

*Louisbourg's Labourer-Soldiers, 1720-1743*  
Labour and Empire Building in an Era of Peace

by

Daniel Pitcher

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores contributions of Louisbourg's soldiers as non-combatants between 1720 and 1743 to the building of a French Atlantic Empire. Louisbourg's garrison was the main construction force used to build the town's extensive fortifications. The fortifications they built were a display of France's intent to build an overseas empire. Therefore, this thesis argues that Louisbourg's soldiers built an empire as construction labourers and not as traditional soldiers fighting on a battlefield. They won no great battles to conquer a new land, but the skilled and unskilled labourer-soldiers of Louisbourg helped to build a trading hub that successfully connected Louisbourg to France and its other colonies in North America. Louisbourg's commercial and economic successes demonstrate how empire was built from "below". The defensive and civil infrastructure built by these labourer-soldiers was essential to the success of this empire.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **The Evolution of Louisbourg's Historiography**

Due in large part to the Diefenbaker Government's decision to reconstruct a section of an eighteenth-century fortress in the 1960s, a vast amount of research has been produced pertaining to Louisbourg. The Diefenbaker administration's decision to reconstruct Louisbourg (and subsequent administrations' commitments to fund the project) was a political response to Cape Breton's high unemployment caused by the decline of the mining industry. This decision was part and parcel with the neo-liberal policies adopted by the Canadian Government and other Western governments in the post-war era to take a more active role in the welfare of their citizens. Not only did these neo-liberal policies implement measures to aid with peoples' welfare, they also opened the doors to post-secondary and graduate school educations that were formerly inaccessible to most of the population.

The political and the social climate of the time and the limited amount of employment opportunities as university academics produced the perfect conditions at Louisbourg for scholars to work in a less traditional scholarly setting. If not for these conditions, it is possible that the research and subsequent historiography pertaining to Louisbourg may very well not exist as we know it today. However, this is the "second generation" of Louisbourg literature. The "first generation" of literature, like its successor, was also influenced by the era in which it was written. Like the vast majority of literature written before the 1950s, this literature focused primarily on Louisbourg's military role and emphasised the two sieges, and to a lesser extent Louisbourg's economics. Accordingly, the prevalence of communications and global markets in contemporary society influenced scholars to take a broader Atlantic World approach to explain and analyze the interactions of French colonies in this era as an integrated network. Connections



and comparisons are characteristic of this recent wave of literature; however, this approach is also indebted to earlier regional studies, like those produced on Louisbourg, and to the template first used by British Atlanticists to ask similar questions in an English context. The main goal of this Atlantic World influenced scholarship, like the “first generation” historiography is to answer why the French colonial scheme failed.<sup>1</sup>

While connections among the French colonies and to France are easily interpreted statistically through economic studies without semantic or philosophical ambiguities, the same is not true of failure, because it is often used in the context of empire. As a descriptive term, “empire” is problematic, because neither the French nor the British described their networks of colonial possessions as such – empire is problematic as it is often construed as an anachronistic misnomer. Though the use of “empire” in this context is debated by historians, the term is nonetheless still used to explain French colonial possessions during this era. However, the analysis still centres on failure – a failure to exist, launch, or defend itself.

Military and economic analysis dominated the “first generation” of Louisbourg’s historiography. The main goal of exploring these two themes was to show why Louisbourg, and by extension the French colonial system, inevitably failed because of French inferiority to the British system. The “second generation” literature does not seek answers for Louisbourg’s failures, thus previous interpretations were counter-argued. Predominantly, the newer literature sought to gain a better understanding of the colony’s social, economic, and religious life. It is only more recently that historians have looked at the French colonial possessions holistically. The newness of this historiography does not mean that there is a consensus as to what the French

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth J. Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Sea: Communications and the State in the French Atlantic, 1713-1763* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002) and James Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

possessed in North America, or even an explanation as to why it failed. The evolution of Louisbourg's regional historiography and its relationship to the broader French Atlantic are the focus of this thesis. Though both literatures are evaluated separately, at times there will be some overlap between the two, because it is impossible to separate them. This historiographical overview explores the definitions and qualifiers that merit the description of "empire" for the French colonial system, and addresses the various interpretations as to why the system failed.

In the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, historians Francis Parkman, William Wood, and George Wrong addressed Louisbourg whether directly or indirectly. Diplomatic is not an adjective that accurately describes the writing of American born historian Francis Parkman. He argued that religion and politics were the decisive factors that made English domination of the continent inevitable.<sup>2</sup> In Parkman's view, religion and politics were even more decisive than the disparity in the population sizes of the French and British colonies, because this imbalance was a symptom of religious and political differences.<sup>3</sup> It was these differences that caused the corruption in the French system. Thus, the reason for the French losses was the colonial officials who hampered the defence of Canada, and more significantly "the clerical monitors of the Crown robbed their country of a trans-Atlantic empire."<sup>4</sup> Because of their highly influential priests, French Canadians became intellectually backwards and lived in compliant docility to the whims of their autocratic religion and King. To Parkman, the systemic corruption caused by the collusion of the Catholic hierarchy and the French monarchy were perfectly emulated in their colonies. Parkman did, however, offer some praise for French

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<sup>2</sup> Francis Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe* (1884; repr.; Boston Little, Brown, and Company, 1912), 1: 20-21.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

Canadian males, because they had lost the “effeminacy” so characteristic of France’s male population.<sup>5</sup> In contrast, the “masculine race” of independent, defiant, and vigorous New Englanders, in spite of Puritan influence, created a democratic society that “abounded in high examples of public and private virtue.”<sup>6</sup> These virtues led to diversity in populations and to religious toleration, which, of course, was not extended to Catholics. “France”, he argued to illuminate the importance diversity and toleration played in English domination of North America, “built its best colony on a principle of exclusion and failed; England reversed the system and succeeded.”<sup>7</sup>

Parkman’s analysis demonstrates three theoretical concepts that show the influence contemporary society had on his writing. First, he subscribed to the theory of “progress” inherent to the Whig interpretation of history. Thus, the backwards French system had no other option but to collapse when challenged by a more progressive system based on Protestantism and liberty.<sup>8</sup> Second, Social Darwinism was a dominant ideology in Parkman’s era among societal elites – a group to which he definitely belonged – to explain why a lack of industriousness and dependence on social institutions weakened the lowest classes, which explained disparities in wealth.<sup>9</sup> The French monarch’s subsidization of and social interference in its colonial schemes, thus, created a complacent population with no aptitude to succeed in a capitalist *laissez-faire* society.<sup>10</sup> Lastly, Parkman was a proponent of the Great Man concept of history.<sup>11</sup> Therefore,

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 22-27.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>8</sup> W. J. Eccles, “The History of New France According to Francis Parkman,” in *Essays on New France* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1987), 16-17.

<sup>9</sup> W. J. Eccles, “Parkman, Francis,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 12, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed July 12, 2014, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/parkman\\_francis\\_12E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/parkman_francis_12E.html).

<sup>10</sup> Eccles, “The History of New France According to Francis Parkman,” 18.

Louis XV's less than wise decision, in Parkman's eyes, to side with Austria, a traditional enemy, in the Seven Years' War was the catalyst that set into motion a chain of events that caused the demise of France's North American presence.<sup>12</sup> It was not just greater numbers and British military superiority that led to English domination of the continent; British superiority of character was also a decisive factor.

Wrong described Louisbourg as a "forlorn outpost" and "never more than a rather desolate outpost of France."<sup>13</sup> He also claimed that the French ambition to make Louisbourg an international trading hub was merely wishful thinking.<sup>14</sup> William Wood, in his 1915 book *The Great Fortress*, described life in Louisbourg as "unhappy" and "dull".<sup>15</sup> Wood opined that "fishing, smuggling, and theft" were Louisbourg's three greatest industries.<sup>16</sup> This, of course, was all run by Louisbourg's highest officials, whom he described as nothing more than a "gang of thieves" that wanted only to "get rich and get home."<sup>17</sup> Both authors argued that the inability to populate Louisbourg and the colony at large coupled with the corruption, complacency, and incompetency of its officials caused the French to lose possession of this colony.<sup>18</sup> However, Wrong's work goes beyond Louisbourg in its scope, and his various analyses extended to the fall of New France. Wrong's work, therefore, has another dimension to it: he tried to explain the British Conquest of Québec as an event that granted significant benefits to French Canadians and

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<sup>11</sup> W. J. Eccles, "Parkman, Francis,".

<sup>12</sup> Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe*, 2.

<sup>13</sup> George MacKinnon Wrong, *The Canadians: The Story of a People* (London: MacMillan, 1938), 159 and *The Conquest of New France: A Chronicle of the Colonial Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918; repr., Toronto: Glasgow, Brook & Co., 1921), 73.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>15</sup> William Charles Henry Wood, *The Great Fortress: A Chronicle of Louisbourg, 1720-1760* (Toronto: Glasgow, Brook & Co., 1915; repr., 1922), 93 and 136.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 93 and Wrong, *The Conquest of New France*, 73.

an event that would be conceptualized as a watershed moment in Canadian history.<sup>19</sup> Wrong's concern was national unity, and though he was naïve about the good relationship between English and French Canada, he wrote optimistically and, unlike Parkman, diplomatically.

In the 1930s, the economic historian Harold A. Innis turned to economics to explain British superiority. The struggle between the French and British in North America, from Innis's perspective, was more of an economic battle, and the military struggle was for him peripheral. In the case of Ile Royale, failure was imminent because its trading connections with the New Englanders created dependency on the English colony. Interestingly, he argued that the colony failed because it had a large resident based fishery. This was the exact reason, he argued, why the British colonies triumphed.<sup>20</sup> By following the English colonial model and not the French migratory land-based 'Dry Fishery' or the open-sea 'Green Fishery', Ile Royale was in direct competition with New England.<sup>21</sup> Thus, Innis argued, "Competition encouraged aggression from the [English] colonies, and dependence on them for supplies weakened the position of Cape Breton on the outbreak of war with England."<sup>22</sup> In Innis's analysis, it seems that the attack on Canso in May of 1744, the French privateering campaign of the same year, and the French-allied Native Americans played no role in inciting New England aggression towards Ile Royale. And while the French were dependant on New England for foodstuffs, Innis maintained that trade

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<sup>19</sup>Donald Wright and Christopher Saunders, "The Writings of the History of Canada and of South Africa," in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing, 1810-1945*, ed. Stuart MacIntyre, Juan Manguascha, and Attila Pók (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4: 395.

<sup>20</sup> Harold A. Innis, *The Cod Fishery: The History of an International Economy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1954) 487.

<sup>21</sup> Harold A. Innis, "Cape Breton and the French Regime," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, vol. XXIX, Series 3 (1935): 85.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

with the rival colony for the New Englanders was merely a way to sell their inferior grade cod and circumvent the Molasses Act.<sup>23</sup>

Influenced by Innis's work and armed with his own theories on colonial development, the historical geographer Andrew Hill Clark worried that the Canadian Government's commitment to the Louisbourg reconstruction project would "lead to a false picture of the French development of the island for which Louisbourg served as the political and commercial capital."<sup>24</sup> From Clark's perspective, Louisbourg was underdeveloped and economically insignificant compared to the New England colonies and thus it was dominated by those British colonies. Clark based his claim of underdevelopment on two criteria: Ile Royale's low immigration rate and the failure to implement an agricultural economy. Though these two points are true, they are undermined by his opinion that producing agriculture for export markets was the reason for founding of all colonies, and that proper development of colonies was dependent on, and resulted from, agriculture. Clark's claim of underdevelopment was thus based on a limited understanding of the nature of Ile Royale's economic *raison d'être*: a place to prosecute the fishery and its role as a centralized trading hub. Clark did not consider these factors, because they did not fit into his model for the development of colonial societies. His criteria, however, proved to him Ile Royale's chronic underdevelopment. And since Ile Royale did not fit into his model, he was able to use Innis's previous explanation that the trade relationship with New England was disastrous for the French colony: a dependency caused by its underdevelopment.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.. 85-87.

<sup>24</sup> Andrew Hill Clark, "New England's role in the Underdevelopment of Cape Breton Island During the French Regime," *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe canadien* 9, no. (1 March 1965): 1.

Clark, like Innis, assumed that Ile Royale was the only party that benefitted from this clandestine trade. Though neither focused on Louisbourg's military history directly, their overall perspective was as deterministic as their predecessors: English victory at Ile Royale, and by extension North America, was inevitable due to one factor or another making them superior. With the exception of J.S. McLennan's *Louisbourg: From its Foundations to its Fall*, the vast majority of the "first generation" literature has long since been, and rightfully so, relegated to the study of historiography.

The mandate of the re-construction project demanded highly detailed reports on various aspects of Louisbourg. The task of these initial researchers was to produce these reports. These included architectural reports, archival research, and archeological surveys. In short, they were to adhere to McLennan's standards of thoroughness.<sup>25</sup> The research showed much more than the serious flaws of the earlier historiography; it showed how people conducted their daily lives. Indicative of the time it was produced, the "first generation" literature neglects to mention many groups of people that lived in Louisbourg: women, children, black slaves, lower class men, and common soldiers are but a few examples of the peoples overlooked. A brief survey of the literature demonstrated how these overlooked people were emphasized in the "second generation" historiography.

Kenneth Donovan's exhaustive research on slavery adds not only to our knowledge of the topic for Louisbourg, but also adds significantly to our knowledge of Black History in Canada.<sup>26</sup>

By contrasting the lives of Louisbourg's wealthier and poorer families, Donovan also

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<sup>25</sup> Terry Maclean, *Louisbourg Heritage: From Ruins to Reconstruction* (Sydney, Nova Scotia: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1995), 26-27.

<sup>26</sup> Kenneth Donovan, "Slaves and Their Owners in Ile Royale, 1730-1760," *Acadiensis* 24, no. 1 (Autumn 1995); 3-32.

demonstrates how various classes coped with the demands of life in the colonial capital.<sup>27</sup> In contrast to Wrong's and Wood's statements about Louisbourg's lack of a social life, Donovan proves that Louisbourg had a lively social calendar that members of all classes looked forward to celebrating.<sup>28</sup> Allan Greer's essays on the 1744 mutiny at Louisbourg and the smaller soldiers' revolt at Port Toulouse (present-day St. Peter's, Nova Scotia) in 1750 demonstrates not only the strained relationship the garrison had with its officers, but it also raises awareness of the common soldiers' concerns over living conditions.<sup>29</sup> A.J.B. Johnston's work on legal culture and religious life demonstrate the role that secular and religious institutions played in the lives of Louisbourg's citizens, while his latest work looks at the 1758 siege in a more nuanced and sophisticated manner than can be seen in the "first generation" historiography.<sup>30</sup> B.A. Balcom's work offers a detailed description of not only the physical prosecution of the cod fishery, but also its economic importance, while Christopher Moore's work illuminates the importance of trade to the colony and the colony's importance to trade within the French colonial system.<sup>31</sup> More importantly, Moore's work offers a counter-argument to Innis and Clark.

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<sup>27</sup> Kenneth Donovan, "Tattered Clothes and Powdered Wigs: Case Studies of the Poor and Well-To-Do in Eighteenth-Century Louisbourg," in *Cape Breton at 200: Historical Essays in Honour of the Island's Bicentennial, 1785-1985*, ed. Kenneth Donovan (Sydney, Nova Scotia: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1985), 1-20/

<sup>28</sup> Kenneth Donovan, "'After Midnight We Danced Until Daylight': Music, Song and Dance in Cape Breton, 1713-1758," *Acadiensis* no. 1 (Autumn 2002): 3-28.

<sup>29</sup> Allan Greer, "Mutiny at Louisbourg, December 1744," in *Aspects of Louisbourg: Essays on the History of an Eighteenth-Century Community in North America*, ed. Erica Krause, et al. (Sydney, Nova Scotia, UCCB Press, 1995), 70-109 and "Another Soldiers' Revolt in Ile Royale," in *Aspects of Louisbourg: Essays on the History of an Eighteenth-Century Community in North America*, ed. Erica Krause, et al. (Sydney, Nova Scotia, UCCB Press, 1995), 110-114.

<sup>30</sup> A.J.B. Johnson, *Control and Order in French Colonial Louisbourg, 1713-1758* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001); *Religion in Life at Louisbourg, 1713-1758* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984); and *Endgame 1758: The Promise, the Glory, and the Despair of Louisbourg's Last Decade* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007).



Clark and Innis gave the impression that Ile Royale was not only totally dependent on the New England colony for foodstuffs and supplies, but also that the French colony was the only party that benefited from this trade partnership. In a 1990 essay, Moore disproves Clark's premise by showing that "the limited use of Cape Breton's land resources during the French regime is hardly a persuasive proof of underdevelopment."<sup>32</sup> The essay, derived from his M.A. thesis<sup>33</sup>, shows that Louisbourg was far from underdeveloped. Moore admits that Louisbourg's immigration rate was low, but to counter-argue, he points out that when compared with both the British and French colonies in north-eastern North America, this was not an anomaly. To demonstrate this further, he shows that Louisbourg had a faster population growth rate than New France: Ile Royale's population grew to a little more than 5,000 individuals in its first 25 years. Though New France had a higher population than Ile Royale in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it took the older colony 50 years in the 17<sup>th</sup> century to reach a population of 5,000.<sup>34</sup> Also, Moore demonstrates that, with the exception of Newfoundland, Ile Royale's per capita exports were higher than any other individual colony in the region and that by the mid-1720s the overall volume and value of the trade was comparable to that of New France, which had existed for roughly a century before Ile Royale's founding and had a population that was nearly nine times larger.

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<sup>31</sup> Christopher Moore, "Cape Breton and the North Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century," in *The Island: New Perspectives on Cape Breton's History, 1713-1990*, ed. Kenneth Donovan (Sydney, Nova Scotia: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1990), 30-48; "The Other Louisbourg: Trade and Merchant Enterprise in Ile Royale," in *Aspects of Louisbourg: Essays on the History of an Eighteenth-Century Community in North America*, ed. Erica Krause, et al. (Sydney, Nova Scotia, UCCB Press, 1995), 228-249; "Merchant Trade in Louisbourg, Ile Royale" (M.A. diss., University of Ottawa, 1977); B.A. Balcolm, *The Cod Fishery of Isle Royale, 1713-1758* (Ottawa, Ontario: National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Parks Canada, Environment Canada, 1984); and "The Cod Fishery of Isle Royale, 1713-1758" in *Aspects of Louisbourg: Essays on the History of an Eighteenth-Century French Community in North America*, ed. Eric Krause et al. (Sydney, N.S.: UCCB Press, 1995), 169-197.

<sup>32</sup> Moore, "Cape Breton and the North Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century," 31.

<sup>33</sup> Moore, "Merchant Trade in Louisbourg, Ile Royale".

<sup>34</sup> Moore, "Cape Breton and the North Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century," 31.

In a later essay (also derived from his M.A. thesis), Moore shows that Ile Royale was firmly entrenched in a trade network of five different locales by 1720: France, the French West Indies, New France, the New England colonies, and Acadia.<sup>35</sup> More importantly, the statistical analyses provided by Moore shows that in terms of imports and exports, New England was far from being the colony's most dominant trading partner. Though these records are incomplete, a fact which Moore readily admits, the pattern of the evidence shows that Ile Royale exported a greater value of goods to New England than it imported from New England. The pattern of the evidence also reveals that the colony imported a greater abundance of goods from New France on an annual basis than New England. However, the year 1737 is an exception to this pattern. New France's wheat crop failed that year; Ile Royale had no other choice than to import foodstuffs from New England. This does not demonstrate that Ile Royale developed a dependency on New England, as Clark and Innis maintain.

Innis also argued that the 1733 "Molasses Act" led to the New Englanders offloading their cod at Ile Royale. This particular act was one of the "Navigation Acts" issued by the British/English governments to regulate and control trade. These laws were very unpopular and English colonists often ignored them and found ways to circumvent them, because they often inflated prices; by trading with Ile Royale, the New Englanders followed a well-established pattern. In this case, the French offered lower prices for sugar and its by-products. Innis also assumed that the French were the sole beneficiary of this clandestine trading arrangement; however, he gives no statistical evidence to support this claim, nor does he consider the fact that in the 1740s the British were cut-off from the Spanish market: one of the biggest consumers of its cod. In these years, Ile Royale became a market to sell cod with the loss of this large

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<sup>35</sup> Moore, "The Other Louisbourg: Trade and Merchant Enterprise in Ile Royale," 230.

consumer. However, Moore offers some statistics showing that the amount of cod illegally imported was not that large. As clandestine trade was not usually recorded, the statistics are at best speculative, but in 1742, the year Moore has some evidence for, the Marine Ministry reported that the Ile Royale cod catch was 83,000 quintals, while it exported 90,000 quintals.<sup>36</sup> The amount of cod clandestinely obtained only amounted to 7.7% of the total exported. At a time when the British were cut-off from a major market, this is hardly a significant amount. The clandestinely imported cod was probably even less significant before the Spanish closed their market to the British.

Innis's assertion of New England economic dominance over Ile Royale, an assertion that shaped Clark's argument, was incomplete and ignored the social, climatological, and geopolitical factors that shaped this trading relationship. By examining the statistical evidence and considering the factors that influenced the relationship, Moore demonstrates that this relationship was mutually beneficial. B.A. Balcom's analysis of the Ile Royale cod fishery compliments Moore's argument by showing that Ile Royale's cod catch accounted for more than 90% of the product sold in France.<sup>37</sup> Christopher Moore asserts that the value of the cod fishery dictated the French Monarchy's desire to fortify Louisbourg.<sup>38</sup> Moore shows that Ile Royale thrived in an integrated economic system connected to France and her other American colonies. But, how is this connection defined and described? This question is central to the new historiographical

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 241.

\* A quintal is equivalent to 100 pounds. It is also important to note that the French *livre* (pound) was slightly heavier than a British pound; therefore, a French Quintal is the equivalent of 112 pounds in the British measuring system.

<sup>37</sup> B.A. Balcolm, *The Cod Fishery of Isle Royale, 1713-1758*, 17. \* Ile Royale cod was purchased wholesale. Christopher Moore estimates that the market price was roughly twice as much as the wholesale. Moore, "The Other Louisbourg: Trade and Merchant Enterprise in Ile Royal, 1713-1758," 246-247.

<sup>38</sup> Moore, "Cape Breton and the North Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century," 47.

trend that looks at the entire French colonial system in the eighteenth-century, and it is usually framed in the context of empire.

When describing the French colonial presence in North America during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, or any other nation for that matter, the term “empire” is hard to define philosophically and logistically. Kenneth Banks concludes that the French empire was “always in the making but never made.”<sup>39</sup> Banks also notes that absence of the term “empire” in official documents or philosophical discourses before 1763 makes the use of empire as a descriptive term both inaccurate and anachronistic.<sup>40</sup> Other than denoting the lack of empire in period literature, Banks fails to describe the elements within the system that disqualified it from being an empire. James Pritchard, Banks’s doctoral advisor, argues that although the colonies were possessions of the French Crown, the lack of structural cohesion among the colonies makes empire inappropriate to use.<sup>41</sup> Pritchard’s claim is contrary to Christopher Moore’s theory that the colonies and France were an economically integrated system. And as Moore shows, this started to coalesce in the 1720s, while Pritchard argues that anything that could be potentially described as a French empire did not exist before 1730.<sup>42</sup>

Moore does not shy away from using “empire” as a descriptive term. Though he does not explicitly define the term; he does argue that a legal system usually made to protect or enhance trade, common to and enforced in all colonies, made this system an empire.<sup>43</sup> Dale Miquelon argues that the demands made by the French representatives to settle the terms of the agreements for the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 shows an imperial awareness beginning to grow among

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<sup>39</sup> Kenneth J. Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Sea*, 7.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>41</sup> James Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, 18, 233, and 263.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, xxx.

<sup>43</sup> Moore, “Merchant Trade in Louisbourg, Ile Royale”, 94-104.

France's political elite. Miquelon argues that the demands of the French negotiators – access to economic zones set in a mercantilist framework and a clear distinction of the boundaries between French and British territory in North America – demonstrate an imperialistic world view. From this interpretation, Miquelon qualifies the use of empire in a French context. In opposition to Moore and despite the mercantilist nature of the French colonies, he claims that the empire formed via the Utrecht Treaty was “one of colonial possessions considered individually valuable for their sugar, fur, or fish but which were not integrated into a well-articulated imperial system. Each system of the empire traded with the mother country alone, except in emergencies.”<sup>44</sup>

Miquelon also overlooks the important role that Ile Royale played in supplying a food source to the West Indian slave population, and the fact that after the fall of Louisbourg in 1758, the Anglo-Americans happily took over this economic void.<sup>45</sup> In his comparative analysis of Louisbourg and Havana, J.R. McNeill readily uses the term empire. He argues that their centralized location and their economic role placed them in a broader European imperial scheme.<sup>46</sup> In *Endgame*, A.J.B. Johnston claims that Louis XIV's actions in the 1750s to reinforce colonial garrisons, add more warships to the American theatre, and establishing a “network of Native alliances on the interior of the continent” to hinder Anglo-American expansion were attempts to defend a territory.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Dale Miquelon, “Envisioning the French Empire: Utrecht, 1711-1713,” *French Historical Studies* 24 (2001): 671.

<sup>45</sup> Jean-François Brière, “The French Fishery in North America in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century,” in *How Deep is the Ocean? Essays on Canada's Atlantic Fishery*, ed. James E. Candow and Carol Corbin (Sydney, N.S.: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1997), 57.

<sup>46</sup> J.R. McNeill, *Atlantic Empires of France and Spain* (London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 10.

<sup>47</sup> A.J.B. Johnston, *Endgame 1758: the Promise, the Glory, and the Despair of Louisbourg's Last Decade* (Sydney, N.S.: Cape Breton University Press, 2007), 10-11.

However, the reasons for the failure of empire are just as varied as the definitions of empire. J.R. McNeill, in his comparative study of the French and Spanish empires argues that the inability to stop trade with foreign colonies played a role in weakening both of these empires. His argument also shows that there is no clear path to achieving an empire because “the French failed to stimulate a large trade among their overseas colonies, while the Spanish failed to prevent one.”<sup>48</sup> However, though there were many differences between the two colonies, they adopted similar measures because they both lacked the naval power to rival the British at sea. Thus, they took defensive positions economically and militarily. To protect their economic interests, France and Spain adopted a mercantilist policy, and because of their commercial inferiority, mercantilism was the best way to “preserve and expand the profits of empire.”<sup>49</sup> The lack of naval power dictated their military solution to protect economic interests: the fortification of centres of commerce. A strategy that according to McNeill was the traditional method of protecting colonial interests in the New World inherited for the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>50</sup> The decision to fortify these areas rested on one vital economic necessity – “to profit from them.”<sup>51</sup>

British superiority plays a significant role in McNeill’s analysis; however, this is not in the same tone as Parkman’s “racial” theories or Innis’s theory that the collapse for the French system was imminent. McNeill argues that the manner in which the French and Spanish conducted their overseas affairs was a pragmatic solution for their economic and naval

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<sup>48</sup> McNeill, *Atlantic Empires of France and Spain*, 6.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-47.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-79.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

positions.<sup>52</sup> However, his explanation that the trade among the French colonies was too small and the trade among the Spanish colonies too large demonstrates that there is no clear trajectory for an empire's failure or success. Innis's assertions about how the Ile Royale colony failed because it had a large resident based fishery, while the British colonies triumphed because of their large resident based fishery further proves that there is no clear trajectory to an empire's creation. James Pritchard's argument that the Marine Ministry's inability to eradicate clandestine trade, while he ignores the fact that the British were also unable to eradicate clandestine trade, also gives validation to the idea that there was no direct path to empire.<sup>53</sup> These arguments hinge on the lack of a centralized authority directing the march towards empire; however, they also fail to mention that the French colonies were much more tightly controlled than their British counterparts, yet they declare the French system a failure and the British system a success.

Banks and Pritchard offer the latest interpretations as to why the French system failed or was defeated. The empire, as Banks asserts, failed to exist because Marine officials lacked the tools to deal with the vast amount of information produced in the colonies, the colonies lacked clear direction and efficient governance, and because officials did not fully comprehend their geographic or economic differences.<sup>54</sup> And in his analysis, French naval weakness hindered the communication process because of the reliance on French merchants to transport official

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<sup>52</sup> Prior to the 1960s, it was normal for French and English Canadians to be described as distinct races. See: José E. Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada, 1945-71* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006).

<sup>53</sup> Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, 72.

<sup>54</sup> Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Seas*, 7.

correspondence.<sup>55</sup> According to Banks, the French empire failed to launch; it never existed to begin with.

