



## *Real and Imagined France in Acadia National Park*

By Tim Garrity

*Avec le temps, la fable se grossit, & la vérité se perd.  
With time, the fable is enlarged, and the truth is lost.*

—Voltaire<sup>1</sup>

### *Introduction*

Hear the echoes of France in the place names of Acadia National Park—Sieur de Monts, Lafayette, Saint Sauveur, Huguenot Head, Jesuit Spring, and Frenchman Bay. See the shadows of the Ancien Régime in the carriage road gate lodges at Brown Mountain and Jordan Pond, their architecture designed to resemble buildings on the estates of seventeenth-century French nobility.

George B. Dorr intended that Acadia’s mountains, its “noble granite masses,” would be “true historic documents that will record forever to succeeding generations the human background [of] the Park.”<sup>2</sup> By emphasizing the era when France sought a foothold in the New World, Dorr and his fellow park founders meant to infuse the island’s dramatic land and seascapes with a sense of historical romance.

Above: Detail from the title page of Andre Thevet’s 1555 atlas of maps titled “Cosmographie Universelle, selon les Navigateurs Tant Anciens que Modernes,” from Gallica website <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8447838j/f9.item.zo>. *Courtesy of the Bibliotheque Nationale de France*

Yet while the English were present for decades, Americans for centuries, and Wabanaki for millennia, only a handful of French people lived on Mount Desert Island for more than a few months. Why did the park's founders so emphatically curate a theme of French colonization, writing it into park place names and architecture, when the actual extent of French exploration and settlement on Mount Desert Island was limited? This article describes the extent of the actual French presence during those colonial years, the ways this history was recalled in local tradition, and how influential people made it a central historical theme of the park.

### *What Was the French Presence, Really?*

Explorers like Giovanni da Verrazano in 1524 and Jacques Cartier in 1534 saw Mount Desert Island from a distance (if they saw it at all) while probing the edges of the continent for a passageway to China. They were part of an expanding wave of Europeans who ventured into the Atlantic world during an era of discovery.<sup>3</sup>

During the sixteenth century, competition among European cod fishermen around the Grand Banks drove some French fishermen farther west into the Bay of Fundy and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where they increasingly traded with Indians, exchanging metal goods, like axes, knives and pots, for animal furs for massive profit. Realizing they could make much more money from beaver pelts than cod, French entrepreneurs moved farther up rivers and entered into commercial partnership with Indians. From their posts on North American rivers, French merchants, military officers, government officials, and missionaries gained access to the interior of the immense North American continent.<sup>4</sup>

Religion also inspired the French to explore and conquer new lands. As Father Pierre Biard explained, missionaries wanted “to make a Garden out of the wilderness” and “introduce the order and

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*Thanks to Michele Hiltzik Beckerman, Brad Emerson, Flo Gillich, Willie Granston, Mel Johnson, Earle Shettleworth Jr., Hannah Stevens, the reviewers of this article, and especially Lynn Boulger, who introduced me to French literature, food, and language. Together, we have hiked the Tour du Mont Blanc, biked for a week in Paris—with stops for falafel in the Marais and Vietnamese food near the François-Mitterrand Library—and backpacked for 300 miles in the south along “le Balcon de la Méditerranée.” We have just begun to discover the riches of French history and culture.*

discipline of heaven upon earth.”<sup>5</sup> Ironically, the France that Biard wished to emulate was no Eden at all, but a place bitterly divided in vicious Wars of Religion that pitted Huguenot Protestants against Catholics, fighting over doctrine and wealth.<sup>6</sup> One historian estimates that during the Wars of Religion, from 1559–1598, the population of France, then about twenty million, was reduced by two to four million from military and civil violence and attendant famine and disease.<sup>7</sup> Long-festering grievances between Catholics and Protestants continued to beset French society and the colonists of New France for many decades after the Wars of Religion formally concluded.

Religious warfare was interrupted and the colonial era launched when a new and energetic monarch came to power. After the assassination of Henry III in 1588, a struggle ensued over who would succeed him. The Protestant Henry of Navarre (1553–1610), a leader of Huguenot forces during the religious wars, asserted his claim to the throne against factions who maintained that the king of France must be a Catholic. The matter was finally resolved when Henry acknowledged, “Paris is worth a mass,” and he agreed to convert. Under Henry IV’s reign, the Edict of Nantes established guarantees of toleration for Protestantism. The open warfare between Catholics and Huguenots subsided to a smoldering enmity that persisted for more than a century.<sup>8</sup>

Henry IV commanded the colonization of New France. To launch the expedition, he granted, in 1603, a fur trade monopoly to a nobleman, Pierre du Gua, the Sieur de Monts (1558–1628). A Huguenot, de Monts had fought on Henry’s side during the Wars of Religion.<sup>9</sup> De Monts’ commission allowed him to control the supply and price of all the furs sent back to Europe from the part of America between the fortieth and forty-sixth parallels, from present-day Philadelphia to Prince Edward Island.<sup>10</sup> This arrangement should have been lucrative, but business was undercut by severe hardships, high costs, and by other traders who ignored the monopoly.<sup>11</sup>

The primary French settlement in 1604 was located at Saint Croix Island, near present-day Calais, Maine. From there, the Sieur de Monts dispatched the cartographer Samuel de Champlain to explore Maine’s coastline. Champlain tarried at Mount Desert Island only for three days, from September 5 to September 7, long enough to

explore the shoreline, sketch a map, strike a rock off Otter Cliffs, repair the resulting damage, and give a name to the place: “L’Isle des Monts-deserts.”<sup>12</sup>

The assassination of Henry IV in 1610 threatened to break the truce between the Huguenots and Catholics. The conflict spread to New France, where factions within the company of traders at Saint Croix split along religious lines. A priest and a Protestant minister argued so bitterly that when they both died of scurvy, they were buried in the same grave to see if they would finally stop fighting.<sup>13</sup>

So fractious was the religious strife at the French outpost at Port Royal (on the eastern shore of the Bay of Fundy) that in 1613, Father Pierre Biard and other Jesuits broke away from the Huguenots there, determined to found a Catholic mission on the Penobscot River.<sup>14</sup> The missionary expedition stopped at Mount Desert Island, where the Indian Sachem Asticou persuaded them to set up their Saint Sauveur mission nearby. But within a few weeks, the mission was destroyed by English raiders from the Jamestown settlement in Virginia.

