La Société historique acadienne

Les Cahiers

Vol. 42, n° 2

juin 2011
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Présentation

La rédaction

De retour!

Pour les fidèles lecteurs des *Cahiers*, plusieurs se souviendront que Jean Daigle avait assumé, pour quelques années, la relève du père Anselme Chiasson à la rédaction des *Cahiers* durant les années 1970. Cette expérience m’avait très intéressé et j’avais noué, à l’époque, des contacts étroits avec une foule de chercheurs. Malheureusement, une surcharge de travail au département d’histoire et au Centre d’études acadiennes m’avait forcé de céder le poste de rédacteur.

À partir du présent numéro, j’assume la relève de Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc qui a dirigé d’une main de maître la rédaction des *Cahiers* pendant près de 15 ans. Pendant toutes ces années, assisté par un comité de rédaction, il a dirigé la publication d’études et de recherche de grande valeur. L’exécutif et les membres de la Société ainsi les lecteurs et lectrices des *Cahiers* tiennent à souligner sa contribution exemplaire à l’avancement des connaissances dans le domaine des études acadiennes. Tous les lecteurs et lectrices des *Cahiers* ainsi que les chercheurs chevronnés ont pu profiter, grâce à son expertise, pendant toutes ces années, d’une publication de grand calibre. Merci à Ronnie-Gilles et à son équipe. J’espère m’acquitter de cette lourde tâche et procurer aux chercheurs et aux personnes intéressées à l’histoire acadienne des heures de lecture passionnante.

Comme premier article, un de nos fidèles collaborateurs, Earle Lockerby, nous livre avec des commentaires judicieux le texte de la correspondance échangée par des Acadiens de l’Île Saint-Jean avant la déportation de 1758. Comme peu de correspondance de cette période nous est parvenue, cette recherche revêt un intérêt particulier tout en nous livrant les préoccupations de certains Acadiens de l’époque.

Le deuxième texte nous provient de Francis C. Blanchard. Il nous fait part de ses recherches sur la cloche de l’église de Rollo Bay qui fut coulée en Belgique pour être installée d’abord au 18e siècle à l’église Saint-Pierre-du-Nord (maintenant Saint Peter’s Harbour) pour, par la suite, orner le clocher de l’église Saint-Alexis de Rollo Bay.

Suit le rapport du président de votre Société pour l’année 2010-2011.

Pre-Deportation Acadian Letters
from Île Saint-Jean

Earle Lockerby

Introduction

This paper deals with several letters written from Île Saint-Jean in the early 1750s. Not many letters written by, or on behalf of, Acadians during the several years immediately following their deportation have survived. Rarer, still, are letters from Acadians written during the pre-deportation era. Almost certainly, some letters were written between family members who were at some distance from each other, whether at Annapolis Royal (formerly Port-Royal), Les Mines, Cobequid, Beaubassin, Île Royale, Île Saint-Jean or other places. No doubt some Acadians penned letters for friends or relatives who could not write, since in these times the majority of Acadians were illiterate. Few of these letters would ever have found their way into a government repository of documents, or eventually to an archives. With the tremendous upheaval that virtually all Acadians experienced in their personal lives in the years immediately following the deportations, it is not surprising that letters that may have accumulated in Acadian households were lost.

A few letters in the form of a petition to government were written by, or on behalf of, Acadians and a number of these have survived. Generally, in such letters, the sender was requesting an appointment or compensation for losses argued to have been incurred while working in the interest of the State. In either case, the sender needed to point out to the Minister of Marine the

1. The author thanks Georges Arsenault for his valuable assistance in reviewing and upgrading the transcriptions and translations which were done by the author. His very helpful comments regarding a draft of this paper are also acknowledged. The author is particular indebted to Stephen A. White for his very thorough review of this paper and for his many suggestions and corrections. Assistance from Robert Pichette is also much appreciated.

2. Various letters have survived from people who were deported from Nova Scotia in 1755 or later. For example, see Jean-François Mouhot, "Des ‘revenantes’? À propos des ‘lettres fantômes’ et de la correspondance entre exilés acadiens (1757-1787)," *Acadiensis*, XXXIV(1), Autumn 2004, pp. 96-115.
various good services he or she had performed, such that he or she might be considered a worthy recipient of an appointment, a pension, or some other financial gratification.³

In the case of Île Saint-Jean, only eight Acadian letters from before the deportation of 1758 are known to have survived. Five of these are petitions that involve the Gautier family which, before relocating to Île Saint-Jean from Nova Scotia, had done much to assist the French in their struggles against the British – and also paid dearly for it. One, written by or for Augustin Doucet, never got delivered to its intended recipient; it owes its survival to the fact that it was seized by a British naval vessel and sent to London.⁴ Another, signed by one Paul Doiron, probably would not have survived had a copy of it not been given to a British colonial official in Nova Scotia, perhaps by someone in the Acadian community in Nova Scotia who was a British sympathizer or on unusually good terms with British colonial authorities. Yet another would not have survived had it not concerned a family death, the aftermath of which involved a notary and the letter entering notarial records at Louisbourg.

In this paper, I concern myself only with letters for which the person who sent the letter can be reasonably considered an Acadian. Letters written by individuals who had not themselves lived in Acadia, or who had no forebears who had lived in Acadia, are not considered here. Thus, letters from officials of the Compagnie de l’Île Saint-Jean, and from Jean-Pierre Roma, Father Jacques Girard, and from military and from government officials stationed on the Island, usually for a brief few years, are similarly not considered. Such individuals were not Acadians in the normal sense of the word.⁵


5. Two members of the Du Pont family deserve special mention. Louis Du Pont Duchambon, effectively lieutenant du roi at Port-la-Joie from 1737 to 1744, did write a number of letters, which have survived, from the Island during these years. He was not a native-born Acadian but his wife was. His nephew, Joseph Du Pont Duvivier, was
Letter of Augustin Doucet

The letter of Augustin Doucet is a very short one, but is one of only two of the five letters that are written specifically to a relative, in this case his aunt. It was written in the summer of 1750 and was among a number of letters and other documents that were being carried by the sloop London. This vessel had left Québec in mid-May, its first destination being Shédiac Bay. A modest French fortification and stores depot had been established on the Shédiac River. The shipment included ammunition, foodstuffs, clothing, utensils and tools, including 200 couteaux de bûcheron, all to be delivered to "Monsieur Le Loutre pour presents a ses sauvages." After most of the cargo was unloaded, the vessel continued on to Port-la-Joie, arriving there in early July, presumably with dispatches from Québec for officials at Port-la-Joie. The London appears to have remained at Île Saint-Jean for about a month, taking aboard some food supplies for the Mi'kmaq associated with Le Loutre, as well as a batch of letters addressed to people in Canada, some from civilians, some from administrative officials and possibly some from soldiers in the garrison at Port-la-Joie. Among these letters was that of Augustin Doucet. According to plan, the London was to return to Québec after its sojourn to Acadie française and to Île Saint-Jean.

About 12 August, the London arrived at Baie-Verte where it was met by Le Loutre. A few days later, it was again headed for Port-la-Joie, this time carrying a letter from Le Loutre to one Paul Doiron, and a letter of exchange issued by Le Loutre to Augustin Doucet, the significance of which documents

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7. The priest Jean-Louis Le Loutre was based at Pointe-à-Beauséjour near the present-day Aulac and was the spiritual leader of a group of Mi'kmaq who were military allies of the French. Many historians have regarded Le Loutre as the "military animator" of the Mi'kmaq who were closely associated with him. Couteaux de bûcheron translates literally as "woodsmen's knives." At a British Admiralty Court in Halifax, the London was judged to be have been lawfully seized and was sold at auction. In the court documents, couteaux bûcherons is translated as "butchers' knives." See Records of His Majesty's Court of Vice-Admiralty in the Province of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, RG1, Vol. 491, pp. 62 and 71. The British regarded the seized documents as quite incriminating – they provided proof that Le Loutre in particular, and the French more generally, were actively aiding and abetting the Mi'kmaq in their warfare against the British soldiers and settlers in Nova Scotia.
will be discussed later. On 18 August, before reaching Port-la-Joie, the London encountered the British naval sloop Tryal off Remshag (now Wallace, N.S.). The London was captured and the documents aboard her were seized and taken to Halifax. They were subsequently sent to London by Governor Cornwallis and currently reside in the National Archives of the United Kingdom.8

Here is a transcription of Augustin Doucet’s letter:

Fait au port La joie Le 5 daou 1750 [Adresse à madame Langedo demurrant de au sau des matLot a que Bec]

Ma chere tante jai Lonneur de vous ecrire ce Line pour vous faire asavoir de me nouvelle qui sont for Bonne Dieux mersi Le nica? Je prie dieu que La votre soi de meme ausi bien qua toute La famille. je vou dirai que je sui etablani dan Lacadie jai quarte petis anfan je vive contan sur mes terres me ce na pa dure Lontan car nous avons été oblégé de quiter tou nos Bien et fuir de dessou La domina sien de anglai Le roi se oblige de nous faire transporter et de nou nourrir en esperan Le nouvelle de Franse si Lacadie ne retourne pas au Fransée jespere prandr ma pite famile et lanmenes an Canada je vou prie de me asauoir comme ce comporte le pai.

Je vous asure que nous sommes dan une pauvre situaision car nou somme come Le Sauvage dans le Boi autre choze ne vou pici man des manne poi je vou Sa Lue é vous an Brase de tous son coeur et je tien a le man a tou ses paran e ami et --------- man je vous prie de faire a savoir de me nouvelle a mé frere et a mes oncle adieu ma chere tante je sui e serai toujours votre tre umble-----

Augustaint Doucet

vou aure La bonte de faire me compliman a ma chere cousine fanchet que je la saLue et an Brase de tout mon coeur.

The handwriting of the letter is quite difficult to read. The fact that it is written in a very phonetic manner indicates that the writer had a fairly limited degree of literacy. There are four other letters among those seized that are in the same hand, bearing names at the bottom other than Augustin Doucet’s. The person who wrote all five letters also signed them, using Doucet’s name in one instance and the names of various members of the Lessard family on the other four letters. None of these letters bears the “X” that illiterate people usually used to “sign” a letter or document written for them by someone else.

8. CO 42, Vol. 23, pp. 1-74. Doucet’s letter is the first of the bunch and may be found at pages 1-2.
It is known from evidence presented below that Augustin could not write and that his letter was therefore written and signed on his behalf by someone else, possibly a member of the Lessard family. The brevity of Doucet’s letter, in comparison to the others treated in this paper, might suggest that relatively little needs to be said about it. It does, however, introduce some threads that run through all of the letters dealt with here, and provides the opportunity to examine the environment and context in which all of these letters were written.

Who was Augustin Doucet and who was his aunt to whom he intended the letter to be delivered? His great-great-grandfather, Germain Doucet, was born in France and came to Port-Royal prior to 1641. Augustin’s paternal line of descent was Germain (referred to above), Germain, Bernard and Jean, the latter being his father. Augustin’s father had married Françoise Bourget at Québec and it was there Augustin was born in 1719. One of Françoise’s sisters was Marie-Anne Bourget who in 1709 had married Jean Garigue dit Languedoc at Québec. Marie-Anne was the 60-year-old aunt to whom Augustin sent the letter in 1750 from Île Saint-Jean.9

Augustin’s father, Jean, had been born in Acadia and Augustin moved from Québec to Acadia, the year of his relocation said to have been 1734. It was about 1742 when Augustin married Cécile Mius in Nova Scotia. It was most likely 1750 (but possibly 1749) when Augustin and Cécile moved from Cobequid to the north bank of Rivièr du-Nord-Est (Hillsborough River) in Île Saint-Jean, along with their four children. There home was located in the vicinity of today’s St. Andrews or on the Mount Stewart marsh. Life on Île Saint-Jean would not be smooth. On 27 July 1750, their youngest child, 9-month-old Louis, was baptized. The boy’s age at baptism and the fact that he died only two weeks after being baptised, would suggest that he was seriously ill at the time of baptism. In late January of the following year, Cécile died. The next family tragedy occurred in early June of 1751 when the youngest remaining child, 4-year-old Anne, died.

On Valentine’s day in 1752, Augustin married Marie Anne Prétieux at Port-la-Joie. The entry in the parish register shows that Augustin signed with

9. The standard reference for Acadian genealogy is Stephen A. White, Dictionnaire généalogique des familles acadiennes, première partie, Vol. I et II (Moncton, 1999). Marie-Anne Bourget’s first husband died in 1726 and two years later, she married Jean Poitevin who lived until 1775. It is not known why Augustin Doucet’s aunt would have been using the name Langedoc in 1750. Anne-Marie’s year of birth, 1690, and other details, have been provided by Stephen A. White in a private communication with the author on March 11, 2010.
an "X" which is a strong indication that he got someone else to write his letter of 5 August 1750. It was only a few months after their marriage that census taker Joseph de la Roque came calling on the household. At that time Augustin, enumerated as a ploughman, and Anne-Marie had but one bull, one heifer, one ewe and one sow, and had not yet cleared any land. In the years ahead, the couple would produce nine children of their own. Augustin, Anne and their children then living were deported to France in 1758. From 1759 to 1764, Augustin, his wife, and their children were living at St. Énogat and from 1764 to 1772, they resided at St. Servan, both these places being near St. Malo. In 1777, they lived in the parish of Cenan in Poitou (now the département of Vienne).

Several points in Augustin Doucet's letter are worthy of comment. One gets the impression that his letters to his aunt had been quite infrequent. Despite becoming a settler in Acadia in about 1734, it was nineteen years later that he is mentioning this to her. If his young son, Louis, who died exactly one week after the date on Augustin's letter, was seriously sick at the time the letter was written, Augustin was stoic about it, or optimistic, informing his aunt that his "news...is very good," making no reference to a sick child. Such an upbeat tone is also at odds with his later statement about living in poor circumstances.

Augustin relates that he and his family have been obliged to flee from British-controlled Acadia and to leave behind all his goods. Unfortunately, he does not elaborate on the reasons that caused him, or made him feel that

10. Although Augustin Doucet apparently could not sign his name in 1752, it would seem that he acquired somewhat more skill at doing this in later years. In a marriage acte involving his daughter, Marie Doucet, in 1777 in the Parish of Cenan, département of Vienne, he signed "Doucet." And the following year, he signed "Augustin Doucet" in a marriage acte in the same parish, involving one of his relatives. See Albert J. Robichaux, Jr., *The Acadian Exiles in Chatelleraut 1773-1785* (1983), pp. 121-123.


