

- ❖ Welcome to Grand-Pre National Historic Site. Introduce yourself.
- ❖ Explain that the site is a part of Parks Canada's system of National Historic sites. The mandate of Parks Canada is to preserve, protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage. It is also a site co-managed by Parks Canada and the Société Promotion Grand-Pre representing the Acadian Community.
- ❖ A commemorative site to the Acadian people.
- ❖ Who are the Acadians ?
- ❖ The Acadians are descendants of the French settlers who established in the colony of Acadie in the early 1600's. The colony included present day Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, the Gaspé and parts of present day Maine... (which is probably why there is an Acadia National Park in Maine)
- ❖ The first permanent settlement was a fur-trading colony established in 1605 at Port Royal, capital of Acadie for many years. (A colony of men only). In the 1630s families were brought in from France to settle. By the early 1700s they began to refer to themselves as Acadians.
- ❖ Their story is linked to the famous tides of the Bay of Fundy.
- ❖ The Acadians settled around the Bay of Fundy in present day Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. They introduced the concept of dyke building to drain the salt marshes created by the tides. The development of dyking techniques in Acadie was a combination of their skills and the way they adapted to the distinctive features of the Bay of Fundy.
- ❖ Acadians from Port Royal moved up the Bay of Fundy to Les Mines (Minas) in the 1680's. The area around the Les Mines (Minas Basin) was one of the three areas of Acadian settlement.
- ❖ They built their houses on the uplands adjacent to the marshes. (Indicate the hills where the houses would have been found). Upon looking at this vast flat plain ahead of us, which at that time was marshland, they were reminded of meadows. Therefore, the village was named "le village de la Grande-Prée". In English "Great Meadow".

- ❖ Indicate there are 3000 acres of farmland today. Indicate Long Island and the dykes that protect this land from the tides of the Bay of Fundy. Explain that the Minas Basin(Tides of the Bay of Fundy) is on the other side of the island.
- ❖ Does anyone know what this is ? Use the aboiteaux and explain how they used this to build dykes and how the dykes were built. Explain that it took 2 or 3 years to drain the salt from the soil.
- ❖ The salt marshes they transformed were the richest lands in the colony. Within a very short period of time they could live almost self sufficiently. They were even able to trade their agricultural surplus for what they could not provide for themselves. These reclaimed lands feature topsoil up to 12 meters (40 feet) deep.
- ❖ Although the Acadians prospered due to their dyked lands, there was great conflict in this colony. The colony of Acadie changed hands between France and England many times.
- ❖ In 1713, by the Treaty of Utrecht, Acadie became a British possession named Nova Scotia. (Latin for New Scotland) Port Royal the capitol was renamed Annapolis Royal. It remained a British colony permanently after that.
- ❖ The treaty gave the Acadians the option of either moving or remaining on their lands as British subjects. (Oath of allegiance)
- ❖ The Acadians refused to swear an oath of allegiance to the British crown unless the oath was qualified (conditional) by recognition of their neutrality in case of war. They did not want to put in the position where they would have to take up arms against anyone who attacked this British colony. Most likely that would be France.
- ❖ By this time they no longer considered themselves French, they were Acadian, however they did not wish to take up arms against the French.
- ❖ Also the British and the Mi'kmaq did not have a good relationship. The Acadians knew if they took the unconditional (unqualified) oath they might have to take up arms against the Mi'kmaq. They did^{not} want to do this as they were good friends with the Mi'kmaq. There were marriages between the two communities.
- ❖ This oath of allegiance became a bone of contention for the next 40 years.
- ❖ Many would sign a conditional oath in 1730 when they were promised they would not be forced to take up arms against the French. This was the condition they had requested all along however they received only a verbal promise by Governor Richard Philipps who did not tell the authorities in England about this promise. After signing this oath they were referred to by the British as the *French Neutrals*.
- ❖ On the eve of the Seven Years War (French and Indian Wars in the US), Nova Scotia was surrounded by a strong French presence, the Fortress of Louisbourg on Île-Royale (present day Cape Breton Island), present day Prince-Edward Island belonged to the France and the French occupied present day New Brunswick.
- ❖ By this time Halifax was the capitol of the colony. The new Lt. Governor Charles Lawrence did not agree with the promise made by Philipps.
- ❖ The majority of the settlers in this British colony of Nova Scotia were French speaking and catholic. The population, which was approximately 2000 in 1713 when it became a British colony, had grown to 12000 to 13000.

- ❖ On the eve of the Seven Years War, the British authorities feared that should war break out and should the Acadians decide to support the French, the British would lose Nova Scotia.
- ❖ As far as the Governor Lawrence and his council were concerned the Acadians were not British subjects. They had not signed an unconditional oath.
- ❖ In the summer of 1755 the eve of the war, the Acadians were asked again to take the oath, which they refused. The British authorities ordered that the Acadians be deported to the Anglo-American colonies along the Atlantic seaboard.
- ❖ During the duration of the Deportations a total of 10,000 people (approximate) were deported.
- ❖ In late August 1755, Lt Colonel John Winslow arrived at Grand-Pré with New England and British troops to oversee the Deportation of the Acadians from the Minas area.
- ❖ Winslow selected the church and the surrounding land, believed to be within the present site, as his headquarters.
- ❖ All Acadian men and boys 10 years and older were ordered to assemble on the church on September 5 at 3:00PM.
- ❖ The Deportation order was read by Col. John Winslow. They were told their lands and livestock would be confiscated and they and their families would be removed from Nova Scotia. (*Do not read the Deportation order. There is not enough time*)
- ❖ They then were declared prisoners and remained in the church until the transport ships arrived. 2200 residents of Les Mines (Minas area) were deported.
- ❖ After putting the Acadians and their belongings aboard ship, the troops burned Les Mines (Minas)
- ❖ Not all of the Acadians were deported. Many Acadians eluded Deportation. Many managed to return. At the end of the Seven Years War, after the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1763, they were allowed to return.
- ❖ The Acadians did not return to their former lands, which New England Planters settled after 1760, but settled on vacant lands in other parts of Nova Scotia and what is now New Brunswick.
- ❖ The lands they were given were not great for farming therefore to survive they turned to the sea. Today Acadians are found in every profession, however many Acadian regions survive from the fishing industry.
- ❖ The period of complex migrations after the Deportations lasted for approximately 50 years. The Acadians refer to the Deportation and the migration period as *Le Grand Dérangement*. (*The Great Upheaval*)
- ❖ Today, there are over 3,000,000 descendants of the Acadians worldwide. The majority of these descendants can be found in the four Atlantic Provinces, Quebec, New England, Louisiana and France. You may be familiar with the Acadians in Louisiana referred to as the Cajuns
- ❖ The stone cross marks the cemetery. (Herbin Cross) John Hrederic Herbin purchased the land to establish a park in memory of the Acadians, his mother's people.
- ❖ The bust of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow who wrote *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie* (He never visited Nova Scotia)