French naval weakness along with a lack of clear, cohesive metropolitan direction negated any chance of a French empire prior to the 1730s in Pritchard's analysis. And because of this lack of direction, the colonies directed their own development.<sup>56</sup> Pritchard asserts that this was especially true with trade policy. Where Moore views the common legal system as a strong unifying force, Pritchard sees it as a weak force used to "preserve the illusion that absolutism was in control."<sup>57</sup> To prove this point, Pritchard targets Louisbourg. The fact that Maurepas, the Marine Minister, allowed the colony to trade clandestinely with the New Englanders is Pritchard's evidence that the colonies were truly in control. However, Pritchard's analysis fails to acknowledge that the English colonies, even more so than the French colonies, often directed their own development and also disobeyed similar trade regulations.<sup>58</sup> French and English colonists obeyed these regulations for the exact same reasons: metropolitan merchants could not always meet consumer demands and it was often cheaper to buy these goods from other sources. What Pritchard suggests as Maurepas weakness in not stopping this trade is better interpreted as the minister's pragmatic response to the issue. First, he likely knew that the necessities of life, industry, and economics could not always be supplied by the metropole. Second, it is sometimes best to turn a blind eye to such activities to keep the population content. Finally, if the English with their superior naval power could not effectively dissuade its colonists from breaching trade regulations, then it was even more impossible for the French to control

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>56</sup> Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, 72.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>58</sup> Thomas M. Truxes, *Defying Empire: Trading with the Enemy in Colonial New York* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).



their colonies. If circumventing trade regulations worked for the English and not the French, it seems, as is shown in McNeill's explanations for French and Spanish failure, that there was a determinative factor to failure or success when it comes to empire.

The newer wave of French Atlantic historiography has much in common with the "first generation" historiography: they both seek to explain the failure of the French colonial system without providing a definition for failure. Though the new arguments lack the racial presumptions of the early Louisbourg historiography, the main reason for failure is seemingly the same: French inferiority, albeit argued in a much more sophisticated manner. The French Atlantic World historiography, though more nuanced, still argues that the French were inferior both militarily and economically. And though it is more sophisticated, the Atlantic world approach has at least three philosophical and logistic limitations and complications. First, what are the temporal and geographic limits setting boundaries on this field of study? Second, do the boundaries historians seek to impose on their inquiries lead to an incomplete or inaccurate assessment of imperial failures? Third and most importantly, how are "failure" and "empire" defined, and what is a successful empire, and does defeat mean the whole system was a constant failure?

The work of McNeill, Pritchard, and Banks are limited temporally and geographically. All three briefly mention the African economic connection to both the French and British colonial systems. The three also ignore the colonial and economic interests the two nations had in Asia. In light of this, it is important to remember that the Seven Years' War, a war that led to British hegemony of North America, like the War of the Spanish Succession and War of the Austrian Succession was a truly global conflict. Temporal limitation further complicates these analyses: they confine the trajectory of an empire's development within a specified time-frame.

This analysis also assumes that empires develop, as Andrew Hill Clark assumed for colonies, in the same way. Analyses for failed or defeated empires, however, are slightly more nuanced: a plethora of reasons can affect the trajectory towards failure or defeat. Lack of metropolitan economic control, too much or too little trade among colonies, and inefficient communication are a few reasons. Despite these varied and nuanced reasons, the literature does not give a clear definition of failure and empire. A working definition of empire is thus needed – a definition that relies on both physical and philosophical criteria. Only by defining empire, will it be possible to define failure.

### **Defining Empire**

Debates over empire often involve the legal concepts of *Imperium* (the right to rule) and *Dominium* (ownership). Both concepts are complicated by a history that attempts to link them to the Roman Empire (giving the right to rule) and religious obligations (placing limitations on how one may acquire dominium through warfare). Nigel Davies, an Australian historian, simplifies the concept of empire by suggesting three different types of empire: security, assistance, and trade, and that each has a negative alternative: vainglory, robber-barony, and competitive respectively. A Trade Empire is the easiest to understand; however, its negative alternative, a Competitive Empire, “involves thinking that power comes from simply possessing a trading Empire and foolishly expanding into areas where the cost is greater than the gains.” The Security Empire is defensive in nature, while in negative contrast, a Vainglory Empire is offensive and expansionist. Being dragged into a foreign territory to prevent your rival from getting a foot-hold there exemplifies a Vainglory Empire. Finally, an Assistance Empire draws an imperial power into a situation to help. Davies uses the example of Britain seizing power in India to protect the citizenry from the Thuggees to clarify his point. In the negative alternative,

the Robber-Barony Empire, an imperial power inserts itself into an area and extorts the indigenous population for some kind of tribute.<sup>59</sup>

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, France's colonial policy demonstrates that all three types, and their negative alternatives, were at play. However, for the time period in question, the construction and existence of a French Trade Empire is clearly apparent.

Louisbourg was chosen as the capital of the new colony not because its geography made it easy to defend (it was built on vulnerable territory in terms of military strategy), nor was its site chosen because of its proximity to building materials – the location of the capital was chosen because of its easy access to the fishing grounds and its coastline was ideal for processing cod.<sup>60</sup>

The site was chosen for economic reasons, and thus Louisbourg became the central hub connecting this French overseas empire. The choice to fortify Louisbourg followed a well-established trend – a market, or industry, had existed near to or on the site prior to fortification.<sup>61</sup>

Economic policy often affects military strategy. Davies' three types of empires, and their negative counterparts, are useful ways to look at empire, but whether it is a trade, assistance, or security empire, all are underpinned by economic imperatives.

Adam Smith concluded that “a wealthy nation, is of all nations the most likely to be attacked; and unless the state takes some new measures for the public defence, the natural habits of the people render them altogether incapable of defending themselves.” Smith's conclusions

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<sup>59</sup> Nigel Davies, “Types of empire, (and why comparing them is iffy),” *rethinking history* (blog), September 30, 2010, accessed June 1, 2013, <http://rethinkinghistory.blogspot.ca/2010/09/types-of-empire-and-why-comparing-them.html>.

<sup>60</sup> A.J.B. Johnston, “From port de pêche to ville fortifiée: The Evolution of Urban Louisbourg 1713-1758,” in *Aspects of Louisbourg: Essays On the History of an Eighteenth-Century French Community in North America*, ed. Eric Krause, Carol Corbin, and William O'Shea (Sydney, NS: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1995), 4-5.

<sup>61</sup> Charles L. H. Coulson, *Castles in Medieval Society: Fortresses in England, France, and Ireland in the Central Middle Ages* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2004), 2-4.

further reinforce the philosophical connection between economics and the military is strong and these connections are clearly seen in the contemporary historiography concerning colonial overseas empires. John G. Reid and Elizabeth Mancke make this connection in their essay *From Global Processes to Continental Strategies: The Emergence of British North America to 1783*. Reid and Mancke rightly conclude this with the naval protection offered to the British American cod fishery in Newfoundland – protection that commenced during the first Anglo-Dutch war (1652-1654) which left the English fishing fleets and their on-shore installations vulnerable to attack.<sup>62</sup> In other words, a strong economy needs protection.

This protection is sometimes legal. Christopher Moore's assertion that the law unified and helped trade among the colonies further demonstrates the law's role in protecting economic interests. Law, however, is not in itself a tangible entity – it exists in the philosophical realm and needs physical enforcement. The policy of mercantilism as a possible unifying force that resulted in a French empire in Dale Miquelon's analysis further shows the economic underpinnings of empire. Miquelon's assessment also revolves around the concept of territorial boundaries. Defined territorial boundaries are physical markers of territory – territory that is useless if it does not produce wealth. Territory precedes economic exploitation and economic exploitation demands infrastructure, but a legal right to use the land is just as important as ownership and occupation of the land – even though the French lost the vast majority of their territory in what is now Atlantic Canada, they still retained the right to fish off the coast of Newfoundland until the first decade of the twentieth century. This infrastructure is not only needed for the logistical extraction of a certain resource, but to protect this economic interest.

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<sup>62</sup> John G. Reid and Elizabeth Mancke, "From Global Processes to Continental Strategies: The Emergence of British North America to 1783," in *Canada and the British Empire*, ed. Philip A. Buckner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 23-24.

Fortifications and permanent colonial troops, for a variety of reasons already mentioned, were the methods used by the French to protect their economic interests. Thus, fortifications were a vital component of this particular empire building system process. Negotiations were also vital to the French empire building scheme within the context of Louisbourg. In this case, Louisbourg's fortifications and the smaller fortifications built around the colony were not only contingent on funding from the French Crown, but good relations with the indigenous people of the region: the Mi'kmaq. Annual gift giving ceremonies between the Mi'kmaq leaders and the French Governor responsible for the colony of Ile Royale cemented this relationship.<sup>63</sup> The Mi'kmaq played a role in the empire building process, and the gift giving ceremonies and the lists gifts given are supported by primary documentation. The scope of this thesis, however, deals with those whom actively built the infrastructure of empire on the colony of Ile Royale; therefore, the Mi'kmaq are not mentioned in the thesis because they are not mentioned as workers that built the fortifications. Thus, their contribution to the empire building process, though important, is only mentioned briefly in the introduction.

Thus, it is possible to define empire as an economic system supported laws that unify peoples, facilitates trade, and has the necessary infrastructure to support this trade; a legal right to occupy permanently territory (or permission as given to the French by the Mi'kmaq), or use a specific territory on a seasonal basis; defended by military personnel; and protected by military infrastructure (fortifications or naval patrols). Failure happens when these systems do not help or protect trade, and defeat in battle does not signify the total failure of an imperial system.

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<sup>63</sup> Reid and Mancke, "From Global Processes to Continental Strategies," 28. Original Sources: George Rawlyk, "From Global Processes to Continental Strategies: 1720-1744: Cod, Louisbourg and the Acadians", in *Atlantic Region to Confederation*, ed. Buckner and Reid (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 107-124 and William C. Wicken, *Mi'kmaq Treaties On Trial: History, Land, and Donald Marshall Junior* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 51-52.

## **The Goals of this Thesis**

This thesis argues that the French did indeed possess an eighteenth-century colonial empire because of the social, legal, and economic integration among the metropole and the colonies and that Louisbourg's role as a commercial hub made it an integral part of this empire. It explores the period of relative peace during the formative development of Louisbourg from 1720 to 1743. I chose this period because it provides an opportunity to challenge the common presumption that empires were forged by conflict. The subjects chosen as my focus group are soldiers; this time period allows me to study their role in the empire building process from below, while it allows me to not emphasize their traditional role as combatants in this process, but to demonstrate their equally important role as builders of the material infrastructure of empire. The year 1743 is not just when France entered the War of the Austrian Succession; it was also the last year recruits entered the garrison until the French re-occupied Louisbourg in 1749.

By studying this particular period, this thesis challenges the newer Atlantic World historiography's claim that the French colonial system was a failed imperial experiment. In particular, it will show that Kenneth Banks's "failure to launch theory" based on an inefficient communication system is problematic. The need to supply the demand for soldiers and to control their behaviour hinged on clear and efficient communications between colonial officials and the metropole. Building the infrastructure of empire needed to facilitate a successful trading system is impossible without such a communication system.

Chapters Two, Three and Four demonstrate the effectiveness of this communication and those metropolitan officials understood perfectly well Louisbourg's situation. Chapter Two looks at how Louisbourg's labourer-soldiers were supplied to the labour force and demonstrates

the necessary adaptations made by colonial and metropolitan officials to ensure the construction of Louisbourg's fortifications. It also investigates the numerical make-up of Louisbourg's companies, the personal lifestyles of the soldiers, the physical toll this type of labour had on the workforce, and how Louisbourg's physical environment affected the effectiveness of this labour-force. Chapter Three demonstrates how colonial officials expressed their demands to the metropole and how the metropole reacted to these demands by using systems that had already been in place and proven successful to recruit soldiers. Chapter Four deals with the agency the soldiers had as wage earners, but also the coercive measures used by their captains and the legislation imposed by colonial officials to control them. These three chapters not only challenge the latest historiographical trend of failure, but also question perceived notions and traditional definitions of soldiers.

### **Defining Soldiers**

By straddling two very different branches of historical inquiry (labour history and military history), Peter Way attempts to extend the boundaries of military historiography by exploring the labour conditions of British soldiers during the Seven Years' War. Way observes that traditional military historiography with its battles, leadership, logistics, and strategy has given way to a newer school that focuses on "the army as an institution with social and economic as well as political dimensions."<sup>64</sup> However, he notes that more recent military historiography on eighteenth-century British soldiers, particularly during the Seven Years' War period, falls into one of two camps: the British institutional and the American proto-national. The former focuses on questions of the British army's logistics of organization, training, rules, and

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<sup>64</sup> Peter Way, "Rebellion of the Regulars: Working Soldiers and the Mutiny of 1763-1764," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (Oct., 2000): 763, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2674155>. (accessed March 6, 2013).

operations, while the latter tends to focus on the American colonial troops as a counterweight to the imperial British regulars. The Seven Years' War, for the American military historian, becomes the stage where the American character is formed and the British are cast as the enemies even though they were allies.<sup>65</sup> Both schools, however, ignore the soldiers' positions as wage labourers.<sup>66</sup> The soldiers' role as a wage-labourer has also been ignored by labour historians. Way sees, and probably rightfully so, the Marxist ideology inherent to labour history in contrast to the military history's more conservative nature as an explanation for labor historians avoiding such an inquiry. However, it is also possible that the Marxist influence led to soldiers being dismissed as laboring comrades – they were instead viewed as “repressive aids to the civil power” and “unthinking lackeys of capital.”<sup>67</sup>

Way straddles two historiographic traditions, but his methodology is clearly steeped in Marxist theory. Thus, the labour provided by soldiers built an empire – one that was both territorial and economic. The conditions under which they worked, the adoption and enforcement of a specific work schedule by superiors, and the specialization of labour are interpreted by Way as a proto-factory. Disputes with superiors over wages and treatment are thus, in Marxist fashion, interpreted as class struggles. Thus, he makes the soldier a comrade and an exploited wage labourer and not merely a lackey of capital following orders. And like all struggles, someone, or a group, has to be cast as the “good” guy, while others the “bad”.

Literature from the eighteenth century depicted soldiers as the “scum of the Earth.” Though not

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<sup>65</sup> Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), xv-xiii.

<sup>66</sup> Peter Way, “Class and the Common Soldier in the Seven Years' War,” *Labor History* 44, no. 4 (2003): 456-457, <http://ejournals.ebsco.com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/direct.asp?ArticleID=LDA90TR8BDD8R3L1L6LK> (accessed March 7, 2013) and “Rebellion of the Regulars: Working Soldiers and the Mutiny of 1763-1764,” 763-764

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 457.



all soldiers were unsavoury characters, many criminals and convicts did find their way into uniform. However, to fit into his Marxist framework, they are championed by Way as the “salt of the earth”.<sup>68</sup> The soldiers are thus interpreted as proletariat: a term usually used to describe a wage-labourer working for a privately owned capitalist venture, and a term neither the soldiers, nor their officers used to describe their labour. Hence, their designation as wage-labourer is the only tangible evidence that could possibly qualify them as proletariat.

Proletariat, however, produce commodities: Way’s soldiers earned a wage but did not make goods for a consumer based market. Other than building military infrastructure, plying a skilled trade (if they had one), or working as an unskilled labourer, the fruits of their labour was for strictly martial purposes. However, Way argues that the labour they provided as combatants was part in parcel with Marx’s theory of primitive accumulation. The Seven Years’ War, unlike most wars in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was not a dynastic war and one of Britain’s main goals in the conflict was territorial acquisition. Territorial expansion thus granted the British greater access to and more varied supply of natural resources necessary for primitive accumulation. The process, as Marx described, was not only dependent on exploiting natural resources, but by exploiting human resources – enslaved human resources – to assure the owner profits from their labour. Primitive accumulation was therefore defined by Marx as “the dawn of the era of capitalist production.”<sup>69</sup> However, Marx’s theory is indicative of his deterministic view of the historical process. Primitive accumulation fits in with this deterministic theory because he viewed the land-owners as the proto-capitalists; the slaves as the proto-proletariat. Way’s analysis of these soldiers makes them the first proletariat and leads him to conclude that

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<sup>68</sup> Way, “Rebellion of the Regulars: Working Soldiers and the Mutiny of 1763-1764,” 768.

<sup>69</sup>Karl Marx. *Capital*, vol. 1, "Chapter XXXI, Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist," in *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, vol. 35 (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2005), 738.

they not only built an empire, but they were instrumental in laying the ground-work for Britain's 19<sup>th</sup> century market driven industrial economy.<sup>70</sup> However, they are not only depicted as the agents of the primitive accumulations process; they, specifically those pressed into service, were also victims of its success. Just as the roles of farm proprietor and worker changed through the primitive accumulation process, the modes of production also changed because of it. Agriculture became less dependent on large units of manpower to be done, while the military needed able-bodied men to swell their ranks.

Way's analysis of these soldiers' offers a refreshing and insightful way to interpret the non-combative labour performed by soldiers and what the fruits of their labour won in combat. Way's analysis of soldiers' occupational and socio-economic backgrounds, their labour patterns within the army, and how they reacted to unfair treatment is well-researched and well-argued. The same can be said for the socio-economic reasons that compelled them to sign up for duty or be pressed into duty. However, his main argument about their role in building an empire and a subsequent global capitalist market driven economy is harder to prove and reliant more upon theory than historical research, and in many ways similar to Marx's deterministic view of the historical process.

It is true that soldiers were agents, and important ones, in all military campaigns and defending territory, but Way's claims only see one possible outcome: the results only those from the future know. Throughout his work, Way demonstrates that his sympathies lie with the plight of the soldier. The analysis thus becomes both apologetic and contradictory. By claiming they

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<sup>70</sup> Peter Way, "'black service...white money': The Peculiar Institution of Military Labor in the British Army during the Seven Years' War," in *Workers Across the Americas: The Transnational Turn in Labor History*, ed. Leon Fink (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2011), 61-63. and "Class and the Common Soldier in the Seven Years' War," 457-458.

were integral participants in empire building and laying the path for a global economy, he ignores the fact that they also caused others to be victimized. Often their victimization of others was the result of a direct order, but they did not always need orders to victimize others – some perpetrated cruel acts of their own free permission or in defiance of orders. Hence, by ignoring this he contradicts his assertion that they were more than “unthinking lackeys”, and thus they are only portrayed as the “salt of the Earth.” Way’s claim that they were victims of their circumstances, which is in many respects true, seems both a veiled attempt to absolve them of any wrong doing and apologize for any wrong doing they may have committed. However, his work has many commendable attributes. It portrays soldiers as more than combatants, while at the same time raises question about how these soldiers were defined by their contemporaries and could be defined by modern historians.

In a recent article, Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack attempt to piece together perceptions of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century English soldier by looking at the etymology of the word soldier and its link to the societal views of these soldiers from the era in which they lived.<sup>71</sup> Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary of the English Language* was used to demonstrate the origin and definition of soldier.<sup>72</sup> Linch and McCormack, however, insist that Johnson’s etymological reference to a soldier as one who fights for pay was not merely an academic exercise, but it was a

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<sup>71</sup> Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack, “Defining Soldiers: Britain’s Military, c.1740-1815,” *War in History* 20, no. 2 (April 2013): 144-159, <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1325573663?accountid=10406> (accessed April 17, 2013).

<sup>72</sup> Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th edn, 2 vols (Dublin, 1775), II, col. SOL. Quoted in Linch and McCormack, “Defining Soldiers: Britain’s Military, c.1740-1815,” 148.  
 soldier. *n. s.* [*soldat*, Fr. from *solidarius*, low Latin; of *solidus*, a piece of money, the pay of a soldier: *souldée*, French.] 1. A fighting man; a warrior. Originally one who served for pay. 2. It is generally used of the common men, as distinct from the commanders.

concern echoed in many period texts critical of the profession.<sup>73</sup> “A soldier,” Linch and McCormack explain, “is therefore defined in terms of his pay, and thence that he has been bought: he has no personality of his own.”<sup>74</sup> As noted by Linch and McCormack, Granville made the profession, not only dishonorable, but that this obedience caused men to lose their ability to distinguish between “good and evil.”<sup>75</sup> For Sharp, the profession of soldier was the “bane of every state where it is established, and a disgrace to human nature!”<sup>76</sup> The soldier gave up his humanity for pay.

The work of these three scholars deals with British soldiers, and Linch, McCormack, and Way all agree that it is necessary to define soldiers as more than one who fights – he had a number of labour identities. However, they end up at this conclusion using very different methods. Way’s scholarship is influenced heavily by Marxist theory, and though in theory I agree with his assertion that soldiers did play a large part in ushering in the Industrial Revolutions, I find it hard to prove with concrete evidence and I also feel that it is unfair to define these men with anachronistic terms, such as proletariat, that did not exist when they lived. Also, the soldiers at the centre of my study are not viewed as the victims in the manner that Way portrays them; they are neither good nor bad. Though I avoid a Marxist interpretation, I readily admit that Way’s work was a great inspiration for my own. But, to be fair to my subjects, I intend to use Linch and McCormack’s methodology by trying to define these soldiers in terms that they and their contemporaries understood; the main difference is that my soldiers are French. But these interpretations also apply to these French soldiers because, soldiers, regardless of their

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<sup>73</sup> Linch and McCormack, “Defining Soldiers: Britain's Military, c.1740-1815,” 148.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>75</sup> Granville Sharpe, *Tracts Concerning the Ancient and Only True Legal Means of National Defence, by a Free Militia* (London, 1781), 48-49.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

national affiliations, were expected to perform similar tasks, had similar restrictions placed upon them, contested living and working conditions, came from similar socio-economic backgrounds, and were often shunned by civil society.

The subjects studied in this thesis are similar in many ways, but there is more than nationality that differentiates them. Lynch and McCormack's study is a century long survey: a period of intermittent peace and warfare. They are soldiers without hyphenation to make them soldier-labourers. Way studies soldiers during their Seven Years' making his subjects soldier-labourers. Because they worked during a time of war they were soldiers who laboured and their work lives resembled more that of a soldier than a labourer – they performed traditional military functions in tandem with their role as labourers. Louisbourg's soldiers laboured in a time of peace and their work patterns were more similar to those of their civilian counterparts. Therefore, they are labourer-soldiers, or more aptly labourers that were recruited as soldiers, but performed no soldierly duty. The term labourer-soldier was chosen deliberately on my part because of this. In a way, it is anachronistic, because official documents explicitly describe them as *soldats-laboueurs*. The fact that they were mainly recruited to work primarily as labourers, however, justifies this choice – they blur the lines between civilian and military labour

## Chapter Two: Soldiers and Supplying a Construction Labour Force

### Introduction

The Treaty of Utrecht was followed by a French policy to cut funding to an already decimated navy, and thus a policy to fortify colonial possessions was adopted. Louisbourg, the site eventually chosen as capital for the Ile Royale colony, was the product of the territorial boundaries produced by this treaty, but more specifically, its fortifications, among the most extensive built in North America, demonstrated a new colonial policy that in its very essence defined France's overseas imperial ambitions. In the case of Louisbourg, implementing this policy was hindered, especially in the early years of the colony, by a supply shortage of skilled and unskilled labourers. Finding skilled labourers to work in the colonies was difficult. In fact, colonial administrators at Plaisance experienced similar labour supply problems in the late seventeenth century and throughout the first decade of the eighteenth.<sup>1</sup> Ile Royale inherited these problems, but the new colonial policy of intense fortification made the labour supply problem more severe. The size and scope of the fortifications to be built at Louisbourg were unlike any other in North America, and a total change in direction to traditional colonial fortifications. Jean-François de Verville, Louisbourg's Chief Engineer 1716-1725, was initially responsible for designing Louisbourg's fortifications and ensuring their completion.<sup>2</sup> Schooled in the Vauban model of fortification theory and siege-craft, Verville remarked that:

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<sup>1</sup>Frederick J. Thorpe, "The Politics of French Public Construction in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, 1695-1758." (PhD diss., University of Ottawa, 1973), 234-242 and Nicolas Landry, *Plaisance (Terre-Neuve) 1650-1713: Une Colonie Française En Amérique* (Québec, QC.: Septentrion, 2008), 170.

<sup>2</sup> Engineer, knight of the order of Saint-Louis; b. in France, probably after 1680; m. Madeleine-Angélique Trégu de Langon; father of Louis, Chevalier de Verville (1704–84) and Guillaume (1707–51), distinguished members of the corps of engineers; d. 1729 at Valenciennes, France; his widow was still living in 1751. F. J. Thorpe, "Verville, Jean-François de," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2,

Dans les colonies les troupes ne sont point accoutumées aux travaux de fortifications et de guerre ne faisant point comme en Europe. Ils s'en croyant par la sécurité par la quantité du bois c'y trouvent ou au plus par quelques fort de terre.<sup>3</sup>

A chastisement to both the regular troops and their officers for their ignorance of European fortification theory, the engineer's remarks thus signify a radical departure from the simplistic wooden palisades, earthen ramparts, and the odd masonry battery that were the hallmarks of colonial fortifications in the previous century. However, in spite of Verville's chastisement about the colonials' ignorance of fortification theory and the science of siege-craft, a large European style fortress was to be built. To do this, large numbers of men were needed.

Frederick Thorpe initially developed the argument that labour supply problems hindered the construction of Louisbourg's fortification. His work reinforces the argument of a new colonial policy of fortifications of in lieu of naval strength, while at the same time demonstrating the problems of supplying an adequate labour force.<sup>4</sup> He also demonstrates how climate and geography disrupted labour productivity, and shows, in similar fashion to my work, how, by increasing garrison sizes and recruiting skilled labourers into the military, colonial and metropolitan officials attempted to alleviate the labour supply problem. With regard to disruptions, Thorpe also briefly mentions drinking; however, he does not interpret it, along with climate and geography, as factors that diminished the size of the labour force. They are instead

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University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed March 16, 2013, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/verville\\_jean\\_francois\\_de\\_2E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/verville_jean_francois_de_2E.html).

<sup>3</sup> *Archives Nationales d'Outre-mer, COL C11B 4/fol.66-73v, arrêté du Conseil, sur une lettre de monsieur de Verville, 24 janvier 1719.* \* *Archives Nationales d'Outre-mer will henceforth be abbreviated as ANOM.*

Sébastien Le Prestre maréchal de Vauban, 1 May 1633 - 30 March 1707, was a French military engineer whose theory influenced subsequent generations of European military engineers in the arts of fortification and siege-craft.

<sup>4</sup> Thorpe, "The Politics of French Public Construction in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, 1695-1758.", 5 and 232-2

interpreted as legislative issues for administrators set in a political context.<sup>5</sup> Also, Thorpe does not consider geology's influence on adequately supplying a labour force. Finally, he overlooks workplace injuries as a factor that diminished the labour supply.

However, newer historiography on the French American colonies influenced by the "Atlantic World" approach correctly demonstrates that fortification building was the French strategy used to compensate for weakened naval power. James Pritchard's research not only demonstrates that this colonial policy was in effect, but shows how the naval budget (the budget also included colonial spending) was slashed from over 15 million *livres* in 1715 to 6 million *livres* in 1718.<sup>6</sup> Another concept from the Atlantic World approach is the importance of communications to the process of adequately supplying a labour force. The importance that communications, or more appropriately miscommunications, played in the interaction between the metropole and the French colonies was explored by Kenneth Banks. Banks asserts that communications in the era were ineffective because the metropolitan officials did not fully understand the nuances and diverse needs of the colonies.<sup>7</sup> The labour supply problem reinforces Banks's assertion in this particular case: the engineers' often complained that the recruits sent were inadequate for the needs of the construction project. Their young age was often the source of these complaints. In this case, metropolitan officials thought about the long-term need to supply a garrison and not a workforce to build its fortifications. Also, Louisbourg's labour supply problem contradicts Banks's assertion that the lack of naval resources caused a

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<sup>5</sup> Thorpe, "The Politics of French Public Construction in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, 1695-1758.", 253-254.

<sup>6</sup> James Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 403.

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Sea*, 5.



reliance on the merchant marine to transport not only correspondence, but men.<sup>8</sup> The case of Louisbourg reveals that men, both civilian and military, sent to work at Louisbourg travelled on the King's ships and not merchants.

This chapter explores some of the challenges faced in supplying an adequate workforce for the Louisbourg construction project and ensuring that the labour supply was effective. It considers the various solutions proposed and implemented to solve the labour supply problem, numerical strength of the garrison and the quality of its soldiers, life-styles of the garrison, and the toll construction work took on the labour supply. It also demonstrates how these issues along with geography, geology, and climate shaped the labour supply. Supplying an adequate labour supply for the construction project was hampered by many challenges that not only limited the number of potential labourers and their quality, but also the stagnation and absenteeism of the labour supply imposed by nature. These challenges were part and parcel of the policy to extensively fortify French colonial settlements: a policy connected to a broader overseas imperial vision that needed skilled and unskilled labourers to be physically implemented.

Drawing on Peter Way's scholarship, I argue that, if empire is conceptualized as an integrated economic system, then soldiers played an integral role in the empire building process. Way's analysis correctly and forcefully asserts their importance in this process through a Marxist framework. The Marxist approach allows Way to argue that the soldiers not only built an empire, but laid the ground work for the organizational structure of the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century. Military force enabled for the acquisition of territory and thus the acquisition of natural resources – the resources that made the Industrial Revolution possible

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<sup>8</sup> Kenneth Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Sea*, 155.

through the process of primitive accumulation. Way's soldiers are both the victims of and oppressors for this capitalist system.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, he anachronistically uses Marxist terminology to describe his soldiers – they are essentially the proto-proletariat.

