Founding of Acadia

Article on Acadien.org

After spending the winter of 1604-1605 on Sainte-Croix Island off the coast of present-day Maine, Pierre du Gua, Sieur DeMonts and his men moved their colony to Port Royal in the sheltered Annapolis Valley. In 1605, these French explorers built a fortification which they named in honor of the King's geographer on the expedition, Samuel de Champlain. He called the land "La Cadie", a derivative of "L' Arcadie", the name given to the region early in the sixteenth century by the Italian explorer Verrazano. It is here, and all along the river that winds its way through the Annapolis Valley that the majority of our Acadian ancestors would take root in the first half of the seventeenth century.

Later, a number of families gradually moved further northeast to the Minas and Cumberland Basin areas settling in regions such as: Grand Pré, near the town of present-day Wolfville, N.S.; Cobequid, the Truro region of today; Beaubassin, near the present-day town of Amherst, N.S., as well as the Memramcook region, in southeastern New Brunswick.

Today there exist a number of historic sites which symbolize Acadian history in the province of Nova Scotia. Examples of these include the fort at Port Royal, which signifies where the French first settled in 1605, and Grand-Pré, which commemorates the Acadian deportation and subsequent migrations. The following **Acadian family names** are listed today in the memorial church on the site at Grand-Pré

As a result of the deportation begun in 1755 and the subsequent migrations it entailed, the Acadians were dispersed all over the Atlantic rim including the New England States and all along the eastern seaboard as far south as Georgia. Some were deported to England and back to France. The Acadians also migrated to present-day New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and back to various locations in Nova Scotia and to Newfoundland as well as to Québec. Many would eventually reach Louisiana, the West Indies and even the Falkland Islands.

Present-Day Acadie in Nova Scotia

Four centuries later the province of Nova Scotia, and especially the Acadian villages that dot its shores, will receive some 100,000 visitors attracted to the region by a myriad of historical and cultural activities. As with the two past Congrès, Nova Scotia's celebrations will span a two-week period beginning on July 31, leading up to and concluding with the National Acadian Feast Day on August 15.

The northern Acadian regions of Nova Scotia are located in Richmond and Inverness Counties on Cape Breton Island and in the Acadian communities in Antigonish and Guysborough Counties. The southern Acadian regions of the province consist of Saint Mary's Bay in the Municipality of Clare, Digby County, as well as the Acadian communities in the Municipality of Argyle, Yarmouth County. Acadians are also found in the center of the province in the village of Chezzetcook, Halifax County.

The greater majority of Acadians are found today residing in the Metropolitan areas of Halifax/Dartmouth and Sydney. Since the late nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, Acadians from many rural communities in Nova Scotia were attracted to these centers because of employment opportunities and other city life experiences.