Historic Sackville: The Early Years

SACKVILLE IN ITS FOUNDING MOMENTS

Sackville exists within a valley. The Little Sackville River and Sackville River provided the earliest settlers with fish like salmon and trout, as well as a needed supply of drinkable water.

Early European settlers to the area brought more than iron pots, mirrors and trinkets with them. The Mi'kmaq name for the Sackville area was called "Aloosoolawakade" meaning "a place of the measles." Named after an epidemic of measles that resulted in the death of early settlers, the illness ravaged the Mi'kmaq and led to the deaths of many men, women and children. The Mi'kmaq were subjected to many unfamiliar diseases.

In the 1600's the Acadian French, from their settlements at Minas Basin and beyond, made their way through the valley we know as Sackville today.

Our valley was a long and well-traveled route long before the English arrived in force to found Halifax as a counter to the French at Louisbourg in Cape Breton.

THE NAMING OF SACKVILLE

In August of 1749, **Captain John Gorham**, acting on orders from **Governor Edward Cornwallis**, established a fort named **Fort Sackville** with the support of Mohawk rangers. Fort Sackville was located at the head of the Bedford Basin.

The purpose of Fort Sackville was to protect the newly founded city of Halifax. By guarding what is known today as the Sackville River (which flowed/flows into the basin), it would prevent attacks from enemy aggressors of the time period – the French and the Mi'kmaq people. Soon after, grants of land became available around the fort.
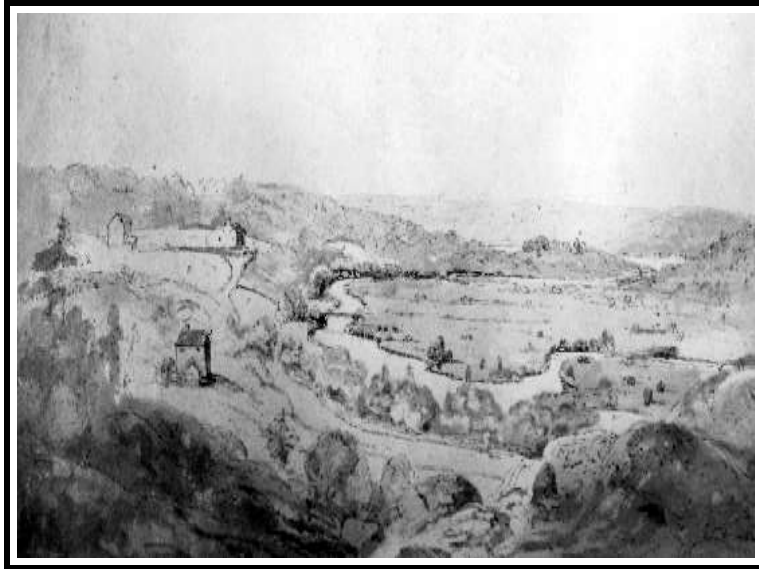
There are two popular theories as to how Sackville received its name. The first theory suggests that Sackville was named in honour of **Lionel Cranfield Sackville, the first Duke of Dorset.** He would later be named the first Duke of Dorset. Among his loves was poetry. In his collection of writings is a poem which described what life was like in hell. He lived from 1688 to 1765.

The second theory is that Sackville was named after **Viscount Sackville**, a man who commanded British forces in the year 1758. It stands to reason, however that the community was actually named for the Duke of Dorset, as Viscount Sackville did not do anything worthy of recognition until nine years after the founding of Fort Sackville.

The Acadians constructed the road out of Halifax to Fort Sackville in 1761.

In December of 1792, Fort Sackville was advertised for sale. Included were two houses and stables.

Established in 1804 were the parish and township of Sackville.

The Earl of Dalhousie commissioned John E. Woolford to sketch Sackville in 1817. Pictured above is one of his illustrations.

