

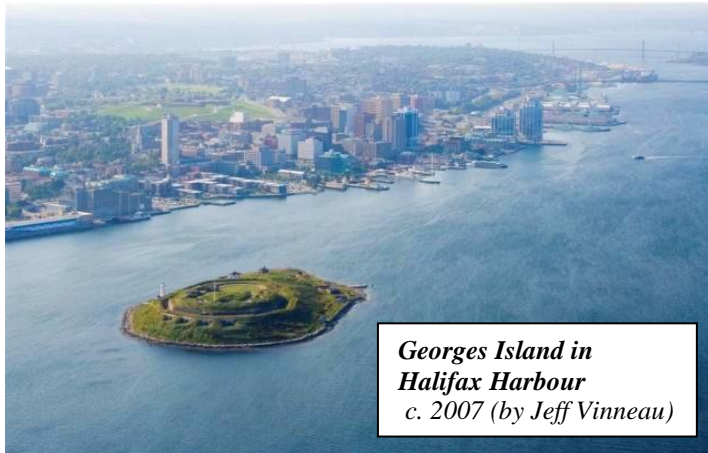
Acadians in Halifax and on Georges Island, 1755-1764¹

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In dealing with the history of Acadia, several authors have mentioned Georges Island in Halifax, Nova Scotia, as a site where Acadians were imprisoned at various times between 1755 and 1763 – that is, between the start of the Deportation and the end of the Seven Years War. Most of those authors have made only vague mention of the connections that existed between the Acadian community and that island, with the exception, however, of one study of the history of Georges Island itself, published in recent years, which devotes at least a chapter to this issue.² It is partly in reaction to this work that the present investigation was undertaken, in order to present more



*Georges Island in
Halifax Harbour
c. 2007 (by Jeff Vinneau)*

explicit and specific information about how Georges Island actually figured in the history of the Deportation over the period from 1755 to 1762. To clarify our understanding of these matters, we thought it would be useful to sketch the major events occurring in Halifax from the moment the Deportation began up to the point when some of the Acadian families left their imprisonment in this city and set sail for a new home, which turned out to be Louisiana.

¹ The author wishes to acknowledge the special help of Stephen A. White, genealogist at the Centre d'études acadiennes Anselme-Chiasson, in agreeing to review the text and the table of Acadian families who spent time in Halifax and on Georges Island between 1759 and 1764. Particular thanks to Mr. White for his thoughtful advice and for providing the author with access to the manuscript of the genealogical notes for Part 2 of his *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles acadiennes*. Also, for making the work possible, the author gratefully acknowledges the role of Parks Canada, his employer at the time that this research was completed.

² Dianne Marshall, *Georges Island: The Keep of Halifax Harbour*, Halifax, Nimbus Publishing, 2003, pp. 91-109.

The story of Georges Island, a mere islet in the very middle of Halifax harbour, goes back to the last ice age, which produced this drumlin, along with the city's landmark Citadel Hill. Visited and occupied for thousands of years by aboriginal peoples, this little island then became a handy site for European fishers, especially French, beginning in the 17th century. Less than a year after the fall of Port Royal in 1710 and thus, shortly before the formal ceding of Acadia to England in 1713, the French were planning to develop fortifications at "Chibouquetou" or "Chibouctou," the French interpretation of the name given to Halifax harbour by the Mi'kmaw community of the area [or Chebucto, for the English].³ Apparently that fortification plan was never carried out, and the little oval-shaped island – which the French dubbed Île Ronde or Île de la Raquette (Round Island or Snowshoe Island) – no doubt remained as a spot for Acadian and New England fishers to dry their catch. Whatever the case, it was not until the mid-1740s that the island again caught the attention of the French, when Chibouctou was picked as the assembly point for the fleet commanded by the Duke d'Anville in his campaign to retake Louisbourg and Acadia in 1746. That endeavour came to grief, however, when stormy weather scattered the fleet and an epidemic decimated the crew, while the Duke d'Anville himself fell prey to an attack of apoplexy. His body was buried on the Île de la Raquette and there it remained until 1749, when the British arrived in force to establish the new town of Halifax in "Chebucto" Harbour. The duke's remains were reinterred beneath the chapel of Saint-Louis at Louisbourg, which had recently been restored to French possession.⁴

Upon arriving in Halifax Harbour, the British recognized the strategic usefulness of the little island, which they renamed Georges Island in honour of His Majesty George II.⁵ Intending to develop Halifax as a commercial centre to rival Louisbourg, the British wanted to fortify the harbour as a counterbalance to the regional power of that French fortress town. Besides planning fortifications for various sites around the harbour, the British colonial authorities also focused their attention on Georges Island. Colonel Edward Cornwallis – commander of the expedition and governor of Acadia or Nova Scotia, of which Halifax was now the administrative capital – identified this island as a good place for a battery to defend both the harbour and the town.

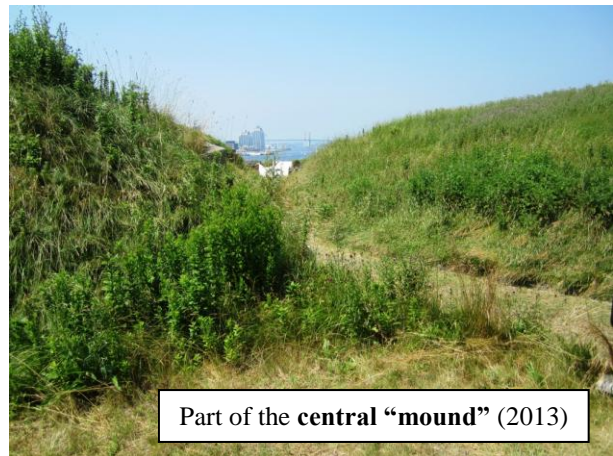
Georges Island was the actual landing-point for the passengers of the five vessels making up the expedition. The ships were then dispatched to Louisbourg, both to pick up supplies and to remove the British civilians from that town before the French returned. When the British colonists went ashore on Georges Island in July of 1749, they put up some storehouses there,

³Silas T. Rand, *Micmac Place-Names in the Maritime Provinces and Gaspé Peninsula*, Ottawa, Geographic Board of Canada, 1919, p. 20. Rand informs us that this expression means a large harbour extending far into a great forest. He also offers the following alternative spellings: Ukchebookt, Chebookt and Chebooktook.

⁴Étienne Taillemite, "La Rochefoucauld de Roye, Jean-Baptiste-Louis-Frédéric de, Marquis de Roucy, duc d'Anville," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, accessible at the following Internet site (as of 4 Aug. 2013): http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/la_rochefoucauld_de_roye-jean_baptiste_louis_frederic_de_3E.html.

⁵The following lines are based largely on the following unpublished work: Terrence D. MacLean, *Georges Island 1749-1906*, unpublished study, Halifax, Parks Canada, no date, 122 pages.

along with a guard post. The following year, Cornwallis was determined to clear the island and build blockhouses, as well as a battery, such as he had planned the year before. By the end of 1750, the British had nearly completed a palisade to encircle the island, and had built a seven-cannon battery on the western side of the island [facing the town site] to prevent a naval attack on the town. During the summers of 1751 and 1752, work proceeded on the island's fortifications with the help of French-speaking Protestant colonists of Swiss and German origin – including some from Montbéliard – who needed to earn money to pay back the cost of their trans-Atlantic passage and their accommodations at Halifax.⁶ Their main task was to move huge amounts of earth, transforming the topography of the island and building a mound at the centre, where fortifications and a battery were then erected. Another battery, with ten cannons, was also constructed at the southern extremity of the island [toward the harbour mouth]. By the fall of 1752, these civilians from the island were finally able to join the main population of settlers on the mainland, in barracks erected especially for them in Halifax town. In 1753, these French Protestant colonists refused to work any longer on Georges Island and joined the German-speaking immigrants who were relocating to Lunenburg, the former Acadian site of Mirligueche (*Mirligouèche*).⁷ However, the job of fortifying the island continued. On the western side, facing the town, workers built a fortification with three bastions and an earthworks parapet. During the summer of 1754, they put up a *cavalier*, or raised artillery platform, at the northeast side of the island, along with two wooden buildings, each 100 feet long and 25 feet wide, 500 feet apart. In 1755, the fortifications on the central high ground were developed further, and a ten-cannon battery was installed at the northeastern side of the fortification, supplementing the ten cannons of the *cavalier* and the six cannons of the parapeted western battery. Inside the fort were the following structures: an underground powder magazine, a storehouse, a small barracks for officers, and a barracks to accommodate 40 men.⁸



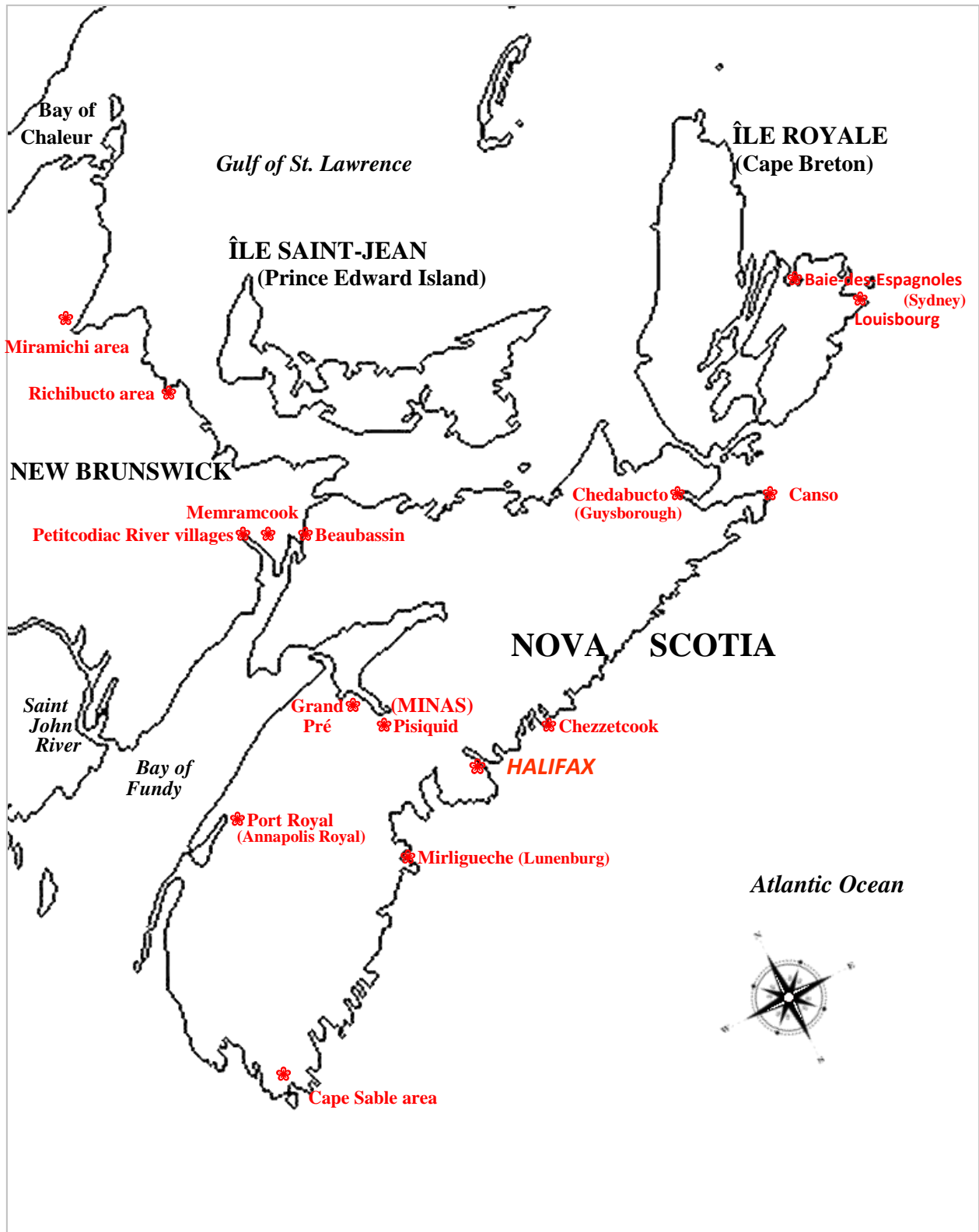
Part of the **central “mound”** (2013)

In 1756, Lawrence found the island's fortifications still inadequate to fend off attack, since they included only 20 cannons, while the six-cannon western battery had fallen into such a state of disrepair that it was useless. But little was spent on the island's fortifications, especially after 1758, when an inquiry by the Board of Ordnance concluded that no additional battery would be built until the island's outer defence works were enhanced, since the palisade was rotten, while

⁶On this theme, see Winthrop Bell, *The “Foreign Protestants” and the Settlement of Nova Scotia*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1961, pp. 279 and 282. [Translator's note: In the population of the “Foreign Protestants” as a whole, of course, the great majority were German-speaking, from the German states and Switzerland.]

⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 386-387 and 457.

⁸T. D. MacLean, *Georges Island...*, *op.cit.*, p. 11.



the parapet was in poor condition and too low to cope with an attack. In addition, the wooden buildings inside the fort needed repair. Meanwhile, the British had mounted a campaign against Louisbourg in the summer of 1757. They abandoned that initiative, yet decided to leave part of their naval fleet at Halifax over the winter of 1757-1758, and effectively turned this harbour into their base of naval operations in North America. Since the British navy maintained a steady presence from then on, the need for fortifications was less pressing. Even though another inquiry in 1761 exposed the flimsiness of Halifax's fortifications, no further work of any significance was undertaken around the harbour, much less on Georges Island, which the inquiry considered strategically unimportant. Two decades would pass before any new efforts would be made to refortify Georges Island, with the 1776 outbreak of the American War of Independence.

Besides fortifications, the island's facilities included warehouses that sometimes served as prisons for persons accused of crimes, including high treason, of which John Hoffman was accused for his role in the insurrection by the Lunenburg settlers in the fall of 1753.⁹ Also imprisoned on the island were, among others, the naval and civilian French sailors captured from vessels boarded by the British navy in 1755 and 1756. In the fall of 1755, the British captured the French vessel *Pontchartrain*. Some 29 passengers were taken as prisoners of war, and were placed on the island the following June.¹⁰ From November 1756 to May 1757, no fewer than 900 French captives were held in these makeshift prisons on Georges Island, guarded by the garrison that occupied the barracks inside the palisade.¹¹ These were not the only French people held prisoner on the island, for it was also to become a site for internment and incarceration of Acadians.

* * *

The Acadian deputies 1755

In the absence of documentation, we cannot know whether any Acadians were imprisoned on Georges Island before 1755. We do know that, in the fall of 1749 and over the subsequent winter, some Acadians from Pisiquid (*Pigiguit*) were held prisoner at Halifax, but we do not know exactly where.¹² It remains to be established whether it was in the storehouses built during the summer of 1749, since no apparent mention was made of that point in the documents from this earliest period. In fact, the first incident involving Acadians shows up only at the beginning of July 1755, with the incarceration of fifteen Acadian deputies (or community delegates) who refused to swear an unconditional oath of allegiance before the Council of the Governor of Nova

⁹D. Marshall, *Georges Island...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 81-84.

¹⁰NSARM (Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management) RG1 vol. 163, second part, p. 76, 22 June 1756.

¹¹D. Marshall, *Georges Island...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 80-81.

¹²Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc, « Pigiguit : l'impact du Grand Dérangement sur une communauté de l'ancienne Acadie », *Du Grand Dérangement à la Déportation. Nouvelles perspectives historiques*, (direction, Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc), Collection Mouvange, Moncton, Chaire d'études acadiennes, 2005, p. 180.

Scotia on 4 July 1755, following which they were told they would be deported to France.¹³ A little more than three weeks later, on 28 July, a similar fate was visited upon other Acadian delegates from Port Royal, Minas (*les Mines*, including the parishes of Grand-Pré and Rivière-aux-Canards), and Pisiquid, who were jailed in their turn at Georges Island for refusing to take such an oath. On 11 September 1755, these deputies left their island prison and were escorted home to their respective districts of Pisiquid, Minas, and Port Royal.¹⁴

The Lunenburg Acadians 1755

Not long afterward, fifty people from Mirligueche (by then, “Lunenburg”) – including some who had actually sworn an unconditional oath of allegiance in the summer of 1754 – were transported to Georges Island to await deportation.¹⁵ On 3 October 1755, the lieutenant-governor of Nova Scotia, Charles Lawrence, sent the following order to Samuel Barron, master or commander of the *Providence*: that he was to take aboard some Acadians from Georges Island, whom he would transport to North Carolina, and that he would see that each passenger was provided a pound of beef, two pounds of bread, and five pounds of flour per week.¹⁶ It was not until 15 November 1755 that Barron set sail from Halifax for North Carolina, where he arrived with his human cargo on 13 January 1756.¹⁷

The women and children of Beaubassin 1756

During the years following, other Acadian families were also confined on Georges Island. In fact, in the year following the deportation of the Mirligueche people, some Acadian families were incarcerated on Georges Island under very special circumstances. These were a group of Acadian women and their children, all from the Beaubassin region, which they had left in the fall of 1755 to escape deportation. Following the advice of their missionary, Abbé François Le Guerne, these women and children had actually decided to make for Île-Saint-Jean (now Prince Edward Island), although their husbands had been deported to the Anglo-American colonies.¹⁸

¹³NSARM RG1 vol. 35, no. 16, p. 7, Charles Lawrence to the Board of Trade, 19 July 1755. Thomas B. Akins, *Acadia and Nova Scotia*, Cottonport, Polyanthos, 1972 (reprinting of *Selections from the Public Documents of the Province of Nova Scotia*, Halifax, Charles Annand, Publisher, 1869) (hereafter: Akins), p. 260.

¹⁴Contrary to what several authors have concluded, the deputies imprisoned on Georges Island were reunited with their families before the deportation of their home communities. See R.-G. LeBlanc, « Piguicuit : l’impact du Grand Dérangement... », *op. cit.*, p. 201.

¹⁵Information provided by Stephen White, that these 50 Acadian women and men were counted in the victualing list of the settlers at Lunenburg in 1755, accessible at the following Internet site (as of 17 Mar. 2010): <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ked1/1755vict.html>.

¹⁶NSARM RG1 vol. 163, second part, p. 65, Orders of Charles Lawrence to Samuel Barron, master of the sloop *Providence*, 3 Oct. 1755, in Akins, p. 280.

¹⁷NSARM RG1 vol. 220, no. 34, accounts of John Campbell for the rental of the sloop *Providence*, in Akins, p. 289.

¹⁸ANC [Archives nationales de France, Colonies], Série C11^A vol. 87, f. 394v, François Le Guerne to Prévost, Belair near Cocagne, 10 Mar. 1756. On this topic, see Paul Delaney, “The Acadians Deported

In the summer of 1756, with their food supplies running low in that French colony, Commander Raymond de Villejoint had the Acadian families sent to Québec.¹⁹ However, according to a French officer stationed at Louisbourg: “A ship loaded with 150 Acadians, that left Isle Saint-Jean for Canada, was seized by a [British] warship off Gaspé. These unfortunate Acadians were brought to Georges Island at Halifax, where they remained for several months, sleeping in the open air, most of them with nothing for covers, their bits of rag having been taken from them when they were captured. They were sent to us at the beginning of November in exchange for sailors that had been captured by our privateers.”²⁰ The British authorities did not know what to do with these prisoners, consisting of women and their children, which might explain why an officer of an English vessel went to Louisbourg in October of 1756 “to negotiate for an exchange of sailors.”²¹

The colonial authorities of Louisbourg – who had been sorely tried by the blockade to which the British fleet had subjected their harbour since the previous spring – agreed to release a hundred British sailors in return for an equal number of French sailors, which the British officer pledged to send to them. Despite that formal promise, when the British sailors reached Halifax, they were placed aboard shorthanded vessels, while the French sailors, along with some French army recruits, were put on board and brought to Europe instead of Louisbourg.²² In return for the hundred sailors released from Louisbourg, the British authorities thought it would be a good idea to send back the Acadian women and their children, along with just a few French sailors,²³ which was undoubtedly a convenient way to get rid of that collection of highly vulnerable people, with winter coming on.

Incidentally, during their subsequent passage from Louisbourg to Canada, these women and children were forced to spend the winter of 1756-1757 at Baie-des-Espagnols (now Sydney, Cape Breton), where the schooner transporting them had to put into port.²⁴ Some of the young Acadian women married Acadian men or French soldiers based there.²⁵ Finally, during the

from Chignectou to ‘les Carolines’ in 1755: Their Origin, Identities and Subsequent Movements”, in *Du Grand Dérangement à la Déportation: Nouvelles perspectives historiques*, op. cit., pp. 258-262.

¹⁹ANC, Série C11^B vol. 36, f. 35r, Villejoint to Drucourt and Prévost, Port la Joye, 3 Nov. 1756; ANC, Série C11^B vol. 36, f. 158r, Prévost to the minister, 26 Nov. 1756; ANC, Série C11^A vol. 101, f. 85r, Vaudreuil to the minister, Montréal, 7 Aug. 1756.

²⁰*Les derniers jours de l’Acadie (1748-1758)*, éd. Gaston du Bosq de Beaumont, Paris, Émile Lechevalier, 1899, p. 208, letter from Joubert to de Surlaville, Louisbourg, 15 Dec. 1756. It is interesting to note that there is no mention of this event in the correspondence of the colonial authorities of Île-Royale or Québec before mid-December 1756, despite the months that had passed since the capture of these Acadian women and their children.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 209.

²²*Ibid.*

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴ANC, Série C11^B vol. 36, f. 197r-v, letter from Prévost to the minister, Louisbourg, 16 Dec. 1756.

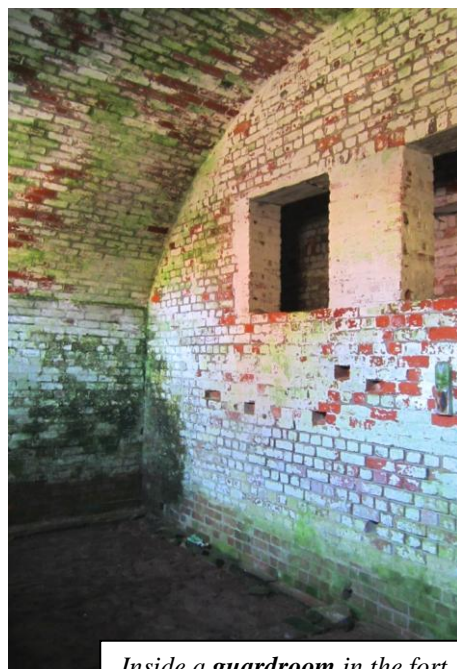
²⁵In the Louisbourg registers, see the marriages of two girls from the household of Jean-Baptiste Savoie and Marie Haché of Beaubassin, or more specifically, of Ouescaque [Vechcaque or Westcock;

following summer, Prévost informed the minister that an English privateer had raided the place and captured the small vessel – a snow – that he had chartered to transport to Canada the Acadian women and children who had been caught by the English the previous year.²⁶

Unfortunately, nothing further on this matter has been found in the official correspondence of the French colonial authorities of the period, but it does seem that the women and children finally reached their destination, since we find them recorded at Québec in the fall of 1757, by which time several had died of smallpox.²⁷

The Cape Sable families 1758-1759

After the incarceration of these women and children on Georges Island, two years would pass before other Acadian families would arrive there as prisoners, in the fall of 1758. The Rangers, under Captain Joseph Gorham's command, undertook an expedition against Acadian settlements in the Cape Sable region. They captured 68 Acadian men, women, and children, along with the missionary Jean-Baptiste de Gai Desenclaves, at the beginning of November. Very early in January 1759, after two months of detention, the British expelled all of these people to France, together with other Acadians captured in the meantime. Aboard two transport ships, the deportees reached Le Havre at the beginning of February.²⁸ That, however, was not the end of the story for Acadians of the Cape Sable area. Rather, in September of 1758, some Acadians of the region had sent a request to the governor of Massachusetts, informing him that 40 families remained there, comprising 150 individuals, who were prepared to surrender because of the great distress in which they found themselves.²⁹ After Governor Thomas Pownall received the missive, he sent a copy to Charles Lawrence, governor of Nova Scotia, in January 1759.³⁰ Since these Acadian families had eluded the earlier search by John Gorham's Rangers in October 1758, Lawrence was delighted to receive the news, and was only too eager to get his hands on these families. But before he could set that in motion,



Inside a guardroom in the fort of later years (photo 2013)

near today's Sackville NB]: Marie-Josèphe, married 21 Feb. 1757 to Jean-Baptiste Boutin; and Marguerite, married 4 July 1757 to Joseph Briand. Information received from Stephen White.