The brief establishment of the Saint Sauveur mission marked the high tide of the French presence on Mount Desert Island. With no significant river access to the interior, the region better served French interests as a buffer zone between New France and New England, and as a place to stage raids on English settlements.

Three-quarters of a century passed between the destruction of Saint Sauveur and the arrival in Acadia of Antoine de Lamothe Cadillac (1658–1730). In May 1688, Cadillac petitioned the governor

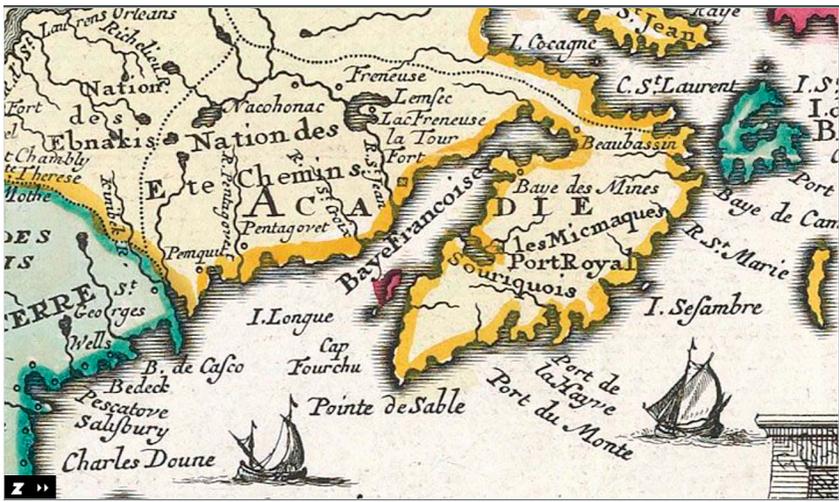


Henry IV (1553–1610) commanded the colonization of Acadia. His statue stands on the Pont Neuf in Paris. *Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons*

of New France for a land grant, which was given and ratified the next year by Louis XIV. The grant, which included land on the Union River as well as Mount Desert Island and nearby islands,<sup>15</sup> obligated Cadillac “to commence within three years of this day to work in order to settle the land, on pain of being dispossessed of the same.”<sup>16</sup>

However, there is scant evidence that Cadillac ever lived on Mount Desert Island and much evidence that he did not. Though English governor Edmund Andros in 1690 recorded, in preparation for driving him off, that Cadillac and his wife dwelt “on the eastern side of Mount Desart,”<sup>17</sup> historian Jean Delanglez has demonstrated that Cadillac “never settled there, and never did anything at all to develop his grant.” Between 1688, when he received the grant, and 1694, when he moved to Detroit, Delanglez documented that Cadillac was present in Quebec, Port Royal, France, or at sea, but never on Mount Desert Island.<sup>18</sup>

A map drawn at the end of Louis XIV’s reign shows that Indians, not French people, occupied the area between the Penobscot and the St. John. Southern Acadia, including Mount Desert Island,



This map drawn at the end of Louis XIV’s reign shows that the region between the Penobscot and St. John rivers was primarily occupied by Indians whom the French called “Etchemins.” After the fall of Saint Sauveur, the French did not make a significant commitment to settling southern Acadia, focusing instead on areas near the St. Lawrence River. “Carte de la Nouvelle France” by Henri Chatelain, 1719. *Courtesy of the Osher Map Library, University of Southern Maine*

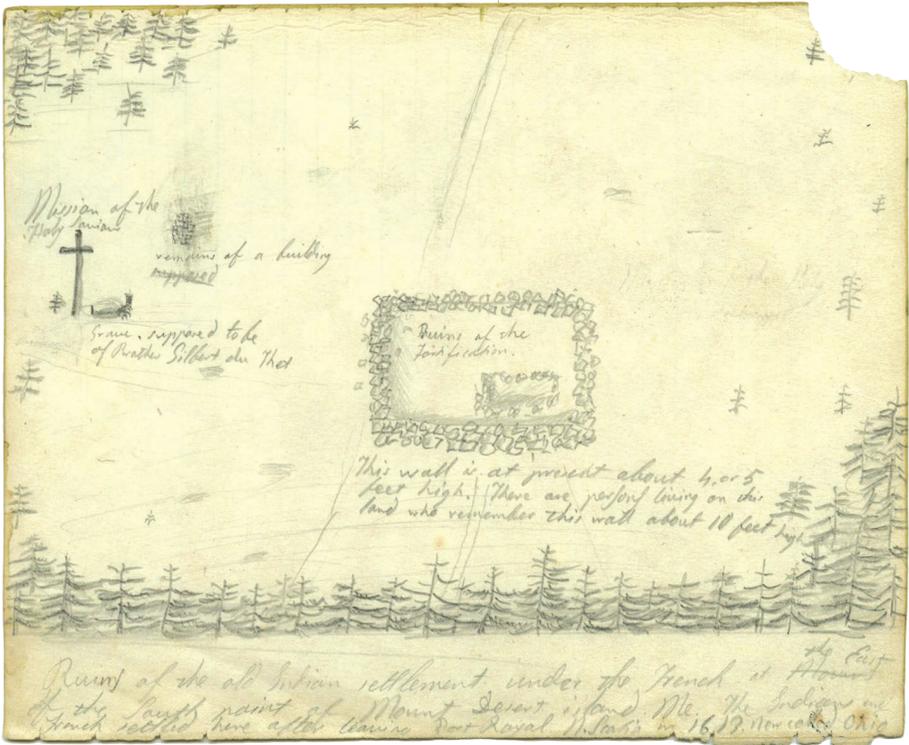
was formally ceded to England by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713.<sup>19</sup> In 1787, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts gave parts of the Cadillac grant to his granddaughter, Maria Theresa De Gregoire, and to her husband, Bartholomy De Gregoire. The De Gregoires lived by Hulls Cove and attempted to develop a farm and mill, but poverty oppressed them. Parcel by parcel, they mortgaged and sold off their inheritance until their deaths around 1810.<sup>20</sup>

