

HUMAN HISTORY OF Sable Island

A brief timeline of the human history of Sable Island before the Humane Establishment in 1801. Sable Island is located in Mi'kma'ki, the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People.



1505-1521

Portuguese maps referred to Sable Island as "Santa Cruz" as early as 1505. In 1521, João Álvares Fagundes, a Portuguese captain, earned command of the area south-east of Newfoundland from the Portugal King. He renamed Santa Cruz to Fagunda after himself.



1583

Sir Humphrey Gilbert's ship 'Delight' became the first recorded ship to wreck at Sable Island. Since then, over 350 shipwrecks happened at the Island. Its location near a busy commercial route, along with fog and weather conditions, made it difficult to navigate.



1598

The Marquis de La Roche-Mesgouez set out to create a permanent settlement in North America. At Sable Island, he left behind forty prisoners along with provisions. Five years later, a ship sent to bring back the prisoners to France found only eleven survivors.



1633

Boston's John Rose discovered hundreds of walrus and seals at Sable Island, leading to Acadian and English hunting trips to get oil and tusks. Massachusetts Bay Governor John Winthrop wrote about one trip in 1635 that involved seventeen men spending the winter on Sable Island in order to hunt.



LATE 1750s

Boston merchant Thomas Hancock attempted to start a farming colony in the 1750s, including bringing cows and horses to Sable Island. It is believed the horses once belonged to the Acadians and are the ancestors of the horses on the Island today.

1793-1801

Notable shipwrecks of the 'Princess Amelia' and 'Francis,' along with wreckers combing the remains, drew public concern for Sable Island. The issue led the Nova Scotia legislature to create the Humane Establishment. This ensured that there was a permanent inhabitant on the Island to help those in need.



RESOURCES

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