"Acadia National Park has a rich human history that includes Native Americans, European settlers, artists, conservationists, and more. Each group has made its mark on what is today Acadia National Park. Explore this section to discover the people and stories of Acadia.

**Early History**

Deep shell heaps indicate American Indian encampments dating back 6,000 years in Acadia National Park, but prehistoric records are scanty. The first written descriptions of Maine coast Indians, recorded 100 years after European trade contacts began, describe American Indians who lived off the land by hunting, fishing, collecting shellfish, and gathering plants and berries. The Wabanaki Indians knew Mount Desert Island as *Pemetic*, ‘the sloping land.’ They built bark-covered conical shelters, and traveled in exquisitely designed birch bark canoes. Historical notes record that the Wabanaki wintered in interior forests and spent their summers near the coast. Archeological evidence suggests the opposite pattern; in order to avoid harsh inland winters and to take advantage of salmon runs upstream, American Indians wintered on the coast and summered inland.

**New France**

The first meeting between the people of Pemetic and the Europeans is a matter of conjecture. But it was a Frenchman, Samuel Champlain, who made the first important contribution to the historical record of Mount Desert Island. He led the expedition that landed on Mount Desert on September 5, 1604 and wrote in his journal, ‘The mountain summits are all bare and rocky..... I name it Isles des Monts Desert.’ Champlain’s visit to Acadia 16 years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock destined this land to become known as New France before it became New England.
In 1613, French Jesuits, welcomed by Indians, established the first French mission in America on what is now Fernald Point, near the entrance to Somes Sound. They had just begun to build a fort, plant their corn, and baptize the natives when an English ship, commanded by Captain Samuel Argall, destroyed their mission."