Chapter 2

This place is self-evident in its special nature...
the waters made the land, the land's made the people.

Charles Curry, 7th generation dykeland farmer

Grand-Pré représente la persévérance devant l'adversité,
la réconciliation, le pardon... l'histoire est une chose.... on vit
avec le passé mais on vit dans le présent en préparant l'avenir.

Gérald C. Boudreau, Acadian

2.0 Description

2.a. Description of the property

The nominated property consists of 1323 hectares of dykelands, known elsewhere as polders, and uplands on the southern edge of the Minas Basin, an eastern arm of the Bay of Fundy in western mainland Nova Scotia. It is bordered by the Gaspereau River to the east, the Cornwallis River to the west, Long Island to the north, and parts of the communities of Grand Pré, Hortonville, and Lower Wolfville to the south. Dominating the distant background, beyond the nominated property, Cape Blomidon extends into the basin as an instantly recognizable landmark.

The nominated property includes the dykeland area that the Acadians created in the 17th century, which successive generations of farmers have expanded. It also includes distinctive representative sections of the Acadian settlement and of the current agricultural community, as well as the entire planned settlement for the New England Planters, a British town grid.

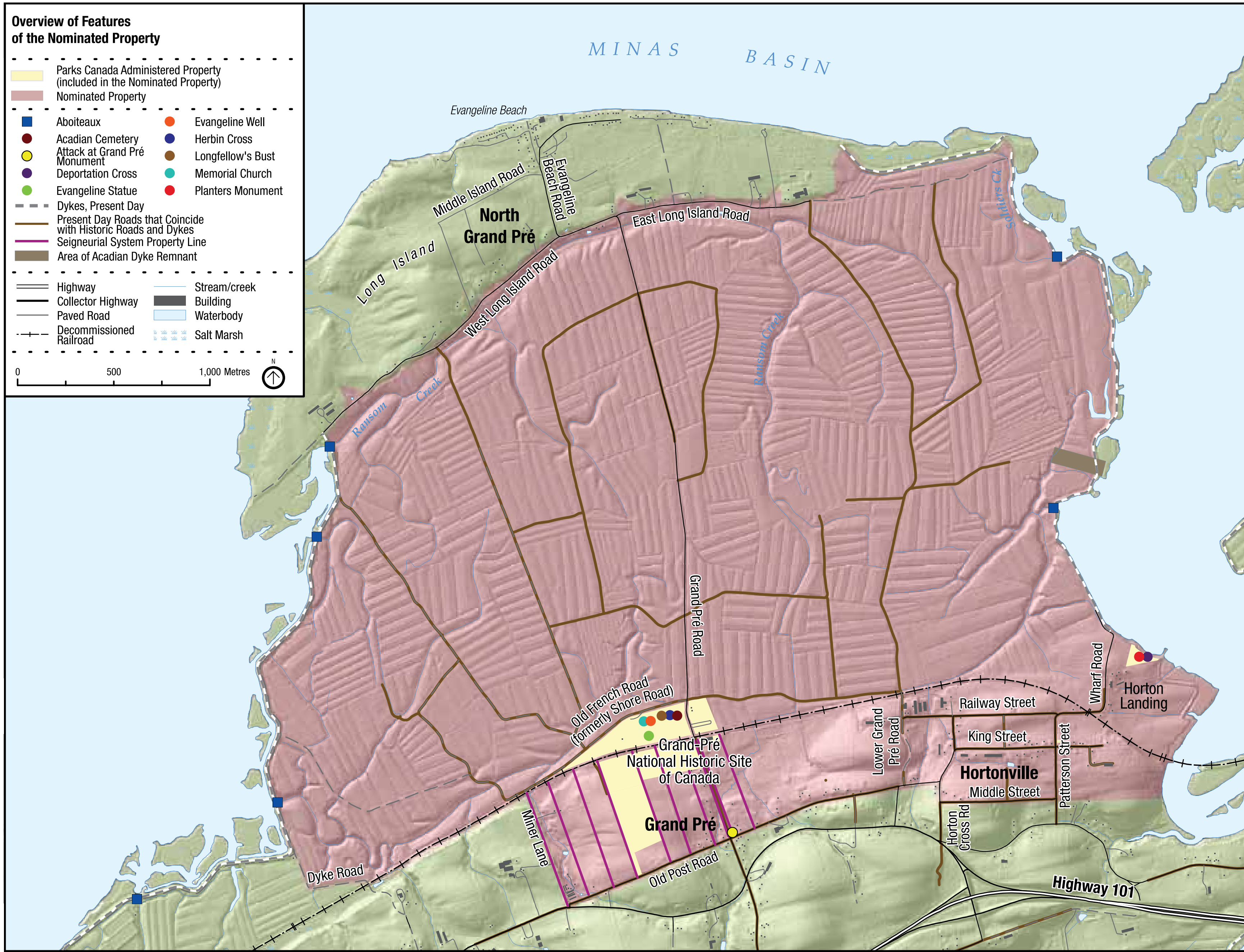
No clear historical record marks the boundaries of the 17th and 18th century community of Grand Pré. In fact, historical accounts and maps alternately use the names Grand-Pré and Les Mines to refer to the general area next to the Minas Basin and to the reclaimed marsh between the Rivière-aux-Canards (Canard River) and the Rivière Gaspareau (Gaspereau River). Even so, other records attest to the presence of the Acadian settlement on the uplands portion of the nominated property. The heart of the Acadian settlement is now defined by a concentration of archaeological remains of houses, field patterns, the cemetery, the traditional location of the remains of the parish church of Saint-Charles-des-Mines, and the intersection of main roads.

The southeast corner of the nominated property includes the surviving evidence of the planned British town grid in Hortonville. The grid is defined by Railway Street, King Street, and Middle Street running east–west and by Horton Cross Road, Wharf Road, and Patterson Street running north–south.

Today, the agricultural community surrounds the dykelands and extends over the hills to the Gaspereau River. The nominated property includes the heart of the Acadian settlement and the British town grid. Since the time of the first Acadian settlement in the 17th century, people have continuously worked these dykelands. The property also includes parts of the hamlet of Grand Pré, which hosts provincially and municipally designated heritage properties and some local services, plus farms on the hills and an expanse of fields and pastures.

At the heart of both the nominated property and the Acadian settlement lies Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada. The national historic site consists of the commemorative gardens, the Memorial Church, cemeteries, and many other memorials to the Acadian Deportation (see Map 3: *Overview of Features of the Nominated Property*).

Through tangible and intangible evidence, this exceptional landscape illustrates the harsh environment, the genius of the dyking system, the productivity of the farmland, and its symbolic reclamation by the Acadian people.



Map 3

2.a.i. An exceptional setting

To understand the environmental challenges and opportunities that have faced communities here since earliest times, one needs to understand the setting.

The setting is defined by its location on the Minas Basin. Here, the shores are pounded twice a day by the highest recorded tides in the world, with a mean range of 11.61 metres. Over 100 billion tonnes of seawater flow in and out of the basin at every tide, more water than the combined flow of all the world's rivers. Yet, those tides create not only an extraordinary challenge to settlement but also an extraordinarily fertile environment, ideal for agriculture.

For approximately 5000 years, the tides of the Minas Basin have deposited the rich alluvial silts of the Bay of Fundy in the intertidal zone at Grand Pré. The resulting mudflats and salt marshes provide habitat to many species of fish, shorebirds and seabirds. They also produce highly fertile and nutrient-rich soils ideal for agriculture. One can see, in the exposed iron-stained sandstones and siltstones beneath their cap of basalt on nearby Cape Blomidon, the type of material that has contributed to the fertility of the wetland. Nutrients were continually being stored in the soils of the marsh as the marsh level rose to keep pace with gradual sea level rise. No comparable productive wetland exists in North America at the same latitude. This intertidal zone is now over 1300 hectares of highly productive farmland protected by 13 kilometres of dykes, and is locally referred to alternatively as the marsh, dykeland or marshland. Surrounding the dykeland, on its fringe, are pockets of the salt marsh (see Figure 2–1) as it would have looked before it was dyked, as well as some remains of the previous dykes that were abandoned to the force of the sea. The marsh continues to host *Spartina patens* and *Juncus gerardii*, two grass species whose natural resilience to the tidal forces makes them ideal for dyke building and maintenance (see Figure 2–2). That salt marsh and the archaeological remains of previous dykes are included in the buffer zone.

2–1 Salt marshes at Grand Pré, outside the dykelands, evoke the landscape prior to its transformation into farmland.

2–2 *Spartina patens* (upper right) and *Juncus gerardii* (lower left) grow outside the dykes at Grand Pré.

The land, as well as the sea, presented challenges and opportunities to people who settled here. The surrounding community primarily sits on the uplands, a row of hills bordering the marsh to the south. Houses and trees are also on Long Island, no longer an island but recognizable from a distance because of its elevation above the flat dykeland. Communities settled on higher ground to protect themselves from floods and to take full advantage of the fertile dykelands. Boot Island, to the east of Long Island, has been eroded by the tides to such an extent that it is now barely visible. Boot Island was, up to the 19th century, attached to Long Island. Archival and sparse physical evidence points to Acadian and New England Planter settlements on that island. An open water channel, or "guzzle," has been forming since the early 20th century between Long Island and Boot Island and continues to increase in size. The rapid erosion of Boot Island has destroyed much archaeological evidence and is one more indicator of the constant challenge of protecting land from the forces of the tide. Long Island and Boot Island are included in the buffer zone.

Grand Pré and the surrounding area retain a strong agricultural sense of place, largely characterized by fields, vineyards, orchards, and rural dwellings. It has no large-scale commercial activities.

2.a.ii. Tangible attributes

The Dykeland as the Heart of the Agricultural Landscape and the Cornerstone of the Symbolic Landscape

The dykeland defines the agricultural landscape and is the foundation for the symbolic landscape. It also connects the two.

Grand Pré, meaning great meadow or great field, derives its name from the 1300 hectares of dykeland that form the majority of the nominated property. Grand Pré has been dyked and farmed for over 300 years. It is a vast expanse of flat land interrupted only by meandering creeks, private farm roads, and a single public road bordered by utility poles. The land has been almost exclusively used for agriculture, regardless of the era or cultural group living alongside it. No permanent buildings stand on the dykeland. The key tangible features of the dykeland include the creeks, the dykes, the *aboiteaux*, and the field pattern (see Figure 2–3).

2–3 The field pattern of the dykelands is clearly visible in this aerial view of the nominated property.

Because of its origins as an intertidal zone, the clayish soil of the dykeland has low permeability. The compactness of the soil and the often humid conditions in the area can make it difficult to operate heavy machinery here. These conditions in effect limit the size and weight of the farming equipment.

Ransom Creek, Great Discharge Creek, and Deportation Creek are three of the main discharge arteries on the dykeland. They have been an integral and virtually unchanged part of the dykeland since the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Smaller creeks drain into these larger arteries and are part of the overall drainage system of the dykeland. Today many of the fields have been "landformed" to improve drainage and retain heat, and the drainage of the dykeland begins with the runoff of water from the soil into ditches. These ditches have a 30-centimetre drop over 300 metres and run through the fields towards one of the three main discharge creeks. The water then continues down those creeks towards the Minas Basin and under the dyke through an *aboiteau*.

Dykes surround the area that was transformed from wetland into farmland. Currently, there are approximately 13 kilometres (8.1 miles) of dykes along the east, west, and part of the north boundaries of the nominated property, all dating from the 20th century. A vestige of an Acadian-period dyke remains on the east side of the dykeland, in the nominated property, protected by a landowner and his ancestors for generations (see Figure 2–4).

2–4 The raised ridge is the only above-ground vestige of an Acadian-period dyke.

It is the only above-ground vestige of that period and no longer serves as a barrier to protect land. Because the dykes were moved and reinforced according to their ability to withstand the changing forces of the tides, there are underground vestiges of dykes from different periods within the boundary of the nominated property, and above ground and underground in the buffer zone. Dykes in the nominated property area were traditionally built from sod taken directly from the salt marsh. Farmers would cut bricks of sod with specialized instruments and arrange them into a solid structure that would resist the impact of the tides. More recently, the operation has been mechanized, with large machines extracting the sod and topping the dykes. Ongoing maintenance of the dykes includes weed control to support the growth of sod and other useful vegetation. In many places, the dykes are faced with boulders on the water side to help protect them from the force of the tides (see Figure 2–5). Smaller portions of the dykes in the nominated property have been built privately by individual farmers. For all dykes, the building principles and their function have remained the same over time: restricting tidal inputs of seawater into the dykeland and protecting the farmland.

2–5 Dykes at Grand Pré are faced with rocks to help them withstand the force of tides and storms.

Aboiteaux, both functioning and abandoned, are found in creeks and under dykes throughout the dykelands (see Figure 2–6). These *aboiteaux* are the key technological component of the agricultural landscape. They continue to facilitate the passage of fresh water from the dykeland into the ocean at low tide, while keeping salt water from entering during high tide. Each *aboiteau* consists of a tubular structure with a simple valve at one end that regulates the flow of water. These structures were once made of wood, either from a hollowed tree trunk or an assembly of planks; today they are made from a combination of PVC piping, wood, and concrete. Once *aboiteaux* cease to function, they are left in place and new ones are installed immediately on top of or next to the old ones. Remains of earlier *aboiteaux* are regularly found by farmers as they carry out their drainage maintenance work. Five functioning *aboiteaux* are located within the nominated property and one is within the buffer zone.

2–6 A working *aboiteau* drains water from the dykelands.

The field patterns on the dykeland are a practical response to the geophysical realities of drainage on the dykelands (see Figure 2–7). Their organically shaped patterns illustrate the smaller size and uneven form of fields common in the 1700s, even though many of these fields have changed sizes and shapes since then.

Some 31 per cent of current field patterns date back to 1760, when the New England Planters were first allotted land. Landowners did not separate fields with hedges, walls, or any other physical obstacle, except when needed to keep cattle, a tradition that endures. In many instances, ditches that collect water are located along the edges of each property, which may include more than one field. Crops grown in recent years on the dykeland include corn, salt hay, soy, alfalfa, oats, and winter and spring wheat. At various times throughout the year, and in various locations, the dykeland is used as a common area to pasture cattle.

2–7 Fields on the dykelands are shaped to create optimal drainage conditions.

The dykeland also plays an important part as a feature of the symbolic landscape. Through its association with the land that was once characteristic of Acadian settlements and the setting of Longfellow's poem *Evangeline*, the dykeland serves as the foundation for the symbolic reclamation of the landscape by the Acadians. It is a reminder of the land that was lost at the time of the Deportation, even representing a "paradise lost" in an idealized vision of history for the Acadian people. Its proximity to the features of the symbolic landscape, which are discussed later, gives meaning to the memorials by setting them in a context that reflects the origins of the Acadians.

The Agricultural Landscape and its Features

The uplands to the south and Long Island, both on the edges of the dykeland, are where the agricultural community of Grand Pré has lived since Acadian times. Four distinct communities surround the dykeland: the hamlet of Grand Pré on the south-central boundary of the nominated property and Hortonville to its east, North Grand Pré on Long Island, and Lower Wolfville to the west of the hamlet of Grand Pré. The boundary of the nominated property includes portions of Hortonville and of the hamlet of Grand Pré. The remainder of these communities, North Grand Pré, and Lower Wolfville, are included in the buffer zone.

In addition to the dykelands themselves, the key tangible features of the agricultural landscape are the settlement, the French field pattern, the British planned town grid, the roads, and the archaeological heritage.

The settlement

The settlement pattern at Grand Pré has changed remarkably little over more than three centuries. Despite all the economic, political, military, and social changes that have swept the region, Grand Pré retains the pattern of a linear, dispersed, and low-density settlement (see Figure 2–8). The settlement continues to spread out across the hills and upland areas, adjacent to but never on the dykelands.

2–8 Grand Pré remains a low-density settlement spread out next to the dykelands, here seen in the background.

This pattern reflects the importance of the farmland, a need to live near it as the main workplace, and a need to protect the settlement from risk of floods. The uplands retain key aspects of the agricultural community that complement the use of the dykelands, including farmland, agricultural buildings, and some woodlands. The many and layered architectural styles of the dwellings and farm buildings – from the oldest house dating back to the late 18th century to the modern bungalow – and the presence of the cemetery provide evidence of an evolving landscape and of its ongoing use by an agricultural community. The settlement extends over the hills, interrupted only by Highway 1 and Highway 101, down to the Gaspereau River where it meets smaller dyked wetlands. This section of the settlement is included in the buffer zone of the nominated property.

The French and British settlement patterns

While today's dispersed settlement is the most tangible evidence of the historic settlement pattern, one can see evidence of other forms of settlement that the French and British colonial authorities tried to impose.

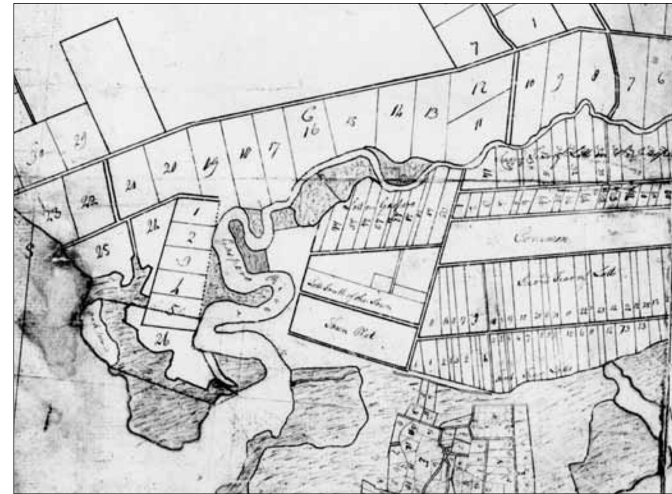
The French pattern illustrates the seigneurial regime in that area. Typical of French North American settlement forms of land distribution, it is characterized by long and narrow property boundary lines running uphill from the closest body of water. It aimed

to provide an equal amount of woodlot to each settler as well as access to the water, at the time the main transportation corridor. At Grand Pré, long and narrow field shapes extending from the edge of the dykelands towards the top of the uplands are visible today (see Figure 2–9).

2–9 An aerial view of Grand Pré shows long and narrow properties, a remnant of the seigneurial regime.