12. By the time of the deportation, Augustin and Marie-Anne had had three children of their own, one of whom died during the transatlantic crossing. Augustin and Marie-Anne were one of the very few couples that ended up being separated from each other during the deportation from Île Saint-Jean. Marie-Anne and the younger children travelled on the Tamerlane, while Augustin and one of his sons by his first marriage travelled on one, or perhaps two, of the other transports. For their residency in France, see Albert J. Robichaux, Jr., *The Acadian Exiles in St. Malo 1758-1785*, Vol. 1, Family Genealogies A-G (Eunice, LA, 1981), p. 278; Albert J. Robichaux, Jr., *The Acadian Exiles in Chatelleraut 1773-1785* (1983), p. 121.
he needed to take such a momentous step. It is true that during several years prior to Doucet’s taking this action, many Acadians were increasingly finding themselves caught between two imperial powers struggling for control of what are now the Maritime Provinces, particularly Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Many, if not most, hoped that Acadia would become, once more, French territory, and a few lent their support to French military forces that sought to achieve precisely that. This, in turn, would have caused them some recriminations on the part of New England soldiers who came to Nova Scotia, and of locally-based British soldiers, who strived to defend the colony from attacks on Annapolis Royal, Halifax and Lunenburg. These attacks were conducted, for the most part, by Mi’kmaq and other Native peoples who were closely allied to the French and were, in essence, led or encouraged by French priests such as Jean-Louis LeLoutre.13

Regardless of the extent to which Acadians assisted, supported, or even sympathized with the raids and military initiatives of Native warriors and French soldiers, the Anglo-American perception was that there was a significant degree of collaboration. The majority of Acadians may have wanted to be simply left alone, but that end was not facilitated by the activities of a small minority of them. In such circumstances, the Acadians were not helped by their almost universal refusal to take an unqualified oath of allegiance to the British crown.14 Uneven-handed and inconsistent treatment by Governor Cornwallis was discomfiting to many Acadians. For example, in 1749 Cornwallis had insisted that Acadians who did not take an unqualified oath of allegiance must leave Nova Scotia. However, less than a year later he sought to prevent Acadians from peacefully removing themselves.15 Also, the


14. Joseph-Nicolas Gautier, who moved from Acadia to Île Saint-Jean in 1749, claimed that the reason that Acadians were relocating to the Island was that they were not prepared to take “le nouveau serment,” which could require them to take up arms against “les sauvages et ... tous Etrangers qui Entreroient dans L’accadie.” Gautier opined that many more would follow him on account of their unwillingness to take an unqualified oath of allegiance. See La Jonquière and Bigot to Minister, 11 October 1749, C11C, Vol. 8, pp. 195-196; see, also, Bigot to Minister, 30 September 1749, C11A, Vol. 93, pp. 253-254v.

construction of British and French forts at Halifax, Chignecto and Baie-Verte was not calculated to put Acadian minds at rest. In assessing the impact that the establishment of the British garrison at Halifax would have on the Acadians, one official at Québec observed that: "les anciens habitants que avoient toujours conserve le désir et l’esperance de rentrer sous la domination de la France seront obligés de renoncer à l’un et l’autre, et de se soumettre sérieusement et pour toujours à la domination anglaise.”

Compounding these “push” factors was a strong “pull” – from the time that Louisbourg was returned to France in 1749, the French government resolved to offer every encouragement to entice Acadians to relocate to Île Saint-Jean or Île Royale. The obligation of the French King referred to by Doucet was the royal promise to provide, free of charge, transportation to mainland Acadians who agreed to relocate, not only for themselves and their families, but also for their livestock and other moveable property, and to provide both land and farming equipment, as well as sufficient foodstuffs for their first year on Île Saint-Jean or Île Royale. The French authorities believed that Île Saint-Jean could be developed to the point of being a major provider of food to Louisbourg. The French stratagem of Acadian relocation, essentially political, was intended to provide a double benefit to France by developing its own colonial territory and local economy, while at the same time undermining a colony of its enemy, Great Britain, which colony the French considered to be restricted to the Nova Scotia peninsula. Ironically, had Acadians en masse decided to relocate to French territory in the early 1750s, they would have been voluntarily abandoning their lands to new British colonists, e.g., New England planters – precisely the same result that happened involuntarily as a result of the deportation of 1755. It is not clear what fraction of mainland Acadians the French authorities might have hoped to attract to Île Saint-Jean and Île Royale over the years following 1749. What is clear, however, is that the French authorities failed the transplanted Acadians miserably by being unable to keep their promise of providing adequate food supplies, particularly on Île Saint-Jean.

18. According to Andrew Hill Clark, the population in 1748 was 735; see Andrew Hill Clark, Three Centuries and the Island (Toronto, 1968), p. 32. The population on the eve of the 1755 deportation has been reliably estimated to lie between 2,873 to 3,026 by Stephen A. White. See Stephen A. White, “The True Number of the Acadians,” in
Historians have frequently noted that in the deportation of 1755, the Acadians unfortunately became pawns in a conflict between two great colonial powers. In reality, through the politics of uprooting Acadians and transplanting them in the Chignecto region and in enticing them to relocate to Île Saint-Jean and Île Royale, France was using the Acadians as pawns from 1749 onward. Indeed, one can say that such usage, or contemplated usage, began as early as the fall of 1745 when France began making plans for wrestling Acadia and recently-lost Île Royale and Île Saint-Jean from British control. France expected Acadians to overwhelmingly support these initiatives, and to help ensure that they succeeded.

Most of the Acadians who chose to relocate to Île Saint-Jean during the period between 1749 and the arrival of Colonel Robert Monckon’s troops at Chignecto in June of 1755, endured much hardship on the Island, famine being the principal affliction. Their number, roughly 2,000, equalled approximately one third of the number of Acadians living in Acadie anglaise (peninsular Nova Scotia) on the eve of the 1755 deportation. For most of these transplants, misery was a fact of life until 1758 when about three quarters were deported to France and one quarter escaped to the mainland. Generally, those who elected to move to Île Saint-Jean paid a steep price. Admittedly, they evaded the calamity of 1755, but a more deadly one was soon to become their fate.

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Ronnie-Gilles LeBlanc, ed., *Du Grand Dérandement à la Déportation* (Moncton, 2005), pp. 55-56. Subtracting 735 from the average of White’s two numbers gives 2,215. A reasonable estimate of the number of Acadians who chose to relocate to Île Saint-Jean between 1745 and the middle of 1755 is therefore about 2,200.

19. The forced removal of nearly 1,000 Acadians from Beaubassin and other communities on the east side of the Missaguash River to the west side of the river (*Acadie française*) in 1750, by burning their homes, was the first forced Acadian removal. See Paul Delaney, “Chronologie des déportations et migrations des Acadiens (1755-1816),” *Les Cahiers* de la Société historique acadienne, 36 (2 & 3), 2005, p. 52; and N.E.S. Griffiths, *From Migrant to Acadian: A North American Border People 1604-1755* (Montréal & Kingston, 2005), p. 392. In the fall of that year, an estimated 700 additional Acadians were likewise expelled by local French authorities, in the interest of France, from other communities such as Nanpan, Maccan, Les Planches, La Butte, Ouechkok, Hébert, and Minoudie. They, too, were sent to *Acadie française*. See a census for these villages in AC, G1, Vol. 466, No. 35.

20. Acadians from the Chignecto area and places such as Reimsheg and Tatamagouche who fled to Île Saint-Jean to escape the deportation of 1755 of course shared in the misery on Île Saint-Jean. Indeed, their arrival exacerbated the famine and general deprivation. For the deportation of 1758, see Earle Lockerby, “Deportation of the Acadians from Île St.-Jean,” *Acadiensis*, XXVII(2), 1998, pp. 45-95.
Augustin Doucet was, judging by his letter, one Acadian who was not prepared to brook continued British control of Nova Scotia, even if he could live in nearby, French-controlled Île Saint-Jean.\textsuperscript{21} It would seem, therefore, that he saw Île Saint-Jean merely as a place to provide him with interim respite, pending a reordering of the political landscape which would be more palatable to him.\textsuperscript{22} If he could not go back to an Acadia that was controlled by France, it seems that he intended to exercise an option – relocating to Canada – that was probably more attractive to him than to most of his kin-folk, because of his prior experience of living in Canada. If the awaited “news” from France that Doucet refers was news of a reversion of Acadia to France, then the realpolitik of 1750 was such as to give faint hope of that. More likely, the awaited “news” related to a decision on the boundary of Acadia – where did British territory end and French territory begin? The French sought to have the Missaquash River accepted as the recognized boundary, while the British argued that the Acadia that they controlled included what is now New Brunswick. A joint British-French commission, based in Paris, had been established in the fall of 1749 to resolve the issue. The commission met sporadically until 1753, accomplishing almost nothing. Augustin Doucet would have much waiting.

It is not clear whether Doucet’s comment about being “like Indians in the woods” refers to having primitive and inadequate (by his standards) housing, or whether it suggests that he never knew from one day to the next where the next meal for his family would be coming from (or perhaps when). Possibly the comment refers to all of these. The extreme deprivation, particularly food shortages on Île Saint-Jean, from 1750 to 1758, is well documented. Famine is frequently mentioned in letters from administrative officials at both

\textsuperscript{21} It appears that Augustin Doucet was a civic-minded individual. After being deported to France, Augustin functioned as a deputy within a community of Acadian deportees. See Damien Rouet, “Diaspora et représentation, le cas des réfugiés acadiens en France,” \textit{Études canadiennes/Canadian Studies}, No. 58, 2005, p. 103.

\textsuperscript{22} Among the documents seized from the \textit{London} was a letter of exchange for 20 livres issued by Jean-Louis Le Loutre to Augustin Doucet of Île Saint-Jean for the supply of “\textit{vivres}” for the Mi’kmaq at Chignecto who were attached to Le Loutre. In the same batch of seized documents is a letter from Île Saint-Jean commandant Claude-Élisabeth Denys de Bonaventure, written at virtually the same time as Doucet was sending “\textit{vivres}.” In his four-page letter addressed to Intendant François Bigot at Québec, the commandant takes three pages to discuss the food shortages that he is facing and to plead for help. Given these circumstances, perhaps Doucet felt that food sent from Île Saint-Jean to Le Loutre’s associates at Chignecto would support an important cause.
Port-la-Joie and Louisbourg. Perhaps the most poignant description was provided by Father Jacques Girard in 1753 who indicated that the deprivation extended, at least in some instances, to children having virtually no clothing and huddling around the ashes of a fire to keep warm — and this in October, not the dead of winter.23 Though there were periods of brief respite, the problem of inadequate food supplies, leading to famine, generally worsened with time from 1750 to 1758.

**Letter of Paul Doiron**

The evidence that is suggestive of Augustin Doucet being an Acadian “activist,” or anti-British, is somewhat circumstantial.24 Not so with some of our other letter writers, including Paul Doiron, the person who lent his name to another letter that eventually found its way into the National Archives of the United Kingdom.25 Paul was a grandson of Jean Doiron, the first of this surname to settle in Acadia, and his wife, Marie-Anne Canol. Paul’s father and mother were Pierre Doiron and Madeleine Doucet.26 Paul Doiron grew

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25. The letter may be found at CO 217, Vol. 40, pp. 375-375v. It was enclosed with Hopson to Secretary of State, 18 October 1752, CO 217, Vol. 40, pp. 371-371v.

26. Throughout this paper, Paul Doiron is presumed to be a son of Pierre Doiron and Madeleine Doucet. However, it must be acknowledged that in 1752, there were three Paul Doirons living on Île Saint-Jean, and that the person whose name appears at the bottom of the letter could have been any of the three. All three were grandsons of Jean Doiron and Marie-Anne Canol. One, the son of Pierre Doiron and Madeleine Doucet, was known as “le Grand Paul,” another as “le Petit Paul” and the third simply as “Paul.” Unfortunately, the version of the letter that has survived is a transcript made from an original and accordingly lacks the original signature. One may speculate that, to be credible, a letter of this kind would require that its purported writer be someone who was known to be capable of writing. Le Petit Paul may could not write — he signed with an “X” on his marriage entry in the register for Port Royal. From parish registers, we know that the other two Pauls could write, or at least sign their name. Le Grand Paul lived near the lower end of Rivière-du-Nord-Est, i.e. quite close to Port-la-Joie, whereas the third Paul lived at Pointe-Prime. It is fairly clear that the letter writer is a public-spirited person, someone who could be considered a “nationalist” or even an “activist” with anti-British leanings, though as a resident of a French colony his conduct was not inappropriate. He is also someone who, it would appear, would be comfortable going to Louisbourg to have discussions with senior officials there on behalf of other Acadians. Among the documents seized from the London in 1750 was a letter from Jean-Louis Le Loutre to “paul doiron habitant au port La joye” which begins with “mon
up at Beaubassin in the Chignecto region. Of all the areas of Acadia, it was here that the Acadian settlers were regarded by the officials at Annapolis Royal and, later at Halifax, as being most independent and inclined to lend themselves to activities that supported the interests of His Most Christian Majesty rather than His Britannic Majesty.²⁷

In the summer of 1752, when Paul Doiron’s household was enumerated by Joseph de la Roque, he and his wife, the former Marguerite Michel, were living on the north bank of the Rivière-du-Nord-Est, not far from Port-la-Joie – somewhat closer to this administrative centre than Augustin Doucet. Forty-two years of age, he had relocated to the Island two years earlier and already had a large family – three sons and six daughters. He appears to have been considerably better off than Augustin Doucet, having four bulls, three cows, two heifers, two sows, three pigs and 25 fowls or chickens. He had cleared some land and anticipated sowing eight bushels of wheat on it in the spring of 1753.²⁸

The fate of Paul Doiron and his family at the time of the deportation from Île Saint-Jean is not entirely clear. The family was deported to France. It would appear that Paul and his wife died during the crossing, or within a year or so of arriving in France. At least six children made it to France, five

cher ami.” See CO 42/23, pp. 67-68. This indicates that the Paul Doiron who was the recipient of the letter, was close to Le Loutre, who had been based at Beaubassin since 1749, and that he lived at, or close to Port-la-Joie. Le Grand Paul grew up at Beaubassin and it was from there that he moved to Île Saint-Jean in 1750, probably only a few months before Le Loutre wrote the letter. The third Paul had moved to Pointe-Prime from Cobequid and it is not known whether he knew Le Loutre personally. The recipient of Le Loutre’s letter was clearly involved in providing assistance to Le Loutre and his Mi’kmaq by sending un bœuf and other food supplies to him from Île Saint-Jean at a time when his fellow Acadians on the Island were experiencing a scarcity of food. The father of le Grand Paul is said to have been an Acadian deputy, in which capacity he would have had dealings with British administrative officials at Annapolis Royal as a representative of people in his community. This is similar to the role that Paul Doiron, writer of the letter to fellow Acadians on the mainland, offered to fulfil at Louisbourg. Concerning Pierre Doiron, father of le Grand Paul, being a deputy, see La Famille Doiron (Gould) les descendant-e-s de Pierre Doiron et d’Anne Forest (Fredericton, 1994), p. 360. All of the above evidence points to le Grand Paul as being the letter writer. No evidence has been found to indicate that Paul Doiron of Pointe-Prime, or le Petit Paul, was the letter writer.

²⁷ “His Most Christian Majesty” was a term often used, especially in official documents, to refer to the King of France.

²⁸ “Tour of Inspection Made by the Sieur de la Roque,” p. 86.
of them to Cherbourg. Of the six, five are known to have later left France and settled in Louisiana.²⁹

Shortly before the letter of Paul Doiron was written, the Governor of Île Royale and Île Saint-Jean had made a visit to Île Saint-Jean. This was an annual practice begun as early as 1726 and the Governor was always accompanied by a few lesser officials from Louisbourg. These summer visits served a variety of purposes. They enabled the Governor and his officials to see for themselves, at first hand, the state of affairs on Île Saint-Jean, and to have discussions with the local commandant. Equally important, they provided an opportunity for the Louisbourg officials to make their annual presents to assembled Mi’kmaq not only from Île Saint-Jean, but also to those who would come from certain parts of Acadia, and places such as Miramichi.³⁰ A feast was always held for the Mi’kmaq and there were speeches made by both sides. From the point of view of the French officials, these annual get-togethers were key events to help maintain a military alliance with the Mi’kmaq. The French officials would receive intelligence on what the British were up to in Acadia, particularly of a military nature, and the Mi’kmaq would be encouraged to undertake certain missions and to generally maintain their allegiance to the French King.