²⁶ANC, Série C11^B, vol. 37, f. 95r, letter from Prévost to the minister, Louisbourg, 12 July 1757.

²⁷Personal communication from Stephen White to the author.

²⁸Clarence-J. d'Entremont, *Histoire de Cap-Sable...*, vol. 4, Eunice, Louisiana, Hebert Publications, 1981, pp. 2080-2081.

²⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 2095-2097 and 2117-2118, Joseph Landry and Charles d'Entremont to Thomas Pownall, Cape Sables [sic], 15 Sept. 1758, in Akins, pp. 306-307.

³⁰Thomas Pownall to Charles Lawrence, Boston, 2 Jan. 1759, in Akins, pp. 304-305.

these Acadians took another step of their own, in the absence of any reply from the governor of Massachusetts. In the spring of 1759, they delegated a few of their community members to travel to Halifax and offer Lawrence their surrender. At the end of June 1759, Capt. Gorham and his Rangers brought to Halifax some 152 persons. Lawrence had them disembark on Georges Island, “as being a place of the most security,” adding them to a half-dozen Acadian prisoner captured the preceding winter on the Saint John River.³¹ After several months’ detention on the island, these Acadian families were transported to Cherbourg, France. According to Clarence-J. d’Entremont, at least eight people died during their imprisonment on the island between June and November 1759.³² A crucially significant event happened on the night of November 3 and 4, just before these latest deportees set sail from Georges Island: that is, there was a storm such as had rarely been witnessed anywhere on the coasts of Acadia.³³ The consequences of that bit of weather would make themselves felt for years to come, as we will shortly see.

The Acadian armed resistance movement

It is first worth mentioning that the military collapse of Québec, in September of that same year of 1759, dealt a severe blow to the armed resistance movement among Acadians who had



British flintlock
(War of 1812 era)

escaped the Deportation, alongside those who had managed to return from exile as early as 1756. Back in September 1755, English-American troops had suffered a heavy setback during a campaign they had launched against the Acadian villages along the Shepody (*Chipoudie*) and Petitcodiac (*Petcoudiac*) rivers. That expedition had aimed to capture those Acadian men who had defied the British order to show up at Fort Cumberland (formerly *Fort*

Beauséjour) on 11 August 1755. The order had come from Lieutenant-Colonel Robert

³¹NSARM RG1 vol. 40, no. 66, pp. 1-2, Charles Lawrence to William Pitt, Halifax, 3 Dec. 1759; NSARM RG1 vol. 188, p. 83, minutes of the Governor’s Council, 29 June 1759, and p. 84, minutes of 5 July 1759.

³²J-C d’Entremont, *Histoire du Cap-Sable...*, *op.cit.*, p. 2103. Also, in his letter of 3 Dec. 1759 to William Pitt, Lawrence mentions “... *some have died here*”.

³³CEA [Centre d’études acadiennes Anselme-Chiasson, Université de Moncton] F912, PRO WO [Public Records Office, War Office] 34/11, p. 18, Charles Lawrence to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 10 Dec. 1759; NSARM RG1 vol. 35, no. 44, p. 2, Charles Lawrence to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 27 Dec. 1759.

Monckton, commander-in-chief of the British and English-American soldiers who had captured that French fort two months earlier.³⁴ Fired by their victory over the invaders, the Acadians had then organized an armed resistance, with cooperation from French and Canadian (Québécois) troops under Charles Deschamps de Boishébert, and likewise from their aboriginal allies. For three years, the British garrisons at Forts Cumberland, Edward, and Annapolis, not to mention those around Halifax, were harassed by the latter and by the Acadian guerrillas. At the start of July 1758, an ambush brought death and capture to several Acadian resistance fighters from the Petitcodiac River, whose villages had been spared from destruction up to that time. The famed Joseph Broussard “Beausoleil,” one of the main leaders of the Acadian resistance fighters, narrowly escaped, and did lose at least one of his sons in that encounter. And then, a few weeks later that same month, Louisbourg fell to the British. The following November, the British advanced up the Petitcodiac River, burning all the villages and leaving the inhabitants in total disarray.³⁵

Along with those setbacks to the resistance, another British expedition sowed destruction along the lower part of the Saint John River and then moved upstream to destroy Acadian settlements there at the beginning of 1759.³⁶ Less than a year later, in September 1759, after a siege of several months, Québec town also fell. In the wake of the collapse of that capital of New France, along came the infamous storm of early November 1759, an event that would sound the death knell, so to speak, for the Acadian resisters of the Petitcodiac. The storm flooded their fields with salt water – fields that had been marshland, which they had dyked and drained with great pain and effort. There was no hope of reconstructing their lives along this river, once the destruction of the land was added to the previous year’s total loss of their homes.

Surrender of New Brunswick refugees (first wave) and of aboriginal people - 1759-1760

With nothing left to sustain their survival and with winter rapidly approaching, the people of the Petitcodiac and of the nearby Memramcook River sent representatives to Fort Cumberland on 16 November 1759 to surrender their remaining population of 190 persons. Commander Joseph Frye agreed to feed a third of them – 63 individuals – over the winter, while the others would have to wait until the spring to return to the fort.³⁷

At almost the same time, on 18 November 1759, it was the turn of the Acadian refugees of Bouctouche, Richibucto (*Richibouctou*), and Miramichi to do likewise.³⁸ Living as refugees

³⁴P. Surette, *Petitcodiac : Colonisation et destruction 1731-1755*, Moncton, Éditions d’Acadie, 1988, pp. 29-75.

³⁵“The Report and Map of Major George Scott’s Expedition to Remove the French from the Petitcodiac in 1758”, *Collections of the New Brunswick Historical Society*, no. 13, (1930), pp. 97-114.

³⁶“Monckton’s Report of his Expedition against the French on the St. John in 1758”, *Collections of the New Brunswick Historical Society*, no. 5, (1904), pp. 163-175.

³⁷NSARM RG1 vol. 188, pp. 114-117, minutes of the Governor’s Council, 9 Jan. 1760; Joseph Frye to Charles Lawrence, Fort Cumberland, Chignecto, 10 Dec. 1759, in Akins, pp. 310-312; p. 118, minutes of the Governor’s Council, 12 Jan. 1760, in Akins, pp. 312-313.

³⁸*Ibid.*

since 1755 along the east coast of present-day New Brunswick, these Acadians had also seen their makeshift homes destroyed by British troops in the autumn of 1758, at the same time as those of the settlements at Cape Sable, the Petitcodiac River, and the Saint John River. Meanwhile, Brigadier Robert Monckton had issued a free passage or authorization to refugees from the Saint John River valley who had managed to escape to Canada (Québec province) when British troops had moved up the river in the autumn of 1758 and winter of 1759. Monckton had promised that they could return to their homes after they had sworn the oath of allegiance to Britain, following the fall of Québec town. In November 1759, those returning Acadians reached Fort Frederick, which the British had built at the mouth of the Saint John River in 1755, atop the ruins of the French fort that Boishébert had abandoned. Numbering approximately 300 persons, these Acadians were betrayed: they were arrested on the spot. At the beginning of January 1760, they were escorted to Halifax as prisoners of war, to await deportation to England.³⁹ News of this outcome had a chilling impact on the refugee Acadians at Bouctouche, Richibucto, and Miramichi, who cancelled their promise to surrender at Fort Cumberland – to the chagrin of the British authorities, who could not rest until they had brought all Acadian rebels under total submission.⁴⁰

³⁹NSARM RG1 vol. 188, pp. 110-112, minutes of the Governor's Council, 30 Nov. 1759, in Akins, pp. 309-310; CEA F912, PRO WO 34/11, pp. 14b-15, Charles Lawrence to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 2 Dec. 1759; CEA A4-1-3, NSARM RG1 vol. 165, pp. 26-27, Richard Bulkeley to Sylvanus Cobb, Halifax, 28 Dec. 1759; NSARM, RG1 vol. 35, p. 6, Charles Lawrence to Board of Trade, Halifax, 11 May 1760.

⁴⁰« Papiers Amherst (1760-1763) Concernant les Acadiens », *Cahiers de la Société historique acadienne*, vol. III, no. 7, (Apr., May, June 1970), pp. 259-260 (hereafter: Amherst, p.), Jean Manach to Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, Richibouctou, 10 Mar. 1760; CEA F912, PRO WO34/12, p. 35, Roderick MacKenzie to William Forster, Fort Cumberland Chignecto, 16 Dec. 1760, in Amherst, p. 273; CEA F912, PRO WO34/12, p. 122, William Forster to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 29 May 1761, in Amherst, p. 291; NSARM RG1 vol. 30, no. 56, pp. 1-2, James Murray to Jonathan Belcher, Quebec, 20 Sept. 1761, in Akins, p. 322; NSARM RG1 vol. 31, no. 5, p.1, Jonathan Belcher and William Forster to James Murray, Halifax, 25 Mar. 1762; NSARM RG1 vol. 37, no. 4, p. 2, Jonathan Belcher to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 9 Apr. 1761; no. 6, pp. 1-3, Jonathan Belcher to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 14 Apr. 1761; no. 8, pp. 1-5, Jonathan Belcher to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 17 Apr. 1761; no. 9, pp. 1-8, Jonathan Belcher to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 15 Apr. 1761, in Akins, pp. 327-328; no. 13, p.53-57, Jonathan Belcher to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 11 Jan. 1762; no. 21, pp. 2-7, Jonathan Belcher to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 21 Oct. 1762; no. 41, pp. 3-7, Montague Wilmot to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 10 Dec. 1763; NSARM RG1 vol. 40, no. 70, pp. 1-3, Jonathan Belcher to William Pitt, Halifax, 9 Apr. 1761; no. 73, pp. 1-6, Jonathan Belcher to the Earl of Egremont, Halifax, 9 Jan. 1762, in Akins, p. 321; no. 79, pp. 2-9, Jonathan Belcher to the Earl of Egremont, Halifax, 20 Oct. 1762; no. 89, pp. 4-11, Montague Wilmot to Dunk Halifax, Halifax, 10 Dec. 1763; no. 91, pp. 2-16, Montague Wilmot to Dunk Halifax, Halifax, 22 Mar. 1764; NSARM RG1 vol. 136, p. 13, Jonathan Belcher to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 25 Feb. 1761; pp. 17-18, Jonathan Belcher to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 19 Mar. 1761; p. 22, Jonathan Belcher to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 12 Apr. 1761; NSARM RG1 vol. 188, pp. 137-138, minutes of the Governor's Council, 10 Mar. 1760, in Akins, p. 313; p. 193, minutes of the Governor's Council, 20 Feb. 1761, in Akins, pp. 314-315.

