

Citizenship in a Borderland Region: Questions

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Fort Kent, Maine

Reading Questions

- What principles might have guided the officials who granted and surveyed the Acadians' lots on the St. John River (e.g. location, shape, size, which lots went to whom)? What would have been the settlers' primary economic activity?
- If the border was yet undefined, why did British officials grant lands in this region? Was this an uninhabited territory?
- Many French-Canadian families from Quebec came to the Upper St. John Valley in the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s. What might have drawn them to the region?
- How would you summarize Dr. Jackson's and Mr. Pike's views of Acadians? How do those views fit within Jackson's and Pike's overall arguments?
- What was the overall goal of the 1919 law? Could the legislature have enacted other measures to achieve the same goal?
- The attacks of September 11, 2001 led to new border security measures; the COVID-19 pandemic closed border traffic to nearly everyone. How is this different from the border as people knew it in the nineteenth century? What other factors led to changes in border crossings from the early twentieth century to 2001?
- In Francis Brassard's description of the school system as it existed in the 1960s, is there a separation of church and state?
- What might explain the apparent 180-degree shift in state policy towards Maine Acadians between 1919 and 2002?

Statements for Debate

- The boundary settlement of 1842 benefitted the Acadian communities of northern Maine.
- From the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, Acadians were uninterested in politics.
- Religion is a defining characteristic of Maine's St. John Valley.

Interpretive/Essay Questions

- Explain the significance of the St. John River in the making of northern Maine communities.
 - The French language can still be heard in communities on the American side of the river, though the number of speakers has declined substantially in recent decades. Give two factors that might explain the resilience of the language and two factors that might explain its decline.
 - Historically, what have been Acadians' expectations of the federal and state governments? What have been these governments' expectations of Acadians?
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Please contact the Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes at the University of Maine at Fort Kent for the original document set, an accompanying bibliography, or further information. Contact: Patrick Lacroix, director, (207) 834-7535 or <acadian@maine.edu>.