In 1752, the delegation to Île Saint-Jean was headed by Governor Jean-Louis de Raymond who had arrived at Louisbourg from France in August 1751.³¹ He had left Louisbourg on 17 July 1752 for Port Toulouse and then Île Saint-Jean.³² The sojourn would have lasted two to three weeks, perhaps a bit longer, and Paul Doiron’s letter is dated 23 August 1752. It is likely therefore that Doiron’s letter was drafted as a result of the Governor’s visit. Apparently, it was drafted while the Governor was on Île Saint-Jean or shortly after, and the wording, in not the actual writing, may have been crafted by

²⁹. William Arceneaux, _No Spark of Malice: The Murder of Martin Begnaud_ (Baton Rouge, LA, 1999), pp. 55-63. See also www.acadiensingray.com/Appendices-ATLAL-DOIRON.htm. Paul Doiron and his family may have been sent across the Atlantic aboard the _Ruby_. It is possible, also, that the family was first taken to Louisbourg and then put aboard the transport vessel, _Mary_.

³⁰. Sometimes the Governor was unable to make the yearly trip to Île Saint-Jean and on such occasions another official from Louisbourg, such as the financial commissary, would be his substitute. Sometimes, the attendees at these yearly assemblies that usually took place at Port-la-Joie, included a few Maliseet from the Saint John River.


the Governor, someone in his party, someone in the administrative cadre based at Port-la-Joie, or possibly even by Father Jacques Girard who would certainly have possessed the necessary literary skills.

The letter reads as follows:

Copy of a Letter from an Inhabitant of the Isle St. John to the French Inhabitants of Nova Scotia Inclosed to Governor Hopson by a person supposed to be a friend of the Government

Monsieur

Je vous ecrit ces lignes pour vous assurer de mes tres humbles respects et pour vous dire que Mon’ le Comte de Raymond notre Gouverneur etant venu a l’Isle St. Jean nous a decouvert nettement la decision de la Cour. Il m’a commis pour ecrire par toute l’Accadie les avis qu’il a à vous donner touchant votre destinee. Il vous conseille de prendre votre parti pour vous refugier sur le Terrein Francais, il vous promets tous les secours necessaires pour vous faire transporter là où il vous plaira, sur l’Isle Royale. L’Isle St. Jean sur quelle partie vous souhaiterez le plus convenables. Il vous offres pour ce sujet Batiments, vivres tous les Secours Spirituelle dont vous pouvez avoir besoin pour evacuer ce pais.

Il vous fait scavoir que tous les pretendus arrangements pour L’Accadie sont enfin finis, et que vous ne devez rien attendre dans ce pais que d’être trompes par les Anglais.

Le propre de ce grand homme de bien c’est d’en faire à tous les peuples par ses beaux exemples mais principalement son grand amour pour l’accroissement du bien Spirituel en fournissant des pretres dans tous les lieux là ou il Commande.

Il vous fait marquer le tres grand regret qu’il ressent du parti qu’il vous voit prendre en vous affermissant dans un pais qu’il regard deja comme perdu.

Enfin il vous fait scavoir que vous ne devez plus vous fonder sur l’esperance d’avoir des pretres dans ce pais parce que notre bon Roy par son ministere defend meme à monseigneur L’Eveque de Quebec d’en accorder à L’Accadie.

Enfin ne vous appuyez point sur cet article que, comme sur une chose fort incertaine, mais Soyez content que ce Seigneur aussi puissant que liberal vous tende la main.

J’attens de vous une Reponse prompte à L’Isle St. Jean à fin que Je puisse me rendre à ses Ordres avec votre humble representation à la fin du mois de Septembre a Louisbourg, pour qu’il marque à la Cour votre depart ou votre refus.
Il ne force personne par ces presentes il attend que ce doit être d’un coeur Franc, comme je lui ai fait connoitre que pouvoit être le votre, et celui de plusieurs autres à qui j’ai écrit. Je vous laisse avec votre prudence ordinaire à méditer l’avis De mons' Le Comte De Raymond, mareshal de camp Lieutenant des armées du Roy, chef d’escadre, Gouverneur de L’Isle Royale, Isle St. Jean et Dependances.

de L’Isle S’Jean
le 23 aoust 1752

Je suis avec Estime, Mons’
Votre très humble Serviteur

(Signé) Paul Doiron

The first point to note about the letter, is that it is that no original is known to have survived. It was a circular letter intended to be received by various Acadians on the mainland. No doubt, a number of handwritten copies would have been made and distributed in certain regions of Acadia. Quite possibly, the letter came with verbal instructions to “pass it on” among various people in any given community. A copy of the letter came into the hands of some British colonial official in Nova Scotia; perhaps it was passed to the British by an Acadian who had British leanings or who was not happy with the ongoing depopulation of Acadia. In any event, the letter came to the attention of Nova Scotia Governor Peregrine Hopson who sent a copy to the British Secretary of State, the Earl of Holderness, in London. 33 What was sent to London was in fact a transcription, in French, made by officials at Halifax. The first page of the transcript was headed by a note in English, explaining that the letter had come from an inhabitant of St. John’s Island and that it had been addressed to “the French inhabitants of Nova Scotia.”

In the letter we have a reaffirmation of the policy of relocation of Acadians to Île Saint-Jean and Île Royale and of the inducements being offered. If this was the first of such letters from an inhabitant of Île Saint-Jean, then it marks, in two ways, a ratcheting up of the overall approach being utilized by French authorities to implement the policy. First, “advice” from the Governor is being communicated to mainland Acadians. Second, the device of an appeal from one of their own, who has already made the move, is being used. In the letter, the matter of the spiritual well-being of Acadians is being invoked. This would no doubt resonate with a considerable number of Acadians who felt that their access to priests was inadequate. The Treaty of Utrecht of 1713 provided for Acadians remaining in Nova Scotia to have

33. Hopson to Secretary of State, 18 October 1752, National Archives of the United Kingdom, CO 217, Vol. 40, pp. 371-371v; Doiron’s letter was an enclosure with Hopson’s letter and is found at pp. 375-375v.
Roman Catholic priests available to them. It did not stipulate how many priests, or who got to select them.34

The matter of priests in Acadia was somewhat problematic for the British from soon after the signing of the treaty, until the early 1750s when difficulties came to a head. The problem was that most of the priests did not confine themselves to the normal pastoral activities and duties. They did not do so, because they were pressured by French government authorities in France and at Louisbourg and Québec35 to involve themselves in the struggle between France and Great Britain.36 Certain of them, eg. Antoine Gaulin, Pierre Maillard and Jean-Louis Le Loutre, concentrated on the spiritual well-being of the Mi'kmag, at the same time encouraging the Mi'kmag to provide military intelligence, to harass and kill Anglo-American soldiers in Nova Scotia, and sometimes interfere with Anglo-American shipping, particularly with New England fishing vessels off the coast of Nova Scotia. Some priests, it is true, paid only lip service to this “duty,” and a few may have maintained totally clean hands. Nevertheless, some, including Pierre Maillard, Jean-Louis Le Loutre, Jean Manach, Maurice de La Corne and François Le Guerne became skilled at animating, if not leading, the Mi'kmag and other Native peoples in military action against the British. Le Loutre was the most troublesome of all – to the extent that Governor Cornwallis put a £50 price on his head.

The other way in which the priests were a thorn in the side of the British was that they sought to keep the Acadians attached to France and discouraged them from taking an unconditional oath of allegiance. Again, this behaviour of the priests was expected on the part of French government authorities. It is not surprising, therefore, that there were disputes between certain priests and Governors at Annapolis Royal and Halifax and that complaints were

34. In article XIV of the treaty it is stated: “But for those who are willing to remain there [Acadia], and to be subject to the kingdom of Great Britain, are to enjoy the free exercise of their religion, according to the usage of the church of Rome, as far as the laws of Great Britain do allow the same.” See Charles Jenkinson, A Collection of All the Treaties of Peace, Alliance and Commerce Between Great Britain and Other Powers, Vol. 1 (1648-1713) (London, 1785), p. 36 [reprinted in 1968 by Greg International Publishers, Farnborough, England].

35. In the case of Québec, the pressure was exerted primarily through the Bishop of Québec.

36. See Feuille au net (lue au Roy), concerning colonies, 29 August, 1749, C11A, 94, 76-78v.
sometimes made to the Bishop of Québec. On several occasions certain
priests were arrested and detained or banished from Nova Scotia. British au-
torities felt that they had the right to approve any priests coming to Nova
Scotia to work among the Acadians while the Bishop and France thought
otherwise. These tensions had the inevitable result that in the years leading
up to 1752 when Doiron’s letter was written, many Acadians probably were
not getting spiritual support from their priests to the extent that they would
have wished. The situation in this regard on Île Saint-Jean saw a dramatic
improvement in 1752 and 1753 when three new parishes were established
and four new priests came to the Island. This improving situation would have
been well known to Doiron and to the visitors from Louisbourg in the
summer of 1752.

Like Doucet, Doiron makes reference to “arrangements for Acadia.”
This was likely a reference to the joint commission dealing with the border
of Acadia. Two years had passed since the letter of Doucet, who apparently
had held out some hope for the outcome of the commission’s deliberations.
By 1752, however, it was apparent to all that the commission was making
almost no progress. This fact was seized upon by the drafter of the Doiron
letter as a further reason for electing to come to territory that was indisputably
French – Île Saint-Jean. “Being deceived by the English” is a phrase that
would have no doubt relied for resonance on tensions relating to a variety of
things. For one, there were the problems with the priests discussed above,
which may have caused some Acadians to feel the Treaty of Utrecht article
promising priests had not been satisfactorily honoured by the British, or had
been initially honoured but subsequently reneged on to some degree. Re-
prisals visited upon a few, including the Gautier family, for being too blatant
in their support of the military campaigns of Duvidier, Marin and the Duc
d’Anville to retake Acadia may have been viewed by some Acadians as
British “deceit.” More than anything, the term “deceit” probably was a
reference to the fact that for many years, the British had accepted an oath of
allegiance from Acadians in which they would not need to bear arms, but
after the arrival of Governor Cornwallis in 1749, an unconditional oath of
allegiance was expected and demanded.

In his letter, Doiron in effect puts Governor de Raymond on a pedestal.
Quite possibly, Doiron had seen or even met the Governor on his recent visit
to Île Saint-Jean. Governor Raymond was certainly not someone who would
fail to make a mark. Many would not have agreed, however, with the charac-
terization in Doiron’s letter. A contemporary and colleague, Michel de
Courtois de Surlaville, wrote that the flamboyant Raymond was “headstrong, vain and presumptuous.” Perhaps Surlaville’s most charitable comment was that Raymond was animated by “an intense zeal which never lets him listen at all.” Thomas Pichon who, like Surlaville worked under Raymond, observed that he knew “how to profit by the knowledge of others, and to turn it to his sole advantage.”

About the most positive statement about Raymond that occurs in a biographical sketch by a modern historian is that “many of his projects had merit, [but] they failed through his inability to concentrate his energies and his lack of discrimination....” He was given to a lavish lifestyle, glorified in pomp and circumstance, and was extravagant, self-centered, high-handed and domineering. He clashed frequently with the financial commissary, Jacques Prevost de La Croix, who shared some of Raymond’s characteristics. The Governor, who according to Doiron’s letter, was “great and upright,” used people with little regard and got his servant girl pregnant. According to his biographical sketch, he was “pathologically obsessed with his self-importance.” While energetic, the object of his energies was personal advancement rather than public service. In less than one year after his arrival at Louisbourg, unhappy with his increasingly untenable situation, he requested a transfer. By the fall of 1753 Raymond, who had had no experience in either the Marine or colonies prior to his Louisbourg posting, was gone, having occupied the Governor’s office a little more than two years.

Religion and making priests available to colonists in Île Royale and Île Saint-Jean does not seem to have been one of Raymond’s priorities or interests, despite the ascription in the Doiron letter, i.e., his “nature... to provide good examples to all the people, particularly through his great love of fostering spiritual well being.” It is true that several new priests would come to Île Saint-Jean in 1752 and 1753, i.e., after Raymond arrived at Louisbourg in early August 1751. However, the credit for this may well belong primarily to Abbé de L’Isle-Dieu, the Bishop of Québec’s vicar general in France, and to his interceding directly with the Minister of Marine. The Abbé may not have had a particularly good opinion of Raymond, since in one letter to the

38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
Bishop the Abbé writes that "the idea of the apostolic vicariate proposed by the Comte de Raymond is a chimera."

In Doiron's letter, it is claimed that the Acadians of Nova Scotia could no longer count on, or reasonably hope for, priests continuing to be available to them in Nova Scotia. At this time there were eight priests working among the Acadians of Acadie anglais and Acadie française, the latter including the St. John River. As it turned out, all eight were still administering to their flocks shortly before the time of the deportation of 1755. Also, at the time that Doiron's letter was written, the availability of priests in Île Saint-Jean was not much better than in Acadia. Although three more priests would arrive on Île Saint-Jean in 1753, in 1752 there were only two. The average number of inhabitants that needed to be served by each priest in 1752 on the mainland was not greatly different than on Île Saint-Jean.

It is reasonable to presume that senior officials at Louisbourg and/or Port-la-Joie were satisfied that Paul Doiron was the right person to lend his signature to a letter that was intended to appeal to mainland Acadians. Accordingly, it is likely that he was a person who was well known to a considerable number of his compatriots on the mainland, which he had left only about two years earlier, had some stature there and was respected. One may

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41. L'Isle-Dieu to Pontbriand, 3 March 1753, Rapport de l'archiviste de la province de Québec pour l'année 1935/36 (Québec, 1936), p. 370. L'Isle-Dieu discusses arrangements for supplying priests to Île Saint-Jean on numerous occasions. See various letters to the Minister and to the Bishop of Québec on pp. 359-409.

42. According to D.C. Harvey, the census of the summer of 1752 enumerated 2,223 inhabitants on Île Saint-Jean. The two priests, were Jacques Girard and Patrice La Grée and the number of inhabitants per priest was therefore 1,116. For this census see "Tour of Inspection Made by the Sieur de la Roque, Census 1752", Appendix A, Part 1, pp. 3-172 in Report Concerning Canadian Archives for the Year 1905, Vol. II (Ottawa, 1906), pp. 76-172; D.C. Harvey, The French Régime in Prince Edward Island (New Haven, CT, 1926), pp. 168-169. The eight missionaries on the mainland were Jean-Louis Le Loutre, Henri Daudin, Charles Germain, Claude Jean-Baptiste Chauvreux, Jean-Baptiste de Gay Desenclaves, François LeGuerne, Jean Manach, and François Le Maire. Stephen A. White has determined that the Acadian population of Nova Scotia, including all of the Chignecto region and the Saint John River, on the eve of the 1755 deportation was somewhere between 9,729 and 9,993. See Stephen A. White, "The True Number of the Acadians...", op. cit., pp. 55-56. Taking the mean of White's two numbers, and dividing by 8, gives 1,232 inhabitants per priest. Admittedly, because of transmigration from the mainland to Île Saint-Jean and Île Royale between 1752 and 1755, the ratio for the mainland in 1752 would have been somewhat higher than 1,232 to 1.
presume, also, that he was comfortable in a leadership role, and in going to Louisbourg to represent prospective migrants to Île Saint-Jean, he could interact in an able manner with officialdom at Louisbourg. In effect he was acting in the role of the traditional Acadian deputy, a responsibility that his father, Pierre, had exercised at Beaubassin.43

It should be noted that Paul Doiron was not the first Acadian to write a letter from Île Saint-Jean that sought to persuade mainland Acadians to move to the Island. It is known that Joseph-Nicolas Gautier had done the same in 1749.44 However, no copy or transcription of it is known to exist.