The Mi'kmaq and Maliseet (*Wolastoqiyik*), meanwhile, were starting to surrender to the British authorities, as advised by their missionaries, Pierre Maillard of Île Royale and Île Saint-Jean (Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island), Fr. Charles Germain on the Saint John River, and Jean Manach on the east coast of present-day New Brunswick. This began in the autumn of 1759 and reached a peak during the winter and spring of 1760.⁴¹

Arrival of the New England “Planters” and a new role for Acadian captives – 1760-1762

This latter development was great cause for celebration among the British authorities, for it meant that they no longer had to fear attacks by the native peoples against the new settlements scheduled for the spring of 1760 with the arrival of the “Planters,” colonists from New England, who would be taking over the deserted farms of the Acadian deportees. In fact, the settlement



Inner side of the dyke at Grand-Pré (2011)

project had been planned for the spring of 1759, but was postponed because of the threat of attack by Acadian resisters and their aboriginal allies. The fall of Québec in September of 1759, with the attendant capitulation of French troops, along with the surrender of the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet during the following fall and winter, opened the way for the scheme to proceed. The British authorities had been looking forward fondly to these substitute farmers ever since the eviction of the Acadians from their rich lands, starting in 1755, and thus far the plan had been

⁴¹NSARM RG1 vol. 188, pp. 110-138, minutes of the Governor's Council, between 30 Nov. 1759 and 10 Mar. 1760; NSARM RG1 vol. 35, no. 47, pp. 6-7, Charles Lawrence to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 11 May 1760.

frustrated by the militants of the Acadian resistance, with their French and aboriginal allies.⁴² But now, the levees and valved drainage conduits (*aboiteaux*) had been so badly damaged by the storm of 3-4 November 1759 that seawater had flooded the Acadians' drained marsh fields and rendered them useless for agriculture. However, only the Acadians had the skills required for remediating this unfortunate situation. As a consequence, circumstances switched overnight for the Acadians, from precariously negative to rather more positive. After fighting the Acadians during the preceding five years of fierce resistance, suddenly the British needed them badly, to restore the land for the Planters.⁴³

As early as the fall of 1759 and the spring of 1760 some individual residents of Halifax were already employing Acadian prisoners as servants, labourers, and other sorts of workers.⁴⁴ Once the New England Planters arrived in the spring of 1760, it became an urgent matter to repair the damage to the dykes and *aboiteaux* caused by the November 1759 storm, and since the Acadians were the only people with the necessary skills, there was no option but to recruit their services. Work began in 1760, but it was primarily in the subsequent two years that 120 Acadian men worked at mending the breaks that seawater had made in the levees, and at rebuilding the *aboiteaux* that had been damaged or destroyed by the especially high storm tides of 3-4 November 1759.⁴⁵

⁴²There are many references to this question in the official correspondence between Lawrence and the authorities in London. These are the main ones: NSARM RG1 vol. 30, no. 5, pp. 7-8, Dunk Halifax to Charles Lawrence, Whitehall, 8 July 1756; no. 13, pp. 8-9, Board of Trade to Charles Lawrence, Whitehall, 10 Mar. 1757, in Akins, p. 304; no. 21, p. 7, Board of Trade to Charles Lawrence, Whitehall, 7 Feb. 1758; no. 29, pp. 3-4, Board of Trade to Charles Lawrence, Whitehall, 1 Aug. 1759; no. 25, pp. 1-2, Board of Trade to Charles Lawrence, Whitehall, 14 Dec. 1759; no. 34, pp. 6-12, Board of Trade to Charles Lawrence, Whitehall, 7 Mar. 1760; NSARM RG1 vol. 35, no. 24, pp.38-40, Charles Lawrence to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 3 Nov. 1756; no. 30, pp.19-25, Charles Lawrence to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 9 Nov. 1757; no. 38, pp.14 and 19, Charles Lawrence to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 26 Sept. 1758; no. 39, pp. 6-10, Charles Lawrence to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 26 Dec. 1758; no. 41, pp. 2-3 and 8-9, Charles Lawrence to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 20 Apr. 1759; no. 47, pp. 4-5, Charles Lawrence to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 11 May 1760; NSARM RG1 vol. 188, p. 138, minutes of the Governor's Council, 10 Mar. 1760, in Akins, p. 313; CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, p. 12b, Charles Lawrence to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 17 Sept. 1759; pp. 26b-27, Charles Lawrence to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 12 Mar. 1760.

⁴³NSARM RG1 vol. 37, pp. 5-7 and 15-16, Jonathan Belcher to the Board of Trade, 12 Dec. 1760; NSARM RG1 vol. 136, pp. 32-33, Jonathan Belcher to William Forster, Halifax, 18 June 1761, in Akins, pp. 319-320; CEA F912, PRO WO34/12, p. 41b, William Forster to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 19 Jan. 1761; pp. 134-134b, William Forster to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 24 June 1761; p. 147b, William Forster to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 15 Sept. 1761.

⁴⁴CEA A4-1-3, NSARM vol. 165, p.27, *Proclamation ajoining [sic] all Persons who employ French Prisoners to deliver them to the Clerk of the Navy Hospital*, Richard Bulkeley, Halifax, 7 Nov. 1759; pp. 51-52, *Proclamation forbidding all persons to pay to the French Prisoners more than 12d per day on pain of their being deprived of said Neutrals Service*, Charles Lawrence, Halifax, 16 Apr. 1761 [1760 – R-GL].

⁴⁵NSARM RG1 vol. 37, pp. 5-7 and 15-16, Jonathan Belcher to the Board of Trade, 12 Dec. 1760;

While those men were busy on such tasks in the areas of Pisiquid, Minas, and Port Royal, some 150 Acadian men were assigned to construction of buildings and docks, forest clearance, and excavation tasks, on behalf of the engineering branch of the British armed forces in Halifax.⁴⁶ The chief engineer, John Henry Bastide, was well acquainted with the Acadians, since he had spent at least two assignments at Annapolis Royal, first in 1744, and then between 1749 and 1751. Undoubtedly he had drawn upon their services during the fortification projects that he was in charge of carrying out there. In any case, he considered the Acadians very adept at wielding an axe, and expected they would easily manage the tasks he wanted done.

Everything now seemed to be going smoothly for the Acadians; they were riding high. But then, in early July of 1762, it all came crashing down, and the horror of the Deportation once again stared them in the face.

What to do with the New Brunswick 700? 1760-1762

At the very beginning of 1760, Acadians being held at Fort Frederick, at the mouth of the Saint John River, had been transported to Halifax and sent to Georges Island to await deportation. They were to follow their relatives and the Cape Sable Acadians, who had been sent away two months earlier, at the start of November 1759. At summer's end in 1760, they were joined by the 300 or so Acadians from Petitcodiac, Memramcook, and the refugee camps along the east coast of present-day New Brunswick. These were the people who had turned themselves in to the commander at Fort Cumberland, and who had then been transferred to Pisiquid's Fort Edward, and finally made to walk to Halifax. These 300 were likewise placed on Georges Island to wait for deportation.⁴⁷ Now, as we have seen, their services had become indispensable for the survival and development of the new settlements of Planters, the New England colonists. Lawrence having died on 19 October 1760, his successor, Lieutenant-Governor Jonathan Belcher, and his council set about trying to come up with grounds for deporting the Acadians still left in Nova Scotia, in spite of the labour services that the latter were providing to the

NSARM RG1 vol. 136, p. 7, Jonathan Belcher to Isaac Deschamps, Halifax, 21 Jan. 1761; CEA F912, PRO WO34/12, pp. 134-134b, William Forster to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 24 June 1761; NSARM RG1 vol. 188, p. 317, minutes of the Governor's Council, 21 July 1762.

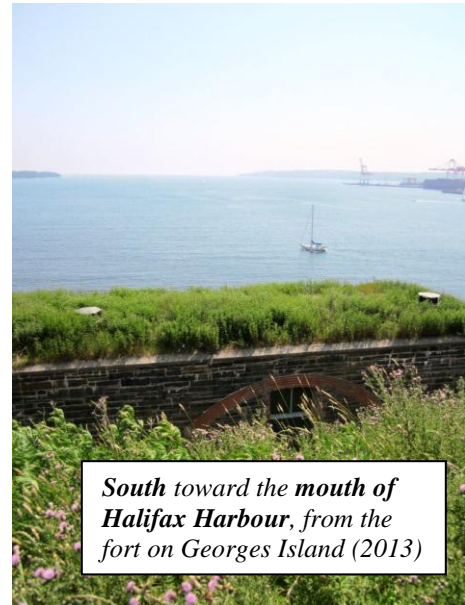
⁴⁶*Ibid.*; CEA F912, PRO WO34/12, pp. 136-137, John Henry Bastide to William Forster, Halifax, 15 June 1761, in Amherst, p. 291-292; CEA F912, PRO WO34/13, p. 69, Jeffrey Amherst to William Forster, Albany, 31 July 1761; CEA F912, PRO WO34/14, pp. 57-57b, John Henry Bastide to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 22 June 1761, in Amherst, p. 292; pp. 67-67b, John Henry Bastide to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 1 July 1761; pp. 96-97, John Henry Bastide to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 24 July 1761, in Amherst, pp. 293-294; pp. 106-107, John Henry Bastide to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 29 July 1761, in Amherst, p. 294; pp. 130-131, John Henry Bastide to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 1 Oct. 1761, in Amherst, p. 295; CEA F912, PRO WO34/15, p. 192b, Jeffrey Amherst to John Henry Bastide, Albany, 16 July 1761; p. 201, Jeffrey Amherst to John Henry Bastide, Staaten Island, 28 Aug. 1761; p. 7b, Hugh Debbiege to John Henry Bastide, Halifax, 17 Apr. 1762; p. 20b, Hugh Debbiege to John Henry Bastide, Halifax, 6 May 1762; p. 52, John Henry Bastide to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 12 Aug. 1762; p. 118, Samuel Beardsley to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 28 June 1763.

⁴⁷CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, p. 55, Charles Lawrence to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 6 Aug. 1760.

English-American settlers. General Jeffrey Amherst, commander in chief of the British armed forces in North America, did not share that opinion, and would rather have allowed the Acadians to stay in Nova Scotia on condition that they swore the oath of allegiance.⁴⁸

Belcher and his council, however, were determined at all costs to get rid of the perceived threat against the new settlements, especially the one planned for Beaubassin in 1761. First, they had Abbé Jean Manach arrested and incarcerated on George's Island at the beginning of March 1761. From there, he was put aboard a British naval vessel, which was heading for New York and then Britain. This "dangerous" priest was accused of having drunk the health of the Pretender to the British throne and of having preached resistance among the aboriginals and the Acadian rebels.⁴⁹

In fact, as of autumn 1761, two years after the fall of Québec town and one year after the surrender of Montréal, there remained more than 700 Acadian refugees who had not yet given up, and were living at various sites around the Bay of Chaleur and Miramichi Bay.⁵⁰ Back in the summer of 1760, the majority of these Acadian refugees had participated in the Battle of Restigouche, and were raiding the ships bringing supplies to the British troops at Québec. These Acadians were becoming more and more troublesome for British authorities at both Québec and Halifax. The governor of Québec,



South toward the mouth of Halifax Harbour, from the fort on Georges Island (2013)

⁴⁸NSARM RG1 vol. 188, p. 193, minutes of the Governor's Council, 20 Feb. 1761, in Akins, pp. 314-315; NSARM RG1 vol. 136, p. 13, Jonathan Belcher to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 25 Feb. 1761; CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, pp. 192-192b, Jeffrey Amherst to Charles Lawrence, Camp of Montreal, 9 Sept. 1760; p. 202, Jeffrey Amherst to Jonathan Belcher, New York, 22 Mar. 1761. Amherst thought, moreover, that it would cost too much to transport them and support them in England, and thus, that Belcher needed to consult the authorities in London before undertaking to deport the Acadians to England. See likewise, CEA F912, PRO WO34/13, p. 25b, Jeffrey Amherst to William Forster, 17 Jan. 1761. It was also this letter that led Belcher to consult the council on the status of the Acadians who were still in Nova Scotia, at the meeting of 20 Feb. 1761.

