

The Many Voices of “Acadianness”: The Multivocality of Identity at Grand Pré

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Prologue:

This journey began as a personal investigation into Acadian identity. My father is Acadian and my mother is not. I have often wondered how I fit into this larger picture of being Acadian. Bringing together my interest in my Acadian identity and in archaeology, I began to put this project together. Acadian history had always interested me during my earlier education. When I had the opportunity to join an archaeological field school in 2007 at Grand Pré National Historic Park, I was thrilled. Working at the site let me gain practical knowledge about archaeology, and learn about my Acadian past. I knew that I wanted to study Acadian identity, and how archaeology plays an increasingly important role in the construction of that identity at Grand Pré. Investigating the perseverance of Acadian ethnicity in Canada, and how this perseverance has led to a cultural resurgence, also led me to focus specifically on the Grand Pré site. I wanted to understand how one can construct an identity of being Acadian through multiple kinds of information about the Acadian story at Grand Pré. Sharing my knowledge with my family and future generations of curious Acadians would also provide a small role in the increasing interest in Acadian research.

The summer spent at Grand Pré opened my eyes to the different ways that an Acadian story is presented at the site. I learned a lot about the history of the deportation, the actual events and hardships suffered by Acadians because of it, and interesting facts about my own family's misconceptions about our past. The archaeological artifacts made the experience seem more real to me, as if finding these pieces of the past connected me to the site even more than before. Taking in as much as possible, I began to see how Acadian people can feel strong

connections with Grand Pré. Entering into my fourth year at St. Francis Xavier University, I knew the focus of my Honours thesis would be Acadian identity, and the archaeological work being done at Grand Pré. I want to discuss how Acadian identity has been constructed through multiple kinds of information at the site, and address the roles of these presentations to the overall picture of the site. This shapes my thesis.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Grand Pré National Historical Site is a commemorative site located near Wolfville, Nova Scotia. Described in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem, *Evangéline: A Tale of Acadie*, the Grand Pré area represents an important part of Acadian identity as a point of reference for the people, and as a physical landscape which links Acadians to their past. Garnering attention as "the land of Evangéline," Grand Pré became a National Historic site in recognition of the history of the Acadian people. In short, for Acadians, and for others, Grand Pré represents a connection to the lost, pre-deportation Acadian past. A part of Acadie returned to the Acadians, the site symbolizes a reconnection to the lands from which they were exiled. These characteristics create physical and emotional connections to an Acadian identity that is supported by tourist reactions to, and expectations of, the site. How this identity is constructed at the historic site of Grand Pré through multiple kinds of information about the Acadian story is the main focus of this project.

In this thesis, I show that at Grand Pré, the Acadian story is multivocal since it is presented in three ways: through historical records, through archaeological remains, and through the story of Evangéline. These three kinds of information, I argue, create a meta-narrative of Acadian identity. I define the meta-narrative at Grand Pré as the entire Acadian story encompassing the past to the present. This includes the first settlement, the deportation and exile, and the cultural revival years later. Below, I examine the ways in which these three kinds of information construct Acadian identity at the site. Asking how the historical, fictional and archaeological perspectives are presented, what they say about Acadian identity and

whether any of them are given more weight or importance than any of the others when telling the story about the Acadians, I argue that these three kinds of information compliment each other. Each kind of information is a part of a meta-narrative of Acadian identity. Each is important in the creation of the overall picture.

Analysis of multivocality, as it applies to this work, refers to an examination of how different kinds of information are used at Grand Pré to tell the meta-narrative of the Acadian story. In other words, I define multivocality as the use of different kinds of information to tell various parts of one large, integrated story, in this case the story of the Acadian people. My research questions ask: “How is the meta-narrative of Acadian identity presented at Grand Pré? Do any of these three ways of telling this story have precedence over any of the others? What does this tell us about how Acadian identity is constructed at the Grand Pré site?”

The multivocality of Grand Pré addresses the presence and presentation of all three kinds of information telling the story of being Acadian. Fawcett, Habu and Matsunaga argue that for a site to be multivocal, importance and recognition need to be given to different versions of a story, whether they are professionally and academically constructed or whether they are created using amateur representations (2008: 2). My use of the term multivocality differs from this use in that rather than analyzing different versions of the Acadian story, each of which is based on different kinds of information, I analyse which parts of the integrated meta-narrative the different kinds of information create. Grand Pré uses three kinds of information to exhibit three parts of the meta-narrative of Acadian identity: the historical records, Evangéline and the archaeological evidence. However, during site visits and interviews

with employees at the site, unequal emphasis is placed on some of these kinds of information over others. How this affects the meta-narrative at the site, and the Acadian identity that the site presents, will be discussed later. Addressing each of these three kinds of information is necessary to understand the part of the meta-narrative they tell, and how they are presented at the site.

The historical records compose an important part of the Grand Pré site, essential in the foundation of understanding the past. The lives of the Acadian people, before, during and after the deportation, have been understood through first-hand written accounts (Le Blanc 2003: 27). The social, economic, and political aspects of Acadian life are used to help build the foundations of the meta-narrative presented at Grand Pré (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07). The historical perspective is important because it provides information about the daily life and cultural features of the Acadian people that would be difficult to understand through archaeological inferences alone. Much of the historical information can be substantiated by recent archaeological work done at Grand Pré, as well as other Acadian settlements throughout the Maritimes. Historical records reveal the political conditions impacting the Acadian people during their lives in Acadie, and the events that culminated in their deportation and exile. The knowledge that is obtained from the historical records is valuable because it provides the foundations of the information presented at Grand Pré. This part of the meta-narrative describes Acadian life and the political context of the time.

The story of Evangéline adds another part to the meta-narrative at Grand Pré by providing a fictitious and emotional description of what the deportation and exile might have

felt like. This fictional character serves as a cultural icon of Acadian endurance and strength, and was an important cultural figure in the revitalization of the Acadian community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Le Blanc 2003: 102). *Evangéline: A Tale of Acadie* was written by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in 1847 and brought worldwide attention to the Acadian people and to Grand Pré. The fictional poem of *Evangéline* depicts a romanticized image of Acadian life, written by an English American who was exposed to the foundations of the story at a dinner party in New England, in the winter of 1840 or 1841 (Le Blanc 2003: 53). The poem provided a beacon for cultural revitalization by drawing on the shared experience of the deportation and exile, and encouraging the construction of ethnic relationships between Acadian descendants. *Evangéline* creates an emotional connection to the Acadian story that is evidenced by tourist reactions and expectations about the character, and her part in the Acadian history (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07). The part of the meta-narrative played by *Evangéline* constitutes the revival of the Acadian people and the establishment of Grand Pré as a cultural reference point. Addressing the fictional perspective of *Evangéline* presented at the site reveals an interesting shift in the equality of emphasis placed on each kind of information. The story of *Evangéline* is becoming increasingly de-emphasized at the site, which can be attributed to the coupling of historical records with the more recent presence of archaeology.

Archaeology at Grand Pré is becoming increasingly incorporated into the exhibition and grounds of the site. Archaeology provides a scientific approach to understanding the past by providing material artifacts that can be used in association with the historical records to interpret the Acadian story. Open excavations allow tourists to see the archaeologists at work,

ask questions about what is being discovered, and see the material artifacts found at the site. Many of these artifacts are displayed in the exhibition hall of the interpretive centre. According to Victor Tétrault, Executive Director for the Société Promotion Grand Pré, this archaeological perspective creates a physical link to the site and the history that took place there (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). This idea has been discussed by Hodder as providing a “real” connection to the past through physical evidence (1992: 279). This archaeological perspective provides information about the smaller, technical information about what was going on at Grand Pré before, during, and after the deportation. Coupling the archaeological record and the historical record creates a powerful argument for the events and information known about the Acadian story. This has led to the increasing emphasis on these two perspectives and a de-emphasis on Evangéline.

This paper looks at the history of the Grand Pré site and its presentation of the Acadian story. How the three kinds of information are incorporated into the presentation of the site and what they provide in the larger context of Acadian identity is analyzed. Each perspective is addressed individually, looking at the relevance to the meta-narrative, and an in-depth look at the roles played by each in the construction of Acadian identity. The conclusion of how these three kinds of information relate to one another, and whether or not one or more has precedence over another, answers my research questions. The historical records, fictional story of Evangéline, and archaeological perspectives create a meta-narrative of the Acadian story at Grand Pré, with precedence given to the historical and archaeological records over Evangéline, but with each kind of information maintaining importance to the meta-narrative.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Perspective

The three perspectives presented at Grand Pré create a composite whole, with each kind of information telling important parts of the Acadian story (Personal comment B. Le Blanc 11/22/07). The theoretical perspectives regarding the idea of multivocality are elaborated on further in this chapter. The perspective of multivocality in this project focuses on the different ways in which these three kinds of information form the meta-narrative of Acadian identity presented at the site. Each perspective adds a different part to the meta-narrative, all of which are crucial to complete the story. The connections to the past that are created through these three perspectives, aid in understanding how Grand Pré can be viewed as a reference point from which Acadian identity can be constructed and reinforced.

