

A Voyage to Acadia in 1731

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In 1731, **Robert Hale, Jr.**, sailed from Beverly, Massachusetts to Chignecto Bay in the northeastern part of the Bay of Fundy in Nova Scotia / Acadia. He kept a detailed journal of his experiences on that trip, which was in the possession of the American Antiquarian Society when it was published in the Historical Collection of the Essex Institute, Vol. XLII, No. 3, July 1906, Salem, Massachusetts. Google digitized this collection and made it available at the website:

http://www.google.com/books?id=KgUXAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

Hale's journal is on pages 217 through 244 of the Historical Collection. Hale kept detailed records of weather and sea conditions and the difficulties of navigating in the Bay of Fundy. He also occasionally provided comments on the Acadian people, which are those I summarize in this paper. While I believe that Hale was truthful in his descriptions, he does come from eighteenth-century New England where feelings were generally negative toward the French and other Catholics at this time.

A Brief History¹ – (all information in this section is from the reference in footnote 1)

French exploration of Acadia started about 1604 and settlement started about 1610. The early days were marked by conflict from both within and without. Examples are:

- In 1613, **Sir Samuel Argall**, attacked and pillaged Port Royal, Acadia, under direction of the English governor of Virginia.
- **Sir William Alexander**, Earl of Stirling in Scotland, occupied Port Royal from 1628 to 1632. This was at the same time as the **Kirkes** occupied Québec. The Treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye gave control of New France back to France in 1632. Many of the Scottish settlers were deported.
- In 1635 – 1647, **Charles de Menou d'Aulnay**, **Charles de Saint Étienne de la Tour**, and **Nicolas Denys** competed, sometimes violently, for control of Acadia.
- In 1654, **Robert Sedgewick** of Boston destroyed most of the settlements of Acadia.
- **Sir Thomas Temple** was given the governorship of Acadia by the English Commonwealth (**Cromwell**) in 1657. His control only extended to Port Royal and a few other sites.
- The Treaty of Breda ended the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665 – 1667) and returned Acadia to France in 1667, although the official change came in 1670.
- In 1670, there were about 400 French people living in Acadia.
- **Julian Aernoutz**, a Dutch naval officer, destroyed the French military presence in Acadia in 1674 during the Third Anglo-Dutch War when France and England were allied against the Dutch. Acadia was a Dutch colony until 1676, although, the Dutch left once they looted Acadian valuables, and there was no long-term Dutch presence in Acadia.
- In 1690, during the War of the League of Augsburg, **Sir William Phipps** captured Port Royal at the direction of the government of Massachusetts Bay Colony. He burned a number of houses and the church. He removed the French soldiers but left no English soldiers in their place. Two English pirate crews pillaged the town again later in 1690. Phipps later became governor of Massachusetts.
- In 1696, **Col. Benjamin Church** of Massachusetts destroyed Beaubassin. The War of the League of Augsburg ended in 1697.
- The War of Spanish Succession started in 1702. In 1704, **Col. Benjamin Church** pillaged the villages of Chignecto and Les Mines. An English attack at Port Royal failed in 1704. Two sieges of Port Royal in 1707 failed despite the fact that the French governor, **Daniel d'Auger de**

¹ *Acadian History*, Acadian-Cajun Genealogy & History website, as quoted on 11 June 2013 on <http://www.acadian-cajun.com>.

Subercase, only had 300 soldiers. During this time, the English often raided unprotected settlements along the Bay of Fundy.

- By 1710, the English occupied Acadia. The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 made the English occupation permanent.
- From 1710 to 1755, the English tried to get the Acadians to pay taxes, fight for the Crown against the Indians and French, and follow English laws, customs, and religion. Meanwhile, the Acadians tried to avoid taxes, live their lives as before, be mostly neutral in the wars between France and England, stay on good terms with their friends and relatives in the *Wabanaki* Indian Confederacy, and practice their religion.
- In 1755, the English government deported the Acadians and seized their farms. They were primarily deported to the thirteen English colonies, although some were taken to England, some were taken to France, and some fled to Québec. Around 15,000 Acadians were deported or fled. Approximately half of them died during the deportation. Later, some of the scattered Acadians made their way to Lower Louisiana and are called Cajuns.

