

To Reach the Park Battery Provincial Park is located on Nova Scotia's Bras d'Or Scenic Drive approximately 57 kilometres (35 miles) east of Port Hawkesbury and 88 kilometres (55 miles) west of Sydney. The park is just off Route 4, 0.8 kilometres (1.5 miles) east of St. Peter's.
GPS N45 39.408, W60 52.008



RESERVATIONS

1-888-544-3434

9:00 am to 11:00 pm AT (7 days a week)

www.novascotiaparks.ca (24 hours)

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Parks and Recreation Division
 Department of Natural Resources**

RR # 1, Belmont,
 Colchester County,
 Nova Scotia B0M 1C0
 (902) 662-3030
www.novascotiaparks.ca

**Department of
 Natural Resources**

10258 Grenville Street,
 St. Peter's
 Nova Scotia B0E 3B0
 (902) 535-2032

Battery Provincial Park

10110 Hwy 4
 (902) 535-3094
 (mid-June to mid-September)



Photos courtesy Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and Nova Scotia Tourism, Culture and Heritage.

Information Circular PKS-41 | Printed FEB 2010 3M

Battery Provincial Park



Battery Provincial Park overlooking Cape Breton's rugged southern Atlantic Coast near the scenic Bras d'Or Lake, Battery Provincial Park is located near the historic community of St. Peter's, Richmond County. In addition to providing an attractive setting for camping, picnicking and sightseeing, the park invites visitors to explore a rich cultural legacy that predates Halifax and Louisbourg.



History

Used extensively by the Mi'kmaq as a portage and seasonal encampment; the narrow isthmus that separates the Bras d'Or Lake and the Atlantic Ocean was one of the first sites in the New World to be settled by Europeans. Portuguese fishermen established San Pedro near the present park site in 1521, however unaccustomed to the severe winters, they departed in 1525.

In 1650, Nicholas Denys, a French merchant adventurer, built a trading post and fort near the former site of San Pedro which he renamed Saint Pierre. The main activities at the post were fishing and trading. The fishery was mainly for cod, which was "dried" before being shipped to France. The trade was in furs and was carried on with the Mi'kmaq, who supplied a range of pelts in return for European goods.

To improve access to the interior of Cape Breton, Denys constructed a road across the isthmus that enabled boats to be transported overland between the Atlantic Ocean and Bras d'Or Lake. Denys' settlement quickly became a thriving commercial centre and an important military post.

During the winter of 1668-69, the trading post and fort were destroyed by fire. With the help of the Mi'kmaq, Denys and the other French were able to survive the winter, however Denys was financially ruined and forced to leave Saint Pierre. The settlement endured, but saw only modest growth over the next half century.

Following the loss of mainland Nova Scotia to England in 1713, France began to encourage the development of Cape Breton. This generated a wave of French immigrants, some of



The canal is great for fishing, strolling or just watching the boats slip through the locks.



whom settled at Port Toulouse, near Denys' original fort. In addition to a profitable trade industry, the area supported farming, fishing and boat building. The settlement maintained a lime kiln that manufactured plaster and mortar, some of which was used in the construction of the Fortress of Louisbourg. A small fort was built at Port Toulouse and a garrison was established there.

In 1745, Fort Toulouse was destroyed by the New England expedition that later captured Louisbourg. When Louisbourg was returned to France three years later, the French proceeded to strengthen their defences on Cape Breton Island.

As part of that effort, Port Toulouse and its fort were rebuilt in 1750. The fort was finally abandoned in 1758 when England gained control of Cape Breton Island.

English Settlement

In 1777, Lawrence Kavanagh, Jr. and his family became the first English people to settle in Saint Pierre. Enterprising men like Kavanagh soon transformed the area, renamed

St. Peter's, into a thriving settlement. Kavanagh was later elected to the Nova Scotia Legislature, the first English-speaking Roman Catholic to hold a legislative seat in the British Empire.

The outbreak of war with France in 1793 turned Britain's attention to the strategic importance of St. Peter's. Mount Grenville, the highest point of land within the park, commands a view of both the Bras d'Or Lake and the Atlantic Ocean, and was chosen as Britain's chief point of defence for Cape Breton Island. At the summit of Mount Grenville, in 1794, Fort Dorchester was completed.

Area Attractions

- Museums in **St. Peter's**, **Arichat** and **River Bourgeois** provide a glimpse of the rich heritage of the region. A number of festivals and ceilidhs are also held in the area.
- Swimmers and beach-combers will enjoy nearby provincial beach parks – **Lennox Passage**, **Point Michaud** and **Pondville**.

The fort, a square redoubt with a guardhouse and a magazine, commanded a garrison of 50 men. It never saw battle and was abandoned four years later when the threat of a French invasion or Acadian uprising had passed.

Interpretive displays within the park mark the ruins of Fort Dorchester, the lime kiln and the Kavanagh homestead. The village of St. Peter's continued to prosper in the following years. During this period, the volume of shipping steadily increased and could no longer be accommodated by Denys' original haul-over road. As early as 1825, plans were made to build a navigation channel that would link Bras d'Or Lake with the ocean.

St. Peter's Canal

In 1869, after 15 years of drilling, blasting and digging, the St. Peter's Canal was completed. Eight hundred metres (one-half mile) long and 30 metres (100 feet) wide, the canal enabled vessels to sail between Bras d'Or Lake and the Atlantic Ocean.

For many years the canal handled large volumes of commercial traffic and proved to be a vital link in the economy of Cape Breton Island. Today, St. Peter's Canal is operated by Parks Canada as a National Historic Site and is used primarily by pleasure craft.

Your toes will tap to the sounds of a kitchen ceilidh

- Good opportunities abound for anglers to dip a line for **salmon or trout**. Ask at the park office about license requirements and the availability of guides.

For information on these and other attractions please consult the Nova Scotia Doers and Dreamers Guide, visit a Visitor Information Centre or the website at www.novascotia.com

Enjoy the spectacular views of the Bras d'Or Lakes