**Letter of Nicolas Gautier**

Few Acadian families, if any, were more prominent in the 1740s than that of Joseph-Nicolas Gautier.45 He was born in 1689 in France and came to the Port-Royal area around 1710. In 1715, at Port-Royal he married Marie Allain, a daughter of Louis Allain, a “merchant of consequence.”46 It was his marriage and subsequent inheritance from his father-in-law’s estate that enabled Joseph-Nicolas Gautier to advance rapidly as a merchant and entrepreneur. The family was based at Bellair on the south bank of the Annapolis River. Joseph-Nicolas had a sawmill and two gristmills. He also had extensive land holdings along the Annapolis River and at Port-Royal and owned several vessels engaged in trade to the Carribean, France, New England and Louisbourg. By the mid-1740s his assets were worth a claimed 85,000 livres, making him undoubtedly the wealthiest man in Acadia – a “veritable tycoon,” as one historian put it.47

In addition to his entrepreneurial acumen, Joseph-Nicolas Gautier had one other trait that made him stand out. Having a dislike for the British, on

43. It is claimed that Pierre Doiron, husband of Madeleine Doucet, was deputy of his village and that he baptized children in the absence of the priest. See [www.ancestorgenealogy.com/chapy/doiron.htm](http://www.ancestorgenealogy.com/chapy/doiron.htm).


various occasions he and his family actively supported French efforts to capture Port-Royal and to return Acadia to France. He provided intelligence on British defences and troop movements; transported foodstuffs, munitions, and troops; and piloted French vessels along the coastal waters of Acadia on behalf of Joseph Du Pont Duvivier in 1744, Paul Marin de La Malgue in 1745, La Jonquièure in 1746 and Jean-Baptiste-Nicolas-Roch de Ramezay in 1746 and 1747.48

Gautier and his sons were not the only Acadian partisans to actively assist the French in their campaigns to retake Acadia in the 1740s, but the family was certainly the most prominent in such a role.49 In 1744, the British seized his 40-ton vessel and its cargo, valued together at 7,000 livres, and put a price on his head. The following year, British soldiers burned his habitation which in 1744 had served as Duvivier's headquarters for a campaign against Annapolis Royal. Even before Marin de La Malgue reached Annapolis Royal in 1745, the British took into custody and imprisoned a number of suspected Acadian collaborators, including Marie Allain, the wife of Joseph-Nicolas Gautier, and Pierre Gautier, his son.50 After 10 months of having "their feet in irons" in prison, mother and son managed to escape by forcing the bars and scaling the walls. In 1746 Gautier, père, who had, himself, managed to keep one step ahead of the British, moved his family to Beaubassin. There he apparently was promised some financial compensation from the French government for his losses and abandoned lands, and was given a grant of 500 livres to enable him to reestablish himself on French territory.51

By late summer 1749, the Gautier family had moved to a location on the north bank of the Rivière-du-Nord-Est in Île Saint-Jean, giving the name "Bellair" to their new habitation.52 At Bellair, in Acadia, Joseph-Nicolas and

49. Another notable Acadian partisan was Joseph LeBlanc dit Le Maigre whose daughter married a son of Joseph-Nicolas Gautier in 1760.
50. Gautier, père evaded capture since he was away from the Gautier residences, while assisting Marin.
52. Bigot to Minister, 11 October 1749, C11A, Vol. 93, pp. 283-284v. Although it is generally reckoned that the Gautiers moved to Île Saint-Jean in 1749, there exists some evidence that they may have arrived as early as the fall of 1748. Such timing is suggested by the fact that census taker Joseph de la Roque in 1752 recorded that the
Marie had conducted some farming operations, so turning their hands to agriculture on Île Saint-Jean would not have been something new for them. Despite their very large losses, they were not exactly destitute; in September 1749, shortly before the family relocated to Île Saint-Jean, or shortly after, Joseph-Nicolas contracted to supply 16 head of cattle to Acadian refugees at Port-Toulouse on Île Royale.\(^53\) His still owning at least one vessel would have enabled him to engage in some trading — an activity that had helped him amass a fortune.\(^54\) Reestablishment of the family fortune, however, was not to be; on 10 April 1752 Joseph-Nicolas died at the age of 63.\(^55\)

The 1752 census, taken during the summer of that year, shows Widow Gautier, 58 years of age, living on her 7 arpents by 40 arpents parcel [0.4 km by 2.3 km or 236 acres], where some land had been cleared and seven bushels of wheat and one bushel of oats had been sown the previous spring. She owned six oxen, four cows, three heifers, two bulls, three calves, two wethers, two ewes and 80 fowl. She had in her employ one Guillaume Lagneau, described as being 55 years of age and “of Indian nationality, born in Baston.”\(^56\) One may presume that he handled some of the farmwork and that he had come with the family from Acadia. Perhaps he had been hired by Joseph-Nicolas when at Boston on a trading trip. The census taker noted that the Widow Gautier also owned a much larger property located at the place called “de Brouillard.” It measured 40 arpents by 40 arpents [2.3 km by 2.3 km or 1,351 acres]. No residents on this parcel were enumerated. Living with Marie Gautier were two sons and two daughters, ranging from 11 to 19 years

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54. In 1750, Gautier obtained a permit to engage in coastal trade along the shores of Île Royale with the 50-ton St. Nicolas which belonged to him. See Enregistrement des congès, 26 August 1750, MG6 A2, Série B, Vol. 6116, p. 4. In the same year, he had a 30-ton bateau built on Île Saint-Jean. See “État des Bâtiments qui ont été construits... pendant l’année mil sept cent cinquante,” C11B, Vol. 29, pp. 210-210v.


56. “Tour of Inspection Made by the Sieur de la Roque,” p. 88. “Baston” reflects the way in which Acadians pronounced the word “Boston.”
of age. Living near her on their own properties were two married sons, Nicolas and Pierre.57

Joseph-Nicolas Gautier’s letter was written while he was on a trip to Louisbourg, only seven months before his death on 1 April 1752.58 Based on a number of letters that Gautier wrote before moving to Île Saint-Jean, all in the same hand, it may be deduced that the letter of 10 September 1751 was also written and signed by him. The letter reads as follows:

Monsieur,

Je nay pas voulu Manquer L’occasion du Vaisseau du Roy Sans me donner L’honneur de vous Ecrire ces Lignes pour vous assurer de mes tres humbles respects et de mon Entiere soumission. Et en même tems de prendre la liberté de vous représenter la Situation de L’Isle St. Jean ou Je suis actuellement Etabli avec toute ma famille, ou un gros nombre D’habitans de l’Acadie a mon Exemple et sollicitation s’ont venus s’Etablier sur cette Isle au nombre de deux a trois Cent familles avec Leur Bestiaux ce qui fait qu’aujourd'hui L’Endroit paroit tout autre quil netoit Ci devant par Les travaux que tous ces habitans ont faits et font tous Les Jours par Les defrichements des terres dont Ils se trouvent fort contents.

J’ose vous Representer, Monseigneur, Quil ne leur manquerait que des grains pour Ensemencer leur terres qui sont en Etat d’etre Ensemencés, Ce qui mettrait Cette Isle En Situation de se soutenir par Elle même; Monsieur franquet Et M’ Boucher et plusieurs de ces messieurs qui ont fait leur tournée ont vù par eux meme Ce qui en Etait et en paraissent fort contans, Et Esperant qu’avec Le Secours de Votre Grandeur. Ce sera dans la suite de quelques années un fort bon pays pour Le secours de L’Isle Royale tant pour les Bestiaux que pour Les Grains, Cest ce que Je prend La liberté de Representer a votre Grandeur. Et Esperant quelle voudra bien m’accorder Le Poste de capitaine de Port qui se trouve necessaire dans L’Endroit, tant pour l’entrée que pour la sorti des vaisseaux de sa Majesté, sans vanité Je puis me flatter qu’il ne S’en pourroit pas trouver un plus Capable de Remplir ce poste etant connoisseur du Port et du Chenal Et etant practicien de toutes ces Costes et avres depuis quarante ans Esperant que Votre Grandeur voudra bien avoir des Egards pour Les Bons Services que Jay rendus moy et toute ma famille dans toute La Guerre derniere, Et ayant abandonné a la Cadie plus de soixante et dix mille Livres de bien pour me Retirer sous la domination de mon veritable Prince. Monsieur de la Galissoniere pourroit vous en

rendre un fidèle compte avec Monsr Auwart qui Etoient pour lors à
Québec, qui ont bien voulu Se Charger de mes memoires pour Les
presenter a La Cour, dont Ils ont bien voulu me faire l’honneur de
m’assurer de la protection du Roy.

Cest ce que Je prend la liberté, Monseigneur, de vous Representer, ainsy
Faisant Je Seray obligé et toute ma famille de prier Le Seigneur pour La
Sante et prosperité de Votre Personne.

En me donnant L’honneur de me dire avec un tres profound Respect et
une Entière Soumission.

Votre très humble et tres obéissant Serviteur
Nicolas Gautier
Louisbourg le10 7\textsuperscript{e} 1751

In his letter, Joseph-Nicolas Gautier takes credit for the transmigration
of 200 to 300 new families to Île Saint Jean. These numbers are quite plausi-
ble. From April 1750 until the middle of August in 1751, a total of 1,270 new
colonists had arrived on the Island from Acadia.\textsuperscript{59} Also, it is known that
Gautier was seen by officials at both Louisbourg and Québec as a “model”
new colonist, who, because of his profile, would serve as a good example to
prospective migrants. Accordingly, he received special assistance to relocate
to Île Saint-Jean.\textsuperscript{60} He was reported as having personally written to some
mainland Acadians to urge them to quit Acadia in favour of Île Saint-Jean
and Île Royale.\textsuperscript{61}

Gautier’s letter, written in the month of September, makes reference to
a lack of seed grain. This is the time of year that inventories of grain would
normally be at a high, since the more-established farmers would have com-
pleted their harvest only a few weeks earlier. However, in 1749 there had
been a major crop failure on the Island due to a plague of grasshoppers, and
in 1750 an epidemic of mice had ravished the grain fields.\textsuperscript{62} Also, the arrival
of new settlers with their cattle and other livestock from Acadia had greatly
increased local demand for grain. Shipments to the Island from France,
Louisbourg and Québec were never enough. Not having adequate amounts

\textsuperscript{59} Louis Franquet, “Le voyage de Franquet aux îles Royale et Saint-Jean,” \textit{Rapport de
l’archiviste de la province de Québec pour l’année 1923/24} (Québec, 1924), pp. 133-
134.

\textsuperscript{60} Bigot to Minister, 30 September 1749, C11A, Vol. 93, pp. 253-254v; La Jonquières and
Bigot to Minister, 5 October 1750, C11A, Vol. 95, pp. 51-53.

\textsuperscript{61} Bigot to Minister, 30 September 1749, C11A, Vol. 93, pp. 253-254v.

\textsuperscript{62} Franquet, “Le voyage de Franquet aux îles Royale et Saint-Jean,” p. 132.
of seed grain available was of course a very serious matter because it meant that in the following year the crop would be necessarily smaller than it otherwise would be. That the colonists were forced to "eat into" seed reserves was a measure of how desperate their situation was. This may have been the first year on Île Saint-Jean that it proved impossible to spare adequate grain for the spring planting, but it would not be the last.63

Gautier's letter declares that Île Saint-Jean would become a larder for Île Royale. This was not the first time that this hope or objective would be proclaimed and it certainly would not be the last.64 However, such was not to be. Although there were occasional shipments of foodstuffs from the Island to Louisbourg, these were far outstripped by the shipments of food to Île Saint-Jean. Despite these shipments to the Island, critical food shortages were commonplace from 1750 until the end of the French regime on the Island in 1758. On a number of occasions some of the population experienced famine. During the winter of 1756/1757 some people starved to death and in 1757 some settlers were reduced to eating grass.65

63. In 1752 and 1757, seed grain was in short supply. See Drucour to Minister, 9 May 1753, Archives Nationales de France, Archives de la Guerre, Série A1, Vol. 3393, pièce 66; Drucour and Provost to Minister, 25 November 1756, C11B, Vol. 36, pp. 29-34v; Drucour and Prevost to Minister, 10 December 1757, C11B, Vol. 37, pp. 31-35.

64. The idea of Île Saint-Jean being a supplier of foodstuffs to Île Royale emerged as early as 1726 – see de Mezy to Minister, 14 August 1726, C11B, Vol. 8, pp. 87-91. In 1741, a shortage of grain in Île Royale caused Louisbourg to look to Île Saint-Jean for supplies. See Duquesnel and Bigot to Minister, 15 October 1741, C11B, Vol. 23, pp. 21-22v. It was soon after Île Royale and Île Saint-Jean reverted to France as a result of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, however, that there was a reaffirmation that Île Saint-Jean would become the "breadbasket" of Île Royale. This was one of several reasons why the government of France reaffirmed in 1748 a policy of encouraging Acadians to relocate to Île Saint-Jean – see Minister to La Galissonnière, 3 June 1748, B, Vol. 87, p. 237. The commandant at Port-la-Joie, as late as 1756, harboured the belief that Île Saint-Jean would not only become self-sufficient in food, but would also be a substantial supplier to Île Royale. See Vaudreuil to Minister, 7 August 1756, C11A, Vol. 101, p. 84-87v.

While he may not have wanted to boast, Joseph-Nicolas Gautier could legitimately claim that no one was better fitted for appointment to the position of port captain at Port-la-Joie than himself. He was well known as a navigator and shipowner and was quite familiar with coastal waters throughout all of Acadia, Île Royale and Île Saint-Jean. There is no evidence that Gautier’s request was approved. Even if it had, Gautier died before he would have learned of it. Two of his sons had more success, however. The older, Nicolas Gautier, held the post of assistant port captain at Port-la-Joie from 1752 until 1756, while his brother, Pierre Gautier, occupied this position from 1757 until 1758. Both sons had acquired their father’s skills as a mariner, as well as his strong anti-British sentiments and penchant for assisting the French in their military campaigns in Acadia.

In his letter, Joseph-Nicolas Gautier does not go into any detail concerning his “good services” rendered to the French Crown, i.e. his partisan work to help the French retake Acadia. Two years earlier, shortly before moving to Île Saint-Jean, he recounted his services at length and in detail in a 16-page letter to the Minister of Marine.

