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American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/13p0s6gd>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 6(2)

ISSN

0161-6463

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Publication Date

1982-03-01

DOI

10.17953

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From "One Nation" in the Northeast to "New Nation" in the Northwest: A Look at the Emergence of the Métis¹

OLIVE PATRICIA DICKASON

The mixing of the races, as the cliché would have it, began in North America as soon as Europeans and Amerindians met; it was another manifestation of a universal phenomenon that was re-experienced under the particular conditions of the New World. But the universality of the event in its biological sense was not matched by a corresponding generality in its social and political aspects. In this regard, racial intermixing was as individual as the societies experiencing it. In the New World, such powers as Portugal and Spain accepted it as an inevitable consequence of colonization and sought to deal with it by integration and assimilation. France also sought to assimilate Amerindians, but added her own dimension by trying to use racial intermixing as an instrument of empire. In so doing, she unwittingly helped to prepare the way for a phenomenon which she not only did not want, but would have disapproved of thoroughly: that is, the development, among the Métis of the Canadian Northwest, of the sense of a separate identity, the spirit of the "New Nation."

Although in Canada today, the Métis are identified with the West, specifically with the three prairie provinces (Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta), it is doubtful that there was any more mixing of the races, in a biological sense, in those regions than in the East or on the West Coast. In fact, the reverse may

well be true, at least as far as the East is concerned; Jacques Rousseau, eminent Québec biologist, claimed in 1970 that 40% of French-Canadians could find at least one Amerindian in their family trees.² What did not occur on either coast or in the St. Lawrence Valley was the emergence of a clearly defined sense of separate identity, of a "New Nation." In comparing the Métis of the Northwest with those of the Northwest (principally Red River, but also Hudson Bay and the Great Lakes), the question immediately presents itself: why did a "New Nation" arise in the latter region but not in the former? And why do we never hear of the Métis on the West Coast? For that matter, why do we practically never hear of Métis in the Northeast?

The invisibility of the eastern Métis has been abetted by historians who write as though they never existed.³ Until recently, this has been particularly true of Québec historians, culminating with Lionel Groulx, who denied the existence of Métis within the contemporary French-Canadian community.⁴ Although such attitudes are now changing,⁵ old ideas die hard. For instance, such an eminent historian as Marcel Trudel, while acknowledging that some métissage did occur, based his estimate of its extent in 1663 on what he could find explicitly stated in the official record;⁶ in his opinion, intermarriage fell into disfavor in New France because of the bad quality of the offspring.⁷ Some nineteenth-century historians found even less evidence of intermixing. Emile Salone, using Cyprien Tanguay's genealogy⁸ as his guide, uncovered only four French-Amerindian marriages in the St. Lawrence colony during the seventeenth century. Generally, he wrote, such marriages were not tolerated as the influence of the missionaries was against it: "This did not mean that there were no infractions of the rule, but that they were without consequence. Métis children were left to the tribe, and so lost to the colony."⁹ This was the prevalent belief; another expression of it was Abbé Joseph-A. Maurault's theory that the Malecite of St. John's River were the mixed-blood descendants of fishermen from St. Malo, who had left behind their children by Native women. It is an argument that has been picked up by Lucien Campeau today.¹⁰ The major exception to such cogitations among nineteenth-century French-language historians was expressed by Rameau de Saint-Père, who published in Paris. In his study of the French in Acadia, he attempted to assess the role of métissage.¹¹ It was not a line of thought that has been continued by Naomi Griffiths, a contemporary English-lan-

guage historian of Acadia. Even though she concedes that Amerindian skills were passed on to European settlers and that "occasionally an Indian woman would be absorbed into an Acadian village through marriage," she produces only two documented cases of this.¹² She does not even mention Jean-Vincent d'Abbadie, Baron de Saint-Castin (1652–1707), the best-known of the "Indianized" Frenchmen of Acadia, whose half-Abenaki son, Bernard-Anselme, became a celebrated forest fighter in the French cause.¹³ This reluctance on the part of Canadian historians to acknowledge métissage in the Northeast becomes all the more anomalous in the face of their ready acceptance of this phenomenon in the Northwest. Thus they reduce to irrelevance the fact that France officially supported "one race" in Canada throughout the seventeenth century.

What the historians are reflecting, even at this late date, is the profound dichotomy between official policy and popular myth. This was particularly striking during the period of official encouragement of intermarriage;¹⁴ even then social attitudes toward métissage were at best ambivalent. There were always strong feelings against it in certain sections of society on the grounds that it adulterated the purity of the blood, leading to deterioration. Europeans brought such attitudes with them across the Atlantic as part of their cultural baggage, which they had inherited from the days of the Renaissance and earlier. It was an aspect of the prevalent belief in absolutes: the pure, white and good were seen as being at the top of the world hierarchy, while the impure, black and evil were at the bottom.¹⁵ In practice, this was at least partially countered by the natural interest of some fathers in their children, even though mixed-blood, and their desire to have them carry on family farms and enterprises.