Nationalism, ethnicity, and identity

Ethnicity becomes an important feature of the Acadian identity construction, because it encompasses the notion of nationalism. Nationalism refers to the way in which people legitimize themselves in relation to others, promoting pride in one's past, and creating relationships with others of shared histories and experiences. Nationalism is a way to separate one's self from some people, and construct bonds with others (Trigger 1995: 269). National archaeology is defined by Trigger as a method with which to encourage pride in ethnic groups seeking nationhood (Habu, Fawcett & Matsunaga 2008: 1). Nationalism helps create group identity as it extends to the broader context of socially constructed ethnicity (Trigger 1989: 174). With the development of the culture-historical approach to archaeology, a model was created that enabled national archaeologies to emerge (Trigger 1989: 174). This culture-

historical approach has been understood as being a method for encouraging group pride and confidence in nationality or ethnicity by people who may feel threatened, repressed, or deprived of basic rights by external influences and power structures (Trigger 1989: 174). Acadian culture is exemplified clearly by these characteristics. The community ties created before the deportation were the results of similar experiences, language, and values. This concept also extends to the time of the deportation when the Acadians experienced the collective traumatic event, forever creating a bond between all who experienced it, or who were descendants of it. During the period of exile, similar experiences would again prove to be significant in collective relationships extending to an Acadian ethnicity. Finally, with the Acadian revitalization of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, common experiences and ideas were again the foundations of group identity, drawing upon the realities of the past and the symbolism derived from *Evangéline* and Grand Pré. In understanding the past, ethnicity and nationality can emerge as means of establishing group pride and social relationships between those who feel they share the same experiences, ideas, and values (Trigger 1989: 205).

Expanding on this notion of identity stemming from ethnicity or nationality, Meskell describes identity as being in continuous negotiation in which a person organizes himself or herself in relation to others within their social realm (2001: 188). Identity is how people define who they are, and this definition is as critical today as it was in the past (Diaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005: 11). Ethnic identity is discussed as being a social determinate, cut across by other social features around a person, including status, gender, age, and so on (Meskell 2001: 189). How a person constructs his or her identity is constantly influenced by the world around him or her, and it is the individual's understanding of what is expected of him or her in terms of group

identity that constitutes the ethnicity with which he or she associates. Identity is explained as being intricately linked to a sense of belonging (Diaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005: 1). It is an individual's association based on significant differences that allows him or her to identify with another person or with a group (Diaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005: 1). To understand the way in which identity construction is understood and presented at Grand Pré is done by looking at the three kinds of information that make up the meta-narrative at the site. How each of these perspectives becomes a part of the meta-narrative at the site, and the importance that each part plays in telling the whole story of the Acadians, is discussed later.

Multivocality

Multivocality, as discussed by Hodder, is the participation in the interpretation of a site by academics and non-academics, making the site relevant to both, and providing either complimentary and/or contradictory interpretations (Fawcett, Habu and Matsunaga 2008: 2). These different perspectives of interpretation, allow for a broader and clearer picture of the site, addressing multiple versions of a story, and giving importance to all. At Grand Pré, multivocality addresses the composition of a meta-narrative of the Acadian story, created through different kinds of information. In other words, multivocality is understood as how one, integrated meta-narrative, is constructed through three kinds of information, all telling complimentary parts of a greater story.

By incorporating both academic and professional interpretations of a site with amateur interpretations, underrepresented groups (generally understood as being the amateurs) gain the opportunity to have their voices heard. Emphasis on giving voice to underrepresented

groups is crucial to understanding multivocality as used by post-processual archaeologists such as Hodder. The concept of multivocality developed in response to the growth of social movements, which encouraged awareness of socially marginalized groups (Fawcett et. al. 2008: 3). This led to a demand for change in archaeological practice; archaeologists were encouraged to give more power to ask questions about and even interpret sites, to socially marginalized and subordinate ethnic and social groups (Fawcett et. al. 2008: 3). Grand Pré does, to some extent, provide a platform for subordinated voices to be heard, since the story of Evangéline is presented alongside information about Acadians already learned through history, and, more recently, through archaeology. Grand Pré presents all three kinds of information, but increasingly does so in a way that de-emphasizes the part played by Evangéline.

My understanding of multivocality differs from that established by Hodder and others in that it addresses a meta-narrative composed of three parts, and created through three different kinds of information presented at the Grand Pré site. The historical, fictional and archaeological perspectives are all necessary in understanding the greater meta-narrative of the Acadian story. The historical perspective provides historical information, which creates the foundations of the meta-narrative at the site. It represents an academic and professional interpretation of the past, substantial in the site's presentation and development. Evangéline is a fictional perspective, representing an amateur interpretation of an emotional depiction of what the deportation might have been like. This perspective is being de-emphasized at the site, but it maintains an important position in the meta-narrative despite this. Archaeology provides a scientific interpretation of the past that provides physical evidence and quantifiable data to analyze what has already been learned through the historical records. Archaeology constitutes

an academic interpretation of the past and is increasingly gaining emphasis at the Grand Pré site. Nevertheless, despite the emphasis or de-emphasis on any of these perspectives, their parts in the meta-narrative remain important. Without one part of the meta-narrative, the story is incomplete.

Nationalism, ethnicity, and identity, understood in the Acadian meta-narrative presented at Grand Pré allow for the construction and conceptualization of what it means to be Acadian. How this information is comprehended by both Acadian and non-Acadian tourists creates a platform from which an Acadian identity is generated. When tourists visit the site, they construct relationships with what is being presented to them, which determines how they understand themselves fitting into the greater picture of being Acadian or not. Whether this is through the historical, fictional, or archaeological information, tourists negotiate their own conceptualizations of what is presented, and this in turn influences the development of identity through the presentation of the Acadian meta-narrative at the site. Multivocal sites present multiple kinds of information which gives both academic and non-academic sources relevancy. At Grand Pré this is exhibited, but there is also an emerging shift in emphasis on historical and archaeological records over the fictional Evangéline story. However, all three perspectives maintain their presence at the site because of their parts in the meta-narrative of what it means to be Acadian. Addressing these three kinds of information in terms of the parts actually played in the meta-narrative, their significance to the site, and the construction of identity associated with them, is discussed in chapter 6. Explaining how this process comes together and how this theoretical framework is incorporated into the discussion of my paper is explained next.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter provides a look at the methods used to complete this project. Briefly discussing what was done begins with establishing research goals and questions. Achieving these goals and why it was even important is expanded upon in this section. Future work being done in a similar field may require knowing how my project was done, and so this chapter describes the process from the beginning to the end, and the process along the way.

Establishing a research goal was the first step. Having been exposed to the excavations at Grand Pré in the summer of 2007, I knew I wanted to understand how the role of archaeology fit into the overall picture of Acadian identity at the site. Establishing this goal, it was then necessary to formulate a plan of action to achieve it. I had already been exposed to the site daily during the summer field school I had participated in, but I knew that another visit would be necessary. This time, I needed to pay particular attention to how the historical, fictional, and archaeological information was presented at the site. This required taking pictures of the signage alongside a guided tour. I also needed to conduct interviews, and therefore needed ethical approval. This was completed and approved by the Anthropology Department. Once my ethics were cleared, I created a letter of intent for Mr. Tétrault, one of my key informants. With this letter, I asked for permission to use his name as well as offered a finished product to him and the Grand Pré site to further the work being done within the Acadian community. With this data collected, my questions prepared, and the date and time set up for my visit, I was off to Grand Pré.

The site visit occurred on October 25, 2007. The site closed early in October, so I had to negotiate entry to ensure that I would be able to visit and get my interview with Mr. Tétrault while I was there. Mr. Victor Tétrault is the Executive Director for the Société Promotion Grand Pré, and I thought he would be able to provide ample information about the site and its organization. When I arrived, I met Mr. Tétrault and conducted a semi-structured interview, recorded by a hand-held tape recorder. I had previously prepared questions for the interview (See Appendix A for questions). During the interview, Mr. Tétrault told me that, Mr. Roger Sevigny, a long-time employee at the site, could give me more information about the topics that interested me. Previous to my visit, I was unaware that he would be available, so my interview with him was spontaneous. I followed the guideline of questions I had with me, and Mr. Sevigny assisted in answering the questions that Mr. Tétrault thought he would be better prepared to answer in depth. These two interviews provided me with data about the history of the Grand Pré site, including how it has evolved, and the outlook for the future. I was also exposed to the reasoning behind the site's set up, as well as the motives behind the different methods of presentation. I later e-mailed a copy of my letter of intent to Mr. Sevigny to ensure that his interview information could be used in this paper and that I could use his name.

My third interview was conducted over the phone with Dr. Barbara Le Blanc, a professor at Université Sainte-Anne, and expert in Acadian identity construction and presentation at Grand Pré. Due to conflicts of time, this was our best option. I e-mailed a copy of my letter of intent to her, as well as a copy of the questions prior to the interview. With her approval and acceptance of the letter, we proceeded with the phone interview. Several of my questions referred me to her book, *Postcards from Acadie: Grand Pré, Evangéline and the Acadian*

Identity. She was more than willing to assist with the other questions pertaining to the archaeology at the site. Our interview was short, but the data and help she provided me was substantial.

