

The Early Colonization of Canada



Chapter Question

How did early immigration and expansion change Canada? Read Luc's story to learn about the history of his family.





my Story

My Acadian Heritage

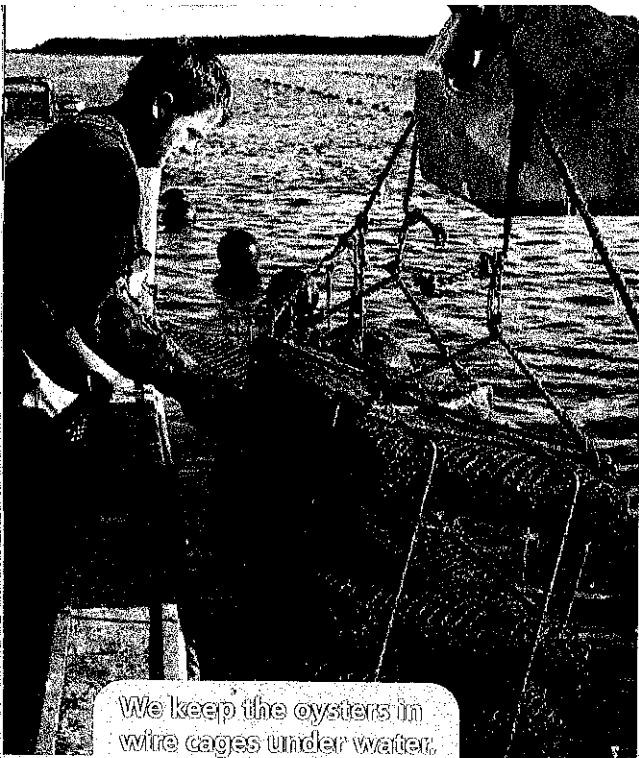
Hi! My name is Luc Landry. I'm 10 years old, and I live in Caraquet, New Brunswick, on the Baie des Chaleurs. Landry is an Acadian name. We're descended from the first French people who lived on the East Coast.

The Acadians originally came from France back in the 1600s. Most of them were farmers. Europe was pretty crowded back then, so they were really interested in having their own land to farm. I wonder if they realized how cold the winters could be, though! These families supported themselves with farming, fishing, and hunting. They also traded with the First Nations people who lived here first—the Mi'kmaq and the Maliseet.

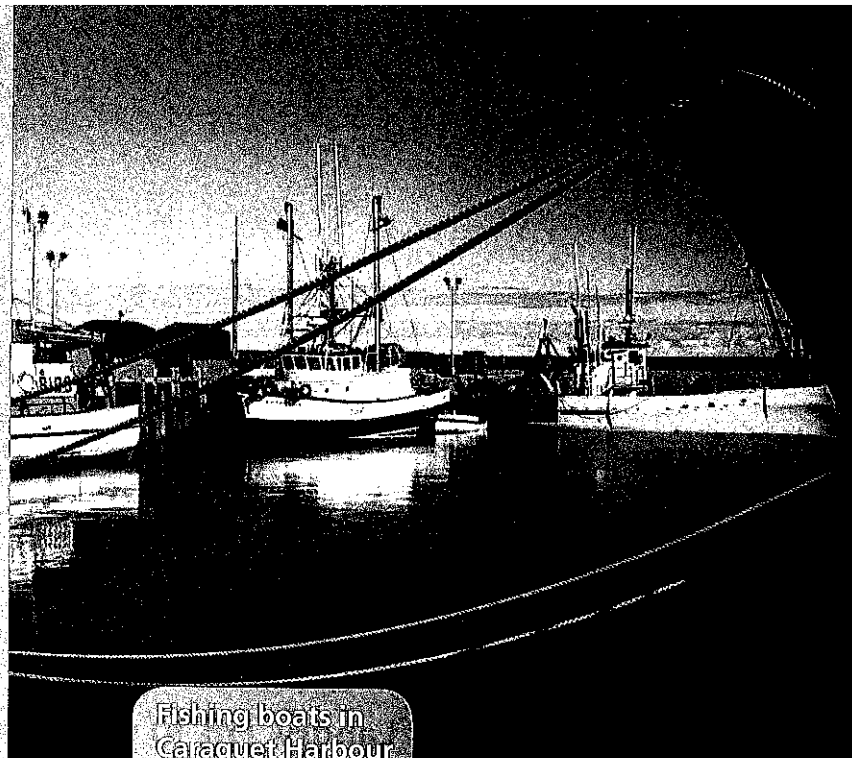
Today, I'm on our boat, *La 1755*, with my dad. We're heading out to check on our oysters. It's windy and cold out here, but I love it. Dad says fishing is in our bones. The Landrys have been fishing for 200 years.



Acadians like to show their heritage!



We keep the oysters in wire cages under water.



Fishing boats in Caraquet Harbour.

Before that, our ancestors were farmers in Nova Scotia. Maybe farming is in our bones, too, because now, instead of fishing with a line or net, we farm oysters. They live in cages under water until they are ready to be harvested. Then we just haul them in. Pretty smart, eh?

The early Acadian farmers had some good ideas, too. There were no supermarkets, so they had to make just about everything themselves. Dad says the Acadians did well because they were good at adapting, and because they made friends with the Mi'kmaq. The Mi'kmaq knew a lot about survival.

Dad is checking the weather on his smart phone. They couldn't do that in the old days—but that doesn't mean they didn't have ways of forecasting the

weather. The Grand Pré area where our ancestors farmed was a salt marsh. Sometimes sea water would flood the fields and ruin their crops. So they built dykes, or walls, that stopped the sea water. They made Grand Pré one of the best farming areas in the region. Brilliant!

The Acadians thought of this land as their home. They tried to get along with everybody, and make the most of the resources they found here: fish, forests, and farmland. When the French and the British fought (which they did a lot!), the Acadians didn't take sides.

But then the British tried to get everyone to swear an oath to their king. The Acadians said no, because they were interested in continuing peaceful co-existence with everyone.



You can still see some of the old Acadian dykes. This one is in Nova Scotia.



Getting together and seeing family is important for Acadians!

So in 1755, because the Acadians wouldn't wear allegiance, the British loaded them all on ships and sent them away! Some families were split up and sent to different places. That must have been really traumatic.

I can't imagine not being able to see my family. We can just drive to Halifax to visit my uncle. But back then, there were no planes, trains, or cars. It wasn't so easy to get around. So many families never got back together.

Grandpère Landry tells lots of stories about the Landrys. He says one of our ancestors escaped the deportation by hiding in the woods. He got so hungry that winter that he had to eat his shoes! Others died of starvation. When summer came, he headed north. The land around there was no good for farming, so he learned to fish.

Did I mention that our boat is called *La 1755*? That's our way of remembering what happened. Dad says that nowadays, some families that were separated are getting back in touch, thanks to the Internet.

We've checked on the oyster cages. Now it's time to head home. I'm starving, but I'd better not say anything to Dad. He'll just say, "Try some shoe leather!"

INQUIRING MINDS

1. Why do you think Luc loves being out on the ocean?
2. Have your ancestors or those of someone you know ever faced difficult circumstances? What happened? How did they cope?
3. Think about the history of your community. When did people first settle there? Why?