During the American War for Independence, French aid proved vital to the American cause, and during the French Revolution, the model of the American republic was an inspiration to the revolutionaries. After the fall of the Bastille, the Marquis de Lafayette honored George Washington by presenting him with a key to the old prison. Washington, historian Francois Furstenburg observed, “shared the sense that the French and American revolutions were bound together as two manifestations of a single global movement for liberty.”<sup>21</sup>

In the early 1790s, émigrés fleeing the turmoil of the French Revolution came to America to invest the dissipating capital of the Ancien Régime in land speculation.<sup>22</sup> In 1790, Madame Bacler de Leval attempted to purchase extensive tracts of land on the shores of Taunton Bay, northeast of Bar Harbor. She explored the region by boat and even climbed to the top of 1,000-foot Schoodic Mountain so she could overlook the place where, Samuel Eliot Morison wrote, she “proposed to establish a city on the seacoast, as port of entry for this thriving colony, with brick mansions, shops, banks, theatres and all the agréments of the vanished regime in France.” But the financing for the scheme fell through, and her purchase was limited to a farm in Trenton she called Fontaine Leval. Now only traces of the venture remain, such as the name of the town of Lamoine, after one of her early followers, La Moine.<sup>23</sup>

### *Local Claims to French Presence*

Vestiges of the French presence remained in the cartographic record after the fall of the Saint Sauveur mission in 1613. Joseph DesBarres recorded the French place names “Mount Desart Island” and “Frenchmens Bay” when he drew his nautical atlas for the English Navy in 1776.<sup>24</sup> But most of the French place names that are familiar today are absent from pre-twentieth-century maps.



Father Eugene Vetromile sketched this map on a visit to Fernald Point in 1867. His label for “the ruins of the fortification” proved to be only the foundation of a barn. The map and the stories it was based on are false. *Courtesy of the Maine Historical Society*



Photograph circa 1857 of Fernald Point viewed from Flying Mountain. The large barn occupies the same space as the “ruins of the fortification” noted on Fr. Vetromile’s map.  
*Courtesy of the National Park Service, Acadia National Park*

After the deaths of the De Gregoires in the early nineteenth century, few traces of French contact with Mount Desert Island remained. But those traces were sometimes augmented by local legends, such as the tale that the French diplomat Talleyrand (1754–1838) was an illegitimate child born in Southwest Harbor.<sup>25</sup>

A more substantial case is made for the location of the Saint Sauveur mission. Though archeological evidence is wanting, many residents and historians have maintained that the site of the mission was at Fernald Point in Southwest Harbor. In 1867, the historian Francis Parkman wrote, “about a mile from the open sea, on the farm of Mr. Fernald, is a spot perfectly answering to the minute description of Biard.”<sup>26</sup> David Hackett Fischer expressed his view in 2008, writing, “Other islanders have located Saint-Sauveur in different places, but Jesuit Point [also known as Fernald Point] is the most likely.”<sup>27</sup>

At Fernald Point in 1921, a farmer dug an object out of the ground that is now displayed in a frame at the Southwest Harbor Public Library. Amateurs and experts consulted by library officials have variously described it as a “dagger, halberd, spontoon, or the top of a fence post.” Estimates of its date of origin also vary, ranging from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries.<sup>28</sup>

In 2015, archaeologist Bruce Bourque examined a map of Fernald Point drawn by the Jesuit priest Eugene Vetromile in 1866. The map shows a rectangular wall that is labeled the “Ruins of the Fortification.” An annotation says, “There are persons living on this land who remember this wall about 10 feet high.”<sup>29</sup> Bourque reoriented and superimposed a digitized version of Vetromile’s map on satellite images using technologies like LIDAR and infrared to visualize possible sites of a fortification



This object was dug from the ground at Fernald Point in 1921 and now is on display at the Southwest Harbor Public Library. Its date of origin and purpose have yet to be determined. *Courtesy of the Southwest Harbor Public Library*

or burial area, and planned to initiate a survey of the land using ground-penetrating radar.

But once a certain photograph was brought out of the park archives, the survey was called off. Dated 1857, the photograph shows Fernald Point from the summit of Flying Mountain. A large barn stands where the map labels the “ruins of the fortification.” The supposed “ruins” are merely the foundation of the old barn. The map and the stories it was based on are false.<sup>30</sup>

### *The Restoration*

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, influential citizens began energetically to make connections between Mount Desert Island and its French colonial past. Entrepreneurs like DeGrasse Fox populated the tourist districts of the island with French names for their hotels: DeGregoire Hotel, Hotel Des Isles, The Louisburg, and St. Sauveur Hotel. Cottages took on names like Atlantique, Beau Desert, Honfleur House, La Rochelle, Maisonette, Pointe d’Acadie, Talleyrand, Beau Geste, La Escale, La Folie, and Petite Plaisance.<sup>31</sup> Owners gave their establishments such names to tap the powerful brand of French culture, with its associations of elegance and good taste.

