

22 Anwoth Road
Westmount, P.Q
Canada
Oct. 11th 1954

Dear Mr. Raddall:-

It was great to see your name heading the historical sketch about the Acadians, in Week-End (Oct. 9th 1954).

I got my knuckles rapped some years ago when I protested to the Junior Red Cross, one of whose groups had done a cross-stitch sampler (depicting the expulsion) and sent it to a school in the Maritimes. The information added that it had been hung on the wall of the school-room. I felt there were many fine and dramatic incidents in Canadian history without choosing this one. The Superintendent of J.R.C replied in no uncertain terms!

Now that I have your article to file, might I have a reference or two to back me up when I quote you? Is your version mentioned in any school history?

Thanking you
I remain
Sincerely yours

Leslie Bell
(Reg.N.)

October 14th, 1954

Dear Miss Bell,

My story "The Credit Shall Be Yours" is based securely on fact, which I checked carefully in the Archives at Halifax. No school history that I have seen gives any detail of the events leading up to the expulsion, or of the expulsion itself -- and the most significant truth is in the details.

The best published account of the whole affair is that of the famous American historian Francis Parkman, who quotes extensively from the actual documents of the time, English, American and French.

Volume 2 of his "A Half Century Of Conflict" gives a detailed account of Acadian affairs before 1755, including the slaughter of Colonel Noble's New England soldiers while billeted in Grand Pre in 1747. In the appendices to this volume he quotes extensively from the letters of Shirley, the Massachusetts governor, urging the viewpoint of the American colonies and demanding that the Acadians be removed from the country. Volume 1 of his "Montcalm and Wolfe" gives detail of the Capture of Fort Beausejour by a force of American troops, and then the use of these troops to carry out the expulsion of the Acadians.

A copy of the despatch from London, disapproving the idea of removing the Acadians, is in the Archives at Halifax. (This despatch was actually crossing the sea when the expulsion was carried out.)

The situation at Fort Anne, where many of the English officers and soldiers had married Acadian women, is shown in correspondence between Governor Lawrence at Halifax and Major Handfield, the commandant of Fort Anne. It is also shown in the journal of Captain John Knox, a British officer who came to Fort Anne soon after the expulsion. Handfield himself, and several other officials, were all married to daughters of Madame Marie Magdalen Winiett (nee Maisonat), an Acadian woman who exerted a powerful influence on their husbands and in fact ruled the garrison. This small company at Annapolis, some of whom had spent forty-odd years there, were the only English soldiers in the Valley at the time of the expulsion; and Major Handfield's long hesitation to carry out the expulsion order at his end of the Valley enabled hundreds of Acadians to escape into the woods and wait till the whole thing had blown over. Professor Belliveau of St. Anne's College, himself an Acadian, informs me that most of the French-speaking people now living in Digby County are descended

from Acadian families who escaped from the Annapolis River through Major Handfield's indulgence.

difference between

A day or two after my story appeared in Weekend I received an anonymous note mailed in Montreal, informing me that the expulsion of the Acadians was an English plot, and that there were no Americans before the Declaration of Independence in 1776. (Which is like saying there were no Canadians before the Statute of Westminster in 1931, when Canada became a sovereign state!) This is, of course, the biased and ignorant ~~stupid~~ attitude which prefers to hate the English. There were Americans from the time the first children were born to the Pilgrims and other settlers on American soil, and by 1755 the American view and the English view of things on this side of the ocean ~~was~~^{was} as wide as the sea itself -- a fact made very clear 21 years later with the Declaration of Independence. After years of bloody warfare with the French and Indians on the frontier the American colonists had come to regard everything French with a fanatical hatred. Hence their demand that the Acadians be removed from Nova Scotia, and the readiness with which they supplied the troops to capture Fort Beauséjour and then to carry out the expulsion without waiting for approval from England. Lawrence, the English governor at Halifax, was completely under the influence of the Bostonians and fell in with their plans, hence his order to the unfortunate Handfield and the other English soldiers at Fort Anne who had lived in amity with the Acadians for so many years. For these men the expulsion was a tragedy no less than to the Acadians themselves; and the myth that all this was an "English" plot carried out by "brutal redcoats" is one of the saddest ironies of history.

Sincerely,

Miss Leslie Bell
22 Ansoth Road,
Westmount, P.Q.