

**L'Union Fait la Force: Acadian Music as a Cultural  
Symbol and Unifying Factor**

By

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### Abstract

L'Union fait la Force: Acadian Music as a Cultural Symbol and Unifying Factor

Brooke Bisson

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To date, there has not been extensive research done on the subject of Acadian music. Current scholarly efforts focus mainly on other aspects of the culture, such as history and demographics. Despite the lack of knowledge about the subject, songs with distinctly Acadian themes, such as remembering the Deportation and the past, Evangeline, homeland, and pride in heritage started to emerge in the late nineteenth century with the beginning of the Acadian renaissance. There were many national symbols and emblems chosen at this time, including a flag, anthem, motto, and the popular adoption of the figure of Evangeline. However, the Cajuns of Louisiana tell a different story of Evangeline than the Acadians of the Maritimes, and they also have adopted their own flag. However, the music from these two regions, among others, share common thematic material, and in doing so, act as a cultural unifier between groups that were separated by the Deportation. Musicians from all corners of Acadie have continued to use this thematic material in their music through the close of the twentieth century, which shows that these themes of remembering the Deportation and the past, Evangeline, homeland, and pride in heritage continue to be important to the younger generations and help to bind the Acadian people together through a popular medium and common themes.

## Introduction

Music has always been an important part of everyday life in the Acadian community. In the past, songs have played a key role in religious functions, social gatherings, and family entertainment. In her essay “Acadian Folk Songs” Professor Elizabeth Brandon says: “The song played an important role in Acadian life. It was sung not only for pleasure but it accompanied the daily chores of the people. Singing was an especially popular form of entertainment during their *veillées* -- social gatherings of family, friends, and neighbors” (Brandon 188). Today, Acadian music has moved out of the personal sphere and can be heard on the concert stage and at cultural festivals. It has found its way into the offerings of mainstream record stores and consequently into the homes of people who are not necessarily a part of the culture. Within the musical genre itself, there is, in addition to dance tunes and instrumental music, an oral tradition that dates back to the beginnings of Acadie. Among the ballads, *complaintes*, and more modern compositions, there are numerous songs dealing with what can only be described as recognizably Acadian themes and values. Themes and ideals such as remembrances the past and the Deportation, Evangeline, homeland, and the unquestionable pride that is felt by Acadians are just a few of the motifs that appear in the music. These themes are not just common to one region of Acadie, but rather hold meaning and significance for the Acadian people in general and in so doing, this music is able to cross many borders and boundaries.

There are many questions that remain to be answered about Acadian music, but despite this, the music is a definite reflection of the people who have written it. Naomi Griffiths, a well-known Acadian historian, says: “In 1748, the Acadians considered themselves Acadian, the French considered them unreliable allies, and the English, unsatisfactory citizens” (Griffiths 37). This identity, which allowed the Acadians to view themselves as a unique people as early as 1748, is something which has manifested itself in their music. This can be seen in a number of compositions, from the patriotic songs written in the late nineteenth century at the time of the first Acadian national gatherings, to pieces written by the younger generations only a few years ago. While there are ballads and dances, jigs, reels, *complaintes*, and contemporary songs that have none of these distinctive Acadian themes, these motifs and ideas have occurred in a wide enough sample of the music to warrant further attention.

For a people scattered around the world, as the Acadians were after the Deportation, the presence of distinctly Acadian themes, language, and identity within the music is especially significant. Music, which is easily disseminated and distributed, acts as a link between the scattered groups, as members of the various communities are able to identify with the themes found in the music itself. These songs, speaking of a common past, common ideals, and a common culture, suddenly take on more than a mere expression of personal feelings or artistic license. John Blacking, an ethnomusicologist says:

There is a sense in which music conveys nothing except itself: in itself, it cannot awaken feelings that may benefit or harm humanity. But it can make people more aware of feelings they have experienced, or partly

experienced, provided there is a degree of cultural, and hence emotional, rapport between the composer and the audience (36).

The cultural rapport between the artist who is singing about these themes and the audience who shares some of the same ideals is unmistakable. Thus, these songs, speaking of various aspects of the Acadian identity, act as a unifier, or cultural glue so to speak, which helps to keep the culture alive and vibrant. Not only that, but the musicians who express their pride in their heritage through their music are helping to keep a four hundred year old musical tradition vibrant and active.

In a world where language is often perceived as a barrier, music is, in many instances, able to transcend those barriers by speaking to peoples' love of melody, rhythm, and sound. The knowledge that a given song speaks of a past, history, and heritage belonging to the listener can be very powerful, even if the lyrics are not immediately understood. Music provides a way for the Acadian people to share collective memories, experiences, and feelings through themes such as remembering the Deportation and the past, Evangeline, homeland, and cultural identity.

Like many minority cultures surrounded by a strong and dominant mainstream society, the Acadians have faced the possibility and danger of assimilation for a number of years. In his book Notes from Exile: On Being Acadian, Clive Doucet, a cultural anthropologist, says:

diasporic Acadians have one thing in common that Acadians from Maritime Canada do not. For Acadians growing up in an Acadian village such as Cap Pelé or Memramcook or Caraquet, there is no reason not to become Acadian because you are surrounded by the heartbeat of Acadie.

This isn't so for Acadians outside of New Brunswick. For us, there has to be a defining moment, a subconscious click which changes things, otherwise it is inevitable that we will just drift into the melting pot (173).

One of the ways in which the Acadians can stand against this attempt at assimilation is through their music. Music is an accessible medium for people of all generations, and it is easily distributed through cassettes, CD's, and even more recently, through the internet. The presence of songs about the past which deal with recognizably Acadian themes allows people from Nova Scotia to Louisiana, and from Maine to France to share a symbolic, collective experience. John Blacking says: "Music cannot instill a sense of fellowship; the best that it can do is confirm situations that all ready exist" (36). Despite the fact that the Acadians of the Maritimes and those of other regions have adopted nationalist symbols, such as a flag, anthem, motto, or insignia, these symbols are not uniform and vary from region to region. However, the messages and meanings in the music remain the same, and provide a way for the Acadians to conserve their culture and to remember their past.

Up to now, there have been no extensive studies conducted on Acadian music, which provides one pressing, strong reason for research into this unexplored field. Numerous questions remain unanswered concerning such basic musical ideas as rhythm, instrumentation, and harmony, how these traits came to Acadie, and how they have changed over the years. Although it is a well-known fact that the music is an important part of the culture, there is not much more known than that. These unanswered questions and the gap in the cultural knowledge of the Acadian people in general provide another

pressing reason for more research in this area, which in turn led to the research behind this study.

Although the bulk of the music studied here will be from within the boundaries of old Acadie -- from the Atlantic Canadian provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island -- these are not the only places which harbor substantial Acadian communities or which have contributed to the general body of works known as Acadian music. In order to illustrate how the music acts as a unifying factor for the Acadian people, scattered as they are across the globe, songs from Louisiana and Quebec will be studied as well as those from the Maritimes in an attempt to understand some of the unifying and universal themes which are a part of the music.

The opus of Acadian music is a little known and poorly charted one, at best. This musical tradition dates back over 400 years and is constantly being added to and modified by modern musicians and younger generations. The choice of the songs studied here is based on a set of criteria established specifically in regards to this project. The lyrics to every song analyzed here are easily accessible to the public, either through publication in an anthology or songbook, or printed on the liner notes of the albums released by Acadian artists. Each of the songs studied speaks to a specific theme, either that of remembering the Deportation and the past, Evangeline, homeland, or pride in the Acadian heritage. In researching this, it quickly became apparent that there would have to be limits on the material studied both in relation to the length of this thesis and to the scope of this project. Although there are many other songs that meet all the established criteria, the ones chosen here have been selected based on the availability of their lyrics and the wide-spread geographical locations of the composers and lyricists.

Acadian musical history can trace its roots back far before 1881, which is the date that marks the beginning of this study. This date is significant, however, because it is the date of the first Acadian congress, the first gathering of the Acadians to discuss issues pertinent to the community. The year 2000 marks the end of the twentieth century and is the cut-off date for the music in this study. The 120 years outlined by these dates provide a rich heritage of music and a wide array of themes and ideas that have come forth as musicians express themselves and their identities through music and song. The goal of this thesis is to study the lyrics of some of the many songs written and published during this time period in order to survey which themes and motifs are written about and how these themes and the treatment of the subject matter changes or does not change as time progresses and societal values and influences shift.

This thesis will be dealing exclusively with vocal music, and further, with songs that have readily accessible lyrics. Although there is a strong and lively instrumental tradition in Acadian music, it will not be addressed here. Due to the scattered locations of the Acadian people and the wide spread scope of their communities, analyzing instrumental music and how that too may act as a unifying link is outside the boundaries of this work.

## Chapter One

“Comme nous avons dit au sujet de la littérature, la culture d’un groupe ethnique se manifeste par sa musique et ses danses.” ~ J. Alphonse Deveau, Notre Heritage Acadien

A handful of scholars and members of the Acadian community have collected what little is known about Acadian music. Réal Vautour, the director of the department of music at l’Université de Moncton has said: “Je considère que l’histoire de la musique en Acadie reste à écrire. J’ai trouvé quelques texts, mais ils sont très incompletes et il y a encore plein de vides à combler” (Vautour 226). However, recently there has been an increase in Acadian musical recordings being released by younger generations of musicians and a growing public interest in the music. Hopefully, these positive signs will lead to more research and further study into this interesting and important cultural field.

Although the twentieth century has witnessed a shift in the subject matter researched and studied by Canadian historians away from a larger national narrative towards a more focused, cultural area of study, there are still many subject areas that remain unexplored and under-represented in academia. During the early to mid years of the century, the emphasis centered on the need to relate the national narrative through a barrage of dates, rulers, wars, and political actions. This narrative was, for the most part, told through the viewpoint of a select group of primarily white males, often with the exclusion of women and other ethnic minority groups. If these groups were mentioned at all, it was more of an aside rather than as a significant part the history being told. The later years of the twentieth century saw a breaking away from this tradition as historians began to focus their attention on more specialized areas of study. Emphasis began to be

placed on distinct regions within Canada, and studies began to include more and more information on minorities and their role within the overall national narrative. Despite this shift in attention, there are still many aspects of this cultural study that have, so far, been ignored. One of these as-yet-to-be-explored cultural areas is music, which to date, has been seen as a form of leisure activity rather than a major part of and conveyer of culture. Although there have been many studies conducted of the Acadians and their cultural practices, the articles and books written on these people are shockingly silent on the subject of Acadian music.

In the past, “The long neglect of research on the modern history of Canada’s Maritime Provinces has allowed myths and stereotypes to dominate both popular and academic images of the region” (Forbes 7). The history of Canada was told from a centralized point of view and the common-held assumption was that the Maritimes were a conservative, backward region where both the governments and the people were too set in their ways to make any sort of changes in their lifestyles (Forbes 7). It became the goal of historians such as Ernest Forbes, Naomi Griffiths, and Colin Howell, among others, to attempt to deconstruct some of these stereotypes and to bring the history of the Maritimes to both the public and the academic communities.

Scholars began researching subjects such as industrialization and regional development in the Maritimes in an attempt to disprove some of the long-standing beliefs about the Atlantic Canadian provinces. During the 1970’s and 1980’s, research focused on topics such as “regional underdevelopment, class conflict, and the position of the Atlantic Provinces within Confederation” (McKay, “Region” 89). In the years since then, the focus of Maritime writings has shifted further still, so that in the 1990’s, topics

focusing on gender, ethnicity, and community began to be emphasized (McKay, “Region” 89). Colin Howell notes:

While my first generation of graduate students were captivated by debates involving the place of the Maritimes in Canada, the processes of development and underdevelopment and the lost promises of the industrial capitalist nation-state in hinterland regions, students today are more likely to be seeking out another regional cultural icon to analyze and deconstruct, whether it be lighthouses, racing schooners or lobster traps (Howell, “Development” 24).

Scholars are studying topics that are on a more personal, community-based level rather than on the wider, national political models of the earlier years of the twentieth century, and this has given rise to studies in areas such as sports, local community history, and ethnic groups, among other things. There is a wider base for all forms of cultural research; however there are still areas that have not, as yet, been covered.

The deconstruction of folklore and other aspects related to the “folk” -- music, tales, customs, etc. -- in an academic setting was not taken seriously for many years, since “the idea of a scientific discipline devoted to the study of declining elements of culture ... made little sense” (Ó Giolláin 4). Although Ó Giolláin is discussing folklore in Ireland, his argument can be just as easily applied to Atlantic Canada. According to P.D. Clarke, “By favoring structure over culture in their analyses of the past, Maritime historians have necessarily cultivated a deterministic view of the evolution of Maritime society” (75). Within the region, there has been a scarcity of articles published on folklore, music, dance, and other cultural phenomena, and to date, there has only been

one article published in *Acadiensis* on the subject of music: Kenneth Donovan's article titled: "After Midnight We Danced Until Daylight: Music, Song and Dance in Cape Breton, 1713-1758."

The historians of the later twentieth century were working to deconstruct the regional stereotypes that surrounded the Maritime provinces. Because of this, subject matter that, due to its very nature, fed into the existing stereotypes, tended to be ignored. In his article "Tartanism Triumphant," discussing the Scottish heritage in Nova Scotia, Ian McKay says: "In Nova Scotia not only the Scots, but all the white ethnic groups (or 'races') came to be seen as people whose cultures were virtually unchanged from ancient times. (Representation of Acadians had developed this theme since the 19th century)" (McKay, "Tartanism" 15-16). The Acadians, who were making an attempt to hold on to their past, would, in some senses, fit the stereotype of unchanging, unmotivated people, and it is for this reason that P.D. Clark feels that they were not given the scholarly attention that they otherwise might have received. He says:

More important here are the consequences of a programmatic approach to the Maritimes' past, which, because it implies compliance to the criteria of progressivism and enlightenment, greatly limits the taxonomy of objects judged to be worthy of consideration. To the extent that Acadie is perceived as backward, monolithic, Catholic and corporatist (and not just historically), it holds no greater attraction for Maritime historians than does the traditional Maritime order they wish to deconstruct (75).

The idea of the Acadians portrayed as an illiterate, peasant people with no substantial contributions to the culture of the Maritimes is also stated by A. G. Bailey in his essay

“Creative Moments in the Maritime Provinces.” Bailey discusses so-called “bench mark” literary contributions in both prose and poetry that he feels to be defining works in the history and cultural development of the Maritimes. However, those who have contributed are of English descent, and Bailey dismisses any contributions by other cultural groups, specifically by the Acadians by saying:

The Expulsion of 1755, and after, not only shattered the pattern of Acadian community life: it removed the majority of the people themselves bodily from the scene. Those who managed to evade expulsion, together with those who returned to fight on a later day in ‘the battle of the cradle’ have, for all their fine qualities, made no contribution to French Canadian culture comparable to those with which we are here concerned. As a peasant people they were quite different from the enterprising Yankee with his inquiring mind, his political acumen, and his cultivation of the intellectual virtues, and it is therefore doubtful whether the Acadians would have developed the kind of social dynamic that was necessary to high accomplishment in the field of literature, had they been allowed to remain in possession of their homes (48).

Because this article was written over 50 years ago, the language and general ideas put forth here fall back on the Maritime stereotypes that more recent historians are working so hard to dispel. Using the Deportation as an excuse, Bailey disparages the vast amount of Acadian cultural material, in both literature and indeed music, at the time when he is writing, which is 1949. In contrasting the Acadians with the “enterprising Yankees,” Bailey does not mention the fact that the Acadians have survived the Deportation and

have had to do this through their own merit. He does not mention that the farming techniques for building and maintaining the dikes along the marshes were implemented, designed, and maintained by the Acadians before the “enterprising Yankees” arrived in the Maritime region. In dismissing the Acadians’ lack of “political acumen,” Bailey neglects to consider or mention the several meetings that were held in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and the political decisions and actions, including the adoption of a national flag and other symbols, which were instigated and carried out by members of the Acadian community. As for their “lack of literary contribution,” Bailey does not mention any of the Acadian writings to date, and certainly does not mention any of the numerous songs, *complaintes*, and local musical compositions which were, and are, a major part of Acadian culture.

Previous scholarly studies of the Acadians have focused on such subjects as economics, farming practices, demographics, etc. Despite the fact that the Acadians have struggled since the Deportation to maintain a distinct and collective identity mainly through the preservation of cultural elements, it is not the cultural aspects which comprise this identity which have been studied, but rather, it has been the concrete, political, historical, and economic facets of the Acadian people which have received the most attention. According to Colin Howell:

Unwittingly or not, historians of the region have tended to discount the significance of those social and cultural practices whose history does not on first glance contribute to an understanding of regional economic development. This emphasis is beginning to change as historians in the region shift their attention from the broader regional economy to social

and cultural relations at the level of the community, neighborhood, and household (Howell, Sandlots 9)

Some aspects of the Acadian culture, such as the role of women or the examination of the material culture of the early settlers, have been written about in recent years. Some of the well-known researchers, authors, and historians to write about the Acadians are: Naomi Griffiths, Bona Arsenault, Sally Ross, J. Alphonse Deveau, Barry Moody, and Georges Arsenault. These scholars have, through their research and writings, brought the history and the Acadian people to academics and the general public alike. However, their work focuses mainly on the history and only certain aspects of a very rich and vibrant culture that has yet to be researched, analyzed, or published. Despite the growing public popularity of Acadian music and the ever-increasing interests of the Acadians themselves in the revival and promotion of their own culture, an exhaustive, conclusive study of Acadian music has yet to be conducted.

There have been numerous histories written about the Acadians. Some of these are in English, some in French, and some have been translated from French to English and vice versa. These histories range in focus and concentration. Some focus on a timeline of dates, wars, and treaties and how these affected the Acadians. Some concentrate on the history of certain areas such as the villages of Chéticamp or Chezzetcook, Nova Scotia. Some are written from a distinctly Acadian point of view, outlining in detail the hardships that were faced by these people, especially after the Deportation in 1755. Still others attempt to give the reader a broad, overall idea of Acadian history and what these people endured. The intended audiences of these histories range from those written for younger school aged-children to those written for and by

members of the academic community. While none of these histories were written with Acadian music as the principal theme, many if not all of them attempt in some fashion to convey a sense of what Acadian daily life was like to the reader in addition to providing information on dates, happenings, and political actions.

Many authors have briefly mentioned the importance of music within the Acadian culture, but they have not expanded on how or why it is important. They acknowledge the presence of music, singing, and dance, but the subject is not studied further. A book of Acadian folksongs, originally collected by Helen Creighton, begins its preface by saying: “Folklorists have long recognized and praised the merits of traditional Acadian music” (Labelle ii) which is true; the twentieth century saw a proliferation of folk song collections emerge. However, these collections are just that -- collections. They are not scholarly works and only very rarely attempt to analyze the music or place it within a context of cultural importance. Father Anselme Chiasson, another well-known collector of Acadian folk songs, says “The Acadians have always had a gift and a special fondness for song” (502). However, it is not only within collections of the music itself that people remark on the importance of song and dance within the culture. Sally Ross and J. Alphonse Deveau write “music and songs constitute essential elements of the cultural heritage” (Ross 149). In his book The Acadians, Barry Moody says “Acadians loved parties and dancing and frequently took time out from their work for these activities. The ‘party music’ that has survived to the present day among the Acadians is lively and full of the joy of living” (Moody 51). Despite the seeming importance that these authors place upon the music within the culture, the music receives little more than a cursory mention in their books, and sometimes even less than that in the works of others.

One book that mentions the importance of the music throughout Acadian history is Bona Arsenault's History of the Acadians. This book draws heavily on primary documents that portray in very vivid detail the trials of settlement, the ordeal of the Deportation, and the hardships of living in exile, and, although music is not studied in detail, it is mentioned in some of the documents that Arsenault consults.

Despite the lack of citation in Arsenault's index, there are two brief mentions of the music that were recorded in primary documents at the time. Captain Brooke Watson, an English officer who played a role in the Deportation of the Acadians in 1755, said "Their long cold winters were spent in the pleasures of joyous hospitality. As they had plenty of firewood, their houses were always comfortable. Rustic songs and dancing were their principal amusement" (Arsenault, History 94). Rameau de Saint-Père, a French historian who published a historical work on the Acadians in 1859, said "They liked the activity of church feast days, the processions and the solemn hymn singing that seemed to mingle with the ocean's beat. At parties, old French songs would be heard as well as recitals of hunting experiences and pirate sagas" (Arsenault, History 61). These are two observations by two very different people in two very different walks of life, at two different time periods -- before and after the Deportation -- but they both agree that music was an important, even "principal amusement" in the lives of the Acadians, and yet, this otherwise quite thorough and detailed history does not delve into the music any further.

In their book The Acadians of Nova Scotia: Past and Present Sally Ross and Alphonse Deveau cover Acadian history from the first settlements through the present day, at the time of publication, in 1992. The book goes into detail about the return of the Acadians to Nova Scotia and their struggles to rebuild towns and re-establish their

presence in such places as Clare, Argyle, Chéticamp, and Chezzetcook. Ross and Deveau outline how each of these villages was founded and how the community was able to maintain the Acadian presence throughout the centuries.

Ross and Deveau briefly mention music in their final chapter, entitled “Choices and Challenges: The Acadians of Nova Scotia Today.” Here, the music is associated directly with the people and is fondly remembered:

“It was Mardi gras! Family and friends gathered for a sing-song. The air was filled with music and the aroma of fudge. We sang such favorites as ‘Partons la mer est belle’ and the poignantly beautiful but tragic love story of Evangeline. The joy of mardi-gras was enhanced by the spirit of camaraderie by everyone and our voices sounded sweet in the early spring evening” (Ross 145-146).

The music is not discussed as a separate entity in this chapter, but instead is mentioned in the context of other events, such as religious holidays or festivals. It is in memories like these that valuable information about the music can be found, for even knowledge about what was sung or danced to in the early years of the twentieth century would help to fill in and elaborate upon this gap in knowledge about the Acadians.

Even in histories where the authors deliberately include the social aspect of Acadian life as a continuing theme throughout the book, the music is rarely if ever mentioned. Nicolas Landry and Nicole Lang’s *Histoire de l’Acadie* breaks the chapters down in a chronological order. Within those chapters, there are sub-headings that are addressed as the timeline progresses, such as *le politique*, *le social*, and *l’économie* (Landry). Within the heading of *social*, themes such as religion, education, population,

and demographics are discussed and compared as history progresses and times and situations change. Although this is one of the only books to directly deal with some of the social ramifications of Acadian history, the treatment of the music and other cultural aspects is still glaringly lacking.

The information that is available on Acadian music is limited at best. Its established place in the culture has been acknowledged, but its origins and defining characteristics are vague and uncertain. As one collector of Acadian folk songs, Father Anselme Chiasson notes, "The documents from the first three centuries in Acadia are generally silent on the folk traditions and culture of the Acadians" (479). However, he adds:

The best source of information on folk traditions in Acadia is found in the studies carried out in the twentieth century by Acadians and other ethnologists. Of these oral traditions collected in our century, some have been drawn entirely from the memory of informants and have otherwise completely disappeared, others are still alive today....The Acadians have always been fond of songs, music, tales and legends. A good singer, a talented fiddler, an entertaining storyteller were respected figures in their midst. And because of their isolation, they lovingly conserved the only culture they possessed, their folk culture (Chiasson, "Traditions" 478).

This twentieth-century desire to preserve Acadian culture has resulted in the establishment of many Acadian museums and cultural centers, the staging of cultural festivals, as well as the documentation of numerous songs and ballads collected by such people as Father Chiasson and Helen Creighton.

Music was one of the many aspects of their culture that the first settlers of Acadie could bring with them from their homeland. Not only were the orally-based songs easily transported, but the singing of these melodies allowed the settlers to maintain a tie with their homeland, and expressed the early Acadians' desire to maintain their religion, ideals, aspirations, language and culture (Michaud 617). Not only did they bring with them their songs and ballads, but also their dances and musical instruments (Dôle 22). In addition to the songs which were native to each individual province, songs which were learned by the future Acadian colonists while on their way to the ports of France and while on their voyage across the Atlantic, which they learned from other travelers and from the sailors aboard ship, became a part of their musical repertoire (Dôle 41). The songs that were sung in these early times encompassed a wide variety of themes and emotions, including sorrow, joy, love, work songs, dances, and numerous laments (Michaud 617).

It is these old songs that were brought from France to the New World which make up a large portion of what is now considered to be Acadian music (Chiasson, "Traditions" 502). These songs, which have survived a rather tumultuous history, have stood the test of time, the dispersal of the Acadian people, and the slow assimilation of Acadian culture into the mainstream Anglophone world. Songs today still contain the names of people and places in France that were important and popular back when the songs were being composed, nearly 400 years ago and some even farther back than that (Chiasson "Traditions"502). This culture was passed down orally within families, and although it was the role of the women to impart social values and morals to the children,

it was the men who were the cultural storehouses of the old stories, customs, and songs (Cormier 256).