### *France and the National Park*

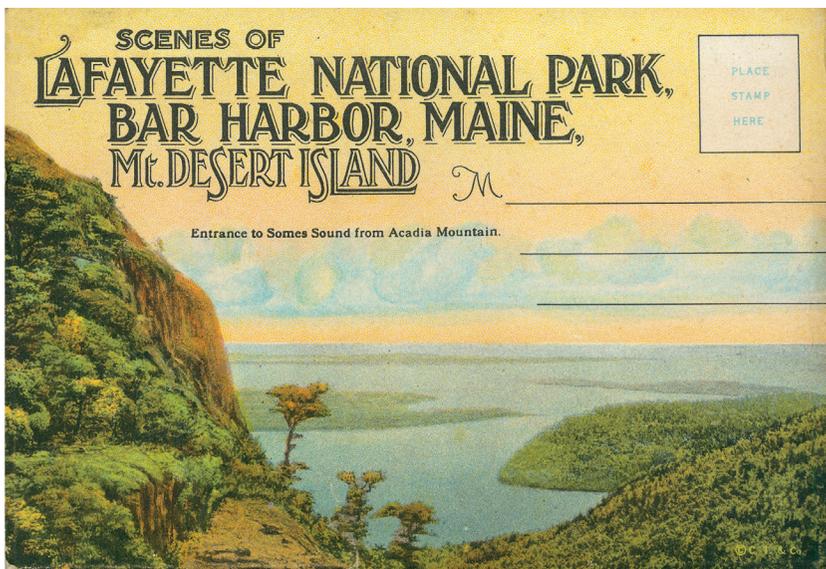
In 1886, the mutual admiration between France and the United States was expressed in the gift of the Statue of Liberty to stand in New York Harbor. A fundraising appeal declared the monument would be “executed in common by the two peoples associated with this fraternal work, as they were of old in establishing independence.”<sup>32</sup> In return, a statue of the Marquis de Lafayette was “Erected by the School Children of the United States,” according to its inscription, and placed in the court of the Louvre in Paris.<sup>33</sup>

The American affinity for France and the effort to create a national park on Mount Desert Island converged as the First World War raged, and George Dorr and his collaborators sought government approval for Sieur de Monts National Monument. The new monument was approved by executive order of President Woodrow Wilson in 1916, and the United States joined the war effort on the side of France in

1917.<sup>34</sup> Upon the arrival of the American Expeditionary Forces in Paris, one of its officers declared, “Lafayette, we are here!”<sup>35</sup>

In September 1918, Dorr petitioned the government to have one of Mount Desert Island’s mountains renamed “Flying Squadron” to honor “all Aviators who lost their lives in the line of duty during this war to make the World safe for Democracy.”<sup>36</sup> Dorr’s request was granted, though the mountain was later renamed for Dorr himself.

During the war years, Dorr returned to Washington repeatedly to lobby Congress to elevate Sieur de Monts National Monument to the status of a national park. He advised Maine’s Senator Frederick Hale that “It would be of interest to tie up the Park’s creation, in naming it, with the great events of the period and the war in



Sieur de Monts National Monument was created in 1916, then became Lafayette National Park in 1919, and finally Acadia National Park in 1929. Postcard circa 1919–1929. *Courtesy of the National Park Service, Acadia National Park*

France,” to which Hale responded, “Then, the name to take is that of Lafayette.”<sup>37</sup>

“That was a time,” Dorr wrote, “when the whole east was taking the war in the spirit of a high crusade and Lafayette’s name was foremost in men’s thoughts.”<sup>38</sup> The bill authorizing the creation of Lafayette National Park was signed by President Wilson on February 26, 1919.<sup>39</sup>

In time, Dorr had second thoughts about choosing “Lafayette” for the name of the park. He recalled, “The name of Lafayette was taken because of the strong war-time feeling at the time of the Park’s creation.” Dorr thought it better to connect the park to a more ancient history. He wrote, “I have often since thought that Acadia, because of its old historical associations and descriptive character, would have been far better.”<sup>40</sup> In 1929, when a large gift of land on the Schoodic Peninsula was added to the park’s domain, “Acadia National Park” became the new name.

At Dorr’s direction, beginning in 1918, French place names began to proliferate on maps of the island. Green Mountain became Cadillac; Robinson, Acadia; and Dog, Saint Sauveur. The mountaintops were now meant to be read like chapters in a history book. Dorr wrote, “Champlain is commemorated in the bold peak under whose shadow ... he must have sailed on entering Frenchman’s Bay, ... Cadillac, lord of the Monts deserts, is commemorated in their highest summit; Saint Sauveur Mountain looks down on the site of the old Jesuit colony, and the scene of its wrecking; and Sieur de Monts Spring, a never failing fountain of pure water issuing from the mountain’s foot, commemorates the founder of Acadia.”<sup>41</sup>

In constructing his understanding of the ancient French past, Dorr relied heavily on the histories of Francis Parkman, nineteenth-century America’s most eminent historian. Dorr renamed one of the park’s mountains for Parkman, whom he described as “historian of the French Dominion in America,”<sup>42</sup> In September 1920, Dorr published an article in the magazine *La France* titled “A Glorious Tribute to France: The New Lafayette National Park on the Maine Coast.” He embedded in his article an extended quote from Parkman: “Such was the domain which France conquered for civilization. Plumed helmets gleamed in the shade of its forest, priestly vestments in the dens and fastnesses of ancient barbarism. Men steeped in antique learning, pale with the close breath of the cloister, here spent the noon and evening of their lives, ruled savage hordes with a mild paternal sway, and stood serene before the direst shapes of death.”<sup>43</sup>

Dorr renamed the mountains in a time when many educated people held certain assumptions to be true: that history is shaped by great *men*, that chauvinistic ideas about race, gender, and nationality reflect the natural order of things, and that European colonization

was generally beneficial to the colonized. By the end of the twentieth century, most scholars had discarded these ideas, bringing down with them the reputations of historians like Francis Parkman and explorers like Cadillac.