Following the interviews, transcription was necessary. This was very time consuming, but I managed to transcribe all of the interviews in a timely fashion. The data provided has allowed me to reference quotes and information, and use this for my research. At the time I was doing the initial interviews at Grand Pré, detailed site description was also a component of the visit. This required taking note of the site's set up and lay out, through observation and photography as visual reminders. The site visit occurred the same day as my interviews, and Mr. Sevigny gave me a guided tour of the exhibition hall and the grounds.

Mr. Sevigny explained the methods of presentation at the site, including tours and programs developed for groups of tourists and educational institutions. While walking through the exhibition hall I took pictures of the signs and displays, and recorded the commentary that was provided by Mr. Sevigny. This continued as we toured the grounds and visited the church. Further site exploration occurred after the interviews when I was allowed to go through the exhibition hall by myself to take necessary pictures and recordings. When my time was finished in the interpretive centre, I said my thanks to Mr. Tétrault and Mr. Sevigny and went for my own tour of the grounds again to get more photos. I walked from the site to the café off the highway in order to look at the signage and presentations relating to the site as it would be approached.

Visiting the site was an important part of the process because it exposed me to the three kinds of information presented there, and the specific ways in which they are presented. Trying to understand how these frameworks relate to the construction of the Acadian identity was my goal. Through this site visit, and the previous visits that I had during my time spent there as a summer archaeology student, I was able to gain a better idea of how these perspectives are encompassed into the meta-narrative of the site.

The literature review and theoretical perspective encompassing this thesis were the most difficult for me. Trying to understand the connection that these three perspectives have in the construction of a meta-narrative required much analysis and reworking. I gathered several sources that I felt would be able to support my ideas and provide a greater context to the project. Through my analysis of the literature, I was able to create a theoretical framework that encompassed the idea of identity construction regarding all three of these perspectives and how they are presented at the site. These three kinds of information can affect how a person understands themselves in relation to others. This requires constant negotiations with the environment, and impacts the idea of ethnicity and nationality. These features emerge as social constructs that are generated from group relationships, and this idea helps understand how identity can be constructed at Grand Pré. Understanding this, I was able to look at the historical records, Evangéline and the archaeology at the site, and see how they fit into the narrative of what it meant to be Acadian. This led me to my analysis and discussion.

Analysis of the data incorporated my interviews, site descriptions and pictures, as well as my literature reviews and theoretical framework. By combining all of these features, I was

able to look at my question, and try to establish a concrete answer that could be substantiated by my data. This process requires a great deal of critical thinking, and allowed me to combine my own research with work that has already been done about Acadian identity construction at Grand Pré. With my research questions always in the back of mind, I had to review all of the data and determine what was important, what might need explanation, and what conclusions I could draw from what I had gathered. This part of the thesis combined with my discussion allowed me to support what I was finding through providing my own evidence. Discussing my findings and the areas I feel could be beneficial for future research completed the project. This section points out potential ideas for further development of archaeology at Grand Pré and the importance of having the three frameworks of Acadian identity at the site.

Chapter 4: The Acadian Story

This chapter outlines the Acadian story. What I have referred to as the Acadian meta-narrative is this story. The settlement of the Acadians at Grand Pré, the political unrest over control of the land by outside forces of the British and French, the events leading up to the deportation, the execution of the deportation, years of exile, and eventual cultural revitalization all make up this meta-narrative. This chapter helps to explain what the meta-narrative is in greater detail, and explains how it is presented through the three kinds of information. This chapter will develop the ideas around the meta-narrative, and explain how to understand the Acadian story presented at Grand Pré.

Acadian History

Successful French settlement in the New World occurred in the 1600s and 1700s with the help of the Mi'kmaq (Le Blanc 2003: 21). The land of Acadia was highly disputed and contested from the earliest settlements in this time. Both British and French colonists tried to establish boundaries in the area throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but none were definitive, and conflicts arose (Le Blanc 2003: 22). The settlement of Grand Pré resulted from the migration of French settlers known as "Acadians" from the colony of Port Royal (Le Blanc 2003: 25). These migrations took place in three phases around 1680-1699 (Le Blanc 2003: 25). The first and third phases of migration consisted of only a few individuals, with the third considered a modest phase, resulting from a food shortage at Port Royal in 1699 (Le Blanc 2003: 26). The second phase is marked by the capture of Port Royal by the British in 1688,

and the recapture by the French in 1691, causing several settlers to leave in search of something new (Le Blanc 2003: 26).

Settlers to the Minas Basin area, known as Les Mines by the French, included Pierre Melanson, one of the founders of Grand Pré who settled in the area with his family in the 1680s (Le Blanc 2003: 26). The small settlement would eventually grow to become one of the most highly populated eighteenth century Acadian communities in the area (Le Blanc 2003: 26). By 1755, the site had an estimated population of around 2,200 people (Le Blanc 2003: 26). The British and the French had been in constant warfare over the rights and access to the lands of Acadie, and it was this constant struggle that left the Acadians to the will of outside forces. The continuous struggle over the region left the Acadians under unstable control, with external influences having little importance in their everyday lives. This lack of involvement by the outsiders led to the delegation of basic needs and leadership among the communities themselves. In 1713, the Treaty of Utrecht officially placed Acadia in the hands of the British, leaving the French-speaking, Catholic Acadian people as the outsiders in a now English-speaking, Protestant colony (Le Blanc 2003: 30).

The Acadian presence caused uncertainty for the British, leading to the creation of Oaths of Allegiance to ease the suspected tension. The Acadians argued for neutrality, continuing trade between the English, French, and Mi'kmaq. This sustained the distrust of Acadians by the British. In 1755, after increasing conflict with France and growing concerns about the Mi'kmaq, a decision was made by the British about what to do with the Acadian settlers. A period of occupation by British soldiers in Grand Pré eventually culminated to the

events of September 5, 1755, at 3:00 in the afternoon. Colonel John Winslow read the order for “Le Grand Dérangement” in the front of the Saint-Charles-des-Mines church to the gathered men of the community (Le Blanc 2003: 35).

Standing out in the hearts and minds of Acadian descendants around the world, this date marks a period of devastation, exile, and trauma, dividing families and friends. The first-hand account in the journal of Colonel Winslow documents the incident from the earliest phases through to its completion in December of 1755 (Le Blanc 2003: 35). Those who survived the event and the years of exile that followed were continuously faced with disappointment and problems. Enduring minority status and removal from their home lands, the Acadians had to start all over again. The exile continued until the 1800s. When the Acadians were finally able to return their lands no longer belonged to them; they were forced to relocate and readapt. The deportation serves as a major part of Acadian and Canadian history. The impact it has had on Acadian identity has formed the basis for a cultural resurgence, producing a nationality and ethnicity attesting to a strong and enduring people.

The revitalization of Acadian culture

The Acadians were faced with having to reform the communities they had been torn from after the deportation. Settlements appeared in the United States and in some regions of Acadia when the exile was lifted, including New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. Minorities in these areas, the Acadians and their culture were suppressed (Le Blanc 2003: 102). Having to recreate the bonds of community they had built prior to the deportation was difficult, as many of the settlements were small and scattered (Le Blanc 2003: 102).

In 1847, Longfellow's poem *Evangéline: A Tale of Acadie*, raised world-wide attention to the plight of the Acadian community (Le Blanc 2003: 51). Longfellow, an English American, wrote the poem after hearing the tale at a dinner party in New England (Le Blanc 2003: 53). The massive success of this poem created an idyllic picture of a peaceful people torn from their land in a horrifying act, and a heroine who, despite it all, never gave up looking for her long lost love, Gabriel. *Evangéline* encompassed values that present her as the ideal Victorian woman (Le Blanc 2003: 51). Through *Evangéline's* story, the strength of the Acadian community became world-renowned.

From the 1880s to the 1930s, several Acadian leaders began a cultural revival focused on rebuilding Acadian group identity (Le Blanc 2003: 100). Features that emphasized group similarities, such as the Roman Catholic faith and French language, became foundations for this early group identity (Le Blanc 2003: 100). Being Acadian began to reflect positive connotations associated with the endurance and perseverance of *Evangéline*. Early Acadian revivalists looked at the political, educational, and social rights that the Acadian people were deprived of since the deportation and return from exile (Le Blanc 2003: 100). By addressing common attributes of language, religion, and family ties, the Acadian people could re-create group relationships that had been lost after the deportation (Le Blanc 2003: 101). The "land of *Evangéline*" combined historical significance with the romanticized imagery of Longfellow's poem. The Acadian building of ethnicity was prompted by Longfellow's *Evangéline* and used Grand Pré as a reference point for this "collective memory" (Le Blanc 2003: 101). The decades from the 1880s to the 1930s had the early nation builders using the romanticized story of *Evangéline* and Gabriel, and the land of Grand Pré as a means of awakening cultural identity and unity of

Acadian people (Le Blanc 2003: 102). Le Blanc refers to these early revivalists as “ethnic nation builders,” using Grand Pré and Evangéline as reinforcement for the values and ideas they expressed about Acadian identity in these earlier years (2003: 102).

