NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Department of Tourism, Culture & Recreation
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, Newfoundland
Canada A1B 4J6
Telephone: 1-800-563-6353
Facsimile: 709-729-0057
Internet: info@tourism.gov.nl.ca

EXPLORING OUR PAST

Archaeological wonders of Newfoundland and Labrador
Peoples of the Land and Sea

The ocean, with its abundance of fish, seals, and other marine life, has always been the primary source of food to the people of this province. Caribou herds, small game, freshwater fish, plants, and fall berries added further flavours and nutrients to the diet. Both the land and the sea provided raw materials for clothing, tents, watercraft, and for the tools to manufacture them. The natural environment was a great source of spiritual inspiration for past peoples of this province. This is illustrated by the animal effigies created by Maritime Archaic Indians 5000 years B.P. (Before Present), by the intricate amulets carved by the Dorset Eskimo 2000 B.P., and by the bone pendants made by Beothuk 1000 years later. Today, the meeting of the land and the sea continues to inspire the province’s renowned artistic community.

Most of the archaeological sites in the province have been found along the coast. Recent archaeological surveys in the interior of the Island of Newfoundland, and in Labrador, show that prehistoric peoples also spent certain parts of the year living in the interior. The Europeans who arrived from Iceland, Greenland, Spain, France, England, and Ireland tended to camp or settle along the rich but rugged coastline.

Introduction

Newfoundland and Labrador has always been a wonderful destination for “time travellers.” For students of history and archaeology there are artifacts and sites that predate the pyramids. Interpretation centres and active archaeological digs across the province provide insights into the lives of the earliest inhabitants of this province and of more recent settlers.

This travel guide is designed to assist those interested in exploring the province’s historic and prehistoric past. The map shows the locations of archaeological attractions, while the text describes the highlights visitors can expect at each site.

Archaeological knowledge is constantly changing. New evidence is continually being uncovered, and many of the province’s sites are the subject of ongoing study. Many more sites await investigation and interpretation before they can yield clues to the past.

Every effort has been made to provide current, accurate information in this guide; but as with most documents that report on scientific endeavours, it risks becoming dated as new finds and knowledge change the way we view the past. Although some of the interpretations may change, Newfoundland and Labrador will continue to provide an exciting adventure for students of the past.

Come explore, come discover, come enjoy.

The Prehistoric Period - The First North Americans

Archaeological research suggests that humans from the Asian continent first came to North America over 20,000 B.P. They arrived via a narrow corridor of land across what is now the Bering Strait to Alaska. They came in the wake of herds of wildlife, including woolly mammoths, bison, and horse. Between 18,000 and 14,000 years B.P. the glaciers of the last Ice Age began to melt, and the land bridge was covered by the rising sea.

The first North Americans, the Palaeo-Indians, spread as far as the southern tip of South America. Over time, some of the animals of the Ice Age, including woolly mammoths and the giant beaver, disappeared, their extinction possibly hastened by the improving weapons of the Palaeo-Indians. In Labrador, the disappearing glaciers gave way to the first grasses and bushes such as alder. In time birch and conifers of the northern forests sprang up. Frozen lakes became fishing grounds and canoe routes, and the offshore soil deposited by retreating glaciers created one of the world’s richest marine areas.
Maritime Archaic Period

The first inhabitants of the province were part of an Archaic Indian culture that inhabited eastern North America between about 8000 - 3500 B.P. The Archaic Indians first arrived in southern Labrador from the Maritime provinces and the north shore of the St. Lawrence. These people had a strong relationship with the sea and depended heavily on its resources, hence the name “Maritime” Archaic Indians. They eventually inhabited the entire Labrador coast reaching northernmost Labrador about 5000 B.P. One burial site at L’Anse-Amour dates back approximately 7500 years, making it the oldest known burial mound in North America. By about 4000 B.P. they also occupied much of the coast of the Island of Newfoundland. Over thirty years of archaeological study offers a picture of a people with an evolved spiritual and material culture. Stone spear and knife blades, bone toggling harpoons, and marine animal effigies suggest a people fully adapted to the sea. Although no direct evidence exists, it is very likely that the Maritime Archaic Indians had sturdy watercraft. Also not preserved are the products of hideworking such as clothing, tents, and sinew lines for tools, all so vital to survival. The care taken with burials and the nature of grave goods during this period suggest a strong reverence for the individual in both life and death as well as a clear sense of the individual’s relationship with nature. Maritime Archaic occupation of Labrador gave way to that of the Intermediate Indians whose sites are dated between 3500 to 2500 B.P. Much remains to be studied of the Intermediate Indians, including their connection, if any, with the Maritime Archaic Indians. Their site locations suggest familiarity with both the sea and interior environments.

