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a Review of Naomi Griffiths' *From Migrant to Acadian*

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Exploring the Acadian Identity:
a Review of Naomi Griffiths' *From Migrant to Acadian*

OVER THE COURSE OF 45 YEARS, Naomi E.S. Griffiths has made an extraordinary contribution to our knowledge of Acadian history. Her most recent work, *From Migrant to Acadian: A North American Border People 1604-1755* (Montreal & Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), is the result of her extensive archival research in Europe and North America and follows up many of the questions raised in her earlier publications.[1] The book examines the growth of an Acadian self-identity in the period from the first arrival of traders and settlers to the Deportation. It suggests that the most important feature of this self-identity was the emergent belief that, as Acadians, they had a right to live on their lands and a right not only to be consulted on matters affecting their lives, but to be part of the decision-making process and to have their own independent decisions respected. This gives the book the tension of a Shakespearean tragedy as the reader watches the Deportation almost inevitably approaching, driven by the very factors that helped to create the confidence: the relations between Acadians, neighbouring First Nations, New England states, New France, France, both the central officials and the Atlantic ports, and Britain. Within all these border relationships, the Acadians were developing economic, social and political traditions that developed into an enduring self-identity.

The book addresses the important contemporary issues of local identity and resistance to the forces of globalization and assimilation as illustrated by the Acadians. It builds on ideas already expressed by Francis Parkman, J.B. Brebner and A.J.B. Johnston.[2] However, it deliberately avoids situating the Acadians in other general literature on border or frontier situations.[3] In contrast to the work of Richard White, there is no stress on what cultural traits the Acadians may have adopted because of contact with the British settlers, though there are several suggestions from irritated French officials that Acadians developed independent, even "republican" attitudes, possibly developed through contact with the New England colonies.[4] The pressures on the Mi'kmaq, Abenaki and Malecite, and their role as border peoples, are explored and some comparisons with the Acadian development are made, following up on the earlier work of George Rawlyk. Parallels are also suggested between Acadia, Wales, Scotland and the Channel Islands as areas conquered by England

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1 The best introduction is N.E.S. Griffiths, *The Contexts of Acadian History, 1686-1784* (Montreal & Kingston, 1992). Her other publications include many articles in *Acadiensis* and *la société historique acadienne, les cahiers*.

2 Extracts from Parkman and Brebner, illustrating their respective views on the border situation of Acadians, are given in Naomi Griffiths, *The Acadian Deportation: Deliberate Perfidy or Cruel Necessity?* (Toronto, 1969): Parkman, pp. 32-43, 98-103 and Brebner, pp. 44-8, 82-4, 88-91. For the work of A.J.B. Johnston, see " Borderland Worries: Loyalty Oaths in Acadie/Nova Scotia, 1754-1755", *French Colonial History*, 4 (2003), pp. 31-48.

3 *From Migrant to Acadian*, "Introduction", p. xvii. For border and frontier literature see, for example, Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes region 1650-1815* (Cambridge and New York, 1991) and J.M.S. Careless, "Frontierism, Metropolitanism and Canadian History", *Canadian Historical Review*, XXXV (March 1954), pp. 1-21.

4 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 128, 200, 205.

where language, culture and separate identity were able to survive in spite of the power of a central British government.[5] The parallel of Acadia with Ireland is described as even clearer because of the religious issue.[6] Massachusetts is also described as a border colony where independent attitudes were encouraged by the intermittent weakness of British authority and the continuing British need for trade.[7] Passing references to the Atlantic coast as a common border for many countries could also be set in a wider historiographical context.[8] The detailed study of Acadian development is carefully set in the context of other historians of Acadia, especially John Reid and J.B. Brebner and the bibliography will be valuable to students wishing to follow up either the border issue or pre-Deportation Acadian history.[9] Griffiths insists that Acadian society is worth studying for its own sake and that many of its characteristics developed through the nature of immigration and the social and economic patterns established by the climate and geography of the region.

