

HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF ENTRY ISLAND

Entry Island is the only inhabited island not connected to the others. Since 1822, many families have come and gone. Some family names no longer exist, but many of their descendants do. Presently, there are approximately 130 residents and the remaining family names are Dickson, Patton, Josey, Morrison, Aitkens, McLean, Clarke, Quinn, Leslie, Chenell, Welsh, Backs and Brymer. The position of the island gives it its name. It is located approximately 5 miles east of Amherst and nine miles south of Grindstone. The island is approximately 2 ½ miles long, 1 ½ miles wide and 7 miles around. It is pentagonal in shape.

Sir Isaac Coffin made his first visit to the Magdalen Islands in 1806 and compiled a census. He recorded the following eight family names living on Entry Island at that time: Charles Arsinoe, Pierre Arsinoe, Simeon Bourgeois, Francois Grenier, Veuve Richards (who was a widow), Louis Vigneau, Francois Vigneau and John Hault. All these families eventually left Entry Island, but when and why they moved is unknown.

By 1822, an English-speaking family settled on the island and remained there with their family until their deaths. It is believed that David Dickson and his wife Nancy Cassidy were the first permanent English-speaking settlers at Entry Island. David was a native of Liverpool, Nova Scotia, while his wife was believed to be from Amherst Island.

In October 1999, the Entry Island Heritage Committee was formed to promote the heritage of Entry Island with the support of the Council for Anglophone Magdalen Islanders. Support from members of the Community Economic Development and Employability Committee of the Magdalen Islands, or simply CEDEC, also assisted the initiative. After much work, dreams came true when C.A.M.I. purchased a building in the spring of 2000 and by June 2000, the Historical Museum of Entry Island opened to the public. An affiliate of C.A.M.I., the museum displays a rich ancestry with many artefacts once used, photographs and War Memoriam exhibit of Entry veterans.

Exhibits to see at the Historical Museum

Ivan Quinn:

Homage is paid to Ivan Quinn, who was well known in the islands for his singing and composition of songs about the Magdalen Islands. For many years he was Mayor of Entry Island. He owned and operated a store called “Joe’s Grocery” where he was known to have a guitar behind the counter and needed no coaxing to play a song or two when asked. Sadly, Ivan passed away on January 18, 2002.

Butter making:

The cows would be put out to pasture with a bell around their necks. The bell made it easier to find them, especially in foggy weather. Cows were milked every morning and evening. The cow’s milk was poured into a separator to separate the milk from the cream. As soon as enough cream was gathered, it was put into an earthen churn and churned into butter. The butter would then be washed repeatedly with cold water to remove all the milk before being moulded into a butter press.

A Horse Called Farmer:

Learn the amazing, true story of the famous Entry Island horse named Farmer.

Farming:

Farming was a primary necessity in the 1800’s up until the 1960’s. Haymaking and some of the equipment used before tractors and mowers is displayed. The scythe was used to cut down hay by hand, the wooden hand rakes to rake the hay and horses used to haul it. A plentiful amount of vegetables were grown each summer and stored in an outside root cellar for the winter. Dairy products, meat and fish were also preserved and stored for the winter. Today, there are still approximately 8 – 10 farmers at Entry.

Fishing:

Throughout the early 1900’s men fished in double-ended dories with no cabin on them. They pulled their nets and traps by hand. In the 1920’s, Frank Leslie owned and operated a lobster factory at the north point of the island until its closure in the 1930’s. Later, with the financial help of Mr. Leslie, the first wharf was built on the western part of the island where another factory was built. Only codfish and mackerel were salted in large barrels there and taken to Amherst for sale. The wharf and factory were closed in 1945, however the boats were still hauled up on the slip there until

1947. Today, like many other Madelinots, most Entry Islanders make their living from the fishing industry.

Lighthouses of Entry:

The first lighthouse was built in 1874. It was located on the Wash Pond and later moved off the hill and closer to the cliffs. In the 1920's it was once again moved to its present location. The light of this lighthouse was situated on the roof of the keeper's dwelling. The present lighthouse was erected in 1969 and run manually until the late 1980's. The first compressed air foghorn was installed in 1923. In 1971, an electric foghorn system was installed. As technology evolved, boats no longer needed the foghorn and so it was completely removed in the 1990's.