Early Palaeoeskimo Period: the Pre-Dorset Eskimo

Approximately 4000 B.P. the Early Palaeoeskimo expanded southward into Labrador from the high Arctic, eventually disappearing around 2000 B.P. The term Palaeoeskimo literally means “prehistoric Eskimo.” The early Palaeoeskimo introduced arctic technology and culture to the Labrador coast and in time to Newfoundland. In contrast to later Dorset Eskimo, the early Palaeoeskimo had an economy that focused on marine resources but that also had an important terrestrial component. Their material culture remains include distinctive tools such as the side-notched endblade and small, oval soapstone lamps. The occupation dates and site locations suggest that these early Eskimo expanded into Labrador at the expense of their Maritime Archaic Indian predecessors. In fact, by about 3500 B.P. there is no longer any evidence of Maritime Archaic presence in northern and central Labrador. Archaeologists do not know whether this was due to extinction or to retreat, either southwards or into the interior. It is known, however, that the Pre-Dorset Eskimo heralded an extensive and distinctive occupation of Labrador and Newfoundland. Exhibits at Port au Choix and The Newfoundland Museum in St. John’s give further insight into this period.
Late Palaeoeskimo Period - The Dorset

A second wave of Arctic-adapted people expanded southwards into Labrador around 2400 B.P. The Dorset Eskimo are named after Cape Dorset in Baffin Island where their artifacts were first found. They were more intensely marine-oriented than the early Palaeoeskimo. Their sites are found throughout coastal Labrador and Newfoundland. Dorset Eskimo marine specialization is reflected in site locations on outermost islands, which permitted better access to the harp seal migrations. It is also reflected in the bone remains, mainly of harp seal, from the middens (refuse dumps) at these sites and by stone and bone tools such as harpoons. Perhaps the most tantalizing Dorset artifacts are carved bone, antler, ivory, and soapstone figurines of polar bears, humans, and birds, many of which are on display at The Newfoundland Museum. For unknown reasons, the Dorset disappeared from the Island of Newfoundland around 1000 B.P. They continued to occupy central and northern Labrador for another 600 years. About A.D. 1400 a third wave of Arctic people arrived in northern Labrador. These were the Thule (pronounced "too-lee") Eskimo, an Alaskan people who populated the entire Canadian Arctic and Greenland. They are named after a place in western Greenland where their artifacts were first identified.

Interpretation centres focusing on the Late Palaeoeskimo can be found at Cape Ray, Port au Choix, Fleur de Lys, and Burnside.

Recent Indian Period

The term Recent Indian refers to Indian groups of the late prehistoric period (about 1700 - 500 B.P.) who inhabited Newfoundland and Labrador prior to the arrival of Europeans. In Labrador, Recent Indian archaeological sites are distinguished by the nearly exclusive use of a translucent stone called Ramah chert. This unique stone was used by most prehistoric peoples in the province. The only known source is outcrops in Ramah Bay, northern Labrador. The Recent Indians were great travellers and traders as shown by the presence of Ramah chert at sites throughout the Labrador peninsula, the north shore of the St. Lawrence, and as far south as New England.

The presence of items such as porcupine quills on the Island of Newfoundland (there are no porcupines in Newfoundland) further highlights a tradition of trading and technology transfer. In Newfoundland, the Indian groups of the late prehistoric period are distinguished by their use of local cherts and by the production of tiny, intricate points that were probably used as arrow tips for birding or for hunting small game. Both the Labrador and the Newfoundland Indians of this period spent warm times of the year on the coast and moved to the interior to hunt caribou during colder seasons. Recent Indian material can be viewed at the Boyd's Cove interpretation centre, and at the South Dildo Whaling and Sealing Museum.
The Historic Period - The Aboriginal Inhabitants

The arrival of Europeans around 500 B.P. was a time of great change for aboriginal groups. Links with traders and missionaries brought changes in aboriginal economic and social structure. Contact with Europeans also introduced diseases to which they had no resistance. In the case of the Beothuk Indians, European settlement resulted in their extinction.

