

**Finding Aid for
Fish River Blockhouses Map Collection
MCC-00227**

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Collection Title: Fish River Blockhouses Map Collection

Provenance: The creators of the maps are unknown.

Chain of Custody. This collection consists of two mylar maps V1-227 (1 / 2) and V-227 (2/2).

The 46.2 cm x 57 cm ink-on-paper original from which V1-227 was copied is part of a collection of surveys and plans which were transferred to the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick from the Crown Land Section of the New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources in 1985. It was donated to the Archives in 1992 by Jean Pelletier, then an employee of the New Brunswick Department of Municipalities, Culture and Housing.

The paper original from which V1-227 (2/2) was copied belongs to the Fort Kent blockhouse. During his tenure as principal of the Madawaska Training School (1926-1955), Richard Crocker retrieved this document from the wheelbarrow which was being carted to the dump. The map was donated to the Fort Kent Blockhouse by Paul Kelly. The mylar photocopy was made by Chad Pelletier, who donated it to the Archives in 1994.

Date Range: ca. 1839, see scope note for details.

Shelf list Numbers: V1-227 (1,2)

Accession Number: MCC-00227

Language: English

Physical Description/condition:

V1-227 (½) is a 18.25" x 22.25" map on a 24" x 25" sheet of mylar.

V1-227 (2/2) is a 19" x 24.25" map on a 24" x 25" sheet of mylar.

Citation Information: Cite as Fish River Blockhouses Map collection, MCC-00227, Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes, University of Maine at Fort Kent.

Access: The collection is available to researchers without restrictions.

Preservation: No special measures are necessary.

Scope and Content Note.

This collection consists of two slightly different copies of a map, plans, and sketches of fortifications of Soldier Pond and Fort Kent, Maine. V1-227 (½) is a copy of a map belonging to the New Brunswick Provincial Archives. This map is undated. It consists of two sketches, two plans, and a map outlining the location of construction of blockhouses at Soldier Pond and Fort Kent. V1-227 (2/2) appears to be a tracing of the same map. It is virtually identical in terms of the content and lay-out. The only notable difference is that it is dated: a date of "1838, A.D." appears in the lower left-hand corner. All available evidence suggests that the 1838 dating is erroneous, as planning and construction of

the blockhouses depicted on the map began only in 1839.

It is not possible with the information at hand to provide precise dating for these maps. The present a fairly detailed architectural plan of the Soldier Pond blockhouse; unfortunately, that building has not survived and no other drawing or sketches are available, so it is not possible to assess the accuracy of the depiction on the map. The sketch of the blockhouse at Fort Kent is architecturally inaccurate in a number of respects, most notably, in the depiction of battlements at the top of the building (the original blockhouse had a hip roof with dormer windows). The wealth of details about the blockhouse at Soldier Pond and the inaccuracy and lack of details in the depiction of the Fort Kent blockhouse suggests that the original map may have been created after the construction of the Soldier Pond blockhouse (April 1839) and prior to the construction of the Fort Kent blockhouse (construction began in September 1839).

Historical Note.

The following text provides the synopsis of the history of the construction of the blockhouses at Fort Kent and Soldier Pond, both of which were constructed in the context of conflict over the unresolved northeastern boundary of the United States, which was resolved in 1842 by the Webster-Ashburton Treaty.

Maine Provisional Land Agent Charles Jarvis ordered Captain Alvin Nye and twenty-two volunteers from the Maine civil posse and the militia undertook the construction of booms and two blockhouses along the Fish River in April 1839. By 23 April of that year, Nye reported that the blockhouse on Little Lake was nearly finished.

In August, 1839, Captain Stover Rines, a veteran of the posse's actions in the disputed territory, was summoned to relieve Captain Nye. Rines probably arrived the next month and began working with Jarvis to establish the post at the Fish River's mouth, which would eventually be known as Fort Kent. By March 1840, the booms, blockhouses, and associated buildings were completed.

After a period of relative calm, tensions related to the boundary dispute New Brunswick and Maine once again flared up in the late 1840. In August of the following year, the federal government arranged for its troops to take over the forts on the Fish River. Captain Lucien B. Webster, commanding Company C of the First Artillery, arrived at Fort Kent in September 1841, where he and his company lost no time in trying to upgrade both the physical and logistical situations at Fort Kent. Webster reported that, upon his arrival, the blockhouse was in an unfinished stage, needing new floors and other repairs.

Related Collections.

MCC-000198, Maine Militia Record Book, 1839.

Sources. McDonald, Sheila. "The War After the War: Fort Kent Blockhouse." Maine Historical Society Quarterly Vol. 29 (Winter-Spring 1990): 142-168.