The approach is narrative and chronological, so students looking for a rapid summary may find it frustrating. The turning points in the development of Acadian self-identity, however, are identified in conjunction with the major political changes in the region as British and French governments claimed control of the area and periods of war replaced periods of comparative peace. The resulting thoughtful analysis is buttressed by extensive documentation of the background situation of each of the groups "bordering" Acadia as well as vivid and lively character sketches of those involved.[10]

No summary can do justice to the book's thesis that pre-Deportation Acadian identity developed as a function of their situation as a border people, but some key themes can be identified. Acadian relations with First Nations, one of the societies on their borders, are examined in as much detail as the existing documentation allows. One continuing theme for all the border areas and the Acadians themselves is their diversity. In this case, the divisions are between the Abenaki, caught in a border situation themselves, the Malecite, whose role is not explored in detail, and the Mi'kmaq. The Mi'kmaq, like the Acadians, had internal divisions though these are, understandably, not explored in detail.[11]

Trade statistics show the continuing importance of the fur trade to Acadians and suggest a continuing economic relationship, particularly with the Mi'kmaq, right up to 1730.[12] This was an early factor in developing a separate identity for Acadians, even as farming was becoming increasingly important to them. The trading was often independent of government supervision and "semi-legal".[13] French government

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5 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 256.
6 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*.
7 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 114.
8 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 8.
9 J.B. Brebner, *New England's Outpost: Acadia before the conquest of Canada* (Hamden, 1927); John G. Reid, *Acadia, Maine and New Scotland: Marginal colonies in the seventeenth century* (Toronto, 1981).
10 See, for example, *From Migrant to Acadian*: Robert Sedgewick (p. 75), John Nelson (p. 120), Paul Mascarene (p. 334) and François Du Pont Duvivier (p. 339).
11 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian,* p. 296.
12 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 1, 85, 271.
13 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian,* p. 17.

interests were more focused on the fisheries and their relationship to changing fortunes in Europe. The French population involved in fisheries was much more likely to be temporary while the fur-trading and farming populations established longer-term relationships.[14] Information on intermarriage is frustratingly low, but the few identifiable examples of influential early Acadians benefiting from Mi'kmaw wives and relatives suggests there may also have been a pattern of marriages recognized locally but not officially, similar to the one Sylvia Van Kirk discovered in western Canada.[15] Intermarriage continued beyond the earliest years as the 1687 census identified several Mi'kmaw wives in Port Royal.[16]

This did not mean Acadians necessarily recognized a First Nation's right to the land they lived on. Griffiths suggests that the view of the "sauvage" identified by Olive Dickason continued in Acadia, but that the relationship was very different as compared to relations between the settlers in New France and the Five Nations.[17] The pragmatic acceptance of Catholicism by many Mi'kmaq also made the relationship closer in the early days of settlement: the suggestion that Madame de Guecherville was willing to accept First Nations' right to the land, as long as they became Catholic, is intriguing.[18] Religion was a link between Acadians and those First Nations who accepted the teachings of missionaries. In addition, the more tolerant attitude of the Franciscan missionaries in Acadia to First Nations' customs and beliefs contrasted sharply with the Jesuits' approach in New France and was less likely to create First Nations' hostility.[19]

The influence of Mi'kmaw politics on the Deportation period has already been explored by Griffiths and others.[20] However, the parallels and differences noted between the First Nations and Acadians as negotiating powers are interesting: the French and British were both forced to accept First Nations as independent treaty-making bodies while they were reluctant to grant similar status to the Acadians.[21] This suggests the Acadians may have seen the Mi'kmaq as an example to be emulated as well as a threat, ally, bargaining tool and buffer isolating them from the arriving British settlers.

The influence of the New England borderlands on Acadians has also been explored previously. However, Naomi Griffiths adds useful detail on the periods when two groups were seen as "my friend the enemy" as well as some caveats on the theme of universal Protestant New England loathing of Catholic Acadians. She finds some common "borderland" experiences, including the challenges of the Atlantic coast and