Essentially, I argue that there was a French Colonial Empire. This argument is at odds with some of the Kenneth Banks's and James Pritchard's scholarship, because both argue against the existence of a French empire. Kenneth Banks describes France's colonial efforts as an Empire that was "always in the making but never made."<sup>10</sup> At the same time Banks uses the lack of the use of the word in official documents and the era's philosophical discourses as further evidence to deny the empire's existence, because the term "empire" is anachronistic. Banks, however, fails to define empire and also what elements were lacking in the French system to deny its status as an empire.<sup>11</sup> James Pritchard's definition of empire is rooted in structural organization among the colonies and the metropole. Pritchard argues that the French system never achieved this structural organization, and therefore never became an empire and could not be described as such until the 1730s.<sup>12</sup> Contrary to Pritchard's argument, Moore argues that this

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<sup>9</sup> Peter Way, "Rebellion of the Regulars: Working Soldiers and the Mutiny of 1763-1764," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (Oct., 2000): 763, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2674155>. (accessed March 6, 2013); Peter Way, "Class and the Common Soldier in the Seven Years' War," *Labor History* 44, no. 4 (2003): 456-457, <http://ejournals.ebsco.com.ezproxy.library.dal.ca/direct.asp?ArticleID=LDA90TR8BDD8R3L1L6LK> (accessed March 7, 2013); and Peter Way, "'black service...white money': The Peculiar Institution of Military Labor in the British Army during the Seven Years' War," in *Workers Across the Americas: The Transnational Turn in Labor History*, ed. Leon Fink (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2011), 61-63.

<sup>10</sup> Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Seas*, 7.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, 18, 233, and 263.

structural organization existed and that the French colonial holdings did indeed constitute an empire that started to coalesce in the 1720s.<sup>13</sup>

The work of Pritchard and Banks is heavily influenced by the Atlantic World template first used by historians in an English context. While I focus mostly on Louisbourg, I argue that the labour provided by the colonies soldiers created the structural organization, infrastructure, and economic integration essential to the empire building process, thus this regional analysis helps to place Louisbourg's labourer-soldiers in the larger context of the Atlantic World, because their labour made possible the integration of a larger imperial scheme. Allan Greer's thoroughly researched work on the Louisbourg garrison was invaluable source material and provided a great reference guide that enabled further analysis of primary sources. Aside from his work on the 1744 mutiny, Greer's work is more of a report with no overriding argument; therefore, an argument supporting or disclaiming a thesis is impossible. This does not mean his work is not an example of great scholarship and research skills: it is most definitely both of these. Focusing on soldiers, in similar fashion to Peter Way as agents of the empire building, using the Atlantic World template, and reinforcing Christopher Moore's argument for economic integration allows for new and broader ways to interpret the information found in Greer's report. Much of the primary material that Greer's work pointed me to along with theoretical concepts helps to form an argument for the existence of a French Colonial Empire. The challenge of supplying labour is an example of the machinations used in this empire building process.

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<sup>13</sup> Moore, "Merchant Trade in Louisbourg", 94-104.

## Solving the Labour Supply Problem

The immense fortifications built at Louisbourg were not officially started until 1719. Fortifications of this magnitude were to be built in the new colony's capital, but the question of its precise location needed to be determined. Louisbourg, Port Toulouse (St. Peter's, N.S.), and Port Dauphin (St. Anne's, N.S.) provided the three possible sites for the future capital, and each had their advantages and disadvantages. Port Toulouse was close to the raw building materials needed to construct the fortifications; Port Dauphin's landscape made it, from a military perspective, the easiest and most logical locale to fortify. Louisbourg's proximity to the fishing banks and the subsequent settlement of those employed in the fishery dictated that Louisbourg, though not close to raw materials or easily defended –was to be chosen as the capital.<sup>14</sup> Economics influenced the site to be fortified and Louisbourg followed a well-established European trend – a market, or industry, had existed near to or on the site prior to militarization.<sup>15</sup> Though the intense fortification program did not commence until 1719, work still needed to be done and a supply of labourers needed to be found to ensure its completion.

In 1715, as a potential solution to the labour problem, Ile Royale's officials considered the option of implementing a *corvée* (a type of labour tax) that forced civilians to labour on government construction projects. The method was used in France to fulfill labour requirements and was made possible by France's large population and longer construction season. Although the colony's population was small (especially in the early years of the colony), Ile Royale had a

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<sup>14</sup> A.J.B. Johnston, "From port de pêche to ville fortifiée: The Evolution of Urban Louisbourg 1713-1758," in *Aspects of Louisbourg: Essays On the History of an Eighteenth-Century French Community in North America*, ed. Eric Krause, Carol Corbin, and William O'Shea (Sydney, NS: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1995), 4-5.

<sup>15</sup> Charles L. H. Coulson, *Castles in Medieval Society: Fortresses in England, France, and Ireland in the Central Middle Ages* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2004), 2-4.

civilian labour-pool from which to draw ; however, the construction programme coincided with the fishing season, and when they were available to work (the winter months) construction was at a stand-still. A *corvée* could not, therefore, work for the Ile Royale colony. The economic importance of the cod-fishery, in similar fashion to its influence on the site chosen for the colonial capital, trumped the need to force civilians to labour on the fortifications.<sup>16</sup>

A semi-successful solution to this problem was to contract civilian labourers from France to work in the colonies on a seasonal basis.<sup>17</sup> Though this did bring skilled labourers to the colony, it did not bring enough men to satisfy the demands of the construction project. This problem was demonstrated in 1719 when Isabeau, the contractor, was unable to procure the 12 masons necessary for that year's project.<sup>18</sup> According to Verville, men did not want to go to Louisbourg because of its bad reputation, and that those who did venture there asked for sums of 80 *livres* per month for their services – wages that were significantly higher than they would have earned in France.<sup>19</sup> Verville's allusion to Louisbourg's reputation could mean its climate,

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<sup>16</sup>Frederick J. Thorpe, "The Politics of French Public Construction in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, 1695-1758." (PhD diss., University of Ottawa, 1973), 246; Christopher Duffy, *Fire and Stone: The Science of Fortress Warfare 1660-1860*, (Douglas David and Charles Limited: North Vancouver, 1975), 35; and B.A. Balcolm, "The Cod Fishery of Isle Royale," 191. The "in France" value fluctuated from a low of 1,418,480 livres in 1744 to a high of 3,553,350 livres in 1731.

<sup>17</sup> Thorpe, "The Politics of French Public Construction in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, 1695-1758", 240.

<sup>18</sup> Michel-Philippe Isabeau was the contractor at Ile Royale from 1719 to 1724. His job as the contractor was to ensure there was enough man-power, tools, and materials to complete the project. He was contracted to the Crown, but it was from the contractor that the men would receive their wages. F. J. Thorpe, "ISABEAU, MICHEL-PHILIPPE," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed October 6, 2013, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/isabeau\\_michel\\_philippe\\_2E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/isabeau_michel_philippe_2E.html).

<sup>19</sup>ANOM, COL C11B Vol.4/fol. 235-235v, *Lettre de M. de Verville au Conseil concernant l'engagement d'ouvriers*, le 10 août 1719.\* A unit of currency known as a *livre* did not exist as a species in itself. Smaller amounts of currency added up to a *livre*. 20 *sols* equaled a *livre* and *sols* was comprised 12 *deniers*. There was also larger species of coin: the *écu* and the *Louis d'Or* worth three and 20 livres respectively.

the alcohol induced debauchery of its soldiers (though this would be unlikely to dissuade a young skilled labourer from going to Louisbourg), or its lack of housing infrastructure in these early years. Though Verville was unclear with what he meant by Louisbourg's reputation, it seems to have justified the wages demanded. All that is certain is that men did not flock to work in the colony, and that many of those who decided to go to Louisbourg did so on a seasonal basis. Hence, to supply the demand for both skilled and unskilled labour and to have them on hand for the entirety of the construction season, men were recruited to enlist in the *Compagnies Franches de la Marine*.<sup>20</sup>

### **Garrison Size and the Potential Labour Pool**

The role of the *Compagnies Franches* in Louisbourg was to provide, not just a fighting force, but a labour force. Whether they were sent to Louisbourg to fight or build, the need was the same: a large garrison full of capable men. In the eyes of some, they were far from capable. The minimum age to enlist was 16; however, it is possible that some were younger. Because of this, Verville made at least two complaints about the quality of soldiers being sent to Louisbourg. For instance, he complained in 1719 that the soldiers sent were young and weak and he requested that next year's recruits be fully grown men. Again in 1723, he described the recruits as mere children. Verville's need for an adequate supply of capable labourers was contrary to the Maurepas policy of sending young recruits to the colonies.<sup>21</sup> It was also in direct opposition to

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<sup>20</sup> The *Compagnies Franches de la Marine*, also known as the *Troupes des Colonies* or *Troupes de la Marine*, were recruited solely for the purpose of manning the colonies and the Port of Rochefort. They were officially formed in 1682 and the first three companies were sent to Quebec in the spring of 1683.

<sup>21</sup> Jean-Frédéric Phélypeaux, comte de Maurepas was the Minister of the Marine from 1723-1749. The posts responsibilities included the colonies, the navy, and maritime trade.

the preference of at least one governor, Saint-Ovide's preference for young recruits.<sup>22</sup> Policy dictated the quality of recruits sent to the colony; thus, influencing the potential labour supply. Allen Greer has correctly interpreted that this policy guaranteed more serviceable years from a soldier, but this policy can also be interpreted as a form of indoctrination because young minds are easier to influence and mould than older minds. Exactly what is needed in the military, but not for the demands of the construction project, these young recruits were of little use until they matured physically.<sup>23</sup> The quality of the recruits was also hampered by the issue of their physical size. To qualify for service in the colonies, recruits were to be a minimum of *5 pieds 1 pouce* (1.65 metres) and in 1736 Maurepas increased it to *5 pieds 2 pouces*.<sup>24</sup> The rules concerning the minimum height, like those concerning the minimum age to enlist, were not always adhered to. For instance, Jean-Baptiste Tomasein measured only *4 pieds 9 pouce*, well under the height regulations. Tomasein's height was recorded in a judicial record: the only records that recorded such details thus making it impossible to determine the average height of the garrison.<sup>25</sup>

However, after his initial review of the garrison in 1739, the new governor, Isaac de Forant,

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<sup>22</sup>Monbeton de Brouillon, dit St. Ovide, Joseph de, governor at Ile Royale from April 1718 to April 1739. \*He left for France in 1737 and did not return to Louisbourg. His successor Isaac Louis de Forant was appointed on 1 April 1739.

Bernard Pothier, "MONBETON DE BROUILLAN, Saint-Ovide, JOSEPH DE," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 3, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed October 6, 2013, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/monbeton\\_de\\_brouillan\\_joseph\\_de\\_3E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/monbeton_de_brouillan_joseph_de_3E.html).

<sup>23</sup> ANOM, COL C11B Vol.4/fol. 237-241v, *Lettre de M. de Verville concernant les affaires de la Colonie, construction de maisons, dépenses, fonds des fortifications, etc.*, 19 novembre 1719 ; ANOM, COL C11B Vol.6/fol. 293-294v, *M. de Verville au ministre qui décrit l'avancement des travaux aux fortifications*, 14 août 1723; ANOM, COL B, 60/ fols. 28v-29, *Maurepas à Duval*, 6 avril 1734 and ANOM, COL C11B Vol.8/fol. 55-64v, *Saint-Ovide au ministre*, 20 novembre 1726; and Allen Greer, *The Soldiers of Isle Royale, 1720-45* (Ottawa: National Historic Parks and Site Branch, Parks Canada, 1979), 29.

<sup>24</sup>ANOM, COL B, Vol. 64, fol. 287v, *Maurepas to Beauharnois*, 24 décembre 1736. See also: Greer, *The Soldiers of Isle Royale*, 26.

\*A French *Pied* is not equal to an English Foot. A Pied = 1.066 Feet

<sup>25</sup> Greer, *The Soldiers of Isle Royale*, 29. Greer reports that of the 21 men who appeared in court or deserted, four were under the minimum height. Judicial reports required a description and give the only clues to the size of the soldiers.

remarked that: “*Je n’ay jamais vu de si mauvaise troupes, on ne compterant pas cent soldats si l’on rennyvoit tous ceux qui sont au dessous de l’ordonnance*”<sup>26</sup> The garrison numbered 546 men in 1739. If de Forant statement is true, then only 17.7% of the garrison met the ordained height requirement of 5 *pieds 2 pouces*. The data on this subject is at best sporadic, but it is likely that a percentage of the soldiers did not meet the minimum height requirements. Some recruits sent to Louisbourg were too young or possibly too small to effectively contribute to the labour pool. The soldiers from the *Compagnies Franches*; however, were only one potential source of military labour power to be recruited for the Ile Royale garrison, and these men were chosen specifically for their size and strength: two essential qualities needed for the construction project.

In 1722 Verville, recruited the first 49 men from the Swiss mercenary company of Colonel Franz Adam Karrer to serve at Louisbourg.<sup>27</sup> The engineer, who practically hand-picked these men, knew exactly what qualities he was looking for: “*...les hommes les plus fort et les plus robuste pour travailler aux fortifications.*”<sup>28</sup> Though these men were highly trained mercenaries, their soldierly skills were secondary to their ability to dig, lift, and haul. However, to fully understand the potential size of the labour pool to be drawn from Ile Royale’s garrison, it is necessary to look at the numerical structure of the companies stationed in the colony.

In an ideal situation, Ile Royale’s garrison would have been fully manned, but this was never the case. Depending on the year and military regulations, the garrison’s size varied. For example, in 1719, the year that the construction project officially started, Louisbourg’s ideal

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<sup>26</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 21/fol.51-54, *Monsieur de Forant au Ministre*, 22 septembre 1739.

<sup>27</sup> ANOM, COL C11G 12/fol.86v-87, *Ordonnance du roi, pour faire servir 50 Suisses détachés du régiment de Karrer à l’île Royale*, 12 mai 1722.

<sup>28</sup> Archives du Port de Rochefort, Vol. 99/ p. 222, le 4 mars 1722.



strength was 350 enlisted men. Seven companies were stationed at Louisbourg at that time, and each company, excluding commissioned officers, was composed of two sergeants, two corporals, one drummer, and 45 privates. The actual number of men present at Louisbourg during 1719 was 301.<sup>29</sup> Seemingly, this meant that 301 men were available to work in some capacity on the fortifications. But drummers were probably not working as part of the construction labour force: their daily duties more than likely precluded them from working on the fortifications.<sup>30</sup> Thus only 294 men were potentially available to the labour force. The situation in 1719 exemplifies a recurring theme throughout Louisbourg's history: the garrison was always undermanned (see Tables 2.1-2.3). Because the garrison at Louisbourg was never fully manned and because not all of the men were physically capable of working on the fortifications, the pool of potential labourers was somewhat diminished. This diminished pool still provided that vast majority of unskilled labourers employed on the project and a portion of the skilled labourers.

**Table 2.1: Ideal Strength of Ile Royale Garrison, 1719-1740**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Number of Troupes de la Marine Companies</b>	<b>Ideal Strength</b>	<b>Companies of Swiss Karrer Mercenaries</b>	<b>Ideal Strength</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1719-21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>350</b>
<b>1722</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>350</b>
<b>1723</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>410</b>
<b>1724-29</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>460</b>
<b>1730-40</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>580</b>

<sup>29</sup>Series D2C, Troupes des colonies. Canada et Ile Royale. Compagnies détachées 1658-1736, 26 Novembre 1719.

<sup>30</sup>Margaret Fortier, "18th Century French Drumming," MRS 270 (Ottawa : Parks Canada, 1977), 47.

**Table 2.2: Ideal Strength of Ile Royale Garrison, 1741-43**

Years	Number of Troupes de la Marine Companies	Ideal Strength	Companies of Swiss Karrer Mercenaries	Ideal Strength	Artillery Company	Ideal Strength	Total
1741-1742	8	560	3	150	N/A	N/A	710
	8	860	3	150	1	30	740

**Table 2.3: Actual Strength of Louisbourg Garrison, 1719-1729**

Year	Troupes de la Marine	Swiss Karrer Mercenaries	Other	Total
26 novembre 1719	301	0		301
1720	317	0		317
1 novembre 1721	315	0		315
1 novembre 1722	280	49	1 Miner	330
1 novembre 1723	335	50	1 Miner	386
18 octobre 1724	330	99	1 Miner	430
4 novembre 1725	398	98	1 Miner	448
1 novembre 1726	346	101	1 Miner and 2 soldiers from Canada	450
1 novembre 1727	352	95	1 Miner	448
1 novembre 1728	353	98	0	451
1729		97	0	448

Documentation that recorded the number of men working on the fortifications in September of 1724 shows the successful recruitment of skilled labourers into the Ile Royale garrison, and that the vast majority of the Louisbourg's construction workers were members of the garrison. In total, 253 men were employed working in some capacity on the fortifications. Only 17 civilians, 5 stonecutters, 11 masons and a single bricklayer worked at this time. The remaining workers were soldiers (173 men from the *Compagnies Franches*, 62 Swiss

mercenaries, and a miner on loan from the *Troupes de Terres*). The numerical breakdown of this report shows the number of skilled labourers serving terms in the military. Among the ranks of the *Compagnies Franche*, seven masons, four carpenters, four brick-makers, three sawyers, two blacksmiths, and seven cabinet makers (these men would have been making doors, window frames, and other objects that required more refined wood working skills) worked on the fortifications. Six masons account for the number of skilled tradesmen found in the ranks of the Swiss mercenary contingent. Unskilled workers were listed as a *terrassière* or a *manouvrier* (diggers and labourers). Louisbourg's garrison totalled 430 men in 1724, 30 men short of its ideal strength; thus, 54.6% of the garrison was employed working on the fortifications.<sup>31</sup> Four years earlier, 112 workers were employed on the construction project in May and June: 95 of whom were enlisted men.<sup>32</sup>

Both of these lists demonstrate that the vast majority of the labour force was drawn from the garrison. However, the two lists have a striking difference: no soldiers were documented as having a skilled trade in 1720. Skilled tradesmen were joining the ranks of the Ile Royale garrison: they had some success recruiting skilled labourers into the colonial troops. Allan Greer's *The Soldiers of Isle Royale, 1720-1745* and Margaret Fortier's *The Ile Royale Garrison, 1713-45* both offer some insight on the skilled labourers present in the Louisbourg's garrison. Fortier even provides an extensive list of soldiers and some of the skilled trades they possessed serving in the garrison and from 1713 to 1745. The list provides names of 16 that claimed they

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<sup>31</sup>ANOM, COL C11B 7/fol.156-156v, *État des ouvriers employés pour les travaux au Port de Louisbourg et ailleurs dans la Colonie pendant le mois de septembre*, septembre 1724. The various construction sites at Louisbourg were the King's Bastion, the Royal Battery, and the Island Battery. Other labourers were employed at other locations in the colony. Port Dauphin, Port, Toulouse, and L'Indienne (now known as Lingan, the French operated a quarry there in the 18th Century).

<sup>32</sup>ANOM, COL C11B 6/fol.192, *État des ouvriers employés aux fortifications en mai et juin 1720. Bordereaux des recettes et dépenses pour l'année 1720*, 22 novembre 1723.

were skilled tradesmen and 11 possessed skills pertinent to the construction project: 1 blacksmith, 1 brick maker, 4 masons, 2 coopers, 1 pit sawyer, 1 brick and lime mixer, and a single joiner (see Table 2.4).<sup>33</sup> Greer's analysis is not as in depth as Fortier's on this subject, but he does make a list of soldiers that professed skill in a particular trade.<sup>34</sup> Leslie Choquette adds a stone-cutter, Germain Le Parisien to this list.<sup>35</sup> The lists compiled by Greer and Fortier were both derived from legal records. It is only when the soldiers faced legal prosecution, were witnesses in a trial, had a contract notarized, or were discharged, deserted, or died in the course of duty that their names enter the historical record. Nonetheless, they provide a sample of the trades claimed. A.J.B. Johnston, building on the work of Greer, also cautions against taking the trades claimed by soldiers as completely accurate. For Johnston, the young age of the soldiers claiming to possess these skills indicates that they possibly exaggerated their level of expertise in a specific trade.<sup>36</sup>

The lack of records of this nature lies squarely on Louisbourg's military command: they did a horrible job recording the life details of their soldiers. Their negligence did not go unnoticed by the Marine Ministry, but despite complaints a detailed report was not submitted until 1752. Michel de Surlaville<sup>37</sup> was responsible for this task. Obviously, Surlaville did not

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<sup>33</sup> Margaret Fortier, *The Ile Royale Garrison, 1713-1745* (Ottawa: National Museum of Man., 1984), 155-207.

<sup>34</sup> Greer, *The Soldiers of Isle Royale*, 78. Trades claimed: weaver, carter, butcher, farmer, gardener, glazier, tailor, cooper, joiner, and tanner.

<sup>35</sup> Leslie Choquette, "Compagnonnage in Eighteenth-Century New France," in *Essays in French Colonial History: Proceedings of the 21st Annual Meeting of the French Colonial History Society*, ed. A.J.B. Johnston (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1997), 82-84.

<sup>36</sup> A.J.B. Johnston, *Control and Order in French Colonial Louisbourg, 1713-1758* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001), 212.

<sup>37</sup> An army officer; baptized 17 July 1714 at Bayeux, France, son of Thomas Le Courtois and Charlotte Le Blais; d. unmarried 8 Jan. 1796 in Paris. Surlaville served in Louisbourg as its Troop Colonel from 1751-1754. His goals were to add more discipline to the ranks and to ensure they were enumerated thoroughly. T. A. Crowley, "LE COURTOIS DE SURLAVILLE, MICHEL," in *Dictionary of Canadian*

enumerate every soldier that served in the Ile Royale garrison: only those in service during 1752 were counted. Because of this, it has been ignored in the relevant historiography pertaining to the pre-1745 era of Louisbourg. Surlaville's roll call of the troops is best described as thorough. The tables reveal marital status, height, age, previous military experience, claimed trades, and *noms de guerre*. The most important detail, however, is that Surlaville recorded the number of years served in the colony. This means that skilled labour soldiers serving in the garrison were previously missed. However, this would be impossible without Greer's work, because he shows that soldiers were not recruited into the garrison in 1744 and 1745 – the last year that troops arrived prior to the first siege was 1743. Surlaville's decision to include the number of years served in his report means that soldiers with 9 or more years of experience were overlooked in the previous historiography. Numerous trades were recorded. Some examples were wigmakers, cobblers and master chefs. Both Greer and Fortier demonstrate the same variety of trades from their primary sources, but many of these were not pertinent to the construction. Therefore, a conscious decision was made to search only for people with building trades or skills that supported the construction project. Because of this, 10 additional skilled trades are now known to have worked at Louisbourg and more demographic details are known about them than most soldiers who served in the pre-1745 era. This also demonstrates the successful recruitment of skilled tradesmen into the Louisbourg garrison (see Table 2.5). Combined with the Fortier's list and a labourer identified by Leslie Choquette, it is possible to identify 22 soldiers claiming skilled trades at Louisbourg by name.

**Table 2.4: Names of Soldiers Skilled in Construction Trades Found in Previous Historiography**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Nommes De Guerre</b>	<b>Claimed Trade</b>
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>La Commune</b>	<b>Brickmaker</b>
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>La Prairie</b>	<b>Blacksmith</b>
<b>Pinot, Philbert</b>	<b>La Jeunesse</b>	<b>Mason</b>
<b>Rody, Jean Jacques</b>	<b>La Fleur</b>	<b>Cooper</b>
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Saint Jean</b>	<b>Pit Sawyer</b>
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Saint Pierre</b>	<b>Brick and Lime Mixer</b>
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Solomon</b>	<b>Cooper</b>
<b>De Montant, François</b>	<b>L'Allemand (member of Karrer Regiment)</b>	<b>Mason</b>
<b>Villefayau</b>	<b>Saint Pierre</b>	<b>Mason</b>
<b>Mons, Pierre</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Mason</b>
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Saint Germain</b>	<b>Joiner</b>
<b>Le Parisen, Germain</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Stonecutter</b>

**Table 2.5: Soldiers Serving at Louisbourg before 1743 found in the Surlaville Papers**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Nom de Guerre</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years Served</b>	<b>Claimed Trade</b>
<b>Ballon, Jean</b>	<b>LaVolonté</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Stone-cutter</b>
<b>Biecle, Jean</b>	<b>La Rosé</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>Carpenter</b>
<b>Charpentier, Picard</b>	<b>La Rosé</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Mason</b>
<b>DuGeneac, Joseph</b>	<b>Cambray</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Stone-cutter</b>
<b>Dalieu, Pierre</b>	<b>La Violette</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Joiner</b>
<b>de Lafleur, Eustabache</b>	<b>Le Veillé</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Joiner</b>
<b>Geoffry, Pierre</b>	<b>Le Veillé</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Carpenter</b>
<b>LeLievre, Jean</b>	<b>Le Quille</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Stone-cutter</b>
<b>Neveu, Pierre</b>	<b>Jolicoeur</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Stone-cutter</b>
<b>Phillipe, Louis</b>	<b>Sans Quartier</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>Mason</b>

\*\*These tables only represent skilled tradesmen serving in the garrison that could be identified. It is certain that many more unnamed skilled tradesmen were members of the garrison.

Unfortunately, these are the only known lists that breakdown the number of workers employed at a given time. One can certainly surmise from this that the largest segment of the labour force was drawn from the garrison, that soldiers provided the majority of (if not all of the

unskilled labour), and that this was a consistent theme throughout Louisbourg's history that can be demonstrated by other types of evidence. To further demonstrate their continual role as labourers, Jean-Louis de Raymond, Ile Royale's governor from 1751 to 1753, recommended to the Marine Ministry in 1751 that the colonial troops white overcoat be changed to blue. The governor's logic behind this recommendation was two-fold. Firstly, the barracks and guard-houses were now being heated by coal and the dirt associated with burning coal quickly sullied the white overcoat. Secondly, and more relevant to their role as labourers, Raymond argued that the construction labour performed by the soldiers caused quicker than normal damage and dirtying of the white overcoat.<sup>38</sup> However, the documented injuries sustained by soldiers working on the fortifications also demonstrate that they were consistently a large segment of this labour pool.

### **The Physical Toll of the Work**

Prior to the 1745 siege, an unknown observer remarked: "*Le terrain d'ailleurs où cette forteresse est située est pierreux et ne permet point d'y faire detranchée.*"<sup>39</sup> Digging at Louisbourg is still difficult – jackhammers are often needed to break through bedrock during modern construction and maintenance projects at the National Historic Site. It is not surprising that at times miners, also known as sappers, were sent to Louisbourg to help with the construction project because their expertise with explosives was invaluable.<sup>40</sup> To add more

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<sup>38</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 31/ fol. 55-75v, *Comte de Raymond aux ministre*, 4 novembre 1751.

<sup>39</sup> ANOM COL C11B, Vol. 27/fol. 58-58(v), *Extrait d'une lettre de Londres*, 6 avril 1745.

<sup>40</sup> ANOM, COL B 45/pp. 272-273, *À M. LeBlanc, à Paris*, le 18 Mars 1722. "*On envoie cette année l'Isle Royale, Monsieur, à M. de Verville Brigadier Ingénieur pour pousser avec vigueur les fortifications du port du Louisbourg. On besoin d'un détachement de 10 mineurs commander pare un sergent.*" And ANOM, COL C11B Vol. 34/fol. 228-228v, *Monsieur Franquet, ingénieur, au Ministre. Détail sur les fortifications. Son opinion sur les ingénieurs et sous-ingénieurs. Demande qu'on lui envoie un ingénieur de*

weight that demonstrates the physically demanding nature of the labour, Louisbourg's soil also presented challenges. Archeologist Bruce Fry has described Louisbourg's subsoil as "more correctly a sandy loam, as are the soils that develop from it, but poor drainage and high rainfall cause it to be heavy and sticky when excavated, hence the popular designation."<sup>41</sup> Left undisturbed, this type of soil is hard and compact, thus, making it hard to excavate. However, once excavated it lacks cohesion and structural integrity – leading to the possibility of piled earth, a consequence of excavation, sliding onto workers.<sup>42</sup> Excavation was exhausting and dangerous work at Louisbourg.