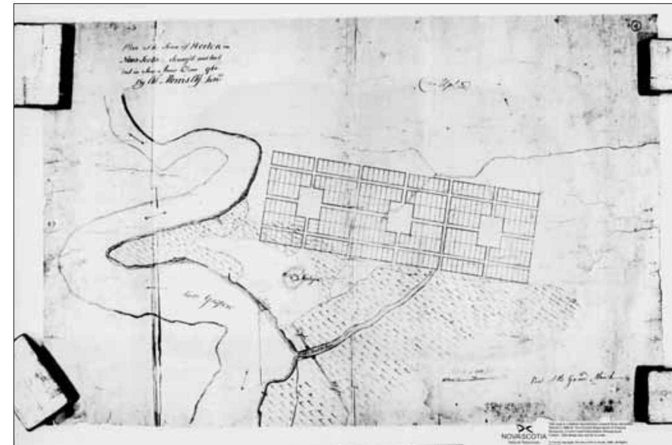
These field patterns are identical to those noted on a map by the British surveyor-general of Nova Scotia, Charles Morris, in 1760 (see Figure 2–10) and on a map from surveyor John Bishop in 1770.

These property lines do not follow the typical British authority's approach of providing equal-sized parcels to new settlers, however there are no obvious physical conditions or obstacles that account for the different approach. In fact, a close examination of these maps highlights field divisions along the Gaspereau River similar to those along the dykeland and reveals the presence of a communal space, all key attributes of the seigneurial regime's spatial organization. This leads historians to suggest that these field patterns are the vestiges of the seigneurial regime that was introduced when the settlement was created in the 1680s. This evidence is included in its entirety in the nominated property's boundaries.



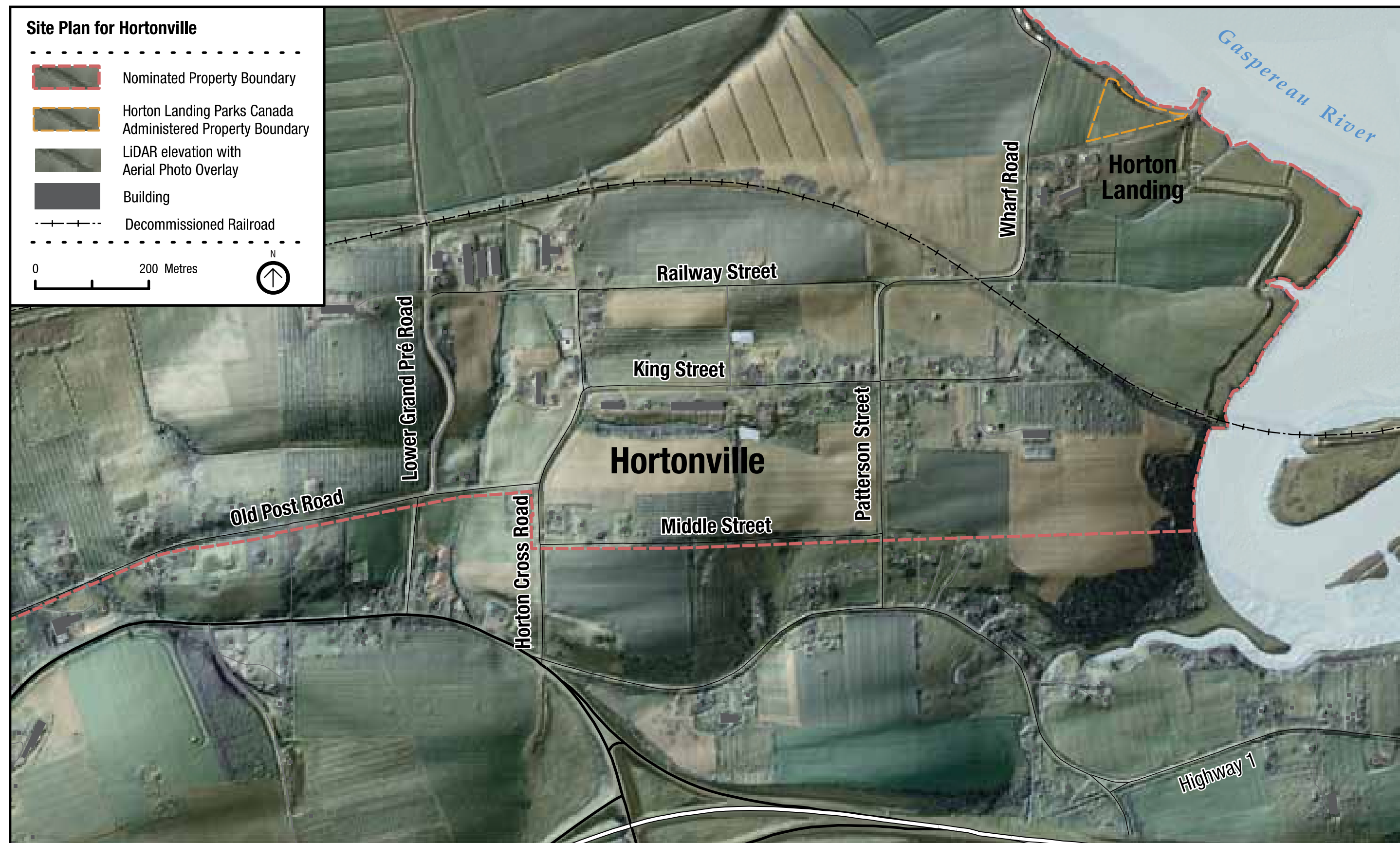
2–10 This 1760 map of Grand Pré shows field patterns identical to those seen today. (Note: north is at the bottom of this map.)

The British town grid in Hortonville (see Figure 2–11) is evidence of the British authorities' plans for settling the New England Planters after the Deportation of the Acadians.



2–11 The plans for the Planter town of Horton followed the typical British settlement grid pattern.

The arrival of the New England Planters, commemorated by a Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada monument at Horton Landing next to the Deportation Cross, marks the beginning of their presence and that of their descendants in the area. The roads and field patterns are intact evidence of the British town plot, a rectilinear grid designed in 1760 and typical of British North American settlement patterns. The Hortonville town grid remains visible, and about half of the original roads are still used today. Middle Street runs east–west at the top of both the grid and the hill. Today, only two-thirds of the street is accessible by vehicle, while the remaining one-third is a footpath that connects with Patterson Street. King Street and Railway Street also run east–west in the grid, Railway Street being the most northerly of the three east–west roads. Patterson Street is currently the most easterly street in the grid and runs north–south. Horton Cross Road is the most westerly north–south road in the grid. About one-third of this road is not rectilinear like the others in the grid system, but curves following the natural shape of the land. Wharf Road, a dirt road running north–south, leads to Horton Landing. See Map 4: *Site Plan for Hortonville*.



Map 4

Both the French and the British settlement patterns are reminders of the two colonial powers that struggled to take control of *Acadie*. The two patterns contrast with the dispersed low-density vernacular adaptation that the settlers used for successfully working on the dykelands. Tangible evidence of that rivalry is commemorated by a Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada's cairn. Located on the corner of Grand Pré Road and Old Post Road, the cairn commemorates the Franco-British imperial rivalry that led to the 1747 attack by French and Aboriginal allies on the British troops stationed at Grand Pré. That event influenced the British authorities' decision to deport the Acadian population in 1755.

Roads

Several historic roads lie within the nominated property. Old Post Road is one of the most important and historically significant roads in the area, connecting the communities from east to west. It dates back to Acadian and New England Planter times and is the southernmost boundary of the nominated property. Today, the road has been graded and paved, but not widened, retaining its original feel as a rural road. Grand Pré Road is the only public road that runs north–south through the dykeland, connecting North Grand Pré with Grand Pré. A portion of this road may date back as far as the 17th century, but most of it is from the late 19th century. Over time, it has been widened, graded and paved.

Smaller, private roads were built on top of dykes, and may date back as far as the late 17th century. Most of these roads are the responsibility of the Grand Pré Marsh Body. Lower Grand Pré Road is a historic dirt road that begins at Old Post Road and descends to the dykeland, gently curving across to Long Island and the community of North Grand Pré. It has been widened and graded in places. The Old French Road (also referred to in part as Shore Road) dates back to the 1680s and runs parallel to the dykelands (see Figure 2–12).

2–12 The Old French Road (as seen today) dates back to the 1680s and runs east–west along the dykelands.

It is traditionally associated with the road travelled by the Acadians on their way to Horton Landing and the ships that deported them. The road has been widened and graded over the years. The western boundary of the upland portion of the nominated area follows the middle of Miner Lane. Miner Lane runs north–south and leads down to the dykeland. All these roads are intricately linked to the agricultural use of the nominated property.

The railway line, formerly operated by the Dominion Atlantic Railway, was an important transportation corridor and element of the history of the area. It brought tourists to discover Grand Pré and allowed farmers to export their goods throughout North America and the British Empire. It runs east–west just south of the dykeland boundary. Although trains have not travelled on the railway line since 2008, the tracks are still present.

Archaeological heritage

The nominated property includes a number of known archaeological sites. It also contains areas that may contain archaeological resources according to historical evidence and predictive modelling. While archaeological evidence confirms that humans were present here

for thousands of years before the Acadians arrived, the key attribute relates to the archaeological heritage from the 1680s onwards.
On the dykeland, on which no homes have ever been built, archaeological sites consist essentially of sub-surface remains of dykes, *aboiteaux*, and roads. Due to the anaerobic nature of the dykelands soils, any discovered organic material would be in good condition. On the settled uplands, numerous sites have been found through surveys and by accidental discoveries (see Figure 2–13). These include structural features from the Acadian period, the New England Planter period, and the later 19th century. Archival evidence suggests the presence of important structures, burial grounds, and other features dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. Additional research is required to confirm their presence.

2–13 Archaeologists document and excavate an *aboiteau* discovered in 2006.

Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada has been the location of most of the archaeological research in the area (see Figure 2–14).

2–14 Archaeological research at Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada.

Since the 1960s, archaeologists have studied depressions in the ground and later identified them as Acadian-period buildings. Two are located on the triangular piece of property that houses the Blacksmith Shop. Other archaeological evidence has been uncovered at the historic site, mostly adjacent to the Memorial Church and near the Herbin Cross. Most of the artifacts discovered on this property are either on display in the visitor centre or housed in the Parks Canada facility in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

Memorials of the Acadian Symbolic Landscape

Creating the memorial park and erecting the memorials have physically transformed the landscape of Grand Pré into an Acadian symbolic landscape. These memorials are concentrated at the Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada and at Horton Landing.

Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada

The Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada lies along Grand Pré Road where the road meets the railway. It hosts key memorials associated with the Acadians, such as the commemorative garden, the Memorial Church (*église-souvenir*) (see Figure 2–15), the Herbin Cross, the Longfellow monument, and the Statue of Evangeline.

2–15 The Memorial Church at Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada is revered by Acadians worldwide.

The visitor centre, at the entrance to the historic site on Grand Pré Road, offers exhibit areas, an audio-visual theatre, a gift shop, a multi-purpose room, storage space, and washrooms. Between mid-May and mid-October, this is where visitors to the site are welcomed, oriented, and informed about their visit and the history of Grand Pré.

The commemorative gardens were designed by Canadian architect Percy Erskine Nobbs, by commission from the Dominion Atlantic Railway in 1918. His design links the different key memorials, displays the symbols of Acadian identity, provides a contemplative setting to reflect on the events surrounding the Deportation of the Acadians, and stands in marked contrast to the agricultural setting surrounding the historic site (see Figure 2–16).

2–16 The commemorative gardens give visitors a quiet place to reflect on the Acadian story.

The Memorial Church is a place revered by the Acadians and their Louisiana cousins, the Cadiens (Cajuns). It has become a destination for an untold number of personal and group pilgrimages and is considered sacred, even though it has never been consecrated by the Roman Catholic Church. The cornerstone was, however, blessed upon completion of the church. Built of fieldstone, the church was finished in 1922, and resembles a Norman French church (see Figure 2–17). It symbolizes the trauma and dislocation associated with the

Deportation of the Acadians, as well as the perseverance and hope with which later generations of Acadians were able to surmount their challenges and hardships. The Memorial Church is believed to be near the location of the 18th-century Acadian church of Saint-Charles-des-Mines. It has iconic status as a symbol of Acadian history in general and of Grand Pré in particular.

2–17 The Memorial Church, here seen in 1935, was erected in 1922 in the commemorative gardens designed by Percy Nobbs.

The Herbin Cross represents one of the earliest attempts to mark, formally and artistically, the prior presence of the Acadians on the ground at Grand Pré (see Figure 2–18). It was erected in 1909 at the direction of John Frederic Herbin, an Acadian descendant and the founder of the historic site, to mark the place where old coffins were uncovered during the 19th century. Constructed from fieldstones collected on location and presumed to be from Acadian houses, it accurately indicates where the Acadian cemetery was located from the 1680s to 1755. A plaque honouring Herbin was added to the cross in the 1930s.

2–18 The Herbin Cross was the first memorial erected at Grand-Pré and marks the location of the historic Acadian cemetery.

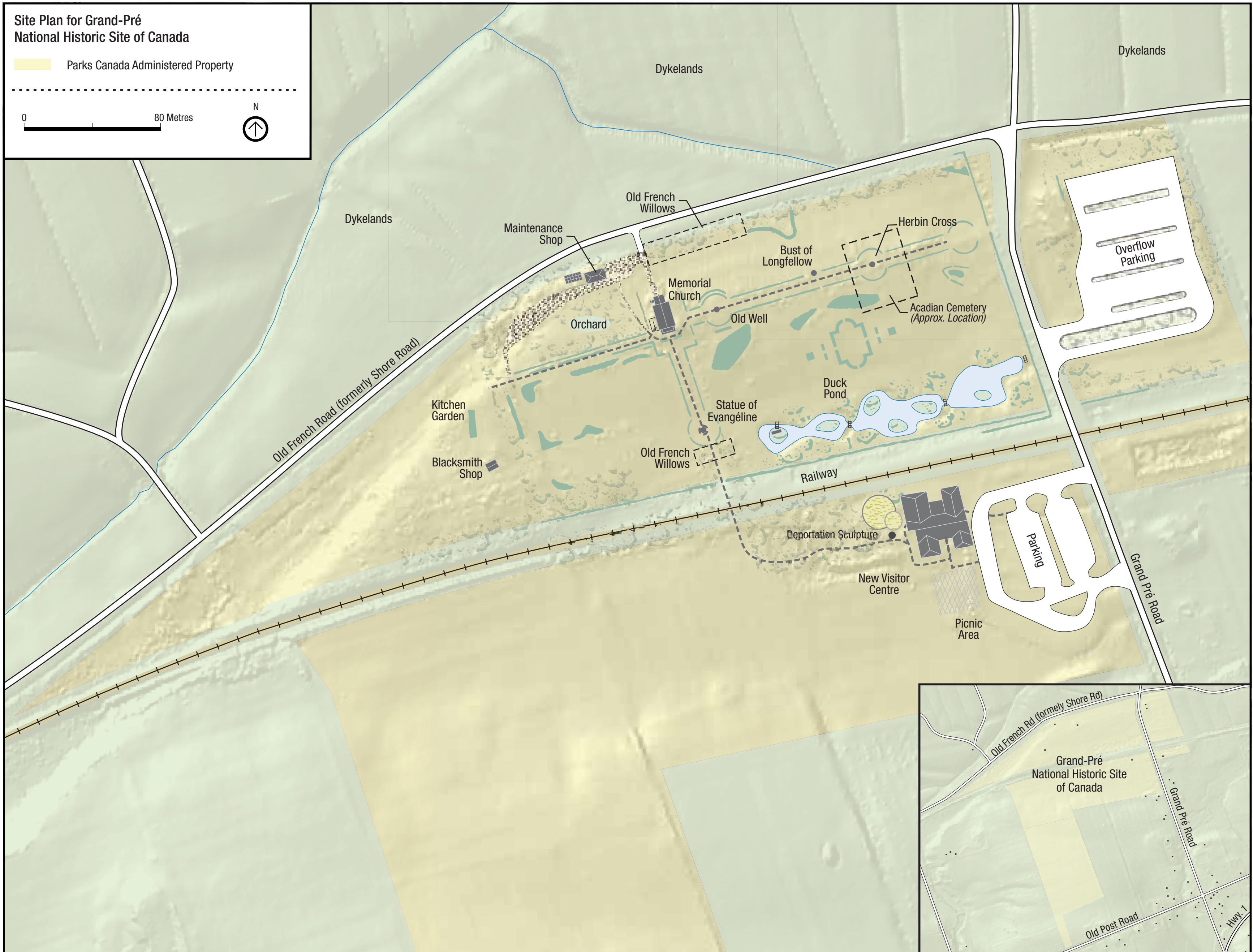
The Longfellow monument is a plaster bust of American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, author of the poem *Evangeline, A tale of Acadie* that brought worldwide attention to Grand Pré and the plight of the Acadians following their Deportation (see Figure 2–19). The monument was erected in the park in 1955 by the Province of Nova Scotia, on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the Deportation of the Acadians. It symbolizes the impact that Longfellow's poem, retelling the forced migration of the Acadians, had on readers around the world and on the collective memory of the Acadian people. It also acknowledges how the success of that literary creation brought untold numbers of tourists to Grand Pré.

2–19 The bust of Longfellow commemorates the attention the author brought to the Acadian story.

The poem's main character, the fictional Evangeline, acquired symbolic status with Acadians and non-Acadians. The character represents hope, the strength of a people's character in adversity, and the trauma of losing one's homeland, all essential aspects of the Acadian experience. That symbolic status was confirmed with the erection of a bronze statue of Evangeline commissioned by the Dominion Atlantic Railway and executed by Montreal sculptor Henri Hébert in 1920 (see Figure 2–20). The Statue of Evangeline, especially with the Memorial Church as its backdrop, has become an iconic symbol of the Acadian history of Nova Scotia in general and of the tragedy of the Acadian Deportation from Grand Pré in particular.

2–20 Longfellow's *Evangeline* popularized the story of the Acadian people around the world.

The Statue of Evangeline, as well as the other attributes of the national historic site, are depicted in Map 5: *Site Plan for Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada*.