⁴⁹NSARM RG1 vol. 40, no. 70, pp. 1-3, Jonathan Belcher to William Pitt, 9 Apr. 1761; NSARM RG1 vol. 136, pp. 15-16, Jonathan Belcher to Jeffrey Amherst, 11 Mar. 1761; p. 22, Jonathan Belcher to Jeffrey Amherst, 12 Apr. 1761; pp. 25-26, Jonathan Belcher to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 25 Apr. 1761; NSARM RG1 vol. 188, pp. 204-205, minutes of the Governor's Council, 21 Mar. 1761, in Akins, p. 319; CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, p. 203, Jeffrey Amherst to Jonathan Belcher, New York, 30 Mar. 1761; p. 206, Jeffrey Amherst to Jonathan Belcher, New York, 28 Apr. 1761; p. 207, Jeffrey Amherst to Jonathan Belcher, Albany, 30 May 1761; CEA F912, PRO WO34/12, pp. 65b-66, William Forster to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 16 Mar. 1761; CEA F912, PRO WO34/13, p. 29, Jeffrey Amherst to William Forster, New York, 19 Jan. 1761.

⁵⁰CEA F909, PRO WO34/1, pp. 160-164, Liste pour le dénombrement des familles Accadiennes..., July-Aug. 1761 in Amherst, p. 296.

Brigadier-General James Murray, was prepared to grant refuge to these Acadians, contrary to Belcher and his council's wish to rid themselves of the refugees in order to ensure peace and security for the new settlements.⁵¹ The outcome was that, in October 1761, the commander of Fort Cumberland, Captain Roderick MacKenzie, organized an expedition against the Acadian refugee camps of the Miramichi and the Bay of Chaleurs.⁵² Finding themselves abandoned to their fate, with their resources depleted, the Acadians put up a weak resistance. They surrendered to Capt. MacKenzie and his troops, who brought back to Fort Cumberland 187 men, women, and children, and another 63 came on 8 November to be put up there for the winter.⁵³ Apart from the latter 63, the others were told to return in the spring of 1762, of whom a certain number were to be transferred to Fort Edward, likely as workers for repairing dykes and *aboiteaux*. These Acadians were the last to surrender, and thus were undoubtedly the most battle-hardened members of the Acadian resistance. The captains and owners of boats – some of them still armed because they had been operating as privateers, preying on British shipping – went directly from Baie Verte to Halifax to turn themselves in. They were there on 17 May 1762 when Belcher and his council resolved to seize the ships of these Acadian partisans, and to disarm and imprison the men.⁵⁴ With these additions to the 600 or so earlier prisoner, the number of Acadian captives exceeded 900.

It was in this climate of distrust and paranoia that a new event occurred to intensify the situation. At the beginning of July 1762, British authorities received news that the French had invaded Newfoundland and taken over the port of St. John's.

Renewed British panic and the abortive deportation of 915 Acadians to Boston – 1762

At Halifax, this turn of events – so unsettling to the local population, let alone to the colonial authorities – set in motion a sequence of actions. A council of war met secretly between 10 July and 17 August, to prepare Halifax harbour for attack by the French – a notion that General Amherst thought absurd.⁵⁵ On 10 July, the council decided that the Acadian prisoners would be

⁵¹NSARM RG1 vol. 30, no. 56, pp. 1-2, James Murray to Jonathan Belcher, Quebec, 20 Sept. 1761, in Akins, p. 322; NSARM RG1 vol. 31, no. 5, p. 1, Jonathan Belcher and William Forster to James Murray, Halifax, 25 Mar. 1762; NSARM RG1 vol. 188, p. 299, minutes of the Governor's Council, 22 Mar. 1762, in Akins, pp. 322-323.

⁵²NSARM RG1 vol. 136, p. 36, Richard Bulkeley to Roderick MacKenzie, Halifax, 9 Sept. 1761; CEA F912, PRO WO34/12, pp. 165-166b, Roderick MacKenzie to William Forster, Fort Cumberland, 3 Nov. 1761.

⁵³*Ibid.*; CEA F912, PRO WO34/12, pp. 169-170, *List of Acadian Families lately brought in to Fort Cumberland*, 8 Nov. 1761 and *List of Acadians inhabiting from Gaspay to Bay Verte not surrendered at Fort Cumberland*, 8 Nov. 1761.

⁵⁴NSARM RG1 vol. 188, p. 309, minutes of the Governor's Council, 17 May 1762.

⁵⁵The council of war met twelve times between 10 July and 17 Aug. 1762. NSARM RG1 vol. 219, nos. 103-114. CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, pp. 212-212b, Jeffrey Amherst to Jonathan Belcher, New York, 29 July 1762. He declared that Halifax had nothing to fear, being well defended by 1,500 men in addition to the militia, and he added that Nova Scotia "is the only province on the Continent Canada Excepted that is provided with a proper defence."

merged into a single group and accommodated under guard by the commander in chief, William Forster, in order to forestall any misbehaviour, and to have them ready to leave on a moment's notice.⁵⁶ On 13 July 1762, enacting a decision taken by the war council the preceding day, Belcher declared martial law and ordered the militia of Kings County to escort to Halifax the Acadians who had been working in the marshes of the Minas, Pisiquid, and Port Royal areas.⁵⁷ Consequently, around 20 July, 130 Acadian prisoners – some 80 of whom were from Fort Edward⁵⁸ – arrived at Halifax under escort, to join the 785 or so Acadian men, women, and children already confined night and day in the open barracks, under guard by the militia and town residents.⁵⁹ That is how things remained until August, when the entire group was put on board seven ships bound for Boston.⁶⁰ It was actually the meeting of the governor's council on 26 July 1762 that took the decision to deport all these people to the province of Massachusetts, because of the Acadians' influence with the aboriginal peoples and also because of their arrogance and impertinence.⁶¹ Four days later, the war council ratified that decision and decided that the Acadians would be deported to Boston, where they would remain aboard ship just

⁵⁶NSARM RG1 vol. 219, no. 103, meeting of the war council, 10 July 1762.

⁵⁷NSARM RG1 vol. 219, no. 104, meeting of the war council, 12 July 1762.

⁵⁸CEA A4-1-1, NSARM, Isaac Deschamps collection, vol. 32, pp. 110-111, *List of French Prisoners victualled at Fort Edward*, 9 Aug. 1762

⁵⁹NSARM RG1 vol. 188, pp. 323-326, minutes of the Governor's Council, 26 July 1762, in Akins, pp. 323-325. One of the reasons invoked was the following: "...more especially as there is no Stronghold or Place to secure them in; and that during any Attack they might take the Opportunity of Setting Fire to the Town and Joining the Enemy." See likewise, NSARM RG1 vol. 188, pp. 328-336, minutes of the Governor's Council, 5 Aug. 1762, in Akins, pp. 325-329. Belcher adds the following in his letter to Amherst dated 12 Aug. 1762: "...but we are destitute of the means, confinement is the first of which offers itself to consideration, but here is no other than that of their ordinary abode, the Barracks...". NSARM RG1 vol. 40, no. 81, p. 13, Jonathan Belcher to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 12 Aug. 1762. CEA F-560, British Library, Andrew Brown Collection, note inserted with the testimony of Joseph Gray, to whom it bore no connection.

⁶⁰CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, pp. 214-214b, Jeffrey Amherst to Jonathan Belcher, New York, 30 Aug. 1762. Amherst mentions the arrival of five ships, but we thought it preferable to go with the testimony of Captain James Brooks, who mentions seven. See CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, pp. 143-145, Statement of Captain James Brooks, Halifax, 12 Oct. 1762. (See also note 73.)

⁶¹NSARM RG1 vol. 188, pp. 323-326, minutes of the Governor's Council, 26 July 1762, in Akins, pp. 323-325. The motives called up to justify the deportation of the Acadian prisoners at Halifax remained essentially the same as those advanced by Belcher, just before this crisis, in his letter addressed to the Board of Trade, in which he judges that steps had to be taken to deport the Acadian prisoners, who were going to rise in number since the surrender of the last of the members of the refugee resistance in the region of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. NSARM RG1 vol. 37, no. 18, pp. 8-9, Jonathan Belcher to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 2 July 1762. See likewise, NSARM RG1 vol. 40, no. 73, Jonathan Belcher to the Earl of Egremont, Halifax, 9 Jan. 1762. Also see NSARM RG1 vol. 31, no. 4, Memorial of Alexander McNutt to the Board of Trade [16 Mar. 1762], where he asked for their support to charter vessels that, as soon as they finished bringing Irish settlers to Nova Scotia, could return to Europe with Acadians aboard.

offshore until General Amherst decided what was to happen to them.⁶² On 12 August 1762, the Chamber of the Assembly added its voice, addressing a memorial to Jonathan Belcher, concerning the behaviour of Acadian prisoners at Halifax, and putting forward a justification for deporting them outside the province of Nova Scotia.⁶³

Father Pierre Maillard, who had negotiated peace on behalf of the Mi'kmaq in 1759 and 1760, now enjoyed the favour of the British authorities. When the war council – during one of their meetings in July or August – questioned him about the loyalty of the Acadians, he replied that one could not trust for a minute the Acadians imprisoned in Halifax at the time.⁶⁴ Was it this advice that led to the decision to deport these 915 or so men, women, and children, contrary to the advice from General Amherst?⁶⁵ And indeed, Belcher received a reassuring letter from the general, writing from New York on 29 July 1762, which Belcher showed to the governor's council at their 9 August meeting. But it was in vain, for the council declared itself more determined than ever to move ahead with the forced removal of the Acadian prisoners from Halifax.⁶⁶ The following day, Belcher informed the war council of General Amherst's correspondence about the Acadian prisoners and the natives, but the decision stayed the same – especially because news had arrived that some of the Planters in the region of Minas or Horton had deserted for fear of an imminent attack by the French.⁶⁷ Whatever effect his testimony might have had here, Pierre Maillard died on 12 August 1762,⁶⁸ just as the deportees were going aboard the ships. Besides entire families, these 915 people included the 130 men who had been escorted from Port Royal, Minas Basin, and Pisiquid, and who were being deported without their families.⁶⁹

Leaving Halifax on the 18th of August 1762, the seven ships transporting these Acadians reached their destination a week later, on 25 August.⁷⁰ The Nova Scotian authorities had ordered Captain James Brooks, commander of the convoy, to go to Boston and there await the orders of

⁶²NSARM RG1 vol. 219, no. 111, meeting of the war council, 30 July 1762.

⁶³CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, pp. 122-123 and NSARM RG1 vol. 221, no. 19, Memorial presented by the Chamber of Assembly to Jonathan Belcher, 12 Aug. 1762, in Akins, pp. 315-318.

⁶⁴CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, p. 260, William Forster to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 15 Aug. 1762.

⁶⁵CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, pp. 192-192b, Jeffrey Amherst to Charles Lawrence, Camp of Montreal, 9 Sept. 1760; p. 202, Jeffrey Amherst to Jonathan Belcher, New York, 22 Mar. 1761. Belcher and his council also used the contents of these letters to justify deporting Acadian prisoners who were being held at Halifax. See NSARM RG1 vol. 188, p. 328-336, minutes of the Governor's Council, 5 Aug. 1762, in Akins, pp. 325-329.

⁶⁶NSARM RG1 vol. 188, pp. 337-340, minutes of the Governor's Council, 9 Aug. 1762.

⁶⁷NSARM RG1 vol. 219, no. 112, meeting of the war council, 10 Aug. 1762.