There were several other instances of conflict between Acadia and New England up to the end of the Seven Years War (aka French and Indian War). Despite the obvious ill will between Acadia and New England, they were natural trading partners. Agricultural goods grown in Acadia, along with coal and copper mined there, were in demand in New England and manufactured goods were in demand in Acadia. Active trade between Acadia and New England occurred throughout these years while trade with Québec was less robust since Québec had less need of Acadian goods.

Robert Hale's Voyage Aboard the Schooner Cupid

[Note: Hale used "y" in place of "th" sometimes. For example, he used both the word "the" and the word "y^e", sometimes in the same sentence. All words are shown as published in 1906 except for my comments in brackets. Nautical entries are excluded from this summary. Dates given are from the Old Style, Julian, calendar used in England and the English colonies at that time]

[**Robert Hale** was a doctor and a merchant in 1731. He later became active in local politics in Beverly, Massachusetts, and held several public offices.]²

Sab. 20. [Sunday, 20 June 1731] 4 P.M. – An Indian on shore seeing us pass by, he came off in his Canoe to us, with his Squaw, 2 Papouses & Dogg. He was wretchedly poor. We gave him 3 or 4 Biskets, a little Tobacco & Pipes.³

[20 June] 6 P.M. – Wee got up to the Gutt [entrance to the Annapolis (Port Royal) harbor] & just after our Entrance 2 Frenchmen came on Board us, one of whom had Wooden Shoes on, the first that (to my remembrance) I ever saw.⁴

June, Mond. 21. 4 A.M. – ... About a mile above this Island on y^e Larboard is a Small Village of French pple. containing about a dozen houses, about which the land is clear'd at Some distance & is y^e First of that sort which you see; it is pretty low there but very high all round. From hence you first discern y^e Fort which lyes about E.S.E. A little above this Village about ½ a mile are 8 or 9 Houses more ... From hence to y^e Fort on each side of y^e river are small Villages (If I may so call them) at Small Intervals of

² Hale, 217.

³ Hale, 225.

⁴ Hale, 225.

about 4, 5 or 6 Houses in a Village, inhabited by French pple. for no English live here, but such as live in or near the Fort.⁵

Tuesd. 22. 6 P.M. – We went ashore & I seeing some Firr trees endeavour'd to get the Balsom which is pretty plenty, but the Knats & Muskettoes being very plenty also, I was soon forc'd to give over; as I was going down I saw 2 Speckled Snakes like Adders, upon the Beach, such as I never saw before, which I killed.⁶

Sab. 27. 1 P.M. – I took my Boat with 2 hands designing to go about 2 Leagues up the River to the nearest French Houses (my Pilott being an Interpreter) ... at about 2 Miles distance a Small Village of 3 or 4 French Houses called Worscock [Weskak] & lyes up Tantamar River, to which we went, & the French entertain'd us with much Civility & Courtesy & when we came away one man would needs accompany us to our Boat, & conduct a nearer way over the Marshes than that by which wee came.⁷

[27 June] 8 P.M. – [at Meskquesh (Beaubassin)] ... wee got up to the Town, to the House of one **William Sears** the Tavern Keeper, [**Guillaume Cyr**⁸ was the husband of **Marguerite Bourg**, my fifth great grand aunt] who let us in & got water to wash our Legs & feet (bedaubed with Clay in coming ashore) & other Refreshments.⁹

