

## Reading Log #4

In the article “Acadian Identity: The Creation and Re-creation of Community” by Naomi E. S. Griffiths, the readers are taken through the journey of Acadians in Canada in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In her research, Griffiths is particularly interested in “how communities form and develop over centuries” (Griffiths 325). In 1604 the French began to make their presence known in the New World, and only a few years later is when we see the beginning of Acadian settlements (CBC Timeline). The Acadians were “French-speaking Catholic[s]” who inhabited the Atlantic coast of North America, and Griffiths explains in great detail what happened to these colonies and why (Griffiths 326).

In 1713 The Treaty of Utrecht is signed, leading to the end of the war of Spanish Succession (CBC Timeline). This caused the Acadians living in Nova Scotia to become “permanent British subjects”, while Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island remained French (CBC Timeline). The Acadians wanted to be able to live on the French claimed land while remaining under the English rule (Griffiths 333). They were known as “the Neutral French” because they wanted to live under the English rule, but they did not want to fight with neither the French nor the Indigenous peoples, which eventually causes problems for the colonies (Griffiths 334). The years between 1713-1755 was considered the Golden Age because the Acadian colonies were thriving (Griffiths 334). “In 1713 there were approximately 3,000 Acadians, [and] in 1755 their population was closer to 20,000” (Griffiths 334). They were also thriving in their food sources as it “was varied and plentiful and included a wide variety of meats, wild and domestic, vegetables, fruits and fish” (Griffiths 335). However, this Golden Age ended mid-

summer of 1755 when the British decided to exile the Acadians from the province (Griffiths 335). The reason behind this move was because in 1754, one year prior, the “British government demanded that Acadians take an oath of allegiance to the Crown that included fighting against the French” which most Acadians refused (CBC Timeline). Over the next few years, Acadians were forcibly removed from their homes and sent to different destinations while anything that was left behind was destroyed and burned (Griffiths 337). “[I]t was planned as a destruction of a community, the death of an Acadian identity” (Griffiths 337). Acadians that were exiled via ships were highly susceptible to death with a death toll ranging from 30% to 50% (Griffiths 338). Those who did survive the journey had another obstacle to overcome when “epidemics of smallpox and cholera struck the exiles, who had little experience of, and therefore little immunity to these diseases” (Griffiths 338). The exile officially ended in 1764 when Acadians were once again allowed to own land in Nova Scotia (Griffiths 339). This occurred due to France signing the Treaty of Paris in 1763, “[giving] Great Britain its colonial possessions in North America”, except for the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon (CBC Timeline). The Acadians then began slowly returning to their colonies.

“Today there are some 300,000 people living in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island who consider themselves Acadian by heritage and work to hand this legacy on to future generations” (Griffiths 328). Over the period of the exile “English-speaking Protestants had exiled approximately 15,000 French-speaking Catholics from Nova Scotia” (Griffiths 328). The Acadians built up a community of 20,000 that was broken apart, but eventually managed to become the 300,000 it is today (Griffiths 334, 340). This event is an important part of Canadian history that some people might not be aware of and this shows that communities may be much stronger than people think.