Construction work is inherently dangerous, and even with modern safety equipment and work-place safety procedures, injuries still occur. For labourers in the eighteenth century, such equipment and procedures did not exist. Not surprisingly, work-place injuries were another strain on Louisbourg's supply of labourer-soldiers. Though this documentation is sporadic, the lists of soldiers demanding pensions for their military service help to paint a picture of the dangers associated with working on an eighteenth-century construction project. Although periodic, these requests are valuable because they give more detailed biographical information of individual soldiers than the regular role calls, which only give the number of soldiers serving in the colony. As historian A.J.B. Johnston stated, Louisbourg's soldiers were "usually seen, rather, as constituent parts of a larger whole. The nicknames (*noms de guerre*) they carried were

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*France et de l'argent*, le 9 décembre 1754. Mentions two miners from Grenobles stationed at Louisbourg since 1752.

<sup>41</sup> Bruce W. Fry "An appearance of strength": The Fortifications of Louisbourg," in *Aspects of Louisbourg: Essays On the History of an Eighteenth-Century French Community in North America*, ed. Eric Krause, Carol Corbin, and William O'Shea (Sydney, NS: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1995), 34-35.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*



often the only identity they had, at least in the eyes of their officers.”<sup>43</sup> They were just a number on a sheet with no individual identity. Fortunately, the pension requests allow for some brief biographical sketches of various soldiers working on the fortifications to be drawn, highlight the physical dangers associated with this type of work, and demonstrate some of the more severe injuries sustained.

Antoine Guillerme, a 47 year old corporal in Captain St. Marie’s company and known by his nickname *Bellerose*, had enlisted as a member of the colonial troops in 1704. A native of Lyon, he sought a pension for injuries sustained while working on Louisbourg’s fortifications that had left him crippled. Jean DesRoches, a 32 year old soldier in Captain du Chambon’s company, enlisted in 1726. By 1730, the soldier requested a pension because an accident sustained while working on the fortifications had left him with a maimed arm. At the age of 32, Francois Champagne, also known by his nickname *Sans Chagrin*, had also requested a pension in 1730. A member of the Ile Royale garrison since 1719, he had sustained a broken leg when earth had collapsed on him; the injury left him crippled.<sup>44</sup> The unstable nature of Louisbourg’s sandy loam type soil after excavation was likely a significant factor that caused Champagne’s injury. Requests from other years demonstrate a similar pattern. In 1732, Louis Marchand, *Poitieres*, a corporal who had served for 18 years was crippled while working on the fortifications and 35 year old Louis Billeau, was utterly exhausted from his 10 years labouring on

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<sup>43</sup> A.J.B. Johnston, *Control and Order in French Colonial Louisbourg, 1713-1758* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001), 125.

<sup>44</sup> ANOM, COL D2C 47, Troupes des colonies. Canada et Ile Royale. Compagnies détachées 1658-1736, *Rôle des caporaux et soldats invalides congédiés des compagnies françaises tenant garnison à l’Ile Royale qui demandent la demie-solde*, 3 décembre, 1730. Of the 8 men applying for a pension in 1730, seven cited injuries sustained while working on the fortifications as their reason for requesting a pension. The other soldier, Bernard Richard, was 70 years old, a corporal in Captain de la Valliere’s company and had been serving in the colonies since 1690.

the walls at Louisbourg.<sup>45</sup> The nature of the wage payments may in part explain some of these injuries. For example, one of the tasks demanded of the soldiers was to construct a road from Louisbourg to Mira. For a running length of one *toise* (1.949 meters), the soldiers were to be paid 10 *sols*. Needless to say, the soldiers were trying to complete as much work as possible. Unfortunately, their zealousness led to men falling ill and a few dying from exhaustion.<sup>46</sup>

These records help give a sense of the injuries sustained while working on the fortifications. Unfortunately, the records rarely state the cause of the injury and only describe the injuries sustained so one cannot form a statistical analysis to determine the injury rates of different jobs on the construction site. The dates on which such accidents occurred were not documented, nor was the fortification being worked. But “*estropiée travaillant aux fortifications*” (crippled/maimed while working on the fortifications) commonly occurs in these pension requests. The men documented in these records were those who had suffered the most debilitating of injuries, because minor injuries went undocumented. This leads one to speculate that minor injuries, those that take a few days or weeks to heal, probably affected Louisbourg’s supply of labourer-soldiers. Though it is likely minor injuries accounted for workplace absenteeism, it is well-documented that absenteeism on the construction site because of alcohol consumption affected Louisbourg’s supply of labour.

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 20 décembre 1732.

<sup>46</sup>ANOM, COL C11B 14/fol.151-155, *M. Le Normant au ministre. Affaires courantes de la Colonie*, 12 octobre 1733.

## Lifestyles and Demographics

Bernard Richard was seventy years old when he requested to be released from and pensioned for his military service in 1730.<sup>47</sup> Richard was not the only man of advanced age who petitioned for a pension. Nicholas Cochoir, aged 60, Antoine Laury, aged 66, and Jacques Bonnerie, aged 72, requested to be released from their military service in 1732.<sup>48</sup> Richard and Bonnerie served as corporals, while Cochoir and Laury had not progressed beyond the rank of private. From these four examples, we can see that the life of a soldier was one of social and financial stagnation, because they could never join the ranks of the commissioned officers. Becoming a sergeant or being selected to join Louisbourg's artillery unit was as far as he could hope to progress in his military career. With only two sergeants and two corporals per company and a 30 man artillery unit officially formed in 1743<sup>49</sup>, it is clear that most of these men remained privates for the duration of their military career. They would overwhelmingly remain single, live in cramped quarters, and at times eat rations that were nearly rotting.<sup>50</sup> Their outlook on life and their prospects for the future were probably far from positive. Drinking may have been their only solace and also their main form of entertainment and excessive drinking, as Marcel Fortin notes, may have been also used as a way to demonstrate one's masculinity. Fortin

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<sup>47</sup> ANOM, COL D2C 47, Troupes des colonies. Canada et Ile Royale. Compagnies détachées 1658-1736, *Rôle des caporaux et soldats invalides congédiés des compagnies françaises tenant garnison à l'Ile Royale qui demandent la demie-solde*, 3 décembre, 1730.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 20 décembre 1732.

<sup>49</sup> ANOM, COL, C11B/26 fols. 236-238, *Ordonnance Pour Etablir un Compagnie de Bombardiers*, 20 juin 1743.

<sup>50</sup> Marcel Fortin, "Popular culture and public drinking in Eighteenth-Century New France: Louisbourg's taverns and inns, 1713-1758" (master's thesis, University of British Columbia, 200), 36-37, accessed March 2, 2013, <http://hdl.handle.net/2429/10614> and Allan Greer, "Mutiny at Louisbourg, December 1744," in *Aspects of Louisbourg: Essays On the History of an Eighteenth-Century French Community in North America*, ed. Eric Krause, Carol Corbin, and William O'Shea (Sydney, NS: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1995), 95.

argues that the nicknames adopted by some soldiers – the six who went by *Pretre-à-boire* and the single *Verse-à-boire* – demonstrate their proclivity for consuming alcoholic beverages.<sup>51</sup>

The reasons for the soldiers' fondness of alcoholic beverages are hard to prove, but what can be demonstrated is that the soldiers did drink and their drinking interfered with Louisbourg's fortification project. And according to one account, they apparently drank more and more often than their continental counterparts.<sup>52</sup> Ile Royale's official correspondence and subsequent legislation demonstrate the concerns caused by the soldiers' alcoholic tendencies. For example, Pierre Augusta de Souris<sup>53</sup> complained that: "...*petits cabarets retiennent les soldats et il est impossible de les avoir pour les travaux...*"<sup>54</sup> Jacques-Anges le Normant de Mézy<sup>55</sup> declared that: "... *le soldat et le matelot boivent, ils ne travaillent que pour ce la.*"<sup>56</sup> Like soldiers elsewhere, they liked to drink and used any money they earned to finance their next alcoholic binge. And there were more letters detailing this exact problem. A 1720 letter sent to the Marine Ministry echoed the grievances of Soubras and complained that soldiers missed work due to consecutive days of drinking. However, it should be noted that this problem occurred more frequently when funds were readily available to pay the soldiers for their labour on the fortifications. De Mézy

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<sup>51</sup>Fortin, "Popular culture and public drinking in Eighteenth-Century New France", 36.

<sup>52</sup>Paraphrased from: A.J.B. Johnston, *Control and Order in French Colonial Louisbourg, 1713-1758*, 188. Original Source: ANOM, F3, Article 51, fols. 149-72, "Isle Royale," 1717.

<sup>53</sup>Louisbourg's *commissaire-ordonnateur* (financial administrator) from 1714 to 1718. In collaboration, "SOUBRAS, PIERRE-AUGUSTE DE," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed September 18, 2013, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/soubras\\_pierre\\_auguste\\_de\\_2E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/soubras_pierre_auguste_de_2E.html).

<sup>54</sup>ANOM, COL C11B 2/ fol. 258, *Monsieur de Soubras, touchant les cabarets à retrancher*, 1717.

<sup>55</sup>Jacques-Anges le Normant de Mézy succeeded Soubras as the *commissaire-ordonnateur*. He held the post from 1719 to 1731.

T. A. Crowley, "LE NORMANT DE MÉZY, JACQUES-ANGE," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 3, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed October 6, 2013, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/le\\_normant\\_de\\_mezy\\_jacques\\_ange\\_3E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/le_normant_de_mezy_jacques_ange_3E.html).

<sup>56</sup>ANOM, COL C11B 5/ fol. 75-77, *Arrêt du Conseil sur une lettre de M. de Mézy datée du 17 juin 1720, concernant les cabarets, le commerce et les filles à marier*, 23 août 1720.

and Saint-Ovide recommended that the company Captains be on hand when soldiers received cash wages for their work.<sup>57</sup> This, however, was not implemented.

Drinking was a problem at Louisbourg, or at the very least, the colony's administration deemed it a problem. In fact, throughout the colony's existence, 12 *ordonnances* were issued concerning the sale of alcohol.<sup>58</sup> And of these 12 *ordonnances*, eight had provisions that prohibited the sale of alcohol to soldiers while on duty or working on the fortifications (1722, 1728, 1734, 1735, 1741, 1742, 1749, and 1754). Selling alcohol to the labourer-soldiers resulted in fines being issued to the vendor (alcohol and its restriction will be further discussed in Chapter 3). However, the frequent reiteration of this particular clause does indicate that the intoxication of soldiers who worked on fortifications continually worried the colony's administrators. Logistical, demographic, and social factors all played a role in limiting the labour supply either through a lack of manpower or lost manpower due to legitimate and illegitimate absenteeism. Geography, geology, and climate all played a role in limiting the labour supply and how much work that could be done in any given season.

### **Geography, Geology and Climate**

By the eighteenth century, trans-Atlantic voyages were common and well-organized, and skilled technicians were employed to navigate the seas. This did not mean that all trips went according to plan or that all voyages were identical. Ideally, the voyage from La Rochelle or Rocheforte to Louisbourg was about six weeks, but it was not uncommon for trips to take much

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<sup>57</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 5/fol.136-147, *Messieurs de Saint-Ovide et de Mézy au Conseil de Marine. Répondant aux reproches qui leurontétéfaitsd'entraver les travaux des fortifications*, 10 novembre 1720.

<sup>58</sup> A.J.B. Johnston, *Control and Order in French Colonial Louisbourg, 1713-1758*, 145-150 and Gilles Proulx, "Aubergistes et Cabaretiérs de Louisbourg 1713-1758," *Travail inédit* numéro 136 (Ottawa: Parcs Canada, 1972), 31. The *ordonnances* were issued in 1714, 1717, 1720, 1722, 1728, 1734, 1735, 1741, 1742, 1749, 1753, and 1754.

longer than that. Distance, therefore, hindered the supply of labourers that could be on-hand throughout the construction season: a season that lasted roughly seven months. Why does this make distance a problem in supplying an adequate labour supply? The shipping season and the construction season coincided. Hence, if a vessel transporting labourers heading for Ile Royale left France at the beginning of the construction season, it might not have reached its destination until well into the construction season. Because most civilian labourers recruited to work in the colony sought only seasonal employment, the construction project would be at the mercy of the ship's captain who had transported them to Ile Royale. If the captain arrived late and needed, or was scheduled, to head back to France before the construction season ended, it meant that a skilled labour force could not be maintained for the entirety of construction season: similar problems occurred in Plaisance.<sup>59</sup> To alleviate the need for skilled labourers, they adopted a similar solution that would later be adopted at Louisbourg: the recruitment of soldiers with skilled labour backgrounds.<sup>60</sup> This was not only common to the French during this era; the British also recruited skilled labourers into their ranks.<sup>61</sup> Peter Way's work gives tremendous insight into the type of work that these men did aside from their traditional soldierly duties – not just fighting units such as artillery and infantry. Way's work shows that, among the ranks of the soldiers that served in North America during the Seven Years' War, the men possessed a variety of skills all of which were important to military operations. The smooth running of any army depends on personnel with various levels of expertise – even a tailor was an essential part of the military personnel. Unskilled labour was essential to dig trenches and other earthen field works. Like the soldiers in Louisbourg, they were also labourers. There is, however, a great distinction

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<sup>59</sup> Thorpe, "The Politics of French Public Construction in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, 1695-1758."

<sup>60</sup> Thorpe, "The Politics of French Public Construction in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, 1695-1758." 240.

<sup>61</sup> Peter Way, "Rebellion of the Regulars: Working Soldiers and the Mutiny of 1763-1764," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (Oct. 2000): 766-769.

between the two – Louisbourg’s soldiers are more aptly described as labourer-soldiers, while their British counterparts are best described as soldier-labourers. In other words, labour was the primary concern of Louisbourg’s soldiers, while soldiering was the primary concern of the British soldiers. Despite this, both soldiers played significant roles in building their nations respective empires through labour not typically associated with soldiers.

Using soldiers as labourers was beneficial, because civilian labour was not essential, nor was it always reliable or numerous. At Louisbourg, their inclusion in the garrison added another benefit – a steady supply of labourers available throughout the entirety of the construction season. However, this also meant that the labourer-soldiers needed to be provided with food, shelter and clothing for the months in which they did not work.<sup>62</sup> With the civilian labourers willing only to work seasonally, it is likely Louisbourg faced the same problem of having a workforce that was on-hand for a part of the season. The recruitment of skilled labourers into the military alleviated this problem.

Unfortunately, the trans-Atlantic voyage also affected the supply of unskilled labour. This becomes abundantly clear with the example of the aforementioned miners and the Swiss Mercenaries that arrived in 1722. The vessel, on which they travelled, the *Paon*, did not arrive in Louisbourg until late-July – well into the construction season.<sup>63</sup> From this example, we can see that valuable time was lost and progress stalled, because both skilled and unskilled labourer-soldiers arrived late in the season. Geographical distance from France, the source of the labour supply, hindered the supply of new labourer-soldiers on a yearly basis. And even when they did

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<sup>62</sup> Thorpe, “The Politics of French Public Construction in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, 1695-1758.”, 234-243.

<sup>63</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 6/fol.51-52v, *Monsieur de Mézy au ministre. Arrivée du vaisseau du roi le Paon. Affaires de détails. Dégâtsfaits par des forbans. Les Sauvages de l'Acadie inquiètent les Anglais. Remercie le ministre du brevet d'écrivain donné à son fils. le 7 août 1722.*

make it to Louisbourg, there was no guarantee, as has already been discussed, that they were physically capable of joining the labour force.<sup>64</sup>

Louisbourg's rocky geology was another factor that shaped the demand for skilled labour in the construction project. As already mentioned, the soil-type and the rocky nature of Louisbourg presented many challenges to the labour-soldiers employed on the fortification project. Though challenging physically, skill is not required to excavate soil: removing bedrock does require skill. Hence, miners were needed to assist with the construction project. The miners, or more correctly sappers, were explosives specialists. Construction projects in France frequently required the use of miners and the rocky conditions of Louisbourg made them necessary for the project.<sup>65</sup> Ile Royale's official correspondence shows that the need for miners spread to colonial fortification projects and their importance to Louisbourg's construction project.

The first request for miners was issued by Verville in 1717. In his correspondence, he requested and received "*deux soldats mineurs pour stiler les autres à ces ouvrages.*"<sup>66</sup> Seemingly, his request hints at initiating a type of apprenticeship programme to teach soldiers a skilled trade,

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<sup>64</sup> ANOM, COL C11B Vol.4/fol. 237-241v, *Lettre de M. de Verville concernant les affaires de la Colonie, construction de maisons, dépenses, fonds des fortifications, etc.*, 19 novembre 1719 ; ANOM, COL C11B Vol.6/fol. 293-294v, *M. de Verville au ministre qui décrit l'avancement des travaux aux fortifications*, 14 août 1723; ANOM, COL B, 60/ fols. 28v-29, *Maurepas à Duval*, 6 avril 1734 and ANOM, COL C11B Vol.8/fol. 55-64v, *Saint-Ovide au ministre*, 20 novembre 1726; and Allan Greer, *The Soldiers of Isle Royale, 1720-45* (Ottawa: National Historic Parks and Site Branch, Parks Canada, 1979), 29. See also: ANOM, COL C11B 20/fol.41-47, *Monsieur de Brouillan au ministre, concernant les recrues et les troupes*, 3 novembre 1728.

40 were recruited for the *Compagnies Franche* and sent to the colony that year; however, only 35 were able to be incorporated into the eight companies. The remaining five were simply described as *invalides*.

<sup>65</sup> A.J.B. Johnston, "Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban: Reflections on His Fame, His Fortifications, and His Influence," *French Colonial History* 3 (2003): 178.

<sup>66</sup> ANOM, COL C11B Vol. 2/fol. 75-78, *Arrêt du conseil au sujet des fortifications de l'Ile Royale*, le 22 mai 1717.



or at least the soldiers who demonstrated a natural aptitude for a specific vocation. The next mention of the miners in the colony is from 1722. They were on-hand from late-July until mid-December. The records do not mention what exactly the miners did in 1722; they only state that miners were needed to “...*pousser avec vigueur les fortifications du port du Louisbourg.*”<sup>67</sup> Verville himself does not go into detail about the work the miners did at Louisbourg; he only comments that he was satisfied with the work that they had done and that they worked with “*diligence et tranquillité.*”<sup>68</sup> Like in 1717, one miner was retained to instruct the soldiers that showed potential in this vocation.<sup>69</sup> The miner, who possibly went by the name Montauban, stayed in the colony until 1727.<sup>70</sup> The French had operated a quarry at L’Indienne (Lingan, N.S.) from 1717 to 1741.<sup>71</sup> And throughout his time in the colony, the miner worked there with a small detachment of soldiers. Without a doubt, these were the soldiers Verville deemed to have potential to work in that field and the miner taught his expertise in explosives at the quarry to them.

The need for miners returned in the 1750s. Louis Franquet<sup>72</sup>, the newly appointed Chief Engineer, demanded a brigade of 10 miners in 1750.<sup>73</sup> The brigade of 10 miners was not

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<sup>67</sup> ANOM, COL B 45/pp. 272-273, *À M. LeBlanc*, à Paris, le 18 Mars 1722.

<sup>68</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 6/fol.118-119, *M. de Verville au Conseil concernant l’arrivée du Paon avec à son bord des hommes, canons et autres effets nécessaires à la subsistance de la Colonie*, le 22 décembre 1722.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*; and ANOM, COL C11C 15/no237/3p, *Délibération du Conseil de la Marine sur une lettre de Verville datée du 3 décembre à Rochefort*, 14 décembre 1722.

<sup>70</sup> ANOM, COL D2C 47/p. 171-174, *Troupes des colonies. Canada et Ile Royale. Compagnies détachées 1658-1736*, le 1 novembre 1723; *Ibid.*, p. 190-194, le 18 octobre 1724; *Ibid.*, p. 203-207, le 4 novembre 1725; *Ibid.*, p. 221-225, le 1 novembre 1726; *Ibid.*, p. 231-235, le novembre 1727; and *Ibid.*, 241-244, le 1 novembre 1728.

<sup>71</sup> Dilys Francis, *The Mines and Quarries of Cape Breton Island During the French Period, November, 1965*, 5.

<sup>72</sup> Louis Franquet was a French military officer and engineer. He was first sent to Louisbourg to inspect the state of the ports fortifications in 1750. The same trip had also led to travels in Québec to perform the same task. Franquet returned home in the Autumn of 1753 only to return to Louisbourg the following

approved, but correspondence from 1754 reveals that two miners from Grenoble had been in Louisbourg since 1752.<sup>74</sup> However, one task that these miners may have been charged with was attempting to destroy an outcrop of rocks along Louisbourg's coast known as Cap Noir (now commonly called Black Rock), because it provided an elevated plane for an attacking army to fire directly in to the Princess Demi-Bastion.<sup>75</sup> Cap Noir's elevation was construed as a *faux-pas* by Louisbourg's previous engineers and thus not mentioned in their reports. The promontory should either have been razed at an earlier date or included as a part of the fortifications in the wall.<sup>76</sup> Franquet's 1750 request for a brigade of 10 miners, therefore, can be in part construed as a measure to potentially rectify this strategic oversight. To raze the elevated rocky outcrop that was deemed a defensive liability, holes were bored into the ground, filled with gun powder, and set—holes of such a nature can still be found in the area. About half of the outcrop was destroyed.<sup>77</sup> Such labour denotes geology's impact on the supply of specialised labour in Louisbourg, in this case miners with expertise in explosives. However, explosives, especially those employed in the eighteenth century, work best in dry weather, and this too was in short supply at Louisbourg.

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spring. He was given the title of director general for the fortifications of New France. Though he was responsible for the fortification of Ile Royale and New France, his priority was to prepare the fortifications of Louisbourg.

F. J. Thorpe, "FRANQUET, LOUIS," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 3, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed September 19, 2013, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/franquet\\_louis\\_3E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/franquet_louis_3E.html).

<sup>73</sup> ANOM, COL C11B Vol. 29/fol. 304v, *Le Sieur Franquet, ingénieur, rend compte au ministre de son arrivée à Louisbourg, de son inspection des fortifications et des travaux qu'il y faut faire*, le 9 août 1750.

<sup>74</sup> ANOM, COL C11B Vol. 34/fol. 228-228v, *Monsieur Franquet, ingénieur, au Ministre. Détails sur les fortifications. Son opinion sur les ingénieurs et sous-ingénieurs. Demande qu'on lui envoie un ingénieur de France et de l'argent*, le 9 décembre 1754.

<sup>75</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 34/fol. 217-219, *Monsieur Franquet, ingénieur, au Ministre, concernant la destruction du Cap Noir qu'il a fallu raser à l'entrée de Louisbourg*, 15 novembre 1754.

<sup>76</sup> J.S. McLennan, *Louisbourg from Its Foundation to Its Fall 1713-1758* (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1918), 107.

<sup>77</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 36/fols. 249-250, *Franquet*, avril 1756.

“*Il y a 7 mois de neige ou d’hiver rude*” reported Verville in a 1719 letter. He also estimated that after subtracting “Feast Days” and days lost to inclement weather, there were only about 93 days a year in which work could be done.<sup>78</sup> The climatic event known as the “Little Ice Age” is well documented and also concurrent with the Ile Royale construction project. Therefore, there is little doubt to question Verville’s assessment of Louisbourg’s weather. How did Louisbourg’s climate affect the labour supply? The winter froze the supply of workers and halted progress on the construction. Instead of working on the walls, the soldiers were effectively unemployed or underemployed. All that could be done was to procure and prepare construction materials for the upcoming season. Inclement weather during the construction season also stalled progress and made for an idle labour supply. The climate did not diminish the potential workforce, but it did stall it by restricting the amount of possible labouring days. Rainy and stormy days may have even been the impetus for the consecutive days of alcoholic binging that Ile Royale’s garrison was reported to take part in.

## **Conclusion**

Securing an adequate supply of labour to meet the demands of the construction project presented many challenges to Ile Royale’s administrators, and many variables affected the potential labour supply and its effectiveness. The dangerous nature of the work took its toll on the available labour supply within the garrison that could be employed on the fortifications. Injuries were common and the by-piece pay system at times led to injury, exhaustion, and death in the most severe cases, and thus strained the potential supply of labourers to be drawn from the garrison. The fact that the garrison was never fully manned to the standards of military

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<sup>78</sup>ANOM, COL C11B 4/fol. 66-68, *Verville aux Conseil*, 24 janvier 1719.

regulations had also impacted the potential labour supply. One must also not discount the demographic make-up of the garrison and their lifestyles. Unfortunately, the records do not permit an in-depth demographic analysis, but those that exist show a number of soldiers of advanced age. It is unlikely that these soldiers were able to contribute to the construction programme; the same can be said for younger soldiers physically unready for such labour. Louisbourg, however, was still a garrisoned town and these non-labouring soldiers performed the more traditional role of a soldier: standing guard. There was no guarantee that soldiers capable of working on the fortifications were reliable. A day or multiple days spent drinking in a cabin on the outskirts of town distracted the labour supply from their task: building fortifications. Finally, geography, geology, and climate also affected the supply of workers. Geography dictated the arrival of new recruits in the colony and caused absenteeism due to travel, geology demanded a supply of specialists, and the climate stalled the supply of workers and progress on the fortifications. Challenges from Louisbourg's location and its physical environment limited the labour supply's numbers and effectiveness.

The decision to construct a European style fortification in North America was complicated by the differences between the two continents: mostly demographic and climactic. Colonial policy dictated the direction the colony would take in matters of security and economics, or more correctly the security of economics. The labour supply needed to construct the fortifications at Louisbourg demonstrated not only a colonial policy, but also an imperial policy. The colonial policy was to integrate the colonies together as a cohesive unit bound by law, trade, and culture with the mother country: it was the overall goal and economic in nature. The imperial policy is best described as the strategy used to implement this integrative colonial policy achieved by intensive fortification in the colonies. In other words, the imperial policy

militarized the colonial economic policy, and Louisbourg's fortifications perfectly demonstrate this – military action is often directed by economic goals.

The decision not to implement a *corvée* is one example of the colony's economic needs dictating military action, because it limited the potential labour pool. The cod fishery was more important than the fortifications meant to protect it. Economic needs also governed recruitment practices, and because of the prohibition on recruiting from the colonial population, the size of the garrison and labour pool was also limited. A policy of this nature makes sense economically, because most of the men in Louisbourg's lower classes worked in the cod-fishery.<sup>79</sup> Fishermen were there to fish; soldiers, at least those physically capable, were there to build. The fishermen represent the colonial policy, while the soldiers represent the imperial policy used to support and protect the colonial policy.

Colonial policy coupled with imperial policy created a labour supply problem in the colony that was also compounded by Louisbourg's geography, geology, and climate. By pursuing a policy of fortification over naval patrols, the French implemented a policy to decrease their defence budget. Though it is cheaper to fortify in the colonies than it is to rebuild a navy and then outfit patrols, colonial policy created the demand for people, mostly men, to implement it in the colonies. Ile Royale's supply problem was the result of a colonial policy that placed demands on colonial administrators to implement the policy of their political superiors, while the completed work of the labour supply was the physical implementation of this policy. The demand to fortify Louisbourg also created a demand for labourers: the topic of the next chapter.

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<sup>79</sup> ANOM, COL, B Vol. 57-2, fols. 761-761v, *Maurepas à Saint-Ovide*, 19 juin 1732.

In this case, two fishermen enlisted into the garrison at Louisbourg. When new got back to the Marine Ministry, orders were given to have these two men discharged.

Also see: Greer, *The Soldiers of Isle Royale*, 75.

## Chapter Three: Alleviating the Demand for Labourers in Louisbourg

### Introduction

The imperial policy to intensively fortify Louisbourg created the demand for labourers, and by its very nature, a building project of this scale required a large and diversified workforce. As a new colony, Ile Royale's small and scattered population coupled with the importance of the cod industry stifled their capabilities to satisfy this demand by drawing on the local labour pool: a problem that was not unique to Louisbourg in the French colonies. Historians (Frederick Thorpe and James Pritchard, to name a few) argue that it was the unwillingness of French citizens to leave "*la douce France*."<sup>1</sup>

Allan Greer takes this analysis a step further by highlighting the socio-economic reasons why French migration to the New World was much lower than that of other European nations. Land sharing practice, Greer shows, played a significant part in alleviating push factors in migration. In the French system, all male descendants received a parcel of land; therefore there was not a huge segment of the population that needed to migrate in search of new economic opportunity. Connected to landownership was the legal protection French peasants had from eviction. Unlike their European counterparts, French landlords did not possess the means to evict surplus peasants from the land. In short, they did not face the intense socio-economic "push" and "pull" factors to leave their native land that their counterparts from elsewhere in Europe did. Socially, the French monarchy and the vast majority of its subjects adhered to the Catholic faith. The social upheaval caused by the persecution of certain religious denominations in England did not affect France to the same degree. Greer notes this social factor lessened the

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<sup>1</sup> Thorpe, "The Politics of French Public Construction in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, 1695-1758", 260 and James Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, 17.

need for mass migrations out of France. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, the Huguenots, as Greer notes, became the only segment of the population that felt the socio-economic factors that induced them to migrate en masse. The revocation, which extended to the colonies, meant that Huguenots migrated to the Protestant friendly English colonies. Socio-economic “push” and “pull” factors, in Greer’s assessment, lessened the need to leave home for the colonies.<sup>2</sup> The logical argument put forth by Greer demonstrates why Louisbourg faced problems in satisfying the labour demand for the colony’s massive construction project: the lack of universal socio-economic factors to spur on mass out-migration.