Knitting & Rug Hooking Parties:

A one time, there were parties held by the ladies of Entry for knitting socks, mittens, gloves, fishing mitts and cuffs to pull on over the wrist to protect the arms while fishing. Long winter nights were filled with enjoyment by story telling and the knitting got done and, this way, it never seemed to be a chore. After the work of sheering sheep, washing, carding and spinning the wool, the yarn would be made up into skeins. The skein would be put over one person's arm and made into a ball for an evening of knitting. The same when a mat hooking was held. Ladies would gather at someone's home with scissors and a hook. Made from jute feed bags, a design was drawn on these then, strips of scrap materials would be hooked up from underside of the jute to about a ½ inch on the top creating a mat. A lunch was always served before parting ways.

Veterans of Entry:

A grateful nation remembers our war dead.

World War I saw 17 men from Entry Island enlist. All 17 of these young men returned home safely to their families.

Although small in size, the Magdalen Islands suffer great losses during the Second World War along with many prisoners of war. During World War II, 39 young men enlisted most of which were with the Royal Rifles of Canada or the Navy. During the fall of Hong Kong in 1941, 14 of these young men were taken prisoners of war. They suffered four long years in these camps, and of these 14 young men, only six survived this horrific ordeal. During the Korean War, four men enlisted. These four all returned home safely.

Points of interest while visiting Entry Island

Big Hill is the highest hill in the Magdalen Islands rising 580 feet above sea level. Here, from the summit of this hill, a panoramic and truly breathtaking view is offered!

The lighthouse as previously mentioned.

Entry Island's All Saint's Church is the only War Memorial church on the Magdalen Islands. The lumber was used from the former church, which was over 50 years old, and in need of extensive repair. The new church kept the old name of "All Saint's", but would be known as a "Royal Rifles War Memorial" in memory of the young men from Entry Island who had died as Japanese prisoners of war, following the fall of Hong Kong during World War II. The pulpit came from St. Augustin Church of Amherst. The church features beautiful stained glass windows, one of which was received as a gift from the former St. Luke's Anglican church of Grindstone, along with a large bronze bell on display in the churchyard. The stained glass window located to the east was placed there in memory of five young people who lost their lives at sea in November 1987. A 23-foot memorial cross was erected in 1988 bearing the names of those lost at sea.

The Entry Island School is the 4th school to be built over the years. The school was built in 1962 and opened in 1963. There were 45 students attending that year from Grades 1 – 9. Presently, three teachers instruct students of Pre-Kindergarten up to Grade 8.

The legend of "Kitty's Brook" has it that there was a vessel sailing past the Islands with a young girl named Kitty on board. She was said to be the Captain's daughter. The little girl became very ill and died. It is told that the Captain brought her ashore at Entry Island and buried her in a beautiful little spot close to a brook that ran down to the sea. Her name marks this place known today as "Kitty's Brook".

You'll find Wash Pond at the bottom of a hill on the south side of the island. It was once used a place where people did their washing. The main use of the water from this pond was to wash sheep's wool. It was easier for the women to take their clothing and wool to the pond than to carry the water to their homes. The wool was laid to dry on the rocks.

A journey to Entry Island is like discovering the archipelago for a second time! The residents live with connections to the main islands during the

summer by boat and winter by a small plane. Entry Island will charm you with its simple countryside, nature, colourful landscape and, above all, the hospitality of those who live there. It is a magical spot for photography, trekking and picnicking. Don't miss a visit to Entry Island when visiting the Magdalen Islands.