



By IRIS SANDERSON JONES

CAPE BRETON ISLAND, N.C. — Adventurers have been discovering Cape Breton Island for nearly 400 years, but very few of them have come from the Midwest.

Explorers John and Sebastian Cabot landed here in 1497. Basque fishermen and French merchants occupied Fortress Louisbourg 50 years before the American Revolution.

The Scots came in the 19th century, because it looked so much like the highlands of home, and firmly established the bagpipe and the tartan as the local cultural symbols. You see the words Claid Mhe Fhàilte everywhere; it means One Hundred Thousand Welcomes.

Some of these adventures probably came off-season, which makes perfect sense in this Canadian maritime province. It is still an undeveloped tourist destination, for better and for worse. This means that you get all the pleasures of picturesque fishing villages when the accommodations are easy to get, the prices are low and all you really have to worry about is the weather.

NOVA SCOTIANS say that fall is the most beautiful time of year, if it doesn't rain. A quick look at the map will show this province, hanging by a peninsula, with its coastline roads describing a figure eight, like a bow-tie gone askew. At the bottom of the tie's knot is the only major city, Halifax, which is built on the second largest natural harbor in the world. (The largest is Sydney, Australia.)

The tourist bureau has divided the province into nine clearly marked trails. The Evangeline Trail curves northwest into the country where Longfellow's Acadians were evicted by the British.

The Cabot Trail curves northeast to Cape Breton Island. The Lighthouse Trail and the Marine trail go east and west from Halifax into some of the tiny fishing villages that crochet Nova Scotia's 4,625 miles of coastline.

Tourism is usually a combination of government and private forces. A short season, and very lightly populated communities, make it difficult for any one area to promote tourism on a strictly commercial basis.

THIS MEANS that you won't find a lot of fast food restaurants beside the road, and you will sometimes search vainly for a place to have breakfast. It also means you have this land of picturesque villages in its natural state, without the slickness sometimes brought on by tourism.

Parks Canada, the Canadian equivalent of the National Park Service of the United States, provides some of the finest tourist attractions, at little or no

cost to the public, in museums, restorations and parklands.

This is particularly true at Fortress Louisbourg, which has been meticulously reconstructed from existing foundations and old plans, and on the Cabot Trail in Cape Breton Island.

I drove the Cabot Trail from Alexander Graham Bell's summer home at Baddeck, through the coastal fishing villages that border Cape Breton Highlands National Park, to one of the provinces' three government resort hotels and to the Gaelic College of Fine Arts and Highland Crafts. Alexander Graham Bell spent the last 30 summers of his life, and did most of his flight experiments, on the scenic bay at Baddeck, where Parks Canada has built a fine museum in his memory.

The museum shows his life in Scotland, Canada and the United States, with imaginative displays of both the inventor and the experimenter. A special room houses the hydrofoil, which he developed here to a speed of 70 mph in 1919.

Bell's grandchildren still live here in a house on the seacoast, near his grave.

THE CABOT TRAIL leads you out of Baddeck and along the scenic Margaree River to Margaree Harbor, with fascinating little museums along the way to distract you: the Salmon Museum, Heritage Museum, Museum of Musical Instruments and others.

The houses of fishermen make flat patches of color against the rough grass hills that edge the sea north to Cheticamp, a French fishing village visible for 15 miles across an arm of the sea.

The trail winds through continuous highland vistas from here, through the national park, to Ingonish, where you should stop for accommodations or at



Dressed in period costume, Gerry Lann stands guard outside Fortress Louisbourg. (Photo by Iris Sanderson Jones)

least a meal at the Keltic Lodge.

Keltic Lodge, Liscombe Lodge on the Marine Trail east of Halifax, and the Pines, on the Evangeline Trail near Digby, are the three provincially owned and managed resort hotels of Nova Scotia.

Keltic has a gourmet dining room, golf course, beach, chair lift and good nearby hiking trails, but its major interest to me was a base from which to explore nearby fishing villages.

The fishing boats, which are the insignia of Nova Scotia, are plentiful in the adjacent town of Ingonish and in tiny coves up and down the shoreline.