Greer’s earlier work on Ile Royale’s soldiers adds weight to this claim. However, the lack of adequate documentation by Louisbourg’s captains only gives a small sample to make deductions from. By scouring judicial and parish records, Greer determined the birth-place of 67 soldiers that served at Ile Royale between 1720 and 1745. Though his sampling revealed that rural birthplaces were more common, the ratio was disproportionate to that of France. Thirty-six men (54%) in Greer’s sample declared a rural place of origin, while at least 83.3% of France’s population at the time originated from rural areas.<sup>3</sup> The socio-economic “push” and “pull” factors enticed more people of urban origin to the colonies. This is only a small sampling, but there is one piece of correspondence that further demonstrates this disproportionate ratio. In 1730, Francois de Bourville, the *Lieutenant de Roi*, wrote that the 84 men recruited that year were from either Rocheforte or Paris.<sup>4</sup> Though the letter only states place of recruitment, it is certain that a good number of these men originated from one of these two urban centres.

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<sup>2</sup> Allan Greer, *The People of New France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 13-15.

<sup>3</sup> Allan Greer, “Mutiny at Louisbourg, December 1744,” in *Aspects of Louisbourg: Essays On the History of an Eighteenth-Century French Community in North America*, ed. Eric Krause, Carol Corbin, and William O’Shea (Sydney, NS: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1995), 87.

<sup>4</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 11/fol. 30-41, *Major Bourville au ministre*, 30 novembre 1730.

Bourville's letter also reveals that the Paris recruits impressed the governor, while he was less than happy with those sent from Rocheforte. Subsequently, he demanded that recruitment center around the Paris region. His demand reinforces that the garrison was predominately urban in origin.

The attempts to satisfy Louisbourg's labour demand, as Bourville's letter reveals, revolve around one vital necessity: a communication network. Kenneth Bank's concluded that communications were essential to the empire building process and the inefficiencies of the French communication system led to an empire that was "always in the making but never made."<sup>5</sup> Meeting Louisbourg's demand for labour was contingent on a vast communications system – a system that included colonial and continental officials, and a group of recruiters on the ground to entice men to enlist for colonial service. However, was the communication system used to recruit these men inefficient to the point that it hindered the empire building process, or Louisbourg's place within this empire? This is an important question given that many of the men targeted for recruitment built the infrastructure of empire: fortifications, roads, and wharves are a few examples. Their labour was vital to both military and economic security – two main components of an imperial system.

Despite their important role, Louisbourg's garrison was never fully manned, thus it is easy to assume that the system used to recruit new soldiers, and subsequently a labour force, to the colony indicates a flaw in the communication system and the French Colonial Empire as a whole. By examining the practices used to recruit men to serve in France's continental army, it becomes apparent that this process was highly developed and successful, and that trickery, as we

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<sup>5</sup> Kenneth J. Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Sea: Communications and the State in the French Atlantic, 1713-1763* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 7.



shall see, allowed for this success, but at the heart of this process efficient communication was vital. The socio-economic “push” and “pull” factors espoused by Allan Greer are also applicable to military recruitment. Service in the continental army had economic benefits over colonial service, one was the disparity between signing bonuses, which made it more attractive than colonial service. It is also necessary to consider that enlistments were voluntary and not compulsory, and even criminals were often given the choice between prison and colonial service. Thus, is it possible that the problem was miscommunication between colonial and continental administrators led to its ineffectiveness and the failure to create an empire? In other words, was it as Kenneth Banks claims caused by metropolitan administrators’ ability to understand completely the different needs among the individual colonies?<sup>6</sup>

This too seems logical, but this argument also has some flaws when considering the official correspondence. The Marine Ministry was well aware of Louisbourg’s need for an adequate labour force and a fully manned garrison – the two were inextricably connected. To supply soldiers and by extension labourers for Louisbourg, the Ministry faced many challenges. First among them: Ile Royale was only one colony. This is a logistical problem, not inefficient communication or the inability to distinguish one colony’s needs to another. Competition also hindered the recruitment of colonial soldiers: continental service, as mentioned previously, was more desirable than colonial. This was not just a numbers game, but an indicator of the quality of soldiers sent to the colonies. Continental captains’ preferred to recruit tall men for their companies – the complaints about Louisbourg’s small soldiers were partly due to marketplace competition.<sup>7</sup> Lastly, the Ministry was at the mercy of the recruiters for the supply of recruits. If

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<sup>6</sup> Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Sea*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Greer, *The Soldiers of Isle Royale*, 29.

the number of recruits was low or contained weak, sickly soldiers, this too was a symptom of the competition for recruits between colonial and continental regiments. The policy of voluntary enlistment also played a key role in the recruits sent to Rocheforte prior to their colonial postings.

This chapter argues that Louisbourg's demand for labourers was the fallout of an imperial policy to intensively fortify colonial possessions, and that the communications system used to satisfy demand was neither inefficient nor flawed. It begins by exploring the economic theories of supply and demand as they applied to the labour force. This explanation gives a simplified theoretical background to labour supply and demand, but also demonstrates how Louisbourg's labour demand situation strays away from the classical interpretation of labour economics. Though Louisbourg's demand and the situation of its labourers do not fit the mold of classical economic theory, the demand still needed to be communicated to potential recruits. To demonstrate that the communication process was not inefficient or hindered by an inability to digest the differences between the various colonies by metropolitan officials, the chapter examines the strategies and tactics colonial and metropolitan officials used to satisfy Louisbourg's labour demands by exploring the link between communications and recruitment. Ultimately, it was not the inability of metropolitan officials to comprehend the needs of individual colonies, but the garrison and by extension the labour force was a victim of the labour marketplace and the lack of universal socio-economic "push" and "pull" factors. Consequently, this chapter also analyzes the potential factors that enticed individual labourer-soldiers to enlist for colonial service.

### **Supply and Demand in the Labour Market**

The concept of supply and demand, the foundational theory of economics, is relatively simple to comprehend: demand for a product and the availability of its supply dictates its price. High demand for a product coupled with a static, low, or decreasing supply dictates a high price, while low demand for a product with an abundant or increasing supply lowers prices. The goods and services exchanged in this process have two categorizations: inelastic (necessities) or elastic (luxuries). The demand for elastic goods is directly affected by its price. For instance, if the price of a luxury item inflates, the demand for this product will fall and only those with the financial means purchase these products. In contrast, inelastic goods are the necessities of life and are not as vulnerable to inflation: the rising cost of bread for example. People may complain about the inflation, but people will always need to eat. Like bread, labour is a necessity, and thus is also inelastic. Therefore, not only do these laws apply to the purchase and sale of goods, they also apply to the labour market. Mathematically, the change in employment divided by the change in wages demonstrates labour demand to be inelastic. Therefore, in a perfectly static model, as wage goes up employment goes down, while lower wages leads to higher levels of employment.<sup>8</sup> However, a political mandate created Louisbourg's demand for construction labour, not a classic free-market system. Does Louisbourg fit into this model?

In a sense, these labourers are comparable to modern government workers because their wages came from public coffers and the ability to negotiate collectively makes them somewhat similar to modern unionized labourers. However, their wages, as we shall see in the next chapter, were regulated.<sup>9</sup> In other words, there was a set minimum wage – if the labour supply

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<sup>8</sup> "Elasticity of Labor Demand," Penn State College of the Liberal Arts, November 3, 2013, accessed November 3, 2013, <http://elearning.la.psu.edu/econ315/lesson-4/elasticity-of-labor-demand>.

<sup>9</sup> Johnston, *Control and Order*, 182-183. From: D' Héricourt, *Éléments de l'art militaire*, vol. 1, fol. 50.

was adequate or saturated, the wage would not drop below the set minimum. This was so entrenched in Louisbourg's labour culture that one contractor, Ganet, declared that their demands were like the law.<sup>10</sup> Ganet's remark shows a similarity to Neil Chamberlain's theory that collective bargaining was both contractual and legal.<sup>11</sup> If the demand for labour in Louisbourg decreased, wage rates earned by the unskilled labourer-soldiers would not drop below a regulated level. Also, the higher wages did not force the employment level to decrease: there was a steady need for labourers. In fact, they still earned 20 *sols* a day working on the fortifications in the 1750s and according to the engineer Franquet they often earned 30 or 40 *sols* per day.<sup>12</sup>

The work provided by these labourer-soldiers was essential to the empire building process and they were able to use a labour supply problem as leverage for their wage demands. Likewise, their labour was also essential to the economic and military security of the French colonial system. Thus, their access to work was not subject to fluctuations in the construction labour marketplace: only the completion of the construction project could make their labour obsolete and alleviate the demand, and the project never truly finished. Lastly, even if the labour supply was adequate at the commencement of the construction project, minimum wage legislation protected labourer-soldiers from accepting wages below the mandated minimum. Nonetheless, the demand for labour inflated wages, but this wage did not or would not lower as the labour supply became more abundant.

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The code stipulates that between 1 June and 31 October soldiers labouring apart from their military duties were to be paid 10 *sols* per day, while the rate of pay between 1 November and 31 May was set at 9 *sols*.

<sup>10</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 7/fol.348-351, *Lettre de Ganet au ministre concernant les ouvrages aux fortifications*, 18 décembre 1725.

<sup>11</sup> John Gennard and Graham Judge, *Employ Relations*, 4th ed. (London: Chartered Institute of Personnel Development, 2005), 217.

<sup>12</sup> ANOM, COL C11B Vol. 29, fol 306-315, *Monsieur Franquet au Ministre*, 13 Octobre 1750.

Louisbourg's labour supply problem did not reflect the classical interpretation of labour economics. A minimum wage guarantee and the public nature of the construction project meant protection from lowering wages when the labour pool became sufficient or saturated. However, as we shall see in the subsequent chapter, it was often difficult for these labourer-soldiers to reap the financial benefits of these wages for a variety of reasons, and the factors that protected them from the wage fluctuations espoused by the open-market interpretation of labour supply and demand made them vulnerable, as we shall see in the subsequent chapter, to other forms of exploitation. Nonetheless, the demand for labour needed a solution and communications played a vital role in supplying men for Louisbourg's labour market.

### **Communications, The Labour Market, and Recruitment**

Communications are either direct or indirect. Indirect communication is often performed via ceremonies of celebration or commemoration and is often ritualistic.<sup>13</sup> It is these rituals that provide a common understanding and shared knowledge in a certain culture. Banks describes two instances (the Proclamation of Peace in 1713 and the birth of the Dauphin) to demonstrate the use of ritualistic communication. However, these rituals were for the lower, often illiterate, classes. Thus, the communication of how to convey these messages arrived in the form of direct communication to colonial authority. From these two different examples, Banks demonstrates how the ritual component of the communication differed in the various colonies and often disobeyed the instructions found in the official correspondence. However, the state communicated on a daily basis with its citizenry in Louisbourg: celebrations of royal births and proclamations of peace were rare occasions. The almost hourly beating of the drum dictated the

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<sup>13</sup> Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Sea*, 11.

flow of the work day for both military and civilian labourers, while at the same time communicating an air of martial authority and security. Citizens frequently heard regulations, laws, and other official news read aloud in public spaces. Though mundane and boring, the state communicated daily to its citizens. Colonial and metropolitan officials also communicated. Their letters reveal the various requests colonial officials sent to their superiors and the replies and solutions ordered by the superiors. One request that was frequently mentioned in the correspondence was the need for soldiers, or more importantly, labourer-soldiers. All of this was made possible by a communication network that was highly effective at conveying the need for labour in the colony of Ile Royale.

As noted in the previous chapter, the number of soldiers serving at Louisbourg at any given time was subject to military ordinances, and many of these men were construction workers and did not perform the duties typically associated with soldiers. Though they were primarily labourers, these soldiers bolstered the number of men attached to each company of men in Louisbourg. It is therefore easy to conclude that recruiting an adequate labour supply was just as important, if not more important, than supplying a fighting force. Correspondence from 1730 demonstrates the importance of recruiting labourers for the construction project. Firstly, Maurepas reveals in a letter that, in accordance to Governor St. Ovide's request, an increase in the number of soldiers sent to Ile Royale was in order. St. Ovide's letter was written a month before the issuance of orders to increase the number of companies serving at Louisbourg from six companies of 60 men to eight companies of 60 men. In his position as Marine Minister, it is certain that Maurepas knew about these forthcoming staffing increases before their announcement. This, however, was not St. Ovide's reason for demanding more troops; it was

the intensification of the construction project that spiked the demand for soldiers to work on the construction project.<sup>14</sup>

The recruitment of men for these two new companies occurred in the metropolitan centers of Rochefort and Paris. Eighty-four men were recruited to serve in Ile Royale's French colonial troops and an additional 17 in the Karrer regiment: still 38 men short to properly supplement the two new French companies. The captains' of these two companies, d'Ailleboust and DeGannes, did something uncommon for colonial captains: they traveled to France and personally recruited for their companies.<sup>15</sup> D'Ailleboust recruited 27 men for his company of 44 men, while DeGannes recruited 26 men for his company of 43 men.<sup>16</sup> The extra men in each company came from shuffling the members of the already established companies. Once again, the garrison was not fully manned. The recruits of 1730 arrived in Louisbourg on the first of October, making it impossible for them to contribute directly to that season's construction projects. It is likely that some found employment gathering building materials in the winter months. The engineer, Verrier, confirms this possibility in a letter from May 1731 where he mentions that teams were busy over the winter collecting rubble stone.<sup>17</sup> Interestingly, only one month after the recruits' arrival, St. Ovide judged the recruits' qualities and declared his preference for soldiers recruited in Paris.<sup>18</sup> Subsequently, he suggested that recruitment concentrate heavily in Paris: a request that seemingly signifies the urban background of Louisbourg's garrison.

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<sup>14</sup> ANOM, COL B 54-1/fol. 224v-225, *Maurepas à Beauharnois*, 20 février 1730.

<sup>15</sup> ANOM, COL B 54-4/fol. 520, *Ordre du Roy au Sieur de Gannes pour levee de Soldats*, 7 mars 1730.

<sup>16</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 11/fol. 159-161, *Etat de la recette et consommation des vivres dans les magasins du roi pour l'année 1730*, 31 décembre 1730.

<sup>17</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 12/fol. 102-103v, *M. Verrier, ingénieur, concernant les travaux aux fortifications*, 23 mai 1731.

<sup>18</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 11/fol. 30-41, *Major Bourville au ministre*, 30 novembre 1730.

Unfortunately, the biographical data pertaining to the common soldier serving in Louisbourg between 1720 and 1743 was not recorded or was poorly recorded by the company captains. Also, the censuses carried out in the colony are of no use when studying the demographic make-up of the garrison because officials only enumerated the civilian population. To ascertain the number of troops serving in Louisbourg between 1720 and 1743, two sources are helpful: troop reviews and quarterly rations lists (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2). The former provides numerical data for 1720-1729, while the latter provides data for the years 1730-1743. Though the ration lists provide more information (deaths, leaves, discharges, and recruits entering the garrison) than the troop reviews, they still do not provide the necessary information to provide a statistical analysis of places of origin, names, or claimed trades. The troop reviews, however, do show that a steady influx of new recruits entered the Ile Royale garrison and a number of elderly and sick soldiers received discharges on an annual basis (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2). And while it is true that the garrison was never fully manned, an effective communications network still existed and was vital to enticing new men to enlist for colonial service. The annual average of enlistments for the years covered in this study is 40 men for the *Compagnies Franches* and 17 for the mercenary Karrer Regiment.<sup>19</sup> These men helped to satisfy the demand for labourers in Louisbourg.

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<sup>19</sup> Greer, *The Soldiers of Isle Royale*, 24 and 75. In total, 1036 men enlisted in the *Compagnies Franche de la Marine*, while 403 enlisted in the Karrer Regiment between 1720 and 1743.



Table 3.1: Troop Size, Annual Discharges, Deaths and Recruits, 1720-1729

Year	Present at Review	1729 Year End Ration Numbers	Discharges	Deaths	Recruits
1720	317		0	No data	0
1721	257		25	4	0
1722	330		0	Insufficient data	64
1723	386		24	4	84
1724	430		26	8	51
1725	448		0	Insufficient data	23
1726	450		23	11	70
1727	448		0	4	45
1728	451		28	Insufficient data	47
1729	448	449	24	6	30

Table 3.2: Troop Size, Annual Discharges, Deaths, and Recruits, 1730-1743

Year	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Discharges	Deaths	Recruits	Strength at Year's end
1730	512	579	529	31	3	101	528
1731	486	502	496	12	8	13	486
1732	478	545	513	19	12	117	545
1733	536	560	550	37	17	66	558
1734	550	554	552	26	9	46	553
1735	540	563	551	21	8	51	544
1736	531	539	536	37	18	52	536
1737	529	565	543	62	5	78	543
1738	539	578	551	53	15	73	546
1739	538	557	546	15	12	20	547
1740	540	568	552	48	9	62	549
1741	545	707	599	40	Insufficient Data	201	Insufficient Data
1742	662	702	683	29	6	65	Insufficient Data
1743	699	701	700	0	Insufficient Data	80	Insufficient Data

In theory, the troops levied for both France and the colonies were volunteers. Ensuring the adequate strength of the garrison was the responsibility of company captains. Because captains in France were landed lords, they were able to fulfill their needs for men through what André Corvisier calls “feudal recruitment”: their family estates supplied their manpower needs.<sup>20</sup> Colonial captains did not have this option and had to rely on professional recruiters called *racoleurs*, who had become the prominent recruiters of continental troops by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to supply their need for military manpower. Potential recruits, like the citizens of Louisbourg, received communication from the state via an oral transmission. The difference: the proclamations read aloud are part of the written record. *Racoleurs* communicated this message orally, and they did not have an official document to convey the message about the need for soldiers in the colonies. They were on the front lines of the recruitment process and had to improvise the state message to potential recruits. Clandestine tactics were often used to help convey this message. It is important to analyze these techniques and they were used to supply manpower for Louisbourg’s labour demands.

The French historian Georges Girard, by using case studies, sheds some light on the primary tactics used by the *racoleurs*. Girard also shows that the recruitment process, for the French continental regiments relied on the permission of the regional governors. Once this was obtained, the *racoleur* was free to set up in a public area to attract potential recruits. Loud noises often draw a crowd and garner peoples’ attention; hence, a drummer accompanied the recruiter to attract attention.<sup>21</sup> Another tactic employed by to entice potential recruits was through written recruitment propaganda posted on the doors of prominent buildings (see Figure 3.1). Such

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<sup>20</sup> Greer, “Mutiny at Louisbourg, December 1744,” 87.

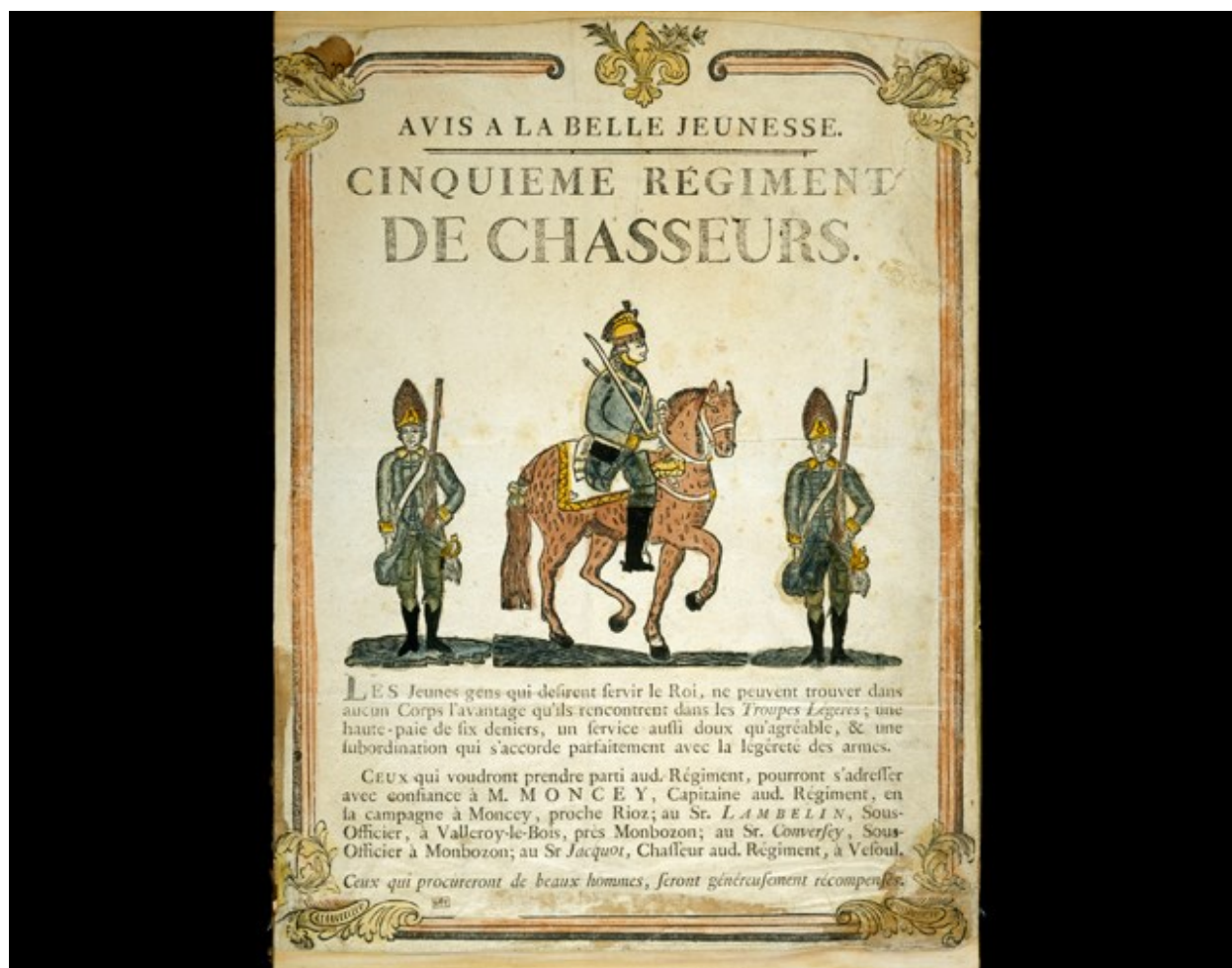
<sup>21</sup> Georges Girard, *Le service militaire en France à la fin du règne de Louis XIV: Racolage et Millice* (Paris: Plon, Nourrit et cie, 1922), 75.

Propaganda was seemingly not used. The recruitment process was focused on drinking establishments instead of open air announcements and visual propaganda, a fact that aided the *racoleurs* in employing the trickery associated with their trade. Technically, all enlistments were voluntary: inebriation allowed *racoleurs* to dupe their victims into enlistments. By targeting an already inebriated patron or getting a potential recruit drunk, the *racoleur* was able to manipulate the victim to join. In his drunken stupor, the potential recruit often accepted money from the *racoleur*. The *racoleurs* argued that the acceptance of money was a binding contractual agreement to enlist and it became their legal recourse when the victim sobered up and angered with his new lot in life petitioned local authorities to nullify his enlistment. By exchanging money in a public setting, the *racoleur* operated in a place with witnesses, but more importantly drunk, unreliable witnesses.<sup>22</sup> Drinking impaired the victims' ability to think clearly and understand the situation unfolding around him, while also invalidating the testimony of potential witnesses if the recruit appealed to the courts about his enlistment. Impaired judgement was the *racoleurs* ally and they used it effectively to dull the mental faculties of potential recruits.

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<sup>22</sup> Georges Girard, *Le service militaire en France à la fin du règne de Louis XIV*, 81.

Figure 3.1: Late 18th Century Recruitment Poster<sup>23</sup>



Youth impairs judgement through a naïveté common to those with little life experience. Therefore, it is not surprising that the *racoleurs* targeted teenage boys and in extreme cases even pre-teens to enlist. Georges Girard gives examples of boys as young as nine years of age recruited for military service. At this young age, the boys were not only shorter than the muskets used in the era, but they did not possess the strength or coordination to fire them in battle. The recruiters were well aware of this; they also knew that parents with the financial means to do so

<sup>23</sup> “Affiche de Recrutement Du 5e Régiment de Chasseurs,” Musée de l'Armée Invalides, February 2, 2014, accessed February 2, 2014, <http://www.musee-armee.fr/collections/base-de-donnees-des-collections/objet/affiche-de-recrutement-du-5e-regiment-de-chasseurs.html>.

bought leaves for their children. Unfortunately, the leaves were only temporary and the recruiter reclaimed the boy when he was of age to enlist – 16 years of age. However, this does not mean that underage recruits never found themselves fully engaged in military life. In 1702, a 14 year old boy enlisted for service in the Agenois Regiment. The unnamed boy, described as the laughingstock of the regiment, was sent home until he was strong enough to serve.<sup>24</sup> In this case, Girard shows that it was not the boy's parents who delayed the boy's entry into military service, but his captain. The captain's actions echo the engineer Verville's complaints about the young and weak soldiers unfit for construction labour sent to the colony, but the young boys (often only a year older than the Agenois boy) recruited for service in Louisbourg were not so fortunate – they remained in Louisbourg. Sixteen was the minimum age to enlist for colonial service, but it is likely some were slightly younger than this. The youngest confirmed age of enlistment in the Ile Royale garrison was Eustabauche de Lafleur (dit *la Viellé*). In the 1752 *Signalement des Troupes*, the 27 year old, a joiner by trade, already served 15 years in the colonial troops – he was only twelve years of age when he enlisted.<sup>25</sup> The Marine Minister's preference for young recruits worked in the *racoleurs* favour.

One known colonial recruiter was François Amariton. A lieutenant attached to the colonial troops in New France, Amariton's contract to recruit men for the colonial garrisons sheds some light on the methods used in the recruitment of colonial troops and the potential factors that may have led some men to enlist for colonial service. The contract stipulated that he receive 30 *livres* for every man successfully recruited and the reimbursement of all travel

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<sup>24</sup> Georges Girard, *Le service militaire en France à la fin du règne de Louis XIV*, 83-85.

<sup>25</sup> *ASQ Papiers Surlaville, Polygraphe 55-8, Signalement Des Troupes, 3 mars 1752.*

expenses.<sup>26</sup> Amariton did not gross the 30 *livres* per man: the money covered signing bonuses and the *embaucheur's* (contracted civilian recruiters) fees. Unfortunately, the contract does not reveal these sums. However, the fact that Amariton only received 30 *livres* per man and his need to divide that fee among three parties indicates that colonial recruits received a meagre signing bonus compared to their continental counterparts. In fact, a 30 *livres* signing bonus is small in comparison to the bonuses offered by continental regiments, which was fixed at 60 *livres* in 1731.<sup>27</sup> Given the chance to choose between colonial or continental service, why did these men choose the former with its pittance of a signing bonus? With the absence of a universal factor driving migration to the colony, personal circumstance and motivations became the driving force of migration.

### **Personal and Socio-Economic Factors among the Recruits**

Age, prejudice, and personal circumstances give some clues for enlistment in colonial troops. Though recruitment practices for continental troops often preyed on young males, the ministerial preference for youths in the colonial troops meant that some boys were recruited into the colonial service. Hence, the colonial market for soldiers coincided with one of the *racoleurs* favourite victims: naïve young boys. Personal circumstance also led some men to enlist in the colonies. The motives and circumstances of every soldier that enlisted to serve in Ile Royale are

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<sup>26</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 1/fol.489-489v, *François Amariton, lieutenant d'une compagnie d'infanterie au Canada, au Conseil de Marine: il se charge de former, de conduire à Rochefort et d'entretenir jusqu'à son embarquement une compagnie pour le Canada moyennant une somme de 30 livres par homme*, 21 février 1716.

<sup>27</sup> André Corvisier, *L'armée Française de la fin du XVIIe siècle au ministère de Choiseul; le soldat* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1964), 1:327.

The money awarded for signing bonuses rose steadily throughout the century and reached 80 *livres* for infantry men during the French Revolution. See: Samuel F. Scott, "The Regeneration of the Line Army during the French Revolution", *The Journal of Modern History* 42, no. 3 (September 1970): 224, accessed November 3, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1905867>.

unknown. Details such as this are usually only revealed if a soldier encountered legal problems. Two young men, Joseph Lagand and Nicolas Lebègue, serve as examples that show desperation was a motive.

