STORIES FROM THE RICH PAST OF OUR PARISH

These historical stories are submitted weekly by our Heritage Chairperson, George Munroe.

Jean Baptiste Moreau

The recruiting and settling of the Foreign Protestants in Nova Scotia was the first time in British Colonial History that The Boards of Trade actually made the arrangements. On previous occasions a trading company had assumed the obligation in return for valuable trade privileges. The Foreign Protestants originated in the areas of the Upper Rhine and were Swiss, German and from Montbeliard. They travelled down the Rhine and embarked at Rotterdam for Halifax in 1749. The settlers were German and French speaking, and were Lutherans and Calvanists. The Anglican Church in Halifax had endeavoured to organize itself around three clergy, one English speaking, one French and the other German to meet the needs of the growing community of Halifax.

The Rector of St. Paul's Halifax, the Rev. John Breynton, ministered to the English. One of the German settlers with some training was sent to London for ordination, however, he probably died as an unknown person in an English port, because he was never heard from again. The French fared much better, one of The Hon. Edward Cornwallis' party which founded Halifax in 1749, was Jean Baptiste Moreau who was listed as a most unlikely combination for these times, namely, a Gentleman and a Schoolmaster. Moreau had been the Prior of an Abbey in Brest, France. He left the Roman Catholic Church and went to Bath in England, where he married and the joined the Cornwallis Expedition. The Rev. John Breynton recognized in Moreau a person capable of ministering to the French and recommended him to the Bishop of London, who accepted him on the word of Breynton without examination or further Ordination. In 1752 Moreau became the spiritual leader of the group which was being consolidated before transfer to Lunenburg in 1753. Parish organization, therefore, began before the actual founding of the town.

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