This collection of old songs has been transformed and added to over the years as Acadians have branched out from their isolated communities, either through direct removal, or through their search for work in other areas of the world. Music from Quebec and other parts of the world has found its way into Acadian culture and has left its mark on the music (Chiasson, "Traditions" 503). And of course, the music is constantly being added to and revised as new compositions are added and older ones rearranged as musicians of today add their own ideas and notes to the already rich Acadian musical heritage.

After the large Acadian gatherings of the late nineteenth century, which were held in 1881, 1884, and 1890 respectively, many songs were composed that had patriotic or distinctly Acadian themes, such as "Evangeline," "La Marseillaise acadienne," "Plainte et pardon," "La fleur du souvenir," and "Le Pecheur acadien," all by A. T. Bourque, "Un Acadien errant," by B. D. Gillis,<sup>1</sup> "Echo d'un beau jour," by l'abbé A. Robichaud, "En Avant," by l'abbé S. J. Doucet, and "Partons la mer est belle," and "Le Reveil de l'exile" (Deveau 400). These songs remember the sad past of the Acadian people and at the same time speak of the valor and morals of the group of a whole (Deveau 401).

The nature of the songs composed by the Acadians changes somewhat in the 1960's, when the often sad nature of some of the earlier songs is replaced by a general joie-de-vivre as people celebrate the opportunity to live in Acadie or Louisiana (Deveau 401). Some songs composed during this period include "Viens voir l'acadie," by Donat

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<sup>1</sup> While Deveau gives credit to Gillis, the lyrics of "Un Canadien errant" were written by Antoine Gérin-Lejoie.

LaCroix, “L’Acadie s’marie,” by Edith Butler<sup>2</sup>, “Retour à Richibouctou” by Calixte Duguay, “Je veux vivre au soleil” by Angèle Arsenault, and “Tabusintac” by Raymond Breau (Deveau 401). Not all of the songs of this time were happy, though, and some, including “Réveil” by Zachary Richard and “Maudite guerre<sup>3</sup>” by the group 1755, attest to the injustices suffered by the Acadians of the past (Deveau 401).

Georges Arsenault is one of the few who has researched extensively in the field of Acadian song tradition, and his book Complaintes acadiennes de l’Île-du-Prince-Édouard is a well-known examination of the *complainte*, a song style which has come to be associated with the Acadian community. The *complainte* is in essence a lament, and most deal with the theme of death or disasters that have befallen the Acadian community. They are mostly local events and act as a sort of local historical record in a society whose primary means of transmission of facts follows an oral tradition (Arsenault Complaintes).

There is very little is known about instrumental music in Acadian culture because very few studies have been completed as of yet on this particular subject (Chiasson, “Traditions” 503). Documents show that there were instruments brought over from France with some of the first settlers to Acadie: namely the *hautbois*, a double reed instrument, (Dôle 23) and the *cornemuse*, a sort of pipe (Dôle 28). The violin was also popular at this time and eventually replaced the *hautbois* and the *cornemuse* as the instrument of choice (Dôle 23). Various instruments have made their appearances within the music as times and tastes have changed. Today, the fiddle and accordion are commonly found in Acadian music (Chiasson, “Traditions” 504).

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<sup>2</sup> While “L’Acadie s’marie” was performed by Edith Butler, it was written by Jean Claude Dupont.

<sup>3</sup> Although at first glance, “Maudite guerre” appears to have been written about the trials of the Deportation, it was in fact written about the Seven Years’ War (Lamothe 74) as is evidenced in the line from the song which states: “Ca bien duré sept ans, / pendant ma vingtième année / J’suis rentré en Acadie” (1755, “Maudite guerre”).

It is especially within instrumental music that the outside influences on the musical culture become apparent. In fact, it is speculated that the vast majority of purely instrumental songs, that is songs with no accompanying lyrics, have come to the Acadian culture from an outside influence (Chiasson, "Traditions" 504). During the years of the Deportation, roughly 1755-1763, Acadians came in contact with many outside groups, including soldiers, sailors, and various societies and cultures in the new locations which they inhabited during the years of exile. The new songs and styles of these groups influenced their own music that helped to expand the musical repertoire and to infuse it with many new and interesting influences (Dôle 193). Today, many Acadian fiddle tunes have distinct Irish and Scottish facets, which has been attributed to the direct influence and presence of these musical cultures within the lumber camps that employed many Acadians (Chiasson, "Traditions" 483). This influence was so prevalent that "Irish and Scottish jigs and reels were absorbed directly into Acadian instrumental and popular music" (Chiasson, "Traditions" 483).

Songs and dances were common entertainment for family gatherings, but occasions such as baptisms, marriages, anniversaries and various religious and other holidays throughout the year also provided the Acadians with ample opportunities to express themselves through their music (Dôle 90). In addition, there were bands in Acadie, which are discussed by Neil Michaud in his essay "The Acadians and their Music." The majority of those that Michaud discusses were formed in the mid to late nineteenth century and were affiliated with either churches or colleges.

Another important venue of Acadian music is within the Church itself. In the past, the Catholic Church has played a major role in daily life and has been a source of

strength and inspiration, and although the role of the Church is not as strong as it once was, its presence remains important to many Acadians. Many of the early song collections were compiled by priests. Hymns were not only sung at Sunday Mass but were also sung at home gatherings in the evenings as well (Michaud 319). The importance of this music can be seen later in the decision to use the melody of “Ave Maris Stella,” a well-known church hymn, as the Acadian anthem.

Not only was music an important part of church services and religious holidays, but it was also used as a teaching tool in many communities where there was no resident priest who could provide religious education for the community members (Chiasson, “Traditions” 501). Instead, books of hymns, such as Cantiques de l’âme dévoté dits de Marseille, by Laurant Durand, were given to the people. These books of hymns contained religious doctrine and stories about the lives of the saints, which were set to popular and easily remembered melodies (Chiasson, “Traditions” 501). In this way, music was featured in many aspects of daily life, not only at parties, or at church, but often in the home on a more personal, educational level.

During the nineteenth century, the Church was often inseparable from the rest of the everyday occurrences of Acadian musical life. Most churches possessed a reed organ, at least during the period after the Deportation (Michaud 619), which attests to the importance which was placed on both religion and music. The churches throughout the region of Acadie were often the driving force behind the establishment of bands and choirs; however the direction of these ensembles was not the task of professional musicians, but rather was the responsibility of the local priests or monks (Michaud 620). Often, any formal musical training or teaching that was done in any given area was

dependent upon the presence of a local religious order and their knowledge of and their willingness to teach music (Michaud 628)

Acadian colleges, such as St. Joseph's, Sacred Heart College, and Université Ste. Anne, were also centers of musical activity. The colleges often had their own bands and musical groups and were the sites of concerts and other musical gatherings. As the influence and role of the Church diminished, the presence of these colleges became increasingly more important in fostering and promoting musical life in the Acadian community.

The staging of Acadian cultural festivals is not a new phenomenon, and has its roots in the early days of Acadie (Michaud 629). According to Rene Baudry:

These celebrations have the advantage of allowing Acadians to work on their own distinctive public events and to participate in various ways. Local or regional talent is stressed. There are folk dances, fiddling contests, songs of the land, craft exhibits, and so forth....In a number of areas, including Clare County in Nova Scotia and Caraquet in New Brunswick, they are a kind of popular expression of social and cultural life in Acadia. Because the festivals end on August 15, they also emphasize the Acadian national day, the Assumption. (Michaud 629).

These festivals continue to be popular events today, and include such celebrations as the Grou Tyme festival that is held in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Beginning in the 1940's, Acadian music experienced a surge in popularity as people continued to strive to document songs before they are lost (Chiasson, "Traditions" 503). It became the job of the collector to preserve and document these songs, because:

The ordinary people who harbored this ancient folk culture might not, indeed probably could not, be aware of what it was they had. They were the living and fast eroding walls of a cultural vault full of treasures. The collector held the key, and his or her mission was to rescue the treasure while the walls still held and the customs or songs or crafts still “survived.” (McKay, Quest 23)

The efforts of the diligent collectors did preserve many songs, which very well might have been lost without their efforts. According to Ronald Labelle “There have been, however, fewer publications devoted to Acadian traditional songs than to those of other French speaking areas such as Quebec” (ii). Arrangements have been made of these songs, which have been performed by many different musical groups in an attempt to preserve this part of the Acadian heritage. Today, there are a number of Acadian folk song collections, which were gathered by a handful of people in an attempt to preserve this primarily oral tradition before it became lost. The earliest collection was started in the early years of the twentieth century, when Father Arsenault and Father Gallant collected songs from their parishes in Prince Edward Island (Michaud 617).

One of the better-known of these collections is the Chansons d’Acadie, which contains songs from the Chéticamp parish in Cape Breton which were collected by Father Anselme Chiasson and Father Daniel Boudreau. This collection consists of a series of eleven volumes, published between 1942 and 1993. The songs collected in these books seem to have no coherent theme or overarching reason for being collected other than a desire to see them preserved. The songs collected in the first edition, for example, range from “Ave Maris Stella”, the Acadian national anthem, to “La Passion,” which can trace

its origins back to the 12th century, to “Partons la mer est belle,” which was composed in the early twentieth century, to a local composition, “Le Crédit,” which is not attributed to anyone in particular, but is definitely “une composition acadienne.” (Boudreau i)

Although the book provides the reader with a basic melody line and the verses to these songs, information such as the name of the composer, the name of the collector, or why the piece was included in the collection is not given. The virtue of this series is that it made these songs easily accessible to the general public and made a conscious effort to preserve these songs before they were lost amidst the more common, and often more popular, English and American songs which were becoming more and more important to the younger generations.

Helen Creighton is well known in Nova Scotia and Canada for her work collecting folk songs in the twentieth century. Although her main focus was on English folksongs, she also collected quite a few French works and, because of the region she was working in, Acadian songs as well. These have been collected and published in a book called La Fleur du Rosier, which contains some 125 songs, which range in content from old French ballads to children’s songs to *complaintes* composed by local people. The format is quite similar to that of Chansons d’Acadie in that the reader is given the melody and the verses to the songs. One of the merits of this book is that, in Creighton’s own words:

A scholar was required to write the notes. This had to be someone familiar with the whole folksong field in Quebec as well as the Maritimes Provinces....His stipulation was that he should be sent all the tapes so he could check all the transcriptions that had been done. This resulted in

many changes where words had been obscure before....His meticulous attention to detail has resulted in a much better presentation and for this I am greatly indebted. His notes and presentation should increase the value of these songs and those points of interest that a student would hope to find (Labelle x).

The scholar to whom Creighton is referring to is Ronald Labelle, the editor of La Fleur de Rosier. This points to the fact that this was not merely a collection of folksongs for the sake of collecting them, but rather is in many ways a scholarly endeavor in an attempt to make sure that the words and melodies were accurate, researched, and documented. The inclusion of all notes and writings in both French and English make this easily accessible to Acadians and those outside the culture alike, regardless of their mastery of the French language. Granted, there have been some criticisms of Creighton for her editing decisions, reflecting and privileging her race, sex, gender, and social position (McKay, Quest 100). Yet, her contribution to the preservation of these songs is unquestionably important, and her decision to seek outside knowledge and assistance in dealing with these Acadian songs speaks highly of her desire to see these songs properly collected and presented.

The collecting of songs continues to be of interest to the Acadian community in the later years of the twentieth century. In 1981, two Acadian cultural groups in south west Nova Scotia, the Centre d'études acadiennes at l'Université Ste. Anne and the Federation acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse, collaborated and published a volume called Musique acadienne du sud-ouest de la Nouvelle-Écosse. This volume follows the same format as earlier publications, with melodies and verses of both "chansons folkloriques"

and “chansons contemporaines.” These songs have been gathered together from various collections, and in the cases of the more contemporary music, names of composers are given. Other than this, though, there is no information given about these songs -- questions about origin, date of publication, or meaning are left unanswered. However, the publication of this book in the late years of the twentieth century shows that the interest in Acadian music and culture is still alive in Nova Scotia.

People have worked diligently to collect and preserve the songs of this oral tradition before they disappear; it now remains for the scholars to study this material. Questions concerning the music in early Acadie, how it has evolved over the years, and whether this drive to preserve the music in the early twentieth century was effective in keeping the music alive within the culture remain to be answered. To date, there has not been an extensive study done on the music and very few books or articles have been published on the subject. However, the resources are available for people in the future to study and understand this vast repository of cultural significance.

The rich musical tradition has provided the Acadian people with a ready means to express themselves in a medium which continues to grow in popularity both for members of the Acadian community and those outside of it. The medium of song is an easy template and a perfect means to express some of the events of the Acadian past and their culture that set them apart and make them distinct from the other cultural groups around them. The themes of the Deportation and the past, Evangeline, homeland, and cultural identity speak to the pride these people have in who they are and their desire to hold on to that identity.

## Chapter Two

“The more global the world gets, the more people want to stick to what’s unique to them.

And a lot of times it is the music. The music was always there; it’s just getting to the public now.” ~ Albert Arsenault of “Barachois”

There is no question that music forms an important and unique part of Acadian culture which has allowed the Acadians to be able to express who they are as a people. In addition to an anthem, “Ave Maris Stella,” there are many songs with either patriotic or definite Acadian themes that articulate the musicians’ feelings in regards to identity and cultural pride. These songs have been written by a wide variety of people from all walks of life and from all regions of Acadie. Though the composers and the geographical locations vary, the thematic material remains the same, and in this way, represents the Acadian people as a whole.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a series of national meetings were held, at which a select few delegates voted upon and ratified a number of symbols that came to represent the Acadian people. These include a flag, anthem, emblem, motto, and patron saint. In addition to these, the character of Evangeline, although not officially voted upon, can be included in this group. These symbols, which were chosen by a select few, have come to represent the Acadian people; however, despite the intentions of those who ratified the symbols, they do not represent the community as a whole, but rather stand for various local regions, as many of these symbols have distinctly local meanings, origins, and designs. For example, there are local variations of the Evangeline story, and different

flags represent the Cajun people of Louisiana and the Acadians of the Maritimes. The music, however, written by any number of “every day people” is not recognized directly as representing the community, despite the fact that the themes hold meaning for Acadians around the world, whereas the different flags only represent a small portion of the people.

Although many of these so-called “subgroups” such as the Cajuns of Louisiana and the people of the Maritime provinces have each adopted their own symbols and their own ways of expressing who they are, this chapter will deal mostly with the rise of *Acadian nationalism* and the process by which various symbols and elements were adopted into the culture in the Maritimes. While the cultural symbols from other parts of Acadie will be briefly mentioned here, the focus of this study will be on the adoption of cultural images in the Maritime provinces of Canada, since a comprehensive study of emblems from all parts of Acadie is beyond the scope of this research. Despite the presence of these cultural symbols, they are not interchangeable nor do they represent the entirety of the Acadian people. For example, the Cajuns of Louisiana adopted their own flag on February 22, 1965 (Leger, “Drapeau” 139), and while this flag holds a great deal of meaning for them, it does not have the same significance for the Acadians of the Maritime provinces or elsewhere. However, music can be transferred from one community to another without losing its meaning or impact, especially when the thematic material of those songs speaks to specifically Acadian themes such as the Deportation or pride in one’s heritage.

As early as 1850, the French historian Rameau de Saint-Père had realized that the Acadians would need symbols to link and unite the people dispersed around the globe

(Biddiscombe 120). The people would need something with which they could identify as being a part of their heritage, something that would uniquely be a symbol of who they were. Rameau wrote a two-part history about the Acadians, the first volume of which was published in 1859. This allowed those Acadians who were able to read to learn about themselves and their history in their own language. The work by Rameau not only allowed the Acadians to learn about themselves, but allowed the rest of the French-speaking world to read about and appreciate what the Acadians had been through.

Prior to the publication of Rameau's historical work, the American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote "Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie" which was published for the first time in 1847. (Thériault, "Acadia" 56). The poem tells the story of two lovers, Evangeline and Gabriel, who are separated during the Deportation, only to be reunited years later after a long search by Evangeline as Gabriel lies dying. The poem, though primarily a love story, is based loosely on the events of the Deportation. Although fictional, this widely popular poem gave the Acadians an opportunity to see themselves in print in a place beyond their struggles for survival and resettlement. According to Léon Thériault, "The couple Gabriel and Evangeline symbolized their progress as a people, both in their dispersal to the four winds and in their eventual reunion. For many, it was as if Acadia had finally received its letters patent of nobility" ("Acadia" 57). The poem sparked a wide-spread interest in the lands of Acadie (Griffiths, "Evangeline" 31) and promoted among the Acadians a newfound interest in their own past, current position, and future, all of which marked the beginnings of a new phase in Acadian history.

These two literary depictions of the Acadians, based on fact and one based on fiction, marked the beginning of a chain of events that would lead to the eventual

adoption of many cultural symbols by the Acadians of the Maritimes. In 1864, only a few years after the publication of Rameau's history, the Collège St.-Joseph was founded in Memramcook (Le Breton). In 1867, *Le Moniteur Acadien*, the first French-speaking newspaper in the Maritimes, was founded by Québécois journalists (Biddiscombe 121). The university and the newspaper provided the Acadians with a formal setting and opportunity to discuss ideas and debate issues which were gaining importance within the society. With the establishment of these institutions and the ability to exchange ideas through print media and debates, a distinctly middle class began to grow and develop, and in so doing, began to take a healthy interest in the future state of the Acadian people (Thériault, "Acadia" 70). During this time, the fate of Acadian nationalism was in the hands of the clergy and professional middle class, who, in promoting national pride and choosing symbols representing the Acadian people, championed the past, religion, and rural life, all of which reflected the values held by the society at that time (Ouellette 75).

These members of the Acadian elite can be roughly broken down into four distinct groups: successful farmers, merchants and businessmen, the highly educated, which included the clergy, and politicians (Andrew 13-14). The rise of these classes was based on an increase in populations, better educational opportunities, and an increase in voting power, among other things (Andrew). Although these groups shared some characteristics with other, similar elites in Europe and other places, the Acadian elite was not a closed, static entity and did not have the same control over the people and the government that its European counterparts had (Andrew). However, the choice of national symbols rested in the hands of those few, although it would be up to the common people to accept and ratify the decisions made.

One of the key events that acted as a catalyst in the hosting of the first Acadian gathering in 1881 when the first national symbol, the Acadian patron saint, was chosen, was a gathering of the Francophones of North America. This meeting was sponsored by the Société Saint Jean-Baptiste of Québec, and was held in June of 1880 (Thériault, "Acadia" 70). One hundred Acadian delegates attended this conference, (Thériault, "Acadia" 70) and although it was not necessarily considered to be an exclusively Acadian gathering, there are those who consider this meeting in 1880 to be the truly first *Congrès national*, rather than the meeting that the 100 delegates decided to organize in Memramcook in 1881 (Robidoux ix). The hosting of an exclusively Acadian conference was a vital step in discussing matters that pertained exclusively to the Acadian people and not necessarily to the entire Francophone population of North America. A common term that has come to be used in reference to the time beginning with the Memramcook conference is "Acadian renaissance," which was first used by Rameau de Saint-Père (Ouellette 76), and has come to refer to the period from 1881 and the first Acadian Congrès through the first World War (Biddiscombe 120).

Although the aim of the Memramcook congress, which was held on July 20-21 1881 at Collège St-Joseph, was ostensibly to discuss issues such as agriculture, colonization, problems of emigration, education, journalism, and the Acadianization of the Church, one of the major focal points of the meeting was to discuss and choose a patron saint of the Acadian people (Thériault, "Acadia" 71). Attendance totaled nearly 5,000, but it was a few hundred men, all members of the Acadian elite, who took part in the discussions and were responsible for the decisions which were made.

In choosing any kind of symbol, an example being the patron saint, the Acadian delegates faced two crucial questions: should they maintain their own cultural identity, or form a united front with Québec? Also, France was a natural choice for a model, but should one make example of the *ancien régime*, which was in power during the establishment of old Acadie, or the new governmental order, in keeping with more modern times (Biddiscombe 121)? These issues and the debates that surrounded them were evident at the Memramcook conference when the delegates attempted the task of choosing of a patron saint for the Acadian people.

According to Perry Biddiscombe, this issue was “nothing less than the future self-identity of the entire nation ‘une question de vie ou de mort ou les Acadiens comme peuple’ as one cleric noted” (125), and as such, this issue was clearly the center of many heated arguments before a settlement was reached. Although the possibility of having an Acadian patron saint had been discussed as early as 1870 (Biddiscombe 125), the delegates were divided between two possible choices: Saint Jean-Baptiste, patron saint of the Québécois, or Our Lady of the Assumption, who had more meaning and cultural ties to the Acadians themselves. There were supporters of both possible patrons, and the issue was important enough to be discussed by some of the best orators in Acadie at the time (Le Breton).

The debate came down to two schools of thought. Those in favor of Saint Jean-Baptiste argued that the Acadians should follow the French-Canadian example, their line of reasoning being that they had officially become French-Canadian with the ratification of Confederation. Those in favor of Our Lady of Assumption strongly argued that the

Acadians needed to maintain their own separate identity (Thériault, “Acadia” 71), an issue which was argued strongly by the Rev. Stanislas Doucet, who said:

Do we (Acadians) wish to become linked with the Canadians in such a way as to be no longer recognized as a separate people? ...Then let us choose Saint Jean-Baptiste, the national holiday of the Canadians as our own....Should we, on the other hand, wish to preserve our national group and at the same time profit from an efficacious and unique means of strengthening and affirming our existence as a separate people? Then let us choose our own national holiday taking account only of ourselves  
(Griffiths, Creation xii)

In the end, the decision rested with Our Lady of Assumption, who was designated as the patron saint of the Acadian people and her feast day, August 15th, as the Acadians’ national holiday. The hosting of this conference and the important decisions which were made there marked a true beginning and opened the door for the growing feelings of nationalism among the Acadian people (Thériault, “Acadia” 70).

The fact that the first culturally representative symbol to be chosen by the Acadians was a patron saint is significant, because it is a testament to the role that the Church played in the lives of these people and to the influence that the clergy and the Church had at these national gatherings. The impact and influence that the Church had would continue to be felt as other symbols were chosen, and the religious theme established with the choosing of a patron saint would be continued through the use of religious references and symbolism in many of the other cultural emblems.

Although a patron saint had been chosen for the people, debates continued to rage because those who had favored adopting Saint Jean-Baptiste and following the lead of Francophone Québec were not satisfied. Perry Biddiscombe says: “According to Pascal Poirier, ordinary Acadians were accosted and warned to celebrate St. Jean-Baptiste day rather than the Assumption, and there were even rumors about the organization of a counter-convention to overturn the results of the gathering at Memramcook” (126). Pascal Poirier had attended the conference in Québec in 1880 (Robidoux xxx) and was a member of the executive committee of the Memramcook conference in 1881 (Robidoux 2). Although there was no counter-conference to overturn the decision, it was generally felt that the issue could be discussed further and possibly be resolved at the next gathering, which was to be held in Miscouche, Prince Edward Island, in August of 1884 (Thériault, “Acadia” 71). Many of the same issues were to be discussed at the Miscouche conference as had been in Memramcook, but the importance of the Miscouche meeting was in the selection of a flag, an anthem, and a national emblem (Biddiscombe 133).

One of the reasons why so many cultural symbols were chosen at this time was that: “Les nationalistes essayèrent donc de faire en sorte que les Acadiens puissent prendre en main les outils essentiels à leur destin collectif. C’est ainsi qu’ils voulurent que le peuple acadien, comme tout peuple, se dote de symboles représentatifs, notamment une fête, un drapeau et un hymne national” (Thériault, Question 30). Also, “national emblems were crucial to the position of an elite whose leadership was not dependent upon control of a state apparatus...The importance of the flag as one of these symbols cannot be overemphasized, because the flag was -- and is -- central to the way in which Acadians see themselves, and to the way in which they are seen by others”

(Biddiscombe 120). The Acadian flag of today is in essence a French tricolor with a gold star in the upper left corner of the blue field, although there were many alternate ideas and designs discussed before this one was decided upon.

The question of maintaining a distinct identity versus forming a solid Francophone front with the Québécois still had not been completely resolved, and was an issue which surrounded the design and plans for the flag. According to Perry Biddiscombe: “The flag issue was clearly related to the question of national patron, since Acadians particularly wanted to increase the Marianistic content of national symbols while the St. Jean Baptiste partisans sought to limit the further development of an independent Acadian national consciousness” (126).

The choice of Our Lady of Assumption as the patron saint emphasized the need for a religious solidarity among the chosen symbols, and offers one explanation as to some of the symbolism found in the Acadian flag. The present design was conceived and implemented by Father M. F. Richard, who felt strongly about the need to promote a distinctly Acadian identity which would remember the past and what the Acadians had gone through, pay tribute to the Acadians’ French roots, and also emphasize the people’s religious beliefs and their ties to the Church. He explained his design and idea by saying:

Nous prétendons avoir droit d’existence sur le sol de l’Acadie, défrichée et arrosée par les sueurs, les pleurs et le sang de nos frères. Nous voulons respecter et faire respecter les justes aspirations des enfants et des martyrs de Grand-Pré et de Port-Royal, et nous sommes décidés à démontrer que l’Acadien, comme le Canadien, l’Anglais, l’Irlandais, et l’Ecossoise, a des droits dans ce pays et qu’il est déterminé à les défendre contre tout

tentative d'invasion.... Je voudrais que l'Acadie eut un drapeau qui lui rappelat non seulement que ses enfants sont Français mais qu'ils sont aussi Acadiens...Le drapeau tricolore tel que confectionné serait celui de l'Acadie en y ajoutant dans le partie bleue une étoile aux couleurs papales. L'étoile qui représente l'étoile de Marie "Stella Maris" servira d'écusson dans notre drapeau comme celui du Canada fait du drapeau anglais celui de la Confédération (Robidoux 172).