Monsieur Franquet is Louis Franquet, an army officer and military engineer based at Louisbourg from 1750 until 1758. In 1751, he visited Île Saint-Jean to review the state of the Island’s defences and to recommend how they should be strengthened. While on the Island he travelled to a number of communities and left a detailed and valuable record of what he found. Monsieur de La Galissonière is Michel Barrin de La Galissonière who served at Québec from 1747 to 1749, officially as commandant general, but in effect as Governor General of New France. Monsieur Hocquart (Gilles Hocquart),

nombre a été assez grand) ils sont delivrés de bien des maux.” Concerning grass, Prevost wrote: “... pour secourir l’île S’Jean où les habitants Broutaient l’herbe le mois dernier.” See Prevost to Minister, 6 October 1757, C11B, Vol. 37, p. 148v. Though famine was more endemic on Île Saint-Jean during the 1750s than in previous decades, it was experienced a number of years in the 1730s and 1740s. In 1749, some inhabitants are said to have died from starvation. See François Bigot to Minister, 9 August 1749, C11B, Vol. 28, pp. 126-127v. Yet, an earlier reference to starving to death relates to habitants at Port-la-Joie. See Duchambon to Minister, 2 October 1737, C11B, Vol. 19, pp. 157-160.

68. “Le voyage de Franquet aux îles Royale et Saint-Jean,” pp. 111-140.
based at Québec, was the intendant of New France from 1729 until 1748. Monsieur Boucher was Pierre-Jérôme Boucher, a draftsman, cartographer and engineer who was working under Franquet in 1751. He had long served at Louisbourg, having arrived there in 1717.\(^69\)

**Letters of the Widow Gautier**

It is clear that Marie (Allain) Gautier believed that her husband had not been justly compensated for his losses by the time of his death. In her view, promises made by Raymond and Prevost at Louisbourg and Governor de La Galissonière at Québec had not been kept. She appears to have been a determined lady; in the space of a couple of years – from 1752 to 1754 – she fired off three letters to the Minister of Marine in France.\(^70\)

The first of the three letters to the Minister of Marine was signed at Louisbourg by "Josette Gautier pour ma mere (sic)." These words appear to be in a handwriting different from that of the body of the letter. Also, the handwriting in any one letter does not seem to be in the same hand as the writing in the other two. One may therefore conclude that Marie Allain was herself unable to write. Whether she could write or not, Marie Allain was clearly a woman of substance and tenacity, and apparently had the ability to manage her family’s business interests. She may have learned the basics from her entrepreneurial father and no doubt honed her skills during her adult years at Bellair in Acadia during periods when her husband was absent and she had to manage the multi-faceted family businesses.\(^71\) Her three letters are similar in a number of respects yet complementary. The letters and English translations follow:

*Lettre de la V° Gauthier, 14 Décembre 1752 à Louisbourg
Sur le terrien qu’on lui a enlevé pour le redonner à Monsieur de S'Ovide*


\(^70\) Three letters in a couple of years may not seem like Madame Gautier was keeping the pressure up particularly vigorously. However, it must be remembered that it was not abnormal for half a year to be required to receive a response to a letter that crossed the Atlantic by wind-powered ship to reach the Minister of Marine. The letters are found at: 14 December 1752, C11B, Vol. 32, pp. 349-349v; 10 November 1753, C11B, Vol. 32, pp. 350-351; 1754, G1, Vol. 462, pp. 436-437.

\(^71\) Census taker La Roque identified her as a négotiantate. She was quite possibly Île Saint-Jean’s first business woman.
Monseigneur

Ayant eu la malheur de perdre ce printemps mon mary, jay recours à votre Grandeur, pour luy représenter les grandes pertes que nous avons fait dans cette guerre, qui ont été de 60000° dont Monsieur de la Galissonniere plus mieux que personne vous latester.

Monsieur le Comte de Maurepas avoit accordé 400° a feu mon mary, en attendant qu’il fut a bien de nous faire trouver cette somme, aujourd’hui Monsieur Prevost ne ma point fait payer un sol de cela, et ma dit qu’il falloit un ordre pour que cela me fut continué et reversible à mes enfants qu’il l’écriroit à votre Grandeur, qu’il pensoit que vous voudriez bien envoyer cet ordre.

Nous avons travaillé quatre années le rétablissement de cette Colonie sur Brouillard, où feu mon mary s’est mis avec ordre de Monsieur le Comte [de] la Galissonniere, aujourd’hui il faut que j’en sorte puisque Monsieur de Raymond a eu votre ordre de faire donner ce terrain à Monsieur [de] Brouilliant qu’il a redonné à Monsieur de Thierry, il y a voir aucune Batisse de maison sur ce terrain, aussy avec peu d’argent que le Roy peu donner à Monsieur [de] S’ Ovide ou à Monsieur [de] Thierry, ce terrain nous resterray, nous y avons une maison, et avons fait de grand dessers et fait des fossés dans les prairies qui étoient noyé, et qui sy il faut que nous en sortions, qu’il vous plaise Monseigneur, d’envoyer l’ordre que la maison et travaux que nous y avons faits nous soit payés par celuy qui sera pour en prendre possession nous étant mis dessus de bonne fois croyant être en surté, je feray des voeux au Seigneur, pour votre santé, et vous supléi de me croire avec toute la soumission, et respect possible, Monseigneur.

Votre très humble et très obéissante servante

Josette Gautier pour ma mère.

Lettre de la Vve Gautier, 10 9bre 1753 à l’Isle St. Jean

Monseigneur

Sur la promesse que vous fait mons le Comte de Raimon et mons Provos de même que mons lagalissonniere de sinteresser a me procurer une indemnité pour labandons des bien que feu mon marie et moy avons fait dans l’acadie acause de bon service que nous avons rendue au françois dans les différent detachement qui sont venus pandans la guerre dans lacadie, et ayant pris les armes contre les Englois, Monsieur [de] Laga- lissonniere, de même que Monsieur Aucart nous manderre dabandonner ce que nous avons fait sans eziter quoique cela nous fit tort de pres de
soisante et quelque mille livres, ce qui est sans exagération car je puis vous envoyer un état conforme à celle que feu mon mari envoya à Monsieur de Maurpas dans une requête qu'il lui fit présenter, cet état est entre les mains de Monsieur Bourdon mon jendre, qui doit pascer l'hivert à la Rochelle. Je puis assurer Sa Grandeur, que quoique l'on nous ayant fait espérer que nous serions dédommagée de tous les aban-
dons que nous ayons pus faire nous navons pas encore vu un sol sinon une pention que Sa Majesté avoir acordée à feu mon mari en récompence des bons service qu'il lui avoir rendue. si je ne puis estre remboursé de la somme que nous avons abondonnée à lacadie, au moins Monseigneur en indemnité faite moy accorder pour moy et ma famille la pention que feu mon mari avoirs, je suis Monseigneur avec une groce famille qu'il faut quactuellement je soutienne, sans aucun secours car on mavoir accordée une terre à l'isle S' Jean nommée Brouilliant sur laquelle jay fait Batir une maison et fait semer, cela otorize par une consection a nous accordée par Monsieur de Bonnaventure commandant de la dite ille, et de feu Monsieur Degoutin subdélégué, on veux a presant que jay mis cette terre en valeur la faire tomber à Monsieur Brouillian pour la remettre à Monsieur de Cierri; la chose ne me parois pas juste j'espère que léquité de vôtre justice empechera que cette perte soit jointe aux autre ou aux moins quel men fera dédommager soit par le Roy ou celui a quis on lacordera c'est la grace que jattan de toutes léquité de votre justice. Je suis & La Veuve Gautier.

Canada
1754
M. de la Porte

A Monseigneur de Garde de Sceaux Ministre et Secretaire d'Etat de la Marine

Monseigneur

Anne veuve du S' Nicolas Gautier, a L'honneur de representer a Votre Grandeur qu'ayant quitté le port Royale dans L'accadie et tous ses biens pour venir S'Etablir à Lisle S' Jean, Sur Lavis que M. le Marquis de la Gallisoniere en donna a feu son mary, où Je suis presentement avec toute ma famille laquelle est tres grande ils nous a été aconcedé un Terrain nommé Brouillan, Sur L'ordre que M. le Marquis de la Gallisoniere Gouverneur Général pour L'ors de toute la Nouvelle france en avoir donné a M de Bonnaventure qui commandeit a lad Isle S' Jean et a M. Daigoutin Sub délégué de M L'intendant de Canada duquel nous avons la Concession dud terrain ou nous avons fait faire de Bonne foy, croiant devoir estre tranquile, une maison, d'Efriecher, netoyer les prairies et fait
faire des fossés, pour désécher lad prairie que etoit innondé ce qui nous a coute considérablement a faire faire: presentement on veut nous L’otter disant qu’il est a M. de S’Ovide lequel n’en a point de concession et ce pour le donner a un Capitaine de Louisbourg, qui ne peu le faire valoir par lui meme ce qui nous a arrester et Empecher de Continuer a d’Effracher et mettre le tout en valeur Sur cette apprehension, qu’il vous plaisme Monseigneur de faire donner ordre a M. le Gouverneur et Intendant de L’Isle Royale, que lesd Batise et travail que nous y avons faite, nous Soient payés par arbitres par celui qui en prendra possession, ou que L’ordre de M. Le Marquis de la Gallisoniere et concession que nous avons Soit confirmé de Nouveau, comme assy que S’il faut quitter led terrein qu’il nous en Soit donné la meme quantité de terrein non concedé dans lad’ Isle; M le Marquis de la Gallisoniere a une entiere connoissance de tout lequel doit en parler a Votre Grandeur, m’en raportant entièrement au rapport qu’il vous en fera et a ce qu’il Souhoittera qu’il soit fait a ce Sujet C’est la grace que j’espère de la Justice de Votre Grandeur et ne cesserés de faire des voeux les plus Sinceres pour la conservation de Votre Grandeur.

Just how large were Joseph-Nicolas Gautier’s losses in Acadia and what type of losses were they? In his letter of 10 September 1751, he claimed that he had lost more than 70,000 livres worth of property. However, in a long letter to Minister de Maurepas in 1747, before he moved to Île Saint-Jean, he sought indemnification for 65,000 livres for losses of land, buildings and two batiments de mer, together with 20,000 livres worth of debt owing to him. He provided a breakdown of the property losses in some detail. Since Gautier had been forced to flee from the Annapolis River to Beaubassin, these debts probably became more difficult to collect than if he had remained. In her first letter, Marie Allain claims that the losses were 60,000 livres and in her second, the figure mentioned is over 60,000 livres. Madame Gautier’s first two letters would suggest that either most or all of the debt had been collected by 1752, or that she had decided not to include it in her request for redress. Her third letter, written in 1754, does not mention compensation for any losses incurred prior to the family’s move to Île Saint-Jean. This could suggest that she had been successful in obtaining some compensation for the losses in Acadia, but this seems improbable – no records can be found of any compensation paid to Madame Gautier. Indeed, a letter of her son, Pierre

73. It is possible that some of the debt would have been uncollectible, even if Gautier had remained in Acadia.
Gautier, written in 1757, indicates that the family did abandon their claims for losses in Acadia.\textsuperscript{74} The widow Gautier makes reference to a pension of 400 livres granted to her husband, pending a larger settlement. In 1748, the King granted Joseph-Nicolas Gautier a \textit{gratification extraordinaire} of 500 livres for his services in Acadia and Minister de Maurepas indicated that he would endeavour to pay this sum each year until circumstances would permit something more substantial being done for Gautier.\textsuperscript{75} It seems that Gautier received payments of 500 livres for two years at most, and possibly only once.\textsuperscript{76} In the spring of 1750, Minister de Maurepas wrote Governor de La Jonquière and Intendant François Bigot in Québec that he had procured a gratification of 400 livres for Nicolas Gautier who was “distinguished for his zeal.”\textsuperscript{77} It appears from Marie Allain’s first letter that this yearly amount was paid to her husband until 1751 only (two payments), no payments having been made after Gautier’s death in the spring of 1752. To put 400 livres in perspective, it was roughly the same as the yearly salary of a priest working in Acadia or Île Saint-Jean, or of an interpreter working for French government officials at Louisbourg.

It is probable that Gautier, who made trips to Québec in 1747 and 1748, would not have been dealing with government officials there had the war of 1744-1748 not resulted in the French colonial administration at Louisbourg being replaced for several years by a British administration. It would have been more logical for him to be looking for redress from French officials at Louisbourg, a place he had visited often before the war.\textsuperscript{78} By the time of Marie Allain’s second letter (fall of 1753), she seems to have somewhat given up hope of receiving compensation for the family’s losses in Acadia—at least restore the yearly pension of 400 livres, she pleads. By the third letter,

\begin{itemize}
\item 75. Minister to La Galissonnière and Bigot, 23 February 1748, B, Vol. 87, p. 28.
\item 77. Minister to La Jonquière and Bigot, 23 May 1750, B, Vol. 91, p. 38.
\item 78. For Gautier’s visits to Québec, see La Galissonnière and Hocquart to Minister, 23 October 1747, C11A, Vol. 87, pp. 154-156; La Galissonnière and Bigot to Minister, 30 September 1748, C11A, Vol. 91, pp. 55-57v. Gautier’s trip to Québec in 1747 was by land for fear that if he went by sea, he might be captured by a British naval ship or privateer. The conflict between Great Britain and France from 1744 to 1748 was part of the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748).
\end{itemize}
one year later, the matter of a pension and indemnification for losses have apparently been replaced in her mind by the more immediate threat of loss of the major part of her land in Île Saint-Jean. There is no evidence that Marie Allain ever succeeded in having the pension reinstated or that she or her children ever received a single sou by way of compensation for the losses of her and her husband in Acadia. Also, any compensation that Joseph-Nicolas Gautier himself received appears to have been for his “good services” rather than for his losses. Matters were not helped by the discontinuity of officialdom that the Gautier family had to deal with – in the first instance officials of Canada at Québec, and, after 1748, officials at Louisbourg. Governmental and administrative “red tape” was as rife then as it is now.

It is interesting that in her second letter Marie Allain stated that Governor de La Galissonière and Intendant Hocquart had advised the Gautiers to abruptly flee Acadia in favour of French-held territory. La Galissonière’s spin on this seems a little different; he wrote to Minister Maurepas that Gautier “had determined to abandon his property in Acadia.”

Whatever role La Galissonière and Hocquart may have had in this, if any, it would no doubt have been to Marie Allain’s advantage to infer that government officials shared some responsibility for the losses incurred.

The “re-establishment of this colony” that Marie Allain writes of in her first letter is a reference to a new political dynamic being pursued by officials in France and at Louisbourg, following the restoration of Île Saint-Jean to France by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle which ended the War of the Austrian Succession. As mentioned earlier, there was a focussed and dedicated effort to develop Île Saint-Jean as a supplier of foodstuffs to Île Royale and encouraging emigration to Île Saint-Jean from the mainland was part and parcel of this. It was almost as if there were two French regimes on Île Saint-Jean – the old (1720-1745) regime and the new (post-1748) regime. As events would prove, the “new regime” was to last only a decade.