Map 5

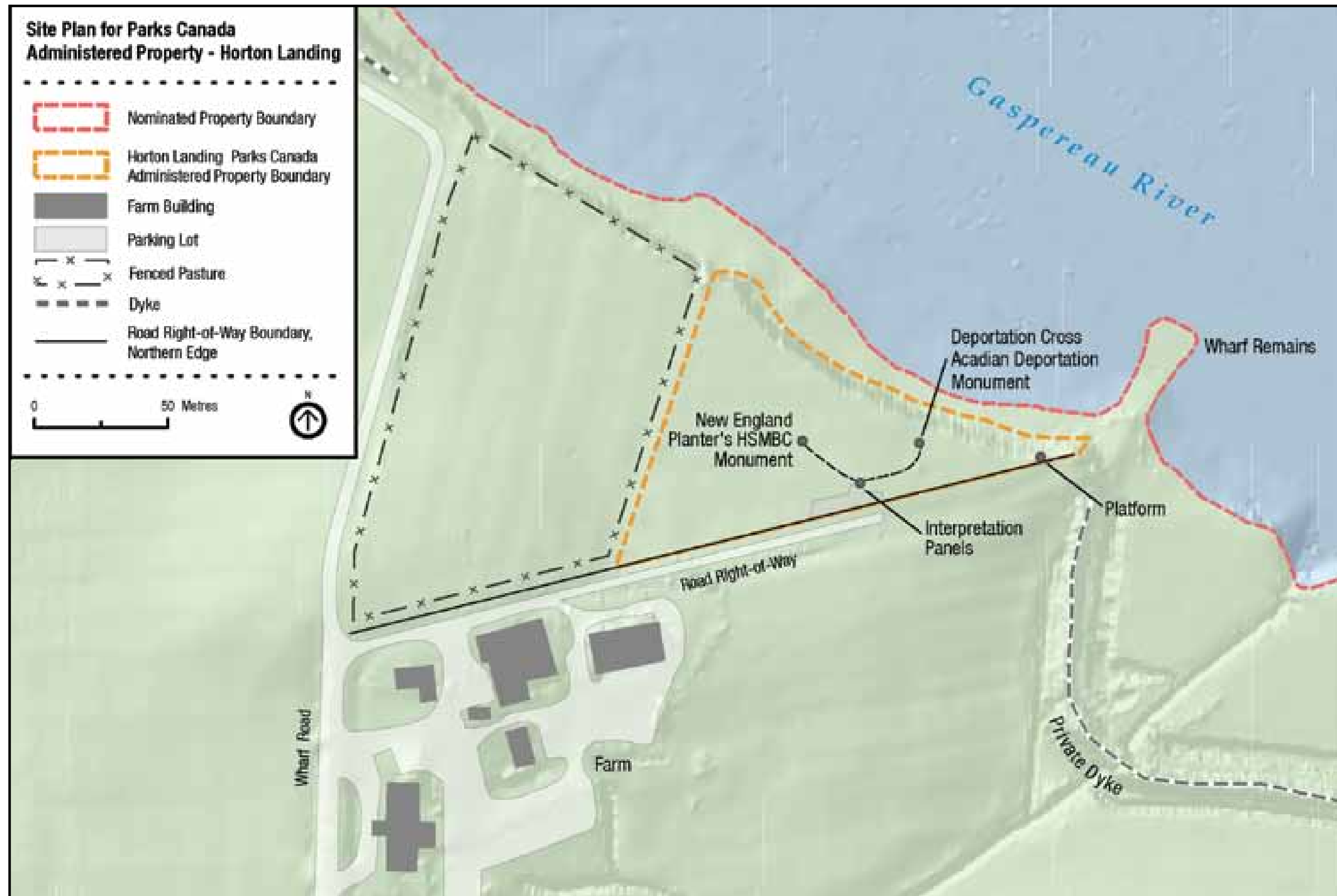
Horton Landing

Horton Landing lies at the end of Wharf Road where the land meets the mouth of the Gaspereau River. It is a small triangular piece of land, marking the spot where Acadians were boarded onto small boats to begin their forced migration in 1755 (see map 6, Site Plan for Parks Canada Administered Property – Horton Landing). An iron cross, known as the Deportation Cross, symbolically marks the place of the beginning of the forced migration and honours the sufferings of the Acadian people (See Figure 2–21).

2–21 The Deportation Cross at Horton Landing marks the spot from which the Acadians were boarded onto boats in 1755. Cape Blomidon lies in the background, on the left.

Originally erected by the Acadian community in 1924 next to a nearby creek and the railway, the Deportation Cross was moved to Horton Landing in 2005 as new information confirmed the exact location of the event. It displays a plaque that reads,

The dry bed of the creek which is in sight, a few paces in the marsh is the spot where the VICTIMS OF THE EXPULSION OF THE ACADIANS OF 1755 were embarked on the small boats to be rowed over to the transports lying at anchor in Minas Basin.



Map 6

2.a.iii. Intangible attributes

As an agricultural landscape, the main intangible attribute, resulting in the tangible attributes described earlier, is the community-based approach to maintaining the dykeland, including its drainage and roads. Since creeks are maintained as the main drainage outlets, the drainage of individual fields is directed towards those creeks. The result is the characteristic field pattern of a patchwork of shapes and sizes. As a symbolic landscape, the main intangible attribute of the nominated property is the Acadian community's continuing understanding and use of the landscape as a *lieu de mémoire*.

These intangible attributes illustrate the integral relationship between the agricultural and symbolic dimensions of the landscape.

Community-based Management of the Dykeland

The first Acadian builders of the dykes adopted a collaborative approach to managing the dykeland. Today, the dykeland continues to be managed the same way. The Grand Pré Marsh Body is an association of dykeland owners who together, under legislation, are responsible for managing the designated agricultural dykeland. Its membership stands at about 30 owners who use and manage thousands of hectares of dykeland. Many of the current members are descendants of the New England Planters. Their families have been farming the land for close to eight generations, which is extremely rare in North America. Newer members include Dutch farmers who settled in Canada after the Second World War. The centuries-old knowledge of the principles of working the land, of dyke building, and of drainage maintenance is shared among members and within families. It is a thriving organization that ensures collaboration and respect for the land.

2–22 Today farmers work the fields with the help of modern farm equipment.

The ongoing agricultural use of the dykeland, the maintenance of the drainage and dykes, and the incredible productivity of the land are the result of that knowledge and of its nurturing through the Grand Pré Marsh Body (see Figure 2–22). The dykeland area included in the nominated property is managed under the jurisdiction of the Grand Pré Marsh Body.

Lieu de mémoire for the Acadians

Grand Pré is a place where Acadians commemorate their collective experiences and celebrate their identity, a *lieu de mémoire*.

As a *lieu de mémoire*, the symbolic landscape of Grand Pré shows how the Acadians are associated with this area beyond the tangible memorials. This is particularly evident in the many ways Acadians use the commemorative spaces, in particular at the national historic site and at Horton Landing. These uses include annual "Acadian days," annual events commemorating the Deportation and the Acadian National Day, and other cultural and social events. Acadians organize events and take an active role in managing the national historic site. It is also evident in the references to the Memorial Church and to other symbols of Grand Pré in literary and artistic works.

2–23 In 2008, the organizing committee of the Acadian Games gathered 1500 young Acadian athletes at Grand-Pré to learn about their history and celebrate their pride in *Acadie*.

Numerous events at Grand Pré have brought together Acadians from around the world in the past century. These gatherings have united Acadians and allowed them to celebrate and express their collective memory (see Figure 2–23).

Notable events include the bicentenary of the Deportation of the Acadians in 1955 and the World Acadian Congress in 2004, an event organized and held in a different region of the Acadian diaspora every five years.

These intangible associations are evidence of the ongoing evolution of the landscape. They also demonstrate the ability of the Acadian community to continually transform this *lieu de mémoire* to reflect its values and its renaissance.

The Evolution of an Agricultural and Symbolic Landscape

Since the 1680s, when a small group of Acadian settlers first arrived in the area and called the vast wetlands *la grand pré*, the human history of Grand Pré has been linked to its natural setting and the exceptional fertility of this land by the sea.

The earliest settlers were isolated. They were a long way from home and were mostly ignored by the various French and British authorities who administered the area. The settlers developed close relations with the local Mi'kmaq, the indigenous people of Nova Scotia – not just at Grand Pré but elsewhere in *Acadie* – as they came to grips with the natural setting and began to claim fertile land from the sea by building dykes. All of these factors contributed to their developing a new and distinct identity. Though French by birth, over the course of the second half of the 17th century they came to see themselves as belonging to *l'Acadie*, as being *Acadiens* and *Acadiennes*.

During the roughly 70 years before their forcible removal in 1755, the Acadian community of Grand Pré introduced an environmental management approach that had been applied elsewhere in *Acadie*. Acadians took European practices, developed for wetlands and saltpans, and adapted them to the much different environment in *Acadie*.

Faced with the highest recorded tides in the world (see Figure 2–24), the Acadians at Grand Pré worked for three generations to transform over 1300 hectares of tidal marsh into farmland. The farmland was then – and remains today – some of the finest farmland in North America.

In 1760, five years after the Acadians were first deported from Grand Pré and dispersed throughout the world, a contingent of New England Planters was settled at Grand Pré to take over the lands. Then, as now, the transformed marsh was the primary focus for the area's inhabitants. Like the Acadians before them, the New England Planters in the Grand Pré area developed their own strong connections to the land and their rural way of life. The Grand Pré dykeland remains highly fertile today, and the most important features of the original dyked area remain in place.

Then, beginning in the late 19th century and continuing until today, Grand Pré developed as the most important *lieu de mémoire* of the Acadian people. Memorials and commemorative gardens were created adjacent to the transformed marsh to mark the ancient Acadian settlement, commemorate the removal of the people in 1755, and celebrate the vitality of the Acadian community. This last transformation completed the symbolic reclamation by the Acadians of an agricultural land from which they had been forcibly removed.

Before the Arrival of the Acadians: The Highest Tides in the World, a Fertile Environment, and the Mi'kmaq

The Highest Tides in the World

Following the retreat of the glaciers after the last Ice Age about 14 000 years ago, sea levels around the planet rose. Rivers draining from the newly deglaciated land began to wash away sediment. In Eastern Canada, these sediments came to line the bottom of the Bay of Fundy. At this time, the Minas Basin was a shallow freshwater or brackish lake, and Georges and Browns Banks at the entrance to the Bay of Fundy were dry land. As sea levels continued to rise, and Georges Bank became submerged, more sea water entered the Bay. By 4000 years ago, the tidal range in the Minas Basin was only about 1 to 1.5 metres (3.2–4.9 feet), but this range has steadily increased over time to an average of 12 metres (39 feet) in the Minas Basin, 11.61 metres (38 feet) at Grand Pré and a maximum in excess of 16 metres (52.5 feet) – the highest recorded tides in the world.

The greatest ranges and the greatest extent of an intertidal zone occur today in the Minas Basin. As part of the tidal cycle – two high tides and two low tides daily–100 billion tonnes of sea water flow in and out of the Minas Basin twice each day. That is more water than the combined daily flow of all the world's rivers.

2–24 As a result of the large tidal range, extensive mudflats at Grand Pré are visible at low tide.

A Natural Fertility

By any measure, the Bay of Fundy is an extraordinary, complex and highly productive ecosystem. All coastal waters and estuaries tend to be biologically rich because they are adjacent to land that provides a steady supply of nutrients, are generally shallow so that light and nutrients are available to support plant growth, and provide a diverse array of habitats for different species. In the Bay of Fundy, these natural attributes are enhanced by the dramatic tides. Tides create major upwelling areas at the mouth of the Bay in which cold, nutrient-rich water is brought to the surface where light is available to support growth of phytoplankton. This is the foundation for a highly productive food chain that sustains vast numbers of animals from plankton to whales. This is also one of the major reasons that numerous species of fish, birds and mammals migrate to the Bay of Fundy to feed each year.

At the head of the Bay, in the Minas Basin, the larger tides drive a totally different ecosystem, one in which the waters are cloudy because of silts and clays kept in suspension by the tides. There is little biological production in the water, but at the same time large areas of intertidal zone are exposed where phytoplankton and salt marshes flourish. Sustained both by the constant provision of sediment and by the continuous supply of nutrients brought in on the rising tide, salt marshes are more extensive in the Minas Basin, allowing the marsh to grow as sea level rises. As a result, the Fundy marshes are naturally among the richest in the Northern Hemisphere. Together, the marshes and mudflats provide a major feeding ground that attracts millions of fish and birds.

For much of the 4000 years that the Minas Basin has been tidal, salt marshes have been present, building up continuously to keep pace with sea level rise. This vertical increase results from the trapping of sediments, together with absorbed nutrients, by salt marsh plants as the tide rises twice each day. Thus a Fundy salt marsh represents thousands of years of biological production: the plant roots, sediments and nutrients have been stored in the marsh over a geological timespan, producing an accumulation of fertile soil. With the coming of the Acadians, and the dyking of some of these marshes, that fertility became available for agriculture. Indeed, topsoil is on average four and a half metres deep. Although the low permeability of the sediment makes it difficult for salt to be washed out of the soil, farmers were still able to grow shallow-rooted crops. Prior to the Acadian settlement, human use of the Bay of Fundy was mainly through the capture of animal life – shellfish, fish, birds and mammals.

In the period just before the first Acadians came to settle at Grand Pré, the lower-lying parts of what is today the Grand Pré dykelands were covered twice a day by sea water. The higher areas were covered less frequently, just during extreme high tides. When the tide fell, it revealed an extensive salt marsh, consisting of over 1000 hectares of marsh grasses and tidal drainage creeks. This luxuriant marsh was home to a wide range of marine and estuarine life.

The First People, the Mi'kmaq

For thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans in northeastern North America, the *Mi'kmaq*, the indigenous people of Nova Scotia, lived, hunted, and fished throughout parts of the maritime provinces and Gaspé peninsula in Québec, in a region that came to be known collectively as Mi'kma'ki. The particular district in which the shores of the Minas Basin and Grand Pré are located was called *Sipekni'katik*, the name by which today's Mi'kmaq still know it.

Their presence in the broader landscape is confirmed from traditional, archaeological, and ethnographic sources. The archaeological discovery in 2009 of a 4000-year-old stone gouge at Horton Landing provides the earliest date of use of the area by the ancestors of the Mi'kmaq. The Minas Basin figures prominently in the history, legends, and spirituality of the Mi'kmaq, especially Cape Blomidon, which has been for centuries the dominant feature on the landscape in the overall Grand Pré area. This is the setting for the stories of Glooscap – the most important Mi'kmaq hero – including Glooscap and the Whale, Glooscap's battle with the Beaver, and Glooscap and Lazy Rabbit. These stories and more confirm the importance of the Minas Basin and the lands surrounding it for the Mi'kmaq.

Archaeological and ethnographic evidence shows that the Mi'kmaq had settlements in the area, particularly on nearby Oak

Island (see Map 2 for location), at Melanson along the Gaspereau River, and at Horton Landing, confirming their presence in the area over several thousand years. Among the many important Mi'kmaq sites in the Grand Pré area is a burial ground on Oak Island. The Minas Basin falls within range of a regional trading network that brought chert mineral, a stone similar to flint and used to make tools, and traded stones and products from the sea.

The Mi'kmaq typically harvested a wide range of resources in estuarine environments like the one that existed at Grand Pré: waterfowl, fish, shellfish, sea mammals, and medicinal plants. It is almost certain that the Mi'kmaq took the resources they needed from the area on a seasonal basis, such as when certain fish species were abundant in adjacent waters and when the huge flocks of migratory birds came to the area to rest and fatten up.

The Acadians and the Creation of the Dykeland 1680–1755

When the first Europeans arrived in the 17th century to the area that is now Nova Scotia, they found willing trading partners in the Mi'kmaq, who had developed sophisticated trading networks over the millennia. During the succeeding centuries, European settlements gradually encroached on Mi'kmaq territory, especially the rich coastline, and intense competition for the region's resources ensued. Early on, though, the French authorities and the Mi'kmaq forged positive relationships that led to alliances. One such alliance resulted from the historic baptism of Grand Chief Henri Membertou in 1610, the first Aboriginal person to be baptized in what would later become Canada. There are no known treaties between the French and the Mi'kmaq.

When the Acadians began transforming the marsh at Grand Pré, the Mi'kmaq did not prevent them from altering and ultimately removing a vast wetland from the regional resource base. This attests to the harmonious relationship that generally existed between the two peoples, a relationship that was rare in colonial era North America. Acadian settlers maintained positive relations with the Mi'kmaq throughout the late 17th and early 18th centuries, which were years of political uncertainty. As the French and British imperial powers fought for control of Nova Scotia, the settlers were left to build their own alliances and trade networks. The physical transformation of the landscape could only have taken place with the acceptance of the Mi'kmaq, since the latter greatly outnumbered the Acadians in that area in the late 17th century. An analysis of the Acadian parish records between 1707 and 1748 reveals a high number of mixed heritage individuals at Grand Pré. Of the many different Acadian communities before 1755, Grand Pré was the one with the highest percentage of mixed heritage families. There are also frequent documentary references to the Mi'kmaq being at or near Grand Pré, in what the Acadians called the district of Les Mines.

The French in Acadie

The Acadians are a people born in North America. Their identity is the result of the transformation of their individual European values as they came into contact with a new environment and new people. Their story begins with the French settlement of North America.

In 1604, the French made their first attempt to establish a permanent settlement in North America, at Ile Sainte Croix in the Bay of Fundy. They were quickly demoralized and threatened by the rigours of winter in this climate. In 1605, they tried again, better prepared and better located at Port Royal in today's southwestern Nova Scotia. That settlement succeeded, signalling the foundation of a territory called *Acadie* which the French claimed included roughly the lands between the 40th and 60th parallels along the Atlantic Ocean. This would cover today's Canadian provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, plus eastern Québec and parts of three American states in New England.

From Port Royal, the French began their expansion throughout *Acadie* and New France by founding Québec (1608), Beaubassin (early 1670s), and Grand Pré–Les Mines (1682). The settlers came from the French regions of Poitou, Saintonge, and Aunis to an unknown land with the promise of a better life.

The transition from French to Acadian came gradually as a result of environmental, social, and political influences. The settlers found themselves in a wholly unfamiliar environment and having to adapt

to a new climate, wildlife, and vegetation. Socially, they were shaped by their contact with the Mi'kmaq, the indigenous people of Nova Scotia. Through the mutual trust and relative harmony that the two peoples established, the French were able to settle peacefully and learn the ways of the land to survive and thrive. The high number of mixed marriages confirms the good relations and strengthened the bond between the two peoples. Politically, since *Acadie* was strategically important for the imperial powers and changed hands frequently between the British and the French, the settlers were often left to fend for themselves. Consequently, they took matters of justice, administration, and community life into their own hands. These three environmental, social and political influences greatly affected the settlers' sense of independence, initiative, and ownership of the land. By the mid-17th century, these characteristics were distinctive enough to have French officials take note and refer to the French settlers as Acadians. As for the British, they referred to them as "French Neutrals," after the 1730s, as a result of their steadfast resolve to remain neutral in the conflicts between France and Britain.

A Disputed Territory

While the French claimed *Acadie* as their own, the British were competing with them for territorial claims over similar areas. Located strategically between New England to the south and New France to the west, *Acadie* from the early 1600s onward was often a battleground for control of key settlements and military positions. There were numerous violent incidents and, occasionally, outright wars. The struggles were sometimes between French and Anglo-Americans, sometimes among rival groups of French colonists, sometimes between French and British forces, and sometimes between the Mi'kmaq and British or Anglo-American forces. All skirmishes, battles, and raids during the 17th and 18th centuries occurred in the broader context of European conflicts resulting from the race to colonize new worlds, dominate lucrative trading routes, and expand empires in Europe and abroad.