From Parkman, Dorr learned of a Cadillac who was “amply gifted with the kind of intelligence that consists in quick observation, sharpened by an inveterate spirit of sarcasm, was energetic, enterprising, well instructed, and a bold and sometimes a visionary schemer, with a restless spirit, a nimble and biting wit, a Gascon impetuosity of temperament.”<sup>44</sup> Such a portrait made Cadillac seem, at the least, like an interesting guy. And after all, he was granted Mount Desert Island by Louis XIV!

But a good impression of Cadillac is unlikely to survive a reading of Jean Delanglez’s 1928 biographical sketch. Delanglez quoted one Acadian governor who described Cadillac as “the most malicious man in the world, a rattle-headed fellow, driven out of France for I know not what crimes.” Of Cadillac’s dissembling, Delanglez warned, “No statement by Cadillac is ever to be accepted unless corroborated by independent evidence.” Cadillac’s most lasting misrepresentation is his fraudulent coat of arms, displayed since 1906 on a brand of luxury automobiles.<sup>45</sup> Acadia National Park’s highest peak is named for a man W.J. Eccles called “one of the worst scoundrels ever to set foot in New France.” The preponderance of recent historiography decidedly reinforces Delanglez and Eccles’ descriptions.<sup>46</sup>

We have no evidence that Dorr read Delanglez’s work, or that if he had, he would have been influenced by it. In 1931, readers of *The Bar Harbor Times* voted 175 to 5 in favor of rescinding the new names that Dorr had given to the mountains. Yet the vote failed to move the National Park Service, and Dorr’s names remained.<sup>47</sup> Parkman’s histories are admired today more for their literary qualities than their historical interpretation, now viewed as hopelessly chauvinistic.<sup>48</sup> Eccles offered Parkman a partial absolution when he wrote, “Most of his faults were the faults of his age, and these must be forgiven him; but this does not mean that they must be overlooked.”<sup>49</sup>

### *The Carriage Road Gate Lodges*

French history is visually reinforced in Acadia National Park’s carriage road gate lodges, the picturesque buildings that guard the

entrances to the system of gravel roads and stone bridges where only nonmotorized traffic is permitted. In the early 1930s, philanthropist John D. Rockefeller Jr. and architect Grosvenor Atterbury partnered to create a French style for the gate lodges at Brown Mountain and Jordan Pond. The foundation for their effort was set in 1929 when Rockefeller funded Atterbury's tour and survey of the western parks on behalf of the National Park Service. Atterbury reported to Rockefeller and government officials on the generally woeful state of park architecture. For a remedy, he advocated the adoption of an architectural style for each park that would reflect "ancient local traditions."<sup>50</sup> The National Park Service, Atterbury wrote, should "make the Park buildings distinctly different in character from the dreary, commonplace and conventional structures which too often form the background of our American lives."<sup>51</sup>

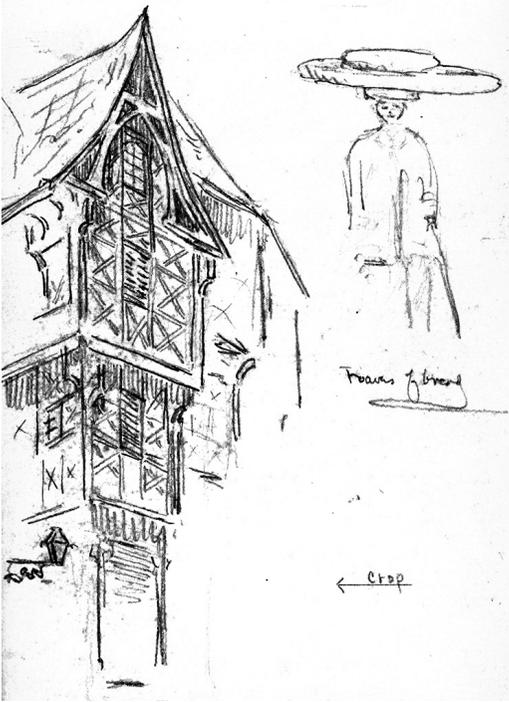
Rockefeller gave Atterbury the opportunity to put his ideas on national park architecture into effect when he commissioned him to design the gate lodges for Acadia National Park. Atterbury believed "the French tradition seemed particularly fitting to be carried out in this area because of its early French Colonial association."<sup>52</sup>

Atterbury had long admired French architecture. From 1894–95, he had studied in Paris under the guidance of French architect Paul Blondel, whose prize-winning design of a Paris medical clinic featured walls composed of brick and limestone layers, a technique that Atterbury adapted to his work.<sup>53</sup> Atterbury toured Le Puy-en-Velay in 1900, sketching the landscape and buildings of that charming region of France.<sup>54</sup>

A park official wrote, "These buildings are being built of granite masonry after a local style in the Le Puis [sic] district in France. The special characteristic of this type of masonry is that the stone is coursed so that the walls present



Grosvenor Atterbury, pictured, travelled to Le Puy-en-Velay in 1900 in the company of his friend Harvey Cushing, who would become a famous surgeon. *Courtesy of Yale University, Harvey Cushing/John Hay Whitney Medical Library*



Atterbury's visit to Le Puy-en-Velay left a lasting impression, and he repeated some of the architectural features he saw there in his own designs. Harvey Cushing sketch. *Courtesy of Yale University, Harvey Cushing/John Hay Whitney Medical Library*

a banded appearance.”<sup>55</sup> The mixing of gray native stone, soft red hues of brick, and the deep brown of wood is replicated in the design of the gate lodges.

