

History

Native Americans used this land long before Europeans set foot on the shores of Pemaquid. The Natives that inhabited this region when English fishermen set up their first fishing stations here in the early 1610s were Wabanaki and Etchemen. The relationships and interactions between the Native Americans and the Europeans played an important role in the development and politics of this region in the 17th and 18th centuries. The relationship continues today.

Pemaquid, established between 1625 and 1628, is one of the nation's earliest and most historically significant English settlements. Nestled beside a small harbor, this spot was England's farthest outpost to the northeast. It was the nearest settlement to the French in Acadia, and several forts were built here to protect settlers from French attacks, as well as to establish a stronghold for the protection of southern New England.

Early Pemaquid prospered and grew quickly. Its economy was based on fishing, fur trade with the Native Americans, timber, and agriculture. However, the English government never provided fully successful defenses for Pemaquid. As a result, Pemaquid had to be abandoned twice during a long series of Colonial wars that broke out on the Maine coast beginning in 1676.

Despite the difficulties of settlement here, English settlers left important evidence of their lives on the frontier in the 1600's and 1700's. That evidence has been revealed through a series of archaeological investigations that began in 1965. The results of this research, on exhibit in the museum and on the grounds of Colonial Pemaquid, provide a rich time capsule of New England frontier life 375 years ago.

Fort Charles, built here in 1677, protected an English settlement that had already been destroyed once during the first of the French and Indian Wars. With its seven cannons and walls made of wooden pickets, Fort Charles appeared to be a strong defensive work in this rough and tumble frontier, claimed by both England and France.

Despite its appearance of strength, Fort Charles fell in 1689, when Native Americans, encouraged by their French allies, attacked the settlement. The fort's garrison, plagued by desertions and numbering as few as 16 men, was too small. Further, enemy fire from behind a rock outcrop nearby proved especially deadly and difficult to counter.

The destruction and abandonment of Fort Charles and the Pemaquid settlement was a major victory for the Native Americans and their French allies. As a result, England abandoned mid-coast Maine for the next three years.

Fort William Henry, built in 1692, was extraordinary for its time. Massachusetts Governor Sir William Phips spent two-thirds of the colony's budget to construct it. Workers used 2,000 cartloads of stone to build the walls 10 to 22 feet high and a stone bastion 29 feet in height. The fort housed nearly 20 cannons and 60 soldiers. For all its apparent strength, this fort did not last. Native people, upset at their treatment by the English, united with the French again to attack the fort in 1696. This fort, which had seemed so strong, proved weak. Mortar used to build the stone walls was of poor quality and could not withstand the attack. Fort William Henry fell, and once again, the English abandoned Pemaquid.

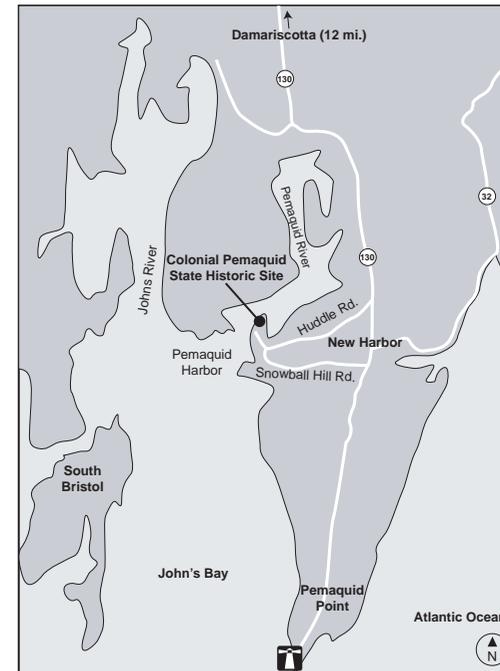
Fort Frederick was built in 1729, 33 years after the fall of Fort William Henry. Col. David Dunbar, Surveyor of His Majesty's Woods in America, re-established a settlement here. Dunbar imported recent Scots-Irish immigrants from Boston, re-built the fort, and established a settlement here without the support of the Massachusetts government, which challenged Dunbar's authority to grant titles to the new settlers. After losing a court battle with Massachusetts, Dunbar and the settlers abandoned Pemaquid. Massachusetts sent a garrison to Fort Frederick and maintained the fort until 1759, when it was decommissioned. Fort Frederick then fell into ruin. Local residents voted to destroy it in 1775 to avoid its occupation by British troops during the American Revolution.

The **Fort House** was built in the last quarter of the 18th century. It is known as the Fort House because it was built so close to the ruins of Fort Frederick. The only other affiliation it had with the forts was that its earliest known owner, Alexander Nickels Jr., was the son of one of Fort Frederick's last commanders. This house was the farmhouse for a 300-acre farm that covered the "village" area of Colonial Pemaquid with pastures for livestock and fields for crops. It was not until the 1960s, when archaeological research regarding Colonial Pemaquid was conducted that we began to understand what life may have been like for the European settlers and Native Americans that lived here during the 17th and 18th centuries.