The conflicts resulted in the colony of *Acadie* changing hands frequently. It was under French authority six times and British authority (which, after 1621, sometimes referred to the land as Nova Scotia) four times over 155 years until the French lost Canada in 1763. During that era, Acadians were actively establishing their communities along the Bay of Fundy, the Atlantic Coast, Ile Royale (now Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia), and Ile Saint-Jean (now the province of Prince Edward Island).

The Minas Basin area was not spared the negative effects of the conflicts. In both 1696 and 1704, expeditions from New England, led by Benjamin Church, came to different parts of *Acadie*. In the latter expedition, the attackers devastated the community at Grand Pré. They burned houses, carried off prisoners, and broke the dykes to let in sea water, because they knew that the enclosed dykeland was crucial to the Acadians' agricultural output. A contemporary account says that the soldiers dug "down the dams [dykes], and let the tide in, to destroy all their corn, and everything that was good." Once the force left, the Acadians returned to the area, rebuilt their houses and repaired their dykes to begin anew.

This incident took place during the War of the Spanish Succession, a European conflict that had many repercussions in North American colonies. When the war ended with the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, one of the terms of the peace agreement was to have a major impact on the Acadians and their settlements. The clause in question saw France transfer sovereignty over *Acadie*/Nova Scotia to Great Britain. The British presence in Nova Scotia was small at the time, with few British settlers and small garrisons only at Annapolis Royal and Canso. Most of the territory either remained under the control of the Mi'kmaq or was home to growing Acadian villages. Nonetheless, beginning in 1713 and increasingly in the years that followed, British officials regarded Acadians as a people owing obedience to their monarch, with all the obligations that this entailed. The question of the Acadians' loyalty was one that would not be settled – to the satisfaction of the British officials – between 1713 and 1755. In fact, this question played a major role in the sequence of events that led to the forcible removal of Acadians from Grand Pré and elsewhere beginning in 1755.

Despite these conflicts and transfers of power, the settlers managed to expand the colony and grow roots in *Acadie*.

Settling Grand Pré

When the French settlers came to Les Mines (Grand Pré) from Port Royal in the 1680s, they occupied lands that were initially part of the *seigneurie* of Alexandre LeBorgne de Bélisle who was the *seigneur* of Port Royal. As was the custom in New France, the settlers were granted lands shaped as long strips that extended away from the nearest water course. This seigneurial pattern, common to New France and somewhat to *Acadie*, allowed each settler to have access to the water, to varying degrees of land quality, and to woodlots. It was the task of the settler to clear the land for farming. The *seigneur* would collect rent and build a mill for the community.

For Grand Pré, little is known about the strength of the relationship between the *seigneur* and his settlers, or about the first years of settlement. LeBorgne de Bélisle had tried to reinstate the authority of the *seigneur* after years of nominal British authority (1654–1670), but he seems to have failed. Even so, it is most likely that the settlers adopted the typical seigneurial land pattern, although no maps or description have survived to confirm that. From the archival evidence and landscape analysis described earlier in section 2.a., historians and archaeologists believe that the settlers of Les Mines did in effect implement a *seigneurie*, and that tangible and visible evidence of that landscape form exists today.

While the first settlers may have adopted the *seigneurie*, their settlement pattern evolved in response to the creation of the dykeland. They created farmland by transforming marshland rather than by clearing woodland. In order for the community to be close to their work area without settling on the newly created land, they built their homes alongside the marsh. The Acadians erected their houses, barns, mills, and other buildings on the adjacent upland and created a system of roads and footpaths to link them with other Acadian villages.

Over time, they cleared land from the uplands to make way for the buildings, roads, and paths, as well as to create some farmland and allow access to the woodlots. From these lots they extracted the building material for their houses, barns, *aboiteaux*, and dykes. From the 1680s onwards, three generations of Acadians gradually enclosed and converted the marsh (*la grand pré*). The resulting agricultural abundance brought prosperity to the local community and allowed it, along with other similar Acadian communities, to enjoy a remarkable population growth.

The Acadians Create Farmland from the Marsh

The Acadians' focus and ability to transform marshes is distinctive in colonial North America. They were the only pioneer settlers in that era to farm so extensively below sea level.

In 1670, the new French governor of *Acadie* observed the settlements close to Port Royal and wrote, "On these dykes they raise with so little labour large crops of hay, grain and flax, and feed such large herds of fine cattle that an easy means of subsistence is afforded, causing them altogether to neglect the rich upland." This comment, which ignores the back-breaking work that went into creating the dykelands, could well have applied to Grand Pré a decade later. In Grand Pré, the great fertility of the dyked marsh was an important key to the region's success.

By the 1680s, Acadians already had half a century's experience of transforming land in *Acadie*. The first recorded evidence of dykelands comes from the Port Royal area at the site of the first successful permanent French settlement in North America. While the origin of land transformation in *Acadie* is not recorded, there are two possible sources of the Acadians' knowledge: one individual and one collective. It seems that these sources may have been at work simultaneously.

In 1636, Isaac de Razilly, governor of *Acadie*, enlisted five *sauniers* from western France for the purpose of "dyking the marsh" (*faire des marais*) at Port Royal, which may be interpreted as either creating saltpans or dyking for agricultural purposes. Their presence in the colony is confirmed in the roll call of their ship the *Saint Jehan*, a list where they were specifically identified along with dozens of other settlers from different parts of France, but mainly from the coastal region of Aunis and Saintonge. These *sauniers* were keepers of the centuries-old expertise of building dykes and draining lands in western France. Dykelands were indeed created in Port Royal as confirmed by the 1670 observation by the French governor at the time. Historians,

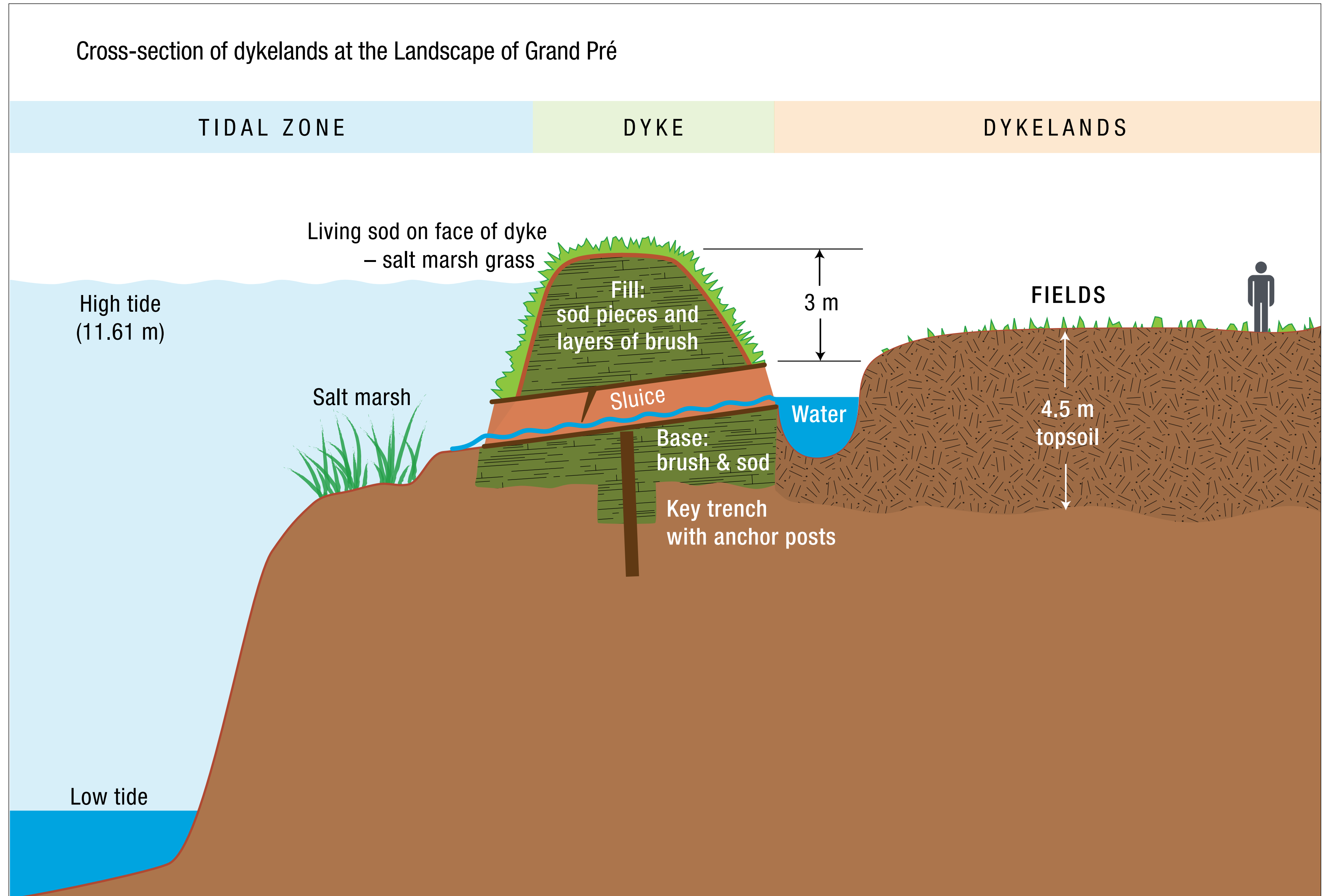
however, have lost track of these *sauniers*, and their impact is difficult to assess. While there is no indication that salt collection per se was ever attempted in *Acadie*, it is reasonable to believe that these *sauniers* would have had a role in carrying knowledge acquired in Europe and adapting it to the environmental conditions of *Acadie*.

The other possible origin, one noted at the turn of the 20th century by historian William Francis Ganong and more recently by historians Yves Cormier, John Johnston, and Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc, is a collective knowledge of dyke building that the French settlers likely brought with them to the new world. The majority of these settlers came from western France, where marshy areas had been transformed and reclaimed over centuries to create much-needed land. In particular, they came from Poitou, Aunis, and Saintonge, areas along the Atlantic coast with large expanses of marsh. These areas were the home of peoples that had mastered the skills of dyking, land drainage, and salt extraction since the Roman period. These regions were also the target of intensive land transformation as early as the 11th century under the direction of religious and political authorities. By the late 16th century, salt water had again flooded many of those large tracts of transformed lands, largely as a result of the dyking and drainage works having sustained great damage from the religious wars that swept across Europe in that century.

However, the knowledge of dyking and drainage was not lost. Many dyking systems still remained, particularly in Poitou, Aunis, and Saintonge, and local populations made constant efforts to maintain them for agricultural use and to protect their settlements. Some of the settlers who came to *Acadie* at the beginning of the 17th century certainly carried this knowledge with them. Its application in *Acadie* is an extension of that tradition from Europe to North America and reflects a simple dyking and drainage experience that predates the large engineering works of the 17th century. The use of more advanced technology to drain the dykes was never necessary. The extreme tides at Grand Pré make mechanized draining unnecessary, because the low tide is well below the level of the dykelands (see Figure 2–25).

At the turn of the 17th century, western France was again the focus of large projects, this time under the engineering leadership and the financial backing of the Dutch. Invited by the royal and seigneurial authorities, the Dutch undertook significant work in France to reclaim those lands through a more systematic and improved system of drainage that involved canals, channels, gates, and landscape design. The Dutch made a significant contribution to land reclamation in those regions, primarily by introducing these engineering designs works. They had a lasting impact on the design and technology of dyking and drainage.

The technology that the Acadians used to transform wetlands and marshes could not have been simpler: special spades, pitchforks, axes, and hollowed-out tree trunks. Much more important than the tools was the ingenuity of the people to read the natural drainage systems of the marshes and then to build dykes that channelled the flow of those creeks in only one direction, discharging into the sea. One element of the Acadians' success was to use sod cut from the original wetlands in their earthen dykes. In a process similar to peat extraction in western Europe, special spades were used to cut bricks of sod in specific sizes and shapes that were then assembled to form the dyke. The grasses and rushes in the sod could withstand being covered by salt water for many hours each day. They also had deep and densely matted root systems that anchored them when the sea water swirled over them, protecting the exposed sides of the dykes at high tide. Cutting the sod and assembling the dykes were a communal undertaking because of the skills, efficiency and speed the work required.



2–25 Illustration of a cross-section of the dykelands at Grand Pré, including the tidal range, salt marsh, *aboiteau* system and fields. Note the *aboiteau* refers to the section of the dyke surrounding the sluice; this cannot be accurately represented in a cross-section, but can be seen in 2–26. Additionally, the tidal zone at Grand Pré includes mudflats that extend for hundreds of metres. In order to illustrate the mean tidal range, this diagram considerably reduces the mudflats.

Along with using the strong, dense plant growth in the sod, the Acadians took advantage of the natural drainage patterns of the marsh by building *aboiteaux* in the small creek beds that drained the marshes at low tide. The *aboiteau*, a term used in *Acadie*, refers to the section of the dyke surrounding the sluice, as well as to the completed dyking project. The sluices each had a *clapet* (clapper), a wooden valve that allowed fresh water out of the sluice and into the river or bay at low tide but did not allow sea water back in during high tide (see Figure 2–26).

DRAINAGE SYSTEM USING AN ABOITEAU

Legend: 1 – Aboiteau. This term designates not only the sluice but also the part of the dike which crosses the stream. Here, the dike is reinforced by fir trees laid transversally with alternate layers of clay soil. 2 – Sluice. 3 – Levee or dike. 4 – Road or path along the top of the dike. 5 – Dike facing made of sod. 6 – Earthen core (made of soil dug from the marshlands). 7 – *Contre-ceinture*. 8 – Drainage ditch. 9 – Stream. 10 – Road leading into the marshlands. 11 – Salt marsh. 12 – Dwellings on higher terrain. 13 – River or bay.

2–26 An *aboiteau* opens to allow fresh water to drain from the marsh and, under the effect of the rising tide, closes to prevent sea water from entering. Details of construction are illustrated above.

Once a section of marsh was enclosed, the fresh water from rain and snow melting gradually washed the salt out of the top layers of the soil. The desalination process generally took two to three years for each plot of dyked land. The *aboiteau* approach used by the Acadians was imaginative and ingenious, an adaptation of techniques used in Europe and elsewhere for centuries before French colonists arrived in North America.

Impressed by the fertility and productivity of the initial transformed lands in *Acadie*, the Acadians would go on, until 1755, transforming many marshes of different sizes along tidal rivers and various coves and bays around the Bay of Fundy, in many parts of today's Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Acadians came to be known as *défricheurs d'eau* (water pioneers), to distinguish them from other colonists in North America who created farmland by clearing the forest. The Acadians did clear some upland areas for their villages, orchards, gardens, and livestock, but the dominant element in their agriculture, highly unusual in North America, was to claim the tidal marshes by enclosures.

Though the Acadians used marsh enclosures to give themselves agricultural land in many different areas, the high tidal range at Grand Pré presented exceptional challenges. Along the Annapolis Basin, where the first Acadian dykes were erected, the tidal range varies from 4 metres to a maximum of 8.5 metres. Within the Minas Basin at Grand Pré, the mean tidal range is 11.61 metres, and the highest tides in the basin reach more than 16 metres. To the Acadian dyke builders, countering this churning volume of sea water required toughness and ingenuity. They had to devise a building technique that would not wash away as the dyke was being built, dexterity to assemble the different parts of the dyke effectively, collective coordination to transform large tracts of lands quickly, and great labour to build large dykes that could withstand the pressure of such formidable amounts of water (see Figure 2–27).

Yet dyking the marshlands was also a major agricultural opportunity. Between 1680 and 1755, the Acadians took on the project of excluding the sea and claiming the highly fertile tidal marshes. They appear to have begun with the easiest part of the marsh, in the centre not far from the upland shore. Once they had successfully enclosed that area, they moved on to a series of other dyking projects. Biologist

2–27 View of a 19th century *aboiteau*, illustrating the elaborate structure required to withstand the pressure of the tides and waves.

and dykeland historian Sherman Bleakney offers a likely construction sequence of the dykeland enclosures in his book *Sods, Soils and Spades* (2004) (see Figure 2–28). Construction began near the centre and progressed in large sections around that first enclosure in 12 sequences that follow the three main creeks and their drainage watershed. Gradually, the Acadian farm families of Grand Pré turned nearly all of *la grand pré* into agricultural land.

2–28 Biologist and historian Sherman Bleakney's map of the Grand Pré dykelands indicates the sequence of dyking.

They left only a portion at the western limit of the wetland undyked, a project that the descendants of the New England Planters would successfully complete after their arrival in 1760. At Grand Pré, the Acadians eventually reclaimed over 1000 hectares, a massive artifact that still exists as an active testament to the Acadian accomplishment. It was also the largest single dyking project that Acadians, or any settlers of European descent, would complete anywhere in North America before 1755.

As the Acadians transformed *la grand pré*, the adjacent village grew steadily. Within a few decades, the Grand Pré area had become the most populous of all the Acadian settlements. Acadians began to export their surplus production, especially grain, to both French and British settlements. The exports were shipped in vessels that anchored in the Minas Basin and loaded and unloaded their cargoes at the landing point (now known as Horton Landing) on the Gaspereau River. Eighteenth-century British and French commentators acknowledged the unrivalled fertility of the dykelands created by the Acadians. For example, Grand Pré was renowned for its grain production.

It is noteworthy that the dyking projects at Grand Pré, and in most other Acadian settlements in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, were community projects (see Figure 2–29). Archival evidence

and first-hand accounts from travellers and authorities, in the 18th and 19th centuries, indicate that communities had rules to guide collective work for the benefit of all. The main rule governing collective management was that each landowner contributed to the building and maintenance of dykes and *aboiteaux* by providing either labour or financial compensation.

2–29 Artist Lewis Parker's painting, *Acadians building dykes and* aboiteaux *at Grand Pré*, shows the collaborative building of dykes at Grand Pré.

It is clear also that collaboration did not mean collective ownership. Evidence suggests once the collective transformation had been completed, the land was allotted through a lottery system. In order to consolidate fields or acquire better land, landowners would then trade or buy fields. An entrepreneurial spirit characterized the farming activities of the settlers. Local farm families made the decision to transform the vast wetlands of Grand Pré, and their children and grandchildren continued the work. Most other Acadian land transformations followed the same process. The only exceptions were the original dykes initiated at Port Royal in the 1630s and the uncompleted project in the Tantramar marshes of the Chignecto area that straddled the border between New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in the 1750s. These two projects were initiated and controlled by a leader or hierarchical figure. By contrast, the more common community approach helped to shape the Acadian identity and strengthen the ties of their close-knit society over the long term.