Atterbury's gate lodges were received with acclaim. Rockefeller described them as “exceedingly charming and decorative.” They were so appealing that Harold Ickes, the secretary of the interior, expressed a desire to live in one of them upon his retirement.<sup>56</sup>

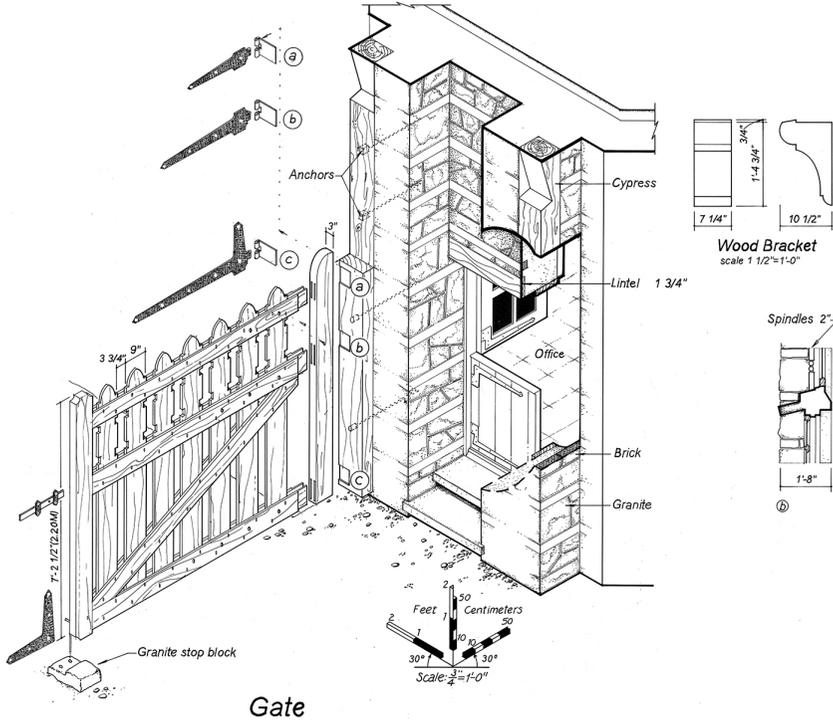
The architect Welles Bosworth said they possessed “a natural picturesqueness born of what seems to me to

be a very just sense of the locality.” These favorable assessments have held up over time. Architectural historian Brad Emerson described the buildings as “far more charming than they have any right to be. Textures and picturesque details are all at high volume, but in the hands of a master designer like Atterbury, they are always under control, each playing its part in the whole.”<sup>57</sup> Thanks to Atterbury's appealing designs, Acadia National Park acquired a new layer of French influence.

### Conclusion

The actual French presence on Mount Desert Island can only be described as fleeting, especially compared to thousands of years of Wabanaki habitation. Yet, throughout the nineteenth century,

# BROWN MOUNTAIN GATELODGE



These architectural sketches and notes for the Brown Mountain gate lodge show the intense attention to detail that went into the building's design. The gate lodge was studied in 1994 for the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER). *Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

strong local tradition reinforced, sometimes in fanciful ways, the consequence of French colonial history. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially around the time that Acadia National Park was founded, a story of French heritage was composed for the landscape.

In curating the history of the region, the park's founders emphasized a historical viewpoint meant to deepen the visitor's appreciation of the park. George B. Dorr replaced local place names with French colonial-era names to tell a kind of history that was "à la mode" for the early twentieth century. Dorr, biographer Ronald Epp wrote, "realized that 'the linguistic contour' of local usage

for geographic features no longer matched the deepened historical standards of the new park service.”<sup>58</sup> He believed that a distant French past could be applied to the landscape and architecture, and it could define the historical character of the park. French names could be given to mountains, sympathy for French people turned into the congressional votes needed to establish and sustain the park, and French design applied to gate lodges. With the place names written into the granite mountain tops, a French colonial history came to dominate the interpretive presentation of the park.

As for why this happened, there are three reasons. First, the park founders were stirred by the romance of Francis Parkman’s histories, whose writing inspired visions of adventurous French heroes that quickened the imagination and never let go. “The French dominion is a memory of the past,” Parkman wrote, “and when we evoke its departed shades, they rise upon us from their graves in strange romantic guise.”<sup>59</sup> For people like Dorr, historical romance still infused the forests and shores of Mount Desert Island.

Second, many of the decisions that gave French place names to the park’s features were not only intended as an homage to French history but also to express the widespread sympathy and admiration for the French people during and after the First World War.

Finally, national park architectural policy was particularly influenced by Grosvenor Atterbury, who wrote, “Whatever the National Park Policy may be . . . the Spirit of Romance and Adventure should not be overlooked.”<sup>60</sup> Atterbury persuaded park officials to adopt an architectural style that would entice visitors from their ordinary worlds.

Some writers have criticized the heavy-handed interpretation of the landscape. Mathew Paulus wrote of Acadia’s carriage roads, “The creation and management of these roads by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., was not only philanthropy but also stagecraft.”<sup>61</sup> Writing more generally about the practice of manipulating history through architecture, Ada Louise Huxtable wrote, “At some point it was decided that reality was not the only option; that one could substitute a more agreeable product.”<sup>62</sup> Huxtable pointed to Colonial Williamsburg, (which, like the gate lodges, was largely funded by John D. Rockefeller Jr.) as the project where “the definition of ‘place’ as a chosen image probably started in the late 1920s.” As the



Grosvenor Atterbury designed the Jordan Pond gate lodge to look like a building that might appear on the estate of a seventeenth-century French noble. From the 1994 HAER study. *Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

twentieth century advanced, the trend was taken to an extreme at sites like Disneyland and Disney World.<sup>63</sup>

Acadia National Park's place names and gate lodges are meant to represent a history of seventeenth-century France in North America. But perhaps they are better regarded as the remains of twentieth-century United States, when sympathy for the French people was at its height, congressional support for a nascent national park was needed most, and romantic dreams conjured a backstory of France grasping for a place in the New World.