A woman by the name of Marie Babineau was the first to create a flag according to Father Richard's design. Although the exact date of completion is unknown, it is known that Mme Babineau simply cut a star out of a French flag and sewed a yellow star in its place (Biddiscombe 131). The star is representative of the Virgin Mary, patron saint of mariners since the seventh century, and not only emphasizes how important the sea is to the Acadians, but also reiterates the selection of Our Lady of Assumption as their patron saint. In addition to this, the star itself had been used as an Acadian symbol on its own since at least 1870 (Biddiscombe 130). The color of the star -- yellow -- is a papal color and further emphasizes the Acadians' strong faith and their ties to the Vatican and to the Church. The field of blue on which it appears represents the Virgin which underlines the people's ties to their faith and their religious beliefs (Biddiscombe 131).

The stripes were not supposed to replicate those of the French flag, which had meanings of their own. The blue in the French flag is said to symbolize the blue flag flown by St. Martin of Tours to represent the confessors; the white stripe is said to represent the flag flown by Joan of Arc and later the kings of France and is a symbol of virgins, and the red stripe is said to be reminiscent of the flag flown by St. Denis and is

said to represent martyrs (Leger, "Drapeau" 119). These colors are also representative of the French ideals of *liberté, fraternité, and égalité*. These were clearly not the same ideals held by the Acadians, who felt that the stripes instead were supposed to represent traits such as hope, innocence, and suffering, humility, purity, and freedom (Biddiscombe 144).

The desire of the Acadians to promote their ties with France was never strongly questioned, although it did raise some interesting issues. Should they model their flag after the white *fleur-de-lis* of the *ancien régime*, and in so doing promote their past and place of origin, or should they identify with the tricolor of modern France? There were strong arguments for both cases. The *fleur-de-lis* flag had been flown above the Collège St.-Joseph since 1877 and had been flown and promoted as the national flag at the Memramcook conference (Biddiscombe 123). It was eventually rejected on the basis that it had not represented France in over 90 years; to adopt this flag would be an insult to France, and would tarnish Acadia's image (Biddiscombe 133). Although the clergy clearly favored the *fleur-de-lis* flag, most of the lay people preferred the tricolor, which was eventually chosen as the basis for the Acadian flag (Biddiscombe 123).

Although the modified tricolor would be ratified as the Acadian flag, there were some who felt that M. F. Richard, who arrived at the Miscouche proceedings with an actual working model, rather than ideas and simple sketches, had an unfair advantage that shifted the vote and the outcome in his favor. Some felt that the hastiness with which the flag was chosen influenced the choice of an anthem, which was another goal of the Miscouche meeting, although the delegates were not so prepared in their proposals and arguments as they had been about the flag (Thériault, "Acadia" 71). Numerous songs

were discussed, including “Un Acadien errant,” which, although originally titled “Un Canadien errant” held appeal because many people identified with the song, whose lyrics tell the story of a man exiled from home and forced to wander foreign lands (Thériault, “Acadia” 70). Other possibilities, including a song titled “La Marseillaise acadienne” were suggested by the delegates (Thériault, “Acadia” 70). Following the example of the religious overtones established in the choices of the patron saint and in the emphasis on the gold star and its associated meanings in the choice of a national flag, the importance of religion and the Church played a key role in the selection of an anthem. Ferdinand Robidoux states:

De toutes parts on demande une chanson, les uns suggérant la Marseillaise, lorsque M. Richard entonne d’une voix grave et solennelle l’Ave Maris Stella, que tout le monde répète après lui. C’était un spectacle admirable, saisissant. Le God Save the Queen succède à l’Ave Maris Stella, puis M. Richard, prenant la parole, exprime l’espoir que nos musiciens nous donneront bientôt un air national. Pascal Poirier, interrompant M. l’abbé Richard, demande la parole pour quelques instants. Plus que tous les autres il est ému. D’une voix frémissante il nous annonce que pour lui l’air national des Acadiens est tout trouvé, est trouvé d’une manière merveilleuse qui montre le doigt de Dieu, l’intervention de Marie, notre patronne (Robidoux 163).

This well-known hymn to the Virgin Mary was chosen for the glory of God through the intervention of the Acadians’ patron saint. However, the choice was questioned by some who felt that the decision had been hastily made and that the people should have a

distinctly Acadian anthem which should, by all counts, be composed by an Acadian (Biddiscombe 138). This debate would resurface years later and would result in the alteration of the anthem in the later years of the twentieth century.

Another accomplishment of the Miscouche *congrès* was the choosing of a national badge and insignia. Léon Thériault says:

The emblem shall be worn on the lapel on holidays, and shall consist of a strip of blue silk embossed with a star radiating light. Above, a ship in full sail, with the word “Acadie” written on its flag. The motto at the bottom shall be “L’union fait la force” (Strength through union). All this shall be set off with a rosette of red and white ribbons (“Acadia” 72).

The ship was seen as one of the Acadians’ ties to the sea, and, as it had ties to both the Virgin Mary and St. Jean-Baptiste, it had been suggested as a possible design for the flag in 1882 (Biddiscombe 129). However, the ship was never put on a flag but rather became part of the national emblem, which is all but unknown today. The idea of the badge and insignia, which were most likely intended to be worn at future gatherings to denote belonging and cohesion much in the same way as a membership pin or lapel patch, never really took root among the people. Today, these items are virtually unknown to members of the community and are for the most part found only in museum collections.

Not all the symbols of the Acadians were decided in such a democratic manner as at the early congresses. One of these symbols, that of the fictional character Evangeline, was not so much chosen as such, but was rather adopted over the years as her character took on a more and more prominent role in the culture. Evangeline was the creation of the American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who created her after hearing a story

about two young lovers separated during the time of the Deportation (Evangeline's Quest). Although the poem deals with the theme of the Deportation, Naomi Griffiths says: "The history of the Deportation presented in *Evangeline* is without political complexity or social depth" (Griffiths, "Evangeline" 34). This statement is backed up in the poem itself, for although there are beautiful, though inaccurate, descriptions of Grand Pré and the "forest primeval" the reasons why the Acadians are being deported are barely mentioned. This is most likely because "Longfellow was not interested in writing the epic of a people but in telling a story about two lovers taken from a peaceful setting by events over which they had no control, who then lived out their lives divided but faithful" (Griffiths, "Evangeline" 34). It was not so much the Acadian people that led to the writing of this poem, but rather Longfellow's interest in individual virtue (Griffiths, "Evangeline" 28).

It is believed that this poem first came to the attention of the Acadian people between 1864 and 1887 (Griffiths, "Evangeline" 36). The poem had been translated into French in 1865 by Pamphile Le May and was used extensively in the first issues of *Le Moniteur Acadien* to promote solidarity among the people (Griffiths, "Evangeline" 36). Although the Acadians had a primarily oral tradition and the vast majority could not read and write, the widespread promotion of this poem struck a chord with the elites and provided emerging community leaders with a ready-made image to give to the people.

The first mention of *Evangeline* in Longfellow's poem describes her in this way:

Fair was she to behold, that maiden of seventeen summers.

Black were her eyes as the berry that grows on the thorn by the way-side,

Black, yet how softly they gleamed beneath the brown shade of her  
tresses!

Sweet was her breath as the breath of kine that feed in the meadows.

When in the harvest heat she bore to the reapers at noontide

Flagons of home-brewed ale, ah! fair in sooth was the maiden.

Fairer was she when, on Sunday morn, while the bell from its turret

Sprinkled with holy sounds the air, as the priest with his hyssop

Sprinkles the congregation, and scatters blessings upon them,

Down the long street she passed, with her chaplet of beads and her missal,

Wearing her Norman cap, and her kirtle of blue, and the ear-rings,

Brought in the olden time from France, and since, as an heirloom, Handed  
down from mother to child, through long generations.

But a celestial brightness -- a more ethereal beauty (Longfellow 41).

Although the publication of Longfellow's poem allowed people around the world to read about the Acadians and their history to an extent, the images which were portrayed in the poem were so strong and so long-lasting that they have painted a very idyllic and fanciful picture of Acadie and the people who lived there. It is Longfellow's portrayal of Evangeline, as a young innocent maiden, which has persisted in many current images and thoughts. Naomi Griffiths says: "In spite of a great many works which have tried to modify the primary colors of Longfellow's imagination, a vignette of Evangeline in her white cap, strolling with Gabriel through a bucolic setting, still tends to obscure any picture of the many-textured, gritty reality of Acadian life in the 1730's" (Griffiths, Contexts 51). This portrayal can be seen at the site of Grand Pré, where a statue of

Evangeline stands before a commemorative church, built there to honor the events of the Deportation. Although it is speculated that Longfellow did some research before he started writing the poem, he in fact had never traveled to Grand Pré, and despite the popularity of his work, there are many inaccuracies in his descriptions of the dikes, and the “forest primeval,” the opening image in the poem, does not exist at all at Grand Pré (Evangeline’s Quest).

It is not only the Acadian community in the Maritime provinces which identifies so strongly with the character of Evangeline. She is as well known and as popular in Louisiana as she is in Canada, though her story is a slightly different one for the Cajun people. In 1907, Judge Felix Voohries published a book titled Acadian Reminiscences: The True Story of Evangeline (Brasseaux). The story of Evangeline gets changed slightly as Evangeline and Gabriel are renamed Emmeline Labiche and Louis Arceneaux. Rather than finding Gabriel on his deathbed, as Longfellow has written, the Louisiana version of the story has Emmeline finding Louis after eight years of separation under an oak tree in the village of St. Martinville. After embracing, Emmeline is rejected by Louis, who has remarried in previous years, as he believed that Emmeline was dead. The story says that Emmeline died of a broken heart and was buried under that same oak tree, which has since become a major tourist attraction in St. Martinville, complete with a statue and advertisements which label it as the final resting place of Evangeline (Evangeline’s Quest). Despite these differences, the essential narrative of the story remains the same, telling the tale of a woman’s determination and the story of a people’s survival, and despite the name changes, Evangeline remains a popular figure and rallying point for the displaced Acadian population of the region. She is sometimes referred to as “St.

Evangeline” (Evangeline’s Quest), an idea that is elaborated on by Carl A. Brasseaux, who says:

Upwardly mobile, educated Acadians (who had either lost contact with their own heritage or had developed an appreciation for their culture after being temporarily removed from their native milieu) adopted Emmeline Labiche as the local equivalent of Joan of Arc, as a heroine who not only restored their ethnic pride, but regained for them a place in the international Acadian community (44).

In this way, the character of Evangeline worked as a unifying force between two different Acadian communities, a concept that will be discussed further in the third chapter of this study.

Not only did Evangeline become a symbol of the Acadian people, but she also became a symbol of the ever-growing tourism industry in Nova Scotia for a number of years. This tourism phenomenon started in 1867, when the first railroad was built to Grand Pré; the only appropriate names for the two steam locomotives that pulled those early trains were, of course, Evangeline and Gabriel (Bergman 18). In 1917, the Dominion Atlantic Railroad used the image of Evangeline and her story to attract tourists from the United States and Canada to see the Annapolis Valley and especially Grand Pré, situated in the heart of “the land of Evangeline” (Evangeline’s Quest). Evangeline and her image were widely used in numerous advertisements, and can still be found gracing the covers of contemporary tourist literature. Although Evangeline has been widely used in the tourism industry, according to Donna Doucet, an Acadian and director of the park of Grand Pré, “For us, this is all very real” (Bergman 18).

Leaders within the Acadian community used this widespread visual imagery of Evangeline and her growing popularity to foster Acadian nationalism and pride in the early years of the twentieth century. Numerous events, such as the unveiling of the Evangeline statue, the dedication of the commemorative church at Grand Pré, the unveiling of the cross marking the Deportation, and the unveiling of the statue of Our Lady of Assumption at Grand Pré, were all events that not only marked a growing trend in nationalistic feelings, but were also directly linked to Evangeline and her story. These events, coupled with the widespread popularity of the story, peaked in the 1920's and 1930's (Evangeline's Quest).

Evangeline's popularity went beyond the tourism industry, and she enjoyed prominence in the performing arts community as well. Numerous motion pictures were made about her, including the first full-length feature in Canada which was made in 1913 (Evangeline's Quest). She had appeared in several American films prior to this, but her presence in the first Canadian film is significant for many reasons. The thematic material for this film is not necessarily "Canadian" but rather represents a minority group, and a minority group from the Maritime provinces at that. This attests to how popular Evangeline was, even outside the Acadian community. In addition to her role in the motion pictures, Evangeline was also the subject of some half dozen operas as well as a widely popular, yet wildly inaccurate, musical comedy that was written by the American Ed Rice in the 1870's (Evangeline's Quest).

Today, the name of Evangeline, a name that was created by Longfellow specifically for the fictional character in his poem, (Evangeline's Quest) is for the most part a household name. One of the reasons why Evangeline has become such a common

mass produced phenomenon is that the Acadians and the Cajuns both wanted to be able to express their roots and their nationality. However, there have been times when both the terms “Acadian” and “Cajun” had been cast in a negative light. According to Carl Brasseaux, “The Evangeline mystique persisted and, by mid-twentieth century, southwestern Louisiana boasted Evangeline bakeries, streets, highways, gas stations, hotels, paint dealerships, auto distributors, dance halls and hot sauce” (31). Not everyone feels the same reverence for this somewhat mythical figure who has come to hold such a prominent place in Acadian society. As Brasseaux goes on to say: “With retelling, the Vooories saga became sacrosanct, despite the efforts of young Acadian activists, such as Angèle Arsenault of Canada and Barry Ancelet of Louisiana, to depose Evangeline because, they maintain, the myth has distorted the image of their people” (49). This distortion is evidenced in the fact that what is remembered is Evangeline’s story, not the real story of families torn apart and the hardships endured by the people during and after the Deportation

The acceptance of Evangeline as a cultural icon and her subsequent evolution from a fictional character into a major cultural symbol and pop culture phenomenon was a process that happened mostly through her wide spread popularity and somewhat through the promotion of the tourism industry. However, the other symbols, those that were voted on in the various meetings, faced a harder fight for acceptance and wide-scale recognition and usage. In his book *L’Acadie du Discours*, Jean-Paul Hauteœur says: “Certaines peuples affirment leur existence par la force des armées, d’autres par le combat politique, d’autres encore par leur production. L’Acadie, elle, n’eut que la force créatrice de la parole de ses rhéteurs et de ses prêtres pour imposer au monde son

existence” (Hauteceur 8). Since the Acadians had no state apparatus to undertake the task, and therefore, the promotion of these symbols was left in the hands of local leaders and the Church, which continued to hold sway over the lives of the people. The endorsement that was given by these local institutions varied from place to place and region to region, sometimes being strong and supportive, other times weak and ineffectual (Biddiscombe 135). Even when strong endorsements were given in favor of one symbol or another, the debates continued over designs and choices for many years.

Some of the most contested debates over various symbols were over the flag itself. One of the fundamental problems concerning the use of the modified tricolor was the association of the original tricolor with the French Revolution. An editorial published in *Le Courrier des Provinces Maritimes* on Thursday, April 17, 1890, written by someone who signed themselves simply as “Tricolore étoilé” says:

La seule chose qui distingue le drapeau adopté par la convention de Miscouche du drapeau actuel de la France, c’est l’étoile qu’on y a ajouté comme emblème de la Nationalité acadienne...et bien le drapeau actuel de la France n’est autre que l’étendard de la Révolution française; par conséquence, le drapeau adopté a Miscouche comprend dans sa composition, dans son essence, l’étendard de la Révolution française.

Voilà pourquoi nous ne pouvons pas adopter un tel drapeau (qtd. in Leger, “Drapeau” 126).

While the Acadian flag was championed as showing the solidarity of the North American francophone community, it was seen as a problem because of its association with the Revolution and not the pro-Catholic regime of Napoleon III (Biddiscombe 123).

After the negative reaction and the association of the tricolor with the French revolution, the addition of the star as a symbol of the Virgin Mary was said to have “purified” the flag (Biddiscombe 144). To further emphasize this “purification,” people started adding religious symbols to the flag, in the white field in particular. Two common symbols that were added were the sacred heart symbol and the image of the Virgin Mary. However, the French government issued a statement against this, which upset many members of the Acadian community (Biddiscombe 139), and so, people reverted to the original design with just the star as the only religious indicator on the flag itself.

Originally, the debates that surrounded the Acadian flag were for the most part ignored by English-speaking Canadians. However, the relations between France and England have had a strained history at best, and the occasional dispute between the two countries brought the Acadian flag to the attention of people who had previously paid it no mind. It was argued that the use of a flag that so blatantly emphasized a French influence was a sign of disrespect to the English crown. These concerns and the state of political relations in Europe caused people to rethink the use of the tricolor as a base model, and even go so far as to propose new alternative designs (Biddiscombe 130). The problems with the tricolor and the heated debates which surrounded it decreased after World War I, which shifted the focus of the country to a much larger, and overall more important issue, and also resolved the tensions between France and England (Biddiscombe 143). Although the tension surrounding the Acadian flag was over for the most part, it was not until 1953 that the dimensions of the flag were made official (Leger, “Drapeau” 135), and this helped to give a more permanent, official backing to the flag.

Perry Biddiscombe says: "The Acadian tricolor is presently a symbol of France only indirectly -- as the gold star is similarly an indirect symbol of religion -- because these elements are part of the overall Acadian heritage. The flag is better understood as a symbol of that heritage as a whole, especially of the century of evolution and development since it was adopted" (146). Today, despite the debates which have raged over its design and its place within the culture, the flag is seen unequivocally as a distinctly Acadian symbol and is looked upon with pride by those of Acadian descent in the Maritimes. "In short, the symbols may be of distant foreign origin and may draw little upon Acadian folklore - which probably explains the flag's initial lack of appeal - but the flag itself has now attained a true patriotic and historic value simply because of its longevity of usage" (Biddiscombe 146). By 1955, the bicentennial year of the Deportation, the flag was widely and proudly used, especially in the celebrations held in commemoration of the Deportation (Leger, "Drapeau" 138).

Many of the states on the eastern seaboard of the United States are homes to substantial Acadian populations. It was the Acadians of Waltham, Massachusetts who were the first to display of the Acadian flag outside of the Maritimes, in 1895 (Biddiscombe 136). Despite the fact that the flag was flown in the United States, it was not universally recognized by all Acadians living there as an Acadian symbol, and many groups living in various areas of the country adopted their own flags and symbols, which often times were variations of the Acadian tricolor.

An example of this is the Cajuns of Louisiana, who, in 1965, adopted their own flag that was created to mark the bicentennial of the Cajuns' arrival in Louisiana (Leger, "Drapeau" 139). The three fleur-de-lis on the blue field are said to represent the

Louisiana Acadians' homeland; the arms of Castile on the red field are a symbol of the Spanish government which was in place upon the Acadians' arrival in Louisiana, and the star in the white field is representative of Our Lady of Assumption, the patron saint of the Acadian people (Leger, "Drapeau" 139). The star is especially significant since it is felt that it is a link between the peoples of Louisiana and the Maritimes (Leger, "Drapeau" 140). The differences between the Louisiana and the Maritime versions of the flag attest to the ways in which the surroundings and intervening years have differently affected the Acadians who have adopted those symbols while at the same time emphasizing the past connections between the two.

At the time of the adoption of the Louisiana flag, there were many feelings of dissent and dissatisfaction with the symbols that had been adopted during the early Acadian gatherings in the Maritimes. This became evident in the way that the younger generations shied away from and even went so far as to verbally attack some of the national symbols due to their religious content in the 1960's (Ouellette 77). It was felt that:

a recommandé que les signes patriotiques tels que le drapeau (bleu, blanc, et rouge avec l'étoile dorée), l'hymne (Ave Maris Stella), la patronne (Notre-Dame de l'Assomption) et la fête nationale (15 août) soient conservés dans la richesse folklorique de l'Acadie, mais ne soient pas invoqués comme signes d'identité nationale (Leger, "Drapeau" 140).

This sentiment went so far as to lead to the burning of the flag by unsatisfied youth as a form of protest (Leger, "Drapeau" 143). Jean-Paul Hauteceur says: "Si l'ancien nationalisme des premières conventines acadiennes s'était prolongé comme tradition

explicite jusqu'en 1955, il apparaît clairement que l'année 1955 marque la fin d'un règne, et l'année 1960 le début d'un nouveau" (30). In April of 1966, there was a gathering of Acadian youth at Collège St.-Joseph. This gathering of students met to discuss such issues as social values and Acadian nationalism. According to Léon Thériault:

Les délégués votèrent donc allègrement l'abolition des symboles acadiens (drapeau, fête nationale et hymne national), que l'on déclara tout juste bons à être 'conservés dans la richesse folklorique de l'Acadie.' On était en effet d'avis que 'les signes extérieurs de notre nationalisme n'ont plus de valeur d'identité ni d'épanouissement.' Étant donné, disait-on, que les 'Acadiens ont été victimes d'un isolationnisme historique désastreux qui aliène la personne' (Question 34).

Many of the objections held by the people came down to an issue of class, and a question regarding who, exactly, had chosen these symbols: the Acadian people, or a select few members of the elite. It was felt that: "The Convention movement has been seen as a clear demonstration of the unity of Acadian elites and of their control over the ordinary Acadian from its origins at the Québec St-Jean-Baptiste conventions of 1874 and 1880 to the development of regular Acadian national conventions" (Andrew 170). It was argued that the people who made the decisions made concerning the symbols did not represent the interests of the general public, but rather the interests of the clergy and the upper classes of merchants and wealthy farmers. However, "It was difficult for the various elites to unite and dominate ordinary Acadians in the name of nationalism. The population was too diverse for the imposition of one homogeneous nationalist image.... Differences between the regions also made it hard to impose the idea of a shared culture"

(Andrew 8). In this way, it was up to the people themselves to ratify the symbols chosen and to implement them and make them part of and representative of the Acadian culture.

This was recognized by Father Richard, who said:

Honneur à la classe ouvrière, à la classe agricole! Vous avez droit à la première place, à la place d'honneur dans les coeurs de cette foule de peuple réunie pour applaudire à votre courage et votre dévouement...Portez avec fierté le drapeau acadien; à ses couleurs ne vous rappellent pas le drapeau de Saint-Louis, elles vous rappelleront au moins les couleurs favorites de votre glorieuse patronne et celle de martyr de la cause catholique et nationale. Guidés par l'étoile que le décoré et qui la désigne comme l'étandard acadien, marchez de conquêtes en conquêtes (Leger, "Drapeau"122).

Without the approval of the people, the symbols had no meaning, but their current acceptance by the people shows how far the symbols have come and how much they still mean to the common man.

The unrest during the 1960's caused by the backlash against the cultural symbols led to other expressions of Acadian nationalism and pride in an attempt by modern Acadians to express themselves and their ideals. Historically, there had never been a strong, cohesive desire for the Acadians to break away as a people and form their own region. "Their belief in their community, their desire to preserve their traditions, their language and their religion, all objectives stated in so many words by the founder of one of the first Acadian newspapers at the time of Confederation, were not attached to pressure for an 'Acadie libre'" (Griffiths, Creation 82). But in 1972, the Parti Acadien

was founded in an attempt to promote Acadian political goals and beliefs. The origins of the Parti began with a young group of intellectuals, who gathered together to discuss such ideas as the possibility of a purely Acadian territory, independent of the other provinces, among other things (Ouellette 79). The brainchild of André Dumont, the party was created to offer the Acadian community an alternative to the more traditional liberal and conservative parties, all of which were run by anglophones. The Parti dedicated itself to work for the Acadian community, with its main platform being the designation of an autonomous Acadian region (Doucet, "Politics" 261), which, according to André Dumont would cover roughly the upper half of New Brunswick. He said:

Sur vos somptueux bureaux d'acajou, dépliez une humble mappe du Nouveau-Brunswick, placez-y une règle en diagonale de Grand-Sault à Moncton. En suivant bien cette direction, tirez une ligne au crayon d'un bout à l'autre et inscrivez de nouveau dans la partie supérieure de ce partage l'appellation ACADIE en grosses lettres (Hauteceur 257).

This idea never came to pass, and although active from its first meeting in 1972 until its dispersal in 1982, the Parti never achieved the goal of an Acadian province, which has been attributed to weak and fluctuating membership as well as a lack of funding (Ouellette 100).

