

## **The Deportation of the Acadians, 1755-1762**

This page will provide an overview of the circumstances surrounding the Acadian expulsion of 1755 to 1762.

### **Historical Boundaries of Acadia**

The historical boundaries of Acadia included most of what is now Nova Scotia, Cape Breton Island (then called Île Royale), New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island (then called Île St-Jean). Under the *Treaty of Utrecht, 1713*, mainland Acadia was ceded to Britain. The treaty made provision for the resettlement of the Acadians, but, for a number of reasons, this never occurred.

Supporting documents in Early Canadiana Online:

*Treaty of Utrecht, 1713* (bilingual)

### **An Oath of Neutrality Offered and Accepted**

As subjects of the British Empire, Acadians were expected to swear allegiance to the British monarch. Acadians offered to swear an oath of neutrality, which was accepted by the British governor of the day, Richard Philipps. For the most part, the Acadians enjoyed a period of prosperity after becoming subjects of Great Britain.

### **Rising Tension**

After the mid 1840s, however, Acadia was of growing strategic interest and was to become the battleground for British and French expansion on the eastern seaboard of North America. Tensions between the British in Nova Scotia and the French on Île Royale and Île St-Jean rose dramatically after the arrival of 7000 British colonists in the area.

### **An Oath of Allegiance Demanded**

In the face of increasing military preparations and other fighting in North America, the new governor of Nova Scotia, Charles Lawrence, demanded an unconditional oath of allegiance to ensure that the Acadians would not take up arms against the British.

The Acadians at first refused as they were concerned about possible retaliation from the French should they swear allegiance to Britain. Later, they reluctantly agreed. This was not convincing enough for Governor Lawrence, who order the expulsion to begin.

## Deportation

In July 1755, the deportations began. The total Acadian population at the time was around 12 000 and it is estimated that as many as 10 000 were expelled. The British seized farms, goods, livestock and pillaged and ruined Acadian homesteads to ensure that they would not return. This continued until 1762.

## Scattered

When the British won control of most French possessions in North America under the *Treaty of Paris, 1763*, French settlers on Île Royale and Île St-Jean were also expelled. While those on the islands were returned to France, however, the Acadians were sent to other British colonies along the eastern seaboard of North America. Many of those deported died in the process; perhaps 1000 managed to remain by hiding in the woods.

Supporting documents in Early Canadiana Online:

***Treaty of Paris, Feb 10, 1763***

(France surrenders most of her North American possessions.)

## Return

Britain eventually gave many Acadians permission to return, once the military threat had passed and they agreed to the oath of allegiance. As many as 3000 Acadians eventually returned, but their farms and homesteads had been claimed by British settlers. As a result, they were forced mainly into unsettled areas of what is now New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

The largest number settled in eastern New Brunswick. They remain there to this day and represent a strong cultural force. Small numbers also settled on what is now Cape Breton (Île Royale) and Prince Edward Island (Île St-Jean).

To learn more about the deportation of the Acadians:

- Read the entry “History of Acadia” in the [Canadian Encyclopedia Online](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?TCE_Version=A).  
[link: [http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?TCE\\_Version=A](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?TCE_Version=A)]
- Visit the [National Library of Canada site](http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/history/18/h18-2953-e.html).  
[link: <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/history/18/h18-2953-e.html>]
- Visit the [Blupete site](http://www.blupete.com/Hist/NovaScotiaBk1/Part6/Splash.htm).  
[link: <http://www.blupete.com/Hist/NovaScotiaBk1/Part6/Splash.htm>]

## Bibliography

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