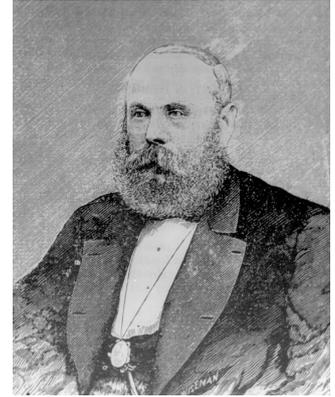


THE CANADIAN EXILES

FACT SHEET



Francois Xavier Prieur

In 1840, 58 French Canadians were exiled for their part in the uprising in Lower Canada (now Quebec). Their presence in the Parramatta River area is recalled by the names of Exile Bay, France Bay and Canada Bay, with the latter chosen as the name of our city.

The 1837-8 revolts in Lower Canada

In 1837 and 1838 there were revolts in Lower Canada (now known as Quebec) by French Canadian Patriotes who held a number of grievances against British government rule, most notably the need for greater participation in government and an increase in the legislative power of the lower house. Following the crushing of the revolts some of the rebels were executed while others were sentenced to transportation. Later, Lord Durham (John George Lambton), Governor General and Lord High Commissioner to Canada, recommended that responsible self government should be granted to the Union of Upper and Lower Canada. This same principle of self government was later applied to the Australian colonies in the 1850s, thus establishing parliamentary democracy.

Canada Bay and the Canadian Exiles

In 1840 the ship *Buffalo* transported 91 English speaking rebels to Tasmania and 58 French speaking Canadians to New South Wales. Originally, the French Canadians were destined for Norfolk Island however due to representations to the Governor Sir George Gipps by the Roman Catholic Bishop, Dr John Bede Polding, they were sent to the Longbottom Stockade, a less severe prison. Nevertheless conditions were still harsh for the convicts. At first there was no bedding while food and clothing was of poor quality. Work included breaking stones for the construction of Parramatta Road.

Many of them collected oyster shells along the shores of Parramatta River to be made into lime, a commodity then in high demand for building purposes. Most were Catholic and found some consolation in visits from Bishop Polding and his Secretary Fr John Brady, both of whom spoke French. Despite the harsh conditions the convicts found some time for relaxation and one prisoner fashioned a set of bowls, the first recorded instance of the game being played in the Canada Bay area.

In 1842 the good behaviour of the French Canadians led to their being granted a ticket-of-leave which allowed them to work outside the Stockade. They found work in the colony as clerks, gardeners, builders and in saw milling. Some worked in the construction of the Victoria Barracks in Paddington. Free pardons were granted to the French Canadians between November 1843 and February 1844. Eventually all but three of the Canadian Exiles returned to Canada: two died while one, Joseph Marceau, married a local woman and settled at Dapto.

The Longbottom Stockade

Longbottom Stockade was located in the vicinity of present day Concord Oval, St Luke's Park and Cintra Park. It was established by Governor Phillip in 1792, about half way between Sydney and Parramatta on a track, which later became Parramatta Road and used as a detention house for ironed convicts proceeding between the two communities. Remains of the Stockade were identified when foundations were laid for the new grand stand at Concord Oval in 1984. Several place names in the area reflect a link with the story of the French Canadian Exiles. A plaque was unveiled in Cabarita Park by Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1970 to honour the Exiles and their role in the political history of Canada. In 1984 the monument was relocated in Bayview Park as this was where the Canadian Exiles disembarked in 1840 on their way to the Longbottom Stockade.

Further information

City of Canada Bay Library Service has more information available in its Local History collection. Sources of information include:

Broissery, Beverley *A Deep sense of wrong : the treason, trials, and transportation to New South Wales of Lower Canadian rebels after the 1838 rebellion*. St Leonards, NSW : Allen & Unwin, 1996. (Includes a list of the French Canadians who were transported.)

Cahill, Jack *Forgotten Patriots : Canadian rebels on Australian shores*. Toronto, Ontario : Robin Brass Studio, 1999. (Includes a list of the French Canadians who were transported.)

Coupe, Sheena *Concord, a centenary history*. Concord, NSW : Council of the Municipality of Concord, 1983. (Chapter 4 'Longbottom and the Canadian Exiles' provides an overview.)

Ducharme, Leandre *Journal of a political exile in Australia*. translated by George Mackaness. Sydney : D.S. Ford, 1944. (reprinted Dubbo, NSW : Review Publications, 1976.) Originally published as *Journal d'un exilé politique aux terres australes*. (Experiences of one of the French Canadian Exiles.)

Image Canada : Canadian Exiles of 1840. Sydney : Canadian Consulate General, 1970.

Lepailleur, Francois-Maurice *Land of a thousand sorrows; the Australian prison journal, 1840-1842*. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1980. (A journal kept by one of the French Canadian Exiles.)

Marceau, Kevin *All but one went home*. Mona Vale, NSW : K. Marceau, 1987. (The story of Joseph Marceau and his descendants in Australia. It includes a list of the French Canadians who were transported, details of the Buffalo and Pierre Trudeau's speech at the unveiling of the memorial.)

Prieur, Francois Xavier *Notes of a convict of 1838*. translated by George Mackaness. Sydney : D.S. Ford, 1949. (reprinted Dubbo, NSW : Review Publications, 1976. Based on experiences of one of the French Canadian Exiles.)

There is also an entry for Prieur in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* vol 2 pp. 352-353.)

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Original Longbottom Stockade with horses