

Fortress

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French Fortresses in North America 1535–1763

Québec, Montréal, Louisbourg and New Orleans



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The object of the FSG is to advance the education of the public in the study of all aspects of fortifications and their armaments, especially works constructed to mount or resist artillery. The FSG holds an annual conference in September over a long weekend with visits and evening lectures, an annual tour abroad lasting about eight days, and an annual Members' Day.

The FSG journal *FORT* is published annually, and its newsletter *Casemate* is published three times a year. Membership is international. For further details, please contact:

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Artist's note

Our sincere thanks to all who have helped in the preparation of this book. We would like to dedicate this book to our dearest daughter Alina.

Readers may care to note that the original paintings from which the colour plates in this book were prepared are available for private sale. All reproduction copyright whatsoever is retained by the Publishers. All enquiries should be addressed to:

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Author's Note

"In the new colonies, the Spanish start by building a church, the English a tavern and the French a fort." There was some truth in this tongue-in-cheek remark by the great French author René de Chateaubriand (1768–1848); New France eventually had a North American network of numerous forts, big and small, extending from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico and west into the present-day Canadian and American prairies. There were also fortresses, the subject of this study, as the main towns were fortified. Fortresses such as Louisbourg and Québec have been rightly famed for their extensive fortifications, Québec having the advantage of a formidable natural site. However, few people today would guess that Montréal and New Orleans could also be termed fortresses, for they were once enclosed by bastioned walls and moats. Although their fortifications were relatively modest and meant to deter raiders rather than fully fledged armies, both cities were surrounded by numerous outlying forts. These provided early warning and acted as an outer buffer, a feature peculiar to the fortress cities situated at the hub of great North American rivers.

Measures

These have varied over the centuries and varied from one nation to another. In New France, weights and measures were those used by the mother country. It is most important to note that the French foot, used in New France, was longer (12.789 inches) than the British foot (12 inches). The official French measures from 1668 to 1840 were:

2 miles = 1 Lieue = 3.898 kilometers
1,000 Toises = 1 mile = 1.949 kilometers
(British = 1.61 kilometers)
6 feet = 1 Toise = 1.949 meters
(British Fathom = 1.83 meters)
12 inches = 1 foot = 32.484 centimeters
(British = 30.48 centimeters)
12 lines = 1 inch = 2.707 centimeters
(British = 2.54 centimeters)

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