

[Page 64 - Before the Loyalists: Acadians in the Sydney Area, 1749-1754](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 48](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1988/6/1

turned out not to be of good quality, the resultant bricks were dry and stoney, and production reached only 138,500 bricks. Moreover, since Louisbourg could buy 1000 good bricks from New England at 21 livres 10 sols, it made little sense to make 1000 poor ones at Baie des Espagnols for 35 liv? res. Accordingly, the brickyard near the Acadian settlement died, and a new and more successful one was established along the Mira River. The End of the Acadian Settlements In the fall of 1753 Governor Raymond wrote the minister of the Marine that he had just returned from an inspection of Baie des Es? pagnols. He began by praising the location: "Of this harbour, moreover, one can say that it is the most beautiful there is in any of the French colonies." He went on to say that there were already "a large number of Acadian families" there, including near? ly sixty girls of marriageable age. He looked forward to the young women marrying other colonists on the island, "which can only produce the very best effects, in de? termining these Acadians, naturally incon? stant, to settle in the colony and thereby increase its strength...." Yet Raymond was not so optimistic about the Baie des Espag? nols community itself. He wrote the mini? ster that "the Acadian settlers have en? tirely neglected the cultivation of their lands, to such a point that I had to post an officer there to watch over them." How did the Acadians feel about having a military presence imposed on them? The doc? uments give no answer, but given the diffi? culties they were undergoing in establish? ing their settlement, one imagines there were many who began to wish that they had never come to lie Royale. In the spring of 1754 wheat, rye, oats and a mix of vegetables were once again planted at Baie des Espagnols and Mordienne. Some of the crops came well, but the land was simply not arable enough to feed everyone in the community. This was particularly worrisome as the Louisbourg authorities continued to grumble about the high cost of the rations they had to provide for the in? habitants there. The frustrations among the Acadians grew to such a point during the summer of 1754 that they approached the new governor of lie Royale, Augustin de Bos- chenry de Drucour, shortly after he arrived in the colony. They presented him with a "request to leave their habitations. They explained that in spite of the supplies the king would give them, in spite of the use? less expenditures he would make, the land, by itself, could never produce enough to feed and keep alive a family." Governor Drucour added that the Acadians "have sworn before me that of all inhabitants in those parts, there were only four who had said to the Comte (Raymond) that the land was ap? propriate for cultivation, and that they only said that to please the Comte." When some of the Acadians tried to tell the for? mer governor the truth about the land, "he put them out saying that they were lazy." The sympathetic Drucour gave the Acadians his permission in the fall of 1754 to leave the colony and return to English-dominated Nova Scotia. Though Governor Drucour was able to grasp the difficulties the Acadians had faced, few others seemed to be able to. One French official wrote that "we don't lose much" with the Acadians' departure, "because this people are naturally slow and lazy." The same man had earlier described lie Royale as "such a hard country,



where men are barely civilized." The French military officer Joubert chimed in that the Acadians had obtained Drucour's "permission to go exercise their laziness in Acadia." Most had already left by the date he wrote, 10 October, and others would be joining them in the spring of 1755. Only a few were staying on Île Royale, some to work in the quarries, others to continue farming. A few settlers may have stayed on in the area that was to become Sydney, because there is a reference, dated October 1755, to a Recollet priest preaching at Baie des Espagnols. For the rest, those Acadians who had come to prefer a return to Nova Scotia over a bare subsistence on Île Royale, the future would not be kind. Shortly after their return to the mainland, the British began the forced deportation of the Acadians from Nova Scotia. This article was originally published in French, with footnotes, in Cahiers de la société historique acadienne (Moncton, Spring 1988). Mr. Johnston is the Researcher/Writer/Editor at the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Park. Druker Insurance Clarlotte St., Sydney 562-5504 Mayflower Mall 564-1818 WILL INSURE VIRTUALLY ANY CAR, HOUSE OR BUSINESS COMPARE RATES: YOU COULD SAVE Phone Toll Free 1-564-6000 BUDGET PLAN AVAILABLE IN EMERGENCY: Avvie Druker. F.I.I.C. 564-6615 64 Jacques-Cartier Motel kitchenette units available / telephones in all rooms P. O. Box 555, Sydney, N. S. B1P 6H4 (902) 539-4375 or 539-4378 or 539-4379 SYDNEY - GLACE BAY HIGHWAY FRANCAIS 2 Kilometres de l'Aéroport ENGLISH * QUALITY SAME-DAY DRY CLEANING * 6 DAYS A WEEK * Vogue Cleaners Wedding Gown Cleaning & Heirlooming a Specialty GLACE BAY • SYDNEY