Joseph Lagand's father died in 1732. Lagand, a cooper's apprentice and only fifteen years old, decided to leave his hometown for Paris. The aspiring cooper now needed to find a new source of employment. While in Paris, Lagand met a recruiter named la Fresilière. The encounter led to an enlistment in the Ile Royale garrison where Lagand, known by his nickname, *Picard*, served in Captain d'Ailleboust's company. At 5 *pieds 2 pouces*, the young man with long brown hair and not yet capable of growing a beard by the time of his 1736 court-martial hearing, surpassed the minimum height requirements by a *pouces*. Lagand, who suffered from scurvy, was unfit for construction labour and was often even too weak to stand guard duty; subsequently, he spent most of his time in Louisbourg receiving medical care at the hospital. By the winter of 1734, his captain, either concerned for or frustrated with Lagand's constant illness, gave him a six month leave and ordered him to seek further treatment at the Rochefort hospital. Unfortunately, for the sick young soldier, the intendant of Rochefort, Jérôme Bignon de Blanzay, was unsympathetic to his situation. Lagand was told that sick soldiers "*couteraient plus au Roy qu'ils se valoient.*"<sup>28</sup> After chastising Lagand for his worthlessness, the intendant discharged him from military duty, a decision he did not have the authority to make. The broke young soldier then went to Paris in search of employment and enlisted for military service in the continental Choiseul regiment. Unfortunately for Lagand, he was not officially discharged from his Ile Royale posting. Accused of desertion, the Marine Ministry sent him back to Louisbourg in shackles for a court-martial hearing. Luckily for Lagand, the members of Ile Royale's *Conseil*

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<sup>28</sup> ANOM, COL C11B/17 fol. 300, 24 octobre 1736.

*de Guerre* believed his story, acquitted him, and ordered him to resume his service in the d'Ailleboust company.

Nicolas Lebègue claimed that he was a butcher by trade, but that he earned a living droving cattle to Paris with his brother and father when he was accused of theft in 1733. Lebègue, also a member of Captain d'Ailleboust's company, enlisted in the Ile Royale garrison in 1730. Known by his nickname, *Brûlevillage*, Lebègue reveals that during one trip to Paris he drank too much and lost contact with his brother and father. Originally from Franche-Comté, Lebègue was alone and without money in Paris. Captain d'Ailleboust, one of two colonial captains that recruited in France, had what the lost 22 year old needed: food, lodging, shelter.<sup>29</sup> Though Lagand's and Lebègue's circumstances were different, they enlisted for the exact same reason: they needed a way to take care of their personal well-being or to relinquish this responsibility in a military setting. Lagand's desperation or inability to look after his personal well-being led to enlisting on two separate occasions.

The examples provided by these two soldiers echo assertions made by Kevin Lynch and Matthew McCormack in a recent article. Lynch and McCormack attempt to define the eighteenth-century British soldier, his role in society and perceptions of his profession by the public at large, using non-anachronistic terms. Lynch and McCormack show that British society

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<sup>29</sup> Greer, *The Soldiers of Isle Royale*, 27 and Leslie Choquette, "Compagnonnage in Eighteenth-Century New France," in *Essays in French Colonial History: Proceedings of the 21st Annual Meeting of the French Colonial History Society*, ed. A.J.B. Johnston (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1997), 76. ANOM, COL G2, Original source: ANOM, COL G2182/fol. 148-357, *Conseil Supérieur. Procédure criminelle ... a l'encontre du nommé Nicolas Lebègue dit Brûlevillage et Thomas Berranger dit La Rosée soldats accusés de vol*, 1733.

D'Ailleboust and Degannes were the only two captains to recruit for their companies in France. They did this on only one occasion in 1730. See: ANOM, COL B 54-4/fol. 520, *Ordre du Roy au Sieur de Gannes pour levee de Soldats*, 7 mars 1730.



of the period viewed soldiers as boys caught in a never-ending childhood.<sup>30</sup> Most likely, he remained single and never attained what Linch and McCormack describe as the pinnacle of eighteenth-century masculinity: marriage and fatherhood.<sup>31</sup> The military was not only their source of income; it was essentially a parent. As a surrogate parent, the military provided what parents traditionally provide for their children: food, clothing, shelter, and discipline. However, it was not just socio-economic factors such as these that led to enlistments in the French colonial troops. Physical attributes also possibly played a role in the decision to enlist for colonial service.

The ultimate destiny of many colonial soldiers possibly stemmed from continental captains' preference for taller men. For example, regulations for the French Calvary in the period stipulated a minimum height of *5 pieds 4 pouces* – three inches more than the colonial regulations – while the minimum height required for entrance in the French *Armée de Terre* was *5 pieds 2 pouces*.<sup>32</sup> This is at odds with the recruitment of young boys, but these boys would not serve until they reached age. Recruiting young boys into the continental army was a money making scheme (leaves were bought) and in a way akin to the drafts used by modern day professional sports leagues. The regiments needed constant replenishing, thus, preying on the gullibility of young boys ensured the future numerical strength of the regiments. As noted in the previous chapter, many of Ile Royale's soldiers allegedly did not meet the minimum regulated

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<sup>30</sup> Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack, "Defining Soldiers: Britain's Military, c.1740-1815," *War in History* 20, no. 2 (April 2013): 154-156, <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1325573663?accountid=10406> (accessed April 17, 2013).

<sup>31</sup> Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack, "Defining Soldiers: Britain's Military, c.1740-1815", 154-155.

<sup>32</sup> Corvisier, *L'armée Française de la fin du XVIIe siècle au ministère de Choiseul; le soldat*, 2:637-638.

height. Their small stature excluded them from service in France, this coupled with financial desperation possibly made colonial service attractive or an only option.

However, not all of the Ile Royale soldiers were short. One soldier, Jean LeLievre, known as *Lequille*, was 5 *pieds* 6 *pouces* and 18 years old when he joined the Ile Royale garrison in 1740. Unfortunately, this record does not state his reason for enlisting in the colonial troops. Information pertaining to motives for enlisting is only found in civil or criminal court records: LeLievre does not make an appearance in these records. LeLievre was young when he enlisted and this might partially explain his enlistment, but other skilled tradesmen were considerably older at the time of enlistment. A thirty year old joiner, Pascal Dalieu, known as *La Viollette*, also enlisted 1740.<sup>33</sup> At thirty, youthful indiscretion can hardly be a reason for Dalieu's enlistment. In consideration of his age, it is quite likely that he was rather skilled at his trade and his skill made him a much needed member of the construction workforce. Why would he join?

Like LeLievre, Dalieu leaves no other trace in the historical record. Various situational possibilities potentially explain why Dalieu or other skilled tradesmen enlisted for colonial service. Desperation is one possibility. Recruitment for the colonies took place in February and March.<sup>34</sup> These were slow months for construction workers and it is possible that the need for work forced them to enlist for colonial service. It is possible that alcohol made skilled labourers susceptible to the recruiters' tall-tales. Perhaps Dalieu left of his own free-will and enlistment in the colonial troops was a way to see another part of the world. One soldier who fits the itinerant mold of the world traveller is Christophe Chiquelier. In 1729, the 14 year old was sent to Louisbourg. Compared to the other soldiers in the colony he came from a rather privileged

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<sup>33</sup> *ASQ Papiers Surlaville, Polygraphe 55-8, Signalement Des Troupes, 3 mars 1752.*

<sup>34</sup> Jay Cassel, "The Troupes de La Marine in Canada, 1683-1760: Men and Material" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1987), 89.

lifestyle. His father was a harpsichord maker and responsible for looking after these instruments of Louis XV: a job that the younger Chiquelier inherited in 1737 and remained in that position until his death in 1792. Monetary needs were not a motivating factor for Chiquelier, the want to see different parts of the world, or his father's want for him to, plausibly explains his presence in Louisbourg.<sup>35</sup> Fleeing from the possible repercussions of legal transgressions was another factor that motivated enlistment in the Louisbourg garrison. One soldier, Thomas Beranger, known as *La Rosée*, joined the colonial troops in 1730 to escape possible criminal prosecution. Beranger, a gardener from Saintonge, severely injured a peasant in a drunken brawl. To escape potential prosecution, Beranger left for Rochefort and enlisted for colonial service.<sup>36</sup> These are various possibilities that may explain why skilled labourers enlisted in colonial service. Beranger's story, however, demonstrates his desire to escape prosecution. Other soldiers were already convicted criminals and, when recruitment was not going well, the prisons became a source of potential manpower.

This fact seemingly fits into Robert Steinfeld's argument that all labour prior to the nineteenth-century was "unfree".<sup>37</sup> In other words, employers' coerced workers into a working arrangement that barred them from leaving their job and that the workers were not free agents in the labour market. Louisbourg's soldiers seemingly fit into Steinfeld's definition as "unfree" labourers, and as soldiers they were bound to their contract as soldiers. Yet the officers did not coerce them to work on the fortifications and the soldiers could work for Louisbourg's private

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<sup>35</sup> Kenneth Donovan, "'After Midnight We Danced Until Daylight': Music, Song and Dance in Cape Breton, 1713-1758", *Acadiensis* 32, no. 1 (September 2002): 5-9.

<sup>36</sup> Greer, *The Soldiers of Isle Royale*, 27.

<sup>37</sup> Robert J. Steinfeld, *Coercion, Contract, and Free Labor in the Nineteenth Century*. (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 3-4.

citizens if they chose to do so.<sup>38</sup> Thus, they straddled between “free” and “unfree” labourers. To meet the demand for Louisbourg’s manpower needs (making the labour of Louisbourg’s soldiers “unfree”), prisoners were sometimes recruited, and, like the trickery employed by recruiters practice, this was also common in France to fulfill military manpower needs.<sup>39</sup> Thirty criminals were ordered for 1720, but did not come to the colony, and, as a result, no recruits were sent to the colony that year. The next documented source of criminals sent to Louisbourg was the 25 sent in 1723. In total, 81 recruits were sent to the colony in 1723 – 31% were criminals.<sup>40</sup>

Unfortunately, there are no records that indicate the number of convicted criminals sent to serve in the Ile Royale garrison on an annual basis or the crimes they committed. Allen Greer argues that these men were most likely deserters from continental regiments.<sup>41</sup> Desertion was a common problem in the French regiments making Greer’s claim highly plausible. Further corroborating Greer’s claim is Surlaville’s 1752 roll call. While Surlaville’s report does not mention the existence of convicted criminals in the garrison, it does mention that certain soldiers had previously served in continental French regiments making it likely they were deserters. A letter from Governor Raymond in 1752 sheds some light on other possible convictions of the labourers: smuggling. It is unclear if the smugglers, possibly *faux sauniers*, enlisted under coercion or if they retained their civilian status (those sent to Canada worked on roads and other public works projects as cheap convict labour with no attachment to the military).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> See: Jacques Testard page 95.

<sup>39</sup> Georges Girard, *Le service militaire en France à la fin du règne de Louis XIV*

<sup>40</sup> Greer, *The Soldiers of Isle Royale*, 28. From: Port de Rochefort, IE, Vol. 95, fols. 59-67, Conseil, 10 July, 1720; *ibid.*, Vol. 101, fols. 617, 621-22, de Morville, 31 May, 1723.

<sup>41</sup> Greer, *The Soldiers of Isle Royale*, 28.

<sup>42</sup> Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Seas*, 133.

The convicts mentioned in Raymond's letter were unskilled labourers, and, like those sent to New France, they built roads. In this case their task was to repair a road that went from the Dauphin Gate to the Royal battery. In what seems to be a pitch to have more criminals sent for labour purposes, Raymond declared that the road was now "*d'une grande beauté et très utile au publique*."<sup>43</sup> It is unclear whether or not Raymond exaggerated the quality of the labourers finished product, but he was eager to state that he saved 6,000 *livres* by paying them half the wage of non-convicted labourers. Raymond's letter demonstrates another important fact. The need for labour was effectively communicated and dealt with. Colonial officials clearly communicated their needs and the Marine Ministry understood the needs and acted decisively. The whole process relied on communication and an established network with a proven track record of supplying soldiers – labourer-soldiers in the case of Louisbourg. Louisbourg's garrison was never fully manned, but this is not a symptom of miscommunication. France's socio-economic climate and the voluntary nature of military service better explain the undermanned garrison.

## **Conclusion**

From 1720-1743, Louisbourg's demand for labour demonstrates the important role communications played in the recruitment process. The recruitment of soldiers, many of whom worked as construction labourers while at Louisbourg, shows not a flaw in the communications network, but instead France's socio-economic conditions during the era. Except for the Huguenots, France's population was almost completely religiously homogenous. And without the religious conflicts that, for example, occurred in England during the seventeenth-century,

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<sup>43</sup> ANOM, *COL C11B 32/fol.70v. Raymond*, 19 November 1752.

there was no need for a mass out-migration to the New World. The French practice of sharing land among all the male progeny also diminished the need to leave France.

In fact, it is plausible to argue that the presence of the New England militia forces that besieged Louisbourg in 1745 is partially attributable to the lack of social and economic incentives for mass migrations out of France. With a greater population base, the New England colonies were able to muster sizeable militia forces for colonial defence. The French colonies had militias and Louisbourg's contained nearly a thousand men.<sup>44</sup> However, they were an aid to the colonial troops sent from France to defend the colony, not the main force. The lack of French immigration to the New World and the decimation of France's navy followed by massive cuts to the naval budget dictated a land based strategy for colonial defence. These socio-economic pressures led to different methods of securing colonial possessions. For the French, this meant deploying troops to the colonies and intensive fortification, while the British used their numerically superior naval fleet to secure their colonial possessions and relied primarily on colonial militias for land troops. Despite the lack of universal socio-economic "push and pull" factors in France, there was still immigration to the colonies. The presence of labourer-soldiers in Louisbourg, demonstrates not only this, but also demonstrates France's imperial system: a colonial entity linked militarily, culturally, and economically among each other and to the mother country – something impossible to achieve without an effective communication system.

The fact that Louisbourg's garrison, and by extension workforce, was never fully manned seems to demonstrate a flaw in the communication system. Various complaints about the quality of labourers sent to Louisbourg also seemingly point to its ineffectiveness. However, it is not the

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<sup>44</sup> N. E. S. Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian a North American Border People, 1604-1755*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 329.

communication system that is to blame for these downfalls: personal or individual circumstances provide a better answer; circumstances that are related to France's socio-economic climate and that affected both the quality and quantity of men recruited to serve in the colony. Along with the socio-economic conditions in France, choosing to serve in the French continental regiments was another option provided to possible soldiers, and, for two reasons, this affected colonial recruitment. First, the disparity in signing bonuses between colonial and continental service made the latter a more attractive option. Second, the commanders of the continental regiment's preference for strong, tall men put them in direct competition with colonial recruiters for the type of men wanted and needed for Louisbourg's construction project.

Still, men enlisted for colonial service. A universal socio-economic "push" and "pull" factor does not explain these enlistments: individual socio-economic factors do. Whether the factors that led people to leave home were universal or individual, one common denominator influenced their decision: opportunity. For Joseph Lagand, military service provided an opportunity for security. Food, clothing, and shelter, though these were often of questionable quality, provide personal security. Lagand possibly had trouble or was incapable of providing this security for himself; military life gave such an opportunity. Thomas Beranger's enlistment gave him the opportunity to escape the criminal repercussion of injuring a peasant during a brawl. Perhaps for others, economic opportunity led them to enlist for colonial service. Soldiers with a background in skilled-trades fit well into this category. It is also conceivable that some enlisted for the opportunity to travel. Chiquelier, the future royal caretaker of instruments, serves as an example of this type of recruit.

In contrast to Kenneth Banks's thesis that the ineffective French communications system created the empire that was never made, these enlistments demonstrate the effectiveness of the

communication system and that it indeed did help to build an empire – an empire that as Christopher Moore correctly argues was highly integrated economically.<sup>45</sup> Louisbourg’s labourer-soldiers and their counterparts in other French colonies made this integration possible by building the physical infrastructure of empire: infrastructure that facilitated the security of and trade within this empire. None of this was possible without a communication system that worked.

Banks, however, does acknowledge the many stages of the communications process existed.<sup>46</sup> The recruitment of soldiers hinged on various parties communicating the demand for labourers to enlist for colonial service. Official correspondence from colonial officials started the recruitment process. The Marine Ministry approved or denied these requests. However, this was not the final link in the communications chain. Recruiters also needed notifications of the demand for recruits, and this marks a break in the paper trail associated with the recruitment process. Thus, understanding the tactics used by recruiters is necessary to explaining why some men enlisted for colonial service.

In many ways, the job of the recruiter was analogous to a salesperson, and at times a dishonest salesperson. It was his job to deliver a pitch to entice potential recruits. Unfortunately, it is unclear what the exact sales pitch was, but in Louisbourg’s case one sales pitch instantly comes to mind: economic opportunity. Recruiters, as demonstrated by Girard, employed a plethora of tactics to entice potential recruits. Girard also shows that the recruiters were fairly dubious with the techniques they used and alcohol often played an important part in the recruitment process. These techniques were effective and with great certainty it is possible to

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<sup>45</sup> Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Seas*, 7 and Christopher Moore, “Merchant Trade in Louisbourg, Ile Royale” (M.A. diss., University of Ottawa, 1977), 94-104.

<sup>46</sup> Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Seas*, 47-56.



claim that colonial recruiters also used them. Alcohol probably played a large role in the colonial recruitment process and led some men to enlist in an impaired state. Whether the methods used were honest or not, the recruiter was essentially a communicator. It was his job to communicate the need for men in the colonies.

In technical terms, he was the sender of the message and the potential recruit was the receiver. The recruitment process at this stage relied on oral communication and the role of sender and receiver switches in such a situation; a good conversation relies on both parties listening and responding. Alcohol probably allowed a potential recruit to divulge his personal situation (it is possible that some divulged this information freely). The information possibly gave the recruiter the opportunity to tailor his message specifically to the needs and situation of each individual. Lastly, we cannot discount the role money played in this process. The signing bonus was incentive for the soldier, but money was also an incentive for the recruiters. Recruiters received payment for each recruit; hence, quantity was more important than quality. This situation likely gave recruiters more incentive to employ suspicious techniques. However, this further demonstrates that the perceived flaw in the communications system that led to the complaints about Louisbourg's labourer-soldiers is also attributable to the way in which the recruiters received payment for their services and possibly their greed.

Recruiters had personal motives to recruit men and they often used far from honest ways to do this. Though often preyed on, recruits were not forced to enlist. They chose, even if they suffered from impaired judgment, of their own free will. This is evidence that they exercised a degree of personal agency in this decision. And though there is no universal "push" and "pull" factor that drove enlistment making opportunity of some sort or another the driving force behind colonial enlistment. Convicted criminals were also among the recruits sent to Louisbourg. It is

unclear what charges these men faced, but desertion from military service is the most likely answer. Prisoners' choices were the death penalty, imprisonment, or colonial service. Colonial service was the best option. But, like other enlistments, opportunity – the opportunity to avoid prison – influenced their decision. Though forced to choose between two undesirable options, they still chose their own destiny. They too exhibited some degree of personal agency.

Personal agency gave these men the choice to enlist or not to enlist and they retained a good deal of agency while at Louisbourg. However, personal agency morphs into collective agency. Louisbourg's low population and isolation made them a highly valuable commodity in the labour market. In their new home, they used this situation to choose when they worked and the pay received for their work. However, like the agency they exhibited by choosing to enlist for colonial service, their agency at Louisbourg was not without limits and they were not immune from potential exploitation. Additionally, agency like this, as we shall see in the next chapter, led to a problem: controlling a group of people needed to implement the imperial policy of fortification building.

## Chapter Four: Limiting Agency and Asserting Control over Louisbourg's Labourer-Soldiers, 1730-1743

### Introduction

Military life demands subordination, but asserting control over the Ile Royale garrison was a complicated matter. Though they were soldiers with a chain of command to follow, many were labourers who worked away from the direct control of their superior officers and apart from their duties as a soldier. The money earned working on the fortifications gave them power and in many ways an independent, if not defiant, spirit. The fact that these men worked outside their military responsibility is not unique to this particular garrison. It was common throughout the French American Colonies and even in France, because the wage they earned solely from soldiering barely allowed them to subsist: they needed extra work to supplement their income. Compared to soldiers elsewhere, those at Louisbourg made far more money (two to three times more) than soldiers elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> The story of asserting control over the Ile Royale garrison by their officers, in particular those working as labourers at Louisbourg, goes beyond the usual subordination expected: it is a story of economic control and dependency.

This chapter examines various methods in which the officers and colonial administrators attempted to control their subordinates. These methods were of two basic types: legislative and economic (including wages for non-military work, control over purchasing options and debt). The legislative and economic constraints imposed on these soldiers boils down to the agency purchasing power gave the soldiers and how to abate it. But more precisely, it is about what the soldiers purchased – alcohol for the most part – and who and where they purchased it from with

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<sup>1</sup> Johnston, *Control and Order*, 182-183. From: D' Héricourt, *Éléments de l'art militaire*, vol. 1, fol. 50. The code stipulates that between 1 June and 31 October soldiers labouring apart from their military duties were to be paid 10 *sols* per day, while the rate of pay between 1 November and 31 May was set at 9 *sols*.

the money they earned. This is not to say that they always received cash for their work, at times accepted payment in kind (often alcohol) for their work. Not surprisingly, these payments in kind were another issue that hindered the captains' attempts to assert control over their soldiers.

Ile Royale's soldiers, however, were not so easily controlled. Legislative measures employed to control, or at least limit, the quantity and frequency of the soldiers' alcohol consumption were easy to issue, but harder to enforce. The economic leverage the officers gained by ensuring the soldiers were not paid directly by the contractor was one in which they had to fight for, but once won, they were able to assert control over and limit the agency of their men's purchasing power. With direct access to the wages the soldiers earned, the captains not only limited their purchasing power, but made the soldiers dependant on them for every aspect of their subsistence. Though the soldiers eventually lost the right to receive their pay directly from the hand of the contractor, they still fought to ensure they received a fair wage for their work – their status as labourer-soldiers was both an advantage and a liability.

The size and scope of the fortifications built at Louisbourg made it unique in North America. The negotiations with Ile Royale's garrison and the legislation issued to subordinate them were integral to the implementation of a French imperial policy and was impossible without an effective communications network. In contrast to Banks's thesis that the French communication system was ineffective and fraught with metropolitan misunderstanding, the communication between the metropole and the colony prove otherwise. And though the attempts to both limit the soldiers' access to alcohol and to limit the economic control of their captains were both unsuccessful, it was not because of ineffective communication. The volume of official correspondence reveals this.

The demand to build these fortifications and the social relationships they formed also made Louisbourg a unique locale in the French Empire. And, to understand why legislative and economic controls were imposed on these soldiers, it is necessary to determine why Louisbourg was so different from France and other French colonies. Allan Greer and A.J.B. Johnston both correctly argue that the working conditions of Ile Royale's soldiers were vastly different than those of their counterparts in New France. Johnston argues that for the New France garrison, opportunities outside of the military made their enlistment's stepping stone to a possible civilian life in the colonies. Opportunities provided by the colony agriculture economy and the fur trade.<sup>2</sup> No such opportunities existed at Ile Royale. Greer argues in similar fashion, but also adds that these opportunities also lessened desertion at Ile Royale: there was nowhere to go, not many economic opportunities, and the smaller geographic size and location of the colony meant almost instant recognition as a deserted soldier.<sup>3</sup>

Relationships also play a key factor in the difference. Firstly, the relationships between the officers' and their men were not as formalized from previous interpersonal experience as they were in France. Corvisier's aforementioned "feudal" recruitment practices are used by Greer to explain the callousness of colonial captains' towards their soldiers – an assertion that found its ways into the subsequent work of Johnston. This explanation, however, is only a plausible answer. There is no reason to believe, especially after studying recruitment practices, that continental commanders had any concerns for their men. France's vast population seemingly indicates that there was a steady supply of potential recruits. Finally, Greer does not consider that cause of these abuses was distance from metropolitan central authority. This too also seems

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<sup>2</sup> Johnston, *Control and Order in French Colonial Louisbourg*, 192-198.

<sup>3</sup> Greer, "Mutiny at Louisbourg, December 1744," 86-87.

to indicate ineffective communication, but on reflection more accurately portrays economic opportunism as the motive for callous regard of the captains in regards to their men's wages. Living conditions also form social bonds. The literature clearly shows that Ile Royale's garrison was housed in barracks long before their counterparts in New France – other garrisons were billeted among the civilian population. Kenneth Banks argues that the introduction of barracks in Quebec was a measure to control the soldiers. I, however, argue the opposite. Although I agree that the goal of the barracks was to control the soldiers and supervise their whereabouts, I also argue that it provided a public sphere, similar, as David Held writes, to “a realm of social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed.”<sup>4</sup> Social, working, and living conditions are at the heart of Louisbourg's uniqueness.

### **The Uniqueness and Conditions of Louisbourg**

On the surface, Louisbourg looked pretty much the same as any other garrisoned town, and its soldiers lived in a manner similar to their counterparts in other French colonies or in France. They were to obey the chain of command, wear their uniform, submit to corporal punishment, and to fight when necessary. However, Louisbourg's social and economic conditions created some unique traits among its soldiers. The most obvious was that they were primarily labourers and that these skills for most of the colony's existence superseded their skills as soldiers. In fact, there are even complaints of the soldiers' inability to perform drill properly.<sup>5</sup> It is likely that during the 1720s and 1730s many of the soldiers had any experience with

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<sup>4</sup> David Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), 260.

<sup>5</sup> J.S. McLennan, *Louisbourg from Its Foundation to Its Fall 1713-1758* (Toronto: The MacMillan Co. Of Canada LTD., 1918), 193. Summary of Surlaville's 1750s description of the troops: When he held a review, the troops performed their evolutions badly, some of them did not know how to handle or carry a gun, they were noisy in the ranks, their uniforms were worn and dirty, and were badly put on.

muskets, marching, and other drills performed on an eighteenth-century battlefield. Louisbourg is not unique in the fact that its soldiers laboured on jobs apart from their military duty; it is the fact that many of them performed no military duty at all that makes them unique. Only those unfit for labour did guard duty. And therefore, administrators taxed the labourer-soldiers' earnings to supplement the income of the soldiers standing guard.<sup>6</sup> Soldiers in other garrisons differed, because they worked only when it did not conflict with their military duties. New France gives a good example of this working arrangement. The expectation of the New France's colonial officials was that these soldiers were primarily soldiers. They were to serve their 24 hours of military service and then have 48 hours off. While on their 48 hours away from military duty, these soldiers were then able to supplement their income from other sources. Theoretically, Louisbourg's garrison was to follow the same 24 hours military duty followed by 24 hours off. The needs of the construction project, as previously mentioned, meant that many soldiers never spent even one day on guard duty.

The nature of the work also made Louisbourg slightly different from other colonies. In New France, the soldiers who sought work primarily did so working for private citizens. Louisbourg's soldiers also had opportunities to work for private citizens. Jacques Testard's request for remuneration to the sum of 80 *Louis d'or* in 1752 for carpentry work done to the house of Sieur Pierre Morin demonstrates that soldiers could ply their trade away from the construction of fortifications.<sup>7</sup> Although there was a simultaneous private and public

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<sup>6</sup> By 1732, five percent of the money labourer-soldiers made was deducted to aid the men standing guard duty. See: ANOM, COL C11B 12/ fols. 251v-253, *Saint-Ovide au ministre*, 11 novembre 1732. The amount changed to 1 *sol* for every *livre* earned. See: ANOM, COL B 91/ fol. 352, *Ministre au Desherbiers*, 14 Juin 1750.

<sup>7</sup> ANOM, G2, Vol. 201, *Requête de Jacques Testard, soldat charpentier, demandeur d'une somme de 80 louis, pour avoir travaillé à la maison du Sieur Pierre Morin*, 18 septembre 1752.

construction boom at Louisbourg in the 1720s and 1730s, the bulk of the soldiers worked on the government-funded project. The significance of this working pattern is isolation versus companionship. Fortifications of the scale constructed at Louisbourg required large teams of men to work together. Therefore, the labourer-soldiers knew one another relatively well. Adding to the soldiers' familiarity with one another was one of the government buildings constructed: a barracks. Barracks were a relatively novel concept in the eighteenth century, and Louisbourg's barracks were completed by 1728.<sup>8</sup> The goal of the barracks was not just to house soldiers, but also to supervise their whereabouts and activities. It also provided a public sphere that counteracted its goal as a source of military subordination. The barracks became exactly this before and during the December 1744 mutiny. Prior to the widespread use of barracks by standing armies, officers billeted soldiers to live with families in private residences. Quebec's garrison lived this way until completion of a barracks: sometime between 1748 and 1752.<sup>9</sup> This is in stark contrast to the lodging practice in the early colony of Plaisance, where labourer-soldiers lived apart from the regular soldiers.<sup>10</sup> Soldiers in the Quebec garrison likely did not know one another as well as their Ile Royale counterparts. It is likely that the soldiers of the Ile Royale garrison had a strong sense of collective identity. The Ile Royale garrison had more interaction and companionship in an isolated region, while in comparison the New France garrison had less interaction in a land that presented more opportunity outside the military.

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<sup>8</sup> Blaine Adams, *The Construction and Occupation of the Barracks of the king's Bastion at Louisbourg*, (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1978), 82.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth J. Banks, *Chasing Empire across the Sea: Communications and the State in the French Atlantic, 1713-1763*(Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 2002), 134-135.