Continuing French and British Conflict

As France and Great Britain continued to jockey for imperial domination of North America throughout the 18th century, most Acadians, including those at Grand Pré, wanted to stay out of the conflict and be accepted as neutrals. Unfortunately, neither French nor British officials were willing to accept that position. Both powers wanted the Acadians, or the "French neutrals" as the British and Anglo-Americans labelled them, to support their cause and, ideally, to fight for it. The French saw the Acadians as natural allies, since they were Roman Catholics, mostly of French descent, and spoke French. The British, on the other hand, viewed the Acadians as subjects of their king since the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. A few Acadians were pro-French and a few others worked with the British, but most were caught in the middle between competing imperial aspirations. Following the Treaty of Utrecht, the Acadians were expected to take an oath of allegiance to the King of Great Britain. This they at first refused to do, in an attempt to maintain their identity and their neutrality.

In 1729–30, Acadians throughout mainland Nova Scotia agreed to a modified oath proposed by the British governor based at Annapolis Royal. The governor assured the Acadians that they would not be forced to take up arms against the French and the Mi'kmaq, and that they would be allowed to remain neutral. Events in the 1740s and 1750s, however, led later British administrations to revisit the question of Acadian neutrality.

In addition to their concern over the Acadians, the British were also troubled with their relations with the Mi'kmaq. As the British strengthened their position in New England and *Acadie* at the

beginning of the 18th century, they signed treaties with the Aboriginal peoples of those regions, including a treaty signed in Boston in 1725 with the Wabanaki Confederacy intended to ensure the protection of existing British settlements from attack. The Mi'kmaq, who were part of the Confederacy, agreed to the treaty in 1726 after several modifications.

After three decades of peace, Great Britain and France again found themselves in conflict during the War of the Austrian Succession (1744–1748). The main theatre was in Europe, yet Canada saw its share of action. Several incidents at or near Grand Pré had a long-term impact on the Acadian population.

In the summer of 1744, a military expedition from the French stronghold at Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island advanced through the main Acadian communities, including Grand Pré, appealing to the Acadian men to join the campaign. Few answered the call. Acadians wanted to remain neutral, and they had a harvest to bring in. While the overall Acadian response in 1744 disappointed the French, it worried the British, who had hoped to see them actively turn against the French.

The following year, 1745, the French launched an unsuccessful attack on the British base at Annapolis Royal. At around the same time, a large army of provincial soldiers from New England, supported by British warships, captured Louisbourg. In 1746, France outfitted a massive expedition to cross the Atlantic on a mission to regain Louisbourg, to take Annapolis Royal, and to compel the Acadians to commit themselves to the French cause. The expedition ended in disaster because of delays, storms and illnesses.

Both the French and the British strengthened their positions in the Atlantic region in the late 1740s. In the autumn of 1746, in response to earlier French actions in the area, the British sent roughly 500 New England soldiers to establish a post in the village of Grand Pré. The Anglo-American troops took over several houses on the uplands overlooking the reclaimed marsh and settled in for the winter. A few hundred kilometres away in the Chignecto region near the New Brunswick border, a contingent of 250 French soldiers and 50 Maliseet and Mi'kmaq warriors heard reports of the New Englanders' occupation of Grand Pré. Despite being outnumbered two to one and facing the hardships of mid-winter travel, they set out for Grand Pré in January 1747. They were joined or assisted by a small number of Acadians who were sympathetic to the French cause. At the same time, some pro-British Acadians warned the New England soldiers that an attack might be imminent. The New Englanders ignored the warnings, thinking the severe winter conditions made an attack unlikely.

In the early morning hours of 11 February 1747, in the middle of a blinding snowstorm, the French, Maliseet, and Mi'kmaq force caught the New Englanders by surprise. Known to history as the Attack at Grand-Pré, the encounter left as many as 80 New England men dead, including their commander (see Figure 2–30). The bodies of the soldiers were interred in a mass grave, while their commander was buried separately nearby.

The incident was to loom large in the thinking of some British leaders in 1755, when they decided to implement a massive removal of the Acadians.

2–30 The Monument to the Attack at Grand-Pré.

When the War of the Austrian Succession ended in late 1748, the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle returned Louisbourg to the French. Not long after, both France and Britain expanded their military presence in Atlantic Canada. France's major move was to send an expedition of several thousand colonists to re-occupy Louisbourg in 1749. From 1749 to 1751, the French also established a post at the mouth of the Saint John River and two forts in the Chignecto region, at Beauséjour and Gaspareaux. The British, meanwhile, sent a massive expedition to establish Halifax in 1749 as a counterbalance to Louisbourg. Over

the next few years, the British also established several new posts, forts, and settlements beyond Halifax. They included Fort Edward within the Acadian community at Pisiquid, a small fort at Vieux Logis (Horton Landing) near Grand Pré, Fort Lawrence in the Chignecto region (opposite Fort Beauséjour), and a sizeable new town of "foreign Protestants," mostly of German and Swiss origin, at Lunenburg, on Nova Scotia's southeastern shore.

2–31 This 1748 maps shows plans to settle Protestants at Grand Pré, labelled as "No 2" in this map, prior to the Acadian Deportation. The British authorities had planned settlements (shown as grids on this map) in the immediate vicinity of the existing Acadian settlements (illustrated as concentrations of houses here). Note, the large concentration of houses and the church (shown as a square with a cross) at Grand Pré, in the middle of the map, illustrating the importance of the settlement of Grand Pré.

Deportation and New Settlement 1755–1810

Deciding to Deport the Acadians

The Seven Years' War, sometimes called the first "world war," pitted Britain against France and involved allied countries on both sides. While France concentrated on the war in Europe, Britain sent 20 000 troops to North America in a bid to bring down France's colonial empire. The war led to the fall of New France.

As world events crowded in on Acadian and British settlements in Nova Scotia, the British administration, known as the Nova Scotia Council, decided to revisit the question of Acadian neutrality. They did so more forcefully than in the past, when their control over the province had been more nominal than real. Over the next few years a complex series of events unfolded that culminated in what became known as the *Grand Dérangement*, the Deportation of the Acadians. This term refers collectively to many separate forcible removals that took place over seven years beginning in 1755.

In the early summer of 1755, the surveyor-general of Nova Scotia, Charles Morris, prepared a detailed plan for the Nova Scotia Council that outlined how the Acadians might be removed from their lands in Nova Scotia and dispersed elsewhere in other British colonies.

This plan revived a school of thought that dated back to the 1720s when some British officials favoured removing the Acadians from Nova Scotia and replacing them with Protestants, either British or "foreign," who would be loyal to the British crown. The British had also noticed the value in the fertility of the farmlands owned by the Acadians, which were an economic driver in the area. The idea of attracting "foreign Protestants" surfaced periodically for several decades; even before the British brought over German and Swiss Protestants to establish the new town of Lunenburg in the early 1750s, a British plan of 1748 shows where Protestants might be settled in the Grand Pré area. The 1748 plan shows where the New England Planters would later establish their town (see Figure 2–31).

In June 1755, an expedition put together by acting Nova Scotia Governor Charles Lawrence and Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts captured the two French forts in the Chignecto region, Fort Beauséjour and Fort Gaspareaux. When news reached Halifax that 200 to 300 Acadians had taken part in the defence of Beauséjour – compelled to do so by the French commander of the fort – the authorities in Halifax saw this as a sign of Acadians' complicity with the French. The Nova Scotia Council decided that all Acadians in the Chignecto region would be rounded up and deported, even if they or a member of their family had not helped to defend the French fort. About a month later, on 28 July 1755, after meeting twice with the deputies of the Acadian communities on mainland Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Council resolved to remove every Acadian man, woman and child from all of Nova Scotia. The Deportation would begin at Grand Pré and nearby Pisiquid in early September.

While the deportation of the Acadians was about removing a disloyal group, there is no denying that the fertile dykelands at Grand Pré and elsewhere were also extremely important to the British plans for settlement. The acting governor of Nova Scotia, Charles Lawrence, offered the following opinion on 18 October 1755, in a letter to the Lords of Trade in London, England:

> … As soon as the French are gone, I shall use my best endeavours to encourage People from the Continent to settle their lands … and the additional circumstances of the Inhabitants evacuating the Country will, I flatter myself, greatly hasten this event, as it furnishes us with a large Quantity of good Land ready for immediate Cultivation.

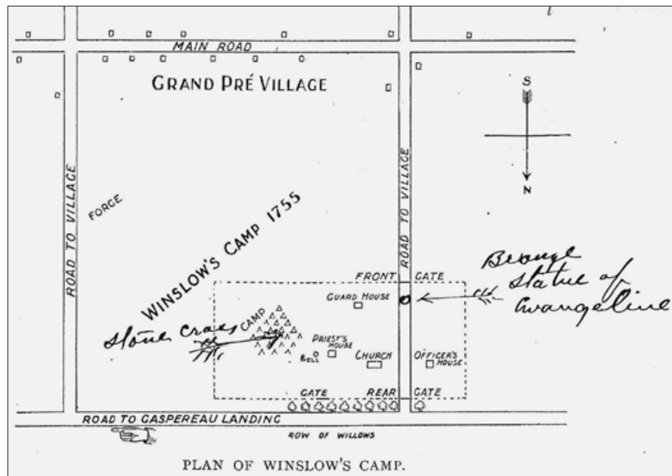
In the end, of the slightly more than 14 000 Acadian men, women and children, three quarters were deported to other parts of North America or to Europe. The rest went into hiding or fled.

The Deportation at Grand Pré

The events at Grand Pré were among the earliest and largest of the Deportation. Most importantly, they were recorded by some of the key British participants. The records provide a detailed historical account of the events and their impact on the Acadians, and also set the context for later depictions of Acadian culture. They also provide later Acadians with a snapshot of a transformative event in their

cultural history. The following information comes from the two most important sources: the journals of Lt-Col. John Winslow and of one of his junior officers Jeremiah Bancroft.

Lt.-Col. John Winslow of Massachusetts was the officer in charge of rounding up and deporting the Acadians from Grand Pré. He arrived on 19 August 1755 with about 300 New England provincial soldiers. He gave no indication of what was to happen, but gave the impression he was there on a routine assignment. His first act was to establish a secure base of operations, because his force was greatly outnumbered by the 2100 Acadian men, women and children living in the Minas Basin area. For his stronghold, Winslow chose the area around the Grand Pré parish church, Saint-Charles-des-Mines. His soldiers erected a palisade around the priest's house, the church, and the cemetery, and his troops pitched their tents within that enclosure (see Figure 2–32). So as not to upset the Acadians unnecessarily, Winslow informed community leaders they should remove the sacred objects from the church before it became a military base. By early August 1755, the parish priests of Saint-Charles-des-Mines, and of neighbouring parishes, had already been arrested and brought to Halifax to await their deportation to Europe.



2–32 Early 20th century depiction of Lt-Col. Winslow's camp at Grand Pré, based on Herbin's assessment of historical evidence and tangible features.

As August 1755 came to a close and September began, the Acadians of Grand Pré and other nearby villages were harvesting crops from the dykeland and cultivated upland areas. This harvest, although the Acadians could not know it, would be their last in Grand Pré.

On 4 September 1755, Lt.-Col. Winslow issued a call for all men and boys aged 10 and older to come to the parish church at three o'clock the next afternoon to hear an important announcement. A similar ploy was used by Capt. Alexander Murray to call Acadian males of the nearby Pisiquid region to come to Fort Edward, on the same day at the same time. In fact, the British had used a similar ruse on 11 August in the Chignecto area to attract and imprison some 400 Acadian men in Fort Beauséjour, renamed Fort Cumberland after its capture, and Fort Lawrence. Winslow and his men had witnessed this just before their departure for Grand Pré.

On 5 September, 418 Acadian males of Grand Pré proceeded to their parish church – now surrounded by a palisade and controlled by armed soldiers – to hear the announcement. Once they were inside, Winslow had French-speaking interpreters tell the assembled men and boys that they and their families were to be deported. Included in the announcement was this statement:

> that your Lands and Tenements, Cattle of all Kinds and Live Stock of all Sorts are Forfeited to the Crown with all of your Effects Saving your money and Household Goods and you your Selves to be removed from this ... Province.

Jeremiah Bancroft, one of Winslow's junior officers, records in his journal that the look on the Acadian faces as they heard the announcement was a mixture of "shame and confusion ... together with anger." He added that the "countenances" of the Acadians were so altered they could not be described.

The removal of the roughly 2100 people who lived at Grand Pré and in the neighbouring villages proceeded neither quickly nor smoothly. Winslow had to cope with a shortage of transport ships and provisions. The men and boys spent more than a month imprisoned within either the church of Saint-Charles-des-Mines or on the transports anchored in the Minas Basin before the rest of the population was forced on board the ships. Winslow described the scene of the

first contingent of young men, marching from the church along the road beside the dykeland to what today is known as Horton Landing (see Figure 2–33).

He wrote,

> [they] went off Praying, Singing, & Crying, being Met by the women & Children all the way…with Great Lamentations upon their knees praying.

2–33 The stained glass at the Memorial Church at Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada depicts the deportation of the Acadians.

On 8 October 1755 the mass embarkation of the men, women, and children to the waiting ships began, with the small boats setting off from Horton Landing. Those who lived at Grand Pré and Gaspereau went first. Winslow recorded that,

> [the inhabitants left] unwillingly, the women in Great Distress Carrying off Their Children in their Arms, Others Carrying their Decrepit Parents in their Carts and all their Goods moving in Great Confusion and appeared a scene of Woe and Distress.

Acadians lived together in large, extended family units. Although Winslow gave orders that families were to be kept together, this often proved impossible in the confusion and because of the small size of the ships. Friends, relatives and neighbours were separated, never to see each other again.

On 19–21 October, the soldiers compelled families from outlying communities to assemble at Grand Pré in preparation for their eventual loading on board transport ships. This group of Acadians numbered about 600, from 98 families. While they waited for the transports to arrive, they lodged in the now-empty Acadian homes near Winslow's camp, along the upland area by the reclaimed marsh. These families were deported to the Anglo-American colonies just before Christmas 1755. This time the departure point was not Horton Landing but another spot nearby.

The Acadian Odyssey

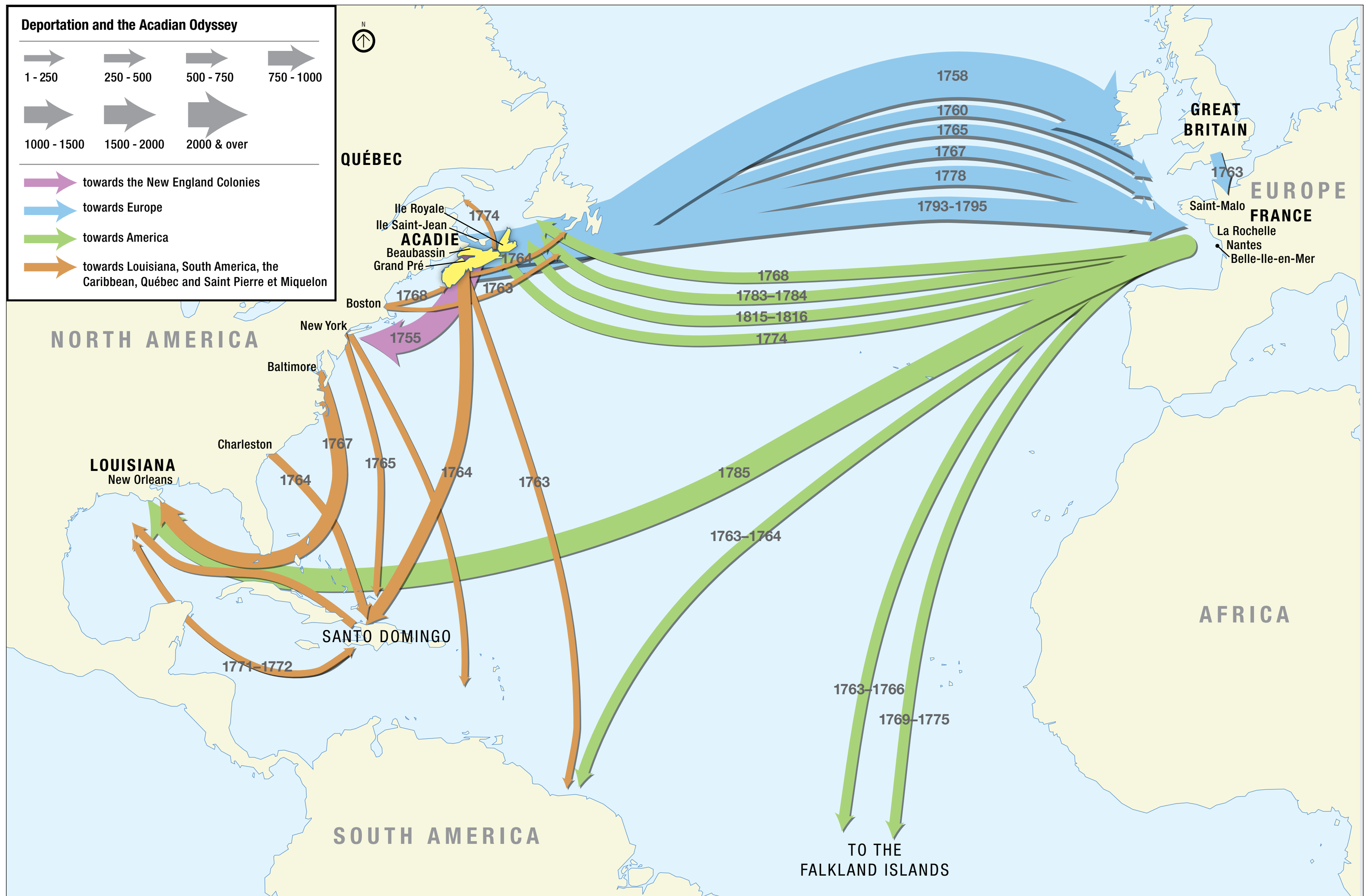
In the coming decades, thousands of Acadians would land at ports around the world, only to depart again in search of a place from which they could one day return to their homeland in *Acadie*. Out of this Odyssey was born the Acadian diaspora.

Between 1755 and 1762, the British authorities organized the gathering of Acadian populations in key locations to board ships and sail in convoys to various destinations (see Figure 2–34). In the last months of the year 1755 alone, 6000 Acadians, or close to half the entire population, had been deported: from the Minas Basin area, including Grand Pré, from the Pisiquid area, from Chignecto and from Port Royal.