80. While Madame Gautier might argue that government officials had some responsibility or obligation to indemnify the family for losses, it is hard to argue that the officials were in any way responsible for the losses. After all, it was British or New England soldiers that burned or seized the Gautiers’ buildings and vessels in retaliation for Gautier’s aiding and abetting the enemy. Moreover, the administration at Port-Royal was in a position to seize the Gautiers’ lands for the same reason. About the only loss that Joseph-Nicolas Gautier might have precipitated by choosing not to flee would have been the loss of his personal freedom – he would have been incarcerated, if not worse.
In each of her letters Marie Allain mentions her children, her family, her large family, or a large family that she had to support. According to the census of 1752, she had two daughters living with her, aged 12 and 15, and two sons, aged 11 and 19. This was not a large family by the standards of the day, and the elder son, Joseph-Nicolas, probably would have been one of the prime workers on the Gautier’s land. The elder of the daughters, Élisabeth, would likely also have been a major contributor to household and farm chores. Her sons Joseph and Pierre, aged 35 and 24, respectively, lived with their wives within a few kilometers of her, each having his own property, and Joseph having two children of his own. Josette (Marie-Josèphe) Gautier, who at the age of 33 signed the first of the three letters on behalf of her mother, lived in Louisbourg where in 1737 she married Michel Du Pont de Gourville, an infantry officer. He was a brother of Joseph Dupont Duuvivier who served as a junior military officer on Île Saint-Jean in the early 1740s and a nephew of Louis Du Pont Duchambon, who served at Port-la-Joie as King’s Lieutenant from 1737 to 1744. In this role the latter was the most senior official on the Island.

Marie Allain mentions her son-in-law, Jean-François de Bourdon Dombourg, also a military officer who served on Île Saint-Jean for several years, beginning in 1749, and later at Louisbourg. He married Marguerite Gautier at Port-la-Joie only five months before Marie Allain wrote the first of her three letters to Minister de Maurepas. Like her sister, Josette, Marguerite provided her mother with a connection to officials in Louisbourg: Bourdon was a nephew of Claude-Élisabeth Denys de Bonaventure, commandant at Port-la-Joie from 1749 to 1754 when he became King’s Lieutenant at Louisbourg. According to Marie Allain’s second letter, written in late 1753, it was Bonaventure, whose nephew was by then her son-in-law, who granted to the Gautiers the property she referred to as Brouillan. While Marie Allain certainly had “some connections” to Louisbourg, they were not at a sufficiently high level to help her obtain a positive outcome to her petitions.

The reference to digging ditches on the marshes along the northern side of the Rivièrè-du-Nord-Est is particularly interesting. As far as is known, two of Marie Allain’s letters are the only documents from the French regime to mention this feature of marshland farming on Île Saint-Jean. Nowhere are dykes mentioned on Île Saint-Jean during the French colonial period, though
it is known that dykes were used to a limited degree. In various places, one may still see channels along the shores of the Hillsborough River which run across the marshland more or less perpendicular to the direction of river flow. Perhaps these have developed naturally, but perhaps they are the remnants of the drainage ditches of the type created by the Gautier family and other Acadian settlers.

The Brouillan property seems to have been a particularly thorny problem for Madame Gautier. In one sense, it might be viewed as an early manifestation, or forerunner, of the absentee landlord problem that so bedevilled the Island for the best part of a century during the British colonial regime. In the case of the Gautiers, it was a question of trying to get good title to land that was reputed to belong to someone living away from the Island – land upon which they had expended much work on improvements. The name, Brouillan, undoubtedly came from Joseph de Monbeton de Brouillan de Saint-Ovide, governor of Île Royale and Île Saint-Jean from 1718 to 1739. He lived in France after 1739 until his death in 1755 at the age of almost 80 years. Why this land was named thus is not exactly clear, but it apparently had been called “Brouillan” for at least two decades before the Gautiers relocated to Île Saint-Jean. On a map dated 1730, an area of land identified as “Broïllan” is located at the present Frenchfort. This area of land is immediately to the east of a stream that is marked on the map as Rivière Broïllan. A kilometer or two from its mouth, the stream meanders through a piece of marshy terrain that the map identifies as Prairie de M. de Broïllan.” A second stream,


82. Drainage ditches on the marshes of the Dunk River are discussed in Cairns, The Salt Marshes of the Dunk River, pp. 7-9 and Figures 9, 10 and 11. Cairns suggests that ditching work of French settlers was continued later by British settlers.

83. “Pland de la rivière Du nord-Est en l’isle St. Jean en 1730,” Map F/240 (Port) La Joye / 1730, Negative No. 49768, Library and Archives Canada. Today’s Battery Road runs through the area of land identified on the map as Broïllan.

84. Rivière Broïllan is now known as “Frenchfort Creek,” also “Millers Creek.”
called Rivière St. Ovide, parallels Rivière Broüillan on the map, about a kilometer further east. 85 It would seem from this nomenclature that Joseph de Monbeton de Brouillan de Saint-Ovide while governor may have granted these lands onto himself, perhaps unofficially.

When a dwelling was built Brouillan, and when people began to live there, is a little ambiguous. In his census taken during the summer of 1752, La Roque mentions Brouillan, but does not enumerate any people living on it. In the first of her three letters, written near the end of 1752, Marie Allain indicated that no dwelling had been built there prior to her coming to the Island, but that her family had built a dwelling, cleared a large parcel and constructed drainage ditches on the land known as “Brouillan.” About a year later, she wrote that she had sown some grain on Brouillan. No additional information is offered in the third letter. One may speculate that perhaps Brouillan was being prepared as a farm and place of residence for Joseph-Nicolas, the elder son living with Marie Allain at the time the 1752 census was taken and that he may have taken up residence soon thereafter.

Judging from Marie Allain’s letters, officials at Louisbourg considered that Saint-Ovide owned the property known as “Brouillan” on Île Saint-Jean and that he had transferred it, or intended to transfer it, to a man by the name of Thierry. He was François-Nicolas de Chassin de Thierry an army captain at Louisbourg. In 1732 he had much impressed Saint-Ovide with the manner in which he had undertaken an assignment. However, his lack of courage and carelessness have been cited as an important contributing factor in the loss of Louisbourg to New England soldiers in 1745. 86 The mix-up concerning ownership of Brouillan began very soon after the Gautier family arrived on Île Saint-Jean. According to Marie Allain’s letters, Brouillan was granted the Gautiers by Commandant de Bonaventure and the Sub-Delegate, François-Marie de Goutin. Both men had been on the Island for only a year or two when the concession would have been made, and conceivably were unaware of any previous claim to the land called Brouillan. One would think, however, that Bonaventure or Goutin, or both, would have been aware that the land in question had the name Brouillan. In Acadia, it was common for land to bear a certain name that was derived from the name of the family that owned or occupied it. Madame Gautier wrote in her third letter that de La Galissonière had ordered Bonaventure and Goutin to make the concession. The latter two

85. This second stream is shown on present day maps but bears no name.
officials may have simply followed orders from a superior who was further removed than they from the matter and quite possibly had no knowledge of any prior connection of the land to Saint-Ovide.

Interestingly enough, the Brouillan property had been subject to other ownership wrangling only months before Marie Allain first raised the ownership matter with the Minister. In the spring of 1752 Saint-Ovide, who had been in France since 1737, informed the Minister that he had acquired the property over 30 years earlier, and as a convenience, it had been received in the name of Sieur Fautoux, described by Saint-Ovide as his secretary. Saint-Ovide claimed that he had had some buildings erected on the property and other work done to it and that Fautoux had never made any claims. The property was sold by Saint-Ovide, he asserted, in 1751, which resulted in protests by Fautoux’s widow. She claimed that it was her husband’s name on the deed and that she had justly inherited the property from her husband. Saint-Ovide advised the Minister that it was well known by both officers in Île Royale and inhabitants on Île Saint-Jean that he was the owner. He requested the Minister to have a deed provided to him. The Minister, for his part, instructed officials at Louisbourg to have the matter resolved fairly, but opined that if it was common knowledge that the property belonged to Saint-Ovide, then Widow Fautoux had no valid case.  

There is no evidence that Maurepas nor officials at Louisbourg took any overt steps to resolve the matter to Widow Gautier’s satisfaction, and she is not known to have raised the issue after 1754 in any letters to government officials. Since both Saint-Ovide and Thierry died in 1755, very likely the matter resolved itself, if not to Marie Allain’s complete satisfaction, then at least to the point where she was no longer immediately threatened with the loss of Brouillan. Marie Allain and members of her family who were

87. Minister to Raymond and Prevost, 11 May 1752, AC, B, Vol. 95, 280. It is tempting to conclude that Sieur Fautoux was Léon Fautoux, a commission agent and merchant trader in Louisbourg. His wife became a widow in 1748, but he came to Île Royale from France in 1730 only, and is not known to have ever been a secretary to Saint-Ovide. See Dale Miquelon, “Fautoux, Léon,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. III (Toronto, 1974), p. 216.
88. The Gautiers apparently had no problems with title to their smaller property on the north bank of Rivière-du-Nord-Est. According to census taker La Roque, it had been “given to them by permit from Monsieur Benoist dated 24th January, 1749.” Benoist, a military officer, was the defacto administrator on the Island for about a year, beginning in the fall of 1748. For the deaths of Saint-Ovide and Thierry, see Bernard Pothier, “Monbeton de Brouillan, dit Saint-Ovide, Joseph de,” Dictionary of Canadian
residing on the Island at the time of the second siege of Louisbourg (1758) managed to avoid the ensuing deportation by fleeing to the Restigouche region of Chaleur Bay where she remained for several years.\textsuperscript{89}

**Letter of Françoise (Pitre) Boutin**

Françoise (Pitre) Boutin, the originator of the second last of our letters was quite likely a less prominent Acadian on Île Saint-Jean than Augustin Doucet, Paul Doiron, Nicolas Gautier, Marie Gautier and Pierre Gautier, writer of the last letter presented here.\textsuperscript{90} The fact that she lived at Trois-Rivières would not have particularly helped her to be known to many other Acadians on the Island beyond her own relatives. This settlement had been reestablished in the early 1750s only and was not close to the centers of any of the five parishes on the Island.\textsuperscript{91} Also, she had moved to Île Saint-Jean, not from Acadia, but from Île Royale. Françoise, husband Joseph Boutin, and several of their children had moved from Baie-des-Espagnols, Île Royale, to Trois-Rivières in June of 1755.\textsuperscript{92} In 1752 and 1753, all, or almost all, of the Boutins in what is now the Maritimes were living in Baie-des-Espagnols.\textsuperscript{93} In La Roque's census of 1752, Joseph Boutin is listed as a *habitant laboureur*. He had been born in Grand-Pré and in 1752 he was 42 years of age, approximately the same age as Françoise whom he had married about 1731. The family had moved from Acadia to Île Royale in the fall of 1749 and had

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90. Augustin Doucet was nicknamed “Justice.” This could imply that he was sought out by others for advice related to disputes, or perhaps functioned as a sort of “justice of the peace,” in which case we may assume that he was well known. However, “Justice” may have been a play on his given name which would have been shortened to “Gustin,” but pronounced as “Justin.”

91. A settlement at Trois-Rivières had been established by Jean-Pierre Roma in 1732. His colonists came directly from France. However, in 1745 the settlement was destroyed by a New England privateer and it remained unoccupied until Acadians came to live here in the early 1750s, likely on lands that had been cleared by Roma.

92. A census of Baie-des-Espagnols taken in 1753 enumerates Joseph Boutin and family. See *Recensement général des habitants des ports et havres de l'Isle Royale ... fait en juillet et août 1753,* AC, G1, Vol. 466, No. 82.

93. This can be deduced from the la Roque census of 1752 and from the genealogy of the Boutin family in White, *Dictionnaire généalogique*. See “Tour of Inspection Made by the Sieur de la Roque,” p. 47; White, *Dictionnaire généalogique*, Vol. I, pp. 264-265.
been on the King’s rations from the time they arrived in Île Royale until the time of the census.

Françoise and Joseph had five sons and three daughters, the two oldest being Joseph, born in 1732, and Euphrosine, who was two years younger. She was living with her parents at the time the census was taken in Baie-des-Espagnols, but by 1755 when her mother sent a letter from Trois-Rivières, Euphrosine was married to Charles Carret. Apparently, the Boutin family wished to move to French territory soon after the French regained control of Île Royale and Île Saint-Jean in 1749, and decided to try their luck in Île Royale. It would seem that all was not to their liking at Baie-des-Espagnols and so they decided to move to Île Saint-Jean, leaving behind several children: it is known that Joseph Jr., Euphrosine, and the second eldest son, Ambroise remained at Baie-des-Espagnols. Of Françoise’s eleven siblings, eight had already preceded her to Île Saint-Jean in 1750 and 1751 and two more came in 1752 or later. Her kin had settled in various places, mostly in what is now Queen’s County. Joseph Pitre, the second eldest of Françoise’s brothers, had settled at Rivière-du-Ouest with his wife and children.94

By 1752, Joseph and Françoise Boutin had begun farming at Baie-des-Espagnols in a small way. The census of 1752 shows that they had been granted some land there and had cleared two arpents (a bit more than one and a half acres). Their only livestock then was three lambs and three pigs, but by 1753 they also had two head of cattle.95 In 1751, they had harvested 12 bushels of oats. The shores of Baie-des-Espagnols did not contain good farmland and little marshland. The taker of the census of Île Royale ports and harbours in the summer of 1753 noted that all of the inhabitants of Baie-des-Espagnols were Acadians and that they “ne font cependant pas de grands progrès malgré les secours qu’ils ont reçus de Sa Majesté ce qui les met dans une grande indigence qu’ils ne peuvent cependant attribuer qu’à leur peut déconnomie et leur paresse.”96

Perhaps the Boutin family felt that Île Saint-Jean offered better opportunities to get ahead than Baie-des-Espagnols. One may suppose that the Boutins also did some farming at Trois-Rivières after settling there, most

95. Tour of Inspection Made by the Sieur de la Roque, p. 47.
96. Recensement général des habitants des ports et havres de l’Isle Royale ... fait en juillet et août 1753,” AC, G1, Vol. 466, No. 82.
likely on land that had been previously cleared, and later abandoned, by Jean-Pierre Roma. It is probable that several of their children accompanied them to Île Saint-Jean – four of them would have been under 12 years of age.

Françoise Pitre's hope would soon be tested. As Joseph, Françoise and their younger children were making their way from Baie-des-Espagnols to Trois-Rivières tragedy struck the Boutin family. On 13 June 1755, Joseph Boutin died and Françoise was left a widow. A week later she sent a letter to her children at Baie-des-Espagnols to inform them of the sad news. 97 Her letter read as follows:

aux trois Riviere  
Mes chair enfant  
je vous ecris pour vous annoncer La mort de votre père qui est mort Le 13 dumois vous navez qua prier dieu pour Lui est dite a Ses parant qui enfasse de même Mes enfent payez toute ces dette est vander La goillette venez agrand deligance me trouver dite aussi a froisine est a petit joseph boutin qui ne manque pas de venir me trouvez des que vous trouveré Loccation pour nous etablir aux plusstost des quon vous travaille il y a moýen de SesChaper il y a deux jour tons oncle joseph tuýl des Louma-rain La charge de Sont Canaux ilyen a tuýl 13 est 8 outarde Ces un bêlle endroit pour La vie. Ne manquez pas mes chair enfant de venir aux plus tost faite nos compliment a tous Ces bonne juain de parla

Nous somme tous arriver a bon port autre votre deffin [défunt] pere  
Mes chair enfant  
Votre servante  
franoise pitre

It is interesting that the letter is addressed to "my dear children," (presumably all her children still living in Île Royale), yet in it Françoise requests the recipients to request "Froisine" (Euphosine) and "little Joseph" to come to Île Saint-Jean! This rather incongruous phraseology is perhaps explained by the fact that, although she wanted all her children in Île Royale to move to Île Saint-Jean, it was the two oldest, Joseph Jr. and Euphosine, that she expected to take the lead in making the necessary preparations – on behalf of all of her children at Baie-des-Espagnols. The "relatives" referred to in the letter would have included a brother of Joseph Sr., the widow of another brother, and possibly his father who is known to have been living at

97. The letter may be found in the Notariat de l'Île Royale (Greve Bacquères), 10 July 1755, Archives des Colonies, G3, Carton 2044.
Baie-des-Espagnols in 1752. Other relatives no doubt intended to be in-
formed were the Lejeunes — the mother of Joseph Boutin Sr. was Marie-
Marguerite Lejeune and in 1752, three of her brothers and one of her Lejeune
cousins had been residing at Baie-des-Espagnols.