For More Information

Colonial Pemaquid State Historic Site is open daily 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Memorial Day through Labor Day. If you would like to ask questions, make comments, reservations for school or group tours, or volunteer at the site, please contact us, from April through October.

Colonial Pemaquid State Historic Site
P.O. Box 117
New Harbor, Maine 04554
tel. and fax: (207) 677-2423

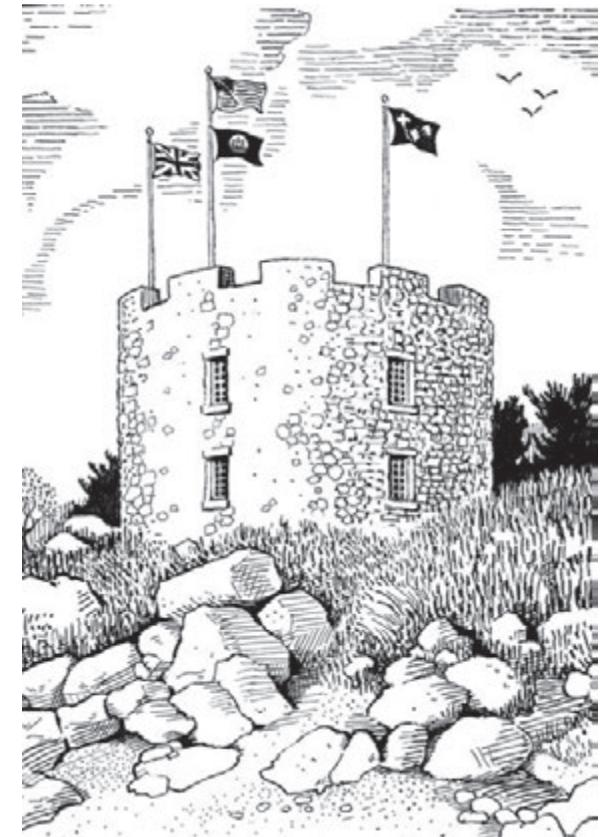


Off season (November - March) please direct questions and comments to our regional office:

Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands
Southern Regional Office
107 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0107
Tel.: (207) 624-6080 Fax.: (207) 624-5081
TTY: Maine Relay 711
www.maine.gov/dacf/parks/
www.friendsofcolonialpemaquid.org

This brochure is available in alternative formats.

Colonial Pemaquid State Historic Site



*Fort William Henry
Colonial Pemaquid State Historic Site
Bristol, Maine*



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION and FORESTRY
Parks and Lands

Welcome

Welcome to Colonial Pemaquid State Historic Site located on the Pemaquid Peninsula in Bristol. This site offers a glimpse of what life was like at an English frontier settlement during the 17th and 18th centuries. The site gained recognition as a National Historic Landmark in 1993. It features a museum/visitor center, the partially reconstructed Fort William Henry, Fort House, village, boat ramp and pier.

The **Museum/Visitor Center** offers exhibits on the history of Pemaquid from early Native American life here through the Colonial period. It includes and displays selected artifacts from the over 100,000 artifacts uncovered on this site and a large diorama of the Pemaquid Village. For the children we have museum searches, a scavenger-hunt style activity, to enhance their enjoyment of the museum. Restrooms are located at the Museum.

Fort William Henry was the second of three forts built on this site. The partial reconstruction that now stands here was completed in 1908. The bastion of the fort contains interpretive panels and artifact exhibits as well as a commanding view of John's Bay from the roof.

The **Fort House** dates back to the last quarter of the 18th century. Its earliest known owner was Alexander Nickels, Jr. son of one of the last commanders of Fort Frederick. Today, it includes a parlor room, furnished in the style of the early 19th century, a research library, archaeology lab, interpretive information, gift shop and artifact storage from the many archaeological digs that have been conducted here at Colonial Pemaquid and the surrounding areas.

The **Village** is a collection of 14 stone cellar holes that reveal the location and use of several buildings from the various periods of the village's history. Most of these have an interpretive panel describing the likely use of the structure and

some of the artifacts found during archaeological excavations.

The **Cemetery** contains gravestones that date as far back as the early 1700's. It is privately owned although the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands assists with its stewardship. Due to the fragile nature of many of the stones we ask that you refrain from making rubbings from the stones. If you want more information on one or more of the gravestones, cemetery inventory sheets may be acquired at the Fort House.

The **Pier and Boat Ramp** are available for use to visitors. Launch your boat into Pemaquid Harbor to tour the coastline of Pemaquid, South Bristol, Boothbay, New Harbor and Chamberlain, or fish for mackerel off the pier for the day. Picnic areas are available in various locations of the park.

For scheduling a school or group visit, please call us at 207-677-2423. We will be happy to describe the various programs and tours we offer.

Rules

To ensure a safe and pleasant visit for everyone, please follow a few simple rules:

- Do not use alcohol.
- Keep pets on leashes.
- Clean up after your pets.
- Respect the park boundaries.
- Do not make rubbings of cemetery stones.
- Use of metal detectors is prohibited.
- No ground disturbance.
- Carry in and carry out your trash.

Restrooms are located at the Museum.