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14 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 74.
15 Sylvia Van Kirk, "*Many tender ties*": *Women in fur-trade society in western Canada 1670-1870* (Winnipeg, 1980); *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 37, 57, 87.
16 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 179.
17 Olive Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton, 1977; reprint 1984).
18 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 22.
19 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 21, 56.
20 Griffiths, *The Acadian Deportation*; Geoffrey Plank, "King George II and the Acadian Removal", in Ronnie Gilles LeBlanc, ed., *Du Grand Dérangement à la Déportation* (Moncton, 2005), p. 87.
21 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 245, 268, 383. See also A.J.B. Johnston, " French Attitudes towards Acadians, ca. 1680-1756", in LeBlanc, *Du Grand Dérangement*, pp. 149-50 and William C. Wicken, *Mi'kmaq Treaties on Trial: History, Land and Donald Marshall Junior* (Toronto, 2002).

relationships with New France, that had to be taken into account.[22] New England was also developing its own independence from Europe and, in some cases, a policy of neutrality.[23] This was linked to the friendships established by trade with individuals like John Nelson or John Alden. Charles D'Aulnay even wrote of the need for friendship between neighbours when he wanted help from New England that would enable him to stay in power.[24] Through the various periods of occupation and return to French rule, many Acadians continued to trade with New England, suggesting that some of them came to regard this trade as part of their neutral self-image.

These exceptions to the usual pattern of fear and religious enmity towards Acadians were also divisions within New England. Massachusetts had to consider its border relations with New York, where the fear and enmity were greater and the ties of trade less.[25] Within Massachusetts, there were also divisions: Governor Phipps wanted to see Acadia taken over, Nelson saw it as a trade ally and others wanted to see it maintained as a bulwark against potential Mi'kmaw aggression.[26] These divisions weakened Massachusetts and encouraged Acadian views on their own independent right to make decisions.

Griffiths sees the influence of New England on Acadian identity during the period before the immediate pre-Deportation years taking two main forms: encouraging economic prosperity and independence from France and developing an independent leadership tradition through the use of delegates and discussion. The economic links have already been covered in detail by Brebner, but the steady growth of Acadian prosperity is clearly documented here by census and trade figures. This was in part related to New England trade – frequently illegal – and some Acadians petitioned for this as a right.[27] In politics, governors from New England were not totally averse to some representation of Acadians. The Virginian constitution was considered as a possible model for Acadia and Phipps is credited with organizing the first election.[28] The growth of the delegate system under New England and British influence is explained in valuable detail, providing a useful expansion of the suggestions on its importance in Griffiths' earlier work. All of these political developments probably encouraged Acadians in the idea that they could exercise some control over decisions. Acadian Prudent Robichaud, for example, may have helped to design the modified oath that recognized Acadian neutrality.[29]

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22 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 6, 134. Griffiths defines these challenges as the tension between developing independence in colonies and the imperial powers across the Atlantic and the constant need to consider attempts by New France to assert more power in the area. She also discusses the tensions between fishery and fur economies and the problems of considering both merchant and government interests when dealing with the powers across the Atlantic.

23 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 205, 149.

24 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 61.

25 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 114.

26 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 158, 161.

27 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 151.

28 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 154-5. Governor Phipps established "an 'elected' council to administer the colony. We know nothing of the form of the elections, neither the process of nomination nor who voted, nor how".

29 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 268. The modified oath of 1715 would have allowed Acadians to remain neutral in the event of a war between France and Britian.

The role of New England governors and military men in the Deportation period is already known, but Griffiths' use of European background material builds on this. She documents the increasing frustrations of New England leaders and traders lacking support or guidance from a divided and distracted Britain. This occurred as early as the expeditions of Sir William Phipps in 1690, Benjamin Church in 1696 and Samuel Vetch in 1710 when all three were forced into some kind of negotiations with the Acadians, again strengthening the Acadian self-image as a people entitled to their land and to independent negotiating status.[30] She also suggests that New England men had far more influence on the policies of Britain than French Canadians could ever have had on the policies of France. This was a result of the parliamentary system, the power of merchants in Britain and the ideals stated in the 1689 Bill of Rights.[31] Efforts to strengthen British government power in the colonies through the Board of Trade and through Admiralty Courts resulted in greater New England understanding of patronage politics and the use of colonial agents as intermediaries.[32] Like the other "border peoples" in Acadian and First Nations' society, the people of New England were developing the identity of a group with whom European powers had to negotiate. Still, frustrations remained because Britain would not, or could not, back the growing ambition of New England leaders to control the situation in Acadia.[33] The last two chapters develop this argument by documenting Governor Charles Lawrence's progression towards the decision to deport. Inevitably, placing the responsibility on Lawrence, and Chief Justice Jonathan Belcher, who was also from New England, is not going to satisfy all those interested in the history of the Deportation.[34]