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- <sup>1</sup> Voltaire, “Histoire,” in *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métier*, ed. Denis Diderot (Geneva: Pellet, 1778), 556.
- <sup>2</sup> U.S. Bureau of Geographic Names, Mount Desert Island files, *Memorandum*, March 6, 1931, cited in Ronald Epp, “Superintendent Dorr and the Mountain Naming Controversy,” *Chebacco* 15 (2014): 89.
- <sup>3</sup> Giovanni da Verrazano, “Giovanni da Verrazano to His Most Serene Majesty the King of France,” in *Sailors’ Narratives of Voyages along the New England Coast: 1524–1624*, ed. George Parker Winship (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1905), 20–21.
- <sup>4</sup> W.J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier 1534–1760, Revised Edition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1983), 2, 18–20.
- <sup>5</sup> Pierre Biard, “Relation of New France,” in *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, Vol. 3: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France 1610–1791*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland: Burroughs Brothers, 1897), 35.
- <sup>6</sup> Will and Ariel Durant, *The Story of Civilization Part VII, The Age of Reason Begins* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961), 333; Natalie Zemon Davis, “The Rites of Violence: Religious Riot in Sixteenth-Century France,” *Past & Present* 59 (1973): 51–91, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650379>.
- <sup>7</sup> R.J. Knecht, *The French Wars of Religion 1559–1598 Third Edition* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2010) Kindle edition, 96.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 78–84.
- <sup>9</sup> George MacBeath, “Dugua de Monts (Du Gua, de Mons), Pierre,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003), [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/du\\_gua\\_de\\_monts\\_pierre\\_1E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/du_gua_de_monts_pierre_1E.html).
- <sup>10</sup> Stephen J. Hornsby and Richard W. Judd, Eds. *Historical Atlas of Maine* (Orono: University of Maine Press, 2015), plate 8.
- <sup>11</sup> Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier*, 22.
- <sup>12</sup> Henry Percival Biggar et al., Eds., *The Works of Samuel de Champlain, Volume 1, 1599–1607* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1922), 283; David Hackett Fischer, *Champlain’s Dream* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008) Kindle edition, locations 3158–3252.
- <sup>13</sup> W.F. Ganong, “Dochet (St. Croix) Island—A Monograph,” *Délibérations et Mémoires de la Société Royale du Canada* (Ottawa: James Hope & Son, 1902), 191. <https://books.google.com/books?id=DCMFAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA191>; See also Fischer, *Champlain’s Dream*, location 2883.
- <sup>14</sup> Fischer, *Champlain’s Dream*, locations 2889–2893.
- <sup>15</sup> Yves F. Zoltvany, “Laumet, de Lamothe Cadillac, Antoine,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003), [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/laumet\\_antoine\\_2E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/laumet_antoine_2E.html); Jean Delanglez, “Cadillac’s Early Years in America,” *Mid-America* 26, no. 1 (January

1944): 19.

<sup>16</sup> “Grant of Lands at Mt. Desert to Sieur de la Mothe Cadillac, by the Governor and Council of Canada, July 23–August 2, 1688,” in *Documentary History of the State of Maine, vol. 7, the Farnham Papers 1603–1688*, ed. Mary Frances Farnham (Portland: Thurston Print, 1901), 384.

<sup>17</sup> Clarence Monroe Burton, *A Sketch of the Life of Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, Founder of Detroit* (Detroit: Wilton Smith, 1895), 7, Hathitrust, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015004052570>.

<sup>18</sup> Delanglez, “Cadillac’s Early Years,” 32; For the year of his departure for Detroit, see Zoltvany, “Laumet, de Lamothe Cadillac, Antoine.”

<sup>19</sup> Henri Chatelain, “Carte de la Nouvelle France,” *Atlas Historique* (Amsterdam, 1719), Osher Map Library, University of Southern Maine.

<sup>20</sup> “Grant of Lands at Mt. Desert to Madame De Gregoire by the General Court of Massachusetts, June 29, 1887,” in *Documentary History of the State of Maine, vol. 8, the Farnham Papers 1698–1871*, ed. Mary Frances Farnham (Portland: Lefavor-Tower, 1902), 89; “Mount Desert Island,” *Bangor Historical Magazine* 1, no. 11 (May 1886): 179–185; National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Cover Farm, Hulls Cove, Maine, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, <http://focus.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/NRHP/Text/95001464.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> Francois Furstenberg, *When the United States Spoke French: Five Refugees Who Shaped a Nation* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), 41.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 12–13.

<sup>23</sup> For the Laval party’s visit to Schoodic Mountain and Samuel Eliot Morison’s editorial role in the Bancel de Congoulin text, see Frances Sargent Childs, “Fontaine Leval, a French Settlement on the Maine Coast, 1791,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 51, part 1 (April 1941): 187–222; Bancel de Congoulin, “A French Description of Frenchman’s Bay, 1792: With Notes on the Proposed French Colony in Eastern Maine,” ed. and trans. Samuel Eliot Morison, *New England Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (July 1928): 399, 400, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/359881>.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph F.W. DesBarres, *Mount Desert Island and Neighboring Coast of Maine*, map (London: Joseph F.W. DesBarres, 1776), Mount Desert Island Historical Society.

<sup>25</sup> The story was skeptically relayed by William Otis Sawtelle in 1928, retold in the inaugural pages of *Chebacco* in 1999, and finally dismissed by Francois Furstenburg in his 2014 account of Talleyrand’s visit to Maine in 1794. See William Otis Sawtelle, “The Island of Mount Desert,” *Sprague’s Journal of Maine History* 11, no. 3 (July, August, September, 1923): 127–144; Gladys Butler, “The Legend of Talleyrand,” *Chebacco* 1 (1999): 13–22; Furstenburg, *When the United States*, 262, 263.

<sup>26</sup> Francis Parkman, *Pioneers of France in the New World* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1867), 277.