In the Minas Basin area that year, a total of 2100 Acadians were removed. This includes the removal, by late October 1755, of over 1500 Acadian children, men, and women – with children by far the largest category – from Grand Pré and nearby villages onto the transport ships. The convoy sailed out of the Minas Basin bound for Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. At the same time, transport ships carrying an estimated 1119 Acadian deportees from the Pisiquid area also sailed south to destinations in the Anglo-American colonies. These ships formed a convoy as they were joined by those carrying the 1100 deportees from the Chignecto area who were destined for the southernmost colonies of the Carolinas and Georgia. In December, some 1664 Acadian men, women, and children from the Port Royal region were also deported from Annapolis Royal to the Anglo-American colonies.

In the years that followed, thousands more would be deported from *Acadie*, mainly to France, following the fall of Louisbourg in 1758. Some 4000 Acadian deportees from île Royale (Cape Breton Island) and île Saint-Jean (Prince Edward Island) were deported directly to France in the fall of 1758, as were more than 200 inhabitants from the Cape Sable area in 1758 and early 1759. In the summer of 1762, another 915 Acadian men, women, and children were deported from Halifax to Boston. The Boston authorities refused to accept them. The ships brought the Acadians back to Nova Scotia, where they were detained as prisoners of war. The movement of the Acadian people is illustrated in Figure 2–34.

These deportees were sent to different locations, with the intent by Governor Charles Lawrence to "divide [the Acadians] among the colonies … as they cannot easily collect themselves together again." Some were sent to the New England colonies, whose authorities were required to provide shelter and food. Many colonies did not wish to take on that burden and did not allow the ships to land, forcing them to continue on to the next port. In many cases, families were separated, children were assimilated into Protestant families, and adults were subject to imprisonment or servitude. In some colonies, the governors were anxious to get rid of the deportees and granted



2–34 Destinations and movements of the deportees during the Acadian Odyssey. Based on an original design by Robert Leblanc.

them passports to travel freely between borders, with the hopes that they would move back to Nova Scotia. Some Acadians, after Virginia refused to welcome them in 1756, were sent as prisoners of war to Britain, where they were distributed among the coastal towns of southern England. These were eventually sent to join thousands of deportees that had made it to France. The return to France did not offer any comfort, however, as there was too little land for them to settle. Many ended up destitute.

After the fall of New France in 1760, the authorities in Nova Scotia did not wish to have the Acadians back, even though the British no longer deemed the French to be a threat. Authorities in other parts of Canada needed settlers and were open to attracting the Acadians. The Governor of Québec, James Murray, was one who pursued that idea. In a 1761 letter to Jonathan Belcher, the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia at the time, Murray wrote that Belcher would be ill advised to allow the Acadians back to the lands they had vacated. He argued that it "… must renew to them in all succeeding Generations the miseries the present one has endured & will perhaps alienate for ever their affections from its Government, however just & equitable it may be." Nova Scotia's need for settlers prevailed, however, and in 1764 the British authorities gave Acadians leave to settle there again, with certain conditions attached to their return: they could not settle on the lands they had once occupied, and they could not concentrate in large numbers. This latter condition was to prevent them from forming a community. Some 1600, or a little more than 10 per cent of the pre-Deportation Acadian population, decided to settle in Nova Scotia and the two neighbouring maritime provinces.

The Acadian regions of present-day Nova Scotia are now hundreds of kilometres away from their former settlements, primarily in the southwest and in Cape Breton. Most of those who survived the Deportation preferred to settle instead in Québec, in France, or in French territory such as Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, Santo Domingo (present-day Haiti), and Guyana. In 1785, some 1584 Acadians made their way from France to Louisiana, then a Spanish colony. They are among the ancestors of today's Cajuns.

The Acadians who had been deported to France came directly from the conquered French colonies of Ile Saint-Jean and Ile Royale in 1758 and, in 1763, from Virginia via England where they had spent seven years in detention. In total, some 3000 deportees arrived in France in the mid-18th century. They were concentrated in the Poitou area and in Belle-Ile-en-Mer in Brittany. Most were unsuccessful in settling, and the French authorities increasingly considered them a burden. In 1785, two-thirds of them departed for Louisiana. Two decades earlier, in 1763, others had arrived in the French island territory of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon near the coast of Newfoundland in the Atlantic Ocean. They were removed by the French in 1767 and brought back in 1768. In 1778, the British took control of the islands and deported the entire population to France. The islands changed hands several more times before the French recovered them in 1816 and Acadians were finally able to return. Both in France and in its overseas territories, the few Acadian families that settled there eventually adapted to mainstream society but retained a sense of their ancestry and their identity through oral tradition and artistic expressions.

Acadians had settled in Louisiana as early as 1764. Some families came from Nova Scotia via Santo Domingo, in 1764–1765, while most of the other families went directly from Maryland and from other Anglo-American colonies, through the Caribbean. They were joined in 1785 by the large group from France that had not succeeded in resettling among the French. Acadians were concentrated principally in southern Louisiana and exerted much influence in politics and in the economy. Until the American Civil War in 1861, Louisiana was a bilingual state where French was actively used in public administration, the courts, and business. Steadily, however, that presence was eroded as mainstream Louisiana society came to view the expression of Cajun (Acadian) culture as inappropriate. Legislation was passed in the early 20th century to integrate Cajuns into mainstream society through the school system. Throughout the 19th century, much as in *Acadie*, the Cajuns preserved their traditions because of relative isolation. They followed in the steps of Acadians in Canada and adopted some symbols, including Notre Dame de L'Assomption as their patron saint. Music, songs, and other artistic expressions maintained the oral tradition of their story and the collective sense of identity.

However, the Cajuns had to wait until the middle of the 20th century to rekindle a severed relationship with their homeland in *Acadie*. Grand Pré was to serve as the location of that return.

The Acadians who ended up in Guyana and the Caribbean were sent there by the French authorities, whose twofold aim was to relieve the burden on the administration in France and to settle the colonies that France had kept after signing the Treaty of Paris in 1763. From France, the Acadians were sent to settle the Falkland Islands, Guyana, and Haiti. Although some families remained where they had landed, over time the majority made their way to Louisiana. There is little awareness today, in Guyana and the Caribbean, of an Acadian identity at a community level.

In Québec, the Acadians settled in every corner of the province starting in the late 1760s. Mostly concentrated along the St. Lawrence River, they progressively settled in other areas where agriculture was predominant. The province of Québec is where the largest Acadian population was living by the end of the 18th century. Because of the similarities in religion, language, and social status with the *Canadiens* (French Canadians, today's *Québecois*), the Acadians easily integrated into mainstream society. The Acadians who lived in the province embraced the struggle for the rights of French speakers that drove politics and social discourse in Québec throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Despite their integration, these communities maintained an awareness of their ancestry and contact with the Acadian communities of eastern Canada. In the late 19th century, delegates from those communities in Québec attended the national Acadian conventions held in New Brunswick. The largest population of Acadian ancestry is still in Québec.

The Arrival of the New England Planters and their Legacy

Having addressed the Acadian threat by deporting most of the Acadians, the British authorities sought to address the Mi'kmaq threat by signing treaties with them throughout the 18th century. Indeed, the Mi'kmaq had been allies of the French and the Acadians. During the Deportation, the Mi'kmaq helped some Acadians escape into the forest and in many instances sheltered them as their own. For the British Crown, these treaties meant peace with the Mi'kmaq and the freedom to settle Nova Scotia with populations whose loyalty was unquestionable.

Once the Acadians were removed from their lands, the British endeavoured to attract settlers from New England. In late 1758 and early 1759, they issued inducements to attract land-hungry settlers from those colonies. The colonists, known collectively as the New England Planters, arrived in 1760 at Grand Pré, an area they knew by reputation to be a highly productive agricultural district (see Figure 2–35). What they found instead was that a large portion of the dykeland was submerged.

2–35 A Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada monument at Horton Landing commemorates the arrival of the New England Planters in 1760.

After the Acadians were forcibly removed from Grand Pré in 1755, no one was left to carry out routine repairs on the dykes. In November 1759, a great storm struck at the peak of the 18.03-year Saros cycle, when tides are unusually high in the Bay of Fundy and Minas Basin. A sea surge broke the dyke walls at Grand Pré in several places alongside the Gaspereau River, and sea water flooded a large portion of the eastern and western sections of the dykeland. Some of the dykes that had protected earlier enclosures were still intact and stopped the water from invading the entire dykeland.

In 1759, the British authorities subdivided Nova Scotia into counties for administrative purposes. The County of Kings covered a large area along the Bay of Fundy, including the Minas Basin. The county was divided into three townships: Cornwallis, Horton, and Falmouth. Grand Pré fell within the jurisdiction of the township of Horton. It had the largest amount of dykeland – over 2000 hectares (5000 acres) – and included 1200 more hectares of cleared upland. These conditions were ideal for an agricultural settlement.

The authorities drew up plans for a town in Horton township based on their typical colonial settlement pattern, a rectilinear town grid with central squares, perched on the highest point of land. For Grand Pré, renamed Horton except for the vast marsh that retained its original French name, the town plot was laid out on the hills adjacent to Horton Landing nearest to the Gaspereau River. The settlers were allocated four types of land: a parcel in the town plot, a parcel of cleared upland, a parcel of dykeland and a woodlot. The New England Planters were directed to settle the town and to relocate existing buildings and erect new ones.

The first order of business for the British authorities was to take possession of the dykelands, redistribute them to the new farmers, and ensure that the farmers acquired the skills they needed to maintain the dykes. The interior sections of the Acadian-created dykeland were still protected by dykes, and the authorities immediately distributed them to individual farmers. The sections that had been flooded with seawater in 1759 posed a greater challenge. New England Planters had no experience with dyke building and dykeland farming practices before they arrived in Grand Pré. The British authorities turned to imprisoned Acadians, some of whom were at nearby Fort Edward, for advice, assistance and labour.

New England Planters were at first not as successful farmers as their predecessors. They knew nothing about drainage on the dykelands, the little need for manure on those lands, the value of ploughing in autumn rather than in spring, and crop rotation, all practices that arose from an understanding of the environmental conditions of an intertidal dykeland. Over time, thanks to the knowledge and techniques they learned from the imprisoned Acadians, the newcomers who settled on the uplands at Horton eventually became master dyke builders themselves.

The British settlement pattern proved inefficient for the farmers. The four types of land they had been allocated were often scattered across the landscape. As a result, many parcels of land were sold or exchanged. Most farmers wanted to live on their best land, not in a town plot on a promontory. The New England Planters quickly understood the efficiency of the Acadian settlement pattern. As they were under no threat from the French or the Mi'kmaq after the fall of the Fortress of Louisbourg in 1758 and Québec in 1759, they abandoned the town plot in favour of the dispersed and linear Acadian settlement pattern along the dykeland. They continued the Acadian relationship between the living space on the uplands, the primary farmland on the dykeland, and the woodlots for building materials. The New England Planters expanded the living space farther upland, erecting churches and community halls, and settled on Long Island as well. By 1817, the Governor of Nova Scotia Lord Dalhousie would note, "There is no town of Horton; it is a scattered settlement of neat common houses, small farmers, but rich in their way of life."

It is noteworthy that the Acadian pattern of local ownership and control over the dykeland would be continued when the New England Planters took over Grand Pré in 1760. In fact, the first legislation relating to dykeland was passed by the government of Nova Scotia as early as 1760. It provided for a group of owners to appoint commissions and a Commissioner of Sewers for each dykeland in Nova Scotia. This recognized that building and effectively maintaining dykelands can only be done collectively and locally (see Figure 2–36). The Commissioner would decide what work was required and arrange for labour and

the raising of all funds to meet costs associated with keeping the dykes in repair. The farmers would share expenses for dyke maintenance. They would also appoint from among themselves individuals to assess the size and value of dykelands, to "police" the dykelands and monitor the condition of the fields, to verify fences and enclosures, and to perform other similar duties of common interest.

As time went by, the New England Planter settlements at Horton and elsewhere put down deep roots. Much of Horton itself would, in the 20th century, see its name revert to what the Acadians had called it: Grand Pré. Wherever they settled, the New England Planters and their descendants exerted an influence on Nova Scotia's culture, politics, landscape, and architecture. The best-known standing buildings in Grand Pré associated with the New England Planters are the Crane house (1767), the Calkin house (1768), and the Covenanter Church, constructed between 1804 and 1811. Nearby Acadia University, in Wolfville, also has a link with the New England Planters, although it dates from a few generations later. A Prime Minister of Canada, Sir Robert Borden (1854–1937), is probably the best-known New England Planter descendant. He was born and raised in the village of Grand Pré.

A Productive Dykeland and the Birth of a Symbol 1806–1907

Expansion of the Dykeland and Agricultural Productivity in Grand Pré

The first expansion of the dykeland occurred in 1806 on the west side, with the building of the "New Dike" or "Wickwire Dyke".

It was built west of the north–south Acadian dyke in an area the Acadians had never dyked, in part because of the challenges of resisting the tidal pressure. This dyke enclosed over a hundred hectares of new farmland and withstood the brunt of storms and tides coming from the west. It did not break until 1869, when the Saxby Gale lashed the coast, bringing a combination of high tides and strong winds. As the Acadian dykes had been left in place after the Wickwire Dyke was built, the main Grand Pré Marsh remained relatively untouched. The Wickwire Dyke was rebuilt in 1871.

The maintenance and expansion of the dykes allowed farmers to maintain a high level of productivity that was admired by experts and visitors. The foremost Nova Scotian expert on agriculture in the early 19th century, John Young, offered an assessment of the Grand Pré dykeland in 1822. At that point, the dykelands had been in New England Planter hands for about 60 years:

> The coast of the Bay of Fundy is unquestionably the garden of Acadia, and accordingly we find that the French planted themselves there on the first occupation of the country. They threw across those dikes and *aboiteaux* by which to shut out the ocean, that they might possess themselves of the rich marshes of Cornwallis and Horton, which prior to our seizure they had cropped for a century without the aid of manuring. … Spots in the Grand Prairies [Grand Pré] of Horton have been under wheat and grass alternately for more than a century past, and have not been replenished during that long period with any sort of manure.

2–36 Repairing the dykes at Grand Pré, circa 1900. The tradition of building and maintaining dykelands collectively began with the Acadians and continued with the New England Planters and successive generations of farmers.

Writing in the early 1880s, another expert, D.L. Boardman, observed,

> [The] Grand Pré Dike [dykeland] is one of the oldest in Kings County and one of the best in the province. The old French had dikes here on the first occupation of the country, and there are now to be seen all over the Grand Pré remains of old dikes within those now doing their duty in keeping back the tide. These have been plowed down and leveled off in places, but it is not a difficult matter to trace them.

The American biologist and writer Margaret W. Morley (1858–1923) was clearly impressed by what the Acadians had first achieved and the New England Planters maintained when she wrote in 1905: "[We] cannot gaze upon the broad meadows before the door of Grand Pré without remembering the hands that first held back the sea."

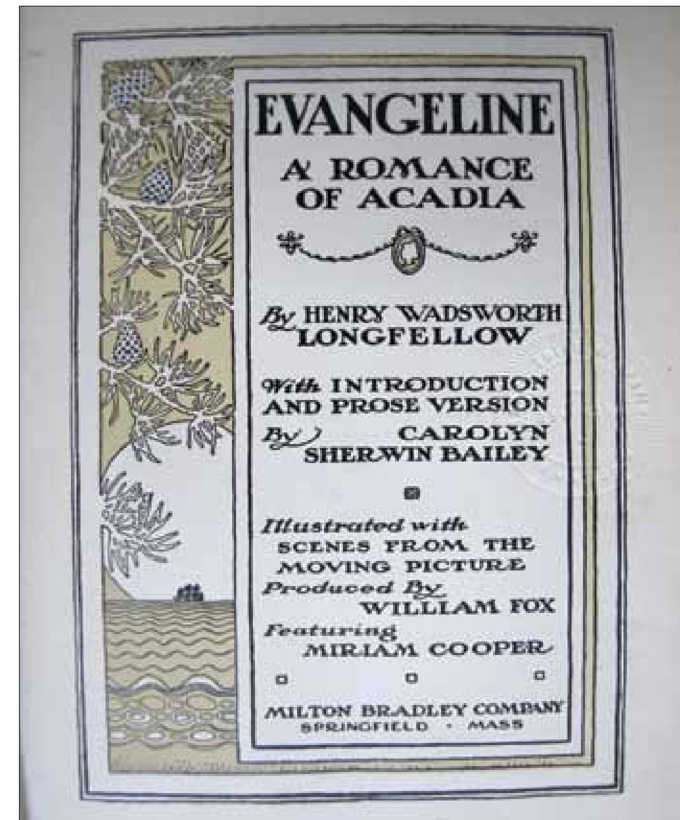
The Deportation of the Acadians scarred the landscape. In 1755, the New England and British troops burned many Acadian houses, barns, churches and other structures as they depopulated the areas. They wanted to make sure that no shelter was left behind for anyone who escaped Deportation. In the overall Minas Basin area, soldiers set fire to about 700 houses, barns, and other buildings.

Those acts of destruction set the stage for the mythological and symbolic aspects of the Deportation. In reality, the village of Grand Pré itself was spared, at least initially. Winslow had his headquarters there, and approximately 600 Acadians were later brought from neighbouring communities and held in the houses for over a month before being sent into exile. Some of the structures at Grand Pré may have been burned after that date. However, sources produced in 1760 describe that at least some – and possibly a good many – of the buildings in Grand Pré were still standing. According to the surveyor-general of Nova Scotia, Charles Morris, roughly 100 houses were still standing at Grand Pré when the New England Planters arrived in the spring of 1760. One of those buildings was apparently the church of Saint-Charles-des-Mines. Regardless of the extent of the destruction, the rupture has been symbolically expressed in oral tradition and the collective memory of the Acadians as they recounted a destruction by fire and the desolation of the land following the removal of the population.

In the early 19th century, certain individuals and organizations began to commemorate the bygone Acadian presence at Grand Pré. Two major forces were at work. One related to the historical, literary and artistic works that linked Grand Pré more than any other pre-1755 Acadian village to the Acadian Deportation (see Bibliography for a list of literary works). The other was the Acadian renaissance that began in the latter half of the 19th century throughout the maritime provinces of Canada. Together, the two forces combined to overlay the agricultural landscape with a symbolic landscape.

Evangeline, A Tale of Acadie

The most influential of the many literary works connected with Grand Pré was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem *Evangeline, A Tale of Acadie*, published in 1847 (see Figure 2–37). The poem tells a love story about two fictional characters, Evangeline and Gabriel, yet it was based on a tale Longfellow had heard of a young couple separated at the time of the Deportation.


EVANGELINE
A ROMANCE OF ACADIA
By HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW
With INTRODUCTION AND PROSE VERSION
By CAROLYN SHERWIN BAILEY
Illustrated with SCENES FROM THE MOVING PICTURE
Produced By WILLIAM FOX
Featuring MIRIAM COOPER
MILTON BRADLEY COMPANY
SPRINGFIELD · MASS

2–37 Longfellow's 1847 epic poem, *Evangeline*, has gone through many translations and editions, including this 1922 version.