⁶⁸See the biography of Pierre Maillard written by Micheline D. Johnson in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* at the following site: http://www.biographi.ca/009004119.01-f.php?&id_nbr=1508&&PHPSESSID=o9qkocqng893q4vuad37tr0ev7 (accessible as of 22 Mar. 2010).

⁶⁹NSARM RG1 vol. 219, no. 112, meeting of the war council, 10 Aug. 1762; CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, p. 120, Jonathan Belcher to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 12 Aug. 1762.

⁷⁰NSARM RG1 vol. 37, no. 20, p. 8, Jonathan Belcher to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 7 Sept. 1762.

General Jeffrey Amherst on the fate of these Acadian prisoners of war. Shortly after their arrival, however, they discovered that the Massachusetts authorities were refusing to let the Acadians disembark and would only reluctantly allow even the sick passengers to land. Governor Thomas Pownall would have allowed everybody off the ships on compassionate grounds, but the Assembly flatly refused to permit the entry of any more Acadians from Nova Scotia, saying that Massachusetts already had too many of them and had accepted far more than the other English-American colonies had done since 1755. More than one month went by, while the seven ships sat at anchor off Boston with their human cargo, waiting for a decision about the deportees. The Assembly stuck to its refusal, even when General Amherst approved a plan to place the Acadians in temporary places ashore, with the general himself guaranteeing all expenses for their care. Finally, Captain Brooks had to surrender to the obvious and he raised anchor.⁷¹

It is not hard to imagine the consternation among the colonial authorities of Halifax to see these seven ships docking back at their berths in early October 1762, nearly a month and a half after departing with those dangerous Acadian men and women. This left the question of who was going to pay for the operation.⁷²

In the first place, General Amherst had been forced to accept a *fait accompli* upon hearing that seven vessels had arrived at Boston with Acadian deportees, despite the fact that he had

⁷¹See the following documents dealing with that failed attempt at deportation: CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, pp. 137-138, Jonathan Belcher to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 12 Oct. 1762; p. 139-140b, Report of the committee of the Governor's Council...*appointed to enquire into the Motives which occasioned the Return of the Transports with the Acadians from Boston*, Halifax, 18 Oct. 1762, in Akins, pp. 332-334; pp. 143-145, Declaration of Captain James Brooks, Halifax, 12 Oct. 1762; pp. 146-146b, Jonathan Belcher to Francis Bernard, Governor of Massachusetts, Halifax, 13 Aug. 1762; p. 148, extract from a letter of Jonathan Belcher to Thomas Hancock, Halifax, 14 Aug. 1762; p. 149, Francis Bernard to James Brooks, Castle William (Boston), 23 Sept. 1762; p. 151, Thomas Hancock to James Brooks, Boston, 27 Sept. 1762; pp. 214-214b, Jeffrey Amherst to Jonathan Belcher, New York, 30 Aug. 1762; p. 217, Jeffrey Amherst to Jonathan Belcher, New York, 21 Nov. 1762; NSARM RG1 vol. 37, no. 21, Jonathan Belcher to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 21 Oct. 1762, in Akins, p. 335-337; NSARM RG1 vol. 40, no. 79, Jonathan Belcher to the Earl of Egremont, Halifax, 20 Oct. 1762, in Akins, pp. 334-335; NSARM RG1 vol. 188, pp. 355-356, minutes of the Governor's Council, 9 Oct. 1762; p. 356, minutes of the Governor's Council, 11 Oct. 1762; p. 357, minutes of the Governor's Council, 12 Oct. 1762; p. 358, minutes of the Governor's Council, 18 Oct. 1762, in Akins, pp. 331-334.

⁷²The war council had broached this issue at its meeting of 17 July 1762 and agreed that Belcher would take the steps necessary if General Amherst refused to accept this deportation as a military expense. NSARM RG1 vol. 219, no. 106, meeting of the war council, 17 July 1762. Colonel Forster informed Amherst about this: CEA F912, PRO WO34/12, p. 260, William Forster to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 15 Aug. 1762.

opposed further deportations since 1760.⁷³ Jonathan Belcher had had access to that correspondence from Amherst, yet had interpreted it as authorization to pursue a policy of forced resettlement of the Acadian population who were considered a danger to the internal security of the colony when faced with a imminent French attack.⁷⁴ Additionally, both the Assembly of Nova Scotia and the war council were partners in that decision to deport the Acadians from Halifax to Boston.⁷⁵ Whatever the case, the explanations that Belcher tried to provide to the authorities in London did not manage to convince them, all the more so because Amherst categorically refused to assume those costs, which, according to him, fell to the province of Nova Scotia, which had taken this initiative. Furthermore, he argued, these Acadians could not be defined as prisoners of war, but rather, were the king's subjects, who could be punished as rebels only if it were proven that they had acted badly.⁷⁶

A regime change and the ongoing controversy: What to do with these Acadians? 1763-1764

Jonathan Belcher not only had problems with the authorities in London, but he was likewise at odds with the commercial class of Halifax, whom he had irked in various ways, most notably by trying to gain repeal of a law (dating back to the founding of Halifax) that protected from all prosecution those debtors who had fled their creditors in Great Britain or New England.⁷⁷ That stance earned him severe criticism from the Lords of Trade in London, on behalf of that merchant class, through the intervention of Joshua Mauger, an influential merchant. Besides that, Belcher had managed to annoy some members of the council and of the provincial Assembly.⁷⁸

⁷³CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, pp. 214-214b, Jeffrey Amherst to Jonathan Belcher, New York, 30 Aug. 1762. As noted above, Amherst mentions five ships, but we thought it preferable to accept the account of Captain James Brooks, who reports seven. See CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, pp. 143-145, Statement of Captain James Brooks, Halifax, 12 Oct. 1762.

⁷⁴See, among others: NSARM RG1 vol. 37, no. 21, Jonathan Belcher to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 21 Oct. 1762, in Akins, pp. 335-337; NSARM RG1 vol. 40, no. 79, Jonathan Belcher to the Earl of Egremont, Halifax, 20 Oct. 1762, in Akins, pp. 334-335.

⁷⁵NSARM RG1 vol. 188, pp. 323-326, minutes of the Governor's Council, 26 July 1762, in Akins, pp. 323-325; NSARM RG1 vol. 219, no. 111, meeting of the war council, 30 July 1762; CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, pp. 122-123 and NSARM RG1 vol. 221, no. 19, Memorial presented by the Chamber of Assembly to Jonathan Belcher, 12 Aug. 1762, in Akins, pp. 315-318.

⁷⁶“With Regard to the Expence of Transporting them that I cannot take upon me to order to be paid as it was Entirely an Act of the Province. These People ought not, in my opinion, to be considered as Prisoners of War, but as subjects to the King & if they Behave contrary thereto are to be punished as Rebels.” CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, p. 217, Jeffrey Amherst to Jonathan Belcher, New York, 21 Nov. 1762. In the summer of 1763, Belcher informed the Board of Trade that he had managed to reimburse the expenses incurred by the deportation of 1762. NSARM RG1 vol. 37, no. 34, Jonathan Belcher to the Board of Trade, Halifax, 4 Aug. 1763.

⁷⁷John Bartlett Brebner, *The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia*, The Carleton Library No. 45, Toronto/Montréal, McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1969, pp. 54-76.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*

As a result, early in the autumn of 1763, Colonel Montague Wilmot arrived in Halifax as the new governor of Nova Scotia,⁷⁹ displacing Belcher from that highly coveted position that he had proved unable to hold onto. What now for the Acadian population still in Halifax? How would the new governor deal with them?

Another element had meanwhile entered the situation. A few weeks earlier, Joseph Broussard, called “Beausoleil,” the famous head of the Acadian resistance movement, had been arrested at Pisiquid with some compromising documents in his possession.⁸⁰ They included a letter from de La Rochette, the secretary or emissary of the Duke of Nivernais, ambassador of France in London. The letter invited Acadians in North America to move to French territory, and encouraged them to add their names to subscription lists that an intermediary would bring to him at London. This letter had come to Joseph “Lemaigre” LeBlanc via Acadians in Philadelphia, who had received it in turn through Acadian refugees in England, just before the latter had departed for France in March 1763 and just after the signing of the Treaty of Paris ending the Seven Years’ War.⁸¹ Beausoleil had been arrested on the spot and taken from Pisiquid to Halifax, where, along with Lemaigre, he had been called before the governor’s council of Nova Scotia to explain himself.⁸² Little is known about the outcome of that matter, but it nearly created a diplomatic incident in London when Belcher reported it to his superiors.⁸³

These were the circumstances in which Montague Wilmot arrived in Halifax. He was already familiar with the Acadians imprisoned there, for he had been commander at Fort Cumberland in 1756-1757, a period when the Acadian resistance fighters were very active in the region of the Isthmus of Chignecto. Unfortunately, his attitude toward the Acadian community was scarcely any better than that of his predecessor, Jonathan Belcher. Like Belcher, he wanted to be rid of the Acadians at all costs. He showed his sentiments in the wake of a request from Jacques Robin, who had, it seems, received authorization from the Lords of Trade to recruit the Acadians to Miramichi in order to set up a fishery there, with Jean Manach as missionary.⁸⁴ Wilmot reacted by objecting in writing to Lord Halifax in December 1763 – well after the Treaty of Paris, which ended hostilities between France and Great Britain. Not only did Wilmot advise against the return of this “... French Popish missionary, and a furious bigot...,” but he also took a

⁷⁹NSARM RG1 vol. 41, no. 88, Montague Wilmot to the Earl of Egremont, Halifax, 7 Oct. 1763.

⁸⁰NSARM RG1 vol. 188, pp. 403-406, minutes of the Governor’s Council, 18 Aug. 1763.

⁸¹CEA A4-1-1, NSARM, Isaac-Deschamps collection, vol. 32, pp. 122-123, from La Rochette to the Acadians [in England?], Liverpool, 18 Mar. 1763; postscript signed by Alexis Trahan, Joseph Leblanc, Tranquille Prince and Alexis Boudro, undated, [England]; second postscript from [Joseph LeBlanc] Lemaigre Le père to [Joseph] Broussard dit Beausoleil, Halifax, 30 July 1763. [Material in brackets in this note: by the author, R-GL.]

⁸²NSARM RG1 vol. 188, p. 406-407, minutes of the Governor’s Council, 22 Aug. 1763.

⁸³NSARM RG1 vol. 30, no. 21, Dunk Halifax to the Earl of Hertford, St. James, 22 Nov. 1763; no. 25, Dunk Halifax to Montague Wilmot, St. James, 26 Nov. 1763; no. 31, Dunk Halifax to Montague Wilmot, St. James, 9 June 1764; NSARM RG1 vol. 40, no. 87, Jonathan Belcher to the Earl of Egremont, Halifax, 25 Aug. 1763; no. 90, Montague Wilmot to Dunk Halifax, Halifax, 28 Jan. 1764.

⁸⁴NSARM RG1 vol. 40, no. 89, p. 5, Montague Wilmot to Dunk Halifax, Halifax, 10 Dec. 1763.

very dim view of reassembling a significant number of Acadians in one place, which he thought would endanger the security of the colony, since they would be able to create bases for a resurgence and for a eventual French expedition. To his mind, not only were these Acadians "...all zealous Frenchmen and the most rigid Papists...", but they also had great sway with the native peoples.⁸⁵ Wilmot further urged Lord Halifax that, if they were allowed to resettle in the colony, it should be only in small pockets amid existing Protestant communities, and in areas where they would have as little contact as possible with aboriginal people. He proposed even settling them on the Caribbean islands gained from the French in the recent treaty ending the war, for, in his view, "...the further they are distant, the greater our safety."⁸⁶

The British authorities, meanwhile, had already determined that the Acadians no longer posed a threat to the internal security of the colony and, as General Jeffrey Amherst maintained, it would be better to let the Acadians settle in Nova Scotia, where they could become good subjects.⁸⁷

In parallel to this, Acadians exiled in the English-American colonies, and even in Nova Scotia (including Halifax) were responding in huge numbers to the invitation issued in the spring of 1763 to move to France. We have available today the various subscription lists, which

⁸⁵*Ibid.* These arguments by Wilmot echo rather strangely those proffered by his predecessor, Jonathan Belcher.