Despite the failure of the Parti Acadien to meet the goals which it established for itself and the heated debates over the symbols, the emblems chosen by the elites at the end of the nineteenth century still play a large role in Acadian culture. The importance that was placed on the symbols becomes evident in some of the memoirs of Acadians collected during the twentieth century. Although there were serious debates over the

choosing of the patron saint, she has become an important figure in the lives of the Acadians today, and her feast day has become important to them as well. The holiday, celebrated on August 15th, was, in the village of Chezzetcook, celebrated with a special mass in the morning followed by a picnic and a dance in the evening, and continues to be celebrated today (Labelle, Chezzetcook 58). One member of the community, Lilliane Bellefontaine, remembers:

August 15th, that was a holiday. Ah yes, it was a holiday, Acadia Day, you know, the Acadians' holiday. And it was a big, big celebration. It was (like a) Sunday. And it often happened that people had hay to gather, and they were afraid of losing it. So they went to ask for the priest's permission. The priest would give them permission to work in their hay fields after the church services (Labelle, Chezzetcook 59).

Today, August 15th is still celebrated as a national holiday and is often either the beginning or end of various Acadian cultural festivals held throughout the region. These festivals, and also the holiday itself, are advertised as the Acadians' day in current tourist literature for the province of Nova Scotia.

Although the end of the nineteenth century is generally referred to as the Acadian renaissance, the feelings of nationalism have persisted through the twentieth century and have manifested themselves in numerous ways. According to Léon Thériault:

Among the great transformations that have occurred in contemporary Acadia, we should first note the secularization of Acadian organizations and ideas. In effect, the Church no longer controls the great institutions; the colleges and the hospitals, to name only two such institutions, are now

the responsibility of the state...But this secularization has gone hand-in-hand with the more prominent role that state has assumed. ("Acadia" 83).

This changing over from Church-influenced to state-run ideas is evident in many aspects of Acadian life and in the national symbols themselves. One of the clearest examples of this is the re-interpretation of the national anthem, "Ave Maris Stella." At the centennial year of the national anthem, le Société nationale de l'Acadie held a contest to see if appropriate, French words could be found. The winner of this contest, Jacinthe Laforest, rewrote the lyrics to reflect a more appropriate, nationalistic view of the song ("Congrès mondial 2004"). Although the first and final verses remain in Latin, the rest of the text has been drastically altered. With the decreased influence of the Church, the new lyrics not only reflect the nationalistic pride felt by the Acadians, but also reflect a growing secularization and decreased influence in the power of the Church which held such a strong grip on the Acadian people over the years. Unlike the previous version that emphasizes the Virgin Mary and the prayers offered to her, the new version focuses on a growing pride in heritage, homeland, and identity, and is sung in French, the language of the people. The changing of the anthem from a purely Latin, Church-based hymn to a French language song dealing with distinctly patriotic, Acadian themes, is a testament to the way in which music can be used to reach the people. The changes to the anthem show an expression of Acadian pride and also exemplifies how music can be adapted and used as a unifying factor within a given cultural group.

All the national symbols in the Maritimes were not decided upon during the large meetings held at the end of the nineteenth century. In fact, a coat of arms of the Société nationale de l'Acadie was unveiled in Miscouche in 1996 by the Right Honourable

Roméo LeBlanc, Governor General of Canada (“Congrès mondial 2004”). The coat of arms is a compilation of the Acadian flag, motto, and insignia, all of which were discussed and voted on at the Miscouche congress over a hundred years previously.

In addition to working with existing cultural symbols, the Acadian community is still wrestling with many issues of nationalistic origin. It has been long understood that language is an important cultural factor and is one of the many things which bind the Acadians together. Currently, the issue of language is one that is becoming more and more important to the Acadian community, especially for those who feel that in order to truly consider oneself Acadian, one must be able to speak the language. At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were roughly 45,000 Acadians in the province of Nova Scotia (Ross 144) and very few members of this population spoke English (Ross 146). However, for many years, English was the primary language of choice in the schools and, with the aim of assimilation in mind, French was discouraged from being spoken in the classroom. The consequences of this course of events is that a mere 80 years later, the French speaking population has decreased by half (Ross 156).

This loss of language, which to many is a sign of a loss of culture, has prompted many movements within the Acadian community to promote the language and to insure its place among the younger generations. These has included a push to foster French in the school systems, a movement which has resulted in the establishment of Acadian schools, in which the majority of classes, if not the entirety, are taught in French. In the late 1980's, 13 such schools existed in Nova Scotia (Ross 174), many of them a direct result of the urging of francophone parents who did not wish to see the language die out entirely. This continues to be a concern today, as more and more French school districts

are created and more programs instituted in an attempt by the Acadian community to preserve this aspect of their culture.

Although the Deportation happened nearly 250 years ago, it is still a subject that resonates strongly with the Acadian people, and has, in some instances, prompted people to sign petitions in an attempt to secure an apology from the British Crown for what happened. This is by no means a settled issue and is one that has been generating much discussion in the as recently as 2002, both in Louisiana and in the Maritimes. In 2001, an article published in the New Brunswick Telegraph-Journal brought this issue to the forefront. The author of the article, Rosella Melanson, says:

The question of seeking an apology from the Crown has actually been around since the deportation. The "Petition of the Acadians Deported to Philadelphia to the King of England", sent in 1763, has never been answered. And, about 10 years ago, an Acadian lawyer from Louisiana launched a request for an apology from the British Crown after his children started asking questions he could not answer, such as why their ancestors were treated like criminals (Melanson).

Melanson's article has struck a chord within the community. In 1763, two Acadian delegates went to London with a petition for King George III, asking that he formally declare the Acadians' exile to be over. Their audience and their request were denied. This refusal "had enormous consequences because it gave local British authorities in the colonies of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island continued authority to treat the Acadians as illegal aliens, to deny them land grants, and to continue the persecution" (Doucet, Notes 137).

The involvement of Acadians from New Brunswick to Louisiana in this controversial issue demonstrates how, despite their geographic dispersal, the Acadian community is united through common beliefs, ideas, and causes. The upcoming Congrès mondial which will be held in Nova Scotia in 2004 and following that in 2005 will be the 250th anniversary of the Deportation itself. These events will undoubtedly witness a renewed interest and increased fervor to find an answer to whether or not the Crown will in fact apologize. Whatever the outcome, this is an issue that affects Acadians around the world and is an issue which has drawn the scattered community together around a common desire and a common cause. Those feelings of nationalism which sparked the desire in the nineteenth century to choose symbols intended to foster a stronger national identity are still alive today, evident in issues like this and the planning of the next Congrès, which is expected to draw people from all over the world to Nova Scotia to celebrate their past, their heritage, and their future.

Despite the debates and the changing world view concerning the Acadian symbols, they remain important to the culture and continue to play an important role within the Acadian community in Louisiana, the Maritimes, and elsewhere. Evangeline, the anthem, and the various flags have come to be distinctly recognized as being “Acadian” or “Cajun,” as the case may be, and offer the people a visual image to hold onto, to remind them of their identity, their heritage, and their past. For almost 250 years, the Acadians have fought to maintain their identity amidst a changing and encroaching Anglophone world. These symbols stand as a reminder of that struggle and of the success in keeping the old traditions and beliefs alive. For a people so proud of who they are and where they have come from, the flag, anthem, and even Evangeline, for better or for

where they have come from, the flag, anthem, and even Evangeline, for better or for worse, remain an important part of their lives.

At the centennial celebration of the Acadian flag, the pride felt in that emblem was evident. “Vive l’Acadie et vive son tricolore étoilé!” (Leger, “Drapeau” 151) was a fairly common saying as people in the Maritimes celebrated their past and their accomplishments. Today, the flag is flown with pride and people readily acknowledge their roots and their pride in who they are. Despite the fact that “tricolore étoilé” does not represent the people of Louisiana, who have chosen their own flag, nor is it a readily acknowledged symbol of all the Acadian groups scattered around the globe, it is still a powerful symbol in the Maritimes where it continues to be a source of pride. It is this pride that keeps the symbols, the flag, the anthem, and even Evangeline alive and vital within the culture today. It is because of this pride that these symbols will continue to be a part of this culture in years to come as the younger generations learn the importance of these objects and what they symbolize, in what it means to be Acadian.

Despite the fact that most of the symbols were originally chosen by a select group of people representing the clergy and the upper classes of Acadian society, it is the people themselves who have accepted the choices made and have given them the importance and the place in society which they hold today. However, these symbols, despite the importance that they hold, are still limited in their scope and their impact. Music, however, has a much broader reach and is something which is able to transcend both borders and classes. In her book The Development of Elites in Acadian New Brunswick 1861-1881, Sheila Andrew says: “The new music was very different from the Acadian tradition to more portable instruments and folk-song, but the interest in music and drama

was not confined to the elite” (Andrew 191). In this way, the music would come to represent the people as a whole and would be able to unite them in ways that the symbols were not able to do. The music, written by and listened to by members of the common masses is in many ways just as representative of the Acadian people as are the emblems chosen by the elites, if not more so. The widespread appeal of the music and the common thematic material used by the composers holds a wide-spread appeal for members of the Acadian community, no matter where they might be in the world. In this way, the music acts as a unifying factor, even though, with the exception of the national anthem, it is not officially recognized as one of the Acadian symbols.

### Chapter Three

“La revanche est de s’exprimer” ~ Bois Joli, “La Revanche”

Music has always provided an emotional and creative outlet as well as a means of self-expression for professional and amateur musicians alike. It provides an opportunity to express emotions and feelings, personal opinions and ideas. In his essay “Expressing Human Experience through Music” John Blacking says: “The function of music is to enhance in some way the quality of individual experience and human relationships; its structures are reflections of patterns of human relations, and the value of a piece of music as music is inseparable from its value as an expression of human experience” (Blacking, “Expressing” 31). The composers and performers who will be studied here have done just that. Acadian song writers have taken themes which are close to their hearts and their culture and have used the outlet of their music to make a statement about these distinctly Acadian motifs, and through the creation of their music, have shared these themes and ideals with the rest of the world. The proliferation of songs dealing with the themes of remembering the past and the Deportation, Evangeline, homeland, and pride in one’s heritage attest to how proud these musicians are of their heritage and their past. In addition, these are themes that are present in contemporary music as well as in music from earlier decades, and this speaks to the continued importance which these themes hold for members of the Acadian community.

Albert Arsenault, a member of Prince Edward Island-based Acadian group “Barachois” has said in an interview that: “The more global the world gets, the more

people want to stick to what's unique to them. And a lot of times it is the music. The music was always there; it's just getting to the public now" (Arsenault qtd. in Fleming 20). Acadian music is just coming into its own as more and more artists and musicians take part in expressing themselves and their culture. Modern albums find a range of songs in a wide variety of styles, the scope of which encompasses modern interpretations of old "traditional" songs to completely new compositions which reflect jazz, blues, rock, and country influences. Music is not merely a reflection of one's culture, but rather it is a part of that culture. Georgiana Born, a music historian, says:

Music 'reflects' nothing; rather, music has a formative role in the construction, negotiation, and transformation of socio-cultural identities. In this vein, music engenders communities or 'scenes'; it allows a play with, a performance of, and an imaginary exploration of identities (Born 31)

The importance which the Acadians place on their music and the longevity of a primarily oral tradition attest to the role which music has played and continues to play in the Acadian socio-cultural identity.

Music, especially vocal pieces, acts as a commentary made by the composer on issues important to him or her and to the society in which they live at the time. The fact that identity is so tied up in music is significant when considering these Acadians and their place within their own society. In his essay "Expressing Human Experiences through Music" John Blacking says:

However personal a composer's consciousness of experience may be, it has been acquired as a result of life in society. Being a member of a

human society is an essential condition for becoming a conscious being and creating music. A person may create for financial gain, for private pleasure, for entertainment, or to accompany a variety of social events, and the composer need not express overt concern for the human condition; but the creator's music cannot escape the stamp of the society which made its creator human (Blacking, "Expressing" 51).

Whether intentional or not, the Acadians' music reflects more than merely who they are: it reflects the society which they grew up in and which has influenced their lives. In this way, the songs studied here, on the themes of the Deportation and its consequences, *Evangeline*, changing attitudes towards the homeland of Acadie, and the expression of and pride in cultural identity and heritage, are reflections of not only the artists themselves, but also of the Acadian people, their values and societal beliefs which have unquestionably and undeniably influenced and inspired the musicians studied here.

There are four distinct themes that have been found through the study of this music: songs about the Deportation and the past, *Evangeline*, homeland, and pride and identity. The songs dealing with the past do not necessarily deal directly with the Deportation itself, although some do; rather, these songs remember the glories of the past and what the Acadian people have gone through. The songs about *Evangeline* range from brief retellings of Longfellow's epic tale to commentaries on *Evangeline*'s current status in the Acadian community. The theme of homeland deals with many different aspects and feelings of the musicians towards Acadie, which range from remembrances of how it was in the past, to an acknowledgment that Acadie is not so much a place defined by boundaries as it is a place which resides in the hearts of those who call themselves

Acadian. The songs that fall under the “pride in heritage” theme, in one way or another, express the artist’s pride in his or her heritage and in the Acadian culture in general.

Although there are many other themes and messages which Acadian artists have written about, these four themes appear frequently and often enough in a variety of songs from different artists and decades as to warrant further study.

**Table 1: The Artists and Their Music**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Song Title</b>	<b>Composer</b>	<b>Year of first publication</b>
Deportation / past	Un Canadien Errant	Antoine Gerin-Lajoie	1844
	Plainte et Pardon	A. T. Bourque	unknown / 1910*
	Grand Pré	Angèle Arsenault	1994
	Les Aboiteaux	Calixte Duguay	1975
	Acadie a la Lousiane	Bruce Daigrepoint	1989
Evangeline	Evangeline	A. T. Bourque	unknown / 1910*
	Evangeline	Michel Conte	1971
	Evangeline, Acadian Queen	Angèle Arsenault	1977
Homeland	Ma Patrie, C'est l'Acadie	unknown / Dominique S. Leger?	unknown / 1905?
	Ave Maris Stella (French Lyrics)	Jacinthe Laforest	1994
	Mon Acadie	Bois Joli	1998
	Viens voir l'Acadie	Donat Lacroix	1974
	l'Acadie de nos coeurs	Comeau, Gallant, and Gautreau	1994
	C'est pas un pays	Michel Thibault	1998
Identity / pride	la Marseillaise Acadienne	A.T. Bourque	unknown / 1910*
	Reveille	Zachary Richard	1976
	Sur le chemin des Acadiens	Donat Lacroix	1990
	Ne m'appelle plus l'acadienne sans...	Lise Aubut et Louisianne Gauthier	1995
	La Revanche	Bois Joli	1998
	Mon Village Acadien	W. J. Chiasson	unknown / 1997*

\*Indicates the year of known publication

## Remembering the Deportation and the Past

The Deportation has been referred to as the most traumatic event in the history of Nova Scotia (Ross 54). The year in which the Deportation started, 1755, is seen as a crucial turning point in Acadian history, and this year is often used to reference previous and consequent events and happenings in Acadian history (Doucet, Notes 184).

According to Sally Ross, “In English, the deportation is referred to as the Expulsion. The Acadians, on the other hand, call it the *Grand Dérangement* or the Great Upheaval” (64). Although the Acadians are not the only people to have faced a similar catastrophic event in their past, the Deportation of 1755 continues to resonate with the younger generations and continues to stand as a testament to the collective past and history shared by the Acadians, wherever they might have ended up as a result of being exiled.

There were many events and happenings that led up to the Deportation, no single one of which can be pinpointed as the sole cause or reason for the event itself. For a number of years, France and Great Britain had been fighting wars, which, although fought in Europe, affected their North American colonies and holdings. According to Sally Ross, “Ever since the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, the loyalty of the Acadians to the British Crown had been a source of contention for most colonial or military officials in Nova Scotia” (55). Ever since the signing of that treaty, the Acadians insisted on remaining neutral amid the conflict that was going on around them (Griffiths, Creation 41).

British authorities, especially Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts and Lieutenant-Governor Charles Lawrence of Nova Scotia, became suspicious of the Acadians’ avowed neutrality as hostilities between France and England grew (Ross 60).

Charles Lawrence was “the first English administrator of the colony who visualized a Nova Scotia that functioned without its Acadian component. The renewal of hostilities between France and England in 1754 enabled him to put his view to the test” (Daigle 44). Despite the fact that the real problems were between the powers of France and Britain, it was the Acadians who found themselves in the middle of the conflict. According to Naomi Griffiths: “Acadian accounts of their actions between 1748 and 1755 were written after the deportation...The picture which emerges from these records is that of a people becoming more and more enmeshed in a war fought across their lands by other powers. Their own actions betrayed only one consistency: an attempt to avoid reprisals by both sides” (Griffiths, Creation 44). This strategy of neutrality would work for almost half a century, until events and decisions would make this neutrality unacceptable to British authorities.

Arguably one of the most critical points in the series of events leading up to the Deportation was the English decision to attack Fort Beauséjour, a French fort built on the Chignecto Isthmus. The British attack, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Monckton, began on June 4, 1755, and the fort fell two weeks later. Among those confronted at the time of the battle were several hundred Acadians, who had been pressed into service to help defend the fort (Ross 60). It was difficult for Monckton to ascertain whether the Acadians were there of their own free will or, as they had claimed, were there because they had been compelled (Griffiths, Creation 52). Whatever the reason for their being at the fort, Governor Lawrence had all the reason he needed to formulate a plan for the Acadians’ removal: they had clearly broken their vow of neutrality and, therefore, were considered enemies of the British Crown.

Lawrence's decision to remove the French inhabitants of Nova Scotia was made during a cabinet meeting on July 28, 1755 (Ross 61). Although Grand Pré is commonly thought of as the place where the Deportation began, the actual removal of the population began at Beauséjour, which had been renamed Fort Cumberland, on Aug. 11, 1755 (Ross 61). The reading of the deportation orders and the removal of the Acadians from their villages continued on from there, and, despite common belief, this process was not one that took place only in 1755. As late as 1762, people were still being sent from the colony (Griffiths, Creation 60). The Acadians of Nova Scotia were not the only ones to be deported; rather, this was a fate suffered by those of the other Maritime provinces as well. According to Sally Ross, "After the fall of Louisbourg in July of 1758, the majority of the Acadians living on Ile Royale and Ile Saint-Jean were repatriated to France" (64). Overall, there were thousands of people evicted from their homes and their lands and forced to leave. Some historians estimate that this figure was somewhere around 6,000 people, while others feel that the figure was closer to 10,000 (Griffiths, Creation 60).

One of the most powerful images in Longfellow's poem "Evangeline" is the burning of Grand Pré:

Columns of shining smoke uprose, and flashes of flame were  
Thrust through their folds and withdrawn, like the quivering hands of a  
martyr.  
Then as the wind seized the gleeds and the burning thatch, and, uplifting,  
Whirled them aloft through the air, at once from a hundred housetops  
Started the sheeted smoke with flashes of flame intermingled.  
These things beheld in dismay the crowd on the shore and on shipboard.

Speechless at first they stood, then cried aloud in their anguish,  
"We shall behold no more our homes in the village of Grand-Pré!"

(Longfellow 70-71).

Although many of Longfellow's images and events are based solely on the poet's imagination, the burning of the villages was based on fact. "Following orders to burn and lay waste, British troops traveled from village to village, torching every building in sight" (Ross 63). The villages were burned mostly so that should anyone escape the evacuation, there would be no shelter of any sort available to them (Griffiths, Creation 58).

In addition to the burning of the villages, many families were separated as they were loaded onto the ships. In a letter from Governor Lawrence to Colonel Monckton, Lawrence says: "I would have you not wait for the Wives and Children coming in but Ship Off the Men without them" (Griffiths, Creation 58). In this way, families were separated and shipped to different places. However, "the way in which the Acadians were treated depended less on the advice of Lawrence than upon the characters of the officers in charge. Nothing would be done by the latter in contradiction of the main purpose, deportation, but a considerable amelioration of methods was achieved by those officers who wished so to do" (Griffiths, Creation 58). The separation of families and communities served another purpose, that of disbanding a close-knit people who, with their families and kinship ties intact, had the potential to take up arms against Britain, and, as such a threat, needed to be dealt with appropriately.

One of the outcomes of the Deportation was the high death toll suffered during the actual transport and exile. "Storms at sea, lack of food and water on board and poor sanitary conditions meant that many boats lost over a third of their passengers while

others disappeared with all hands” (Daigle 45). Because of these conditions, many ships arrived at their final destinations with far fewer people onboard than the numbers with which they left port. “For example, the *Cornwallis* had left Chignecto for South Carolina with 417 Acadians on board. When she docked at Charleston only 210 were still alive” (Griffiths, Creation 58). Although there are estimates as to how many people were deported from Nova Scotia, there is no way to tell how many of those deported lived to see their final destinations.

When these transport ships did arrive, they were often rejected by the colonies to which they were sent. “In addition to losing their possessions and being separated from members of their families, the Acadians had to face a hostile reception by American colonists from Massachusetts to South Carolina who complained they had not been forewarned of the prisoners’ arrival which would result in additional expenses” (Daigle 45). There are many petitions that were written by exiled Acadians seeking aid from various government officials, asking for money to buy food and clothing for their families. Despite the fact that their removal from Nova Scotia solved one theoretical problem for the colony, their placement in other British lands caused many more problems.

It did not matter where the Acadians landed, many of them simply wished to return home, which many of them did. However, their dreams of reclaiming their previously held lands were not to be. “Many Acadian families were able to resettle in Nova Scotia, although not on their ancestral lands. By the mid 1760’s, for example, the government had redistributed all the Acadian farmland of Grand Pré and the Annapolis Valley to Protestant colonists from New England, known as the Planters” (Ross 67).

They were forced to resettle and re-establish themselves far from established centers, and so, once again, they had to start over. The influx of returning Acadians to the province of Nova Scotia continued, with small numbers of people returning until the late 1820's (Ross 76).

There were many consequences and outcomes of the Deportation, an event that still has great meaning and impact for the descendants of those who lived it. There was a loss of land, of possessions, and of crops, "But for the Acadians the tragedy was the destruction of their society, the dispersal of their close-knit families, the breaking of their related communities" (Griffiths, Creation 59). The Deportation is an event that changed the history of the Acadian people and is something which will be remembered in the collective memory of the community members.

In the vast and numerous accounts of the Deportation, the theories put forth as to why it happened, the accounts of the Acadians in exile, and the discussion of the plight of the people upon their return to Acadie, there is no discussion of how this event affected the music. Sally Ross says: "In the vast repertoire of Acadian folk music, there is not a single ballad or song that tells of the Deportation" (65). However, Ross does not elaborate as to why that might be and fails to mention that there are many modern songs written about the Deportation. Still, this question of why no music was written about the Deportation remains. Barry Moody says: "Since the Acadians themselves were still largely illiterate, it was left to others to record the events; the Acadians merely remembered" (83). This is possibly one explanation as to why no songs were written for many years about the Deportation, though there is no solid evidence to back this up.

Although there are no known folk songs dealing with the Deportation and its

aftermath, Acadian composers and musical groups of the twentieth century have used this event as an inspiration for songs which range in scope from reminders of what happened to speculations of what might have been had the Deportation of 1755 never occurred. These songs, written over the course of a number of decades, are as varied and diverse as the people who wrote them; however, they all share one thing in common: a desire to preserve the memory of what happened to the people of Acadie at the hands of the British and the aftermath that this event was to cause.

One of the songs which was nominated as a possible choice for the Acadian national anthem was a variation on a well-known folksong titled “Un Canadien errant.” The variation simply changes the exiled Canadian in the song to an Acadian, the sad yearnings for the exile’s native Canada to sad remembrances of Acadie. Although this song was not written specifically about the Acadian Deportation and consequent exile, the theme of the exile and the yearning to return home experienced by the Canadian in the original text struck a chord of recognition among the Acadian people, which was why this was nominated as a possibility for their national anthem.

The song itself tells the story of an exiled man, who, forced to wander foreign lands, never forgets his native home. The opening verse states: “Un Canadien [Acadien] errant, / Banni de ses foyers, / Parcourait en pleurant / Des pays étrangers” (Gibbon 94). The image of an Acadian, wandering foreign lands, banished from his home, calls to mind several instances and remembrances in past history. The first is of Evangeline, whose travels and wanderings in search of Gabriel are a well-known part of her story. After the Deportation, many people traveled in search of missing friends and family relations, and many people, unhappy in the colonies in which they landed, set out in

search of a place that they could call their own before settling in what is present-day Louisiana.

In his wanderings, “Un jour, triste et pensif, / Assis au bord des flots, / Au courant fugitif / Il adressa ces mots: / "Si tu vois mon pays, / Mon pays malheureux, / Va, dire à mes amis / Que je me souviens d'eux” (Gibbon 95). These two verses have many images that are evocative of the Acadian past. The phrase “au courant fugitif” calls to mind the people who avoided the Deportation by taking to the woods and hiding from the English as fugitives in their own lands. Unable to return to their homes and forced to stay hidden, these people would have undoubtedly been “triste et pensif.” The line “Mon pays malheureux” calls to mind many images -- memories of burned villages, stolen lands, and cherished homelands now in the hands of others. The wanderer asks the river to relay his message to his friends, implying that they have been long separated, as were the people who were deported.