THE TWO GREAT ROADS

Sackville referred to a broad area, and not just the areas that we know as Lower, Middle and Upper Sackville today, but Bedford, Beaver Bank, Kinsac, Lucasville and outwards towards Windsor Junction.

Sackville became especially important in the days of stagecoach travel. A line passed through Sackville starting in 1816.

Fultz House Museum's original stagecoach replica on the grounds of the Fultz House Museum.

Located on land which today marks the beginning of Sackville, was the meeting place of where Nova Scotia's two "Great Roads" met. The roads are known as the Cobequid Road and the Old Sackville Road today. They once marked the point where the road from Halifax divided to take travelers to either Truro by way of the Cobequid Road or to Windsor via the Old Sackville Road. As such, Sackville became a traditional stopping place.

In 1858, Bennett Fultz, a wheelwright and cabinet maker, purchased the piece of land opposite Twelve Mile House from his cousin William. On the property, Bennett built a 20 by 20 foot house (which is home to the Fultz House Museum today) for himself and for his wife, Mary Robinson. As their family grew to eight children, their small house was soon expanded to a full two-storey building with a dining room and summer kitchen.

The Fultzes took advantage of their busy intersection by operating a post office from Mary's kitchen window. Herman, one of the Fultz children, became a talented iron worker, operating a successful blacksmith shop across the street. With enterprising Fultzes on each corner of the intersection, there can be no doubt of this family's influence in Sackville's early days.

HOW OUR COMMUNITIES GOT THEIR NAMES

Initially **Beaver Bank** was primarily a farming community, but eventually forestry jobs became an important economic engine to the community. The name Beaver Bank most likely received its name from a beaver dam in the area. William Nicholson was the first person granted land in 1813; he received 550 acres. In July of 1816, William, George, Anthony and Daniel Fultz were granted 1350 acres of land near the boundary between Halifax and Hants counties.

The community of **Bedford** was once a part of Sackville, and was home to Fort Sackville. In April of 1856 the name changed from Sackville to Bedford, after the railway was completed. The name of Bedford is in memory of John Russell, the fourth Duke of Bedford (1710-1771). Russell was the Secretary of State for the colonies in 1749.

Located on the Cobequid Road, **Beech Hill** was established after the War of 1812. The area was considered so high, stagecoach lines had to travel around it to reach their destination points.

Kinsac is a tiny community located on the west side of Lake Kinsac. Originally it was considered part of the Beaver Bank district. A land grant in 1810 was issued to John Fleiger and John Pleasant. After the railway was constructed towards the end of the 1800's, Kinsac developed into its own settlement and became a separate community neighbouring Beaver Bank. A number of residents utilized the rail service to commute to Halifax for work. The origin of the name Kinsac is unknown. However, the word may be derived from a Mi'kmaq word meaning "running water."

Lakeview is on the northwest side of Rocky Lake. The name Lakeview was given because of the excellent view of the lakes that surround the site. Lots overlooking the lake were sold in 1891 in the hopes that a town would be established, but the area has remained mostly rural in nature and has kept its rustic charm. Farming and lumbering were once its primary industries.

The community of **Lucasville** exists along the Lucasville Road between the communities of Sackville and Hammonds Plains. It was named after an early pioneer and settler by the name of James Lucas. Originally the area was referred to as Lucas Settlement. Near the beginning of the 1800's, a number of Black families settled along the road. They include the surnames of Kelsie, Olive, Parsons and William. Over the years many families have called Lucasville home.

Also, many businesses have operated proudly in the Lucasville area, including the lumber mill. Farming and the forestry industries were the lifeblood of the community for much of its early existence.

Windsor Junction is north of the Bedford Basin and is located between Second and Third Lake. It owes its existence to the railroads. The railway lines from Windsor, Truro and Dartmouth had a junction here. The name was given before the railway line to Dartmouth was built, when the main line when the mainline was the railway to Truro, and the Annapolis Valley Railway was a branch line, hence the name Windsor Junction.