- <sup>27</sup> Fischer, *Champlain's Dream*, locations 14212–14213.
- <sup>28</sup> Meredith Hutchins, “Norwood’s Cove Dagger (?)” memorandum, October 2004, Southwest Harbor Public Library.
- <sup>29</sup> Eugene Vetromile, “St. Sauveur Mission, Mount Desert, ca. 1866,” Maine Memory Network, <https://www.mainmemory.net/artifact/100356>.
- <sup>30</sup> I am indebted to Bruce Bourque of Bowdoin College, Rebecca Cole Will of Acadia National Park, National Park Service, and Kate McBrien of the Maine Historical Society for their insights regarding Fr. Vetromile’s map and its relation to the Fernald Point site.
- <sup>31</sup> DeGrasse Fox was the grandson of Admiral de Grasse, whose victory in the Battle of the Chesapeake in 1781 led to the English surrender at Yorktown. Thanks to Brad Emerson for his insights on the work of DeGrasse Fox. The list of hotels and cottages compiled by Thomas Vining can be found at Mount Desert Island Historical Society’s Cultural History Project, <http://mdihistory.org/historical-resources/cultural-history-project>.
- <sup>32</sup> Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, *The Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World* (New York: North American Review, 1885), 25.
- <sup>33</sup> The quotation is from the inscription on the statue in Paris.
- <sup>34</sup> George B. Dorr, *Acadia National Park: Its Origin and Background* (Bangor: Burr Printing, 1942), 30–32.
- <sup>35</sup> *New York Times*, May 9, 1933.
- <sup>36</sup> U.S. Board of Geographic Names, Decision Card for Flying Squadron Mountain, [https://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/f?p=138:3:0::NO:3:P3\\_FID,P3\\_TITLE:565218,Dorr%20Mountain](https://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/f?p=138:3:0::NO:3:P3_FID,P3_TITLE:565218,Dorr%20Mountain).
- <sup>37</sup> Dorr, *Acadia National Park*, 71.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.
- <sup>40</sup> Dorr, *Acadia National Park: Its Growth and Development, Book II* (Bangor: Burr Printing, 1948), 29.
- <sup>41</sup> Dorr, “A Glorious Tribute to France: The New Lafayette National Park on the Coast of Maine,” *La France* 4, no. 12 (September 1920): 592, Google Books.
- <sup>42</sup> U.S. Geographic Names Information Service, U.S. Geologic Survey, [https://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/f?p=138:3:0::NO:3:P3\\_FID,P3\\_TITLE:581476,Parkman%20Mountain](https://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/f?p=138:3:0::NO:3:P3_FID,P3_TITLE:581476,Parkman%20Mountain).
- <sup>43</sup> Dorr, “A Glorious Tribute to France,” 590–91.
- <sup>44</sup> Parkman, *A Half Century of Conflict* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1899), 1:19.
- <sup>45</sup> Delanglez, “Cadillac’s Early Years,” 8, 18.
- <sup>46</sup> Eccles is quoted in Zoltvany, “Laumet, de Lamothe Cadillac, Antoine.”
- <sup>47</sup> Ronald Epp, “Superintendent Dorr,” 91.
- <sup>48</sup> For a balanced view of Parkman’s work, see Mark Peterson, “How (and Why)

To Read Francis Parkman,” Common-place 3, no. 1 (October 2002), <http://www.common-place-archives.org/vol-03/no-01/peterson/peterson-2.shtml>; for a view of a Parkman antagonist, see Francis Jennings, “Francis Parkman: A Brahmin among Untouchables,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (July 1985): 305–28.

<sup>49</sup> Eccles, “New France According to Francis Parkman,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (April 1961): 174, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1918541>.

<sup>50</sup> Grosvenor Atterbury, *Notes on the Architectural and Other Esthetic Problems in the Development of Our Great National Parks* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1929), 125.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 101–102.

<sup>52</sup> Charles E. Peterson, memorandum to director of National Park Service, October 27, 1931, Rockefeller Archive Center, quoted in Anne Rockefeller Roberts, *Mr. Rockefeller’s Roads: The Untold Story of Acadia’s Carriage Roads & Their Creator* (Camden, ME: Down East Books, 1990), 125.

<sup>53</sup> Peter Pennoyer and Anne Walker, *The Architecture of Grosvenor Atterbury* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), 46.

<sup>54</sup> Atterbury travelled in France in the company of Harvey Cushing, who would become a famous surgeon. Cushing’s sketches of the trip can be seen in Harvey Cushing, *A Visit to Le Puy-en-Velay: An Illustrated Diary* (Cleveland: Rowfant Club, 1944).

<sup>55</sup> Peterson, memorandum quoted in Roberts, *Mr. Rockefeller’s Roads*, 125.

<sup>56</sup> Grosvenor Atterbury, letter to John D. Rockefeller Jr., April 18, 1935, Rockefeller Archives, Box 72, Folder 738, quoted in Roxanne Brouse, *The Public-Spirited Beatrix Farrand of Mount Desert Island* (Reykjavik: Beatrix Farrand Society Press, 2016), 50.

<sup>57</sup> Brad Emerson, “The Rockefeller Gate Houses,” *Downeast Dilettante* (blog), June 11, 2011, <http://thedowneastdilettante.blogspot.com/2011/11/rockefeller-gate-houses.html>.

<sup>58</sup> Ronald Epp, citing *Memorandum*, United States Bureau of Geographic Names Archives, Mount Desert Island files, March 6, 1931, in “Superintendent Dorr,” 89.

<sup>59</sup> Parkman, *France and England in North America: Pioneers of France in the New World, Vol. 1* (New York: Library of America, 1885/1983), 15.

<sup>60</sup> Atterbury, *Notes*, 101.

<sup>61</sup> Matthew M. Palus, “Authenticity, Legitimation, and Twentieth-Century Tourism: The John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Carriage Roads, Acadia National Park, Maine,” in *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape*, ed. Paul A. Shackel (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 181.

<sup>62</sup> Ada Louise Huxtable, *The Unreal America: Architecture and Illusion* (New York: New Press, 1996), 15.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*