⁸⁶NSARM RG1 vol. 40, no. 91, p. 15, Montague Wilmot to Dunk Halifax, Halifax, 22 Mar. 1764.

⁸⁷NSARM RG1 vol. 31, no. 10, pp. 6-7, Extracts from minutes of the Board of Trade to Jonathan Belcher, 3 Dec. 1762, in Akins, pp. 337-338. This is what they wrote about the failed deportation of the summer of 1762: "Their Lordships, however could not but be of opinion, that however expedient it might have been to have removed them at a time when the enterprizes of the Enemy threatened danger to the province, and it was weakened by the employment of great part of the troops stationed there upon another service, yet as that danger is now over and hostilities between the two nations have ceased, it was neither necessary nor politic to remove them, as they might, by a proper disposition, promote the interest of the Colony and be made useful members of society agreeable to what appears to be the sentiments of General Amherst in his letter to the Lt. Gov." The letter referenced there is the following: CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, p. 202, Jeffrey Amherst to Jonathan Belcher, New York, 22 Mar. 1761, where Amherst wrote that nothing concerns him more that the security and well-being of Nova Scotia, and "If the removal of the Acadians still remaining within the same could add to either, I should be the first to advise their Expulsion, but as under the new circumstances to that Valuable & Flourishing Province, I do not see that it can have anything to fear or apprehend from those Acadians, but on the contrary, that great Advantages might be reapt in Employing them properly. I must own, I should incline towards letting them remain in the Province, under proper Regulations and Restrictions." Also see Amherst's letter on this theme where he writes that Belcher should develop an accommodation with the Acadians as best he can, since, with the French leaving Newfoundland, "The Acadians may Doubtless Easily be kept under and may be obliged to work for their Livelyhood." CEA F912, PRO WO34/11, p. 217, Jeffrey Amherst to Jonathan Belcher, New York, 21 Nov. 1762.

virtually constitute a census of the Acadian families dispersed in North America in 1763.⁸⁸ Obviously, not all the families responded to the call, but we daresay that the great majority of them did so.⁸⁹ In any event, a majority of the Acadian families held prisoner at Halifax did subscribe to the list: 161 families covering 711 individuals,⁹⁰ out of 232 families encompassing 1,056 persons present in Halifax and vicinity. The latter figures for the total population come from a count that Wilmot sent to London in the spring of 1764, a few months after the 12 August 1763 subscription list was compiled.⁹¹ In addition, 76 family heads addressed a request to Wilmot on 12 May 1764, reiterating the wish they had stated two weeks earlier, on 29 April, saying that they recognized no other sovereign but the king of France, and asking that they be furnished with provisions and vessels that would take them to France or French territory. They pointed out that, with the war ended, they were no longer prisoners of war and thus should enjoy the freedom to move to the country of their choice, following the model of the Acadians who had been kept prisoner in England and who had then gone to France, or those held in Carolina who had emigrated to Cap-François in Saint-Domingue (Haiti).⁹² In the same period, during the summer of 1764, an invitation was circulating in the Halifax region, where the governor of the Caribbean Leeward Islands asked Acadians to transfer there.⁹³

Also at that time, Wilmot received his response from the Earl of Halifax, who concurred with him that, if Acadians decided to remain in Nova Scotia, they should be scattered in small groups around the colony.⁹⁴ The earl also thought it would be less wise to allow them to settle in Canada (Québec), because of its proximity to Nova Scotia. Also, they could not emigrate to the Caribbean islands recently won from France, because the lands there were going to be sold at

⁸⁸J.-Edmond Roy, « Documents relatifs aux Acadiens », *Rapport sur les archives de France relatives à l'histoire du Canada*, Ottawa, C.H. Parmelee, Imprimeur de sa Très Excellente Majesté le Roi, 1911, pp. 598-648.

⁸⁹Also, at the bottom of the list of Acadians at Halifax, is written: « Il y a encore plusieurs familles dispersées le long des cottes de la mer qui Seront dans le meme Sentiment dont les noms ne sont pas ecrits icy. » [“There are still several families spread along the seacoast who will be of similar mind but whose names are not written here.”] *Ibid.*, p. 631.

⁹⁰*Ibid.* Liste des françois Accadiens demeurants prisonniers à halifax... [List of the Acadian French remaining as prisoners at Halifax], 12 Aug. 1763, pp. 628-631.

⁹¹NSARM RG1 vol. 40, no. 92, p. 1, *The number of Families of persons of French Acadians...*, Halifax, 22 Mar. 1764.

⁹²NSARM RG1 vol. 40, no. 94, p. 1, Requête de Béloni Roy et 75 chefs de familles acadiennes [Request of Béloni Roy and 75 heads of Acadian families], Halifax, 12 May 1764, in Akins, p. 347.

⁹³NSARM RG1 vol. 40, no. 95, p. 2, Montague Wilmot to Dunk Halifax, Halifax, 29 Aug. 1764, in Akins, p. 349. In Sept. 1763, it seems that such an invitation had been issued to the Acadian exiles in Massachusetts. See NSARM RG1 vol. 31, no. 31, Dunk Halifax to Montague Wilmot, St. James's, 9 June 1764, in Akins, pp. 347-348. Also see Charles Théodat to the Acadians of New England, Cap-François, 26 June 1764, in Placide Gaudet, “Acadian Genealogy and Notes”, *Canadian Archives for the year 1905*, vol. II, Ottawa, Dawson, 1906, p. 90.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

public auction and thus would be unavailable to these Acadians. Halifax added at the end of his letter that the king of England considered the Acadians as having the same status as his other Catholic subjects in North America, and thus they needed only to swear the appropriate oath of allegiance in order to settle in the colony and enjoy the same privileges and rights as other British subjects.⁹⁵ As British subjects, they could not be forbidden from leaving the colony or any British territory, if they so wished. Still, the Earl of Halifax told Wilmot to do everything he could, of course, to prevent the Acadian families from moving to a foreign territory in response to solicitations and secret manoeuvres by a foreign power, namely, France in this case.⁹⁶ Royal directives of 20 July 1764 took the same stance. Wilmot therefore submitted these proposals and instructions to members of the Nova Scotia council, who quickly prepared the text of an oath of allegiance for the Acadians, along with a proposed list of places where the Acadians would be able to settle within the province.

The November 1764 exodus

As it turned out, the majority of Acadian families rejected that offer and opted instead to leave Nova Scotia. And since the British authorities refused to pay for their passage out of the colony, these families leased vessels to take them directly to Cap-François.⁹⁷ Thus, toward the end of November 1764, around 600 men, women, and children left Halifax aboard rented vessels, heading to the island of Saint-Domingue (i.e., Haiti), where Acadians from Philadelphia, Georgia, and Carolina had already gone, only to encounter nothing but death. Wilmot anticipated a similar fate for the Acadian families leaving Halifax, but he nonetheless celebrated the fact that he had seen the back of them. He wrote: “Thus my lord, we are in the way of being relieved from these people who have been the bane of the Province, and the terror of its settlements.”⁹⁸ In fact, most of these émigrés very soon abandoned Haiti, sailing to the Mississippi, intending to travel north to settle in the Illinois territory [though most remained in Louisiana instead]. When these families departed in the fall of 1764, several other families stayed in the Halifax region before dispersing to other parts of Nova Scotia and what would later

⁹⁵*Ibid.*

⁹⁶*Ibid.*

⁹⁷NSARM RG1 vol. 40, no. 96, p. 5, Montague Wilmot to Dunk Halifax, Halifax, 9 Nov. 1764, in Akins, pp. 349-350.

⁹⁸NSARM RG1 vol. 40, no. 97, p. 2, Montague Wilmot to Dunk Halifax, 18 Dec. 1764, in Akins, pp. 350-351. Some of these Acadian families, encompassing some 231 persons, reached Louisiana in the spring of 1765, where they have numerous descendants. See Carl Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia*, Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1996, p. 74. Also, based on genealogical notes by Stephen White, we have identified at least 223 individuals from that group, as well as 174 other persons settled in the region of Saint-Jacques de Cabahannocer (St. James Parish) in the same period, thus accounting for just fewer than 400 people. What about the other 200 persons who left Halifax in November 1764: did they stay in Saint-Domingue (Haiti)? It seems that some did so, for we have identified at least three such families, two of which settled at Môle Saint-Nicolas and one at Port-au-Prince.

become the separate province of New Brunswick, and even to French-held Miquelon off the southern coast of Newfoundland. Their descendants are still found in these places today.

* * *

In review, who was on Georges Island?

And so, we have been able to follow the main events marking the presence of Acadians in Halifax after 1749, and especially from 1755 until the end of the Seven Years' War. Let us now return to a focus on the role of Georges Island in this story.

First, we noted that it is highly likely that Acadians had been imprisoned on the island as early as the autumn of 1749 and winter of 1750.

Between July and September 1755, approximately 80 Acadian deputies were held prisoner on Georges Island before they were released and escorted to their respective districts, from whence they were deported along with their families.⁹⁹

In November 1755, some 50 individuals within eight Acadian families from Mirligueche (Lunenburg) were deported to North Carolina from Georges Island.

In the summer and fall of 1756, some 150 Acadian women and children were confined on the island before being sent to Louisbourg in exchange for British prisoners of war.

A certain number of families and individuals, mostly from Cape Sable, were held on the island and then deported in November 1758 and in November 1759.

Shortly after the vessel sailed with the November 1759 deportees, a group of some 300 Acadians from the Saint John River were brought to Halifax aboard two schooners and placed under guard on Georges Island to await their deportation to England.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹The following is a breakdown of the number of deputies, from each of three regions, who were imprisoned on Georges Island: 30 from Port Royal 30; 37 from Minas (Grand-Pré and Rivière-aux-Canards); and about 13 from Pisiquid. These figures are based on three sources. (1) According to Acadian exiles in Pennsylvania, there were 80 deputies altogether, including 20 who were locked up on 4 July 1755 and another 60 on 28 July. (2) Minutes of the Governor's Council tell us that the 4 July prisoners included 15 men from Pisiquid and Minas. The minutes also specify that 30 deputies from the Port Royal area were incarcerated on 28 July 1755, but do not mention any additional number from Pisiquid being imprisoned that day. (3) The commander of the deportation from Minas, John Winslow, prepared a list of his deportees, where he identified 37 of the men as deputies. Combining these data, then, we can infer that the total number of imprisoned Pisiquid deputies was about 13. (That is, we begin with the total of 80 and then subtract the 30 men of Port Royal and the 37 of Minas.) See R.-G. LeBlanc, « Piguit : l'impact du Grand Dérangement... », *op. cit.*, p. 196-197; Henri d'Arles, *Acadie*, tome III, Québec/Boston, J.-A.-K.- Laflamme/The Marlier Publishing Co., 1921, Petition of the Acadians deported to Philadelphia, p. 418; Serge Patrice Thibodeau, *Journal de John Winslow à Grand-Pré*, Moncton, Les Éditions Perce-Neige, 2010, p. 158.

¹⁰⁰NSARM RG1 vol. 35, no. 45, p. 6, Charles Lawrence to the Board of Trade, 11 May 1760; NSARM RG1 vol. 188, pp. 110-111, minutes of the Governor's Council, 30 Nov. 1759; CEA A4-1-3, NSARM RG1 vol. 165, Richard Bulkeley to Sylvanus Cobb, Halifax, 28 Dec. 1759.

