

Newcastle U3A General History Summary of Meeting July 18th 2018

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Visit to Discovery Museum: August 14th. Meet at 11.30 outside.

Our exploration of American history continues with

Catherine began by showing 2 slides of potential titles for the talk to allow the members to decide for themselves what the title should be - either 'The Great Diaspora' or 'The Ethnic Cleansing in North America'.

Introduction: The upheaval of the **Acadians:** background information about where Acadia was and how it was founded. In 1524, for the French, an Italian explorer, Verrazano sailed to North America and landed on the south east coast. French settlers set up towns in Carolina and Virginia then moved north to Maine and what is now Nova Scotia. To them it was New France.

Who were the Acadians? The Acadians were of French origin but soon intermarried with the local native Americans with whom they lived peaceably.

Why was Acadia important? For the Acadians, the land was suitable to grow crops, there were good harbours and the Acadians could be self sufficient.

It was in a strategic position for the French and British armies to dock and unload supplies, weapons and men.

It remained French until the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 when Britain gained control.

The Acadians were useful to each army to hear the as they supplied food, shelter and peace with the native Americans.



CAUSE : What were the problems? The British did not trust the settlers fearing that they would fight for the French should the situation arise but to get rid of them would throw up further problems such as food supplies. The number of Acadians continued to increase, far outnumbering the British military at around 500.

EFFECT: The solution? The Acadians would be told to take an oath that they would not bear arms against the British. Many did not bother with the oath believing that they would lose independence and that British rule would not last. The British continued to distrust the Acadians. The Acadians taking the oath thought they'd solved the problem by being neutral.

Another oath: This time the Acadians were to take an oath of loyalty to the British government and crown. They were forced to meet in churches and halls to hear the order from the British governor, Lawrence. The oath was read out along with the punishment for not taking the oath. This was to be exiled without any possessions. Around 4000 were supposed to have taken the oath. Some escaped and continued to wage guerrilla warfare on the British.

Those not taking the oath were given a year to resettle elsewhere.

This was not a solution.

A short video was shown recapping the story so far.



1755: The oath was enforced but this time the British gave no warning to those who would not take it. . They swooped down on towns and villages and rounded up Acadians who had not taken the oath. They were put on to ships and taken to the British colonies. The town and village councils as well as families were dismantled.

Legend, literature and art: The painting of 'Evangeline' by H.H. Emmerson was shown and the legend of Evangeline and Gabriel outlined. There may be no historical evidence for the story but they have become visual metaphors for what happened in Acadia.

Many Acadians moved several times to find a place to call home. Some returned to France while others went as far as South America.

The exiles continued until 1763

Today, the Acadians have an identity which has evolved over the decades. An Acadian press was established and annual commemorative ceremonies held. Many served with the allies in World Wars I and II.

A short video displayed one of the silent films made about Evangeline. Music accompanied it.

There are museums and monuments in Nova Scotia as reminders of 'The Great Diaspora of North America'

Members then discussed the titles commenting on the use of one or another and the meanings conveyed by each title.

Thank you to all our GH members for their comments and input. You make it a valuable and interesting meeting.

Our next meeting is Wednesday 15th August with Sandra telling us about her research into her local war memorial.