Like those who looked to the happier days before the Deportation, the character in the song yearns for happier times. He says: “O jours si pleins d'appas / Vous êtes disparus, / Et mon pays, hélas! / Je ne le verrai plus” (Gibbon 96). In remembering the past here, the character does not specifically remember friends, family, or a missing sweetheart, but rather remembers and yearns for his country, and his land in much the same way as the Acadians, once exiled, yearned to return to the lands of Acadie.

The final two verses of the song reiterate the character’s feelings of despair which he feels at being separated from friends, family, and homeland. He says: “Pour jamais séparé / Des amis de mon coeur / Hélas! oui, je mourrai, / Je mourrai de douleur. / "Non, mais en expirant, / O mon cher Canada! [Acadie] / Mon regard languissant / Vers toi se

portera” (Gibbon 96). Even while dying, the character’s thoughts and dreams center around his homeland and country. This strong attachment to the land and the constant yearning to return home is something that resonated strongly with people in the Acadian community. The overall story of someone exiled, separated from family, friends, and homeland, who, during his wanderings throughout a foreign land, still longs for what he left behind him is a part of the Acadian story and experience, which is why this song was nominated as a possible candidate for the Acadian national anthem.

André T. Bourque was a priest who wrote a number of songs centering on Acadian themes, including a song that speaks of the need to remember the past. His song “Plainte et Pardon,” which was published in 1910, has been described as “...le premier de la série des chants patriotiques d’A. T. Bourque” (Bourque 257). The title suggests the overall message of the song, which is to forgive for past complaints and grievances. The first verse states:

Je l’avais dit dans ma sombre misère:  
 Point de pardon pour l’injuste agresseur  
 Qui de l’enfer suscitant la colère,  
 Nous abreuva de peine et de douleur.  
 Cruel destin! pourquoi nous faire un crime  
 D’être français, enfants de l’Acadie;  
 Pourquoi punir l’innocente victime  
 Dont le seul tort fut d’aimer son pays (Bourque 257)

The use of the first-person “I” at the beginning of the first line immediately establishes

that this is not a retelling of a story about a distant people, but rather that this has to do with the personal remembrances and experiences of the singer/narrator. The notion of forgiveness is established from the beginning. The lines “...dans ma sombre misère: / Point de pardon pour l’injuste agresseur” bring to mind an idea of a Christian forgiveness of wrongs, an idea which is repeated and expanded upon throughout the song. Although the action prompting the need for such forgiveness, namely the Deportation and its consequences, is not directly named as such, the lines “Cruel destin! pourquoi nous faire un crime / D’être français, enfants de l’Acadie; / Pourquoi punir l’innocente victime / Dont le seul tort fut d’aimer son pays” (Bourque 257) make references to what can only be the Deportation itself. This event, in the eyes of the singer/narrator, must be forgiven but not forgotten, and this is a sentiment which appears in the second verse, which opens with the lines: “Mais pardonnons, c’est Dieu qui nous l’ordonne, / Oui, pardonnons, mais que le souvenir / Des jours amers jamais nous abandonne, / Sur le passé guidons notre avenir” (Bourque 257). The direct mention and reference to God is an indication of the way in which religion played an important role in the lives of the Acadians at the time in which this piece was written. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the role and influence of the Church was quite strong, and although this would diminish somewhat as the century progressed, the idea that God would never abandon the people in the past and would guide their future was a commonly held and widely accepted truth.

The influence of religion was not the only thing that would change as the twentieth century progressed. The last four lines of the second stanza state: “Nous les enfants des preux venus de France, / Comme eux soyons sans reproche et sans peur, / N’oublions pas leurs actes de vaillance, / Suivons comme eux le chemin de l’honneur”

(Bourque 257). The idea that the people would “n’oublions pas” the events of the past and the actions of their ancestors is one which is addressed by Acadian artists later on in the century, but in a much different light. In Zachary Richard’s piece “Réveille,” which was written some sixty years after Bourque’s piece was published, the final line of the song admonishes the listener to “Réveille, réveille, hommes acadiens, / Pour sauver l’héritage” (Richard). The need for the people to “awake” and save their heritage is an indication that people have not remembered their past in the same way as Bourque had assumed they would in his bold statement that the sons of France would remember.

The third and fourth verses are a brief mention of the things which the people, or at the very least, which the singer/narrator, would “entends toujours” (Bourque 257) and remember. The singer/narrator specifically mentions “les martyrs de Grand-Pré,” (Bourque 257), another reference to the Deportation and what happened because of it. He then asks the listener: “L’entendez-vous? C’est le sombre murmure / D’un petit peuple à jamais condamné, / Qu’on égorge et qu’on livre à la torture / Pour lui ravir sa foi, sa liberté” (Bourque 258). This questioning of the listener continues with the beginning of the fourth verse, which states: “Les voyez-vous, là-bas sur cette plage, / De ce pays les nobles pionniers, / Meurtris, sanglants, réduits à l’esclavage / On les bannit de leurs chers foyers” (Bourque 258). The direct question to the listener helps to focus his or her attention on what the singer/narrator is saying -- clearly, the singer/narrator remembers these tragic events, and he directly challenges the listener in asking whether they too remember the past. If they do, then they too can empathize with the singer/narrator, if they do not, then there is an almost accusatory tone in implying their forgetfulness.

The final verse is one of hope and confidence. In the first four lines, the

singer/narrator says: “Mais aujourd’hui que renaît l’espérance, / Et que la paix anime tous les coeurs, / Vivons unis, avec la confiance / Qu’ils ont cessé nos troubles, nos malheurs”(Bourque 258). Words such as *renaît*, *l’espérance*, *paix*, *unis*, *confiance*, and *cessé nos troubles*, *nos malheurs* paint a much more positive image than the previous verses, which speak of the martyrs and victims of the past. The words *Vivons unis* are significant, because in reality, the people are not united, they are still scattered and living in communities around the world. However, they are still united by many things, their past being one of them, and one of the ways in which they have remained united is by remembering the events of that past.

In most of the songs that mention the Acadian past or deal with the Deportation or its after effects, the subject matter of the song has to do with the people themselves. Calixte Duguay’s song “Les Aboîteaux” is an exception to this. While mentioning briefly what happens to the people, the focus is on the *aboîteaux* themselves and what happened to them after the people left the lands. Duguay has said:

I wrote a song years ago called ‘Les Aboîteaux.’ *Les aboîteaux* were the symbol of old Acadie. They were the channels that were cut through the dikes to allow fresh water to drain from the fields into the bay so that the land would not become waterlogged behind the dikes. If the *aboîteaux* or the gates (*clapets*) that controlled the flow of water through the dikes broke, everyone had to go and repair them. Then they made a big party after (Doucet, Notes 197-198).

Duguay has been described as “a creative force in Acadie for a generation, touring the villages of Acadie first as a singer and later with his plays....He is one of the artists who

carved out a path for wider success that many young Acadian artists have followed”

(Doucet, Notes 197). He has described himself by saying:

Je suis un conteur et un auteur-compositeur qui utilise les mots et la musique pour écrire des chansons et raconter des histoires. Par conséquence, je suis beaucoup plus à l’aise dans le maniement des images et des symboles que dans le brassage des idées et des concepts. Je ne suis ni historien ni sociologue. Je suis un rêveur éveillé qui cherche à sentir la réalité plutôt qu’à la penser et qui s’efforce ensuite de la rendre par des images. Ce sont les images qui m’intéressent d’abord, pas les concepts ou les idées (Duguay, “l’Acadie” 79).

He has used that love of imagery in writing “Les Aboîteaux”, a song which speaks of an item which was at one time a crucial part of the lives of the Acadian people

The first verse of the song begins by saying: “Hier je suis allé en rêvant d’Isabeau / Voir le foin pousser sur la digue / Ce coin de pays était si beau / Mais il tombe en lambeaux / Et ses habitants depuis longtemps / N’en peuvent plus de fatigue” (Duguay, Les stigmates 95). By beginning the song with the word *hier*, the singer/narrator has already created a sense of looking back on the past and on past experiences. However, this is not a past separated completely from the singer/narrator, as is evidenced by the first person narrative style of the piece, which shows a personal connection to the events being described. To further the personal connection, the singer/narrator tells us the name of the person whom he was dreaming about, “Isabeau.” Rather than dreaming about “ma belle” or a generic love interest, the personification of this woman further tells the listener that the story that will unfold in the verses to follow is a personal one. The lines

“Ce coin de pays était si beau / Mais il tombe en lambeaux” leave an indication that something has happened, and although this something is not specifically named, it is a safe assumption that, given the subject matter of the song and the location of *les aboîteaux*, this event was the Deportation.

This idea is backed up in the refrain of the song, which says: “Mais les aboîteaux attendent quelque part / Que le pays d’alentour s’éveille / Avant de venir nous parler de départ / Pour d’autres merveilles” (Duguay, Les stigmates 95). The final two lines are interesting; not only do they echo the theme of the Deportation, but they also pose a possibility of a day when people will cease to speak of the act of being deported and will speak of other things. This seems unlikely, given the title and subject matter of the song. Even though the country is “en lambeaux,” *les aboîteaux* are still present, waiting for the country to “s’éveille.” Their presence acts as a tangible link to the past and a visual reminder of what happened. That this “symbol of old Acadie” is still inspiring artists and writers hundreds of years after their construction and practical, everyday use, attests to the visible links to the past as well as to the place which that past holds for the people.

The Deportation is alluded to again in the second verse, when the singer/narrator says that: “Jean Leblanc m’a dit qu’un jour aux aboîteaux / La mer s’en viendrait par la digue / Rassembler les membres du troupeau / Partis sur les bateaux / Que les déportés viendraient fêter / Et qu’on danserait la gigue” (Duguay, Les stigmates 96). The fact that the singer/narrator actually spoke to Jean Leblanc attests to a personal story and one that happened not too long ago, or at the very least, one that is fresh in the mind of the singer/narrator. The lines “Rassembler les membres du troupeau / Partis sur les bateaux” seem to allude to the deportation itself, in the act of gathering the people together and

sending them from their homelands. The word “déportés” is an indicator of what has happened; however, the idea that the “déportés” would “fêter” and “danserait la gigue” indicates that, despite what has happened, the people will continue to survive and will find reasons to celebrate.

The final verse begins by saying: “Reviene la mer un jour aux aboîteaux / Forcer les clapets de la digue / Qu’elle nous apporte pour bientôt” (Duguay, Les stigmates 97). These lines present the image of the sea forcing its way through the gates of the dike, which the people have had to leave in the meantime. Since the dikes were built in such a way as to allow fresh water to drain from the fields, if the sea water was forcing itself through the gates, this indicates that things were not operating as they should, because of the peoples’ forced absence from tending *les aboîteaux*. For the first time, the listener is given an idea of some of the at-home consequences of the Deportation.

In many ways, Grand Pré has come to be associated with and representative of the Deportation. Through Longfellow’s depiction in the poem “Evangeline” to the building of the commemorative church and the unveiling of the Evangeline statue and the Deportation cross, the memory of what happened to the people of Grand Pré is very much alive today. The village has also been commemorated through music, as in Angèle Arsenault’s song titled simply “Grand-Pré.”

Her reasons for remembering the village of Grand-Pré are outlined in the first verse, which states:

On porte toujours en soi un peu de son pays

Et moi je n'oublie pas que je suis d'Acadie

Si mon histoire est triste, ce n'est pas votre faute

Mais soyons des artistes, écrivons-en une autre  
 Qui sera bien plus belle, beaucoup moins dramatique  
 Avec des arcs-en-ciel, d'la danse et d'la musique  
 À partir d'aujourd'hui, bâtissons l'avenir  
 En gardant du passé nos plus beaux souvenirs (Arsenault, "Grand-Pré").

In this verse, the singer/narrator first acknowledges her heritage by saying that "moi je n'oublie pas que je suis d'Acadie." This immediately establishes the cultural ties and framework which the singer/narrator is working from. The interesting aspect of this verse is that the singer/narrator does not challenge the people at large with keeping the past alive for the sake of the future, but rather states that it is up to artists and writers: "Avec des arcs-en-ciel, d'la danse et d'la musique / À partir d'aujourd'hui, bâtissons l'avenir / En gardant du passé nos plus beaux souvenirs." Although other artists, such as Zachary Richard in his song "Réveille," have charged the people themselves with the task of keeping the past alive, this is the first time when the influence and importance of music itself is championed as a viable and important medium and way of preserving the past. In so many instances, the arts are overlooked as merely entertainment, or decoration. Here, they become a means of saving the past and helping to build a future, and in this way, are given much more emphasis and importance than they have been given in the past.

"Grand-Pré" has many evocative images of the village, both before and after the Deportation, as well as references to the act of the Deportation itself and to some of the consequent results. The village is described in the second verse as: "Grand-Pré, c'est là que tout a commencé / Grand-Pré, c'est là que nous avons rêvé / Grand-Pré, de bâtir un monde nouveau" (Arsenault, "Grand-Pré"). An allusion is made to Longfellow's poem

“Evangeline” and the well-known images of “the forest primeval” in the line “Grand-Pré, à l'abri des arbres géants” (Arsenault, “Grand-Pré”). However, these peaceful images are contrasted with other, harsher images representative of the village after the Deportation, in lines such as “Grand-Pré, une page d'histoire qu'on a déchirée / Grand-Pré, les maisons, les fermes, brûlées” (Arsenault, “Grand-Pré”). The contrast between the idea of “de bâtir un monde nouveau” with “les maisons, les fermes, brûlées” is a stark reminder of one of the results of the Deportation: what was built was destroyed, and what was before was no more after the people were “déportés.”

Arsenault has, between the before and after images, inserted a verse which is an interesting study. The third verse of the song states:

Non, ils sont pas venus, les soldats, c'est pas vrai  
 Car dans la petite église, tous les hommes priaient  
 Les femmes à la maison préparaient le fricot  
 Les enfants dans les champs surveillaient les troupeaux  
 Non, elle n'est pas venue, la si terrible guerre  
 Qui déchire les familles et crée tant de frontières  
 Si c'est ça mon histoire, je refuse d'y croire  
 Je préfère oublier ce qui est arrivé (Arsenault, “Grand-Pré”).

The reason why this verse is included is not clear. A possible reason for its inclusion is that the speaker in the verse is clearly in shock and denial that the events of the Deportation came to pass -- for such a village as Grand-Pré, described in the previous stanza as “un peu le paradis,” how could such a thing happen? The voice used in this verse changes during the final two lines. What starts out as a narrative observation that

no, the soldiers did not arrive, resolves into the narrator saying: “Si c'est ça mon histoire, je refuse d'y croire / Je préfère oublier ce qui est arrivé” which changes a third person observation narrative into a first person “I” statement. It is possible that the horror and hardship experienced by the people of Grand-Pré is too sad, too painful for the speaker to deal with, and this may be an explanation of why he or she prefers to “oublier ce qui est arrivé.” This final line in the verse is interesting, when compared to two lines stated in the same first person “I” voice in the first verse of the song. In the first verse, the “I” singer/narrator states: “Et moi je n'oublie pas que je suis d'Acadie / Si mon histoire est triste, ce n'est pas votre faute.” Although in the third verse, this statement seems to be refuted, the verses which follow attest to the fact that the singer/narrator cannot, and will not, forget her roots, their past, and what happened at Grand-Pré.

After describing the fate of some of the people after they were deported, people who were “condamnés à vivre en exilés” (Arsenault, “Grand-Pré”), the fourth verse opens with a sense of hope, and the determination of the first-person “I” voice to remember what has happened in the past. The verse states:

Grand-Pré, je ne veux pas vous faire pleurer  
 Grand-Pré, mais je ne peux pas oublier  
 Grand-Pré, que mes ancêtres étaient Français  
 Et tout ce qu'ils voulaient c'est vivre en paix  
 Grand-Pré, nous n'étions que quelques milliers  
 Grand-Pré, nous n'avons pas abandonné  
 Grand-Pré, aujourd'hui nous pouvons rêver

Trois millions d'Acadiens et d'Acadiennes continuent à chanter”

(Arsenault, “Grand-Pré”).

In a sharp contrast to the preceding verse, which begins “Dans les prisons de Londres” (Arsenault, “Grand-Pré”), this verse exudes a sense of hope and possibility for the future, despite what has happened in the past. Echoing the sentiments expressed in the first verse, the “I” narrator has again vowed not to forget either Grand-Pré or his or her roots. This reaffirmation is extremely significant in its second repetition, especially after the third verse, in which the “I” narrator shows doubt in his or her refusal to deal with a sad and painful past. However, despite this, the narrator has come to grips with his or her past, a significant step for a people trying to preserve their past and to keep it alive for the generations of the future. The last four lines of the verse switch from a singular “I” approach to the plural “we” in switching pronouns from “je” to “nous.” This is also significant, because in addition to showing that the singer/narrator is not alone in his or her convictions, the collective people “...n'avons pas abandonné” Grand-Pré. The most significant line is the final line in the verse, in which “Trois millions d'Acadiens et d'Acadiennes continuent à chanter.” The fact that there are that many people is significant; it shows that the people have survived adversity and if these people “continuent à chanter,” not only have they survived, but they have not forgotten what they have been through.

The final verse in the song is a victorious celebration of that survival, expressed in the first line that boldly says: “Nous avons survécu” (Arsenault, “Grand-Pré”). Although “Nous connaissons la guerre / La faim et la misère” (“Arsenault, Grand-Pré”) the people are “Fiers de notre héritage / Parlant notre langage / Marchant à notre pas / Chantant

Alléluia / Enfants de l'Acadie / Notre histoire nous a grandi / Notre histoire n'est pas finie” (Arsenault, “Grand-Pré”). Although the entire last verse is a celebration of survival and of a shared heritage, the final two lines are significant. The idea that a common history has shaped the people and will continue to do so indicates just how much the people emphasize the importance of keeping this history and past alive through memories and songs like “Grand-Pré.”

The Deportation was an event that has been written about by artists in places outside of the Maritimes as well as by artists who live within the old boundaries of Acadie. The song “Acadie à la Louisiane,” performed by Bruce Daigrepoint and the Cajun Band, offers a Louisiana perspective on the events of the Deportation and how it affected the people who now live there.

The song itself is a straightforward telling of some of the outcomes of the Deportation. The chain of events which led up to the Deportation is not mentioned, but rather, the singer/narrator gives the audience an idea of some of the hardships and the cruelties faced by the people upon their removal from their lands. The song opens with the lines: “Ils ont volé toute notre terre / Ils ont brulé toutes les maisons / C'était fait pour l'Angleterre / J'ai perdu mon petit garçon / On a embarqué sur les bateaux / Pour le prendre le grand voyage / Ma famille était séparée / Pour toujours une famille cassée” (Daigrepoint). In those few lines, words such as “*volé*”, “*brulé*”, “*perdu*”, “*séparée*” and “*cassée*” help to paint the picture of a very harsh and moving experience. In addition to this, the listener is told directly who is, at least in the mind of the singer/narrator, responsible for these horrors: “C'était fait pour l'Angleterre.” The reasons behind these actions are not the focus here; rather, it is the actual stark realities of the event itself and

the personal level at which they are presented to the listener. The singer/narrator is not merely recounting something that happened long ago to a distant people, but is recounting something that happened to him, personally, and his people. In this way, the cruelty of the events mentioned take on a whole new meaning and a level that is much closer to home.

The third verse tells of how the horrors of burned houses and stolen lands does not end with the people's arrival at their new destination. The singer/narrator says: "Il y en a qu'a souffert la mort / Il y en a qu'a été vendu / Pour des esclaves dans la Géorgie / On s'est disparu mais tout partout" (Daigrepoint). Inundated with images and a glimpse into some of the repercussions of the Acadians' removal and exile from their native lands, the listener is left with some powerful images which leave a lasting impression which helps to explain why the event is still fresh in the minds of people to this day.

Despite the trials faced by the singer/narrator and his people, the fourth verse gives the listener an idea of the present-day feelings of the singer/narrator. The verse states: "On a trouvé notre pays / La Louisiane notre Paradis / Les prairies et les marais / Le meilleure place pour habiter" (Daigrepoint). Words such as *notre pays*, *Paradis*, and *meilleure* are distinctly positive and help to offset some of the darker images in previous verses. The use of the word *Paradis* especially connotes the idea that the singer/narrator and his people are happy today where they are, despite the hardships that they have faced in the past as articulated by the previous verses.

The trials faced by the singer/narrator and his people are not completely over, as is indicated by the fifth verse, which says: "Les américains ont découragé / Les Cajuns de parler français / Ils voulient on parle juste en anglais / Mais les Cajuns va les embêter"

(Daigrepoint). The idea that the Cajuns will continue to speak French and will continue to survive, despite what obstacles they may face, is a positive, uplifting end to this song and, in a way, helps to explain how the people survived the hardships of the past. The use of the word “Cajun” here clearly denotes the people of Louisiana, and the connection between those people and the Acadians who were deported is the subject of the refrain of the song, which states: “Acadie à la Louisiane / Un grand voyage pour notre monde / Pour trouver la liberté / Et un beau pays” (Daigrepoint). This refrain, which ends the song, outlines just how far the Acadian people have come, from their beginnings in Acadie to their present lives in Louisiana. The chorus helps to remind the listener that the Cajun people of Louisiana and the Acadians of the Maritimes began their journeys in the same place, have endured many of the same hardships, and both share many of the same feelings and ideals, which they have each expressed in their music.

It is interesting to note the different approaches used by the artists studied here in dealing with the issue of the Deportation. Although not all of the songs studied here deal with it directly, there is always at least an allusion to or a mention of this important historical event. In “Grand-Pré,” Arsenault directly comes out saying that: “Grand-Pré, tout un peuple qu'on a déporté” (Arsenault, “Grand-Pré”), and in “Les Aboîteaux,” Calixte Duguay mentions “Que les déportés viendraient fêter.” Not all artists directly use words such as *déporté* but rather allude to the event indirectly. In Bruce Daigrepoint’s “Acadie à la Louisiane”, for example, the singer/narrator says: “On a embarqué sur les bateaux / Pour le prendre le grand voyage” (Daigrepoint). In “Plainte et Pardon” Bourque does not even go so far as to mention the act of leaving via boat. He speaks of “un crime,” “les martyrs de Grand-Pré,” and “D’un petit peuple à jamais condamné,” but

never mentions the act of leaving itself. In other songs that make reference to the Deportation, such as Bois Joli's "La Revanche," the people were "Séparé du familier" (Bois Joli, "La Revanche"), which again alludes to the Deportation without directly mentioning it. Although these allusions are in many ways less direct and less jarring than Arsenault and Duguay's word *déporté*, they still work to paint an image of the Deportation itself and often have a more powerful impact on the listener for their subtlety and indirect references.

The importance which the Deportation and the surrounding events hold for the Acadian people is evidenced in songs such as "Grand-Pré," "Les Aboîteaux," and "Acadie à la Louisiane" by the use of the first person "je" in the narrative voice despite the fact that these songs were written over 200 years after the event took place. Although the words spoken by the wanderer in "Un Canadien Errant" are also in first person, the framework of the story is told in a narrative style, which puts a distance between the singer/narrator and the event which he is describing. This distance lends a certain sense of objectivity to the song; the retelling of a story does not necessarily have a personal connection to the person telling the tale. However, when the storyteller or singer makes a story their own by inserting a first person voice, the event which they are describing becomes a personal one and the objective distance is eliminated. The fact that the Deportation has evoked songs of such a personal magnitude years after the actual event speaks of how this event continues to impact the descendants of those who were there in 1755.

All of the songs in this section share a feeling of triumph and victory based on the people's ability to have survived such a terrible ordeal. With the exception of "Un

Canadien Errant,” which was not written with this specific event in mind, all of the other songs studied here end with a sense of pride and accomplishment, whether it is through the statement of a full verse as in “Grand-Pré” or in a simple line, stating that “Mais les Cajuns va les embêter,” the final line in “Acadie a la Louisiane” or “Que les déportés viendraient fêter / Et qu’on danserait la gigue” in “Les Aboîteaux.” This idea of hope and victory is also the final image presented in A. T. Bourque’s “Plainte et Pardon” although the idea is not addressed in the same way. In both Arsenault and Daigrepont’s songs, the sense of victory and the ability to overcome hardship is a feat that is attributed to the people themselves. There is no mention of God, prayers answered or asked for, or any kind of guidance found outside the collective efforts of the people as a united group. Although Arsenault does make mention of “Car dans la petite église, tous les hommes priaient” (Arsenault, “Grand-Pré”), and the people “Chantant Alléluia” in reference to their survival, her references to God and to religion are minimal, and Daigrepont does not mention this aspect of Acadian life at all. However, both of these songs were written during the late twentieth century, at a time when the influence and importance of the Church had declined somewhat in everyday Acadian life while the popularity and commonality of secularization had become more prominent. This was not the case, however, when Bourque was writing, and this is evidenced in his attribution to the people’s hope in the future being based on a hope in God and His guidance. The final lines of “Plainte et Pardon” state: “Voyez là-haut, une étoile étincelle,/ C’est le salut, le guide protecteur / Qui guidera notre faible nacelle / Dans les dangers d’une mer en fureur”(Bourque 258). The idea that it is God, and not the people, who is in charge is emphasized in the final image of a small boat being guided through a raging sea. It is not

enough for the boat to get itself through the trials, but it relies on guidance from above. Like the images in Arsenault's and Daigrepont's pieces, however, this final image is a positive, triumphant one, giving verse to the survival of the people and to their abilities to overcome whatever hardships and obstacles may come into their path.