In 1880, the first nationalistic conference was held in Québec, inviting the Acadians of the Maritimes to come, with more than one hundred responding (Le Blanc 2003:104). This was to be the first time since the 1755 deportation that a gathering like this had occurred (Le Blanc 2003: 104). It led to the creation of the Société Nationale L’Assomption (SNA) in 1881, which organized several national meetings and conventions encouraging the unity of Acadian people and emphasizing Acadian nationality (Le Blanc 2003: 104). Symbols of Acadian ethnicity were established, many of which are still used today (Le Blanc 2003: 104). A national feast day on August 15, designation of a patron saint (Notre Dame de L’Assomption), the flag (represented by the French tri-colour and the golden star of Mary in the Blue), as well as a national hymn and motto (*L’union fait la force*: united we stand) (Le Blanc 2003: 104). Much of these early emphases on Evangéline represented the romanticized imagery and ideals which later generations found to be limiting to the culture (Le Blanc 2003: 69). These later generations tried to shift the symbolic relationship with Evangéline, and sought more “authentic” symbols of the past, especially prevalent starting in the late 1960s (Le Blanc 2003: 69). Rejection of the ideal Acadian woman, embodied by Evangéline, has led to increasingly sufficient and independent Acadian women heroines, written about to replace her (Le Blanc 2003: 70). This shift reflects a strong sense of Acadian identity that has been established, and has allowed for movement away from earlier strategies of ethnicity, which had been originally developed through Evangéline (Le Blanc 2003: 70).

Looking at the history of the Acadian people, and the endurance and perseverance to survive despite opposition, the strength and pride in Acadian identity can be understood. Evangéline served to embody the characteristics necessary to recreate group unity and form the foundations for Acadian ethnicity. This chapter addresses a brief history of the Acadians from settlement to deportation and from exile to revitalization. The Grand Pré site serves as a small piece of compensation for the injustices done against the Acadian people, returning a part of the lands that had been taken from them. Understanding the history and revitalization is not enough to understand the Acadian identity, but it does shape the meta-narrative that is presented at the site. This meta-narrative and its presence at the Grand Pré site are important to establish what is being presented at the site about the Acadian story. Revealing the three different parts that make up this meta-narrative, the historical, fictional and archaeological perspectives, we can review the multivocality of the site, and furthermore, understand the reasons behind the sites evolution over time.

Chapter 5: The Grand Pré National Historical Site: Past and Present

This chapter outlines the history of the Grand Pré site and its evolution over time. How it was first developed to its present state reveals patterns in the presentation of the meta-narrative. Providing geographical, historical, and personal contexts to the description of the site explains the way the site is established and its development. Grand Pré became a reference point for the Acadian community, providing a common place where Acadians could gather and reconnect to the land that was no longer theirs. The impact that Grand Pré has had on the construction of Acadian identity and ethnicity is revealed in this chapter.

The History of the Grand Pre National Historical Site

The Grand Pré area, located near the present-day town of Wolfville in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia, served as the focal point of Acadian revitalization occurring in the late 1800s and early to mid 1900s. A landmark of Acadian occupation prior to the deportation, Grand Pré provides a physical connection to the past. The location accommodates this look into the past, reflecting the romanticized images of Longfellow's poem. The physical evidence of the Acadian presence is scattered throughout the landscape. The beauty and tranquility commonly associated with pre-deportation stories is shaped in the presentation of the grounds and scenery that makes up the Minas Basin valley. The role Evangéline has played in Grand Pré's evolution is witnessed through these idealized images presented in the poem, and similar imagery reflected in the grounds of the site. Nevertheless, emphases on archaeological and historical records at the site have shifted the focus from Evangéline over the years. How these

kinds of information are presented at the site, and what they add to the Acadian story is explained in later chapters.

Grand Pré, or Great Meadow when translated, sufficiently describes the landscape spanning a peninsular stretch extending into the Minas Basin. East of Wolfville Nova Scotia, the area designated Grand Pré is lined on both sides by the Cornwallis and Gasperau rivers. Originally settled in the 1680s by Pierre Melanson and his family, Grand Pré became one of largest Acadian settlements until the deportation. The land known as Grand Pré encompassed much more area in the past than is designated at the national historic site today. The history that has set this area apart and the paths taken in the development of the site can be traced through time. From its earliest significance as an Acadian settlement, to its current endeavour for recognition by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, Grand Pré is an Acadian landmark both physically and emotionally.

In 1907, the lands associated with the Grand Pré historic site were purchased by a man named John Frederic Herbin (Personal Comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). His mother was an Acadian woman who spoke fluent French, while his father was neither Acadian, nor French-speaking. In the earliest stages of Acadian nation building language was one of the key components to the Acadian identity, and Herbin was not accepted by the Acadian community because of his lack of fluency in French (Personal Comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). Despite this, Herbin felt strong connections with the site of Grand Pré and with the Acadian community. He purchased the land of what was believed to be the location of the original Saint-Charles-des Mines church foundation for the purpose of giving it to the Acadian community to serve as a

commemoration of their past. He wanted the Acadians to have a place that was their own that would forever present the Acadian story. Herbin began to do some research and archaeology of his own on the land. The erection of Herbin's cross is said to mark the graveyard of Grand Pré, built from nearby ruins of a foundation in 1909 (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). Despite the potential of the lands, Herbin's frustration mounted as his lack of acceptance by the Acadian people led to no one wanting to take charge of the lands he offered to them. Finally, Herbin sold the lands to the Dominion Atlantic Railway (DAR), but with rigid stipulations (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07).

The DAR took control of the Grand Pré site in 1917 (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). The strict condition laid down by Herbin when he handed the lands over to them was that the site remain a park for Acadians (Personal Comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). The lands belonged to the Acadian community, and should any Acadian group step forward and want to build a commemorative site on the lands they would be able to do so at Grand Pré (Personal Comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). Development of the gardens around the site began, and the trees lining what was once the entrance to the site were planted. Now fully grown, the trees divide the site down the middle along the old railway, showing the expansion of the site resulting from construction of the interpretive centre. Around 1919, the DAR appealed to the Acadian community again about the lands that could be developed by the Acadian community (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). Proposing ideas for the development of Grand Pré as a project run by Acadians, the DAR finally gained the Acadian community's attention, having already begun transforming the lands through the development of the gardens. That same year, 1919, the lands were handed over to the Acadian community under the control of the

Société Mutuelle L'Assomption (SMA), presently known as Assomption Vie, a financial institution based out of Moncton, New Brunswick, and holders of the legal deed to the lands at Grand Pré (Le Blanc 2003: 113).

The Acadian community took over the development of the lands, continuing the gardens and constructing a monument to commemorate the Acadians and appeal to travellers passing through on the railway. The statue of Evangéline, created by Henri Hébert of Québec, was erected at the site in 1920 (Personal Comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). Evangéline's iconic reputation piqued interests and attracted tourists from around the world to the site (Le Blanc 2003: 71). At this point in the site's history, only two posts marking the entrance to the site, the statue, and Herbin's cross were physically available to visit, with the backdrop of the great meadow all around them (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07). Fundraising efforts among the Acadian community enabled the raising of enough money to build a memorial Church on the site next, with construction beginning in the 1920s (Personal Comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). The memorial church was built and designed based on a church from the same period in Normandy, France (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07). Most likely this design is nothing like what the actual Saint-Charles-des-Mines Church looked like (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07). Neither the elaborateness of the church at Grand Pré today nor the size reflects the information we have about the original church through the historical records. The church would have had to accommodate approximately 500 men, boys, and soldiers who were brought into the church when the deportation order was read (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07). Nevertheless, the church stands today as a commemoration of the original church, which has led to research using the historical records, and more recently archaeology, to try

and find the actual foundation of the original church. The initiative to turn Grand Pré into an Acadian commemorative site was successful, and more opportunities arose for future development.

Around 1956, Parks Canada was establishing national historic sites around Canada, and Grand Pré was a prime candidate for such a title. The community had been working with the site for years, but all from a distance. Besides the park, there were no longer any Acadians in this area since the deportation, and the surrounding community was inhabited instead by generations of Planter families (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). These Planter families were New-England settlers who moved onto the Acadians' lands after they had been deported. When the Acadians returned after the deportation, they were unable to return to their land in Grand Pré, and this remains a reality today, causing the Acadians looking after the site to do so from a distance. This displacement left room for the surrounding community to start thinking of the park as their own, and not an Acadian commemoration site (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07). The site became a place where the surrounding community felt Planter artifacts should go as well (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07). A few years of this thinking transformed the church into a museum, storing things that had nothing to do with the Acadian story at all (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07).

When the site was officially turned over to Parks Canada in 1984, a committee was organized to look at the site and ensure that it presented an Acadian perspective and story (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). Appointing an Acadian superintendant, the church was cleared out of anything not representing the Acadian heritage. The Planter artifacts were

moved to another location, French interpretation was brought in, and the Acadian community was consulted to ensure that Grand Pré represented an accurate depiction of the Acadian story (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). The Acadian community wanted to have more say in how the site was run, and through discussions with Parks Canada the creation of a society known as Le Société Promotion Grand Pré was established between 1992 and 1997 (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). Management of the park became a co-management relationship between the Société and Parks Canada. Parks Canada maintained upkeep of the grounds and general site maintenance, and the Société handled the interpretation, history, and representation of the site. Grand Pré is now running smoothly, with goals and future objectives hopefully within reach. A site reflecting representation of the Acadian heritage, Grand Pré acknowledges and demands attention be paid to the Acadian presence in former Acadie.