The American poet was not the first to write about the upheaval in a literary form, but his characters and plotline became by far the best known and were instrumental in creating Grand Pré as a symbol. Longfellow's description was loosely based on Thomas Chandler Haliburton's *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova-Scotia* (1829), in which the historian described the events at Grand Pré in 1755 by presenting material from the eyewitness account in John Winslow's journal. Grand Pré, a real place with a real history, became the opening scene for a fictional work that for the next century would become the best-known interpretation of the Acadian Deportation.

Over the next 100 years, Longfellow's *Evangeline* went through at least 270 editions and 130 translations. The first foreign-language adaptations were in German and Polish in 1851. French and Danish followed in 1853, Swedish in 1854, Dutch and Italian in 1856, and so on around the globe. Illustrated editions began to appear in 1850, and over the next 150 years dozens of artists offered their visual (and often fanciful) interpretations of Grand Pré and other locales. When motion picture technology was developed, the story of Evangeline and the Acadian Deportation soon turned up in cinemas. Short, one-reel adaptations of Longfellow's tale were produced in 1908 and 1911. In 1913, the first feature-length film ever produced in Canada was a five-reel production of Evangeline that lasted over an hour. American film versions of the *Evangeline* story were released in 1919 and 1929.

Though the Evangeline phenomenon began among non-Acadians, first the Americans and then the British, it was quickly embraced by Acadians and other Francophones (see Figure 2–38). They often came to know the story through the French-language adaptation written by Pamphile Lemay in 1865 and revised in 1870. Lemay's adaptation differed significantly from the original poem by Longfellow, yet the central characters were the same, the opening setting remained Grand Pré, and the narrative arc was essentially the same.

Longfellow generated a high public awareness of the Acadians' story and of its link with Grand Pré. He was followed by many others who physically transformed the landscape so that it symbolically reflected the attachment of the Acadians to their homeland, commemorated the Deportation, and displayed symbols of their values.

2–38 Here in New Brunswick, in a community welcoming the *Congrès mondial Acadien* in 2009, figures of Evangeline and Gabriel are displayed.

In 1869, at the newly opened Grand Pré railway station, the Windsor and Annapolis Railway Company hung a sign that read: "Welcome to the Land of Evangeline and Gabriel." The next year, the first organized tour by rail of the "Land of Evangeline" brought Americans from Boston. Acadians were not involved.

In 1895, an article by historian Henri L. d'Entremont appeared in the principal Acadian newspaper *L'Évangéline*, in which the author argued that Acadians needed to honour their ancestors at the emerging tourist site at Grand Pré. This article, along with political speeches and other public appeals, raised Grand Pré as a place of significance in the Acadian consciousness. A little over a decade later, Acadians took their first concrete steps to commemorate Grand Pré, following the renaissance of their culture and identity.

The Acadian Renaissance

The Acadian Renaissance was a period of renewed cultural awareness during the 19th century in Canada's maritime provinces. Its effect then influenced the identity of Acadian communities elsewhere in the world. While each community had its own challenges

to overcome in maintaining its identity, for the Acadians who came back to Nova Scotia after 1764 the challenge of returning to their homeland, and making a new home, was enormous. Unable to return to their original lands, Acadians became tenants until, in time, they acquired their own lands.

Throughout the ordeal of their wandering, Acadians held onto their culture. It survived in part because they were relatively excluded from the predominant society, and in part because they maintained strong oral traditions. Folklore was passed on between generations and within each small community. Following the resettlement of some Acadians in Nova Scotia, communities began rebuilding on the foundations of their French language, their Catholic faith, and their family ties. These settlements were small and dispersed, as required by the conditions set for their resettlement. This added to the difficulty of maintaining a sense of community, especially within the larger context of a new and very different social and political structure. The strong foundation of Acadian culture allowed the elite to build a sense of national Acadian identity.

The story of the Acadian forced removal had shocked British society at the time, but this sentiment provided no tangible opportunities for rebuilding Acadian society or acknowledging the wrongs they had suffered. In fact, those opportunities only materialized in the middle of the 19th century with the publication of the poem *Evangeline, A Tale of Acadie*. While entirely fictional, its success allowed the real story of the Deportation to be heard and communicated to the world.

The publication of *Evangeline* was a seminal moment in the emergence of the Acadian Renaissance. First, it was written in English, which brought it to many readers in North American and British society. Second, it emerged in elite circles of New England, a region with which Nova Scotia had close ties, both because of the history of the New England Planters and because of the many Acadian deportees who found themselves in New England after the Deportation. That connection provided the conditions for Evangeline to become equally popular among English speakers and Acadians. *Evangeline* was, even as fiction, the first public acknowledgement of the events that had surrounded the forced removal of the Acadians almost 100 years earlier.

The story of Evangeline quickly resonated with the Acadian religious and social elite, who saw an opportunity to enhance their own efforts to build a strong community and claim rights for it. The characters in the poem and their story embodied the values that the Acadian elite recognized in their own people, and they inspired a gradual period of political, economic, and social empowerment. Evangeline, the main character, and her devotion to her lover Gabriel throughout her ordeal became a symbol of the power of faith in a greater purpose. Her belief echoed the message from the Catholic Church to the Acadians and illustrated the perseverance of the people in the face of adversity. These characteristics, and the values of sacrifice, obedience, and resignation to life's ordeals, were consistent with the church's teachings, thus making *Evangeline* acceptable. The Catholic Church authorized the reading and even the teaching of *Evangeline* as a means to raise the cultural awareness, sense of identity, and history of the Acadians. As the educated elite became immersed in the story and the emotions surrounding the Deportation, they now had a medium for conveying that story and a set of symbols to supplement the oral tradition with which they had grown up. Most importantly, *Evangeline* provided a tangible setting as a focus for the Acadians' cultural reawakening. Grand Pré was introduced to the collective memory of the Acadian people. It became a point of reference, so much so that the expression "the children of Grand Pré" was used in political discourse of the time to refer to the Acadians. It embodied the lost homeland, the symbol of what Acadians aimed to return to, and the evidence of the wrongs they had suffered.

The Catholic Church's acceptance and promotion of this poem was important at a time when it played a key role in Acadian society and provided the tools for its renaissance. The Church was a driver in building the Acadian national identity, providing, amongst other things, access to education and their language and symbols. In 1854, the first Acadian school of higher learning, the Collège Saint-Thomas, was founded in Memramcook, New Brunswick. In 1864, it became the Collège Saint-Joseph under the authority of the Congregation of the Holy Cross and obtained degree-granting status, later becoming a

university. During the 1880s, the Acadians of the Maritimes began to hold "national conventions," following the participation of Acadians in French Canadian political gatherings in Québec, to defend the interests of their community. Their focus was to achieve cultural objectives by promoting the use of the French language in education and in the political, economic, and religious spheres. The Church played an instrumental role, along with the educated elite, in leading these conventions. The first convention was held in 1881 at the Collège Saint-Joseph in Memramcook where most of the young Acadian elite who took part in these patriotic events had been educated. The delegates to that convention created the *Société nationale L'Assomption*, whose mandate was to promote and defend the interests of the Acadian people in Atlantic Canada. The second convention took place in Miscouche, Prince Edward Island, in 1884. At that convention, the Acadians adopted a national feast day (15 August), a patron saint (Notre Dame de l'Assomption), a flag (the French tricolour with a gold star in one corner, see Figure 2–39), an anthem (Ave Maris Stella) and a motto (L'union fait la force – unity makes strength).

2–39 The Acadian flag is a common sight around Grand Pré and in present-day Acadian communities.

By the end of the decade, Acadians had three French weekly newspapers, the oldest one being the *Moniteur Acadien*, founded in 1867 in Shédiac, New Brunswick, and members of their elite were elected to the highest offices of the province and the country. By the beginning of the 20th century, Acadian folklore had acquired status along with these symbols to entrench the foundations of Acadian identity. All these manifestations of social empowerment became sources of pride and self awareness.

The Acadian Renaissance was a period of social and political transformation of the Acadian community of Canada in the late 19th century. Through various collective acts, Acadians acquired a sense of unity, in spite of the original British intention to keep them dispersed. Embracing the wave of nationalistic consciousness that moved through Europe and North America in the 19th century, the Acadians elected to reclaim their presence in eastern Canada through incremental actions that gave them the tools for political, economic, and cultural empowerment. An important step was to choose symbols of identity such as a flag, a patron saint, and an anthem, and to tell a national story, all adopted in part or in whole by Acadian communities of the diaspora. Grand Pré grew to become the location to anchor that identity, those symbols, and the collective memory.

Acadian Anthem

French	English
Ave Maris Stella	Ave Maris Stella
Dei Mater Alma	Dei Mater Alma
Atque Semper Virgo	Atque Semper Virgo
Felix Coeli Porta	Felix Coeli Porta
Felix Coeli Porta	Felix Coeli Porta
Acadie ma patrie	Acadia my homeland
À ton nom je me lie	To your name I draw myself
Ma vie, ma foi sont à toi	My life, my faith belong to you
Tu me protégeras	You will protect me
Tu me protégeras	You will protect me
Acadie ma patrie	Acadia my homeland
Ma terre et mon défi	My land and my challenge
De près, de loin tu me tiens	From near, from far you hold onto me
Mon cœur est acadien	My heart is Acadian
Mon cœur est acadien	My heart is Acadian
Acadie ma patrie	Acadia my homeland
Ton histoire je la vis	I live your history
La fierté je te la dois	I owe you my pride
En l'Avenir je crois	I believe in your future
En l'Avenir je crois	I believe in your future
Ave Maris Stella	Ave Maris Stella
Dei Mater Alma	Dei Mater Alma
Atque Semper Virgo	Atque Semper Virgo
Felix Coeli Porta	Felix Coeli Porta
Felix Coeli Porta	Felix Coeli Porta

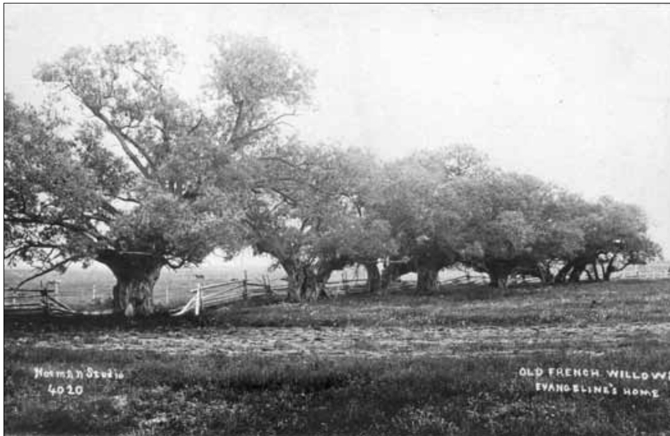
A Century of Tourism, Agriculture, and *Lieu de Mémoire* 1907–present

The Physical Transformation of a Landscape into a Symbol

Individuals such as John Frederic Herbin and Father André-D. Cormier, private companies such as the Dominion Atlantic Railway and the *Société nationale l'Assomption*, and the Acadian community transformed Grand Pré into a historic site and a major tourist attraction in North America. The commemorative monuments, buildings and garden they created were a symbolic reclaiming of the Grand Pré area by the descendants of the people who were forcibly removed in 1755. As a result, for people of Acadian descent, Grand Pré became the most cherished of all their historical sites.

In 1907, John Frederic Herbin, a jeweller and poet – of Acadian descent – in nearby Wolfville, purchased the land at Grand Pré that contained the most prominent ruins that were said to date back to before 1755. Herbin had published a book of local history in 1898 that had echoed the opinions of historian Henri L. d'Entremont, who had argued for the need to honour Acadian ancestors at Grand Pré. The oral tradition of the time held that the ruins on Herbin's new property were vestiges of the old Acadian parish church, Saint-Charles-des-Mines, the same church in which Acadian males were imprisoned on 5 September 1755. Not far from those ruins was a well, also said to date back to the Acadian period (see Figure 2–40). A little farther on was the old Acadian burial ground or cemetery. Nearby were a number of old willow trees, which in the oral tradition were said to have been silent witnesses to the events of 1755 (see Figure 2–41).

2–40 Visitors to Grand Pré, in 1923, at the well near the willow trees.



2–41 This photo of the willow trees at Grand Pré dates from the late 19th century.

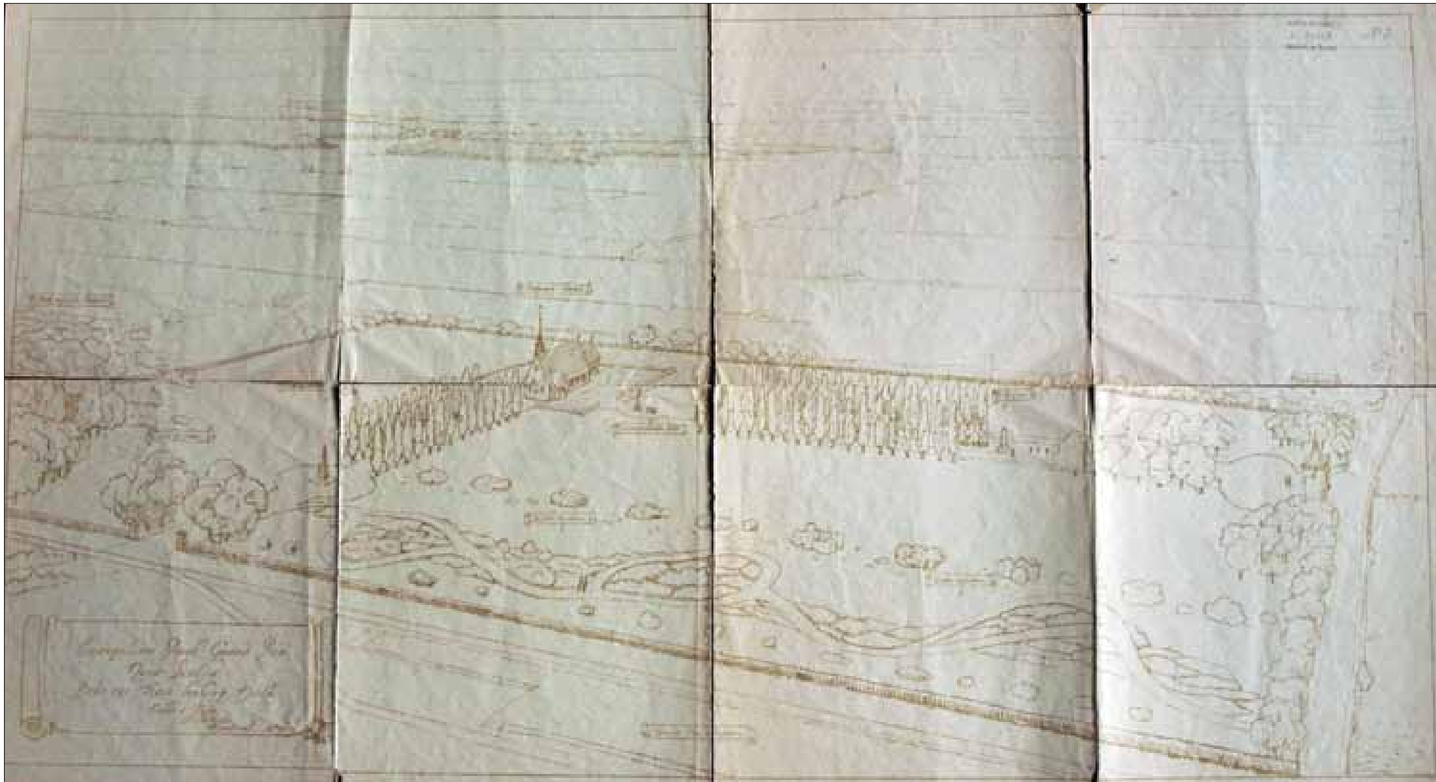
The purchase was a public acknowledgement that this land was significant to the Acadians. Herbin's vision that "...The Grand Pré memorial field is the outstanding historical landmark most closely associated with the occupation of the Acadians of this country for seventy years" convinced others to protect and commemorate the site.

In 1908, the Government of Nova Scotia passed an Act to recognize and incorporate the trustees of the "Grand-Pré Historic Grounds." This was the first attempt by any government at any level to safeguard the site at Grand Pré.

In 1917, Herbin and the other trustees sold the property with the ruins on it to the Dominion Atlantic Railway (DAR) on the condition that the church site be deeded to the Acadian people so they could erect a memorial to their ancestors. The following statement by Herbin explains his vision:

> The proposed restoration of the Memorial Park will consist of buildings to be erected by the Acadians upon the site of the St. Charles' Church. A statue of Evangeline on a stone base with bronze tablets will be erected on the space between the stone cross and the old well. Roads, walks, flower beds and structures to mark the various spots, will add to the attractiveness of the place. From there the great stretch of the Grand Pre lies as a monument of unremitting labour.

The DAR assumed responsibility for the Grand Pré site and engaged renowned Canadian architect Percy Nobbs to bring Herbin's vision to fruition. The architect developed a detailed landscape plan for the grounds, complete with pathways, flower beds and potential monument locations (see Figure 2–42).



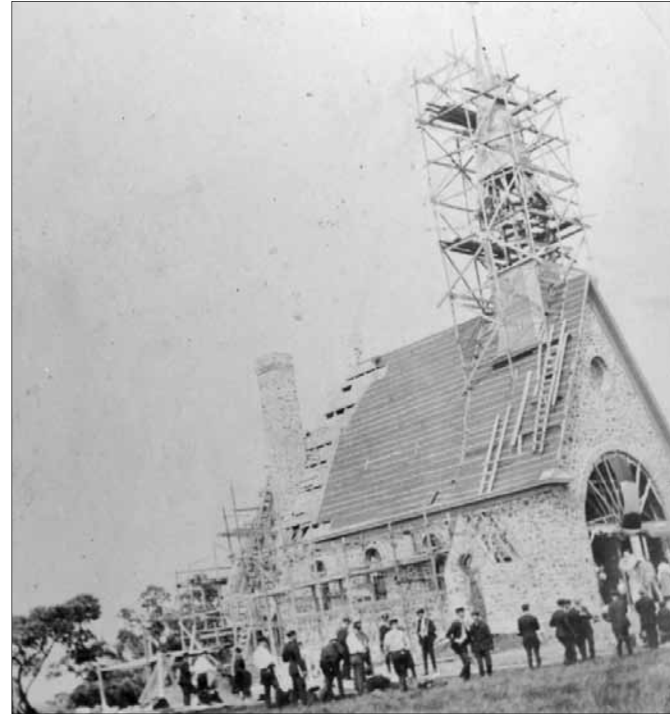
2–42 Percy Nobbs's 1919 plan for the gardens at Grand Pré included potential locations for monuments.