THE MOST interesting such village is Neil's Landing, half-an-hour's drive to the north, and the smaller nearby village of South Haven.

You can watch the small fishing boats in almost every season. They bring in cod in April, lobster from May

to July, crab from July to September, cod and mackerel until January, when they mend their pots and nets for another season.

The Cabot Trail leads south from Neil's Landing and Keltic Lodge to the Gaelic College of Celtic Folk Arts and Highland Home Crafts, where you can see tartans woven and hear students from all over North America practicing highland music. You can then take the highway southeast to Sydney and on to Louisbourg or southwest across the Canso Causeway to Halifax.

Accommodations and other tourist reservations can be made through a unique service called Check-Inns, a service of the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism. Call toll-free by dialing 1-800-341-4286.

For information on Nova Scotia, contact the Canadian Government Office of Tourism at 963-8666.



travel log

Iris Sanderson Jones

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A mine's no more; faces unforgettable

Last week I told you about Miles McCabe and the Glace Bay Miner's Museum, both of which gave me great pleasure when I visited Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, this summer.

As soon as the story was published, a reader, who is a native of Cape Breton Island, called me with some sad news. The Glace Bay Miners Museum burned to the ground, totally destroying the museum building and its precious exhibits.

Nobody yet knows whether McCabe and his fellow retired miners, who were the tour guides and the beating heart of this unusual museum experience, will be able to rebuild. I will let you know as soon as I know.

McCabe is one of the faces of Cape Breton, but not the only one. I also carry in my mind the face of Clarence Ingersoll of Neil's Landing, who was repairing his lobster traps when we met him there on the rocky shore below the lighthouse.

ANOTHER SUCH face is a school teacher-cum-tour guide from Fortress Louisbourg, whose first name is Margot. I don't remember the surname, but it doesn't matter. Her ancestors came from the original Fortress Louisbourg, on the very spot where she is showing me around the restoration.

Another face is that of Gerry Lann of Louisbourg, who plays the part of the first ensign guarding the Dauphine gate at the fortress.

Nova Scotia has many faces; and not all of them are native-born faces. Willie Krauch, who is famous for his smoked salmon, in Tangier near Halifax, is from an island off the coast of Finland.

HE SMOKES HIS salmon the Finnish way, dipped in salt, washed and dried and smoked for two days in the fire of maple wood.

One of his favorite pastimes is to take a bucket of salmon innards, bones and skin and long scraps of fish, out behind the smokehouse for the seagulls.

The first seagull screeches the news and they fly in squadrons to his side, wing-marking the sky. There they screech and caw and pluck at the expensive salmon at his feet, the same salmon that you and I pay \$12 a pound for when it is smoked.

For your information, and don't tell Mr. Krauch I told you so, the smoked mackerel tastes just as good and is only a couple of dollars a pound.

AND SOMETIMES there are faces without any names, such as the face of the women who served fresh lobster and crab in the Lobster Kettle, a dockside barn of a place across the water from the modern town of Louisbourg.

The live fish are stuffed into a net bag and lowered into a steaming pot. They are served on sturdy cardboard plates with bread rolls and melted butter. In season it's \$3.50 a pound for crab and \$6.50 for lobster.

The final face is my own, with butter running down my chin and crab legs spilling all over the checked oil cloth on the tables, and a sigh of delight.

'Vikings' plays Minnesota

tripping

● UP IN THE AIR

Through Feb. 3, passengers aboard selected American Airlines' flights will not have to miss the thrill of victory or the agony of defeat.

American, for the ninth year running, will show National Football League "Game of the Week Highlights," 30 minutes of "the crash of bone against bone" from the most action-packed NFL game of the week, including division playoffs, conference championships

and the super bowl.

Views from the gridiron will be available on coast-to-coast flights and widebody flights lasting two hours or longer.

● WHALE OF A TIME

Mountain Travel, noted for its uncommon tour packages, has a natural history tour/cruise of Baja, Calif., scheduled for February 1981, to coincide with the migration of the California Gray Whale to Baja's lagoons.

Trip dates are Feb. 19-27. Land cost is \$880. For more information, write to Mountain Travel, 1398 So. Lano Ave., Albany, Calif. 94706; or call 415-527-8100.