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FORT ERIE

Greater Fort Erie is a community of communities boasting a residential and commercial corridor which incorporates the town of Fort Erie and the quaint and historic districts of Bridgeburg, Ridgeway, Stevensville and Crystal Beach. As a unique border town, Fort Erie is situated as a major gateway to the Niagara Region.

The Fort Erie area contains deposits of flint, and became important in the production of spearheads, arrowheads, and other tools. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Niagara Peninsula was inhabited by the Neutral Nation, so named by the French because they tried to remain neutral between the warring Huron and Iroquois peoples. In 1650, during the Beaver Wars, the Iroquois Confederacy declared war on the Neutral Nation, driving them from their traditional territory by 1651, and practically annihilating them by 1653.

After the Treaty of Paris, which ended the French and Indian War and transferred Canada from France to Britain, King George III issued the Royal Proclamation of 1763, establishing a "proclamation line", the territory beyond which (including what is now Southern Ontario) would be an Indian Reserve. This was an attempt to avoid further conflict with the Indians, although it did not forestall Pontiac's War the following year. The British also built a string of military forts to defend their new territory, including Fort Erie, the first version of which was established in 1764.

During the American Revolution Fort Erie was used as a supply depot for British troops. After the war the territory of what is now the Town of Fort Erie was settled by soldiers demobilised from Butler's Rangers, and the area was named Bertie Township in 1784.

The original fort was destroyed by ice, as was a second fort built on the same site. In 1803, the British began work on a new, stone, fort inland from the original site. During the War of 1812, the Americans attacked Fort Erie twice in 1812, captured and abandoned it in 1813, and then recaptured it in 1814. The Americans held it for a time, breaking a prolonged British siege. Later they destroyed Fort Erie and returned to Buffalo in the winter of 1814.

The Fort Erie area became a major terminus for slaves using the Underground Railroad in the middle of the 19th century, many of whom crossed into Canada from Buffalo, New York. Bertie Hall (which was used for a time in the 20th century as a Doll House Museum) is believed to have been a stopping point on the Underground Railroad.

Fort Erie is generally flat, but there are low sand hills, varying in height from 2 to 15 metres, along the shore of Lake Erie, and a limestone ridge extends from Point Abino to near Miller's Creek, giving Ridgeway its name. The soil is shallow, with a clay subsoil.

The town's beaches on Lake Erie, most notably Erie Beach, Crystal Beach and Bay Beach, are considered the best in the area and draw many weekend visitors from the Toronto and Buffalo areas. While summers are enjoyable, winters can occasionally be fierce, with many snowstorms, whiteouts and winds whipping off Lake Erie.













Fort Erie Municipal Centre / Town Hall