With Nobbs's drawings in hand, the rail company developed a "park" for tourists who wanted to see the spot Longfellow had made famous in his epic poem. The park-like setting – a cross between a *jardin des plantes* and a commemorative cemetery – encouraged many visitors to reflect on the tragedy of the Acadians in 1755. The first major artistic element added to the landscape was a bronze statue of Evangeline, unveiled in 1920. The statue was the work of renowned Québec sculptor Henri Hébert and was inspired by a design by his father, sculptor Louis-Philippe Hébert (see Figure 2–43). The Hébert artists were of Acadian descent.

2–43 Henri Hébert’s statue of Evangeline was placed at Grand-Pré in 1920.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s the DAR, the provincial department responsible for tourism, and many private companies used images and slogans employing the Evangeline theme and Grand Pré association to sell their products. At the same time, there was a marked commercialization of Evangeline: various depictions of the fictitious heroine showed up on a range of products from soft drinks to car dealerships to chocolates.

Despite the commercial overlay and the frequent tie-ins with a literary figure, Acadians during the 1920s were becoming increasingly interested in Grand Pré and attached to it as an evocative site that was a symbolically reclaimed homeland and a legacy of the tragedy of their forced removal. In 1919, Father André-D. Cormier, a priest from New Brunswick, took part in the negotiations to acquire the property in Grand Pré to build a church. In 1921, the *Société nationale l’Assomption* (predecessor of today’s *Société nationale de l’Acadie* [SNA]) held part of its eighth national convention at Grand-Pré. At that convention, the SNA took official possession of the church site and launched a fundraising campaign to build a Memorial Church (*église-souvenir*) on or near the site of the presumed ruins of the parish church (see Figure 2–44).



2–44 Final work is carried out on the Memorial Church, 1922.

Father Cormier became the founding president of the Memorial Church Committee and began organizing several fundraising campaigns. The Acadian diaspora from the maritime provinces, Québec, Louisiana, and France was solicited for donations. The construction of the church reflected the growing wave of Acadian nationalism that had been on the rise since the 1880s. Having achieved a number of successes in asserting Acadian rights and identity, the Acadian community now felt the time was right for such a symbolic gesture.

The Acadian community’s commemoration efforts at Grand Pré continued in 1923, when they raised funds for a sculpture of the Acadian patron saint, Notre-Dame de l’Assomption, to be placed inside the newly completed church (see Figure 2–45 and 2–46).

2–45 & 2–46 The statue of Notre Dame de l'Assomption, the patron saint of the Acadians, was placed within the Memorial Church. It is seen here in 2008 and 1923.

The next year, a group of Acadians from the maritime provinces and Québec, as well as non-Acadians interested in Acadian history, erected a poignant symbol of the 1755 Deportation. That new marker was an iron cross, referred to as the Deportation Cross, which was erected beside the DAR rail line, about two kilometres from the Grand Pré site. It was placed by a dry creek bed that was believed at the time to be where their ancestors had embarked in small boats during the Deportation. Later research found that the actual embarkation spot was at Horton Landing. The cross was relocated there in 2005.

Up to the mid-1950s, concerned citizens and organized groups, primarily within Canada but also from the United States, were responsible for all the commemorative action and development at Grand-Pré. By 1955, all the major elements of what has now become a *lieu de mémoire* (discussed later in this chapter) had been in place for three decades: the Memorial Church, the Statue of Evangeline, the Deportation Cross, the old willows, a stone cross to mark the Acadian burial ground, the well, and the flower beds. In May 1955, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, the arms-length advisory body that recommends designations of national significance to the responsible federal minister, concluded that the "Grand Pré Memorial Park possesses historical features which would make it eminently suitable as a National Historic Park." Negotiations took place over the next year. On 14 December 1956, the *Société nationale l'Assomption* finalized the sale of Grand Pré to the Government of Canada. Five years later, in 1961, the federal department responsible for historic sites officially opened Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada.

Since that transition, Parks Canada has maintained the original commemorative monuments and worked closely and collaboratively with representatives of the Acadian community. Since the mid-1990s, the Société Promotion Grand-Pré, a new group representing the Acadian community at Grand-Pré National Historic Site of Canada, has worked closely with Parks Canada to promote and enhance the national historic site, supporting the tradition of erecting memorials and organizing events that reflect the Acadian identity and attachment to the site.

A Place that Brings Together a Diaspora

Since the beginning of the 20th century, many events have taken place in Grand Pré that have secured its role as the heart of *Acadie* and the place most closely associated with Acadian identity. These include Acadian congresses, events commemorating the Deportation, pilgrimages, and cultural events.

The first major Acadian event at Grand Pré was associated with an Acadian Congress. In 1921, the eighth general convention of the *Société nationale l'Assomption* took place at Church Point (Pointe-de-l'Église) in southwestern Nova Scotia. It ended with a pilgrimage to Grand Pré, where delegates officially took possession of the lot that was said to contain the vestiges of the former parish church of

Saint-Charles-des-Mines. This was a powerful gesture. It highlighted an event of great historical significance for the Acadian people, symbolically reclaiming an important part of their homeland. The following year, hundreds of Acadians came back to Grand Pré to celebrate the first mass held there since 1755 (see Figure 2–47). It was directed by the first Acadian bishop, Monsignor Édouard LeBlanc. On that occasion, the cornerstone of the Memorial Church was blessed, completing the erection of the most significant symbol of the homeland.

2–47 The first mass at Grand-Pré since 1755 was held in 1922, led by the first Acadian bishop, Monsignor Édouard LeBlanc.

The Deportation Cross, an important symbol of the Acadian experience, was erected in 1924. The cross was unveiled during the first of two pilgrimages organized by the daily newspaper *Le Devoir* from Montreal (see Figure 2–48).

2–48 First pilgrimage organized by *Le Devoir*, in 1924, at which time the Deportation Cross was erected.

At the time, the founder of that newspaper, Henri Bourassa, encouraged French Canadians of Acadian ancestry to join him in the return to the "sacred land" (*terre sacrée*), the "land of memory" (*terre de mémoire*) of Grand Pré, which they did in great numbers. The Deportation Cross, as it is known, has since inspired artists and Acadians around the world, symbolizing the memory of the Deportation but also the identity of the people. Since 2003, it has been reproduced in different locations where Acadians have landed or settled, including Louisiana, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, PEI, Newfoundland and Saint-Pierre et Miquelon. More will soon be erected in France, New England, and Great Britain.

The 175th anniversary of the Deportation in 1930 was the first major event that brought together Acadians from Canada and the United States and sealed Grand Pré's role as the heart of *Acadie*. That year, Senator Dudley LeBlanc from Louisiana led a delegation of "Évangélines" to Québec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, where they took part in the anniversary celebrations in Grand Pré (see Figure 2–49).

2–49 "Évangélines" from Louisiana came to Grand-Pré in 1936, one of many visits by groups of Cajuns to the park.

The following year, a delegation of "Évangélines" from Canada went to Louisiana. Since then, Cajuns have regularly participated in events in Grand Pré and elsewhere in *Acadie*.

In 1955, thousands of Acadians from around the world gathered in Grand Pré to mark the bicentenary of the Deportation. Social and cultural events were organized everywhere in *Acadie* as well as in other parts of Canada. The open air mass held on 15 August (the national day of the Acadians) in Grand Pré was the high point of the commemoration. Over 10 000 Acadians participated in the mass, celebrated by the Apostolic Nuncio for Canada, along with three archbishops, eleven bishops, hundreds of priests, and members of religious orders from Canada, France, and even Haiti (see Figure 2–50).

2–50 Thousands of Acadians attended the open air mass held at Grand-Pré for the 200th Anniversary of the Deportation in 1955.

In 1994, Acadians began organizing events specifically to bring together the diaspora. The *Congrès mondial acadien*, held every five years in an Acadian region, is a display of the Acadian culture and an opportunity for Acadians with common ancestors to get together in the context of *retrouvailles* (reunions). The first was held in south-eastern New Brunswick, the second in Acadiana in southwestern Louisiana (United States), and the third in Nova Scotia. The third *Congrès*, in 2004, also celebrated the 400th anniversary of the founding of *Acadie* with the settlement of Ile Sainte Croix. During that congress, Grand Pré, as so many times before, hosted an open-air mass that attracted 10 000 Acadians.

The following year, in 2005, Grand Pré again welcomed thousands of Acadians, this time to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Deportation. This event celebrated the vitality of the Acadian people and their culture. At this time, the Deportation Cross was moved to its current location at Horton Landing, where the Acadians were forced to board the ships in 1755 (see Figure 2–51).

2–51 In 2005, the Deportation Cross was relocated to Horton Landing to mark the place where Acadians had been loaded onto ships 250 years earlier.

In addition to these major anniversaries, every year on 5 September an event takes place in Grand Pré to commemorate the day in 1755 when the men and boys of Grand Pré were imprisoned in the church and then on transport ships. Hundreds of Acadians walk from the Memorial Church to Horton Landing, remembering the walk that the Acadians from Grand Pré took in 1755 on their way to exile.

Through the years, Grand Pré has welcomed many social and cultural events. In 2008, the organizing committee of the Acadian Games (*Société des Jeux de l'Acadie*) gathered 1500 young athletes at Grand Pré to learn about their history and celebrate the pride of *Acadie*.

Dyke and Aboiteau Maintenance at Grand Pré

This strong symbolic landscape has remained a strong agricultural landscape. The dykes at Grand Pré are maintained, and new expansions have been partially built as well on the west side. The northeastern dyke on Long Island and parts of the eastern dykes were built in the 1940s, some behind the previous lines of dykes, others in front. The Wickwire Dyke, rebuilt in the 19th century, was again abandoned in 1932 following years of degradation from violent storms. It was rebuilt for a second time in 1959. The footprints of sections of other dykes were moved to maintain their ability to withstand the tides. In each case, the decision to build dykes was based on the capacity to maintain the integrity of the system of dykes and *aboiteaux*.

The dykes built in the 1940s, along with the rebuilding of the Wickwire Dyke, were part of a government initiative known as the Emergency Programme. In 1943, the federal government and the provincial governments of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick established the Maritime Dykeland Rehabilitation Committee (see Figure 2–52).

2–52 During the 1940s, federal and provincial governments launched programs to repair and rebuild dykes in the maritime provinces, including these at Grand Pré.

An even more ambitious initiative followed in 1948, with the creation of the Maritime Dykeland Rehabilitation Administration through an act of the Parliament of Canada. The task of maintaining the condition of all dykelands in the maritime provinces was thus treated as a single project that unlocked major financial resources. By the late 1960s, all major projects of rebuilding dykes and replacing *aboiteaux* had been completed. Supervision of the dyke maintenance was transferred to the provinces, where the responsibility remains to this day.

Throughout three centuries of evolution and changes, Grand Pré farmers have retained their distinctive approach to building and maintaining the original dykeland. The design of *aboiteaux* has not changed, although new materials now enhance their reliability and lifespan. The dykes are still built from earth, and the native vegetation continues to protect them. For 300 years, local farmers have experimented with different combinations of materials to strengthen the dykes – sometimes using rocks, sometimes wooden planks held with rods as facing (known as a "deadman") – yet the basic technology is the same. The creeks have been kept intact to ensure the proper drainage patterns.

Today's farmers, some of New England Planter descent and many of Dutch origin who arrived after the Second World War, continue to retain the knowledge of dyke building and maintenance. While few local farmers still know how to handle a spade to cut sod into bricks, many understand the appropriate design and the inner workings of drainage and of *aboiteaux*, as evidenced by the private dykes and *aboiteaux* that continue to be built. The Department of Agriculture has some of this knowledge, but it needs the experience of the farmers to maintain the dykes.

Community-based management continues today in the 21st century. The farmers of the Grand Pré Marsh Body own the land individually but share resources and make decisions collectively about maintaining the marsh. The farmers do not have direct responsibility for the dykes but retain an essential role in their maintenance and the experience of building them. Their management approach keeps alive the spirit of collective concern for this agricultural landscape and the individual desire to thrive. Throughout the major federal and provincial government projects of the past 70 years, the Grand Pré Marsh Body maintained its role. The Grand Pré Marsh Body's recorded minutes and archives go back to the late 18th century. It is the oldest and most active organization of its type in North America.

Centuries of Progress and Adaptation

In the past, dykeland was used for crops during summer and as common pasture in the fall. This allowed nutrients in the form of manure to be reintroduced into the soil. The farmers would gather in Grand Pré next to the dykelands to divide the herds into two, one for the east section and one for the west. They would identify individual branding tools, fence the area, brand the animals, and let them loose on the dykelands. That practice continued until the 1970s, when crops became more sensitive to the impact of cattle and when new farming techniques lengthened the season. Today, cattle are still sent for pasturing on the dykeland, but only in specific areas (see Figure 2–53).

2–53 Cattle still graze on the dykelands at Grand Pré.

Starting in the 1970s, farmers placed an emphasis on the surface drainage of these soils. Their method of drainage became known as

landforming and involved shaping the surface of a field so that excess rainfall ran off into grassy ditches (see Figure 2–54).

2–54 Landforming, or reshaping the surface of the dykeland to improve drainage, has been carried out at Grand Pré since the 1970s.

Landforming in Grand Pré consists of open ditches with a 30-centimetre drop over a distance of 300 metres to drain into the creeks. As a result, the soil dries much faster and holds the heat more efficiently. Farmers can begin working the land earlier in the season and grow a greater variety of crops. Typical crops are pasture, hay, cereals, soy, alfalfa, and some vegetables. During dry summers, dykeland soils hold water better than the upland soils.

Many farmers today raise milk-producing cattle and grow crops for their animals. As milk production is a regulated industry, the farmers have a stable means of ensuring their livelihood. Most of the crops grown on the dykelands are intended as cattle feed for both local consumption and sale. The farmers of Grand Pré are recognized as being progressive in their techniques, tools, and use of fertilizers as well as protective of their traditions. Today, 100 per cent of the dykeland is used for agriculture, and the area retains its point of pride of being one of the most productive agricultural communities in Atlantic Canada. That enduring use is evidence of a successful adaptation to the prevailing environmental conditions and community management. Future success is assured by the farmers continuing to be the stewards of this agricultural landscape, the product of hard labour, pride, and centuries of acquired knowledge.

A lieu de mémoire *of enduring relevance*

Since the early 1980s, the *journées acadiennes* are celebrated annually at Grand Pré at the end of July.

It is a week-long event that showcases Acadian culture, arts, and history and typically attracts thousands of people. At the same time a commemorative event takes place next to the Deportation Cross, on 28 July, the national day commemorating the deportation (see Figure 2–55).

2–55 Every July, the *journées acadiennes* are celebrated at Grand-Pré. The commemoration of the Deportation takes place during this event, on July 28 at the Deportation Cross.

The national day of commemoration of the Deportation was declared by the Parliament of Canada in 2003 and first celebrated in 2005. This was the result of individual and collective efforts from members of parliament, members from the Cajun community in Louisiana, and the *Société nationale de l'Acadie* who were seeking a formal apology from the British Crown and an acknowledgement of the impact of the Deportation on the Acadians. This came in the form of a Royal Proclamation signed by Queen Elizabeth II as Queen of Canada which included the following statements:

> "[...]Whereas on July 28, 1755, the Crown, in the course of administering the affairs of the British colony of Nova Scotia, made the decision to deport the Acadian people; [...]
>
> Whereas We acknowledge these historical facts and the trials and suffering experienced by the Acadian people during the Great Upheaval; [...]
>
> Whereas We hope that the Acadian people can turn the page on this dark chapter of their history; [...]"

The proclamation concludes with the declaration of a national day of commemoration of the event every year on 28 July, which is the day when the Order of Deportation was signed by the Governor in Halifax in 1755. The proclamation was another important milestone in the public awareness in Canada of the events surrounding the Deportation. The first year was celebrated in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia with the unveiling of the first two monuments to the Acadian Odyssey, marking the location of Deportation and resettlement of Acadians around the world.

Since 2005, a multi-faith event has been held at the Deportation Cross at the initiative of local non-Acadian residents (see Figure 2–56).

2–56 The multi-faith ceremony draws Acadians and non-Acadians alike to Horton Landing, as part of the National Day to commemorate the Deportation.

It typically includes a ceremony with Catholic priests, Anglican ministers, Mi'kmaq elders, and recently members of other faiths; a mass at the Covenanter Church in Grand Pré; and a walk from that Church to the Memorial Church.

This last event is significant as it involves non-Acadians in an important commemorative event. Throughout the years, non-Acadians have played a role in supporting the Acadians' aspiration to symbolically reclaim Grand Pré. From the early years of the 20th century, when a local jeweller partly of Acadian descent acquired the land and the DAR developed the site for tourism purposes, to today's local community, non-Acadians have learned about the Deportation and its impact on the Acadians and contributed toward the commemoration of Acadian heritage at Grand Pré. Acadian politician Pascal Poirier noted in 1917 that "the return to Grand Pré is a symbolic resurrection of *Acadie* [an event] that should not offend our friends and fellow citizens of foreign nationality. On the contrary, a sincere feeling of fraternity and peace oversee this return." This spirit continues to underpin the relationships in Grand Pré.

The relationship between Acadians and non-Acadians has been an ongoing exercise of mutual understanding and respect. Grand Pré is not a contested landscape, as the local residents and other non-Acadians have recognized for a long time the Acadian layer of heritage. The local community has been celebrating the Apple Blossom Festival since the 1930s as a means to advertise the agricultural products of the Annapolis Valley but also to celebrate the scenic beauty and Acadian history that was the background to *Evangeline*.

Recently, during the Acadian World Congress in 2004 and the 250th Anniversary of the Deportation in 2005, the local community worked to welcome Acadians on their ancestral land by hosting them and offering resources to carry out their events. One particularly powerful moment was when a farmer whose family had lived and farmed in Grand Pré since the 1760s offered to host the descendants of the Acadian family that once owned that land. The event was attended by hundreds of people, descendants of the Thibodeau family from Canada and Louisiana, as well as the current landowners, the Shaws.

Actions such as these are important indicators of a mutual desire to understand, remember and learn from experiences. They allow a peaceful, symbolic reclamation by the Acadians of their homeland and are evidence of ongoing efforts towards reconciliation, efforts foreshadowed by Pascal Poirier in the early 20th century when he stated "that [the acquisition of the lands] will result in our return home, here at Grand Pré, owners of our ancestral land, amongst our fellow citizens of foreign ancestry, now our friends." The landscape of Grand Pré continues to play a central role in the reclamation by the Acadians of their homeland.