Mond. 28. 5 A.M. – I rose & after Breakfast walk'd about to see the place & divert myself. There are but about 15 or 20 Houses in this Village, tho' it be the largest in the Bay, besides 2 Mass Houses or Churches, on one of which they hang out a Flagg Morning & Evening for Prayers, to the other the Priest goes once a day only, Habited like a Fool in Petticoats, with a Man after him with a Bell in one Hand ringing at every door, & a lighted Candle & Lanthorn [lantern] in the other.¹⁰

[28 June] 3 P.M. – ... I went to see an Indian Trader named **Pierre Asneau [Arsenault]**¹¹, who lately came from St John's in Canada River, with Furs & Seal Skins; they go up this River till they come to a Carrying place of about 10 miles over & then they are in that River, so that tis not half so far to N. found land [Newfoundland] that way as to go all by water. When I came to enquire into the Price of things, I found their Manner is to give no more (or Scarse so much) for our Goods as they cost in Boston, so that all the Advance our Traders can make is upon their Goods. All this Province are oblig'd by Proclamation of **Gen. Phillips** to take Massachusetts Bills in Payment, except where it is otherwise agreed between Buyer & Seller. But tis no Profit to our Traders nor theirs to take any Money except Just for Change, & Money is the worst Commodity a Man can have here, for as our Traders sell as cheap or cheaper than they Buy, it will be but loss to take money to bring away, & the pple here don't care to take it, because in y^e 1st place our Traders will not take it of them for y^e aforewrited reason: 2nd The Indians with whom they Trade will not take, for all the Furs & c^a which they get will scarce pay for what Cloathing they want, & that they take up when they deliver their Furr. 3. They have no Taxes to pay & 4th They trade but little amongst themselves, every one raising himself w^t he wants, except what they have in Exchange from y^e Traders, & as a proof that they are govern'd by this Maxim, I need only say, that when I came to pay my Reckoning at y^e Tavern, y^e Landlord had but 5^d [5 pence] in Money, tho' he is one of y^e wealthiest in the place. ... This Night wee lodg'd at Sears's [Cyr's] again & at supper were regaled with Bonyclabber,

⁵ Hale, 227.

⁶ Hale, 228.

⁷ Hale, 231.

⁸ Surname standardized per *Programme de recherche en démographie historique de l'Université de Montréal* online: <http://www.genealogie.umontreal.ca>, hereafter PRDH.