The Beothuk

The Beothuk (pronounced "bay-aw'-thuk") were the aboriginal inhabitants of the Island of Newfoundland at the time of European contact. The last known Beothuk, Shanawdithit, told her captor, John Peyton, that the Beothuk were descended from Labrador Indians. The Beothuk belonged to the Algonkian-speaking peoples of the Canadian northeast. Beothuk artifacts include stone and bone items plus fragile artifacts of wood and skin that are normally not preserved at sites of earlier cultures. Leather moccasins, bone pendants, baskets, wooden bowls, wooden dolls, shell beads and other artifacts were carefully crafted. The Beothuk were also adept at refashioning European iron nails into hide scrapers and arrow points. The term "Red Indian" was first used to refer to the Beothuk who were known to cover their faces with an iron-rich soil called red ochre. This soil was mixed with animal fat and spread on the body for protection from insects and sunburn. Shanawdithit, who died in St. John's in 1829, left us with numerous words of her language and information about her society and culture. She provided maps showing where her people had encampments together with details of food storage techniques. She also constructed a miniature model of the Beothuk canoe, a distinctive vessel with high bow and stern, and sides that rose high in the middle. Exhibits on the Beothuk can be viewed at the interpretation centre at Boyd's Cove, The Mary March Museum in Grand Falls, and The Newfoundland Museum in St. John's.

The Innu

The Labrador Indians of the contact period, the Innu (historically known as the Naskapi and Montagnais), also belong to the family of Algonkian-speaking peoples. They are descended from Labrador Indians of the late prehistoric period. Their way of life was similar to that of their ancestors as it involved travelling in interior areas for caribou and other resources and to the coast for salmon and trout. The Newfoundland Museum exhibits several pieces of intricately painted caribou hide clothing. In the belief system of these Indians, clothing was imbued with symbolic meaning and special powers by the women who produced it. It was worn by caribou hunters for success in the hunt.

The Inuit

The Inuit are the descendants of the Thule Eskimo. They had an arctic culture that included the snow house or igloo, the kayak boat, the larger umiak boat, the woman's circular-bladed knife or ulu, and the ingenious bow drill. Other distinctive tools of the Inuit included harpoon heads, toggles for dog harnesses, soapstone lamps and pots, and durable seal and caribou skin clothing. As with their Thule ancestors, the Inuit depended on the sea for their livelihood and were adept at both fishing and hunting sea mammal. The Inuit also conducted an inland caribou hunt in the late summer. An exhibit on the Inuit can be seen at The Newfoundland Museum and in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador at the Labrador Institute of Northern Studies.

By the eighteenth century, trading posts and Moravian missions along the north shore of the St. Lawrence and along the Labrador coast brought about significant changes in Innu and Inuit culture. These once nomadic people became more attached to the European stations.
as wage-earning fur trappers, sealers, and traders. Many died of influenza and smallpox. Their bone and stone tools, skin clothing, and skin boats were replaced by European equivalents.

The Mi'kmaq

The Island of Newfoundland is home to another aboriginal group, the Mi'kmaq. The oral traditions and mythology of Nova Scotia's Mi'kmaq recognize the Island of Newfoundland as a hunting ground. Today there are several Newfoundland communities boasting significant Mi'kmaq populations including the Miawpukek Band of Conne River, located on Newfoundland's south coast. Exhibits can be viewed at The Newfoundland Museum.

Rumours of St. Brendan

The legend of St. Brendan (believed to have lived from A.D. 489 - 577) describes how he left Ireland near the end of his life to plant the seeds of Christianity in a far western isle. This legend may have been known by the European explorers, including Columbus and Cabot, who followed Brendan westward nine centuries later. Brendan himself apparently believed he was going to rediscover lands already visited by his predecessors including the early Saint Menoc. Nobody knows the actual fate of St. Brendan; but near L'Anse aux Meadows a lichen-covered stone with a mysterious type of writing has been found. The etching on this stone resembles an ancient Irish or Celtic style of writing that died out in the fifth or sixth century. The stone's covering of slow growing lichens proves that the etchings are hundreds of years old. Legend suggests that it may have been chiselled by St. Brendan the Navigator, the first Irish Saint; but further information is needed before the mystery of this "Ogham" stone is solved.