The goals of the site have evolved since Herbin purchased the lands in 1907. The first goal was ensuring that this small piece of land be put into the hands of the Acadian people and remain in the hands of the Acadian people (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). As the site developed, the goals evolved with it. The site needed to be a commemorative place for all Acadians, telling their stories and using the past as an avenue for present and future representation of the Acadian community (Personal Comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). The present Acadian communities around the world had to be addressed, including the Cajun populations, groups in France, and other Acadian communities thriving in today's society (Personal Comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). Simply addressing the existence of these communities was not enough. The goals evolved again, attempting to connect these communities and bring them together to regenerate pride in their Acadian identity. It would do

the communities no good to be looked at as static and unchanging societies, and therefore incorporating living culture into the Grand Pré site prevented such ideas from forming. The underlying goals of the site have always been to promote and encourage an understanding and connection with the Acadian past through Grand Pré. To preserve the historical memory of the Acadians, Grand Pré has been evolving over time and continues to evolve to ensure the Acadian story is presented.

A Visit to Grand Pré National Historical Site in 2007

The Grand Pré National Historical Site rests in a valley, surrounded by rolling hills, wide open marshes, and farmland. Even the drive to the site reflects the influence of the Acadian presence. Exiting off Highway 101 toward Grand Pré, you merge onto the Evangéline trail. Along the way stores and shops bearing the name of Evangéline line the road. Finally approaching the interpretive centre, the sprawling marshlands span the horizon. The scenery changes depending on the season, but the landscape maintains its simple beauty. Trees line the streets, but as a clearing opens the interpretive centre appears on the left. Open and visible from the road, the red building sits in an open field, encompassing several state of the art features.

The new centre, built in 2003, contains a multimedia theatre, gift shop, exhibition hall, and multi purpose room. At the time of my site visit, the multi purpose room held an exhibit of photography of the site featuring different photos of the landscape, monuments, and, of course, the statue of Evangéline. As you enter the front of the centre through the glass doors, directly ahead you are welcomed by signs and posters in both English and French, and a large

painting hanging above the information desk. The painting titled “Réveil,” by artist Wayne Boucher, presents a story of Acadian survival and strength. The gift shop follows the bathrooms immediately to the right as you walk in, and to the left is the multi purpose room. The design on the ceiling of the multi purpose room represents the Acadian flag in an abstract circular pattern. Directly in front of you as you enter the foyer is the information desk. Donations and entry fees are paid here. Guided tours and information can also be arranged at the information desk. Beyond the information desk to the left is the multimedia room.

Offered at scheduled times all day, a video is presented in the multimedia room about the Acadian story and deportation. As you enter the multimedia room, it resembles the hull of a ship. Wooden rows of seats with individual headphones allow the visitor to pick either English or French versions of the film. Describing daily life, activities, and the events leading up to the deportation, the film presents characters portraying the Acadian perspective. Taking on a more serious attitude, the film shifts to discuss the deportation also from the Acadian perspective as well as from Colonel Winslow’s perspective. Colonel John Winslow wrote a detailed journal about the execution of the deportation and his involvement as the executor. Using historical documents such as this substantiates the story presented and the different perspectives depict what occurred in the gruelling three months of the event. After the video, names of the Acadian families impacted by the deportation are projected on the walls on either side of room. As I scanned the long list, I came across my family name and the story became all the more real to me.

Coming out of the multimedia room, and directly on the opposite side of the interpretation centre is the exhibition hall. Portraying the archaeological findings from the site, historical documentation, and a life size model of the dyke system, the hall presents the three kinds of information composing the meta-narrative of the Acadian story. Starting along the right wall and working your way around, each section in the hall addresses a different part of Acadian life through one of the three perspectives: historical, fictional, and archaeological. Relationships with the Mi'Kmaq, archaeological evidence recovered from the site, and different wars impacting the site directly and indirectly are all addressed. The cross section looks at how the dykes are made, what they look like, and hands on examples of what they are made from, which provides insight into the hard work that actually went into this technology exhibited in a life-size cross section of a dyke in the centre of the exhibition hall.

Roger Sevigny guides me through the exhibition, explaining each of the three kinds of information I focus on in this thesis and the reasons behind their presentation in certain ways. The need to appeal to the tourists' interests seems to be the underlying reasoning for these methods of presentation. Ensuring that people receive accurate information about the Acadian past in interesting and appealing ways makes the history easier to learn. As we come around the room, back toward the entrance, we approach a presentation of Acadians today. Exposure to Acadians who have become important members of the community ties the past to the present. I feel this section to be one of the most important features at the site, providing the idea of living culture through the acknowledgement of important Acadian people through time.

Finally approaching the end of the exhibit hall, we reach the only mention of Evangéline at the site. Here, I discover more about the story of Evangéline and its increasingly under-emphasized presence at the site. Having been an important factor in the creation and recognition of Grand Pré, the importance of the Evangeline story is not entirely ignored. Clearly remaining a draw to the site, Evangeline remains an important cultural icon to the tourists (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07). Once the people actually arrive at Grand Pré, however, reference to Evangeline is limited to the small section in the exhibition hall, and features such as the statue in the gardens. Neither the guides nor the interpreters openly discuss the heroine (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). By telling the story of the Acadian deportation as known through the historical records, explaining Acadian life ways at the site using archaeological data, and explaining the state of the Acadian community today, the Grand Pré site moves away from the romanticized passivity generated by Evangéline (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07).

The Grand Pré site has evolved over time in its goals, presentations, and focus, but it continues to represent a multivocal site. By encompassing three kinds of information as parts of the greater meta-narrative, the site presents these parts to provide a fuller picture of the Acadian story. All of the perspectives, whether historical, fictional, or archaeological, are important in understanding the Acadian identity. How they are each presented, whether or not one has emphasis over another, and what having greater emphasis over another kind of information might say about the Acadian identity being presented are all parts of my research questions that I will address in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Three ways of knowing “l’Acadie”: What the historical records, the story of Evangeline and archaeological data can tell us about Grand Pré

The historical, fictional, and archaeological perspectives create the three kinds of information presented at Grand Pré. These three perspectives make up the meta-narrative of Acadian identity presented at the site. This identity is explained as the way in which Acadian people understand themselves in relation to others, classifying and uniting themselves through shared experiences, values, and history. Defining identity in this way, I argue that these three kinds of information represent different strands of the meta-narrative of Acadian identity presented at Grand Pré. Each strand is woven into the meta-narrative, telling different parts of the story, all of which are important. What these different kinds of information provide, the presentation of each, whether one or more have precedence over others, and what this precedence suggests in relation to the meta-narrative presented, are discussed below.

The Historical Records

The historical records at Grand Pré provide the background information about the Acadian story at the site. What we learn from the historical records, how they are presented, what this presentation suggests about the part played in the Acadian meta-narrative, and whether or not it is given precedence over any other kind of information at the site, addresses my research questions. The historical records provide information about the daily life and political influences of Acadian life before, during, and after the deportation. This kind of information is presented in numerous ways at the site and the part played by this information creates the foundations of the meta-narrative at Grand Pré. Identity construction is influenced

by this historical perspective, providing a look into the daily life and cultural constructions of the Acadian people. The political issues that affected the Acadians are also understood through these historical records. Addressing these features of the historical perspective aids in understanding the part of the meta-narrative played by this kind of information.

The presentation of the historical records at Grand Pré constitutes a major part of the meta-narrative. History provides the foundation upon which the site builds its presentation of Acadian identity and heritage. Documentation of Acadian daily life has revealed economic and political relationships between both the English and the French with the Acadians. This information creates a picture of Acadian life that assists in trying to understand the relationships among Acadian groups, and with others. Other information that has been provided through the historical records involves the Acadian development of survival and adaptation strategies to the Nova Scotia environment (Le Blanc 2003: 27). Acadian life styles have been recorded as being focused on farming, fishing, and fur trading (Le Blanc 2003: 27). Trade relationships with the English, French, and Mi'kmaq, and mechanisms of communication with each are also understood through historical records (Le Blanc 2003: 26).

First-hand accounts, such as those from Sieur de Diervielle, a Frenchman visiting Port Royal in 1699, reveal features of Acadian life that aid in the site's presentation (Le Blanc 2003: 27). Staying for a year, de Diervielle reported on some of the economic features of Grand Pré, including the site being the greatest producer of wheat in the region (Le Blanc 2003: 27). This productivity is illustrated to this day, as the Grand Pré area continues to be one of the more fertile areas in Nova Scotia. Farming techniques have also been described in historical records,

with physical reminders evident today in the landscape. Dyke construction, one of the culturally significant technologies that separated the Acadian settlers from others, can be found in the historical documents, and has been exposed through archaeological investigation of the surrounding marshlands (Le Blanc 2003: 29). This technology was brought over from France and adapted to the unique Maritime ecology. This feature of Acadian life in Acadie led to culturally significant organization, from the way the people worked the lands, to the development of new terminologies that accommodated their personal adaptations to this system ('aboiteau' is an example, which is the small, wooden, one-way valve controlling the flow of water, and is still a term referenced regarding the dykes) (Le Blanc 2003:29). Historical records provide a kind of information that is academically and educationally accepted, and this can be witnessed in the presentation of this kind of information at Grand Pré.