The influence of New France on the development of Acadian identity was in many ways less than the influence of New England. Griffiths points out, however, some reasons why separate identities developed and some occasions when the intervention of New France influenced identity. New France, for instance, was obviously a border community in respect to the First Nations, New England and the influence of France. As already mentioned, relations with the First Nations were very different from those the Acadians experienced. Historians of Quebec have also shown that there was comparatively little friendly trade with New England and a resistance to invasion that took a more militant form in Quebec than in Port Royal. This militancy strengthened New England fear of First Nations and of Catholics, encouraging the growing resolve to control Acadia.[35]

The major economic influence of New France on Acadia was to distract the French government from the smaller Acadian fur trade towards the settlement in Quebec and the Acadian fisheries. Even the focus on the fisheries weakened as hostility with Britain and the growing strength of the New England fisheries made the Baie des Chaleurs more attractive to the French than Canso or the South-West Atlantic.[36] Griffiths thinks this

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30 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 153, 155, 164, 236.
31 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 149, 163.
32 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 226
33 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 441.
34 See, for example, the series of articles in *L'Acadie Nouvelle* by Fidèle Thériault during the summer of 2005.
35 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian* , pp. 162, 237.
36 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 119.

had three major effects on the Acadian identity. It increased the transient population going back to France, because those involved in the fisheries came from France and frequently returned to France, and this enhanced direct contact between France and Acadia. It forcibly lessened, however, Acadian reliance on supplies from France because these supplies were concentrated on New France. It also increased individual rather than government-supported migration.[37]

The social influence of New France also seems to have been very limited, although Griffiths found the settlers came from the same diverse parts of France and the same predominantly urban background. Religious efforts to establish the control of the bishop from New France were limited to occasional visits that failed to create a hierarchy able to stand up against the direct influence from France established by the Abbé de L'Isle Dieu in the later stages of French rule.[38]

Politically, the direct influence of New France was weakened by distance and also by direct French government relations with Acadia. Although Griffiths mentions the possibility of earlier border tensions between Acadia and New France, it is hard to identify any significant border region until the establishment of Louisbourg and subsequent attempts to retake Acadia.[39] During the Deportation period, the disastrous failures of any efforts to successfully intervene from New France are already well known.

This comparatively limited direct role of New France in Acadian affairs reinforces Naomi Griffiths' thesis that border relations were crucial to the development of the Acadian identity and she puts more stress on the direct relationship between France and Acadia as a border outpost of French influence, modified by border conditions. At the same time, the theme of divisions within France is sometimes stressed to avoid too rigid an adherence to generalizations. Griffiths notes the early divisions between Atlantic port cultures in France and regional attitudes as well as the central government's views that were also often divided.[40] This contributed, no doubt, to divisions within Acadia, such as the dual appointments of D'Aulnay and La Tour as governors and the continuing disputes between Robinau de Villebon and the Sieur de Gargas. Divided opinions among French leaders in Louisbourg during the pre-Deportation years also made claims to French government supremacy unconvincing.

Changes in the attitude of the French government are also noted by Griffiths as religious fervour gave way to nationalism, and Acadians, like the settlers in other French colonies, were not inspired by French nationalism – in spite of their identity with French language and, to some extent, religion.[41] Unlike Francis Parkman and Émile Lauvrière, she does not find Acadians enthusiastically loyal to France.[42] As always, motives are hard to prove, but when Commander Duvivier came to "save" the inhabitants of Minas from British dominion in 1744, Griffiths convincingly shows he

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37 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 48, 65, 155.
38 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 396, 435, 566, 657.
39 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 105.
40   Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 6, 30, 144.
41 There is no detailed analysis of colonial attitudes here. The reader is referred to Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, 1983).
42 Francis Parkman, *A half-century of conflict* (Boston, 1897); Émile Lauvrière, *La tragédie d'un peuple* (Paris, 1922).