<sup>10</sup>Nicolas Landry, *Plaisance (Terre-Neuve) 1650-1713: Une Colonie Française En Amérique* (Québec, QC.: Septentrion, 2008), 170.



For its soldiers, Ile Royale's construction boom offered the chance to earn money, but apart from this not many opportunities existed for them to escape their lives as soldiers. The soldiers of New France had more economic chances outside the military and they were not stuck to as lengthy a military term as their Ile Royale counterparts. Even desertion, an illegal means of escaping military life, was relatively uncommon at Louisbourg. For example, the period between 1721 and 1742 only 6% of the garrison deserted from Ile Royale's *Troupes de la Marine*, while only 1% deserted from the Karrer Regiment between 1723 and 1742. In stark contrast, the France stationed Vivarais-Infanterie Regiment lost 27% of its men from desertion between 1716 and 1749.<sup>11</sup> Louisbourg's isolation and the small geographic size of the colony stemmed the loss of soldiers through desertion. It is not surprising that the biggest loss of Ile Royale soldiers from desertion happened in 1746; the year after the French lost Louisbourg to a land force of New England militia with British naval support. Deserting in France offered better opportunities to conceal one's identity as a runaway soldier than in the sparsely populated colony. Legally or illegally, there was little chance of escaping Ile Royale.

Another factor that separates Louisbourg, along with the other colonies, from France is places of origin. The origins of the officers generally correlated to their men. In France, men joined regional regiments. The commanders of these regiments usually came from the aristocratic families, and thus recruited men from their region. Local men and their officer had a pre-existing relationship that was usually paternalistic in nature. Men from various regions in France found their way into Ile Royale's garrison, but most of the officers were born in the Americas. Thus the soldiers and officers had no pre-existing relationship. And, with one

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<sup>11</sup> Allan Greer, "Mutiny at Louisbourg, December 1744," in *Aspects of Louisbourg: Essays On the History of an Eighteenth-Century French Community in North America*, ed. Eric Krause, Carol Corbin, and William O'Shea (Sydney, NS: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1995), 89.

exception, the company captains were not directly involved in recruiting of their men.<sup>12</sup> A recruitment officer, known as a *racoleur*, was responsible for ensuring men recruited as colonial soldiers. The *racoleur* collected men for the colonial troops as a whole; he did not recruit for a specific officer or colony. The men likely did not know their destination until they boarded ship and were not informed of what company they belonged to until they reached the colony. Allan Greer has concluded that the lack of a pre-existing relationship among the men and officers engendered the officers' uncaring attitude towards their men.<sup>13</sup>

Another aspect to consider when analysing the labour militancy of Louisbourg's labourer-soldiers is the concept of *compagnonnage*. *Compagnons* were labour organizations of journeymen who had just completed the first stages of their apprenticeship. Young artisans joined a *compagnon* in their late teens and remained a member until their mid-twenties. The young men involved in these associations travelled from region to region in France in search of employment. The travel allowed these young men to gain much needed experience in their trade. They had a reputation for drinking, antics similar to those associated with modern day fraternities, and labour militancy.<sup>14</sup> The question remains: did the *compagnonnage* tour extend to the French colonies?

Unfortunately, there is no definitive answer. However, Leslie Choquette, interpretation of evidence from Louisbourg's archival sources suggests the possibility of *compagnonnage* in Louisbourg. The various disputes over wages are one of the examples that Choquette uses to

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<sup>12</sup> ANOM, COL B 54-4/fo1. 520, *Ordre du Roy aus Sieur de Gannes pour levee de Soldats*, 7 mars 1730. De Gannes was born in Acadia. It is unlikely he knew any of the men he recruited for his company.

<sup>13</sup> Greer, "Mutiny at Louisbourg, December 1744," 86-87

<sup>14</sup> Leslie Choquette, "Compagnonnage in Eighteenth-Century New France," in *Essays in French Colonial History: Proceedings of the 21st Annual Meeting of the French Colonial History Society*, ed. A.J.B. Johnston (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1997), 76.

show activities of *compagnonnage* which may have occurred in Louisbourg. Also, stonecutters, joiners, locksmiths, carpenters, plasterers, and roofers (all artisans in demand for Louisbourg's construction project) were known for their affiliations with *compagnons*.<sup>15</sup> A court-case from 1733 also presents some evidence of *compagnon* activity in Louisbourg.

The incident involved a soldier Nicolas Lebègue, a butcher. Lebègue had stolen some colored ribbon (red, white, blue, and yellow) from Dame Berruchon's house and then went to the tavern of Jean-Baptiste Laumosnier. Laumosnier ran an *atelier* of stonecutters that included at least one soldier, Germain Le Parisien, the exact man Lebègue sought out. Drinking ensued and Lebègue took the ribbon from his pocket and asked Laumosnier's wife to make cockades for their hats, a request the wife obliged. However, the interesting part of the story is the colour of ribbon stolen. They made up four of the five colours associated with the *compagnons* who had a history of wearing cockades as an identification marker.<sup>16</sup> The only color missing was green. Perhaps Lebègue did not have time to steal this color or Dame Berruchon did not have that color in her collection. Interestingly, Lebègue, Le Parisien, and the dozen soldiers who accompanied them all wanted the cockade on their hats, which was a symbol associated with *compagnonnage*. Moreover, Laumosnier's wife acted in a way similar to *compagnonnage* found in France: the role of a *mere des compagnons*. Her house, which doubled as an inn, became a place of hospitality. As Choquette declares by, "making the cockades, la femme Laumosnier was behaving exactly like a good *mere des compagnons*."<sup>17</sup>

Choquette also alludes to bands of wandering young tradesmen in the colony, and the reluctance of administrators to hire them on the construction project. This led to a swift return to

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<sup>15</sup>Choquette, "Compagnonnage in Eighteenth-Century New France," 82.

<sup>16</sup>Choquette, "Compagnonnage in Eighteenth-Century New France," 84.

<sup>17</sup>Choquette, "Compagnonnage in Eighteenth-Century New France," 85.

France. Choquette asserts that it is plausible that these men had a background in *compagnonnage*, but finds it strange that skilled workers were turned away from the colony when they were in demand.<sup>18</sup> The answer, however, probably lies in the negative attitudes towards *compagnonnage* brought from France. As an activity, *Compagnonnage* was illegal since 1539 and was also opposed by the Church on charges of heterodoxy.<sup>19</sup> Because of this, it is unlikely that officials knowingly recruited men from such a background. However, men with such a background were very likely found in the stable of civilian labourers and labourer-soldiers from skilled labour backgrounds. *Compagnonnage*, as an institution, probably did not exist in Ile Royale, or any other French colony, but aspects of this lifestyle show it possibly influenced the labour militancy displayed by the labourers and labourer-soldiers. Though inconclusive, reading the evidence from this perspective demonstrates the plausibility of Choquette's argument. Her work also demonstrates that the labourer-soldiers of Louisbourg possibly had a strong sense of collective identity.

Louisbourg was unique. This uniqueness fostered by the size and scope of the fortifications built; the large teams necessary to work on these fortifications; the living conditions; and finally the lack of a solid prior relationship among the men and their officers. These unique factors provided the men with public spheres to interact with one another and to form some semblance of a common identity. Officers' fostered a callous attitude toward their men that did not exist to the same extent in France or New France, while Old World connections possibly fostered a spirit of labour militancy among the labourer-soldiers. Imperial policy dedicated to fortifying economically and strategically important locations in the French colonies

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<sup>18</sup>Choquette, "Compagnonnage in Eighteenth-Century New France," 81.

<sup>19</sup>Choquette, "Compagnonnage in Eighteenth-Century New France," 80.

created these factors. In turn, these factors created the need for the officer to control these labourer-soldiers, even though their work fell out of the realm of their military duty. And one way to control them was legislation.

### **Alcohol**

Ile Royale was a new colony with various economic opportunities and because of this, a bit of unsavoury behaviour occurred. The busy summer season meant that the bolstering of the colonies population by migratory fishermen and itinerant sailors. Like the soldiers, these men wanted to drink. Clearly, their often less than desirable behaviour, or at least behaviour perceived as such, caught the colonial administrators' attention. They deemed that the root cause of the debauchery had a common denominator: alcohol. Ile Royale's garrison and its members labouring on the fortifications were not immune. The ranks of fishermen, sailors, and soldiers consisted of men from society's lowest classes. Despite their low station in the societal pecking order, metropolitan and colonial administrators' deemed their labour essential to the financial and defensive welfare of the mother country and her colonial empire. Excessive alcohol consumption threatened the prosecution of Louisbourg's economically important cod fishery, disrupted the town's good order, and, specifically in the case of soldiers, hampered the construction project –the situation required legislation.

Throughout the colony's existence, administrators' issued 12 *ordonnances* to control the sale of alcohol. The *ordonnances* were all very similar in wording and attempt to fix the town's rampant debauchery. For instance, the preamble of the 1742 *ordonnance* explicitly stated that its

goal was to “*remédier et empêcher les désordres qui se commiteront tous les jours.*”<sup>20</sup> While the 1734, 1735, and 1741 *ordonnances* state that: “*Le grand nombre de cabaretiers dans cette ville devenant de plus en plus préjudiciable à l’établissement de la colonie et au bon ordre qui doit y être observé.*”<sup>21</sup> All the *ordonnances* had numerous articles, but the most pertinent to the subject of this thesis, are those that imposed restrictions on the sale of alcohol to soldiers and labourers. In particular, examining the articles concerning soldiers from the 1722, 1728, 1734, 1735, 1741, and 1742 *ordonnances*, to demonstrate how drinking legislation intended to control and maintain good order on the construction site.

In 1717, the *commisaire-ordonnateur*, Soubras, complained that a significant number of small drinking establishments distracted soldiers from working.<sup>22</sup> By 1720, the situation persisted and de Mézy, the new *commisaire-ordonnateur*, suggested that best way to fix it was to “... *détruire les cabanes des cabaretiers qui sont en dehors de l’enceinte des fortifications, et de les réunir dans la ville, afin de les avoir sous les yeux et d’empêcher les désordres qui pourraient se committer dans ces maisons.*”<sup>23</sup> Drinking interfered with the construction project: this needed fixing. Thus, an *ordonnance* issued in 1722 that attempted to control excessive drinking by limiting the vendors permitted to sell alcohol to soldiers and labourers working on the fortifications: only licensed establishments had permission to sell alcohol. Establishments

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<sup>20</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 24/fol.321-321v, *Ordonnance du gouverneur et de l’Intendant. Nouveaux règlements de police concernant les cabaretiers*, 27 avril 1742.

<sup>21</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 24/fol.307-308, *Ordonnance du gouverneur et de l’Intendant concernant les auberges et les cabarets*, 23 mai 1734; ANOM, COL C11A 64/fol.299-304v *Extraits de divers règlements de police de l’île Royale concernant les auberges et les cabarets, la vente des boissons enivrantes, le commerce avec les soldats, la garde des cochons et la chasse aux perdrix*, 20 avril 1735; and ANOM, COL C11B 23/fol.3-4, *Ordonnance de messieurs Duquesnel et Bigot concernant les cabaretiers*, 4 juillet 1741.

<sup>22</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 2/fol. 258, *Monsieur de Soubras, touchant les cabarets à retrancher*, 1717.

<sup>23</sup> ANOM, C11B 5/fol.75-77, *Arrêt du Conseil sur une lettre de M. de Mézy datée du 17 juin 1720, concernant les cabarets, le commerce et les filles à marier*, 23 août 1720.

without permission caught selling alcohol to this particular segment of society faced a 100 *livres* fine: the monies levied from these fines funded construction of a parish church.<sup>24</sup> Obviously, the legislation did not work, and the governor and *commisaire-ordonnateur* issued a new *ordonnance* in 1728. The wording of the new *ordonnance* was almost identical to the one issued six years previously. However, it was now prohibited for the licensed establishments to sell alcohol to soldiers and labourers employed on the fortifications on working days. The fine and the beneficiary of the fines levied remained the same, but added to the disciplinary actions was confiscation of the owner's alcohol – this disciplinary action remained in all subsequent legislation.<sup>25</sup>

The 1734 *ordonnance* not only attempted to restrict the drinking of the labourer-soldiers, but all the soldiers by stating that: “*Ne pouvant les dits aubergistes et cabaretiers détailler des Boissons les jours ouvrables aux soldats et ouvriers travaillans aux traveaux du Roy et aux soldats de garde et non de garde, sous quelque prétexte que se soit.*”<sup>26</sup> The 1741 *ordonnance* reiterates verbatim the one issued in 1734.<sup>27</sup> In 1741 and 1742, the articles concerning soldiers were exactly the same as the 1734 *ordonnance*.<sup>28</sup> Soldiers looking to drink alcohol on their days off in years affected by this particular regulation had only one place to purchase it from: the officers' canteens (a topic discussed more in the next section). Those caught violating this article, or the other articles in the *ordonnance*, faced the same penalties as in 1728. Further

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<sup>24</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 6/fo1.29, *Ordonnance de messieurs de Saint-Ovide et de Mézy au sujet des habitants qui donnaient de la boisson aux soldats, etc.*, 9 mai 1722.

<sup>25</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 10/fo1.57-58, *Messieurs de Saint-Ovide et de Mézy. Ordonnance au sujet des cabaretiens*, 25 avril 1728.

<sup>26</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 24/fo1.307-308, *Ordonnance du gouverneuret de l'Intendantconcernant les auberges et les cabarets*, 23 mai 1734.

<sup>27</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 23/fo1.3-4, *Ordonnance de messieurs Duquesnelet Bigot concernant les cabaretiens*, 4 juillet 1741.

<sup>28</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 24/fo1.321-321v, *Ordonnance du gouverneur et de l'Intendant. Nouveaux règlements de police concernant les cabaretiens*, 27 avril 1742.

demonstrating the ineffectiveness of this legislation, Saint-Ovide and de Mézy issued another *ordonnance* in 1735. The article concerning soldiers in this particular piece of legislation states:

Qu'ils ne donneront point à boire et même ne se laisseront aucunes liqueurs pour aller boire ailleurs, aux soldats et ouvriers travaillans pour le Roy sur les jours ouvrables et indifferamment à tous sortes de personnes les jours de dimanche, et fetes, pendant la service divin, non plus qu'après la retraite batue. Sous peine de quinze livres d'amende applicables comme dessus [the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame].<sup>29</sup>

Conditions imposed on off duty soldiers were not reiterated in this *ordonnance*, so it seems that they regained the right to purchase alcohol from the licensed vendors. Vendors, however, were reminded to be more vigilant to whom they sold alcohol. If townspeople or strangers gave alcohol purchased at a licenced drinking establishment to labourers, labourer-soldiers, or soldiers on duty, the vendor faced punishment. Confiscation of alcohol was still a consequence of contravening the articles of the *ordonnance*. A new stipulation was added to the fine in conjunction with confiscation: "...les vaisseaux qui les contiendront, serront deffoncés en place publique, vis a vis le carcan..."<sup>30</sup> Not only was the alcohol confiscated, it was to be disposed of in a public setting – a consequence with the purpose of humiliating the individual that disregarded the *ordonnance* and deterring his, or her, peers from doing likewise. This drastic measure was not implemented in subsequent *ordonnances*. The *ordonnances* of 1741 and 1742

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<sup>29</sup> ANOM, COL C11A 64/fol.299-304v *Extraits de divers règlements de police de l'île Royale concernant les auberges et les cabarets, la vente des Boissons enivrantes, le commerce avec les soldats, la garde des cochons et la chasse aux perdrix*, 20 avril 1735.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

The *carcan* was a post where criminals were displayed for committing minor crimes. Criminals were paraded throughout the town accompanied by an armed escort of soldiers, a drummer, and the *huissier* (there is no direct translation for *huissier*, but he is best described as a court clerk who doubled as the town crier). The party stopped at various street intersections throughout the town and the crime committed and its punishment read aloud to the townspeople. A drummer was necessary because the sound of the drum garnered attention – punishments were humiliating for the perpetrator and a deterrent for those in the crowd. After parading the criminal through town, the party stopped at the *carcan*, the crime and punishment read one last time, and the criminal chained to the *carcan* for the prescribed time period. To add to the humiliating aspect of the punishment, the *carcan* was in a high traffic area on the town's waterfront.



stated that alcohol was to be confiscated. However, the fine stipulated in 1742 was lowered to 12 *livres* and proceeds collected from fines were to aid the poor.<sup>31</sup>

In total, colonial officials passed seven *ordonnances* to limit and control the drinking habits of soldiers, labourer-soldiers, and civilian labourers. However, does the constant need to re-issue these legislative measures prove their ineffectiveness? The wording of the preamble in the 1742 *ordonnance* “*remedier et empecher les désordres qui se commiteront tous les jours*” indicates that previous legislative measures to control alcohol consumption were ineffective. Gilles Proulx and A.J.B. Johnston both correctly claim this because of the examples given by official correspondence.<sup>32</sup> Only eight months after issuing the 1728 *ordonnance*, the *commisaire-ordonnateur*, de Mézy, reported that the soldiers used the bakery in the barrack’s basement as a place to “*boire, jouent, et fument.*”<sup>33</sup> De Mézy did not give personal details about the soldiers participating in these activities. Though impossible to substantiate, it is likely that some were the soldiers that the legislation attempted to control. The *commisaire-ordonnateur* relayed this report less than a year after the passing of the *ordonnance*; however, the soldiers were doing this prior to de Mézy’s report. In 1738, just three years after the last *ordonnance* was issued, Verrier, the chief engineer reported the men he currently had at his disposal be more diligent in their work and not abandon the construction site for their daily debaucheries.<sup>34</sup>

Though Verrier does not explicitly state that these debaucheries were the result of alcohol

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<sup>31</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 24/ fol. 321-321v, *Ordonnance du gouverneur et de l'Intendant. Nouveaux règlements de police concernant les cabaretiers*, 27 avril 1742.

<sup>32</sup> Gilles Proulx, “Aubergistes et Cabaretiers de Louisbourg 1713-58,” Travail inédit numéro 136 (Ottawa: Parcs Canada, 1972), 27 and A.J.B. Johnston, *Control and Order in French Colonial Louisbourg, 1713-1758* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001), 154.

<sup>33</sup> ANOM, C11B 10/ fol. 110v, *M. de Mézy au ministre qui l'informe de l'état des travaux et répond aux lettres précédentes sur le même sujet*, 22 novembre 1722.

<sup>34</sup> ANOM C11B 20/ fol. 230, *Monsieur Verrier, ingénieur, au sujet des fortifications de Louisbourg, de la construction et de la démolition de certaines maisons*, 1 novembre 1738.

consumption, the implication of his charge stems from the fact that debauchery and alcohol consumption are regularly linked, if not synonymous, in official correspondence. Lastly, A.J.B. Johnston analyzed the 1344 infractions committed by soldiers between January 1753 and July 1753. Of these infractions, alcohol accounted for 253 infractions (about 13.3 infractions per month). These statistics do show that legislation did not work as hoped, but one must also consider that the garrison totalled about 1330 men during this period. Without accounting for recidivism, only 19% of the garrison committed this offence. Drinking occurred and it caused problems, usually, fights and other disruptions committed in the barracks.<sup>35</sup> However, was it as pervasive as officials claimed? These statistics indicate that it was a problem, but they do not show it as a pervasive problem or that it was worse than anywhere else in this period. Unfortunately, records of this nature only exist for this nineteen-month time period. It is practically impossible to tell if officials exaggerated the soldiers drinking or not.

The legislation shows that some deemed drinking a problem with social, security, and economic repercussions, and that violation of the legislation had consequences. The consequences listed only affected the vendors, not the soldiers. It is not entirely clear how the soldiers caught in violation of these *ordonnances* were punished. Military punishments for minor infractions were often relatively quick and done without documentation. It is more likely that soldiers were only punished when their alcohol consumption accompanied another crime or if they were drunk on duty. Punishment for drinking may not have been enforced when the labourer-soldiers committed these offences. The reason: the captains lined their pockets by selling alcohol to their men. Alcohol, therefore, is linked to the economic control that the captains wielded over their men.

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<sup>35</sup> Johnston, *Control and Order in French Colonial Louisbourg*, 192-198.

## Economic Control

Ile Royale inherited not only the labour supply problem that existed in Plaisance, but also a particular payment scheme: the company captains were not to touch the money their men earned.<sup>36</sup> At Louisbourg, the engineer, Verville, estimated that labourer-soldiers had the potential to earn up to 465 *livres* in a season.<sup>37</sup> Other than paying a small tax to help soldiers standing guard duty, this money was theirs to do with as they saw fit. Indulgence in alcohol was one of the preferred ways to spend this hard-earned cash. Though they did not work a typical soldier's job, they were still outfitted, equipped, and rationed as soldiers. The company captains bore the financial responsibility to ensure this. While the captains bore the responsibility to pay for and distribute these items to their men, the men repaid them via deductions from their wages. The problem was that labourer-soldiers earned no money as soldiers and the captains had no way to guarantee payment for the items these men received. Clothing became a particularly pressing item for the officers.

Ensuring that the men in their charge had adequate clothing stems in part from experience in the colonies. Louisbourg's officers, most of whom were colonial born, knew what to expect come winter; men new to the colony most likely did not. Adequate clothing potentially made the difference between death and survival.<sup>38</sup> It almost seems that the officers acted in what could be anachronistically described as a humanitarian manner. Obviously, they did not want their men

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<sup>36</sup> Landry, *Plaisance (Terre-Neuve) 1650-1713*, 170.

<sup>37</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 4/fol. 67, *Arrêté du Conseil, sur une lettre de monsieur de Verville*, 24 janvier 1719.

<sup>38</sup> This does not mean that the clothes the men received were of good quality. Saint Ovide complained that: "... *les drapiers des habits cette année sont de la plus mauvaise qualité[sic] qu'on puisse voir, les chemises importables par la grosseur de la toile et les souliers s'y mauvais qu'a peine ont-ils peu durés quinze jours aux soldats.*" ANOM, COL C11B 9/fol. 76, *Monsieur de Saint-Ovide au Ministre sur les troupes*, 21 novembre 1727.

to die, but the reason boils down more to money than to compassion; the captains wanted repayment for the goods forwarded to their soldiers. The struggle for the captains to gain access to money earned, or at least repayment for goods they provided started in the 1720s and ended sometime in the 1730s. In 1721, the officers received permission to have sergeants' on-hand when the men were paid by the contractor. The sergeants' task was to compel the men to purchase clothing immediately after payment.<sup>39</sup> This, however, was not implemented. But by 1727, the company captains were present when the men were paid. However, the money the labourer-soldiers earned was still inaccessible to the captains, but the dealings the labourer-soldiers made for payment in kind and advances also incensed them. To correct what the officers called "*les abus*", Saint Ovide begged the minister to "*envoyer un ordre pue que ce que adviendra au soldats de son travail soit remis aux Capitaines ou Commandant de la Compagnie pour leur être distribues afin que par c'est endroit les soldats puisse être bien entretenus et puisse conservés quelque chose.*"<sup>40</sup> To reinforce to the Minister that this practice worked, Saint-Ovide explained that the Swiss officers practiced this and that their men were "*bien entretenus et qu'il ne manque rein.*"<sup>41</sup> Saint-Ovide's letter demonstrates some of the societal views towards eighteenth-century soldiers, regardless of nationality. Soldiers were like children and needed their social superiors to intervene in their lives to ensure their physical well-being. This view not only demonstrates the contemporary view of the soldier as child-like, but supports the historiography on soldiers of this era.

In a recent article, Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack piece together perceptions of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century English soldier by looking at etymology of the word soldier and its link to

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<sup>39</sup>ANOM, COL 44-2/fo. 569v, *Conseil aux Saint-Ovide*, 1 juillet 1721.

<sup>40</sup>ANOM, COL C11B 9/fo. 77, *Monsieur de Saint-Ovide au Ministre sur les troupes*, 21 novembre 1727.

<sup>41</sup>ANOM, COL C11B 9/fo. 77, *Monsieur de Saint-Ovide au Ministre sur les troupes*, 21 novembre 1727.

the societal views of these soldiers from the era in which they lived.<sup>42</sup> By using Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*, they demonstrate the origin and definition of soldier.<sup>43</sup> Linch and McCormack, however, insist that Johnson's etymological reference to a soldier as one who fights for pay was not an academic exercise, but a concern echoed in many period texts critical of the profession. The main concern was that they had no freedom to make their own choices, thus they were not complete, responsible men.<sup>44</sup> The French viewed soldiers from this era in similar fashion, but it was freedom that caused French society to view their soldiers in a negative light. This was not "freedom" to do as he pleased, but freedom from religious, social, and moral constraints that roused suspicions and contempt for French soldiers by civilians. Undoubtedly, the social stigma attached to military life was also common in the French colonies. Idleness, however, was seemingly another factor for societal contempt towards French soldiers.<sup>45</sup> The records concerning soldiers skipping work for a day, or several days, of drinking demonstrates that the view of soldiers as idle and lazy was, at the very least, espoused by colonial officials. Finally, since the vast majority of the Ile Royale garrison were single, and tended to remain so, they did not conform to the societal expectations of marriage and reproduction. Their idle behaviour and the lack of a family forced them into a life of dependence on their captains and made them children.

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<sup>42</sup> Kevin Linch and Matthew McCormack, "Defining Soldiers: Britain's Military, c.1740-1815," *War in History* 20, no. 2 (April 2013): 144-148. <http://ezproxy.library.dal.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1325573663?accountid=10406> (accessed April 17, 2013).

<sup>43</sup> Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th edn, 2 vols (Dublin, 1775), II, col. SOL. Quoted in Linch and McCormack, "Defining Soldiers: Britain's Military, c.1740-1815," 148.

soldier. *n. s.* [*soldat*, Fr. from *solidarius*, low Latin; of *solidus*, a piece of money, the pay of a soldier: *souldée*, French.] 1. A fighting man; a warrior. Originally one who served for pay. 2. It is generally used of the common men, as distinct from the commanders.

<sup>44</sup> Linch and McCormack, "Defining Soldiers: Britain's Military, c.1740-1815," 148.

<sup>45</sup> André Corvisier, *L'armée française, de la fin du XVIIe siècle au ministère de Choiseul, le soldat* (Paris: PUF, 1964), 1:100

A.J.B. Johnston reinforces this concept by exploring a simple catchphrase found in documentation: “*tenir la main.*” The catchphrase, Johnston explains, “held a definite suggestion of wariness, a need for vigilance, a desire to exert or extend control, a willingness to punish if necessary, and a sense of superiority that the few possessed over the many.”<sup>46</sup> Military punishments were one way to control the men, but officials also saw the need for positive influences to control the soldiers. Appointing a military chaplain to live among the soldiers was one solution for this. Johnston also shows how the barracks provided a public sphere for commanders to address their soldiers. If a new ordinance in any way affected the garrison, officers assembled the soldiers en masse to hear it. The purpose was simple: the soldier could not declare ignorance of the regulation as a defence.<sup>47</sup> Reading proclamations and posting them in prominent locales within the town was common. The way in which the soldiers received the message is telling of their officers’ perception of them: they needed a direct announcement, while the townspeople received a more indirect one. Officers used the confined living quarters of the barracks to ensure all received the message; they could not trust the soldiers to receive the message any other way. It was not unlike a principal announcing the day’s news to children over the PA system in a modern school.

Soldiers were not always compliant with the ordinances they received. The constant re-issuing of the aforementioned drinking ordinances and the soldiers constant disobedience of these regulations demonstrates their non-compliance. Control over the wages earned by the soldiers was another avenue by which the soldiers asserted their defiance towards and voiced their discontent with their commanding officers. By 1720, soldiers had negotiated a wage of 20

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<sup>46</sup>A.J.B. Johnston, *Control and Order in French Colonial Louisbourg, 1713-1758* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001), 190.

<sup>47</sup>Johnston, *Control and Order*, 190-192.

to 30 *sols* per day. The events surrounding the negotiations for this wage are not explicitly described in the record; they only mention disputes over the daily wages as “*contestations tumultueuse*.”<sup>48</sup> The wage they negotiated in this instance was anywhere from two to three times the 10 *sols* per day prescribed by Héricourt in the code militaire.<sup>49</sup> The practice of negotiating wages, thus, was unique to Louisbourg. However, if a wage was not agreed on, the governor, civil administrator, and the engineer reserved the right to fix the wage.<sup>50</sup> Though the engineer and civil administrator had the right to set wage-rates, it was the governor who had the final say in these matters.<sup>51</sup> In fact, the governor was seemingly one of the people who had a “positive influence” over the men, or at the very least he had the ability to pacify them. An incident from 1728 demonstrates how he played this role.