The First Europeans in the New World - The Norse

The sagas or oral stories of the Norse tell of Bjarni Herjolfsson, a Viking who was blown off course while travelling between Iceland and Greenland in A.D. 986. His reports of "Markland," a heavily wooded coastline, were an irresistible lure to the timber-needy Norse. Leif Eiriksson, or "Leif the Lucky," followed Herjolfsson's route and became the first Norse to land in "Vinland." The sagas describe the settlement of Vinland by at least three Norse expeditions as well as trade and conflict with people they called "Skraelings." At least one child was born in Vinland before the settlement was abandoned. He was Snorri, son of Gudrúd, Leif's sister-in-law, and Thorvald Karlsfjö. In 1960, the Norwegian archaeologist Anne Stine Ingstad and her adventurer husband Helge Ingstad followed clues from the sagas that brought them across the Atlantic to L'Anse aux Meadows. There they were led to a possible site by local fisherman George Decker.
Several years of excavation, some in conjunction with the Canadian Parks Service, resulted in the discovery of artifacts that are indeed of Norse origin as well as the structural remains of a small Norse settlement. This settlement may or may not be the Vinland of the Norse sagas, but it is without a doubt of Norse origin. L'Anse aux Meadows was designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1978. Reconstructed Norse sod houses and an interpretation centre tell the story of the women and men who braved the North Atlantic in their small open boats ten centuries ago.

**European Explorers and Settlers**

Small but seaworthy fishing vessels from European harbours such as Bristol, San Sebastian, and Lisbon, may have rediscovered the Island of Newfoundland in the late 15th century while in search of new fishing grounds. If so, these fishermen would have been acquainted with the “New-Founde-Lande” before Columbus or John Cabot. Cabot’s 1497 voyage westward across the Atlantic was the first historically documented trip of the age to North America. Cabot’s voyage, his reported landing at Bonavista, and his exploration of the New World added fuel to the flame of exploration lit by Columbus. In 1500 the Portuguese explorer Gaspar Corte Real sailed into St. John’s Harbour on St. John’s Day, giving the sheltered harbour its name.

Several cities in eastern North America, including St. John’s, claim to be “the oldest city in North America.” While some cities may boast slightly older incorporation documents, there is little doubt that the most easterly harbour in North America, located closest to the richest fishing grounds in the known world, was used many years before any other North American site. In 1527 an Englishman named John Rutt visiting St. John’s as part of an exploratory voyage, mailed the first letter from the New World to the Old World on an outgoing vessel.

In that same year King Henry VIII of England commanded a merchant named Bute to form a colony in Newfoundland. By 1504 French fishermen were using Ferryland Harbour as a base for their summer fishery. This place was already known to the Portuguese who had named the harbour Forillon. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the French and the Basques used Placentia’s sheltered harbour and its stone beach for drying cod. The Basques in particular carried out an extensive cod and whale fishery. Their sites are found along the southern and western coasts of the Island of Newfoundland, along the coast of southern Labrador, and along the shores of the St. Lawrence. In 1610 John Guy from Bristol established a plantation in Cupers Cove, today’s Cupids. In 1611 pirate Peter Easton terrorized fishermen from his headquarters in Harbour Grace and eventually from Ferryland. In 1620 “The Mayflower” landed at Renews, on the southern shore of the Avalon Peninsula, where it picked up water and supplies before sailing on to Plymouth Rock. When these “founding fathers of America” arrived at their more southerly landfall, they were met by Squantom, an English-speaking American Indian who had been taught English in Newfoundland. The story of Squantom is an interesting one. It is believed he was captured by European sailors and sold into slavery in Spain. After escaping captivity he found passage in a ship returning to the New World and made his way to John Guy’s colony in Cupers Cove in 1616 where the Governor’s wife taught him English. It was the teachings and kindness Squantom experienced in Newfoundland that helped inspire him to aid the ill-prepared settlers of the Mayflower.
In the same year as “The Mayflower’s” voyage, Sir George Calvert, Lord Baltimore, was granted a charter for the colony of Avalon; and in 1621 his first settlers arrived in what is now Ferryland to build houses and start a plantation. The French founded their first Newfoundland colony at Placentia in 1662 during the reign of Louis XIV. From Plaisance, or Placentia, the French protected their fishing grounds and established a presence in Newfoundland that continues today with French place names, French-speaking communities in the St. George’s Bay area of the Island, and with the French-owned islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon. These two islands are a short ferry trip from Fortune.