It is important to note that all the pieces studied here, with the exception of "Un Canadien errant," are not bitter nor angry about the events of the Deportation, at least not as far as the overall theme of the song is concerned. One exception to this is in Daigrepont's direct laying of blame on England for what happened, although this blame is not the focal point of "Acadie à la Louisiane." While the images and descriptions of what happened are harsh, none of these songs bear any ill will or anger towards what happened. The message here is more of a direct remembrance of what happened, rather than an angry complaint or self-pitying lamentation. Clive Doucet notes: "For Acadians, the spirit of 1755 is not the spirit of conquest or defeat. It is the spirit of endurance in the face of great adversity, of strength, not power, of courage, not despair, of caring for one another, of prosperity, not parasitism" (Doucet, Notes 185). This ability to be able to look at the Deportation and the events resulting from this action as a part of history, and to remember and to be proud of what happened speaks volumes about the Acadian people and their own outlook on the event. The fact that the singer/narrator in "Acadie à la Louisiane" does not continually bemoan the fact that he and his family have lost their lands in Acadie but rather extols the fact that they have found "La Louisiane notre Paradis / Les prairies et les marais / Le meilleure place pour habiter" (Daigrepont) is significant. The same can be said for Arsenault's look at "Grand-Pré," in which the singer/narrator says in the final verse: "Mais nous n'avons ni frontière / Ni haine, ni

regard en arrière / Nous marchons droit devant / Vers le soleil levant” (Arsenault, “Grand-Pré”). Bourque’s title, “Plainte et Pardon” speaks for itself; the need to forgive the grievances of the past and to move on is a theme which has continued through the passing of years in Acadian music, or at the very least, in the songs studied here. It is significant to note also that this theme is one to have crossed borders and cultures: Angèle Arsenault was born and raised in Prince Edward Island, Calixte Duguay and André T. Bourque, are from New Brunswick, and and Bruce Daigrepoint is from Louisiana. The four named artists discussed here come from different parts of the world, and yet they share some of the same sentiments and ideals.

### **Homeland**

In his book Notes from Exile: On Being Acadian, Clive Doucet says: “It’s said that the one thing above all else that characterized the old Acadians was their relationship with the land. It wasn’t their culture or their religion or their language, it was their feeling for the land” (108). This is a trait which is still very true for the Acadians of today, a fact which is evidenced in the ways in which Acadie and the idea of a homeland have been manifested through the music of Acadian musicians.

During the 120 years upon which this study focuses, many songs were written about the old lands of Acadie, both as a tribute to the lands which were lost in the Deportation and as an expression of the people’s feelings about their homeland. These songs range in scope from fond remembrances of times past to a more modern idea that home is where the people are, not necessarily marked off by boundaries and static geographical locations. Many of these songs also deal with themes of remembering the

past; however, they all share a common thread in their specific mentions and interests in the lands of Acadie.

Helen Creighton is one of the best-known collectors of folksongs in the Maritime provinces, and although she is known primarily for her collection of English folk songs and ballads, she did collect and catalog some Acadian songs as well, collected from Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island (Labelle, Fleur ii) and published in a book called La Fleur du Rosier, which was edited by Ronald Labelle. One of the songs which appears in this collection is a song titled “Ma Patrie, c’est l’Acadie.” Along with the publication of these songs, a short description was added to explain the significance and origin of the song, if it were known. In discussing “Ma Patrie, c’est l’Acadie,” Labelle says:

This is not a folksong. It is rather a patriotic song composed in honour of the Acadian people. Surprisingly, this song is not found in any of the collections of patriotic songs published following the Acadian political awakening in 1881. Also, the fact that the tune used here is from the song entitled “Marry me or I will no longer spin” suggests that the song is not the work of a professional musician, but that the words were composed to mark some celebration or ceremony (Labelle, Fleur 161).

Most of the songs published in this particular collection were first recorded and collected by Helen Creighton in the late 1940’s (Labelle, Fleur ii). Although the date of composition and the composer of this particular song are unknown, its appearance in Creighton’s collection was not the first time that this particular song appeared in print in the Maritimes. The newspaper *l’Evangeline* published the lyrics to this song on March

16, 1905, attributing it to one Dominique S. Leger, of Lynn, Massachusetts (Leger, “Chant”). Although *l’Evangeline* merely titled the song as “Chant Patriotique Acadien (sur l’air: ‘Mariez-moi, ma Petite Maman’)” the words of the two publications are identical. Whether the newspaper publication was the original source of the song collected by Creighton is unknown. Despite the fact that there is no set date of publication, the beginning of the fourth stanza begins with the words: “Le siècle et demi qui vient de finir / Depuis ce bien triste carnage” (Labelle, Fleur 161). If it has been a century and a half since this “triste carnage,” which one assumes to mean the Deportation of 1755, it is logical to assume that this piece was written sometime around the turn of the twentieth century. A century and a half after the Deportation puts the date at 1905, if one takes these words literally. This may mean that the publication in *l’Evangeline* of the “Chant Patriotique Acadien” may have very well been the first publication, and Dominique S. Leger may very well be the composer, although this is pure speculation without any further evidence to back up this theory.

The song itself, in either version, begins with the lines: “Je vais chanter les versets merveilleux / De ma patrie, de son histoire,” (Labelle, Fleur 161). This introduction, in which the singer/narrator announces to his audience the intention of “singing marvelous verses” is reminiscent of story tellers and the telling of great epics. It is interesting to note that these marvelous verses are not about the people, but rather are about the narrator’s lands and their history. The Acadians are described, in the following lines as: “Bons citoyens, fervents chrétiens. Tel était l’ancien Acadien” (Labelle, Fleur 161), but despite this noble description, this is not the Acadians’ story, it is the story of Acadie, which is described in one line as “terre chérie,” a point which is emphasized time and again

throughout the song.

The second verse begins by saying: “Mais plusieurs fois pendant cent-cinquante ans, / L’Acadien brave les orages, / En repoussant la tempête de sang. / L’ennemi qu’envie ses parages” (Labelle, Fleur 161). Despite the tempests and bloodshed that the Acadians have endured, the enemy is envious of the lands -- not afraid of the people, not seeking riches, but envious of the land itself. Despite the fact that their lands were the apparent cause of the troubles that followed, the people, being “Bons citoyens, fervents chrétiens” turn to prayer. The third stanza ends by saying: “Mère de Dieu, Reine des cieux, daignez les protéger en tous lieux. / Sainte Marie, que l’Acadie soit un jour par eux rétablie” (Labelle, Fleur 161). Although these are prayers for protection, the ending plea for Acadie to be restored holds more of an emphasis in its place as the final line of the verse. Again, it is the lands, not the people, which are emphasized here.

Although the final line of the song states: “Ainsi chantons dans l’intention de la Société de l’Assomption” (Labelle, Fleur 162), the penultimate line reiterates the feelings of the singer/narrator towards his native land. He or she says: ”Mais ma patrie, c’est l’Acadie, du temps passé comme d’aujourd’hui” (Labelle, Fleur 162). The reference to “la Société de l’Assomption” refers to a company that was originally founded in Waltham, Massachusetts in 1903, the name of which refers to Our Lady of Assumption, the Acadians’ patron saint. A chapter opened in Moncton in 1913, and the Society was considered for many years to be the wealthiest and most powerful Acadian social group (Degrâce 19). Aside from the mention of the Society, the final lines of the song are a clear indication of the singer/narrator’s pride in his homeland, both in its past glory and in its present state. Although the song extols the virtue of the Acadian people, praises their

endurance through hardships, and admonishes the listener to “Marchons sur les traces de nos aïeux, / Soyons Acadiens sans réserve” (Labelle, *Fleur* 162) the lands of Acadie still remain the focus of the piece. If indeed this piece was originally written in Massachusetts, as the 1905 publication of these lyrics in *l'Évangeline* suggest, the words become even more significant, for the praises of Acadie attest to how much the lands mean to Acadians everywhere, and not just those who still dwell within the theoretical borders of Acadie.

One of the more well-known tributes to Acadie is in the new lyrics to the national anthem, “Ave Maris Stella” which were written by Jacinthe Laforest in 1989. Although the first and final stanzas of the hymn are kept in the original Latin, the second through fifth stanzas were re-written in French to reflect a more modern, more patriotic view of Acadie and the people who lived there.

Although the first stanza is dedicated to Mary, the patron saint of the Acadians, each of the three new stanzas begins with the line “Acadie ma patrie” (“Congrès mondial 2004”) and, with that opening line, these stanzas have been clearly dedicated to the lands of Acadie. The new configuration is a way to make this song more easily sung and more accessible to the public at large. The following lines of the second verse state: “À ton nom, je me lie / Ma vie, ma foi sont à toi / Tu me protégeras” (“Congrès mondial 2004”). Rather than using the impersonal “c’est” or “it is”, in the description of the land, the narrator uses the singular or informal “ton” or “your” in his address. In addition to clearly establishing a relationship between narrator and subject, the use of personal pronouns helps to personalize said relationship.

The connection and pride that the singer/narrator feels for the land is continued in

the third stanza, which says: “Acadie ma patrie / Ma terre et mon défi / De près, de loin tu me tiens / Mon coeur est acadien” (“Congrès mondial 2004”). The words in this stanza are interesting, because the singer/narrator, in his or her praises of Acadie acknowledges that, whether living in Acadie or not, the lands still have a hold on those who are Acadian. Unlike in “Ma Patrie, c’est l’Acadie” which speaks of the singer/narrator’s “native land” and the marvelous things which happened there, here, the singer/narrator offers the possibility of leaving Acadie, though this statement is quickly backed by the idea that even if he or she does leave, Acadie will still have a hold on him or her.

Also unlike in “Ma Patrie, c’est l’Acadie,” the singer/narrator in “Ave Maris Stella” makes reference to the future of Acadie in the final stanza by saying: “Acadie ma patrie / Ton histoire, je la vis / La fierté, je te la dois / En l’avenir, je crois” (“Congrès mondial 2004”). Unlike “Ma Patrie” which focuses on the past of Acadie, this song clearly shows that the singer/narrator is proud of that past, but that the past is not all that matters to him or her, because he or she believes in the future, whatever that may be.

In his song “Viens voir l’Acadie,” Donat Lacroix invites and encourages the listener to visit the lands of Acadie. The most striking thing about this piece of music is the refrain, which begins and ends the song and which is repeated after each of the verses. The refrain states: “Viens voir l’Acadie / Viens voir le pays / Le pays qui m’enchante / Je te le dis / Je te le chante / Je te le crie / Je te le montre” (Lacroix, “Viens Voir”). In this refrain, the singer/narrator is directly addressing a single, unspecified listener. The use of the familiar or single form of you, or “te,” indicates that this is not addressed to the audience in general but rather calls to mind an intimate discussion between two people. This refrain is interesting in that it not only expresses the singer/narrator’s obvious love

of Acadie, but it also invites the unknown listener to come and visit. Although many other songs, such as Bois Joli's "Mon Acadie" share some of the same self-expression of pride and love of land, this is the only song in which the listener is invited and encouraged to visit. The final line in the refrain, "Je te le montre," is backed up by the singer/narrator, who keeps his promise throughout the remainder of the song to show the listener Acadie through the presentation of a number of images and ideas which are commonly found there.

The first verse begins with the line "Deux cents ans ont passé" (Lacroix, "Viens Voir"). Although there is no specific date given and the event that happened two hundred years ago is not directly mentioned, given the subject matter of the lands of Acadie, it is safe to assume that the event being alluded to is the Deportation. This rather vague reference, however, is the only time in which the singer/narrator mentions this event, firmly grounding the song in the present time of Acadie rather in the historic past. This fixing of the song in the present and the discussion of what is happening in Acadie at the time underlines the invitation to come visit; if people are going to come to Acadie, they are not going to be visiting the lands of the past, but rather, a vibrant, living culture which is discussed in the following verses.

Lacroix tells the listener that: "Tu verras des pêcheurs / Des gars qui ont du coeur / Et plein de courage / L'air pur de l'océan / L'odeur des coquillages / Parfum'ront ton visage" (Lacroix, "Viens Voir"). The personal tone that was established in the opening refrain is continued here as the unknown listener is addressed by the informal or singular "tu." Although this image of the fishermen is somewhat idealized -- there is no mention of the hard work or the storms which are a part of the fisherman's world -- the image of a

fisherman is indeed something which is found in Acadie and which is a part of many Acadian lives.

If the images were not enough to draw the visitor to the shores of Acadie, the final verse compounds the air of welcome by saying: “Tu trouveras des copains / Des amis acadiens / Qui parlent ta langue / Si tu viens sous mon toit / Ce sera com’chez toi / On saura te comprendre” (Lacroix, “Viens Voir”). The interesting line in this final stanza is the third line, “Qui parlent ta langue.” This could have two possible meanings. The first, it could be a literal meaning, intended for Acadians and other Francophones from other areas of the world. Or, it could be a more colloquial term, meaning “you will get along well” regardless of language. Either way, the visitor is made to feel welcome through the line “Ce sera com’chez toi” and is further invited to visit through the final repetition of the refrain, which ends the song.

Bois Joli, a New Brunswick-based group founded in 1996, have also written a song about Acadie. Their song, “Mon Acadie,” is a tribute to the land and to the reverence and pride which people feel towards their native soil. The refrain, which states: “Mon Acadie, toi si jolie, tu es si belle / Je pense à toi et chaque fois, / Et je me rappelle / De vieil ancien qui m’entretient à grande gloire / Mon Acadie, t’es mon pays, t’es mon histoire” (Bois Joli, “Mon Acadie”). The opening words, “Mon Acadie” immediately establish the relationship between the singer/narrator and the country about which he is singing. The following words, “toi si jolie, tu es si belle,” are, as in “Ave Maris Stella,” a direct address of the land, and as in “Ave Maris Stella,” the use of these words helps to establish a clear relationship between the singer/narrator and the land which he is addressing.

The final few lines of the first stanza briefly mention the past of Acadie. The narrator says: “La pensée de hier, c’était misère / En grandes couleurs / L’histoire du jour est un amour / Qui vient du coeur” (Bois Joli, “Mon Acadie”). Although the troubles of the past are alluded to, the focus remains on the lands of Acadie, and the singer stays in the present, through the use of the present tense. In the second verse, the singer says: “Regarde ses fleurs, saisi leurs valeurs, regarde les bien / Fils d’Acadie, prends aujourd’hui ce qui te revient / Promesses du jour font leur retour, prends en bien soin / Agé du coeur, l’ancien d’honneur qui te rejoint” (Bois Joli, “Mon Acadie”). The singer asks “Fils d’Acadie, prends aujourd’hui ce qui te revient” which, although asking the listener to take the time to remember what has gone before, firmly grounds the listener and the song in the present, especially through the specific use of “*aujourd’hui*.” The phrase “*prends le temps*” could just as easily have been used, but the specific use of “today” emphasizes that the past should be remembered but that things are happening in the present and it is the present which matters.

The final line of the song reiterates what has been said before, but also reaffirms the connection between the land and the history of the people. The line states: “Mon Acadie, t’es mon pays, t’es mon histoire” (Bois Joli, “Mon Acadie”). Through the references to the past and through the asking of the listener to remember what has gone before, the group Bois Joli has paid tribute to the past glories of Acadie in much the same way as has “Ma Patrie, c’est l’Acadie,” but in their firm grounding of the song in the present, they have also touched upon how much the country still means to present-day Acadians and the people who live there.

A song titled “C’est pas un Pays” by Michel Thibault of the Nova Scotia-based

group Grand Dérangement was written in the same year as Bois Joli's "Mon Acadie." However, there is a distinctly different approach in this song, although like "Mon Acadie" this also deals with the notion of homeland, and, specifically, Acadie itself. Unlike "Mon Acadie" which tells the listener in the title as to what, exactly, the singer/narrator is singing about, "C'est pas un Pays" never directly mentions Acadie at all throughout the course of the song. Rather, there are several indirect references that will tell the attentive listener that the place referred to in the song is in fact Acadie.

The first of these somewhat subtle references is in the name of the group itself. "Grand Dérangement" is the Acadian term referring to the Deportation, an event that has come to be directly representative of and linked to the Acadian people. With this reference in mind, it is an easy leap to make for the listener to understand that the country being referenced by the singer/narrator is in fact Acadie. The title of the song itself is another such reference, for, although many songs have been written about it, Acadie itself is not a country as such, but rather a region that crosses many borders and transcends modern-day boundaries. Another reference which is made comes in the refrain of the song, which states: "C'est pas un pays, mais c'est la terre à mon père / C'est pas un pays, c'est comme le vent sur la mer / C'est pas un pays, c'est le fruit de la misère / Et comme le pays de Vigneault, c'est l'hiver"<sup>4</sup> (Thibault). This refrain makes many references to things that have been identified with as part of Acadian life. The idea that although it is not a country per se, but that it is home to one's father, and one's ancestors makes reference to Acadie as a homeland and as a place of origin. The mention of "le vent sur la mer" brings to mind the sea and the importance which the ocean and the livelihood which

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<sup>4</sup>This is in reference to Gilles Vigneault's song "Mon Pays" which opens with the line "Mon pays ce n'est pas un pays, c'est l'hiver." This song first appeared on Vigneault's album "À la Comédie-Canadienne", released on Columbia Records in 1965.

it provides holds for the Acadian people, and the line “le fruit de la misère” refers to the Deportation and the miseries that this event caused.

The emphasis on the land itself is underlined in the first two verses, which state:

J'ai voyagé partout sur la terre  
 J'ai traversé milliers de frontières  
 Des pays chauds jusqu'aux zones polaires  
 Du paradis jusqu'au fond de l'enfer  
 Partout on a voulu savoir mon nom  
 Savoir où j'avais bâti maison  
 J'ai répondu question sur question  
 Mon chez nous je l'explique de cette façon (Thibault).

These verses are followed by the refrain, with all of its implied images and links to the Acadian people. It is interesting that, given the wide range of possibilities and ways in which the singer can answer the questions and “explique de cette façon” that, rather than stating “je suis Acadien” or something similar, the narrator instead replies by referencing his homeland, but in a very subtle manner. Acadie does not have to be mentioned directly, for the references to it, however subtle, will be picked up on and will be recognized by those listeners who share the same sentiments and attachments to the land as does the singer/narrator. For those who do not share those same feelings, a direct mention of a place is irrelevant. However, to those who live there, the refrain is almost more powerful for its subtleties and the inner meaning that it holds.

As in “Ave Maris Stella” which briefly touches upon the connection between the land and those who have left it, this song takes that notion one step further. The final two

verses of the song say:

Même si des fois je ne sais qui je suis,  
 Que l'histoire a joué des tours sur ma vie  
 J'ai décidé de vivre comme celui  
 Qui vit à Montréal ou à Paris  
 Je reviens chez nous pour le meilleur pour le pire  
 Et je refuse de me taire et de souffrir  
 J'ai plus besoin de tout cacher, de mentir  
 Pour se libérer il suffit de se dire (Thibault).

These two verses leave the listener with the distinct impression that the singer/narrator cannot escape who he is, based on the fact "Que l'histoire a joué des tours sur ma vie." This history, which is bound up in the lands of Acadie, is remembered when the singer/narrator returns home. The fact that the singer/narrator says "Et je refuse de me taire et de souffrir / J'ai plus besoin de tout cacher, de mentir / Pour se libérer il souffit de se dire" followed by the final refrain is significant. The history that the singer/narrator speaks of clearly has had an impact, because rather than claiming a specific heritage or cultural symbol, the singer/narrator has elevated his homeland to the place of a cultural representative and distinguishing cultural trait. This elevation of the lands of Acadie from merely a loosely defined geographical place to the thing which defines the singer/narrator and the people shows that the ties which the Acadians of old felt to their lands has not dissipated with the passing of time and continue to be an important part of the lives of the younger generations.

In recent years, an idea of "l'Acadie sans frontières" has emerged. Calixte Duguay,

a well-known Acadian composer and artist, has said:

Poets and humanists have for thousands of years dreamed of a pays sans frontières, a country without borders, because we know that frontiers are a source of division, of war. L'Acadie, in a certain way, is un pays sans frontières. There's no frontier. If you're from Louisiana, you're an Acadian. If you're from Montreal, you're Acadian. If you're from New Brunswick, you're an Acadian. It's special in this way (Doucet, Notes 198-199).

This idea has been put into song by “les Méchants Maquereaux” in their song “l'Acadie de nos coeurs.” In contrast to songs written at an earlier time which extol the past history of Acadie and the people who lived there, Johnny Comeau, Lennie Gallant, and Jaques Gautreau have written a song which talks about how Acadie is a part of the people, no matter where they are, as opposed to a static place with its own history and past. This song is titled “Acadie de nos coeurs” and was recorded by a group called les Méchants Maquereaux.

The song opens with the lines: “Séparés par la mer / Pendant les années tristes / Dispersés à travers / On n'avait pas eu l'choix d'partir” (Méchants Maquereaux). These lines refer to the Deportation and the reason why the people have been separated. The first line gives an indication of the distances that separate the people. The fact that “On n'avait pas eu l'choix d'partir” indicates that this was not a welcomed nor planned separation, and is another indication that this verse makes reference to the Deportation.

However, the Deportation is not the subject of the song. This song was used as the theme song for the 1994 *Congrès mondial* held in New Brunswick, a large portion of

which consisted of family reunions in addition to academic conferences and cultural events. People came from around the world to attend this gathering, and the idea of a homecoming and a gathering of the scattered people becomes evident in the second verse, which says: “C’est l’temps pour se revoir / Chanter danser ensemble / Ou ça tout commencé / Presque 400 ans passés” (Méchants Maquereaux). This idea of returning home is echoed in the refrain, which is sung twice after every two verses. The refrain says: “Acadie de nos coeurs / Enfin c’est ton heure / Tes enfants reviennent / Dans tes bras” (Méchants Maquereaux). The first line of the refrain and the title of the song, “Acadie de nos coeurs” is an important, because it implies that although people may not live within the boundaries of Acadie, it is with them, wherever they are. The allusion to the land is an interesting one, because it would have been just as easy to say that people consider themselves Acadian, no matter where they might reside. However, Acadie itself is emphasized, rather than heritage or cultural belonging. The group has not named the flag, or Evangeline, or any of the other tangible cultural symbols which people could have access to no matter where they might be as a representation of their roots, but rather, the land and the people’s connection to it. The fact that the refrain is repeated twice each time that it appears in the song only further underlines this idea.

The people have “Viennent du nord et de l’est / Pour fêter la joie de vivre / Viennent du sud et de l’ouest / Attirés par les racines” (Méchants Maquereaux) and while the people are gathered together, “La douleur du départ / Et des larmes déjà versées / S’oublie dans la joie / Que l’on prend à se retrouver” (Méchants Maquereaux). This last verse is in direct contrast to the opening lines of the song, which recall the pain and sadness of the Deportation. The joy that the singer/narrator mentions in this final verse is

experienced because the people are once more together in their ancestral lands

One thing that all five of these songs have in common is the way in which the singer/narrator expresses direct and very personal ties to the land of Acadie. There are no stories here of a far and distant land; these are all personal accounts and recollections. Another interesting note is the way in which the singer/narrators address the land itself. In “Ave Maris Stella,” “Mon Acadie,” and “Acadie de nos Coeurs,” the land is addressed directly. Rather than addressing Acadie as “it” the singer/narrators have directly addressed the land in an informal way which suggests both familiarity and a personal connection.

It is interesting to note the ways in which the idea of Acadie has changed and shifted as the 120 years focused on in this study have passed. “Ma Patrie, C’est l’Acadie,” which, from all estimations, was written in the early years of the twentieth century, focuses on the glories of the past. The song opens with the words: “Je vais chanter les versets merveilleux / De ma patrie, de son histoire” (Labelle, Fleur 160). There is no doubt that it is the history of the land, not the people, which is being retold. The feelings of the singer/narrator towards the present state of his country are unknown, although the listener becomes quite familiar with the past glories of Acadie and how the singer/narrator feels about them. The past does not continue to be the focus, however, and songs such as “Ave Maris Stella,” “Viens Voir l’Acadie,” and “Mon Acadie” shift the praises sung to the land from the past directly into the present. Lines such as “Mon Acadie, toi si jolie, tu es si belle” (Bois Joli, “Mon Acadie”) are firmly grounded in the present, and although the past is mentioned, it is no longer the primary focus.