At this time, the contractor lacked sufficient funds to pay the labourer-soldiers. Without the prospect of payment, the soldiers threatened to suspend work. To avert this, both Verrier, the engineer, and Ganet, the contractor, requested that he postpone his trip to France for the winter of 1728/1729 to quell the aggrieved labourer-soldiers.<sup>52</sup> The date of the letter shows that the refusal to work did not disrupt the main construction season, but could potentially affect the off-season work of collecting materials. Sources do not reveal how Saint-Ovide satisfied the men, but the engineer’s and the contractor’s insistence that he postpone his trip to France shows that the soldiers respected the governor and trusted him to look after their interests. Saint-Ovide

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<sup>48</sup>ANOM, COL C11B 5/fol.235-237, *Monsieur de Verville au conseil*, 19 juin 1720.

<sup>49</sup>Johnston, *Control and Order*, 182-183. From: D’ Héricourt, *Éléments de l’art militaire*, vol. 1, fol. 50. The code stipulates that between 1 June and 31 October soldiers labouring apart from their military duties were to be paid 10 *sols* per day, while the rate of pay between 1 November and 31 May was set at 9 *sols*.

<sup>50</sup>COL C11B 5 fol. 378-374. St. Ovide, 29 septembre 1721 .

*Les soldats seront payés par l’entrepreneur au prix qu’ils conviendront entre eux et s’ils ne peuvent en convenir le prix en sera réglé par le Gouverneur, le Commissaire-ordonnateur et l’ingénieur.*

<sup>51</sup>ANOM, C11B 7/fol. 142-150, *Mémoire de Verville*, 1724.

<sup>52</sup>ANOM, COL C11B 10/ fol. 91v-92, *M. de Saint-Ovide au ministre*, le 12 novembre 1728.

sacrificed a family visit for the “*bien du service et la sureté de cette place, je le me flatter que les travaux seront continués l’année prochain avec autant de vigueur que cette c’y.*” The governor knew that the success of next year’s campaign was directly related to the contentment of the labour force. He also reveals that the off-season work was detrimental to the upcoming season’s success. The governor walked a fine line; he had to satisfy his superiors in France that the construction project progressed, while maintaining the morale of the labour force and at the same time trying assert discipline over them.

Asserting discipline was easier said than done. The Marine Minister, Maurepas, gathered from reports that: “*Les travaux que 'on fait dans cette isle donnant l'occassion au soldat de gagner de l'argent l'aysance qu'elle leur procure le rend delicat et difficile.*”<sup>53</sup> In other words, the ease with which labourer-soldiers made money made them unruly, and control over their wages was more of an issue than the amount they earned. Unfortunately, the story of the officers’ gaining control over the wages of their men is not fully explained in the documentation, though they do offer some clues that it happened. A letter from Maurepas in 1742 gives directions to follow the system used in 1737: a payment every 15 days that went directly to the captains’ hands (in reality, the men were only paid once a year).<sup>54</sup> A dispute over taxation in 1736 also alludes to this practice. When the men received their *billets* for the work they performed this year, they discovered that the engineer taxed them *7 livres 5 sols* for every *toise cube*. Needless to say, the men were not very happy with this and the *chefs d’atelier*<sup>55</sup> went directly to

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<sup>53</sup> ANOM, COL B 52-2/fol. 574v-577, *Maurepas au Saint-Ovide*, 18 juin 1728.

<sup>54</sup> ANOM, COL B 80/fol. No pagination, *Maurepas au Duquesnel*, 6 juin 1742. ANOM, COL C11B 23/fol. 88-90v, *Bigot au ministre*, 15 octobre 1751.

<sup>55</sup> A *chef d’atelier* plays roles analogous to both a foreman and a union represent in a modern context. He supervises their work, while at the same time helping them to negotiate wages and taking grievances up the chain of command.



the governor with their complaints. After consultation with the engineer and the financial administrator, the governor decided that men received a fair wage for their work. He promptly told them to take their *billets* to their company captains to receive what they were owed by the contractor. He also warned them that he did not want to hear about this again.<sup>56</sup> The fact that the governor told the men to take their *billets* to their captains indicates that the soldiers had lost direct control over their wages. The event also indicates that the governor did not always intervene in favour of the men.

This was not an isolated incident, and the governor's decision went directly against the orders of Maurepas. In November of 1732, a joint letter from the governor and the financial administrator shows that the *chefs d'ateliers* and workers complained about the engineers interference. The engineer prohibited the men from making deals with the contractor. Furthermore, the men, mostly the diggers, complained that they were taxed per *toise cube* in gradation from the most difficult earth to move to the easiest 7, 5, and 3 *livres*. They were making about a quarter less for their work than they had in previous summers. The governor and the civil administrator did not solve this problem, but they did concede to the workers demand to have a monitor present to record their work. This was a first for Louisbourg, but it was acceptable under *Règlements du Roy* (the engineers had always argued against this at Louisbourg and blocked its implementation). However, the two now deemed it necessary to implement this practice to "*tranquiliser l'esprit des ouvriers.*"<sup>57</sup> In the spring of 1733, Maurepas decided on the matter. The workers were to deal directly with the contractor and Verrier had no right to

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<sup>56</sup>ANOM, COL C11B 18/fol. 46-46v, *Monsieur de Brouillan au ministre, touchant les fortifications du port dePort-Royal*, 30 octobre 1736.

<sup>57</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 20/fol. 25-30v, *Saint-Ovide et le Normant*, 15 novembre 1732.

intervene on this matter.<sup>58</sup> In a later letter, he also reminded the governor and civil administrator to ensure that the men were paid promptly and on schedule this year, because they received their pay late in last season's campaign.<sup>59</sup> In January of 1734, the two reported to the minister that they received no complaints from the workers or the *chefs d'ateliers* during the last construction season.<sup>60</sup> This, however, did not stop Maurepas from sending a reminder to the engineer about the workers' right to negotiate with the contractor in the spring.<sup>61</sup>

Combined the incidents from 1732 and 1736 reveal how workers and their superiors mediated labour disputes in Louisbourg. They show that the soldiers-labourers were capable and willing to voice concerns over their wages to the colony's leading official: the governor. Also, the documents reveal that in both of the disputes, unskilled labourers were the only ones affected. There were no complaints from skilled labourers mentioned in the correspondence. Though skilled labourers were members of the garrison, it seems the engineer's tax did not affect them. There is no definitive answer as to why, but it is likely that they worked alongside of the civilian (the aforementioned Germaine Le Parisien is a possible candidate for such a person) labourers and their wages negotiated by their *atelier* (most likely a civilian), thus they were possibly not as vulnerable to the whims of the engineer as the unskilled labourers. It is also likely that their status as skilled labourers made them more valuable to the project and thus they were not harassed.

The two incidents are very similar, but the governor did not respond in the same way.

Why? This is also a matter of speculation, but the warning he gave the labourer soldiers,

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<sup>58</sup> ANOM, COL B 58/fol. 551v-554, *Maurepas à Saint-Ovide et Le Normant*, 19 mai 1733.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 544v-547, *Maurepas à Saint-Ovide et Le Normant*, 16 juin, 1733.

<sup>60</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 15/fol.52-59. *Saint-Ovide et le Normant*, 23 janvier 1732.

<sup>61</sup> ANOM, COL B 61-2/ 596v-600v, *Maurepas à Verrier*, 4 mai 1734.

mentioned in the 1736 letter, and suggests a hint of frustration on his part. During the second dispute, Saint-Ovide, who was 60 years old, had been governor for 18 years, and argued constantly with Verrier throughout his tenure. Perhaps this incident signifies his frustration and a loss of patience. Whatever the governor's reason for making such a decision, he directly defied Maurepas directions that barred the engineer from interfering with the workers' right to negotiate their wage with the contractor. However, the documents do reveal that though the labourer-soldiers lost direct access to their pay, they still retained the right to negotiate their wages. Allan Greer argues that the captains "derived a portion of their total incomes from the profits they made from their soldier workers."<sup>62</sup> This implies suspicions that the captains' book keeping was fraudulent. Greer is more than likely correct in this assertion, but there are no ledger books to confirm how much they profited. However, correspondence does reveal that they did profit from their labourer-soldiers and that the captains were further able to control their men by debt.

From the early years of the colonies, the captains operated canteens.<sup>63</sup> They argued that they needed to operate the canteens in order to supplement their income. Theoretically, the canteens were to provide the men with the necessities of life: extra clothing, rations, and personal grooming implements (combs, soap, thread, etc.). The captains, however, also sold alcohol to their men. Seemingly, alcohol was in greater demand than the necessities of life. Hence, it is possible to see that restrictions limiting the possible vendors of alcohol to soldiers greatly benefited the company captains. The soldiers were also placed in a vulnerable position because they could not receive credit from the town's merchants: the canteens were their only legitimate

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<sup>62</sup>Greer, "Mutiny at Louisbourg, December 1744," 98

<sup>63</sup>AMOM, COL C11B 1/ fol. 73-76v, *L'Hermitte au ministre*, 3 novembre 1714.

establishment for them to purchase goods.<sup>64</sup> However, the labourer-soldiers often received payment in kind from the contractor. This arrangement often led to allegations of profiteering, but it is also possible that this incensed the captains because they lost some potential revenue.<sup>65</sup> The situation of Louisbourg put the labourer soldier in an advantageous position as a wage earner. But, as Allan Greer has correctly concluded, “as a consumer, he was extremely vulnerable.”<sup>66</sup> Canteens were one of the main reasons for this vulnerability. The situation with the canteens, along with the captains’ access to their men’s wages, did not go unnoticed by Maurepas.

Il a été d’usage jusqu’ à présent de remettre aux capitaines la solde de leurs soldats et l’argent qu’ils gagnent aux travaille des fortifications. Cet usage cause bien des abus car les capitaines obligent les soldats à acheter d’eux divers effets et surtout la boisson sur lesquels ils gagnent considérablement.<sup>67</sup>

In the letter, Maurepas only mentions one abuse explicitly: the captains sold to new recruits uniforms of dead soldiers. This particular abuse caught the attention of Maurepas because it was a form of profiteering by the captains – the uniform was paid for twice. Although the other “*abus*” were not mentioned explicitly, it is certain that profiteering by the captains and the vulnerable position of the soldiers troubled the minister. The most egregious allegation in this letter was that captains forced their men to buy drink at the canteens. Maurepas, however, was not the only person to complain about the canteens. Abbé Maillard went so far as to call them “schools of Satan.”<sup>68</sup> Even the governor, Duquesnel, and the financial administrator, Bigot, remarked that the wine soldiers purchased from the canteens caused disorder, but that it should

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>AMOM, COL C11B 5/fol 386-388v, *Saint-Ovide au ministre*, 30 novembre 1721.

<sup>66</sup>Greer, “Mutiny at Louisbourg, December 1744,” 97.

<sup>67</sup>ANOM, COL B 68/fol. 347-348v, *Maurepas à de Forantet Bigot*, 26 mai 1739.

<sup>68</sup>Quoted in: Johnston, *Control and Order in French Colonial Louisbourg*, 183-184.

Original source: Archives séminaire de Québec, Lettre P, no. 63, letter de Maillard, 29 septembre 1738.

not happen in the future. Two years after the admonishment from the Maurepas, Duquesnel and Bigot reported the abolishment of canteens.<sup>69</sup> Yet, in 1742, Maurepas complained that similar abuses still occurred at Louisbourg.<sup>70</sup> In the fall, Duquesnel wrote back to the minister and explained that he could not abolish the canteens, only limit them.<sup>71</sup> Undoubtedly, the captains resisted attempts to abolish this source of income.

The canteens were more than a source of income for the officers: they were also a means by which they controlled their men. Individuals in managerial-like positions used similar strategies in the nineteenth-century. One of the most obvious examples, as pointed out by Stephen Hornsby, was the “truck system” employed by fishing operators in Cape Breton.<sup>72</sup> Like Louisbourg’s soldiers, the vast majority of fishermen lacked cash to pay for materials needed to outfit for a fishing season or clothe and feed their families’. The debt accrued by the fishermen, put them firmly under the control of the operators. They, like the Louisbourg’s soldiers in the previous century, became completely indebted and, thus, dependant and beholden to their masters. Thus, they were in an extremely vulnerable position to be exploited. The “abus” mentioned by Maurepas was exploitation. Because soldiers lacked the ability to receive credit from another source and their wages went directly into the captains hands’, they were in an extremely vulnerable position. It is also important to view officers’ control over their men’s wages as a limiting factor to receive goods from another source – they could no longer receive payment in kind from the contractor for their work on the fortifications, nor could they purchase

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<sup>69</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 23/fol. 28-28v, *Duquesnel et Bigot au ministre*, 20 octobre 1741.

<sup>70</sup> ANOM, COL B 74/ 592-592v, *Maurepas à Duquesnel*, 15 juin 1742.

<sup>71</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 24/fol. 52-52v, *Duquesnel au ministre*, 7 octobre 1742.

<sup>72</sup> Stephen J. Hornsby, *Nineteenth-Century Cape Breton: A Historical Geography* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992), 14-15.

goods in cash from one of the town's merchants. The canteens were the only possible source for soldiers to purchase necessities or luxury items.

Maurepas was well aware that these soldiers were exploited; however, the extent of the exploitation is unknown by historians. Maurepas does allude that the captains "*gagnent considérablement*" from the canteens. Thus, he suggests that the captains sold their goods at inflated prices. With direct access to the labourer-soldiers wages and by providing the only establishment for the labourer-soldiers to purchase goods, the officers were in a position to exploit their men. However, the men are silent on this issue and no direct complaints about the canteens or the captains' access to their wages are mentioned as grievances by the labourer-soldiers. This is mainly because the soldiers did not leave a paper trail. Allan Greer asserts that this system was perceived as unjust by the victims, but the only letter from the soldiers was a petition explaining their grievances that led to a mutiny in December of 1744.<sup>73</sup> Neither direct access to wages, nor exorbitant prices charged at the canteen were mentioned in the petition. The petition does state that: "... *l'Injustice regne a toutes mains en cette pays.*"<sup>74</sup> Good vegetables from the King's Storehouse sold to civilians instead of going to the men for rations and the price of fire wood (10 *sols* per soldier) were the two complaints in the petition. A letter from Bigot and the acting governor, Duchambon, also mentions that the French recruits demanded reimbursement for the uniforms they paid for, but did not receive.<sup>75</sup> Hence, we can only infer that the soldiers were aggrieved by the captains' control of their wages and the prices charged at the canteens.

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<sup>73</sup>Greer, "Mutiny at Louisbourg, December 1744," 99.

<sup>74</sup>Archives nationales, C7, 272, Copy of the petition of a numbr of soldiers addressed to Duchambon,[22-23?]décmbre 1744. Transcribed in: Greer, *The Soldiers of Isle Royale*, 59.

<sup>75</sup> ANOM, COL C11B 26/fol. 232, *Lettre au ministre de M. Duchambon et M. Bigot*, 31 décembre 1744.

## Conclusion

The economic position of the labourer-soldier was both an advantage and a liability. Conditions unique to Louisbourg and the urgency of the construction programme granted them an advantageous position as a wage earner. However, with the captains' eventual control over wages, the labourer-soldier found himself an extremely vulnerable position as a consumer. In short, control over the wages meant a monopoly for the captains to supply their men with goods. The legislative limitations imposed on the soldiers, thus, became another economic situation that benefited the captains. Though the ordinances concerning liquor had a practical goal (ensuring work progressed without interruption), they nonetheless did not stop the labourer-soldiers' drinking. In fact, the coercion by the officers to buy alcohol at the canteens further exacerbated the problem of construction-site absenteeism. The monopoly the captains possessed over their men's purchasing options – a monopoly that limited labour-soldiers' agency – allowed the captains to assert authority over their men by debt-bondage. Interestingly, the labourer-soldiers did not lose their agency as wage earners in this period. Their concern over wages and the minister's insistence that they be permitted to negotiate with the contractor in the 1732 and 1736 disputes show this. Furthermore, it was not the captains trying to intervene in their right to negotiate; it was the engineer. For the captains, the labourer-soldiers' ability to negotiate a better wage was to his financial benefit.

The attempts to control labourer-soldiers legislatively and economically reveal societal attitudes towards soldiers in the era, how labour disputes were settled, and the role of communications in this process. They contradict Kenneth J. Banks' assertions of information overload and inability to understand the individual intricacies of the colonies by the metropolitan

officials.<sup>76</sup> Maurepas correspondence reveals that he knew exactly what was happening at Louisbourg and that he was outraged by the captain's exploitation of their men. He was also well aware that the men were, at times, an unruly lot. However, the fact that the situation went unchanged was because of the governor's inability to stop the exploitation of the canteens. The documents reveal that the governor's job was far from an enviable task. He dealt with complaints from both the soldiers and the officers and faced orders and reprimands from metropolitan officials in France. Seeking a balance point where all three of these parties were content was most likely a tiring task that wore on one's patience. However, these incidents do confirm one of Banks's other assertions. "Independent reports by underlings or other elites cracked a myth of monolithic authority just as much as delays or denials of advancement or honours by the Marine."<sup>77</sup> Maurepas heard complaints about the canteens and the soldiers' pay-schedules, but he does not mention where he heard them or how he heard them. He was undoubtedly receiving reports from the governor's underlings or other colonial elites.

These incidents demonstrate the mediation of labour disputes at Louisbourg and the importance of communications in the process. The incidents were also well documented by both colonial and metropolitan officials. Miscommunication was not the issue, distance was. Months often passed by the time news of disputes reached the minister and it took just as long for his reply to arrive in the colony. It is possible that a solution to the dispute was already mediated by this point, thus, demonstrating that the direct influence of central authority was not always necessary. Nonetheless, the case of Louisbourg's labourer-soldiers highlight the difficulties of governance over a vast territory, while attempts to legislate their access to alcohol

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<sup>76</sup> Kenneth Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Sea*, 5.

<sup>77</sup> Kenneth Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Sea*, 215.



and the governor's frequent decisions in their favour shows their important role in the empire building process.

## Chapter Five: Conclusion

In time, the decision to intensively fortify Louisbourg created an essential link in France's Atlantic Colonial Empire. Fortification was not a new concept in the colonies, but Louisbourg marked a turning point for the nature of colonial fortification. Previous fortifications were small and often made out of wood. Louisbourg's fortifications resembled the large scale fortifications found in Europe. Creating this fortress and the colonial economic link that it became was by no means an easy feat and hinged on supplying a sufficiently large labour supply. The economic and demographic situation of the colony meant that this labour force needed to come from France – the labour taxes used in France for such projects were not feasible at Louisbourg. One solution to this problem was to recruit skilled tradesmen to work at Louisbourg. These men, however, showed no interest in staying at Louisbourg any longer than the duration of the construction season. They used this situation as leverage to demand wages that were much higher than what they earned in France. It was also difficult to gather the required amount of men to fill these positions, while the challenges of navigating the Atlantic Ocean in this era meant that these men often arrived to work well into the construction season. The solution to this problem: recruit and use soldiers to work as both skilled and unskilled labourers. This solution was persistent throughout Louisbourg's history and soldiers were the main workforce throughout both French occupations of the fortress.

Using soldiers to fulfill labour demands was not without its problems. Found among the ranks of the soldiers were men well into their 70s and because of their advanced age, it is unlikely that they contributed to the construction project. Another problem with using soldiers was the dangerous nature of the tasks they performed. Injuries obtained while working on the fortifications dwindled the supply of available labourers. Individual companies were never fully

manned, thus this also affected the potential supply of labourers. The social life of the soldiers reportedly revolved around heavy drinking. The binges, often lasting for several days, delayed progress on the construction project. Lastly, the climate, geology, and geography of Louisbourg hampered both the supply of available work days, but often required on a supply of specialised labourers. Miners were the most notable. The request for miners persisted throughout Louisbourg's history and intensified in the second occupation.

Men skilled in various trades and men capable of hauling, lifting, and shoveling were demanded for construction project. Throughout Louisbourg's existence, they were an integral part in the imperial policy to protect its colonial possessions, and their labour helped to connect the colonies by law, trade, and culture with the mother country. The conditions on the ground at Louisbourg made their presence in the labour market unique – their place in the labour market varied from the classical definition of supply and demand and they resembled in many ways modern unionized, government employees. They had wage guarantees and the flooding of the market with labourers would not affect the wage they earned while working.

Since France lacked universal socio-economic “push” and “pull” factors to bring settlers to the colonies, recruiting soldiers, labourers, and labourer-soldiers to work at Ile Royale relied on a vast communication network – expressing and alleviating labour demands was impossible without it. The network relied on colonial officials, metropolitan officials, and recruiters. However, when the recruiters enter the scene, the paper trail almost stops, but studies on the practice reveal the methods used to entice men into military service. The French did not employ press ganging methods to fill their ranks; it was a voluntary service. This fact implies a certain amount of agency on the part of the recruit, but the methods used by recruiters were often far from honest. Drink and the naïveté of youth were the recruiters ally and they allowed him to

dupe many victims into enlisting. Many soldiers in the Louisbourg garrison enlisted this way. The young age of many of the recruits is a clear example. However, the lack of universal socio-economic “push” and “pull” factors in France also dictated other reasons for enlisting for colonial service. Opportunity was the motivating force behind colonial enlistments, and there were a plethora of opportunities. The motivating socio-economic factors behind colonial recruitment were thus highly personal. Work opportunities, escaping the law, or the inability to take care of your own personal well-being were factors that show why certain soldiers enlisted for colonial service. In the end they made their own choice, whether tricked or not, to enlist.

On arrival at Louisbourg, the soldiers also had choices: the choice to work or not to work and the choice of who to work for. These choices coupled with the high wages that the demand for labourers dictated gave the labourer-soldiers a high degree of personal agency. One choice they often made was to drink frequently and heavily. This particular choice often led to disruptions on the construction site because of absenteeism. Officials accused soldiers of only working long enough to pay for a binge drinking session. In this case, their personal agency was, in the eyes of officials, a detriment to the security (moral and military) of the colonial and the empire as a whole. On numerous occasions, officials passed regulations in an attempt to limit their access to alcohol and by extension their agency.

Louisbourg’s soldiers lost a great deal of their labour bargaining power in the 1730s – their captains gained direct access to the wages they earned on the fortifications. The captains’ argued that this arrangement ensured that the men received the materials they needed to work and survive in Louisbourg and that once these materials were paid for the soldiers received, in theory, the remainder of their cash. This did not limit their agency as wage earners – they still disputed wage rates during this era – but it did limit their agency as consumers. They were wage

earners without cash and their only source of credit for materials was their captain. Not only did the captains provide necessary materials, they also offered a place for the soldiers to buy alcohol. Ironically, the subordination the captains gained over their men did not stop the complaints about excessive drinking or curtail claims of insubordination on the construction worksite. Maurepas decried this situation as abusive because of the inflated prices at which the captains sold their goods. Allan Greer also described this situation as abusive and predatory.<sup>1</sup> It most certainly was, but the voice of the soldier is silent on this matter. There is no way to gauge how they felt about this situation. But, when considering that they possibly came from a background where they had very little in the way of material possessions, they at least had the opportunity to own something.<sup>2</sup>

Louisbourg's labourer-soldiers demonstrate their importance in the empire building process. Their existence in Louisbourg, the demand for their presence, and the complaints about their behaviour attest to this fact, but it also demonstrates an effective communication network. The frequent acquiescence to their wage demands demonstrates the need to keep this workforce content – building the infrastructure of empire depended on it. Louisbourg's labourer-soldiers built infrastructure that eventually connected the French colonial possessions into an integrated empire. This was not an empire that was “never made” as Kenneth Banks argues.<sup>3</sup> It most certainly was made, and these soldiers built it from “below”. They did not conceive of the policy to fortify colonial possessions, but they did implement it. Muskets and cannons played no role in

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<sup>1</sup> Greer, *The Soldiers of Isle Royale*, 38-39.

<sup>2</sup> The payment situation changed for the soldiers in 1754 when they once again regained the right to receive direct payment without third-party involvement. See: Thorpe, “The Politics of French Public Construction in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence, 1695-1758.”, 259. Original Source: ANOM, COL B, 99/ fols. 240-243, *Ministre à Drucor et Prévost*, 12 mai 1754; and ANOM, COL B, 99/ fols. 245-249, *Ministre à Franquet*, 12 mai 1754.

<sup>3</sup> Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Sea*, 7.

their contribution to the empire building process, shovels and wheelbarrows did. Louisbourg's military men show that soldiers are much more than combatants and that empire building is not only a result of successful battle or military might. Soldiers in this particular garrison were unique; uniqueness fostered by the unique social conditions of the period that they worked and lived in Louisbourg. The time they lived in however was not unique, but it was rare – rare because it was a time of peace. Thus, a successful military campaign is not always the base on which an empire is built. Louisbourg's labourer-soldiers built an integral part of an economic system that supported laws to unify peoples, facilitated trade, and the necessary infrastructure to support this trade logistically and defensively.

From these labourer-soldiers, it is possible to see a different path to empire and it is possible to frame the definition of empire by studying this path. However, the example of these labourer-soldiers also challenges the very definition of soldiers. They show, like the British soldiers studied by Peter Way, that the labour of empire building is more than the labour of battle – it is labour of various kinds. Lynch and McCormack's approach of defining soldiers from the view point of the society in which they live allows for one to define soldiers by avoiding modern the modern Marxist terminology used by Way. Joseph Lagand's story demonstrates one facet of the contemporary view of soldiers: they chose military life because they were incapable of taking care of their own personal well-being. Others do not fit so neatly into this category. In line with Lynch and McCormack's analysis some were convicts. These show the pervasive negative attitude in both French and English society toward soldiers. Though both nations negatively viewed their soldiers, the freedom or lack thereof of soldiers frames their respective negative attitudes. For the English, it was the lack of freedom that put soldiers' character into question. They did not think as an individual and this predisposed immoral behaviour by blindly following

commands. The French view rests on the soldiers' freedom being the gateway to immoral behaviour. This was not a freedom to do as he pleased, but rather it was the freedom from religious, social, and moral constraints that caused French soldiers to be viewed with suspicion by civilians. Undoubtedly, the social stigma attached to military life was also common in the French colonies.<sup>4</sup> Lynch and McCormack's analysis has a serious flaw, and one they readily admit: how do soldiers define themselves. Only one voice is represented in their analysis and it is decidedly influenced by the class of some of the subjects they used in their analysis.<sup>5</sup> Because many soldiers were illiterate and did not leave accounts of their life, it is hard to know how they defined themselves.

Louisbourg's soldiers provide some insight as to how they possibly viewed themselves. Obviously, a wage earner is one perspective. Some like the stone-cutter Germain Le Parisien possibly identified more with the skilled trade he possessed than as a soldier. The large numbers of unskilled and skilled labourers employed on Louisbourg's fortifications performed no duties as a soldier, thus, it is hard to say if the influence of the military had any sway on how they self-identified or collectively identified. The young Christophe Chiquelier demonstrates another way to define soldiers: an adventurer or experience seeker. Allan Greer's study of the 1744 mutiny does show that they accepted their lot as soldiers. Greer identifies the demands of the soldiers as indicators that they had no qualms about military discipline, wages, the hardships of service, or even the dangers of war.<sup>6</sup> They were soldiers that wanted justice, more accurately and explicitly

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<sup>4</sup> André Corvisier, *L'armée Française de la fin du XVIIe siècle au ministère de Choiseul*, 1: 400.

<sup>5</sup> Using opinions gleaned from Granville Sharpe's *Tracts Concerning the Ancient and Only True Legal Means of National Defence, by a Free Militia* attests to the class bias of contemporary views. See: Lynch and McCormack, "Defining Soldiers: Britain's Military, c.1740-1815," 148-149.

justice in the form of monetary compensation. Greer asserts there is a deeper meaning to their quest for justice implied by the historical record. They, as Greer argues, wanted “to be treated with the respect due to a soldier.”<sup>7</sup> Greer argues that the procedures they used denote their collective identity as soldiers. Assembling in the barracks courtyard to the beat of the drum, while supervised by corporals, signals to Greer that their actions and their demands were “eminently soldier-like and consistent with their limited objectives.”<sup>8</sup>

The definitions of soldiers are many and there are many paths to empire. The demands of Louisbourg’s soldiers in December of 1744 do suggest one thing, a side to them often not mentioned – they were humans with human needs. They wanted what all humans want: warmth and shelter (the demand for firewood), food (the demand for rations), and fair treatment (the demand for reimbursement of funds for goods not received). In battle or on the construction site, their bodies often paid the physical toll of empire building, and they wanted fair and just treatment for this. But regardless of how these soldiers are defined, whether combatants or labourers, they have one definition that fits them all: empire builders.

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<sup>6</sup> Greer, “Mutiny at Louisbourg, December 1744,” 78-79.

The soldiers demanded:

1. An increase in the issue of firewood and the return to the soldiers of five cords of wool confiscated for theft
2. Redistribution of rations that some men missed on the raid to Canso and the later expedition against Port Royal.
3. Reimbursement of the clothing deduction that was taken from the wages of more than 100 French recruits who arrived in 1741 but never received the uniforms it was supposed to pay for.

<sup>7</sup> Greer, “Mutiny at Louisbourg, December 1744,” 101.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



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