It was Françoise Pitre’s instruction to settle her late husband’s debts and
“to sell the schooner” that played a role in her letter being preserved for
posterity.98 These actions necessitated the involvement of a notary — it was
Guillaume Bacquérisse that handled the matter, and he kept organized,
official files that eventually found their way into government archives in
France. One of the documents in the Boutin file is the letter of Françoise
Pitre. Another document in the file, dated 10 July 1755, tells us that Joseph
Boutin Sr. died of an abscess that ruptured within his body. This suggests that
information additional to that provided in Françoise Pitre’s letter must have
reached Île Royale from Île Saint-Jean soon after her letter arrived, or perhaps
at the same time. The deceased’s debt was just over 566 livres and was to
Michel Du Pont de Gourville, military officer and the son-in-law of Marie
Allain. The schooner was the 17-ton Marie-Joseph, owned jointly by Joseph
Boutin Sr. and his mother’s first cousin, Paul Lejeune dit Briard, a habitant
laboureur at Baie-des-Espagnols.99

The letter of Françoise Pitre is in the same hand as the signature,
suggesting that either she wrote it herself or someone else both wrote it and
signed her name. Because the children with her were young, she needed the
help of Joseph Jr. and Euphrosine to “get us settled” at Trois-Rivières.
Despite family tragedy, her positive attitude is evident by her reference to
Trois-Rivières as a fine place to live. “There one can get along through hard
work,” she stated, and “game may be readily had,” as demonstrated by the
hunting experience of her brother, Joseph Pitre, who was living on the
Rivière-du-Ouest.

Reference to the killing of outards is significant in that birds by this
name are not known to have been mentioned in any other letters written from
Île Saint-Jean during the whole of the French regime.100 This is surprising

98. Françoise signed her letter as Françoise Pitre, not Françoise Boutin, as it was customary
at that time for French-speaking women to retain their maiden names

99. Notariat de l’Île Royale (Grefle Bacquérisse), 10 July 1755, Archives des Colonies, G3,
Carton 2044.

100. Douglas Sobey, Early Descriptions of the Forests of Prince Edward Island: A Source
be remembered that the vast majority of the surviving letters written from Île Saint-Jean
during the French regime were written not by Acadians, but by government officials.
since the Canada goose, which is being referred to, is (and probably was) the most common species of wild goose on the Island and likely would have been the most prized game bird on account of its size.

The fate of Françoise Pitre and her family leading up to and during the deportation of 1758 is unknown. Françoise herself may have died prior to the deportation; her daughter, Euphrosine, almost certainly died on the Island prior to the deportation, though her husband, Charles Carret, and his three children were placed aboard transport vessels bound for France. The three children died at sea and Charles died about six weeks after arriving in France. The youngest son of Françoise, Michel Boutin, was only seven years of age in 1758, yet somehow managed to escape being deported. Inexplicably, he was at Nipisiguit (Bathurst) without his mother in 1761. He later settled at Île Madame. Of Françoise’s ten siblings whose families were living on the Island in 1758, all but one were deported and only one is known to have survived the trans-Atlantic crossing. The loss of life among her nephews and nieces was also very high, some families known to have all perished.

**Letter of Pierre Gautier**

This paper already contains a considerable amount of information about the Gautier family, including some about Pierre Gautier who was the second eldest son of Joseph-Nicolas Gautier and Marie Allain and was just as ardent in his French patriotism and antagonism to the British regime in Nova Scotia as his father. After moving to Île Saint-Jean with his parents and siblings, he established himself on a property not far from where his parents lived. In the fall of 1751, he and Jeanne de La Forest entered into a marriage contract at Louisbourg. When La Roque took his census in the summer of 1752, Pierre and Jeanne are enumerated on the north bank of the Rivière-du-Nord-Est, along with two oxen and six sheep. His occupation was listed as “navigator” and he had cleared no land. He was recorded as being 24 years of age and she


103. AC, G3, Carton 2047. The contract date was 6 October 1751. The actual marriage took place the following summer on June 25, 1752.
18\textsuperscript{104} at that time they were newlyweds, having been married only a couple of months.

It is unlikely that Pierre Gautier cleared much land in the next half-dozen years or that his wife saw a great deal of him during that time. Pierre was too busy working “in the King’s service” at Louisbourg and in Acadia. Like his father, and older brother, Nicolas, Pierre dedicated himself to assisting the French in their struggles with the British. Among his family, it was Pierre that appears to have been the most accomplished in collaborating with the Mi’kmaq to pursue French military objectives against the British in Halifax.\textsuperscript{105}

Pierre Gautier’s letter bears no date or place of writing, but from the context of its contents and from the outcome of a request made in it, one may conclude that it was probably written in October 1757 and probably from Louisbourg.\textsuperscript{106} Pierre Gautier could certainly sign his name, although the style in which he signed was not always consistent. His letter to the Minister appears to have been signed by him, but the body of the letter seems to be in a different hand.\textsuperscript{107}

Pierre Gautier’s letter and an English translation of it follow:

Monseigneur

Pierre Gautier a L’honneur de Remontrer a Votre Grandeur, que depuis la guerre de 1740, il n’a point cessé d’Etre Employé pour le Service,

\textsuperscript{104} “Tour of Inspection Made by the Sieur de la Roque,” p. 87.


\textsuperscript{107} Since Gautier returned from his third trip to Halifax in late September and the squadron of Dubois de La Motte left for France at the end of October, Gautier’s letter was probably written sometime in October. The ships’ departures would likely have been taken advantage of for sending mail to France. For examples of Pierre Gautier’s signature, other than on his letter of 1757, see his marriage contract, AC, G3, Carton 2047 and baptismal entries for 11 April 1751 and 9 April 1752 in the registers of the parish of Port-la-Joye, AC, G1, Vol. 411.
ainsi que feu son père et tous ses ancêtres L’ont Été antérieurement, que d’ailleurs Sa famille et luy pour Étre plus a portée de donner des preuves continuelles de leur Zèle, ont abandonné a la sollicitation de Monsieur le comte de la Galissonnière et de Monsieur Hocquart, des possessions considérables, que leurs travaux leur avoient acquis dans L’acadie.

Il ajoute Monseigneur qu’ayant mérité par sa conduite passée, et par L’utilité dont il ose Se flatter d’avoir Été dans ce païs, la confiance de Monsieur le comte Dubois De la motte et de Monsieur le Chevalier de Drucourt, qui l’ont Envoysé trois fois Consécutives a Halifax, pour tirer des lumieres des forces, de la Situation et des projets des Ennemis, il a Été assez heureux après les Rapports toujours vérifiés par Les Evenements, pour que Ces Messieurs voulant Recompenser Ses travaux, les risques multipliés qu’il a Couru dans Ses trois voyages, et le dedommager des frais qu’ils luy ont Couté, pour que ces Messieurs, disje, ayent jugé a propos de luy accorder la place de Capitaine de Port a L’Isle Saint Jean, avec promesse de la luy faire obtenir du Roy, aux appointments de 600#, il ose d’autant plus se flatter qu’il vous plaira Monseigneur de ratifier ces graces, que d’ailleurs vous Seront demandées par Monsieur le Comte Dubois de la motte, que d’ailleurs le père du Suppliant avoit déjà Été honoré de pareille pension de 600# en consideration des mêmes Services qu’il a rendus. Monsieur le comte Dubois de la motte; et Monsieur le Chevalier de Drucourt luy ont Egalement promis de solliciter en Sa faveur un Brevet de lieutenant de frégatte, qu’il prend encore la liberté de vous Suplier de ne luy point réfuser: ce titre Étant la partie la plus flatteuse pour luy de la récompense de Ses Services.

Enfin en consideration de ses anciennes possessions en acadie, permettez luy Monseigneur pour dernière prière au cas que cette province Rentrat Sous L’obeissance du Roy, Son Maitre legitime, de vous Supplier d’avance de luy accorder la preferance de la place de Capitaine de port du port Royal, ou de tel autre qu’il vous plairoit dans cette Colonie.

Il Se trouveroit par Cette grace, non seulement a portée de recouvrer les héritages naturels de sa famille, mais Encore d’y rendre des services essentiels, par la Connoissance Etandie qu’il a de cette Contrie, Ce double motif luy fait Esperer Monseigneur que vous daignerez faire quelqu’attention a Ses tres humbles rémontrances, et il ne Cessera d’offrir les vœux les plus Sinceres, pour la conservation de Votre Grandeur,

Pierre Gautier

One thing that may be said is that Pierre Gautier was not shy or modest in the extent of his request for rewards from the Minister of Marine. There can be no question, however, about his being very deserving in relation to the services he provided and the compensation that was typically dispensed under
the reward system that operated in New France. Actually, he was rather modest in describing his services and did so in much less detail than his father had done a decade earlier.\textsuperscript{108} For example, he made no mention of the trip, much of it on foot, that he had made from Louisbourg to Québec in the winter of 1756 to deliver official government letters. After leaving Louisbourg, he called at Île Saint-Jean, no doubt to visit his wife and mother. Here he recruited an Acadian to accompany him on the trip, then crossed to Shediac by canoe. Recruiting several Mi’kmaq guides at Cocagne, he proceeded by way of the frozen Petitcodiac and Saint John Rivers, and several portages, to the edge of the Saint Lawrence River from where he travelled to Québec by carriole. He subsequently retraced his steps, carrying new mail, until he reached Cocagne from which he proceeded to Louisbourg by walking along the shores on Nova Scotia and Île Royale.\textsuperscript{109}

Le Comte Dubois de La Motte was Emmanuel-Auguste de Cahideuc, a Rear-Admiral and the commander of the French naval squadron that consisted of 11 warships, who had been sent to Louisbourg in 1757 to bolster the defence of Louisbourg. He was then 74 years of age, having joined the French navy when he was 15, and was obviously well respected.\textsuperscript{110} The Chevalier de Drucour was Augustin de Boschenry de Drucour who served as Governor of Île Royale and Île Saint-Jean from 1754 until the fall of Louisbourg in 1758.\textsuperscript{111}

While Gautier makes clear that his intelligence gathering at Halifax, as a result of three trips there, was the main service for which he deserved tangible recognition, he divulges nothing about manner in which he went about carrying out these assignments. Several diaries of others record the results of Gautier’s exploits and shed light on his techniques. The general approach was to take several Mi’kmaq with him from Louisbourg and make their way, as covertly as possible, to Halifax. There he and his accomplices would fall upon unsuspecting British soldiers or others, particularly those who might be unguarded and off by themselves. He took prisoners who were then interrogated. Some prisoners were brought back alive to Louisbourg; others were killed and sometimes scalped.\textsuperscript{112}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{108} [Joseph-]Nicolas Gautier to Minister, 1749, C11B, Vol. 28, pp. 359-366.
\item \textsuperscript{109} \textit{Voyage en hiver, et sur les glaces de Chédaïaque à Québec [1756]}, AC, C11E, Vol. 4, pp. 134-137v.
\item \textsuperscript{112} Prevost to Minister, 21 September 1757, C11B, Vol. 37, pp. 102-109.
\end{itemize}
In September, a French officer aboard *le Formidable*, the flagship of Dubois de La Motte’s squadron, recorded that Gautier had gone to Halifax with four Indians to capture prisoners. However, “they did not succeed in doing so: they only killed two men whom they scalped.”113 On a second warship, an officer recorded that: “Gautier ... a sworn enemy of the British” had been retained on several occasions to go to British ports “with some Indians, who never returned without bringing some scalps and prisoners, secured even at the foot of the ramparts [presumably the citadel in Halifax] and I must say that Gautier received a well deserved reward from the general.”114 More detail of Gautier’s activities is available from the journal of Dubois de La Motte himself, and it would appear that the trip to Halifax in September was the last of the three trips. The Rear-Admiral described Gautier as “*un de nos fameux partisans.*” However, not all of Gautier’s trips to Halifax may have been as productive as Gautier would have the Minister believe. Wrote Dubois de La Motte of the last trip: “... Gautier fût de retour d’halifax.... mais l’arrivée de ce partisan ne nous apprit rien de plus particulier que ce qu’il nous avoit déjà rapportée après Sa premier découverte.”115

Although the Rear-Admiral may not have been overly impressed with Gautier’s intelligence gathering, the *commissaire-ordonnateur*, Jacques Prevost, had only good words to say. “... *Le nommé Gautier, habitant de l’Isle S’Jean,*” he wrote to the Minister, is an “*homme intelligent et zélé.*”116 Even by the time that Gautier had completed his second trip to Halifax, Governor de Drucour was satisfied that Gautier “*s’est acquitté à notre plus grande satisfaction.*” Consequently, on August 16 – and before the third trip – Drucour ordered Gautier to assume the position of *Capitane de Port à L’Isle St Jean,*” subject to the Minister’s approval.117 A corresponding commission


was promptly and duly issued to Gautier by Drucour.118 This was no doubt the "well deserved reward" mentioned by a French naval officer in his journal. Obviously, one purpose of Pierre Gautier’s letter to the Minister was to solicit the Minister’s confirmation of Drucour’s provisional posting.

Not everyone, however, thought the posting was a good idea. Louis Franquet, the chief engineer at Louisbourg, was of the view Gautier would be of more vital service if he continued to be used for reconnaissance work. Besides, opined Franquet, a man with Gautier’s proclivities would be simply bored spending all his time on Île Saint-Jean. In a letter to the Minister, Franquet was critical of Drucour’s appointment. Wrote Franquet: "Je crois, Monsieur, devoir vous représenter que c'est un bon sujet, mais qu'en l' affectant à ce genre de Service, il devient mort, pour celui auquel il est propre, mieux vaudroit le faire Lieutenant Partisan Réformé, en cette qualité, Sauvages, accadiens, tous Le Suvroient, avez la nécessité de Scavoir ce qui se passeroit à hallifax."119

Franquet’s letter made its mark. Five months after Prevost wrote to the minister with a glowing account of Gautier’s exploits, the Minister wrote a letter to Prevost and one to Drucour. To the former, the Minister pronounced himself satisfied with the information he had received about Pierre Gautier’s being sent off to Halifax for intelligence gathering.120 To the latter, the Minister wrote that he was very glad that a commission as port captain at Île Saint-Jean had been given to Gautier, but that it would perhaps have been more useful to continue employing him as a reconnaissance scout.121 This little episode is a good example of the back-stabbing and skirmishing that frequently took place among officialdom at Louisbourg.

While Gautier’s letter indicated that the salary that he would receive as Capitane de Port à L'Isle Saint-Jean was 600", no figure was mentioned in either Drucour’s letter to the Minister informing the latter of the provisional appointment or in the written commission provided to Gautier by Drucour.