In the late 1990’s the focus shifts again. In August of 1994, Acadians from around

the world came back to Acadie for a two-week long gathering (Doucet, Notes 3). The idea of homeland and land as a cultural identifier or qualifier was called into question during this gathering of people from all parts of the world, who were all Acadian, yet who were not all living within the old boundaries of Acadie. This is an idea which can be summed up by Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, who says: “Community today may not be tied to a specific place, the population of which may be constituted by members of a variety of different communities, publics if one will” (Ó Giolláin 171). One of the themes of the meeting was “Acadie sans frontières” (Doucet, Notes). Songs written since then have followed along this theme. “Acadie de nos coeurs”, written in 1994 and used as the theme song for the gathering held during that year, and “C’est pas un pays,” written in 1998, both address the themes of people living far from the physical location of Acadie but who still view this as their center, as an important part of who they are. In a way, this is a combining of the two ideas put forth in “Ma patrie, c’est l’Acadie” and songs such as “Mon Acadie.” The ideas of the past and present are combined to form a new, modern approach in which the present lives of the people, no matter where they are, are still anchored and still influenced by the past, especially the past stories and history of Acadie itself. Clive Doucet says: “The New Acadie had echoes of the old, especially in the language of seventeenth-century France and the curious mixture of local democracy, co-operative projects and individual entrepreneurship and the love of place and community which would all continue to characterize the new Acadie” (Doucet, Notes 84). In this way, although the ways in which the people address the land may have changed, there is a continued link between past and present, and a continued link to the land, which still remains strong, regardless of boundaries and geographical place. It seems, to quote Donat

Lacroix, “Qui nous rejoindront dans le vent / Hardés d’avenir de passé, / D’Acadie à réinventir” (Lacroix, “Chemin”).

The two themes of the Deportation and the past and homeland find their roots in history and the past. Remembering the Deportation and paying tribute to the old lands of Acadie help to link current artists with their heritage and their past, and in this way, songs which focus on these two themes help to ensure that the past is not forgotten and that the memories stay alive in current as well as future generations.

## **Chapter Four**

“Chantez très fort et chantez souvent / Que vous êtes fiers d’être acadien.” ~ W. J.

Chiasson, “Mon Village Acadien”

Many artists and musicians take great pride in being Acadian, a sentiment that is evidenced in their music. The musicians who have written about these themes are not afraid to declare their pride in who they are and where they come from. Two of the themes studied in this thesis, those of Evangeline and pride in heritage, both deal with the idea of identity and cultural association.

### **Evangeline**

Seen more as a cultural icon than a fictional character, Evangeline has been the inspiration for a number of plays, movies, and operas in addition to popular songs. The way in which she is treated and the way in which her character is portrayed in these songs changes as the public’s and composers’ ideas and feelings about her shift. Although first introduced to the world by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow over 150 years ago, Evangeline still finds herself the focus of the public’s, and indeed many musicians’ attentions.

André T. Bourque wrote a song titled “Evangeline” in 1910 that is quite well known within the Acadian repertoire and which is extremely popular. The piece has been arranged for many different instruments and ensembles, including piano and choirs, and is often featured in concerts of Acadian music. It has been recorded recently by such

artists as Donat Lacroix as a part of his “Pot-pourri de chants Acadiens” which was released on his album “L’Acadie, la mer et l’Amour en chansons!” in 1993.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem is well-known for its use of imagery and word painting. In Longfellow’s opening description of Grand-Pré, he says:

In the Acadian land, on the shores of the Basin of Minas,  
Distant, secluded, still, the little village of Grand-Pré  
Lay in the fruitful valley. Vast meadows stretched to the eastward,  
Giving the village its name, and pasture to flocks without number.  
Dikes, that the hands of the farmers had raised with labour incessant,  
Shut out the turbulent tides (Longfellow 38).

Longfellow’s use of words such as “distant”, “secluded”, and “still” paint a picture of tranquility. “Turbulent tides” have been “shut out”, further strengthening the image of stillness and peace. Rather than telling the reader about a peaceful village, Longfellow has shown this peace through the images that he used.

André T. Bourque’s musical tribute to Evangeline is reminiscent of Longfellow’s imagery, and calls to mind the good times experienced by Evangeline and Gabriel before the Deportation. The opening line, “Je l’avais cru ce rêve du jeune âge,” (Bourque 255) immediately puts this piece in the past, as a memory, and sets the tone for the words to follow. The very verb tense used in “Je l’avais cru,” the pluperfect, indicates a past action that took place before another action; in this case, it indicates that the song takes place before the Deportation.

Images reminiscent of Longfellow’s poem paint the picture of a serene, idyllic, peaceful village, in lines such as:

Je l'avais cru ce rêve du jeune âge,  
 Qui souriant m'annonçait le bonheur,  
 Et confiante en cet heureux présage,  
 Mes jeunes ans s'écoulaient sans douleur.  
 Il est si doux, au printemps de la vie  
 D'aimer d'amour les amis de son coeur,  
 De vivre heureux au sein de la Patrie,  
 Loin du danger, à l'abri du malheur,  
 Loin du danger, à l'abri du malheur (Bourque 255).

Words such as *bonheur*, *heureux*, *sans douleur*, *doux*, *amour*, and *loin du danger* help to echo some of the peaceful descriptions employed by Longfellow in the original poem.

This imagery is continued in the second verse, which repeatedly uses words such as *paix*, *innocence*, *tendre amour*, *franche gaieté*, *doux*, and *aimable*, all words which not only have a soft sound to them when spoken or sung, but which evoke soft, peaceful, calming images. The lyrics evoke a somewhat sentimental yearning for the past that was destroyed, much in the same way as does Longfellow's poem.

In Bourque's version of "Evangeline," the arrival of the English and the act of the Deportation are not mentioned in much detail, much as they are not in the original poem. The mention at the end of the third stanza that "Au vieux Grand-Pré, dans notre cher pays / Lorsque soudain, notre ennemi terrible / Nous abreuva de malheurs inouïs, / Nous abreuva de malheurs inouïs" (Bourque 256) is the first and only real mention of the Deportation. This is not even spelled out as such, merely as the arrival of "notre ennemi terrible" and the fact that "nous abreuva de malheurs inouïs." As in Longfellow's poem,

the song focuses more on the imagery and the love story and less on the Deportation and the events that surrounded the actual people.

One of the interesting aspects about Bourque's piece is the way in which the song ends. The final verse states:

Hélas! depuis sur la terre étrangère,  
 J'erre toujours en proie à la douleur,  
 Car le destin dans sa sombre colère  
 M'a tout ravi, mes amis, mon bonheur,  
 Je ne vois plus l'ami de mon enfance  
 A qui j'avais juré mon tendre amour,  
 Mais dans mon coeur je garde l'espérance  
 De le revoir dans un meilleur séjour,  
 De le revoir dans un meilleur séjour (Bourque 256).

At the end of the song, Evangeline has not found Gabriel, as she does at the end of Longfellow's poem. This indicates that this song was not intended as a retelling of the story, even in a condensed form. The final four lines suggest that she is still looking for him, in the hope that "De le revoir dans un meilleur séjour." The memories of better times that have been lost are the focus here, rather than on the love story and the devotion that were Longfellow's inspiration.

A. T. Bourque was not the only one to write songs about Evangeline. In 1971, Michel Conte wrote a song about Evangeline which is quite different from Bourque's idyllic look back upon a lost past. Conte's version of "Evangeline" has been performed by a number of artists, including the Québec-based singer Marie-Jo Thériou. Conte's

version is in essence a musical retelling of the epic tale, and although his version is naturally quite a bit shorter than Longfellow's original poem, the basic plot line of the story can be easily followed.

Conte's version takes on the air of a direct address or possibly a conversation between the singer/narrator and Evangeline herself. The first two lines of the song establish this, by saying "Les étoiles étaient dans le ciel / Toi dans les bras de Gabriel," (Conte). The use of the word *toi* in the informal "you" form indicates that the singer/narrator is familiar with Evangeline enough to address her in the informal way. Although her name has not been spoken, the fact that she was "dans les bras de Gabriel" specifies to whom the singer/narrator is speaking.

Conte's version also deals more directly with the events of the Deportation that were in reality the catalyst for the entire Evangeline story. The second stanza begins by saying: "Mais les Anglais sont arrivés / Dans l'église ils ont enfermé / Tous les hommes de ton village / Et les femmes ont dû passer / Avec les enfants qui pleuraient / Toute la nuit sur le rivage" (Conte). In this way, Conte has condensed a goodly portion of the Evangeline story into a few lines, but even in this condensed version, the listener is given a few key details. The "ennemis" which Bourque briefly mentions are named outright as "les Anglais." The idea of separation is also introduced in these few lines, where the men are sent to the church, and the women and children have to pass the night on the shore.

Conte goes on to give Evangeline's story, still using words such as *toi* and *ton* to designate Evangeline's presence and ownership of places and events, giving her a very realistic and human appeal. One of the interesting aspects of this song is how the past is tied to the present. After Evangeline has found Gabriel after many years of wandering,

there is a final verse that ties her journey and experiences to people around the world.

The last verse says:

Il existe encore aujourd'hui  
 Des gens qui vivent dans ton pays  
 Et qui de ton nom se souviennent  
 Car l'océan parle de toi  
 Les vents du sud portent ta voix  
 De la forêt jusqu'à la plaine  
 Ton nom c'est plus que l'Acadie  
 Plus que l'espoir d'une patrie  
 Ton nom dépasse les frontières  
 Ton nom c'est le nom de tous ceux  
 Qui malgré qu'ils soient malheureux  
 Croient en l'amour et qui espèrent (Conte).

The opening two lines of this verse are significant. The use of the word *aujourd'hui* is important for its grounding of the final verse in the present and for its ability to link the present to the story which the previous verses have recounted. The second line, which speaks of “Des gens qui vivent dans ton pays” is also important, because it means that, despite the fact that the people and Evangeline herself were deported, the people have survived. This acts as another link to the past, establishing continued ties between the land that Evangeline lived in and left and the land that exists today. The final few lines of this stanza again directly address Evangeline herself, telling her that her name bypasses borders and represents the people.

The province of Prince Edward Island is home to a singer/songwriter named Angèle Arsenault, whose song “Evangeline, Acadian Queen” was first released in 1977. This song, although dealing with the subject of Evangeline, is vastly different from the songs of Bourque and Conte. Neither a sentimental view of the past nor a direct address to Evangeline, Arsenault’s version is addressed to the audience, in which the singer takes on the role of a story teller as is established in the first line of the song, which says: “Je m’en vais vous parler de quelqu’un que vous connaissez” (Arsenault, “Evangeline”). The use of the “je” or “I” pronoun establishes that this is a narrative, being told by the narrator to someone, namely the audience.

Arsenault’s purpose for writing this piece stems from a desire to comment on the way in which the Evangeline name has become commercialized, and the way in which Evangeline has grown from a fictitious character into a pop-culture icon within the Acadian community. After a brief retelling of the Evangeline story in order to establish a context for the rest of the song, the singer/narrator briefly takes on the persona of Evangeline, in saying: “Asteur que t’es enterré j’vais pouvoir m’en retourner / Je m’en vais pour investir dans les compagnies de l’avenir / Afin que l’nom d’Evangeline soit connu en cône” (Arsenault, “Evangeline”). This sudden switch from the narrative third person recital of the Evangeline story to an assumption of the first person character is interesting. The narrative voice, which has assumed the Evangeline persona, boldly has declared her intention of making sure that her name lasts into the future by investing in business, something which Longfellow clearly did not plan or foresee in his creation of this character. What follows are a list of these businesses:

Evangeline Fried clams

Evangeline Salon Bar

Evangeline Sexy Ladies wear

Evangeline Comfortable Running Shoes

Evangeline Automobile Springs

Evangeline Regional High School

Evangeline Savings Mortgage and Loans

Evangeline: The only French newspaper in New Brunswick

Evangeline Acadian Queen” (Arsenault, “Evangeline”).

Arsenault’s somewhat satirical look at how Evangeline vows to return to the Maritimes after burying Gabriel so that her name might continue to live on raises interesting issues when considering Evangeline herself. The title of the piece itself shows how Evangeline, whom Longfellow depicted as a simple yet devoted village girl, suddenly has taken on the much grander and somewhat arrogant title of “Acadian Queen.” This is evidence of the way in which Evangeline has grown to be an almost monumental figure in the Acadian community.

One of the striking aspects of this piece is the juxtaposition of the use of both French and English. Despite the fact that Evangeline was created by an American poet and that the original poem was written in English, both Bourque and Conte wrote their pieces in French, which speaks to how Evangeline has been adopted and accepted into the Acadian community. Although some of Arsenault’s piece is written in French, the French lines represent the brief retelling of the Evangeline story, which is not the emphasis of the song. The list of businesses and the title of the piece itself, which gives

Evangeline the dubious title of “Acadian Queen,” are in English. This indicates that Evangeline and her popularity have spread far beyond the boundaries of the Acadian community and into the mainstream English majority. In this way, even those who do not speak French can at least begin to understand Arsenault’s message about Evangeline and her current status. This further underlines her place as a pop cultural icon for both the Acadian as well as the English speaking community.

The overall effect is that the piece has achieved its goal of a social commentary on Evangeline’s place within the community. The condensed version of the Evangeline story along with the interpretation of her current status as a household name and cultural icon works at reminding people that she is a fictitious character who was never intended to hold the place that she now holds.

It is interesting to note the changes in the ways in which Evangeline is described in these three pieces in comparison to Longfellow’s poem. Longfellow says that “Fair was she to behold, that maiden of seventeen summers” (Longfellow 41). Bourque does not describe Evangeline at all, and Conte merely says that: “Les filles et surtout les garçons / T'auraient dit que tu étais belle” (Conte). Arsenault provides the most interesting description who, from the beginning of “Evangeline, Acadian Queen,” establishes an easy and familiar rapport with the listener through the use of a storytelling narrative. This familiarly is underlined by the lyrics themselves. Unlike the versions by Bourque and Conte, Arsenault’s version uses very modern language and is full of colloquialisms and slang terms. One of the most apparent of these is in Arsenault’s description of Evangeline herself. The singer/narrator says: “Elle s'appellait Evangeline, elle était ben ben fine” (Arsenault, “Evangeline”). The use of “ben ben fine” not only

complements the familiar style that Arsenault has established, but, as a slang term, also is a testament to the modern times in which the piece was written.

All three pieces in some way play with the notion of Evangeline's name and the longevity and familiarity which it holds for so many people, which is interesting, given the fact that Longfellow created this name especially for the character (Evangeline's Quest). The most simple usage of her name is in Conte's piece, in which a repetition of "Evangéline, Evangéline" serves as a very simple refrain. Bourque also uses the refrain to pay tribute to Evangeline and her name. He says: "Evangéline, Evangéline, / Tout chant ici ton noble nom, / Dans le vallon, sur la coline, / L'écho répète et nous répond: / Evangéline, Evangéline" (Bourque 255). The indication that her name is repeated on the hills and in the valleys helps to give the notion that her name enjoys a widespread familiarity. Arsenault also uses this familiarity, in repeating Evangeline's name in the titles of the businesses that she is discussing. Bourque's image that "L'écho répète et nous répond" which, although an indicator that the people are familiar with the name, is magnified in Arsenault's list of businesses, which range from a "salon bar" to a "regional high school" to "the only French newspaper in New Brunswick," all of which indicate that Evangeline's name and its importance have spread beyond Bourque's hills and valleys.

The most significant aspect in comparing these three pieces is the way in which the treatment of Evangeline herself has shifted as the century progressed. Bourque treats her as a symbol of past times. His piece focuses more on the past of Acadie and less on Evangeline herself. By 1977 when Arsenault is writing, Evangeline is very much a part of the present and is no longer a mere symbol of bygone eras, but is rather a symbol of

modern business and enterprise. While Bourque was writing, Evangeline was something of a local folk hero, who had significance to the Acadian people through her popularity. In the 1970's, she was a major public figure, central in the images of many businesses and tourism venues. No longer merely an Acadian folk hero, she had been transformed into a pop culture icon, and this transformation is visible when studying the different ways in which she has been treated in the music.

Her wide spread popularity, as evidenced by Arsenault, is visible in other renditions of her as well. In 1981 Emmylou Harris and The Band released an album titled "Evangeline," where the title track, although in English and taking place on the banks of the Mississippi, references "Evangeline of the Maritimes" (Harris). Undoubtedly, there are many other songs that have drawn their inspiration from Evangeline and her story. Artists and composers are still gathering inspiration from her and her story over 150 years after her creation, which attests to her continued and assured popularity.

### **Identity/Pride**

The question of "what does it mean to be Acadian?" is an issue that is still under intense debate. Is "being Acadian" linked with physical location and geography? Language? Beliefs? Common history? Various scholars and authors have offered definitions of what it means to be Acadian. J. Alphonse Deveau and Sally Ross say that: "Bound together by their French ancestry, their religion, and a compact network of family ties, the Acadians formed a distinct collectivity within a larger society...their language, their traditions, and their history gave them a unique identity" (Ross 144).

Clive Doucet says:

what has made the Acadians important, what has made them more than just French-speaking New Brunswickers or French-speaking Canadians, is that they have continued to endure, to take care of each other, to be a distinctive people even without frontiers. For two and a half centuries Acadians have triumphed over distances, over borders, over poverty, over misfortune to keep in contact with each other, to keep Acadie alive beyond the boundaries of any particular village, town, province, or country (Doucet, Notes 208).

Doucet gives no specific markers, such as religion or language, as do Ross and Deveau, but rather associates being Acadian with a common history of survival and shared experiences. Diarmuid Ó Giolláin offers yet another explanation, and although he is not speaking of the Acadian people specifically, his theory is one which offers yet another contrasting viewpoint. He says: “Ethnicity and nationality have to do with feelings of belonging within large groups of people supported by a relatively well-established consciousness of a common history and a common culture” (Ó Giolláin 68). In his statement, Ó Giolláin has combined the ideas put forth by Ross, Deveau, and Doucet into a much broader statement. Regardless of the definition of what it means to be Acadian, this is an issue which is very close to the hearts of many people, and, despite the uncertainty of the definition itself, being Acadian is something to be proud of, and this pride in heritage is shown through the music of people who claim that heritage, definition of such notwithstanding. In her essay “Twentieth Century Acadians,” Mathé Allain says: “Acadians are bursting out all over with a new pride in their identity. All the traits which

mark them as Acadians they proudly cultivate” (141). This is certainly true of many artists and musicians, who not only are proud of who they are, but who have shared that pride through their music.

One of the songs which was considered as a possible choice for the Acadian anthem at the Miscouche meeting of 1884 was a song titled “La Marseillaise Acadienne.” While not published until 1910 (Bourque 98), the song was written by A. T. Bourque some years earlier. In his book Chez les anciens Acadiens: causeries du grand-père Antoine, Bourque briefly discusses “La Marseillaise Acadienne” and says:

Allons, maintenant, mes amis, avant de commencer ces entretiens, chantons tous ensemble notre petite ‘Marseillaise acadienne’, qui, soit dit en passant, ne ressemble guère à celle de nos fougueux républicains d’outre-mer. Aussi, que ce chant acadien nous serve donc pour ainsi dire de bénédiction patriotique aujourd’hui et pour toujours, car en suivant fidèlement les principes énoncés dans cet hymne, nous ne pouvons manquer d’arriver sûrement aux fins que le bon Dieu a en vue pour le peuple acadien (Bourque 99).

Bourque deliberately calls this both a patriotic and an Acadian song. The clear emphasis on the people in this possible choice for a national anthem is in stark contrast to the well known church hymn, “Ave Maris Stella,” which was eventually chosen. The emphasis of the song itself is on the people and on their lands, and although there are religious references and Bourque himself refers to this song as a “hymne” it is more of a patriotic, nationalist song than a religious piece of music.

The opening line of the song, “Allons enfants de l’Acadie” (Bourque 98) is

reminiscent of “La Marseillaise,” the French national anthem, which opens with the line “Allons enfants de la Patrie.” This is not the only way in which Bourque references the French anthem or the French people in this song. The very title, “La Marseillaise Acadienne” again calls to mind the well known French anthem. At the end of the second stanza, Bourque again references France, this time directly, by saying: “N'oublions pas leur doux parlers, / Héritage reçu de France. / Sachons, sachons toujours le conserver” (Bourque 99). In asking the listener to remember his or her French heritage, Bourque is looking back beyond the years of the Deportation and is referencing and remembering the past, a theme which comes up repeatedly within the context of the song.

The song itself emphasizes again and again the lands of Acadie and what they mean to the people. The refrain, which is repeated twice, once each time after the first and third verses, states: “Honneur à l'Acadie! / Vive notre Patrie! / Chantons la terre des aïeux; / C'est la plus belle sous les cieux” (Bourque 99). The last two lines of the refrain are repeated. In those repeated lines, the words *terre des aïeux* firmly put the emphasis on the past, rather than on the then-present lands of Acadie.

The final stanza looks towards the future, and boldly proclaims that: “Vers l'avenir avec courage / Prenons sans crainte notre essor, / À nous la gloire pour partage / Si nous joignons tous nos efforts. / Marie au Ciel, est notre mère, / Son étendard guide nos pas / Au champ d'honneur, à la victoire. / Marchons, marchons, frères ne tardons pas” (Bourque 99) before repeating the refrain for the last time. This final verse is a triumphant announcement that, together, through the intervention of the Virgin Mary, the people can face what lies ahead of them. The pride and the strongly pro-Acadian feelings that are evoked in this stanza, and the emphasis of the refrain on the lands of Acadie

show why this song would have made an appropriate choice as a national anthem.

It is not only the people of the Maritimes who have a strong connection to their heritage and who have expressed a desire to see that heritage preserved. A man by the name of Zachary Richard, who is from Louisiana, wrote a stirring song called “Réveille” which eloquently speaks of the need to preserve the past and which calls for the people to wake up and save their heritage. The very name of the song, “Réveille” is a command for the people to wake up, and that word is repeated throughout the song, giving emphasis to the directive behind it and the importance that it holds.

The first verse of the song is a powerful reference to the events of the Deportation. The singer/narrator says:

Réveille, réveille, c'est les goddams qui viennent,  
 Brûler la récolte  
 Réveille, réveille, hommes acadiens,  
 Pour sauver le village.  
 Mon grand grand grand grand père  
 Est venu de la Bretagne  
 Le sang de ma famille a mouillé l'Acadie  
 Et là les maudits viennent  
 Nous chasser comme des bêtes  
 Détruire les saintes familles  
 Nous jeter tous au vent (Richard).

Words such as *brûler*, *sang*, *mouillé* *maudits*, *chasser comme des bêtes*, *détruire*, and *jeter* help to paint a picture of destruction, violence, and hardship. Intermingled with

these harsh realities are mentions of family. The singer/narrator discusses how his great great great grandfather came from Brittany, and in the penultimate line of that verse, the word *familles* is preceded by the word *saintes*. The detail which the singer/narrator gives about his ancestor, rather than simply referring to him as such, and the word *saintes* show the amount of importance which is placed on the family, and with this importance in mind, the reason why “les hommes acadiens” must “réveille” becomes apparent: not only for themselves in a gesture of self-survival, but rather for the benefit and future of their families.

These family references are continued in the third verse, where the singer/narrator laments that “J’ai vu mon pauvre père / Était fait prisonnier / Pendant que ma mère / Ma belle mère braillait ... Et moi j’su’ resté orphelin, / Orphelin de l’Acadie” (Richard). With the emphasis that is placed on the importance of family in the first stanza, the fact that the singer/narrator is left an orphan takes on even more significance than the fact that “J’ai vu ma belle maison / Était mise aux flammes” (Richard). The image of being left an orphan of Acadie is the one which concludes this verse, before the restatement of the “réveille” refrain, and as the last and most recent fact in a list of sad and horrible occurrences, the fact that the singer/narrator is left without a family is given added weight and importance.

Given the subject matter of the verses discussed this far, it could be argued that this is a song about the Deportation and should be discussed as such. However, the final verse speaks to the contrary. The final verse says: “Réveille, réveille, c’est les goddams qui viennent, / Voler les enfants. / Réveille, réveille, hommes acadiens, / Pour sauver l’héritage” (Richard). Reminiscent of the opening of the piece, these final lines are very

similar, and yet they carry more meaning for a number of reasons. The final two lines of the song underscore the urgency of the refrain. The people need to “awaken” and save their heritage. The song makes clear that despite the hardships inflicted upon the singer/narrator’s family, he has survived to tell the tale, to pass on the story and the knowledge to those around him. To give up, to remain “asleep” and inactive, to passively let the present take over and obliterate memories and traditions of the past would be to give up and to let a people who have survived the hardships described by the singer/narrator be defeated by their own indifference. The urgency with which the singer/narrator implores the people to “réveille” and the powerful message which the final two lines of the song convey boldly proclaim the singer/narrator’s pride in who he is and the pride he feels in his people, his culture, and his past.

Zachary Richard was not the only composer to write a song stressing the importance of remembering the past and one’s heritage. His song “Réveille” was written in 1976, and over twenty years later, songs were still being written expressing similar sentiments and themes. “La revanche,” performed by Bois Joli and released on their album “Bois Joli” in 1998 is an example of a song with similar themes. Although this song does not have the same urgent tone nor the direct urging of “Réveille, réveille, hommes acadiens, / Pour sauver l’héritage” (Richard) there are some similar sentiments expressed in “La revanche.”.