The historical information about the lifestyle and activities of the Acadians is presented at the site in several ways. The exhibition hall, multimedia film, and hands-on, historical projects developed for educational and online aids, all use the historical records about the Acadian past in their construction. The exhibition hall uses small video clips of bread making, dyke building, clothing styles and manufacturing, farming techniques and tool construction as interactive ways to portray what has been discovered through historical records. Other methods of presentation include dioramas of the landscape, a life-size cross-section of a dyke with a hands-on piece of sod that would be used in dyke construction, help to show what has been learned from historical information. History is reflected in every area of the site, and moves beyond the exhibition hall to the multimedia room where a film depicts the Acadian story.

Historical records were referenced in the creation of this film presenting different perspectives of the deportation that helps to show history in an innovative way. Telling the story from the perspectives of the Acadians and Colonel John Winslow, the man who executed the deportation, the film brings the historical information from the page and presents it to the tourists in a different way. Historical records, such as Colonel Winslow's journal, are being used to locate certain features of the Grand Pré site, including the cemetery (indicated by Herbin's cross and a commemorative sign) and the original foundation of the Saint-Charles-des-Mines church. The historical perspective is crucial in the presentation of Grand Pré, aiding in the construction of the Acadian identity, by creating connections to the past. Bonding people through historically similar experiences, history generates the foundations for the meta-narrative presented at Grand Pré.

The role played by the historical perspective at Grand Pré is one that has been significant since the beginning of the site. It provides an educational and academically acceptable tool for understanding the past. Used to teach students in school about the Acadian story, the historical records exhibit an important part of the presentation of the meta-narrative at Grand Pré. The historical records tell the story of what happened. The foundations of the Grand Pré site, the historical records were used in the past in association with Evangéline, to substantiate Acadian ethnicity. The way in which this kind of information has gained precedence over Evangéline has revealed a shift in the focus of the Grand Pré site, which will be addressed later.

Evangéline

The story of Evangéline represents the fictional perspective presented at Grand Pré. The role it has played at the site has evolved through time. Le Blanc suggest that Evangéline provides an emotional interpretation of what the deportation might have felt like, creating bonds around the common experience of the Acadian past pre, during, and post-deportation, based on a romanticized image of the Acadian story (2003: 71). The presentation of this fictional perspective is set up in historically specific ways, from the construction of the statue of Evangéline in the grounds to the small section in the exhibition hall of the centre. Evangéline has become a cultural icon for the Acadian community according to Le Blanc (2003: 69), but is recently becoming de-emphasized at the site. Employees at the park recognize that she remains a draw to the site, and is still one of the main reasons tourists come to the site (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). However, this fictional perspective is being de-emphasized in comparison to the historical and archaeological perspectives. The part played by Evangéline in the meta-narrative of Acadian identity at Grand Pré is that of a beacon for cultural revitalization and early Acadian nation-building.

Evangéline provides a fictional presentation of the Acadian story, representing endurance, strength, and perseverance of Evangéline, the ideal woman (Le Blanc 2003: 56). Le Blanc discusses Evangéline as creating an emotional presentation of the Acadian story, drawing upon some historical fact to accommodate the romance of the poem (2003: 54). Referencing works by L'Abbe Guillaume Thomas Raynal and Thomas Chandler Halliburton, Longfellow incorporated the events of the deportation and created a poem that gained worldwide

attention and publicity (Le Blanc 2003: 53). Raynal, a French historian, provided details about the daily lives of the Acadian settlers through his published work of the 1770s (Le Blanc 2003: 54). Halliburton's *Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia in 1829* describes detail about the Acadian exile, which Longfellow uses to tell the story of Evangéline after the deportation (Le Blanc 2003: 54). The success of the poem brought attention to the Acadian community and their experiences, providing the Acadian people with Grand Pré as a reference point for building ethnic relationships.

Evangéline provides an emotional connection to the past through shared experiences, history, and the creation of group ethnicity. Le Blanc discusses the role of Evangéline in early cultural revitalization as reinforcing the unique identity of the Acadian people (2003: 69). Young Evangéline was engaged to Gabriel the night before the deportation, and was torn apart from her love; she spends the rest of her life searching for him, but was always one step behind (Le Blanc 2003: 51). Le Blanc discusses that the poem connected with both Acadian and non-Acadian people, intrigued by the woman's endurance and perseverance in finding her love, and creating an emotional reaction of empathy toward the Acadian community that had suffered in this way (2003: 56). The Acadians drew upon the heroine and their history for comfort, creating bonds to the past and establishing Evangéline as a symbol of Acadian pride and endurance (Le Blanc 2003: 68). Evangéline was used to reconstruct a unity between the dispersed Acadian people, and through association as "the land of Evangéline" Grand Pré became the reference point for bringing the Acadians together. The character plays a significant role in what it has provided to the meta-narrative at Grand Pré. Evangéline was used as a beacon and icon for Acadian revitalization of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The attention

brought to Grand Pré, and therefore to the existence of the historic site, is also due to the publicity and popularity of the heroine. The major part Evangéline plays in the Acadian story demands its presence at the site, and how this part of the story is addressed at the site is discussed below.

The presentation of the story of Evangéline has been methodically and historically particular throughout time. Drawing Acadian and non-Acadian people to the lands made famous by the poem, Evangéline has had a shifting position in the site's presentation. Earlier presentation at the site glorified Evangéline, using her character, and the grounds designated as Grand Pré, to unite Acadians around the world (Le Blanc 2003: 57). The statue of Evangéline was constructed in 1920 near the train station, and marked the original entrance to the park (Parks Canada: Accessed 02/15/08). The statue and its positioning in this place captured the attention of the tourists, drawing them to the lands where Evangéline lived (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07). The train stop at this station was 20 minutes long, which, in comparison to the other stops in the area was substantial, and the promotion of Evangéline and the Grand Pré park tried to accommodate this by creating a presentable site (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07). The presentation of Evangéline has shifted through time in specific ways. The original entrance to the park changed with the remodelling of the grounds and the construction of the interpretive centre, shifting focus from the heroine as the centerpiece of the site. The interpretive centre also presents an exhibit devoted to Evangéline, but the amount of space and lack of promotion by guides and employees reveals a change in the part played by Evangéline in the meta-narrative at the site.

The exhibition hall only designates a small section of the entire space to Evangéline, addressing several features of the part played by the fictional character at the site and within the Acadian community. The lengths to which Evangéline's name has been used world wide, and the significance it possesses in the early building of Acadian nationality, are a few of those features. The guides and employees do not discuss her. They refer tourists to the exhibit and the statue, but try not to facilitate the romanticized imagery that has emerged as a result of the poem. Mr. Tétrault explained that at the site tourists are drawn to visit because of Evangéline, but once they arrive the site presents the reality of the Acadian story (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). Personal interviews with Roger Sevigny and Victor Tétrault emphasize the importance of Evangéline despite being fictitious, and the part she plays in drawing tourists to the site. Acknowledging that Grand Pré National Historic Park would not be here today if it was not for the fame of this story, and the connection to the deportation, Evangéline will always have a part in the meta-narrative of the site (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07).

The shift is exemplified through the earlier emphasis that had promoted Evangéline as a cultural icon, and Grand Pré as her Utopian land. The recent addition of long-term archaeology projects at the site within the last 10 years, and the data that is generated from this kind of information coupled with the historical records has shifted the emphasis from Evangéline to these other parts of the meta-narrative at the site. This shift is evidenced by the small section of the exhibition hall devoted to Evangéline, the lack of discussion about the heroine by the guides and interpreters, and the changing of the entrance to the site, which had once immediately associated the site with Evangéline when entering. Evangéline maintains her status at the site as a crucial part of the meta-narrative who is responsible for the Acadian

revitalization, and providing the Acadian people with a cultural reference point from which to generate unity. Despite becoming de-emphasized, Evangéline constitutes a position far too important in the Acadian story to be denied. Mr. Tétrault and Mr. Sevigny discuss this shift as a way to not only continue to draw tourists to the site, but also to show them the Acadian story through other kinds of information. The de-emphasis of Evangéline at Grand Pré is apparent, but the fact that it is still present at the site, and creates an important part of the meta-narrative as an emotional representation of the Acadian story, continues to present Grand Pré through a multivocal lens.

The fictional perspective presented at Grand Pré through Evangéline is undeniable. It is richly woven within the foundations of early Acadian ethnicity and nationality. The poem has created a point of reference for Acadians world wide. The role of the Evangéline story at the site has shifted over time, but it remains an important part of the meta-narrative because of its emotional significance to Acadian and non-Acadian tourists who visit the site (Personal comments R. Sevigny 10/25/07). The Acadian story, both historically and presently has drawn from this Acadian heroine. Despite de-emphasis, the revitalization, cultural unity, and symbolic representation of Acadian pride created through Evangéline, continues to demand her presence at the site to ensure a more cohesive picture of the Acadian story. With the more recent inclusion of the archaeological perspective, and the increasing emphasis placed on the historical and archaeological information, the meta-narrative of the Acadian story at Grand Pré maintains a multivocal presentation.

