



# Ardgowan National Historic Site of Canada

*A reminder of Prince Edward Island's political and social history in the Confederation Era*



Ardgowan National Historic Site of Canada  
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Ardgowan stands as a reminder of Prince Edward Island's political and social history and of a significant portion of the life of one of the principal men who envisioned the birth of Canada and the Island colony's place in the new dominion.

## REASONS FOR NATIONAL HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Ardgowan was the home of William Henry Pope from 1854-1873. Lawyer, land agent, editor of the *Islander* newspaper and Father of Confederation, Pope was at the center of the political and educational controversies of his era. From 1859-1865, he was Colonial Secretary of Prince Edward Island. He attended the 1864 conferences on federal union here and in Québec and became the Island's most forceful and persistent advocate of Confederation. The colonial delegates to the Charlottetown meeting were entertained in this house, which remained in the Pope family until 1879.

## BACKGROUND

Ardgowan National Historic Site was once the home of William Henry Pope, one of Prince Edward Island's Fathers of Confederation. W. H. Pope was pro-Confederation from the beginning and his home became the scene of some rather lavish entertaining during the Charlottetown Conference – an important aspect of how the delegates came to better understand each other in a relaxed atmosphere.

Ardgowan is an example of the “cottage orné” (or picturesque cottage) architectural style, somewhat typical of a genteel family's country home. The exterior of the home and the grounds have been faithfully restored to the Victorian era.

The name Ardgowan has its origins in an appreciation of both the landscape of the estate and the Scots culture. “Ard” is the Highland Gaelic for “hill” and “gowan” is the Lowland Scots for the common daisy. Pope was a gentleman gardener and contributed in his time to some of the landscape features still seen today.

Visitors may experience the period gardens, enjoy a family picnic or take an unhurried stroll and enjoy watching and listening to the birds that frequent the site. A glimpse of a tranquil Victorian life – that of a family of some social stature – awaits the visitor to Ardgowan.

While the exterior and grounds are restored to their 1860s appearance, Parks Canada administrative offices are located inside Ardgowan.



William Henry Pope  
May 29, 1825 - October 7, 1879  
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## MILESTONES

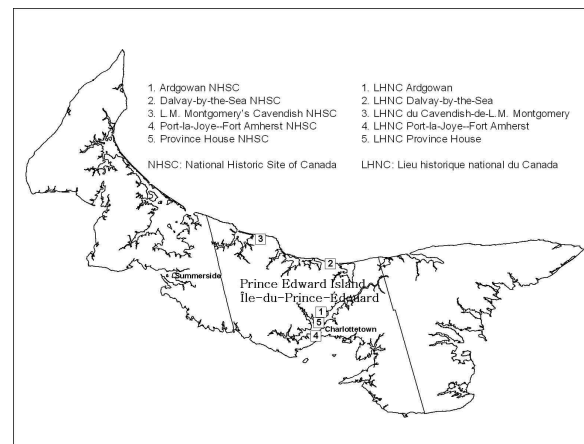
- 1825** William Henry Pope is born in Bedeque, P.E.I.
- 1847** W. H. Pope is called to the Prince Edward Island Bar, having studied in Prince Edward Island and England (specializing in Law at Inner Temple and also under Edward Palmer in Charlottetown (1842-48), who was to become a fellow Father of Confederation).
- 1850s** Pope becomes more involved with the Conservative party.
- 1851** Pope marries Helen Debrisay of Charlottetown. They will have eight children.
- 1859** Conservative party is elected to power; Pope became Colonial Secretary and Editor of the *Islander* newspaper.
- 1863-1867** Pope represents Belfast in the House of Assembly.
- 1863** Pope travels to London, England, with Edward Palmer to try to rectify the land issue (to obtain proprietors' approval for settlement) but fails.
- 1864** The Charlottetown Conference is held the first week of September. W. H. Pope entertains delegates and observers at Ardgown, where they enjoyed a grand luncheon of "oysters, lobsters, champagne and ... Island luxuries".
- 1866** Pope resigns from office due, in large part, to resounding public opposition to the Confederation debate. W. H. Pope

had supported Confederation in the Assembly until Premier James Pope and brother to W. H. Pope succeeded in having a resolution against union passed while W. H. Pope was absent from the colony.

- 1873** Prince Edward Island joins Confederation. W. H. Pope is appointed judge in the Prince County Court in Summerside.
- 1875** The Pope family leaves Ardgowan.
- 1879** Pope dies in Summerside, where he had been serving as a judge of the Prince County Court.
- 1967** Parks Canada acquires the house and five acres of the original 76-acre estate to commemorate the role of the Fathers of Confederation in Canada's history.

## LOCATION

Ardgowan National Historic Site is located at 2 Palmers Lane, at the corner of Palmers Lane and Mount Edward Road.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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