met with remarkably little Acadian support.[43]

In spite of French failure to provide enough support to make trade with New England unnecessary, the economic influence of France on Acadia was considerable. The seigneurial system was established but, in contrast to that of New France, it failed to create a seigneurial elite and encouraged the Acadians to think of themselves as agents of their own change by constantly challenging the system through the courts.[44] New England invasions obviously played a part in this as well, providing evidence of alternative land-owning models. The lack of government-sponsored immigration and the limited seigneurial-sponsored immigration encouraged individual migration requiring Acadians to forge their own family and economic ties. The French fishing fleet was vital to the settlement of coastal areas and even provided another frontier between the fishing economy and the more independent fur and farming economy.

Social influence is clearly linked to the political influence of France. Religion and politics were tied together from the early years when only "loyal" subjects were permitted to settle in Acadia. Judging by the tithes paid and the disputes registered, Griffiths finds the Acadians Catholic, but far from fanatical in their obedience to the priests.[45] This was still enough, though, to make British and New England authorities suspicious of their potential loyalty to the Protestants of New England or the Protestant kingdom established in Britain in 1689.[46] However, these fears were not proof of fact. Far from adhering to a French social model, the main argument of Griffiths' book is that the Acadians established their own model. Even the priests who came over sometimes took on a "border" attitude and represented the Acadian right to be considered and heard.[47]

In politics, French efforts to maintain or increase control in Acadia often encouraged trends towards individualism and independence that Griffiths finds to be a major part of the Acadian identity. The extensive powers given to early leaders encouraged individualism while efforts to centralize power in the French Crown encouraged local leaders to apply directly to France instead of following a chain of command through New France.[48] Weakened by the European wars, France was unable to provide support for French officials and they were constantly forced to seek the support of the governed. Villebon was even forced to accept the need for Acadians to negotiate with New England while he concentrated on the First Nations' alliance in an effort to recover Acadia.[49] The numerous attempts, by both Britain and France, to enforce oaths were a sign of weakness – allowing room for negotiation of terms – not

43 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 339. For further confirmation of this limited loyalty, see Naomi Griffiths, "Acadians in Exile: the Experiences of Acadians in British Seaports", *Acadiensis*, IV, 1 (Autumn 1974), pp. 67-84 and Jean-François Mouhot, "Un regard sur l'historiographie du séjour des Acadiens en France", in LeBlanc, *Du Grand Dérangement*, p. 109 ff.
44 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 44, 49.
45 See also Maurice A. Leger, "La deportation et la religion", in LeBlanc, *Du Grand Dérangement*, p. 109 ff.
46 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 295, 301.
47 Jean-Pierre de Miniac in Minas, for example, was willing to negotiate for the Acadians. See Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 339.
48 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 120.
49 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 159.

a sign of overwhelming strength.[50]

The importance of French weakness during the Deportation period has already been well documented elsewhere, yet Naomi Griffiths' examination of the European background of decision-making suggest a new aspect to the tragedy: France had every intention of taking back Acadia, still apparently relying on a policy of land-holding and French expansion on the land, even when economic and political weakness made this very unlikely.[51] The challenges facing Britain were different. Britain showed some of the characteristics of a border country itself, with strong minority areas within its official boundaries, but that aspect of the country is not stressed in this book. The major concern is with Britain as an imperial power, accepting the existence of ethnic and religious minorities and inviting regional and mercantile participation in policy-making to an extent not evident in France. While the rights of Catholics under the laws of Britain were limited, there had never been an Edict of Nantes or a mass emigration of the Catholic population.

The chief economic influence of Britain was exercised through New England and Griffiths finds that social contacts between the British and Acadian populations were limited. British weaknesses meant that control rarely extended to the whole of Acadia and kept most members of the garrisons nervous of contact with Acadians beyond the necessity of obtaining supplies from them. Had there been more social interaction between the British and the Acadians, the tragedy might have been averted, but the book suggests very limited contacts apart from the marriage of the Winniet family. Garrison societies kept to themselves and as the Deportation came closer, the garrisons were often worse off than the local Acadians.