Newfoundland and Labrador boasts many historic sites commemorating the people and events that shaped the history of this province and the continent. Castle Hill National Historic Park in Placentia and Signal Hill National Historic Park in St. John’s feature artifacts, ruins, and outstanding interpretive information about the early historic period. Travellers can visit the archaeological excavations and exhibits in Ferryland. At Cupids, the archaeological excavation and community museum are open to visitors. In the picturesque community of Trinity, visitors can view an excavation and visit a British military installation. In Labrador, sites to visit include the National Historic Site at Red Bay, which tells the story of the Basque whalers. At Battle Harbour, an early fishing community is in the process of being restored. Moravian missionary stations can be visited in northern Labrador at Hopedale, Nain, and Hebron.

### Time Travelling Destinations

This section describes the sites of interest mentioned in the preceding text. Sites are listed from west to east for the Island of Newfoundland. For Labrador, they are listed from south to north.

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**Island of Newfoundland**

**Cape Ray**

(Route 308, off Route 1)

This is the site of a Middle Dorset settlement first excavated in the early 1970s. An interpretation centre at Cape Ray, 10 km north of Port aux Basques, has exhibits based on the archaeological site.

**Port au Choix National Historic Park**

(Route 436, off Route 430)

In 1967 a group of workers in the fishing community of Port au Choix were excavating a basement when they unearthed a mass of bones, tools, and weapons. The following year archaeologists investigating this find discovered three ancient cemeteries and scores of artifacts. These were all determined to belong to the Maritime Archaic people who occupied this site between 4200 and 3500 B.P. More recent excavations at nearby Phillips Garden have uncovered the remains of both Early and Late Palaeoeskimo peoples.

Today the Port au Choix area boasts over 20 known archaeological sites. An interpretation centre in the community tells the exciting story of the excavations and of the area’s early inhabitants.

**L’Anse aux Meadows**

(Route 436, off Route 430)

This National Historic Park and World Heritage Site commemorates the earliest evidence of European presence in the New World. Excavations have recovered evidence of three sod houses, four workshops, and an iron working smithy. Norse artifacts, reconstructed sod houses, and a well designed visitor centre are worth the trip up the beautiful Great Northern Peninsula.
Fleur de lys
(at the end of Route 410)

This National Historic Site is a soapstone outcrop quarried by Palaeoeskimo peoples. Negative impressions of soapstone lamps, probably made by the Dorset Eskimo 2000 B.P., can clearly be seen on the face of the outcrop. Although this site has yet to be developed, visitors interested in a tour are welcomed by the community.

Red Indian Lake
(Route 370)

This stop features a small beach where the Beothuk once hunted and fished. There is a small reconstructed Beothuk hut with artifacts and a scenic trail that leads to reconstructed Beothuk mamateeks and other structures.

Grand Falls-Windsor - Mary March Regional Museum / Beothuk Village
(off Route 1)

The Mary March Regional Museum in Grand Falls-Windsor is named in honour of a Beothuk woman, who in her own language was called Demasduit. The museum traces 5000 years of human history in central Newfoundland through a series of informative exhibits. Behind the museum a local development group has reconstructed a Beothuk village. This site features winter and summer mamateeks and a sweat lodge.

Boyd’s Cove
(Route 340)

Located along the route to Twillingate and Fogo, Boyd’s Cove was the site of a large Beothuk encampment dated from about A.D. 1650 to 1720. Eleven housepits have been identified at the site. The artifacts on display in

the visitor centre are from the excavations that took place here in the 1980s. The beads, bones, iron, and stone tools reflect a people in transition between traditional culture and European-influenced culture. Visitors can view the original habitation area and explore the trail system.

Burnside
(off Route 310)

Burnside features a small interpretation centre where visitors will often see archaeologists at work. Two of the better known sites in this area are “The Quarry,” Newfoundland’s largest aboriginal chert quarry, and “The Beaches,” the largest known Beothuk settlement. Both can be reached by boat from Burnside. Artifacts at these sites and others along the coast demonstrate that this area was used by the Maritime Archaic Indians, by Palaeoeskimo peoples, and by Indian groups of the late prehistoric period.

Trinity
(Route 230)

Visitors can drive out to Admiral’s Point to the site of an 18th - 19th century British military installation with interpretive trails. An excavation at the Lester-Garland premises in the town of Trinity can also be viewed.
Dildo South
(Route 80)
The excavation of a Recent Indian site at nearby Russell's Point recovered numerous artifacts, including distinctive tiny chert points. Some of these finds are on display at the Whaling and Sealing Museum in Dildo South. The excavation of a Dorset Eskimo site on Dildo Island is accessible by local tour boats.