Archaeological Remains

The archaeological perspective at Grand Pré has become increasingly important to the site's presentation. Constituting a scientific approach to interpreting the past, archaeology provides physical evidence of the Acadian past, buried beneath the ground. Technical details about daily life, events, and activities can be understood through the archaeological records. When coupled with the historical records a powerful and complimentary look at the Acadian past is generated. Presentation of the archaeological records at the site has become incorporated into the exhibition and grounds. Presentation of the archaeological perspective at Grand Pré provides a physical connection to the site that has been expressed by both Mr. Tétrault and Mr. Sevigny. Increasing emphasis placed on this archaeological perspective has aided in the construction of Acadian identity by providing a look at the material culture left behind as evidence in the ground. How this kind of information adds to the meta-narrative at Grand Pré helps to understand the increasing emphasis it is receiving.

The information that is provided through the archaeological records constitutes a technical and scientific part of the Acadian meta-narrative at Grand Pré. Physical remains found through excavations at the site have revealed information about the activities, food patterns, building constructions, technology, and daily life of the settlement at Grand Pré. Different cultural remains and features of the excavations attest to what is already known through the historical records about the site of Grand Pré and the Acadian people who lived there. This historical-archaeological approach to research being done at Grand Pré has led to the emergence of a long-term research project established in co-operation with St. Mary's

University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Parks Canada and the site (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). This research project uses the historical documentation from Colonel John Winslow's journal to try and locate the original foundation of the Saint-Charles-des-Mines church, where the deportation order was read to the men of the community in 1755.

The data gained through archaeological research helps to connect the historical information that is already known with the physical evidence from the excavations. This combination of knowledge provides a fuller picture of the Acadian story at Grand Pré, scientifically substantiating the historical perspective. The deportation, destruction of the community, and the chaos discussed in *Evangéline* are also substantiated by the archaeological research. The presentation of this information at the site has provided another part of the meta-narrative and is incorporated into a growing exhibit in the exhibition hall, and in open excavations on the grounds. The exhibition hall is increasingly incorporating the evidence of this archaeological presence at the site. Hopes of expanding the sections devoted to archaeological artifacts are discussions for the future as mentioned by Mr. Tétrault, and thus the presence of this kind of information is becomingly increasingly emphasized and important in the meta-narrative presented at the site (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). The open excavations at the site are also incorporated into this part of the site's presentation. Allowing tourists to see the archaeologists at work, ask questions about what is being found, and seeing the artifacts on display in the interpretive centre, connects the physical remains to the site's presentation of Acadian identity. Mr. Sevigny described how tourists and employees at the site, are fascinated by the work being done, with some tourists returning to see the progresses made with each season of excavation (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07). The presentation of this

archaeological perspective has been shown to be increasing at the site, both through expanding parts of the exhibition hall and ongoing archaeological excavations being done. The kinds of things that can be learned from this information provide insight into certain parts of the Acadian story that may otherwise be difficult to understand.

Beginning in 2000, the long-term research project set out to locate the original foundation of the Saint-Charles-des-Mines church, which does not correlate with the location of the memorial church at the site. Mr. Sevigny discussed that when the park was handed over to the Acadian society, L'Assomption Vie, in 1920, the plans to build the memorial church began to develop (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07). This led to the beginning of construction in 1922, and completion of the inside of the building in 1930 (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07). Mr. Sevigny explained, that when the site was handed over to the Acadian community, the statue of Evangéline and the entry-way posts were already established as the entrance to the park (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07). Building the memorial church aligned with Evangéline created a picturesque park that was appealing to tourists and was promoted extensively as the land of Evangéline (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07). Mr. Sevigny describes how the promotion by the Dominion Atlantic Railway (DAR), emphasized the role of Evangéline to the extreme, saying that this was her land, that she actually lived here (denoting that she is real), and that the memorial church was built on the original foundations of Saint-Charles-des-Mines Church (Personal comment R. Sevigny 10/25/07). The attempt to find this original foundation has encompassed this long-term archaeological project, adding to the information of the Acadian story with each new field season. The role that is now being

played by the archaeology at the site in terms of its presentation and role in the meta-narrative is gaining emphasis.

The shifting emphasis on archaeology at the site has been the result of awareness to the beneficial information gained through archaeological research. What this information provides to the Acadian story is discussed by Mr. Tétrault, who describes the archaeology as providing a tangible piece of the past that connects the historical data to the physical data being discovered through excavations (Personal comment V. Tétrault 10/25/07). This shift towards an increasing focus on archaeology and historical records, while simultaneously de-emphasizing the part of Evangéline at the site poses an interesting part of the multivocality at the site, which will be discussed later. The fact that these three kinds of information are presented at Grand Pré, that they all constitute parts of the greater meta-narrative at the site, and that they all add their own strand of the Acadian identity, suggests that the site is multivocal according to my earlier definition from chapter 2.

Chapter 7: Multiple stories about “l’Acadie”: Historical documents, archaeological remains and the story of Evangeline as strands in the multivocal meta-narrative of Acadian identity

This project has illustrated that multiple kinds of information are important in presenting a multivocal site that depicts the meta-narrative of Acadian identity at Grand Pré. My understanding of multivocality as incorporating the three kinds of information at the site as strands in the larger, integrated meta-narrative now needs to be addressed in relation to the definitions expressed by Hodder and others in Chapter 2. Reiterating Hodder’s understanding of multivocality suggests that different versions of a story need to be presented at a site, whether they are academically and professionally derived, or if they are amateur and non-professional interpretations (Fawcett et. al. 2008: 2). Giving voice to the underrepresented interpretations equally at an historic site is an important component of this understanding of multivocality. At Grand Pré an interesting idea arises in terms of this definition.

Grand Pré, according to my definition of multivocality, does represent a multivocal site in the incorporation of the three strands of the meta-narrative; however, the de-emphasis of the fictional perspective of Evangéline and increasing emphasis on the historical and archaeological perspectives at the site suggests that we may need to look closer at Hodder’s understanding of multivocality. That these three kinds of information are presented at the site, but are not given equal emphasis could raise issue with the meta-narrative being presented at the site. In other words, multivocality at Grand Pré encompasses three strands of information that compose the greater meta-narrative of the Acadian story. The unequal emphasis between these three kinds of information suggests that a closer look at the multivocality of the site

should be addressed in terms of Hodder's comprehension of multivocality, in order to address the idea of equality needing to be given to all interpretations of the past.

The historical, fictional, and archaeological strands that constitute the meta-narrative, reflects Grand Pré as a multivocal site. Further investigation needs to be done in terms of the emphasis being shifted at the site to truly understand the multivocality presented there; however, the presence of these three kinds of information, all representing specific parts of the greater meta-narrative, substantiates my definition of multivocality as I have expressed throughout this thesis. A review of the three kinds of information, how they are presented at the site, and the part of the meta-narrative they compose, and the emphasis they receive is summarized below.

The historical records make up the foundation of the meta-narrative of the Acadian story. This historical perspective provides context for what happened during the deportation as well as what life may have been like for these people before and after it. History provides interpretations of the past and the historical records, such as first-hand accounts that give details about cultural, economic, political, and social features of life which may not be distinguishable through archaeological or other interpretations, create the foundation of the meta-narrative. History becomes even more powerful when coupled with archaeological evidence. Not only does this provide a written account of what was going on, but we can also see the material evidence of it as well. This connection to the past helps to provide a focal point for the identity construction of the Acadians, as it argues against subordination by dominating societal relationships. History is important in the Acadian identity because it details the events

of the deportation, provides information about daily life, and allows for a social connection to the past through shared experiences. When history is understood as a foundation for the site's presentation, accentuating description of the every day, the part played in the meta-narrative becomes clear. The historical records provide us with the story of the Acadian past. The other perspectives, fictional and archaeological, provide other important parts of the narrative as well.

Evangéline creates an important component in the construction of the Acadian meta-narrative. Despite the de-emphasis as a presentation at the Grand Pré site, Evangéline maintains significance and is not completely discarded. The idea of symbolism and symbolic resources provides a foundation for group ethnicity and identity. The story provided the subordinated Acadians with worldwide attention, emphasizing the tragedy they experienced with the deportation and exile. Evangéline became the symbol of Acadian endurance and determination. Le Blanc describes the role that Evangéline played in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century revival as being a beacon on which the Acadians could focus (2003: 71). Lucy states that symbolic resources drawn upon in the construction of ethnicity need to connect personally with the experiences and practices of the people who are to relate to this identity (2005: 97). In other words, the story of Evangéline provided an idea of what it was like for the Acadians in their lives before the deportation, the experience of the deportation, and the uncertainty of exile. Addressing how these features create symbolic connections to a fictional character is important in illustrating the impact that Evangéline had on the Acadian ethnicity and nation building, and why her presence at the site can never truly be ignored. The

final kind of information that is presented at the site, and that needs to be discussed is the archaeological perspective.