Political influence, however, was profound. Ironically, the British had already recognized the idea of colonial neutrality in the Treaty of Whitehall in 1686 and, although that was overturned with the arrival of William of Orange in 1689, his accession made it clear that citizens had some individual rights and duties. The British use of Acadian delegates and their expanding role was a logical extension of the still-limited British democracy as well as a result of British weakness. It encouraged the development of local leaders and an elite that was more likely to represent the diverse views of the Acadian population than a seigneurial or economic elite class would have done. The dithering over limited and absolute loyalty oaths reflected divisions on policy, not just British weakness. By concentrating on the reasons for the Deportation and the process by which the decision was made – instead of the issue of blame – Griffiths documents the growing fear and exasperation of the British that led Lawrence to finally abandon the oath system altogether and attempt to deport men, women and children – supporters and opponents of the British regime – in a step unprecedented in the histories of France and Britain.[52]

The unusual nature of the Deportation underlines the main thesis of the book: the Acadians were not the creation of external forces but a people who had developed

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50 See, for example, LaVallière's attempt to enforce an oath of loyalty to France in 1679 as described by Griffiths in *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 154.

51 This policy was clear at the time of the Treaty of Utrecht, but there is no evidence given to suggest it had changed. See Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 252.

52 For valuable analysis of how the Deportation differed from previous acts of European governments, see Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 462-3.

their own self-identity, leading to an unprecedented response from the British, who would not, or perhaps could not, countenance such independence. The above descriptions of the contributions of other bordering powers should not distract the reader from Griffiths' insistence that the Acadians were the product of their own ideas and economy, not just a reaction to external forces.[53]

This does not mean that they were a unified group with a consistent policy from 1603 to 1755. New migrants were constantly arriving from various parts of France and integration into the existing community was gradual. Kinship ties within communities and with other communities developed slowly and each community had its own relationship to New England, New France, France and Britain. The differences between Port Royal, the Minas and Beaubassin settlements, and the outposts on the St. John River and at Pentagouet were particularly clear. There were differences between people in those settlements. Even the nature of the border kept changing as treaties left it ill-defined and the balance of powers in North America and Europe shifted.

Economic factors were vital in gradually establishing Acadian identity. As the focus shifted from fur to fishing and subsistence farming, Acadian relationships with Europe weakened and traditions of independence from Europe and interdependence on each other developed. Again, Naomi Griffiths stresses the importance of dyke farming strengthening the need for cooperation amongst the members of every agricultural community as did barn-raising, ploughing and harvesting.[54] Although she does not deal with the fishing economy, similar needs for cooperation must have been experienced there. Economic factors also separated the Acadian and British communities as, ironically, the Acadian economy grew and the British settlers of William Alexander's colony or the British garrisons were suffering comparative hardship.[55]

Social factors were obviously linked to economic developments and Griffiths notes strategic marriages between Acadian families as early as the 1650s.[56] Unlike Jacques Vanderlinden, however, she does not see this developing an Acadian elite social network.[57] Interruptions to the seigneurial system and the introduction of quit rents by the British worked against the development of a seigneurial elite and Griffiths finds no dynastic merchant elites. The emergence of Acadian leaders is carefully documented through their relationships with the French and British, but there is no evidence that they formed an elite social class. Examples given suggest that they became elite through individual achievements rather than connections.[58]

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53 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 284. For a contrary view, see Fernand Ouelette, "Démographie, development, économique, frequentation scolaire et alphabetization dans les populations des acadiennes des Maritimes avant 1911", *Acadiensis*, XXVI, 1 (Automme 1996), pp. 3-31.

54 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, 172, 283.

55 This interesting idea is not developed, but Griffiths notes little contact between Acadians and either of these groups and increasing fear and insecurity in the garrison. See Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 49, 319.

56 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 63.

57 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian* , p. 179; Jacques Vanderlinden, "Alliances entre familles acadienne pendant la périod française", *Les Cahiers, Société Historique Acadienne*, 27, 2-3 (1996), pp. 125-48.

58   Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 181.