119. Franquet to Minister, 16 November 1757, C11B, Vol. 37, pp. 303-305v.
120. For the rather detailed information provided by Prevost, see Prevost to Minister, 21 September 1757, C11B, Vol. 37, pp. 102-107. For the Minister’s reaction, as communicated to Prevost, see President of the Navy Board to Prevost, 11 February 1758, AC, B, Vol. 107(2), pp. 7-8.
Further, Gautier indicated that 600\(^\#\) was the amount of the pension his father had received for similar good services to the Crown, when in fact payments to Nicolas Gautier had been 400\(^#\) and 500\(^#\), not 600\(^#\). It may be that Drucour verbally mentioned 600\(^#\) per year as the salary for the posting at Île Saint-Jean, but just as likely that Gautier was simply creating an opportunity to attempt to “up the ante.”

Considerable personal risk attended Pierre Gautier’s forays to Halifax during the summer of 1757. Despite Franquet’s view, perhaps by late 1757 Pierre Gautier had reached a stage in life where he welcomed a more sedate way of life and wanted to spend more time on Île Saint-Jean and at home. As fate would soon make clear, the Minister was not going to have to concern himself with a possible transfer of Pierre Gautier from the position of Port Captain at Port-la-Joie to a similar position at Port-Royal. In less than a year, Great Britain’s drive to expel France from North America was to notch a major success which would be followed one year later by the capture of Québec. Pierre Gautier may have been content in late 1757 to begin a less risky and more comfortable lifestyle, but that was not to be.\(^{122}\)

The siege of Louisbourg ended by capitulation to the British on 26 July 1758. Pierre Gautier and other members of his extended family fled from Île Saint-Jean to Restigouche before Colonel Andrew Rollo’s forces reached Port-la-Joie on August 13. At Restigouche, Pierre Gautier and his brother Nicolas joined a militia comprised of a handful of regular troops and Acadians and commanded by Jean-François Bourdon, their brother-in-law. All three took part in the Battle of Restigouche in 1760 which ended in the loss of a number of French naval vessels and the retreat of the militia into the woods.\(^{123}\)

For several months in 1765, Pierre Gautier nominally resided at Miquelon; but, as in former times, was often away. During this period, he made three voyages between these islands and France in order to transport supplies needed to build up this island colony of France. He was rewarded by

\(^{122}\) It likely would have been May or June of 1758 by the time that Pierre Gautier would have learned of the Minister’s confirmation of his appointment. Two to three months later the job would disappear.

\(^{123}\) Andrew Rodger, “Gautier, Nicolas,” op. cit., pp. 338-340. The Battle of Restigouche was the last military battle to be waged on the North American continent between Great Britain and France. There were subsequent conflicts between these two powers in the Caribbean and Newfoundland.
an appointment as Port Captain at Saint-Pierre and Miquelon. In November 1765, Gautier was among a number of Acadians who were transported from Miquelon to France aboard the *Deux Amis*. In 1767, close to 800 Acadians were uprooted from Saint-Pierre and Miquelon by French officials as a result of an order from Versailles, and deported to France. Some of the Acadians who had been transported to France got to return to Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, but Pierre Gautier chose to go elsewhere. In 1769, he was appointed Port Captain at Gorée, a minuscule island (45 acres) and French colony just off the coast of Senegal. Today, the island is part of the city of Dakar and is used as a tourist destination to show the horrors of the slave trade throughout the Atlantic world. It was here in 1773 or early 1774 that Pierre Gautier died. Though he never got to reclaim the family estates near Port-Royal, or become Port Captain there, he did get to build on his short-lived Île Saint-Jean experience as Port Captain.

**Conclusion**

In the 1750s, Acadian society was a complex web of inter-family ties, a network of genealogical cross-linkages. This resulted from the fact that the number of different founding families was fairly small and it was a relatively closed, or self-contained, society, i.e., most Acadians married other Acadians within an overall community (in what are now the Maritimes) that in the first half of the 1750s numbered less than today’s population of Summerside, PEI. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was almost no immigration to Acadia from Canada. Immigration from France was never large and newcomers from that country were, for the most part, soon absorbed into founding family lineages, although new surnames, e.g., Gautier, of course took their place along with old surnames.

It should not be surprising, therefore, to find such characteristics reflected in some, if not all, of those Acadian families from which letters have survived. Augustine Doucet’s paternal grandfather was a first cousin of Paul Doiron’s mother. The mother of Joseph Boutin Sr. was a first cousin of

Paul Lejeune with whom Boutin jointly owned a schooner.128 Also, one of Boutin’s great-grandmothers may have been a Doucet.129 Joseph-Nicolas Gautier was a relatively late arrival from France but quickly became “Acadianized.” Though no genealogical linkage can be shown between the Gautiers and any of the other letter senders, one of the Gautier daughters was married to the man to whom Joseph Boutin Sr. was indebted at the time of his death.

The second last of the eight letters is a little like the first – very short and simply a manifestation of ordinary people reaching out to close relatives. While Augustin Doucet wrote of difficult living conditions and Françoise Pitre wrote of newly befallen family tragedy, both also wrote of the possibility of better things to come. The Doiron letter invited mainland Acadians to make a leap of faith that would supposedly enhance their quality of life. The Gautiers’ letters were intended to win favour from officialdom such that redress would be forthcoming for losses and threatened losses, or rewards might be provided for “good services.” The eight letters came from six Acadians from different backgrounds, and from different positions in the socio-economic spectrum, all of whom shared a desire to be subjects of His Most Christian Majesty, i.e., the King of France, to better their personal circumstances, to begin new lives. One thing they all had in common was to chose Île Saint-Jean as the place in which to seek to satisfy these goals.

Despite adversity, the letters all express hope – hope that problems would be resolved, enabling individuals to get on with their lives in a progressive way, or hope that with hard work, the promised land would yield contentment and sufficiency. One letter expresses hope that before long Acadia might once again become French soil. The letters of Augustin Doucet and Françoise Pitre must be typical of dozens, perhaps hundreds, of letters from newly-arrived families on Île Saint-Jean to relatives back in Acadia, and to a much lesser degree, in Île Royale, or even in Canada, informing them of a safe arrival and of family news. It is unfortunate that so few letters have survived.

128. These first cousins had a common grandfather : Pierre Lejeune dit Briard.
129. Augustin Doucet descended from the Germain Doucet who emigrated to Acadia from Brie in France and there is some reason to believe that Joseph Boutin may have also descended from him. See White, Dictionnaire généalogique, Vol. I, pp. 264-265, 526-550, and Vol. II, pp. 1048-1051.
It is said that hope springs eternal, but hope, sadly, would be dashed a few years later for Augustin Doucet, Paul Doiron, Marie Allain, Françoise Pitre and Pierre Gautier and their families, as well as all other Island inhabitants. The fall of Louisbourg in 1758 and the subsequent deportation of the majority of the Island’s population would turn their lives upside down. The aftermath of this cataclysmic event would, for those who survived it, generate a new cycle of rebuilding lives and finding new hope.

Origine « belge » de la cloche historique de l’église Saint-Alexis de Rollo Bay, Île-du-Prince-Édouard

Francis C. Blanchard

Dans un volume publié en anglais intitulé « Cathedrals of the World », on fait référence à la magnifique cathédrale Saint-Rombaut, dont le clocher ouest domine toute la ville de Malines en Belgique. Cet imposant clocher sert d’abri à deux carillons, ayant chacun 49 cloches. Malines est au centre de la tradition belge pour ce qui est de la fabrication des carillons. Les cloches qui sont dans la tour de cette cathédrale en sont un exemple splendide. On ne semble pas savoir la date précise de la construction de cette cathédrale. Saint Rombaut était un moine irlandais qui a vécu au 8e siècle. Ici à Malines (Mechelen) en Belgique, il aurait fondé une abbaye. Il a voyagé un peu partout en Europe convertissant les gens au christianisme ici et là. Il a été canonisé suite à son martyre.

En néerlandais, Malines se nomme « Mechelen ». Aussi, on trouve les orthographes suivantes de ce nom : Mechelin et Mechlin.

Prenez bien compte de ce qui suit au sujet de la précieuse et ancienne cloche de la paroisse Saint-Alexis de Rollo Bay à l’Î.-P.-É. La cloche en question n’est pas d’origine française comme l’ont prétendu certaines personnes. Elle est bel et bien d’origine belge. Faites donc la lecture de ce qui suit :

Dans le Petit Robert illustré de 1985, on trouve « Mechelen » qu’on dit est le nom néerlandais de la ville de Malines en Belgique. Elle se trouve dans la province d’Anvers (Antwerpen) sur la Dyle. On donne aussi comme orthographe « Mechlin ».

Dans le guide touristique Michelin (1961), on peut lire ce qui suit : «Sous l’impulsion de Marguerite d’Autriche s’édifièrent de nombreux hôtels et la fameuse tour de la cathédrale Saint-Rombaut que les réputés fondateurs de cloches malinois garnirent d’un carillon célèbre. » Née à Bruxelles en Belgique, Marguerite d’Autriche (1480-1530) est la fille de l’empereur Maximillien et de Marie de Bourgogne.
Le 23 septembre 2008, je me suis rendu à Rollo Bay avec l'intention expresse d'aller voir la cloche à l'église Saint-Alexis, afin de copier textuellement l'inscription qu'on trouve gravée sur cette vénérable et ancienne pièce d'antan. La cloche est une relique des plus précieuses et une des pièces des plus historiques de notre province.

Autrefois, elle se trouvait dans le clocher de l'église Saint-Pierre, de la paroisse Saint-Pierre-du-Nord (aujourd'hui Saint Peter's Harbour) en l'ancienne Isle Saint-Jean (Î.-P.-É.) d'où elle appelait les « ouailles au culte ».

Le 9 août 1870, monsieur Gerald Barry du Havre Saint-Pierre (Saint Peter's Harbour), en labourant un champ, découvrit une assez grosse cloche. C'était la cloche de l'ancienne église française et acadienne de Saint-Pierre-du-Nord, qui, selon la tradition, aurait été enfouie en terre depuis 1758 à l'époque de la Déportation des Acadiens de cette paroisse.

Monsieur Barry a présenté cette cloche à la paroisse Sainte-Thérèse de Morell. Le curé, alors, a décidé de l'échanger pour une nouvelle cloche avec les gens de Rollo Bay.

Aujourd'hui, cette belle relique précieuse de l'histoire acadienne de l'ancienne église Saint-Pierre-du-Nord se trouve au clocher de l'église Saint-Alexis de Rollo Bay (Î.-P.-É.), d'où elle appelle les fidèles à l'église comme autrefois à Saint-Pierre-du-Nord.

De nombreux descendants acadiens demeurent dans cette paroisse. Voici l'inscription qui figure sur cet objet d'intérêt historique :

+ Jésus + Marie + Joseph +
I H S
P. Cosse m'a faite - Mechelin 1723
En 1870, j'ai été retirée des ruines d'une
eglise d'un ancien village acadien, I.-P.-É.
En 1882 les Paroissiens de Rollo Bay m'ont
fait refonder Par Meneely et Cie de West
Troy, N.Y. en souvenir de leurs ancêtres de
l'Acadie.(sic)

Il serait très intéressant à savoir si la firme de 1723 existe toujours. Le nom P. Cosse, aurait-il une connexion quelconque? Et en plus, ne pourrait-on pas se demander si la fameuse cloche de Malpec n’aurait pas, elle aussi, son origine à Malines (Mechelin / Mechelen / Mechlin) en Belgique?
Rapport du président pour l'année 2010

Membres de la Société historique acadienne,

Il me fait plaisir au nom de l’exécutif de vous souhaiter la bienvenue à la 51e assemblée générale annuelle de votre Société.

Les membres de l’exécutif de la Société historique acadienne se sont réunis à 8 reprises au cours de l’année 2010-2011 afin de planifier des activités intéressantes et éducatives.


Durant l’année 2010-2011, près de 300 personnes ont participé aux diverses activités mises sur pied par votre Société. Le comité de rédaction a quant à lui assuré la publication de quatre numéros des Cahiers.

Un sous-comité de la Société, chargé de planifier une rencontre des organismes intéressés à l’histoire et au patrimoine acadien, a tenu de nombreuses rencontres. Le résultat fut la tenue du 3e Forum des sociétés d’histoire et patrimoniales des provinces Maritimes et du Québec les 15, 16 et 17 octobre 2010. À cette occasion, plus de 60 personnes se sont réunies au Centre universitaire de l’Université de Moncton pour discuter du passé, du présent et des défis qui confrontent les organismes qui s’intéressent à l’histoire et au patrimoine acadien.

Lors de la session dédiée à l’avenir des sociétés d’histoire, une proposition demandait la création d’un comité chargé de présenter un projet de réseautage des sociétés d’histoire lors du prochain Forum qui doit se tenir à Grand Pré en octobre 2011. Ce comité s’est réuni à trois reprises et a expédié aux organismes concernés le fruit de ses réflexions pour discussion en préparation de la rencontre de Grand Pré.
Lors du 3ᵉ Forum, samedi soir, le 16 octobre 2010, un banquet souli-
gnant le 50ᵉ anniversaire de fondation de la Société historique acadienne a réuni une soixantaine de convives. À cette occasion, une affiche soulignant la contribution d’une centaine de bénévoles qui ont œuvré au sein des divers exécutifs durant ses 50 années d’existence a été remise aux membres pré-
sents. Pour souligner notre engagement auprès de la jeunesse, votre Société d’histoire a décerné à deux étudiants inscrits à la maîtrise en histoire à l’Université de Moncton la bourse Léone-Boudreau-Nelson d’une valeur de 1 000 $. Les heureux récipiendaires sont François LeBlanc et Julie Williston.

Depuis l’assemblée annuelle d’avril 2010, le comité de conférences s’est réuni à quelques reprises pour planifier la présentation de deux conférences.

En février 2011, le professeur à la retraite Victorin Maillet a présenté les résultats de sa recherche sur les « Racines amérindiennes dans les familles acadiennes ». Aujourd’hui, en avril, nous avons le plaisir de vous présenter le conférencier Donald Langis, coordinateur diocésain à la pastorale et maître d’œuvre de l’ouvrage *Faire route ensemble / Journeying Together* publié par le diocèse de Moncton à l’occasion de son 75ᵉ anniversaire d’existence.

Aujourd’hui, nous allons aussi procéder à l’élection d’un nouveau conseil d’administration. Dans quelques instants, le comité de nomination vous fera part de sa proposition.

Je tiens à souligner que l’année qui vient de s’écouler a été chargée d’activités intéressantes qui ont pu être un succès grâce à l’appui et la collaboration des membres de l’exécutif. Chers.ères collègues de l’exécutif, vous avez su, avec délicatesse et solidarité, m’aider à franchir des moments personnels très éprouvants durant la dernière année. Je tiens à vous mani-

fester toute mon amitié et mes remerciements les plus sincères.

Jean Daigle
17 avril 2011
Les Acadiens en Europe

Nom et adresse des participants et participantes
au voyage en Europe (6 au 28 juin 1966)

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1. La photo qui suit a paru dans le 12e Cahier de la SHA, juillet 1966, p. 44
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LA SOCIÉTÉ HISTORIQUE ACADIENNE
AU BI-CENTENAIRE BELLE-ÎLE-EN-MER
JUIN 1966
SABENA
Vous souhaite
Voyages aériens belges
De tres bonnes Vacances.
LA SOCIÉTÉ HISTORIQUE ACADIENNE