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Friends, Enemies, OR? The Acadians and Mi'kmaq

The relationships were complex and interdependent that formed between the Acadians and the Mi'kmaq peoples of Nova Scotia. For survival, cooperation, and mutual benefit, the two communities learned about and from each other, living together in mostly respectful partnership until the turmoil of the dispersal of the Acadians and the ensuing violence toward the Mi'kmaq scattered the people across regions and continents. Learn about the history, records, intermarriages, documentation and more to assist you in your research.

I. Overview of the founding of early settlements of Acadia & New France:

History of the development of Acadia & New France: Key dates, military activity, dispersion and wars.

KEY DATES:

Acadia – Early fishermen from the Basque region of France, other European countries fished off the Nova Scotia/Maritimes areas from at least the late 16th century, camping on the shores and having encounters with the Indigenous peoples.

- 1604-1616: First attempts at settlement of the region of Maine, Nova Scotia
- Between 1654 and 1667, no new French families were settled as England was in control.
- In 1667, control returned to France; in 1670, the first Acadian census was conducted.
- In 1674, there was a very brief ownership by the Dutch.
- From about 1610 to 1763 – Controlled by French and referred to as “New France”
- 1755 to 1764 – Grand Dérangement (the Great Upheaval/Dispersement) of the Acadians, being dispersed along the east coast of the early American colonies, many were deported back to France or England. Mi'kmaw lands were also seized or overrun by the English “New England Planter” families.
- In 1764, Acadians began arriving in Louisiana (a Spanish-held territory)

Quebec -

- 1608 – the founding of the city of Quebec; French control.

- 1756-1760 began the British maneuvering to take control of the territory.
- 1763 to 1841 – British control; Records are referenced as “Upper” and “Lower Canada”
- Between 1841 and 1867 – the designation was Canada West and Canada East
- Confederation: July 1, 1867 – Formation of Canada as a nation. Union of Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. And by 1870, the Hudson’s Bay Company lands known as “Rupert’s Land” had become the Northwest Territories.
- The present-day Canada that we all know has only been in existence since 2003, which includes name changes for the various provinces or territories. At Confederation, there were four provinces; now there are ten provinces and three territories.

To see how the country of Canada evolved from the beginnings of Acadia and New France, check these maps at the Historical Atlas of Canada:

http://www.historicalatlas.ca/website/hacolp/national_perspectives/boundaries/UNIT_17/index.htm

Library and Archives of Canada: Pathfinders & Passageways <https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/206/301/lac-bac/explorers/www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/explorers/index-e.html> and the census/enumerations of Mi’kmaw <https://www.canada.ca/fr/bibliotheque-archives/collection/aide-recherche/genealogie-histoire-famille/recensements/recensements-anciens-documents.html>

II. Key websites, tools and books:

Websites -

- Family Search – Free
- Ancestry.com – Free at your public library; fee for home research;
- Library and Archives Canada <http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/Pages/home.aspx>
- Généalogie Québec/Genealogy Quebec, *Drouin Institute* <https://www.genealogiequebec.com/en/> (fee required)
2855 Belcourt, Longueuil, Québec, J4M 2B2 Archives of Quebec
- Beauregard, Denis. Genealogy of the French in North America. <http://www.franco-gene.com/gfna/gfna/998/> AND especially his Acadian resources page www.franco-gene.com/acadian/resources
- With links to many important websites for research in France: <http://www.francegenweb.org>
- Our Roots, Nos Racines: use this phrase in Google to obtain lists of sites
- Early Canadiana Online: <http://www.canadiana.org/>
- Electronic New France / Nouvelle-France électronique: a web site by Joseph Gagné <https://electronicnewfrance.wordpress.com/>

- Loisel Marriage Index (also the Rivest Marriage Index) – Available through the Family History Library & Centers, and some special collections.
- Canadian Facebook and more resources: <https://genealogyalacarte.ca/>

Acadian Census Records

<http://www.acadian-home.org/census-acadia.html> Listings of the census 1671, 1678, 1686 and more, thanks to the microfilms of the Public Archives of Canada and others (these ARE transcriptions – be sure to verify with original records).

Quebec Census Records

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/Pages/census.aspx> Listings of census records include 1825, 1831, 1842, 1851, etc. Remembering that records in some periods refer to “Canada East” for Quebec.

Books for History, Records and Background

Dictionary of Canadian Biography. Vol. I (1000-1700) University of Toronto Press. 1966 (1979 reprint) A wonderful resource now available online
<http://www.biographi.ca/en/index.php>

Drouin Institute (Institut Généalogique Drouin), “Red Book”, originally based mainly on Tanguay and, therefore, subject to the same cautions and restrictions. Called “red” because of the color of the original cover of the book. And “Blue Book” includes marriages only and is a bit rare to find – covers the years 1760 to 1935.

Eccles, W. J. *The Canadian Frontier, 1534-1760*, Revised Edition, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. 1974.

Jaenen, Cornelius J. *The French Relationship with the Native People of New France and Acadia*. Ottawa: Canada, Indian Affairs
<https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.841520/publication.html>

Jetté, René. *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles du Québec*. Les Presses de l’Université de Montréal. 1983. A compilation, more reliable than Tanguay, this is not a primary resource but a good tool to find families and their locations in time.

Larson, Denise R. *Genealogy at a Glance: French-Canadian Genealogy Research*. Genealogical.com. 2011.

Mcneil, Greg. “Membertou purchases traditional land.” *Cape Breton Post*, Dec. 18.
www.saltwire.com/cape-breton/news/membertou-purchases-traditional-land-10781/ 2015.

Miller, Virginia P. "The Decline of the Nova Scotia Micmac Population, 1600-1850." *Culture* 2, No. 3 (1982): 107-20. Public Archives of Nova Scotia, VF Vol. 280, No. 7.

Millwood, Marilyn. "Clean Behind the Ears? Micmac Parents, Micmac Children, and the Shubenacadie Residential School." *New Maritimes*, March/April 1992.

Muhn, Judy Nimer. *Genealogy at a Glance: Acadian Genealogy Research*. Genealogical.com. 2026.

"Nova Scotia Micmac Aboriginal Rights Position Paper." Presented to the Government of Canada by the Union of Nova Scotia Indians. *Micmac News*, Sydney, Nova Scotia, December 1976.

Paul, Daniel N. *We Were Not the Savages*. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2022.

_____. *Confrontation: Micmac and European Civilizations*. Truro, Nova Scotia: Confereracy of Mainland Micmacs. 1990.

Peace, Thomas. *The Slow Rush of Colonization: Spaces of Power in the Maritime Peninsula, 1690-1780*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2023.

Plank, Geoffrey. *An Unsettled Conquest, The British Campaign Against the Peoples of Acadia*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.

PRDH: *Programme de recherche en démographie historique (Program of research in historical demography)*. Gaëtan Morin Éditeur.

<http://www.genealogie.umontreal.ca>

There is an English version online – possible to look up names but to see documents, a fee must be paid (well worth it as the full original images are available without traveling!).

Upton, L.D.A. *Micmacs and the Colonists, 1713-1867*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979.

White, Stephen A. *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles Acadiennes (2 vol)*. Centre d'Études Acadiennes, Université de Moncton, 1999.

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