From the beginnings of Acadia, the political situation encouraged this individualism as well as independence. Early leaders were remote from Europe and, like Claude La Tour, who formed an alliance with the Scot, William Alexander, they often made their own decisions. The book suggests this alliance was not a betrayal of France but an expression of Acadian interests in an Atlantic frontier, just as D'Aulnay and the younger La Tour saw common interests with New England.[59] Independent attitudes were the inevitable result of distance from authority and the limited powers of such authorities as were present in Acadia. French officials Intendant De Meulles, in 1685, and Commander Brouillon, in 1702, complained of the need for discipline among Acadians and their reluctance to pay taxes.[60] Griffiths, citing the contrary opinion of Bishop St. Vallier, who visited Acadia at the same time as De Meulles, does not think this meant the Acadians were a wild bunch.[61] Most apparently paid their tithes and observed their religion, even if they did not always observe the dictates of their priests, who often showed considerable individualism and independence themselves. As noted earlier, Acadian leaders were developed by governments in need of their alliance and the representative system developed from syndics to a role closely resembling Justice of the Peace.[62] The delegate system was even formally accepted by the British as the product of annual elections, with some of the chosen delegates rejected by British courts in Acadia as lacking property qualifications.[63] Griffiths thinks delegate decisions were also the result of group discussions.[64]

This image of power strengthened the Acadian image of their identity as a group to be consulted and a group with the right to make decisions. It was the Minas Acadians who asked for the right to choose representatives to negotiate with Vetch, and it was Vetch who agreed to this.[65] The touching faith in self-determination, faced with an increasingly desperate British occupying power, extended to the right to remain neutral. The tradition was emerging by 1660 and strengthened by the French alliance with the Mi'kmaq that made Acadian participation in a war against France difficult. So Acadians were already claiming a practical right not to take sides by 1692.[66] Naomi Griffiths sees the gradual evolution of this neutrality into an articulated policy as the result of the Acadian belief that they were "the rightful inhabitants of the lands on which they lived, not just negotiable assets to be moved

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59 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 43.
60 See Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*: Intendant Jacques De Meulles, 1685 (p. 128) and Commander Brouillon, 1702 (p. 205).
61 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 128.
62 The British officials in Acadia encouraged Acadians to develop a representative system where Acadian communities chose men from their communities to be channels of communication between British officials and the communities. France had a similar system as early as the 16th century when syndics were "elected by a local community for a limited time to take care of some matter that required time and attention". See Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 78, citing Gaston Zeller, *Les Institutions de la France au XVIe siècle* (Paris, 1948). By the immediate pre-Deportation period, these representatives were being used by the British officials in a role similar to the British Justices of the Peace who dealt with minor local disputes and offences. See *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 325.
63 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 325.
64 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 267.
65 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 240
66 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 164

about as pawns for the purposes of a distant empire".[67] More or less successful negotiations with the British, and the ability to often choose their own response to French demands or requests, confirmed them in this belief. While beliefs are hard to prove, the evidence Griffiths produces, in the confidence of delegate responses in the pre-Deportation period and in the analysis of Acadian petitions, suggests they did think they had come to an agreement with both governments and that they had the right to stay or move as they decided.[68]

This is the crux of the Acadian identity described in the book: they were a self-identified group with a right to their land, a right to make decisions about their lives and a right to be consulted by others when decisions were made. This was the result of shared economy, traditions of cooperation, independence and individualism, and the weakness of colonizing powers. Some aspects of ethnicity, however, are not dealt with by Griffiths in detail. Anthony Smith has suggested that an emergent ethnicity can be defined by "a collective name, a myth of ancestry, historical memories, shared cultural elements, association with a homeland and (partial) collective sentiments".[69] This model, as Griffiths suggests, shows that there is more to be said about myth of ancestry and historical memories, which are only mentioned with reference to surviving the La Tour-D'Aulnay years.[70] However, as the book's conclusion indicates, the Deportation experiences and subsequent return would continue to shape this identity. The book is thought provoking, fascinating, scholarly and lively; in short, it is everything we have come to expect of the work of Naomi Griffiths.

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67 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, pp. 260-1.

68 The payment of quit-rents to the British was seen as acceptance of British presence and British acceptance of Acadian legitimacy. See Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 417.

69 Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism* (London and New York, 1998), p. 19.

70 Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian*, p. 310.