Like Richard’s piece, this one also opens with a brief recounting of some of the events and repercussions surrounding the Deportation. The first verse states:

Séparé du familier

Avec tout à recommencer

Acadiens dans un monde étrange  
 Où personne connaît la différence  
 La promesse de jamais oublier  
 D'un jour, y retourner (Bois Joli, "Revanche").

Unlike other songs, such as "Acadie de nos coeurs" which tell the listener about the separation of the people, this song takes this idea one step further by giving the listener an idea of what happened to the people after they were separated. The lines "Acadiens dans un monde étrange / Où personne connaît la différence" gives a whole new meaning to the word *séparé* as it is used in the first line. The first two lines recount how the people have been separated from familiar surroundings; however, the following two lines tell how, in addition to this, they are separated from society, because of their differences. This isolation inspires "la promesse de jamais oublier" what had happened, an idea that is repeated and stated in stronger terms later on in the song.

The title of the song is rather ominous -- "La Revanche" or "The Revenge" brings to mind questions of how, exactly, one will get revenge for the separation and trials described in the first verse. This question is answered in the first line of the refrain, which is repeated once after the first verse and twice after the second. The refrain begins by saying: "La revanche est de s'exprimer" (Bois Joli, "Revanche") which is an important and bold statement to make. The way in which the people will get their revenge for the separation and hardships caused them is by expressing themselves and speaking out in favor and in pride of who they are, what they believe in, and what they have been through. The refrain continues by saying:

Tout le monde, remarquer

Ensemble, nous avons rebâti  
 Notre amour, oui, c'est l'Acadie  
 Le silence pour très longtemps  
 Enduré peinement  
 Finalement, peuple réuni  
 Victoire est accomplie  
 C'est la revanche (Bois Joli, "Revanche").

A theme that is evident throughout the remainder of the refrain is the idea that together, this revenge is accomplished. In contrast to the first verse, which speaks of separation and isolation, sadness and hardship, the refrain counters this by extolling togetherness, unity, and victory. The united efforts of a people, with individuals speaking out and keeping the promise made in the first verse never to forget, is the people's revenge upon those who tried to separate them.

The idea that the past is important and that a united effort can help to preserve that and to fight back against the repercussions of separation is continued in the third verse, which states:

L'importance de la vie  
 Est pas d'oublier qui je suis  
 Être fier de connaître  
 L'histoire de mes ancêtres  
 Courage et espérance  
 Ont continué l'existence  
 De notre belle patrie

Qu'on connaît comme L'Acadie (Bois Joli, "Revanche").

The fact that the singer/narrator declares at the beginning of this verse that the most important thing in life is to not forget who he/she is, is extremely significant. Putting this remembrance of self and heritage above all other things clearly shows the emphasis and great importance that this identity holds for the singer/narrator. He or she is proud to know the history of his or her ancestors, which, along with courage and hope "Ont continué l'existence / De notre belle patrie / Qu'on connaît comme L'Acadie." It is not courage and hope alone that will accomplish this, but rather the continued interest in the past and in the heritage of the Acadian people. It is not enough merely to remember the past, but it is important to be proud of that and to help to keep the past alive into the future, for the generations to follow.

The pride that is felt in being Acadian is a sentiment that has found its way into many different types of songs, including songs that are primarily about love. Edith Butler has performed a song written by Lise Aubut and Louisianne Gauthier titled "Ne m'appelle plus l'acadienne sans me dire que tu m'aimes." This song, released in 1995, makes it clear from the beginning that being Acadian is extremely important to the singer/narrator.

The first verse states that "Ne m'appelle plus l'acadienne / Sans me dire que tu m'aimes / Moi je suis fière du sang / Qui coule dans mes veines / De nos quatre cents ans / À ne pas mourir de peine / Et à rester moi-même" (Butler). The first four lines are a motif that repeats numerous times in the verses which follow. The singer/narrator here is clearly female, and she is "fière du sang / Qui coule dans mes veines." Unlike in "Mon Village Acadien," another piece which also directly speaks of pride, Butler's piece ties

that pride into the blood directly. This implies that pride and belonging have to do with tangible ties as well as the ties of a common history and heritage, which the singer/narrator is also proud of, as is evidenced in the lines “De nos quatre cents ans / À ne pas mourir de peine / Et à rester moi-même.” These few lines sum up very succinctly some of the accomplishments of the Acadian people. The singer/narrator tells of a history that goes back 400 years, establishing the Acadians’ presence in a historical context. The final two lines of the verse attest to the fact that the Acadians have also survived pain and grief, and not only that, but they have also managed to retain their own identity. This allusion to the Deportation and the hardships suffered and survived clearly give the singer/narrator a second thing to be proud of, in addition to the blood in her veins.

This history is clearly important to the singer/narrator, because it is alluded to again in the second verse. Lines such as: “Quand on parle de ce pays / On parle aussi de ma vie / Quelques giques dans notre histoire / Du soleil dans ma mémoire” (Butler). Here, the singer/narrator is establishing her ties with the land as well as with the blood and the history. These four lines remind the listener that in speaking of the past, one is speaking of events and places which have a direct link and relation to the people of the present, and the singer/narrator is not in any way shy about establishing herself as a direct link to that history.

There is a musical motif that runs throughout the song. In the second verse, the singer/narrator speaks of “Quelques giques dans notre histoire.” In the third verse, the Acadian oral tradition is referenced in the lines: “Les chansons que je traîne / Depuis l’Aquitaine” (Butler). Not only is this vibrant tradition mentioned here, but “depuis l’Aquitaine” gives the listener an idea of how far back this tradition dates. Not only was it

a part of Acadie, it was a part of these people's lives before they left France. In the fifth verse, the singer/narrator mentions: "Je me suis fait troubadour / Pour une vieille chanson d'amour" (Butler), yet another reference to the music and its importance within the life of the singer/narrator and the people in general.

In all the imagery and the discussion of love that permeates this song, there is one image that is spoken of repeatedly, giving it a special emphasis and meaning. This is the four lines which state: "Ne m'appelle plus l'acadienne / Sans me dire que tu m'aimes / Moi je suis fière du sang / Qui coule dans mes veines." This statement, repeated over and over, transcends the love theme and almost overshadows it entirely due to the insistent repetition of those four lines. If pride in one's heritage is on an even level with love, or even if it is what the listener takes away from the song, rather than the love theme behind it, this shows how much importance is placed on heritage and identity.

There are some songs that were written which declare outright the singer/narrator's pride in his or her heritage. One of these songs is a short piece written by W. J. Chiasson and published in a collection of songs titled Grands chansons Françaises d'Acadie: Songs of French Canadian Heritage. Consisting of only two verses and a repeated refrain, despite its short length, this song unquestionably expresses the singer/narrator's pride in being Acadian. Although the title of the song, "Mon village Acadien," suggests that this song was written with a specific town or village in mind, that place is never specifically named, nor is the village or its inhabitants discussed. Rather, this song is a declaration of pride, both in the rich Acadian cultural heritage and in belonging to that culture.

The first verse pays tribute to the beauty of the singer/narrator's homeland,

namely Acadie. A brief description of the country, described as “ce beau pays” includes mention of the mountains and ocean, both described as being “belles” and “joli.” The singer/narrator tells the listener outright that the place being described is Acadie in the last line of the song, which states: “ah, qu’il fait beau dans l’Acadie” (Chiasson, “Village”). Although the village itself is never mentioned, the phrase “petit coin d’l’Acadie” is repeated several times throughout the song. The collection originated in Chéticamp, Nova Scotia, so it is logical to assume that “petit coin d’l’Acadie” and the “village Acadien” are referring to Chéticamp or another village in that area.

However, the mention of Acadie is not the focus of the song, which becomes evident both in the refrain and in the second verse. The second verse states that “Je suis très fier d’êtr’un acadien / Car la vie est belle dans ce beau pays / Et j’espère que vous êtes fiers aussi / Dans ce petit coin d’l’Acadie” (Chiasson, “Village”). The first line of the verse is a bold proclamation, which for the most part speaks for itself. The extent and magnitude of the singer/narrator’s sense of pride is emphasized with the use of the word *très* which lends emphasis and an added meaning to his statement. The singer/narrator addresses the listener directly in saying “Et j’espère que vous êtes fiers aussi.” This statement, aimed most likely at an Acadian audience, is intended to make people reflect upon their own heritage and their own feelings in regards to their culture.

The refrain of this short piece is repeated twice, once after each of the verses and continues the expressions of pride found in the second verse. The refrain states: “Chantez très fort et chantez souvent / Que vous êtes fiers d’être acadien. / Chantez souvent que vous aimez de vivre dans ce petit coin d’l’Acadie / Dans ce petit coin d’l’Acadie” (Chiasson, “Village”). The directive to “sing if you are proud to be Acadian” again

emphasizes the singer/narrator's feelings in regards to his heritage, because he is still singing, and so his actions underline his avowed decree of pride. This idea that people will sing if they are proud of their heritage is interesting in regards to the many other songs in existence that speak to issues of pride.

Donat Lacroix, who is known for his songs written on Acadian themes, has written a song as a tribute to the survival of the Acadian people and the unification experienced by the people despite their dispersed existence around the world. His song "Sur le Chemin des Acadiens" is a look at the road that the Acadians have traveled and a proud declaration in how far the people have come, despite the burdens and hardships that they have had to overcome in the past.

The first verse begins by saying: "Sur le chemin des Acadiens / La route est longue et vagabonde / Nous nous retrouverons demain / Dépassés la lumière et l'onde / Dans un lointain quai ou pays / Qui gardera dans ses accents / La saumure de nos survies / L'espoir de nos rêves d'enfants" (Lacroix, "Chemin"). The line "la route est longue et vagabonde" alludes to the fact that the culture has a long history which dates back far before the present. Despite the wanderings of the people, the verse exudes a hope that they will meet up again, wherever they are.

One of the ways in which these scattered people will be able to recognize each other is through their music. The second verse states: "Vous serez là nobles et fiers / Autour d'un violon accordé / Pour ce grand bal d'outremer / Qui nous mettra la danse aux pieds / Qui nous mettra musique en l'âme / Des chansons de marine à voile / Échouées de l'île Madame / De Grand-Pré bien avant l'étoile" (Lacroix, "Chemin"). It is interesting that such emphasis is placed on the music, and it is the music that is

recognized as a cultural marker, as the trait which will signify a common heritage and beginning. Not only is the music recognized as having a definite importance, but words such as “nobles et fiers” attest to the fact that the people are proud of this heritage and proud of the music which distinguishes them from others. The places from which they originate and the places where they have ended up are named in the third verse, and even the singer/narrator admits to the fact that he does not necessarily know where all the people are, in admitting at the end of the verse that there were people from “de Dieu sait-où” (Lacroix, “Chemin”).

The final verse of the song states: “Et fiers de s’être reconnus / Nous habiterons le paysage / Jusqu’à s’en faire un beau langage / De sur l’empremier ressourdu / Jusqu’à s’en faire des enfants / Qui nous rejoindront dans le vent / Hardés d’avenir de passé, / D’Acadie à réinventer” (Lacroix, “Chemin”). The first line is significant. Again, the word *fiers* appears, reiterating the pride felt in heritage. This is not merely a personal pride, but it is a pride in being “reconnus” -- recognized as Acadian. Not only is his heritage recognized, but Donat Lacroix makes a direct reference to the way in which this pride can unite the people, scattered as they are. This unification is significant, because it transcends boundaries of all kinds, indicating that pride in a common heritage is stronger and more important than those imposed boundaries. This also attests to the vitality and continued survival of the Acadian culture, which, in the hands of those proud people, from “Belle-Ile-en Mer / De la Mad’leine, de Louisiane, / De Chatellereault, du Finistère, / Tous fils de la mer océane. / Descendants aussi de la Loire / De la Vendée et du Poitou / De Châteauneuf, de La Chaussée / De Nantes et de Dieu sait-où” (Lacroix, “Chemin”) will never be completely lost.

One of the themes which appears throughout these songs is the theme of togetherness and unity. Sometimes, it is stated directly, as in “Sur le Chemin des Acadiens” in which the fifth verse opens with the lines: “Et fiers de s’être reconnus / Nous habiterons le paysage” (Lacroix, “Chemin”). In Zachary Richard’s “Réveille” it is not merely the job of one person, but rather it is up to “hommes acadiens, / Pour sauver l’héritage” (Richard). In “La Marseillaise Acadienne” the refrain begins by saying: “Honneur à l’Acadie! / Vive notre Patrie” (Bourque 99). It is clear from the sentiments expressed in the music that being Acadian is something which is very important to these artists.

The idea that the Acadian people have the ability to affect the world around them is a theme that is echoed in a number of these songs. Zachary Richard’s message is clear; it is up to the Acadian people to wake up and save their heritage. This notion that the people can do something about the current state of affairs is echoed in Bois Joli’s “La Revanche.” The refrain states that “La revanche est de s’exprimer / Tout le monde, remarquer / Ensemble, nous avons rebâti / ... / Finalement, peuple réuni / Victoire est accomplie / C’est la revanche.” (Bois Joli, “Revanche”). Although written roughly twenty years apart, the theme and the idea that as a united people, the Acadians can make a difference has not changed.

At the beginning of his book, Notes from Exile: On Being Acadian Clive Doucet says:

Acadians do not exist in some romantic nirvana. There is no fatherland. The physical homeland of Acadie had already been lost for a hundred years when Longfellow wrote his great poem, Evangeline. The sense of

being Acadian cannot be separated from the sense of being Canadian or American, English or French, because these identities form both the boundaries and the interstices of the Acadian story (Doucet, Notes 3-4).

Although a set definition of Acadian identity has yet to be decided upon, Doucet is right when he says: “Acadians do not exist in some romantic nirvana.” They exist in the present, in the here and now, as well as in the stories and trials of the past. It is that existence in the present and the pride in that past which has inspired these artists and many others like them to express their feelings in their music, and to announce to the Acadian community and to the world that they are proud of who they are and where they come from.

### Conclusion

The years between 1881 and 2000 have proven to be a prolific and productive period of time for Acadian musicians. This period has produced many beautiful and moving pieces that have withstood the test of time and have become a part of the Acadian musical opus. The passing years have witnessed a change in how the thematic material has been approached by Acadian musicians, although the themes themselves remain constant. Although composers in the past and those of the present continue to draw inspiration from themes such as the past, Evangeline, homeland, and cultural heritage, the way in which some of those themes have been addressed has been drastically altered.

The treatment of Evangeline has shifted from a glorified look at the past and the countryside from which she was exiled to a modern vernacular commentary on the way in which she and her story have seeped into all aspects of the culture, including being part of business names and having a high school named after her. She has evolved from a fictional character to a pop culture icon, and the way in which she is treated in the musical tributes to her reflects this.

The way in which the homeland of Acadie is treated has also changed. Like Evangeline, earlier musicians tended to glorify and extol the past of Acadie, paying very little heed or attention to the present. As the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, people mentioned the past less and less, instead choosing to focus on their own attachments and present feelings towards the land and what happened there. In addition to this, artists began to address the idea that Acadie is not merely a geographical location but is more of an idea, carried and preserved in the hearts of the people. As is the case with the changing

feelings towards Evangeline, the feelings towards Acadie have changed and shifted along with the changing attitudes and ideals of the culture that influenced these composers.

There are two themes, namely the treatment of the past and the treatment of pride in cultural heritage, that remain for the most part addressed in a similar manner by early and current composers. This may be in part due to the fact that the past is in the past and cannot be changed, and the pride that one feels for one's heritage, other than ceasing to exist, will not drastically change either. Even in light of the changing viewpoints towards Evangeline and Acadie itself, these two things remain constant. The consistency in the reverence for the past and in the pride which is taken in that past and in the cultural heritage of which it is a part attest to the longevity and vitality which are a hallmark of the Acadian people and of their continued success and survival.

In his essay "Music, Culture, and Experience" John Blacking states: "When it [music] addresses a known public, its appeal is limited; but when it is most private, it can have the widest appeal" (Blacking, "Music" 239). Although Acadian in nature, the themes dealt with in this paper are, when stripped down to their most basic level, themes that are universal to humanity. The veneration of the past and the celebration of the hardships faced by a group of people can be found in musics from cultures around the world. The popularization of a folk hero or heroine is also not uncommon. Songs glorifying a homeland or country are quite popular, as are songs declaring pride in one's heritage, culture, or nationality. However, these songs in their specificity hold a definite appeal and place for and within the Acadian community, because they speak of shared experiences and feelings.

## **Acadian Music in the Twenty-First Century**

The twentieth century has witnessed many changes and evolutions in Acadian music. Trends and attitudes have changed, approaches and portrayals of some of the themes and motifs have evolved and shifted, though the thematic material itself has remained the same. The twentieth century has been a time of remarkable evolution and change within the music industry itself, with the invention of records, cassette tapes, and eventually CD's, to improved and innovative recording techniques, to the introduction and use of electronic music and media. All of these changes have helped to add to an already rich and vibrant musical culture, and have helped to carry the music through the century while at the same time not completely taking over or detracting from the musical opus and style which was in place before any of those technological innovations developed.

There are many issues that face the music in these early years of the twenty-first century which will have a greater impact as the new century unfolds. One of these issues, which is currently the source of much debate, is the question of the internet and whether it is beneficial or detrimental to the music industry and to music in general. Many feel that the ability to share songs over the internet has a directly negative impact for musicians and performers, who do not see the royalties and benefits which they would receive from album sales. With the advent of such technology as file sharing and CD burners, which come standard on many newer computer models, this concern is indeed a valid one. However, there is a correlating theory, that this new technology allows people to have access to music, groups, and styles that they previously may never have heard. Internet access allows people to have a wider, more personal choice of music that goes

beyond what albums, artists, and styles which are selected and stocked by local record stores.

For Acadian music, this could be seen as a definite advantage. Angèle Arsenault has said: “Aujourd’hui, grâce à la technologie, on peut entendre des artistes qui proviennent de petits pays et qui véhiculent leur spécificité culturelle. Il faut dire qui on est pour communiquer. C’est de cette manière qu’on peut aider les gens à se connaître et à grandir. C’est à partir de l’individu qu’un peuple se construit” (Arsenault, “Produits” 124). Since many of the Acadian artists studied in this paper are not part of the mainstream musical repertoire, are not known to the average listener, and are not stocked in many record stores, the internet provides people all over the world with access to Acadian music, even if they are not part of the Acadian community and even if they live in an area far from any Acadian settlements. This internet access is not only beneficial to the public, but is a great aid to teachers and educators who may wish to include a unit on the Acadians in their teaching curriculum.

Language is an issue that has been the center of much discussion within the Acadian community for a number of years. Traditionally, the language of Acadian music has been French, the language of the people themselves. However, with ever-increasing numbers of Acadian youth unable to speak French, what is going to happen to these songs of French origin? Will they be lost, or translated into English? Will future composers and singers work in French, or will they work in English to reach a broader, more mainstream audience?

The musicians themselves have taken the time to address this issue. The most common way in which this issue has been dealt with is to have an English translation of

the lyrics in the liner notes. This allows for the French lyrics to stand as they are in the music itself, but gives the English-speaking listener an opportunity to understand what is being said without compromising the song. Artists have also used a combination of French and English in their songs, often having the verses in English, with an easily repetitive French refrain, or vice versa. This juxtaposition of languages allows for a middle ground to be reached by the performer, giving the mainstream English language audience something to listen for while keeping the song in the original French. A third way in which this issue has been dealt with is for the song to be translated in its entirety from French to English. Translation raises many more separate issues. The ability to retain meaning, rhythm, rhyme scheme, and overall musicality without losing the overall flavor and idea of the song become paramount, although translation does allow for a wider audience to understand the lyrics and the music itself.

Today, there are certain instruments that are considered to be fairly common in Acadian music, including the fiddle, accordion, and spoons. However, electric guitars, expanded rhythm and percussion sections, and instruments from the brass family are making their way into the music of the later twentieth century. Artists are making innovations and expanding the current instrument range with daring new renditions of the old songs. The increased musical and technological possibilities that are being expanded upon almost daily have provided current-day musicians with a wide range of opportunities and possible musical influences and avenues for their music in the future.

Music is rarely a static thing and often changes and incorporates features of the cultures and peoples around it. In this way, the music of these scattered people would invariably pick up nuances, melodic inflections, harmony, rhythm, and instrumentation of

other cultures. The sudden dispersal of a previously close-knit community during the Deportation would mean that outside influences would almost inevitably begin to impact and alter the Acadian musical idioms and styles.

There have been extensive studies done of Cajun and Zydeco music in Louisiana, for example. The popularity of such musical groups as Beausoleil and the wide-spread acclaim for the soundtrack from the movie “The Big Easy” have given rise to the mainstream popularity of Cajun music. Unlike Acadian music of the Maritimes, which has yet to gain this same acceptance, Cajun music has been studied and written about in such popular magazines as Smithsonian and Billboard. The publication of articles on Cajun music in these sorts of journals allows for the public to read and learn about the music, thus spreading its popularity and increasing the public’s knowledge of the music itself. When comparing Cajun or Zydeco with Acadian music, it becomes clear how Cajun and Zydeco music has been shaped by African-American, Caribbean, Spanish, and a host of other influences (Bessman 5). Although springing from the same root, these two musical styles differ in instrumentation, musical style, and in the musicians themselves (Anderson 119).

With the constant intermingling of cultures and musical styles, and with the onset of globalization, the ways in which Acadian music will be shaped and molded by the cultures around it in the century to come will be interesting to watch. Already, Acadian bands are showing these influences in their music. The New Brunswick-based group Bois Joli has shown the influence of Latin-American rhythms and melodies in their songs “Bonita Senorita” and “Maria Dolores,” both of which have a distinct Latin beat accompanying decidedly French lyrics. The continued influences of outside styles and

their easy import into Acadie through such media as the internet will undoubtedly have an impact on the music, as music is rarely a static thing and thrives on change and innovation.

The future of Acadian music is distinctly unclear at this point. The possibilities for innovation and new styles are virtually endless. However, if the younger generations who will be stepping forward as musicians in years to come share the same sentiments and values expressed by Acadian musicians in the past 120 years, one thing is certain: no matter what the coming years bring, the Acadians will continue to survive and thrive based on their ability to draw inspiration from various Acadian themes as well as their very strong and pronounced pride in who they are and where they have come from.

## **Conclusion**

Acadian music remains a field which has yet to be extensively researched and studied. Despite a shift in concentration from a central Canadian narrative to more regional studies by scholars of the twentieth century, there is still much work to be done in this field. The efforts of folk music collectors and members of the Acadian community itself have helped to preserve some of the old songs before they die out, which has established a vast repertoire of music that is waiting for scholarly analysis and consideration. Acadians take pride in their culture, which is evident in the growing popularity of the music, both inside and outside of the community.

Cultural pride has been expressed through many symbols, such as a flag, anthem, motto, and emblem, in addition to the character Evangeline, who has achieved a place

within the culture as a representative of the people through the popularity of her story. Despite the presence of these symbols, many of them do not hold the same meaning for the Acadian community as a whole. Local and regional variations on the Evangeline story in Louisiana and the Maritimes present a different approach to the story and even go so far as to assign different names to the principal characters. Different flags represent different community groups, and although those flags hold great meaning for those whom they represent, they cannot be transferred from group to group or community to community without much of that meaning being lost.

Unlike a cultural symbol, such as a flag, which can stand for and represent a group of people who live where it is flown, music is constantly moving and constantly shifting. A flag must have a flagpole to anchor it in place, and is limited to an area near to that flagpole. Music needs only a willing pair of hands to play it, a voice to sing the lyrics, and a willing pair of ears to take in the finished product. Those components are only limited by the people themselves; wherever there are people, there is music. In this way, the music has the ability to be heard by people far away from the land in which the flag flies and in this way, the music works as a representative emissary from one culture to another and as a source of unification for members of a divided people. The themes that it represents can be understood and interpreted by anyone within range of the music, which, as technology improves, continues to grow as the years pass.

The themes of the *Deportation* and the past, *Evangeline*, homeland, and pride in identity are themes which have been written and sung by people in various locations of Acadie, from the Maritime provinces to Quebec to Louisiana. The themes do not change with the territory, but rather act as a bridge between these diverse geographical locations.

The common use of these themes in these songs shows how music is just as important a cultural symbol as the flag or anthem, and in fact is even more so. A song from Louisiana that deals with this thematic material will hold a great deal of meaning for someone in New Brunswick, while the Louisiana flag would not. For a people who are trying to conserve their culture and to maintain their distinct identity, the music provides them with a means and opportunity to do this and helps to unite the people who were separated over two hundred years ago.

In this way, the music comes to represent the entirety of the Acadian people. The themes and ideas discussed in the preceding chapter have not come from Acadie to be disseminated outward, like water from a source, but rather have come from all different areas of the new Acadie, "l'Acadie sans frontières." Today's musicians are continuing a tradition dating back to the conception of old Acadie but are infusing it with a life and meaning all their own. The accessibility of the music itself has been able to cross borders and has represented and unified a people geographically distant through a common message and common themes.

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