

FENCES

Traditional Fence Building in Newfoundland and Labrador



Riggle/Wriggle Fence

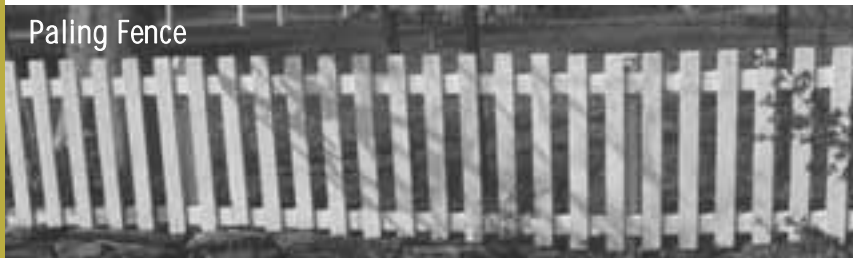
In Newfoundland, fences were built for a number of reasons including keeping animals out of gardens and delineating property lines. There are five main traditional fence types in Newfoundland: the Paling Fence, the Longer Fence, the Picket Fence, the Riggle Fence and the Wattle Fence; and each was used for a different purpose. It is difficult to discern the exact origin of each type of fence, but it can be assumed that all types have European origins especially in Ireland, Scotland and England. The function and style of each fence type is outlined in this brochure. Fences are an important part of our history and landscape and are worth preserving.

Paling Fence

The paling fence is the most refined of these five fence types and was used mainly in front yard for decorative purposes and to demarcate property lines. This type of fence was constructed by using two horizontal planks with evenly spaced vertical palings nailed to them. The palings for these fences were usually a standard size of approximately four feet long and three inches wide. To make these fences more attractive the tops of the palings were often rounded or pointed and the entire fence was usually painted or stained.

Longer Fence

The longer (lunger) fence is similar to the stake and rail fence type that is common in other regions. The longer fence was used to keep sheep, cattle and other large livestock out of gardens or meadows in order to protect the crops. One disadvantage of the longer fence was that it was not very effective in keeping smaller animal out of gardens and meadows. This type of fence was constructed using two vertical posts with horizontal longers nailed to them. These longers were spaced further apart than the palings of a paling fence would be. While the wood used in a longer fence is unrefined, it is usually rinded to make it last longer without rotting.



Paling Fence



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Picket Fence

A picket fence is a less refined version of a paling fence and served to keep both small and large animals out of gardens and away from crops. The picket fence was more effective in its goal than the longer fence because the pickets were placed very close together. The fence was constructed using one horizontal longer at the top of the fence and various supports along the fence with pickets nailed to the longer. The pickets were made from saplings and they were usually about five feet long and two inches in diameter. Furthermore, the pickets were usually rinded in order to keep the fence from rotting and thus extending its life.

Riggle/Wriggle Fence

The riggle rod (wriggle, riddle, lear, roddle) fence is the most unique fence type in Newfoundland and it is very rare today. It is a combination of a longer fence and a picket fence and has obvious roots in the wattle fences of Medieval England.

The riggle rod fence was the most effective in creating a barrier to keep things in or out of an enclosure. This fence type was constructed using three horizontal

longers with long slender branches woven alternately between the longers creating an over-and-under effect. The tops of the branches were usually left untrimmed at the top. The branches were pushed close together and once they dried, the fence formed a very strong barrier. This type of fence was economically practical because it did not require the use of nails on the woven uprights.

Wattle Fence

A wattle fence is not a very common fence type in Newfoundland but it is, at least in part the inspiration for the riggle/wriggle rod fence. With roots in Medieval England, the wattle fence is usually a low fence used around small gardens and is effective as a windbreak. A wattle fence is constructed using a number of vertical posts and weaving long slender, pliable branches around them to create an over and under effect.



Related Sections of the *Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*

Guidelines for Landscapes

Recommended

- Preserving built features — such as gazebos, grottoes, bridges, fences, benches, light standards, drinking fountains, playground equipment, statuary and other constructed amenities, as well as culturally significant objects such as inukshuks — that are important in defining the overall heritage value of the landscape.

Not Recommended

- Removing or radically changing built features that are important in defining the overall heritage value of the landscape.
- Introducing a new design that is inconsistent with the style, era and overall historic character of the landscape, such as replacing a lost wooden fence with a chain-link fence.
- Creating a false history because the replaced feature is based on insufficient physical, documentary and oral evidence.