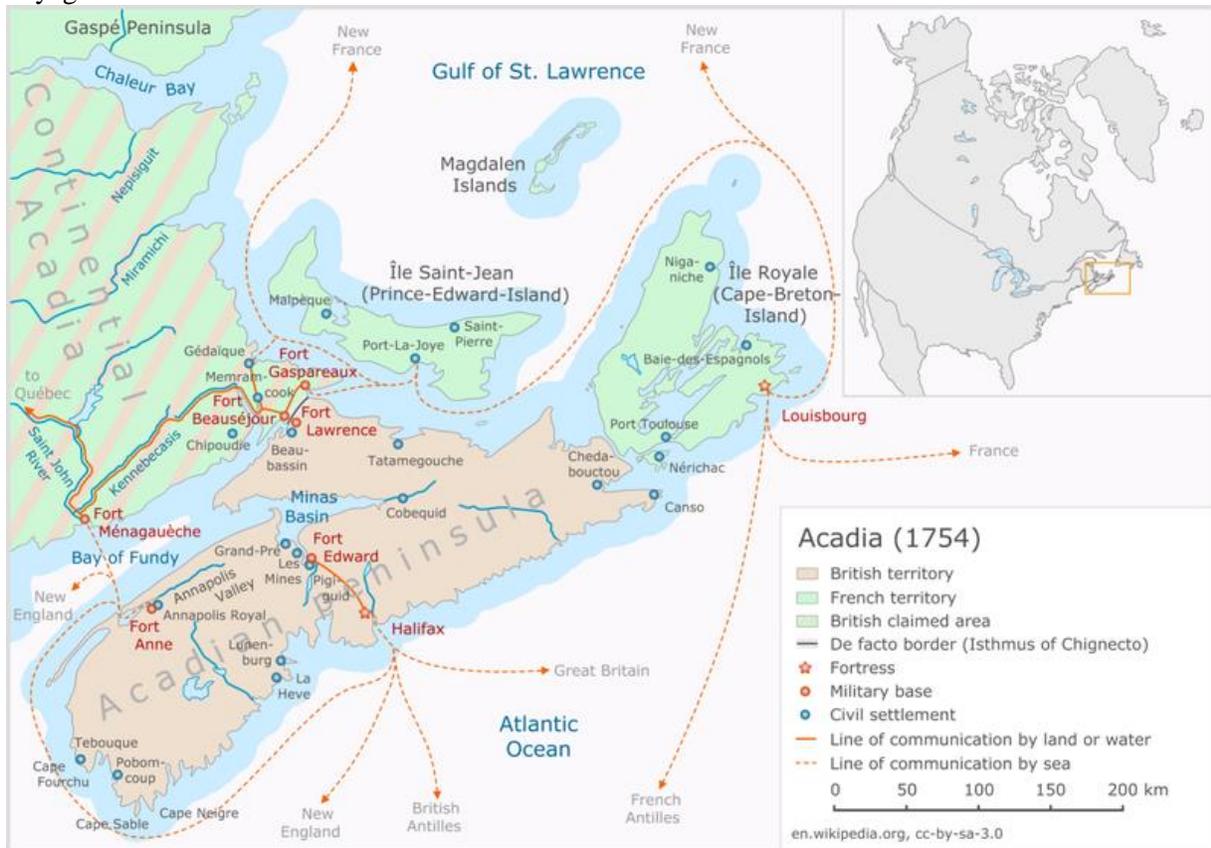
⁹ Hale, 232.

¹⁰ Hale, 232.

¹¹ PRDH.

soop, Sallet, roast Shad, & Bread & Butter, & to day wee din'd with Mr Asneau [Arsenault] at his Brother's upon roast Mutton, & for Sauce a Sallet, mix'd with Bonyclabber Sweetned with Molasses. Just about Bed time wee were surpriz'd to see some of y^e Family on their Knees paying y^r Devotions to y^e Almighty, & others near them talking, & Smoaking &c^a. This they do all of them (mentally but not orally) every night & Morning, not altogether, but now one & then another, & sometimes 2 or 3 together, but not in Conjunction one with the other. The women here differ as much in y^r Cloathing (besides wearing of wooden Shoes) from those in New Engl^d as they do in Features & Complexion, w^c is dark eno' by living in the Smoak in y^e Summer to defend y^mselves against y^e Muskettoes, & in y^e winter against y^e Cold. They have but one Room in y^r Houses besides a Cockloft, Cellar, & Sometimes a Closet. Their Bedrooms are made something after y^e Manner of a Sailor's Cabbin, but boarded all round about y^e bigness of y^e Bed, [the beds were totally enclosed] except one little hole on the Foreside, just big eno' to crawl into, before which is a Curtain drawn & as a Step to get into it, there stands a Chest. They have not above 2 or 3 chairs in a house, & those wooden ones, bottom & all. I saw but 2 Muggs among all y^e French & y^e lip of one of y^m was broken down above 2 inches. When they treat you with strong drink they bring it in a large Bason & give you a Porringer to dip it with. The Gait of y^e pple is very different from the English for the women Step (or rather straddle) further at a step than y^e Men. The Women's Cloaths are good eno' but they look as if they were pitched on with pitchforks, & very often y^r Stockings are down about y^r heels. ...¹²

The remainder of the Journal deals with the voyage home, Hale's homecoming, and the finances of the voyage.



Map made by Klaus Mueller (user name [Mikmaq](#)), Germany, Date=08-11-2006. This file is stored in Wikimedia Commons. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Acadia_1754.png

¹² Hale, 232-234.