The next group was made up of Acadian families from the areas of the Petitcodiac River and the Memramcook River, along with the eastern coast of present-day New Brunswick. This assemblage also numbered about 300 individuals. They had surrendered to the British and were brought to Fort Cumberland (Beauséjour) over the period from the end of autumn 1759 to the spring 1760. From there, they had been transported to Pisiquid in the summer of 1760, and from there they traveled on foot to Halifax. At Halifax, they joined the Saint John River families as prisoners on Georges Island, until they could be deported.

Altogether then, there were around 600 Acadians at Halifax within this period of mid-winter 1760 until the spring of 1761, a good part of them confined to Georges Island. For the Saint John River half of this population, the sojourn included two winters, dating from their arrival in early 1760. The second group arrived from Pisiquid in the summer of 1760, and spent only one winter there. Some of these men and women were in poor condition, as we know because Governor Charles Lawrence asked Doctor Alexander Abercrombie to care for them at government expense.¹⁰¹ It was also in the winter of 1761 that Abbé Jean Manach was incarcerated on the island, to be deported to England via New York.

Now, as we saw earlier, the engineer John Henry Bastide arrived at the end of May 1761, to head the fortification project at Halifax, and hired on several Acadian men as carpenters. Bastide requested 150 workers, while Governor Jonathan Belcher asked for another 120 to go help the English-American colonists of the Minas region in repairing dykes and *aboiteaux*.¹⁰² That represented a significant proportion of the men, who evidently were able to leave their prison on Georges Island in order to work in town or else in the countryside on the other side of the province. In fact, a report on Acadian men employed on the fortification works, dated 24 July 1761, identifies the number of men who were absent from the job, including several who were sick, while only one man was still being detained as a prisoner on the island.¹⁰³ That man was Jean-Baptiste Broussard, son of Beausoleil's older brother Alexandre. Either he had refused to work for the British or he had been held back in prison for some reason such as insubordination.

Indeed, even in the summer of 1762, during the peak of the panic that overtook both the civilian and the military population of Halifax town, after the addition of another wave of surrendering rebels from New Brunswick, it does not appear that the Acadians were confined under guard on the island. This can be inferred from the fact that Belcher and the council both mentioned that 915 persons – including 400 men able to bear arms – were being guarded by

¹⁰¹CEA F912, PRO WO 34/12, p. 118b, William Forster to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 9 May 1761. He writes: "The late Brigadier Lawrence appointed Dr. Alexander Abercrombie to take care of the French Prisoners that have been kept at Halifax and upon Georges Island ever since the beginning of February 1760, but Mr Lawrence having died before any settlement was made for the Doctor's payment... there have not been less than five hundred of these people, and numbers of them almost constantly out of order."

¹⁰²CEA F912, PRO WO 34/12, p. 134, William Forster to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 24 June 1761.

¹⁰³CEA F912, PRO WO 34/14, p. 96, John Henry Bastide to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 24 July 1761. Amherst, pp. 293-294.

town residents night and day in the mainland barracks. It was recognized that the custodial chore was very hard for these citizens, but the barracks were the only place in town where the authorities could hold that many people under guard.¹⁰⁴ If the prisoners were left on their own, it was feared, in the event of an enemy attack, the Acadians could set the town afire and go over to the enemy.¹⁰⁵ Thus it is clear that these 915 people were not being held on Georges Island while awaiting deportation to Boston, for how could they set fire to the town from the island? It is entirely possible, however, that they were transported to the island before embarking for Boston, which took place at the beginning of August 1762. Yet, the official documents make no mention of such a move. We could also speculate that some were held on the island after their return from Boston, but we would have no evidence for the claim. Actually, it is possible that Joseph Broussard “Beausoleil” and a certain LeBlanc (Joseph “Lemaigre”?) were being held there for deportation to England,¹⁰⁶ but no such previous reference is found in the correspondence of Belcher or other British administrators, or in any of the official documents. It could well be that Beausoleil and Joseph LeBlanc “Lemaigre” had been incarcerated on Georges Island merely while waiting for their interrogation by the council members in August 1763, but there also, no specific clarification occurs in the documentary evidence.

To the best of our knowledge, the highest number of Acadian prisoners *held on Georges Island at any one time* was the close to 600 persons who were there between February 1760 and May 1761. The second-largest group seems to have been the Acadian families captured at Cape Sable in the summer of 1759, made up of some 151 individuals, who were deported in November

¹⁰⁴NSARM RG1 vol. 221, no. 19, Memorial of the Nova Scotia Chamber of Assembly to Jonathan Belcher, 12 Aug. 1762, in Akins, pp. 315-318. The sixth reason invoked to justify the 1762 deportation was the following: “That these French neutrals, as they are now collected together, are at present a heavy charge upon the inhabitants, especially the laboring people, who are obliged to mount guard every third day and night in their turns, to prevent the escape of the prisoners confined only in open Barracks, there being no place of close confinement to contain such a number.”; CEA F912, PRO WO 34/11, p. 120, Jonathan Belcher to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 12 Aug. 1762, where he writes: “...but we are destitute of the means, Confinement is the first which offers itself to consideration, but here is no other than of their ordinary abode, the Barracks”; NSARM RG1 vol. 219, no. 110, minutes of the war council, 23 July 1762. When the council asked Bastide whether he had suspended work at the yards in order to move forward with the fortifications, which were judged more urgent, this is how Bastide replied: “...all the people are taken off for the present Services, excepting the French prisoners at work upon the wharf at the Lumber yard who are only out of confinement by day upon tickets of leave and employed as axmen by order of Major General Amherst.” Also, three days previously, Bastide informed Amherst: “The wharf at the Lime Kiln yard is well advanced we have kept Fifty of the French axmen to this work.” CEA F912, PRO WO 34/14, p. 43, John Henry Bastide to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 20 July 1762.

¹⁰⁵NSARM RG1 vol. 188, pp. 323-326, minutes of the Governor’s Council, 26 July 1762, in Akins, pp. 323-325. One of the reasons cited was the following: “...more especially as there is no Stronghold or Place to secure them in; and that during any Attack they might take the Opportunity of Setting Fire to the Town and Joining the Enemy.”

¹⁰⁶Public Record Office, Admiralty 2, vol. 535, p. 316, Order to send, among the other neutral French in England, the Acadians Beausoleil and LeBlanc, who arrived at Chatham, 1763.

1759 with a half-dozen people from the Saint John River, seized in the winter of 1759 and later brought to Halifax.

Accounting for the data and the gaps

Admittedly, we do not have complete information on the Acadian families who lived in Halifax and its surroundings after 1760. We can see that some families and individuals eluded our quest, when we compare the data in Wilmot's count from early 1764, on the one hand, with our findings from Stephen White's genealogical notes at the Centre d'études acadiennes and his *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles acadiennes*, on the other hand. We note also that quite a few of the families and individuals who spent time at Halifax and nearby do *not* appear on the 12 August 1763 list, which identifies 711 individuals in 161 families who declared themselves ready to move to French territory. We know that several families and individuals were living, during this period, in the Chezzetcook area and elsewhere in the vicinity of Halifax. This would include, for example, the families of Louis Petitpas and Jean-Baptiste Roma, servants of Fr. Pierre Maillard, whom they accompanied from Île Royale (Cape Breton) when they surrendered to British authorities in the spring of 1760. In the summer of that year, Lawrence named those two men in an inventory of certain Acadians capable of working on the repair of dykes and *aboiteaux* – persons whose names do not appear in the list of 12 August 1763.¹⁰⁷ We also note the names of several men who do appear in the list of men who were sick and absent from work during August 1761, but who did not turn up in Stephen White's genealogical research as having lived in the Halifax region (even though there is an opposite discrepancy, since White found several other people who did live there but appear nowhere in the official Halifax documents of that period).¹⁰⁸ Recall that there is a shortfall of nearly 350 persons in the subscription list of 12 August 1763, as compared to Wilmot's count of 22 March 1764. Plainly those missing from the August list were people uninterested in moving to French territory, plus those who joined the subscription after that August date. And actually, we see a coming and going between Halifax and Fort Edward (at Pisiquid or Windsor) during 1762 and 1763. Unfortunately, no list is available showing Acadians at Fort Edward who wished to leave for French-held lands. Such a list would have allowed us to make a comparison that could have shown us which families and

¹⁰⁷CEA F912, PRO WO34/17, p. 122. Amherst, p. 287, Charles Lawrence to Edward Whitmore, Halifax, 29 Sept. 1760. All these families were living in the Chezzetcook area at the start of the 1760s and numbered at least some thirty individuals. The men identified in Lawrence's letter are: Abraham Lavandier, Amand Breau, Sigismond Breau, Jean-Baptiste Roma, Jacques Petitpas, and Jean Petitpas, along with Louis Petitpas and Joseph Petitpas, who were in service to Pierre Maillard.

¹⁰⁸CEA F912, PRO WO34/14, p. 96, John Henry Bastide to Jeffrey Amherst, Halifax, 24 July 1761. The following are the men who were sick and did not appear in the list of 12 Aug. 1763: Solomon Maillet, Michel Blanchard, Jean-Baptiste Labauve, Charles Comeau, Ambroise Blanchard, Justin Comeau, and Pierre Lalande. See Appendix I for the list compiled from Stephen White's genealogical notes for his *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles acadiennes*, Part II, unpublished. We wish to thank Mr. White for giving us access to this invaluable genealogical information, without which our study would have been incomplete.

individuals came from Fort Edward to Halifax between the summer of 1763 and the point when Wilmot made his count in the winter of 1764.

Despite those uncertainties in the data, Stephen White's genealogical notes have enabled us to identify at least 800 Acadian persons who were living in Halifax at one time or another between 1759 and 1764. (See the Appendix.)

It is certainly the case that Georges Island served as a site of detention and incarceration for numerous Acadians – males and females, adults and children – between 1755 and 1761, in anticipation of their deportation to the English-American colonies or to England. We are far short, however, of the number that Dianne Marshall has offered, when she claimed there were thousands of Acadians imprisoned on the island waiting for the ships to deport them.¹⁰⁹ She even gives a figure of nearly 1,800 individuals under guard on the island at one point in time.¹¹⁰ As we have been able to show, there were never, at any one time, that many Acadian prisoners at Halifax, and there were fewer still on Georges Island during the entire period we have been examining here.

* * *

¹⁰⁹D. Marshall, *Georges Island...*, *op.cit.*, pp. 35, 90, and 105.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 100. [*Translator's note*: Marshall repeats that estimate in her 2011 book on the Acadian resistance, *Heroes of the Acadian Resistance: The Story of Joseph Beausoleil Broussard and Pierre II Surette, 1702-1765*, Halifax, Formac Publishing, 2011, p. 184.]



Graphics

1. Aerial view of Georges Island in Halifax Harbour ca. 2007. Photo by Jeff Vienneau. Accessed 25 July 2013 at Wikimedia Commons, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Georges_Island_Halifax_Harbour.jpg; licensed for free non-commercial distribution via the GNU Free Documentation license: [CC-BY-SA 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/). This photo shows a cultural heritage site in Canada, [No. 7619 in the Canadian Register of Historic Places](#).
2. Photo of contours within the central “mound” on the island, inside Fort Charlotte. By the translator, 20 July 2013.
3. Map of the area of Acadia showing locales named in the article. Prepared by the translator, using an outline map and compass rose in the public domain.
4. Photo of guardroom in the fort that post-dates the period covered in this article. By the translator, 20 July 2013.
5. Photo of British flintlock of the War of 1812, by the translator, courtesy of the Parks Canada historical re-enactor at the Georges Island “Picnic in the Past” event, 20 July 2013.
6. Photo of Grand-Pré dyke. By the translator, 24 July 2011.
7. Map of eastern North America and the Caribbean. Open source at <http://www.openstreetmap.org/>, accessed 26 July 2013; labels added by the translator.
8. Photo of Acadian hay rake. By the translator, at Grand-Pré National Historic Site, 24 July 2011.