Cupid’s
(Route 70)
Newfoundland’s first official European colony was started by John Guy at Cupers Cove, or Cupids, in 1610. Ongoing excavations of what may in fact be John Guy’s colony are accessible to visitors. During the summer an exhibit can be viewed in the Cupids Community Museum.

The Newfoundland Museum
(285 Duckworth Street, St. John’s)
The Newfoundland Museum features exhibits on the Newfoundland environment, the science of archaeology, and the province’s cultural history. Numerous artifacts from sites around the province are on display. These include Dorset carvings from Saglek, a 4000-year-old carving of a killer whale from Port au Choix, and the 7500-year-old bird bone whistle found in a burial at L’Anse-Amour.

Signal Hill, St. John’s
The view from Signal Hill makes this National Historic Park one of Canada’s favourite attractions. Archaeological studies have provided important details concerning 17th- and 18th-century military structures at the mouth of the harbour. An excellent interpretive trail is in place, and an interpretation centre is located just below the summit. Signal Hill was also the site where Guglielmo Marconi received the first wireless transatlantic signal in 1901. The impressive Cabot Tower standing on Signal Hill was built in 1897 to celebrate both the 400th anniversary of John Cabot’s arrival in Newfoundland and Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee.

Ferryland
(Route 10)
The colony of Avalon was founded by Lord Baltimore in 1621, more than a decade before the establishment of his well known Maryland colony. Today archaeologists of the Colony of Avalon Archaeology Project are excavating the remains of the 17th-century settlement around Ferryland’s inner harbour. Here you can view the ongoing excavations, see the structures that have been uncovered, and visit the nearby laboratory. A visitor centre provides historical information about the site and exhibits some of the artifacts uncovered at the dig. The Ferryland Community Museum provides further information on the early settlement of the southern shore.

Placentia
(Route 100)
Castle Hill National Historic Park is the site of French and English fortifications built in the 17th and 18th centuries to protect the colony of Plaisance and its rich fishery. Plaisance, or Placentia as the English renamed it, was a focal point in the struggle between the French and English for control of the lucrative Newfoundland fishery. The restored fort offers a panoramic view of Placentia Bay, while the Park’s interpretation centre tells the story of the
Basque, French, and English peoples who once occupied the area. Settlers, soldiers, fishermen, merchants, and pirates are all featured in the centuries-old story of Plaisance, the former French Capital of Newfoundland.

**Labrador**

**L'Anse-Amour**  
(Off Route 510)

The sand dune landscape of L'Anse-Amour was favoured by the Maritime Archaic Indians, and many of their artifacts have been found here. Maritime Archaic Indians buried an adolescent child here 7500 B.P. in what is the oldest known burial mound in North America. Informative signage and a small interpretive trail commemorate the site of the burial. Artifacts are on display in the Newfoundland Museum on Duckworth Street in St. John's.

**Red Bay**  
(End of Route 510)

By 1550 the Basques had established a major whaling enterprise in the northwest Atlantic that included the Strait of Belle Isle and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. At its peak over 1000 men worked at the Red Bay site harvesting right whale, bowhead, and perhaps other whale species in order to supply oil to the lamps of Europe. This activity created the largest 16th-century industrial complex in North America. Today it is often referred to as the World Whaling Capital of the era.

In the early 1970s historical geographer Selma Huxley Barkham discovered information on the location of Red Bay and many other Basque whaling stations while studying 16th-century Basque legal documents in northern Spain. The Canadian Parks Service and Memorial University carried out underwater and land-based archaeological excavations at Red Bay throughout the 1980s. They uncovered evidence of a substantial whaling operation. A Basque cemetery was located as well as three sunken galleons and several oil rendering ovens. The interpretation centre features the story of Red Bay, information on the whale species, and exhibits artifacts recovered from both the land and underwater excavations. Tours to Saddle Island, where many of the shore stations were located, are also available.

**The Labrador Coast**  
(by coastal boat)

Much of the Labrador coast has been archaeologically surveyed, and sites number in the thousands. Few of these sites have been excavated, and fewer still are part of ongoing interpretive programs such as community museums. Nevertheless, it is clear that many of the communities the coastal boat visits were once places inhabited by prehistoric peoples. The islands, capes, and points of land the coastal boat passes were also places of encampment for Labrador's Aboriginal peoples. The *Newfoundland and Labrador Travel Guide* can be consulted for places of interest along this spectacular coast.