The archaeological presence at Grand Pré adds a new interpretation of the past and another part to the meta-narrative at the site. The material culture needs to be interpreted to understand the functions and significance that the artifacts have, and how social relationships can be created with them (Diaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005: 1). This suggests that material culture can be significant in creating social relationships between people, and with the artifacts. Symbolism in these interpretations can be helpful in understanding how archaeology at Grand Pré impacts the meta-narrative of the Acadian story presented at the site. How one interacts and relates with others depends on the broader strategies and intentions of the group, and the use and negotiation of material culture is symbolically important (Diaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005: 1). Thus, the material culture being discovered at the site can create a connection between the land and the Acadian community. Material culture expands on the understanding of what it is to be Acadian through physical evidence about the occupation of the land, the removal from the land, and the inability to return to the land after exile (Hodder 1992: 279). Hodder states that subordinate groups emphasize their connections with the past to create an alternative identity to that which has been suppressed (1992: 278). This moves people from being helpless victims in their own history, to being proud, strong, key players in their revitalization. To maintain the feelings of ethnic belonging and group relationships, material culture and symbolic resources are associated into everyday practice, providing powerful ties which certain people can relate to (Diaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005: 97).

Material culture articulates social identity both of the individual and the group (Diaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005: 9). This is done by providing chronological accounts of what happened at Grand Pré, and more specifically using physical evidence to support historical data already available about the Acadian story (Diaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005: 9). Hodder says that multiple stories about the past, whether told by professional academics or by amateur members of the public, need legitimacy, which can be provided by their presentation at historical sites and museums (Fawcett et. al. 2008: 2). At Grand Pré this is done. Grand Pré is an Acadian site representing the historical and physical connections of Acadians to Grand Pré and to the past. At Grand Pré, Acadian history and Acadian identity are encompassed in the notion of a meta-narrative that uses the historical, fictional, and archaeological perspectives to provide an understanding of the Acadian story.

Acadian identity, as it is presented at Grand Pré, is linked to how the meta-narrative incorporates and includes all three kinds of information at the site and the significance of them to the Acadian people. The historical records are references for understanding daily life and activities, as well as cultural and political features of the society. The fictional story of Evangéline symbolizes Acadian ethnicity, providing an idealized heroine who launched community awareness and revitalization. The material culture obtained through archaeology, provides a compliment to the historical records, presenting tangible evidence in support of the historical data and a physical connection to the past. It has also been understood by park employees as creating a sense of “real” connection to past Acadian subordination. These three perspectives come together at Grand Pré to provide different parts of the same meta-narrative

about what it means to be Acadian. How these kinds of information are understood in terms of the multivocality of the site is discussed below.

The site's presentation of the meta-narrative as expressed through all three kinds of information exhibits my understanding of multivocality. The emphasis that each kind of information gets at the site has shifted over time, and provides an interesting feature for discussion of multivocality at Grand Pré. Interpretations of the past can be looked at from extremely relativist perspectives to extremely objectivist and positivist perspectives (Trigger 1995: 275). Relativist perspectives indicate that all interpretations of the past are subjective creations and are not constrained in any way (Trigger 1995: 275). The acceptance of oral traditions specifically, in this case, the fictional story of Evangéline, have tremendous impacts on identity construction, and cultural interpretations of the past. Trigger argues that there needs to be a moderate relativist approach to interpreting the past (2008: 189). Relativism and symbolism are important in how humans behave within their environments and how they understand themselves in relation to others. These ideas allow for explanation of how identity is constructed through archaeology and history, as well as the fictional story of Evangéline.

Multivocality at Grand Pré is the way in which multiple kinds of information compose the meta-narrative of the Acadian story. All three kinds of information tell an important part of the story of Acadian identity, but recently, increasing emphasis has been given to archaeology and history over Evangéline. This suggests that presenting a multivocal site is difficult. Evangéline maintains a presence at the site, because of the important part she has played in cultural revitalization, tourist appeal, and Acadian nation-building. Comments and personal opinions of

employees at the site, have attested to this acceptance of Evangéline, but, at the same time, the desire to present the story of the Acadians beyond the misconceptions that have resulted from Evangéline explains the shift in the emphasis away from the fictional poem. To achieve multivocality at a site, all kinds of information, from the academic sources to the amateur sources, need to be looked at as valid interpretations (Fawcett et. al. 2008: 2). The multivocality of Grand Pré addresses the presence of these different kinds of information, despite shifts in emphasis toward some interpretations over others. These shifts present interesting points telling us about the difficulty of achieving multivocality, and the importance of maintaining these different perspectives at a site because of the importance they have on the greater picture.

The Acadians were a strong people. They built the communities of Acadie and developed the land. They were in constant struggle over their own identity, due to the outside forces of the British and the French. The deportation attempted to put an end to Acadian culture, but it did not succeed. Reconnecting to the past and renegotiating group relationships, the Acadians emerged as a budding nationality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Grand Pré became a reference point for the dispersed community, building upon a bond of shared experiences and history. The parts that each of the three perspectives play in the presentation and construction of the meta-narrative at Grand Pré allows for multivocality to be addressed at the site. This multivocality encompasses historical, fictional, and archaeological perspectives, all of which provide different and important parts of the meta-narrative.

Conclusions

The three kinds of information presented at Grand Pré create a meta-narrative about the Acadian story. Each of the three perspectives provides a part of this meta-narrative, all of which are equally important in what they add. The interesting feature that emerges from this multivocality at Grand Pré is that rather than giving equal emphasis to all the parts of the story, whether academic or not, the site reveals a de-emphasis on Evangéline compared to the historical and archaeological records. This provides an interesting look at multivocality at Grand Pré, and suggests that looking at this unequal emphasis at the site may require another examination at the concept of multivocality put forward by Hodder. I argue that all of these three perspectives are critically important to the Acadian story, and that research being done about Acadian identity construction at Grand Pré needs to ensure the presence and understanding of the historical records, Evangéline and archaeological records as parts of a meta-narrative of being Acadian.

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Appendix A.

Interview Questions for Victor Tétrault and Roger Sevigny:

Topic 1: History of the Grand Pré Site

- When was the site first made into a National Historic Site?
- What were the initial goals of the site?
- How has the site changed over time?
- Have the goals of the site changed over time?
- Can you give me any written information about the background and history of the site?

Topic 2: How is the story of the Acadians, as it relates to Evangéline, presented at the Grand Pré site?

- Where can I find evidence of the Evangéline story?
- Why were these monuments/exhibits etc. put where they were?
- How long have they been there?
- Who put them there?
- Does this presentation relate to Acadian identity?
- Are there any other reasons for presenting the story of Evangéline at the site?

Topic 3: How is the story of the Acadians, as known through the historical records, presented at Grand Pré?

- Where at the site can I find evidence of the Acadian history?
- Why were these exhibits/multimedia etc. put there?
- How long have they been there?
- Who put them there?
- Does this presentation relate to Acadian identity?
- Are there any other reasons for presenting Acadian history at the site?

Topic 4: How is the story of the Acadians, as known through the archaeological record, presented at Grand Pré?

- Where at the site can I find evidence of the archaeology being done?
- Why are these site remains/excavations/exhibits etc. put there?
- How long have they been there?
- Who put them there?
- Does this presentation relate to Acadian identity?
- Are there any other reasons for presenting archaeology at the site?

Topic 5: Do you think that the Evangéline story, historical records, and archaeology tell the same story about Grand Pré and the Acadians?

- If not, how do they differ?
- Do you think on interpretation is more legitimate than others?
- How does archaeology add to our knowledge?

Appendix B.

Interview Questions for Barbara Le Blanc:

Topic 1: The Acadian Identity

- What events or people were responsible for the Acadian revitalization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?
- What events or people were responsible for the Acadian revitalization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?
- Why did this revival happen when it did?
- What was the outcome of this revitalization, and what impact did it have on the Acadian community?
- How is the idea of being Acadian understood today, and has this changed or is it changing from what the original revival suggested?
- In regards to the site of Grand Pré, do you feel it is more important to present ideas about the Acadian identity to Acadians or to other tourists who are not Acadian?

Topic 2: History of the Grand Pré site

- How has Grand Pré become a significant part of the Acadian community?
- How has the site had a role in the construction of Acadian identity, and if so, how has it aided in this construction?
- Has the meaning of Grand Pré changed over time for Acadians?

Topic 3: History of Evangéline and the Grand Pré Site

- How has the story of Evangéline been understood and represented at Grand Pré site?
- How has the revitalization of Acadian identity been linked with the tale of Evangéline?
- Has political legitimacy among Acadians been impacted by the story of Evangéline or has the historical reality of the Acadian past resulted in some impacts on this legitimacy?
- Have power relations in the Acadian community been impacted by the story of Evangéline?
- What kind of impacts would result from the Evangéline story on these power relations?
- How has Evangéline impacted upon rights recognition among the Acadian community?

Topic 4: The role of archaeology at Grand Pré

- What new kinds of information does archaeology, which is based on the recovery of material culture, provide about Acadians? Do some people consider archaeological information more or less legitimate than others ways of learning about Acadia and Acadians (for example, Evangéline or historical records)?
- What events or people were responsible for the Acadian revitalization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?