The small island community of Battle Harbour, situated just north of Red Bay, was where John Slade and Co. maintained a merchant station between 1775-1871. In 1893 Dr. Wilfred Grenfell established his first hospital here. Over seventeen buildings have been reconstructed by the Battle Harbour Historic Trust. Presently open to visitors is a restored doctor's cottage and the home of the Issac Smith family. The Issac Smith residence, built in 1834, has been occupied continuously since then. It is thought to be the oldest standing residence in Labrador. Also restored is the Anglican Church of St. James the Apostle. Visitors must plan their stay around the coastal boat's schedule.
### World Events

- The last Ice Age ends 12,000 BP (before present)
- Great pyramid at Giza finished 4525 BP
- Trojan War 3195 BP
- Alexander the Great conquers Egypt 2327 BP
- Death of Julius Caesar 44 BC
- Normans conquer England 1066
- Columbus sails to America 1492
- American Revolution 1776
- Canadians attack Washington, burn White House 1814
- Canadian Confederation 1867
- World War 1 1914-1918
- World War 2 1939-1945
- Neil Armstrong walks on moon 1969
- The start of the 21st Century 2001

### Newfoundland & Labrador Happenings

- 8900 BP First Maritime Archaic remains in Labrador
- 7500 BP L'Anse-Amour burial mound
- 5000 BP Maritime Archaic people in Newfoundland
- 3500 BP Palaeoeskimo people in Labrador
- 2800 BP Dorset culture spreads through Newfoundland and Labrador
- 1875 BP Recent Indians move into Newfoundland and Labrador
- AD 575 Ireland's St. Brendan arrives Newfoundland?
- 1000 Vikings settle L'Anse aux Meadows
- 1347 Last known Norse voyage to Vinland
- 1497 Cabot reaches Newfoundland
- 1540 Basques at Red Bay supply oil to Europe
- 1583 Sir Humphrey Gilbert claims Newfoundland thus starting the British Empire
- 1620 Mayflower lands at Renews, goes on to Plymouth Rock
- 1629 Baltimore leaves Ferryland for Maryland
- 1762 Last battle of Seven Years War in North America
- 1829 Shanawdithit, the last Beothuk, dies
- 1900 Joseph Smallwood, Newfoundland's first Premier, born
- 1901 Marconi receives first transatlantic wireless signal
- 1919 Alcock and Brown are first to fly the Atlantic
- 1949 Newfoundland joins Canada
- 1997 Newfoundland celebrates Cabot Quincentennial (500 years of European settlement)
- 1999 50th Anniversary of Newfoundland in Canada
- 2000 Newfoundland Celebrates "Viking 2000"
Other Newfoundland and Labrador Time Travelling Destinations

The entire province is an adventure for anybody with an appreciation of the challenges faced by people in the past. Many aspects of our history and prehistory may never be uncovered. The famines and diseases, songs and music, stories and art are lost to the past. Other treasures can, however, be found around the province. For example, there are community museums and interpretation centres featuring artifacts from shipwrecks and archaeological digs, the Red Bay area boasts the remains of a French sealing and fur trading centre, and Random Island has rock etchings from an incident where pirates held settlers hostage. There are dozens of other places featuring stories and treasures from years ago.

Wherever you travel in the province, you will meet people proud of their heritage and eager to share their knowledge of Newfoundland and Labrador’s special places. This province’s museums, interpretation centres, and historic vistas are all waiting to assist with your time travels.

Additional Resources & Suggested Readings:

For further information on planning your visit to this province’s sites of historic and archaeological significance, consult the Newfoundland and Labrador Travel Guide. This annual guide lists all accommodations, tours, museums, and other attractions.

To contact the provincial Resource Archaeologist, call 709-729-2462.

Museum Notes, Information Sheets from the Newfoundland Museum. St. John’s, Newfoundland.


Archeology in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1993 Newfoundland Studies, special topics issue, Volume 9, Number 2.

Credits:

Written by: David Snow, Wildland Tours and the province’s Historic Resources Division
Maps by: Gary McManus
Illustrations by: Martin Darmonkow
Cover Illustration by: Ventzeslav Vesselinov
Cover photo by: K. Bruce Lane

This document was written in 1995. Since that time there have been numerous contributions to what is known about this province’s archaeological history.