All of this, of course, raises questions as to the nature of early contacts between Europeans and Amerindians in the Northeast, Northwest and on the West Coast, of how they compare with each other, and why they appear to have developed along different lines. The focus of this paper will be on the first two regions, as it was in the Northeast that contacts first occurred in Canada, in large measure establishing the pattern for what was to happen in the Northwest. The West Coast presents a separate picture, as contact there not only occurred much later, but also without an element that was so important in the other regions—the French.

"Our young men will marry your daughters, and we shall be one people," Samuel de Champlain (c1570–1635), "Father of New France," is reported to have said on two occasions.¹⁶ This much-quoted remark, which seems to fly in the face of European devotion to hierarchy based on "purity of blood," has been cited frequently as an example of Champlain's enterprise and tolerance in dealing with Amerindians as he set about establishing France as a colonial presence in North America. Without diminishing Champlain's achievements, it can still be pointed out that such an approach was neither original with him nor particular to him. It was a general French colonial policy at the time,¹⁷ a logical position in view of the fact that in the early seventeenth century, France, as well as Europe generally, was still recovering from the demographic disasters of the Black Death during the fourteenth century. In the seventeenth century, a direct relationship was perceived between a nation-state's power and the size of its population; France, aspiring to continental pre-eminence in Europe, needed her people at home. Thus she was suspicious of sending out citizens to colonize distant lands, as that was viewed as depopulating the mother country. The alternative would be to send out a small core of people who would intermarry with indigenous populations, producing, as it were, on-the-spot Frenchmen overseas. It was with such a goal in mind that the charter for the Company of New France included in its Article 17 provision that

The Savages who will be led to the faith and to profess it will be considered natural Frenchmen, and like them, will be able to come and live in France when they wish to, and there acquire property, with rights of inheritance and bequest, just as if they had been born Frenchmen, without being required to make any declaration or to become naturalized.¹⁸

Such a policy indicates that when a compromise with the prevailing hierarchical view was necessary, spiritual conformity was given priority over race. In the case of New France, this compromise was eased by the widespread and persistent belief that Amerindians were really white, turning brown because of certain practices.¹⁹ Consequently, France saw her immediate problem with Amerindians as one of evangelization, to pave the way for assimilation; this contributed considerably to her great missionary drive in the seventeenth century. During her

first decades in North America, whether in Acadia or along the St. Lawrence Valley, few Frenchwomen hazarded the dangers of the Atlantic crossing.²⁰ There was no alternative to some intermarriage at least for the colony to have struggled through those first years.²¹ Such a course would have been dictated as much by problems of survival in an unfamiliar and difficult climate as by the shortage of Frenchwomen. An Amerindian or, later, a Métisse wife, had obvious advantages over her European counterpart. It was a pattern that was repeated by the English when they established themselves on Hudson Bay later in the same century, despite determined efforts from London to prevent it.²² It was also a pattern that the French had already developed in another context in Brazil, where they had established interpreters among Amerindian peoples, who had intermarried with them and thus confirmed the trading alliances by which the French were challenging the Portuguese claim to the territory. However, this had been achieved at the cost of French citizens "going native," which officials now sought to avoid in New France.²³ Viewed in this light, the position of Sulte and Salone, not to mention Groulx, is more indicative of nineteenth century attitudes than it is of seventeenth century facts.

The silence as well as the ambiguity of the record presents a problem for the historian. If, on the one hand, it is unrealistic to deny that métissage occurred within French communities (particularly in Acadia) on the grounds that it was so seldom recorded as such, on the other hand it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to determine just how prevalent it was.²⁴ The rarity of recognizably recorded intermarriages could be related to the probability that many of them would have taken place *à la façon du pays*—that is, according to the Amerindian way; apparently this sometimes happened even among those who more or less lived within the French colony.²⁵ Such unions would have incurred disapproval at official levels whatever their acceptance (or non-acceptance) at others, not so much because they involved Amerindians as because they had happened outside of Christian practice. That was the truly shocking aspect of the situation during the seventeenth century, particularly for a France in the throes of the Counter Reformation: the fact that Frenchmen, raised in the true Christian faith, "became Savage simply because they lived with them."²⁶ It was a phenomenon which drew considerable denunciation from authorities; the very prevalence of such thunderings suggests the extent of the problem.²⁷

Missionaries worked hard to counteract it, not so much by opposing intermarriages as such, as Salone wrote, but by baptizing Native brides of Frenchmen, preferably before marriage; otherwise, regularizing unions in accordance with Christian ritual and seeing that the children were baptized and raised within the colonial community. The overriding need was for manpower, which would have led to many such children becoming French as far as the record was concerned. "Children are the wealth of the country," a visiting French surgeon observed in 1700.²⁸ There was also adoption. Particularly in the seventeenth century, colonial policy encouraged French families to take in Amerindian children and raise them as their own; as with the mixed-bloods, there is almost no way of detecting this in the documentation, unless explicitly acknowledged.

The dearth of direct record is to some extent counterbalanced by indirect evidence. This is especially true for Acadia. For example, an eighteenth-century memoir on Acadia refers casually to Amerindians and "children of the country accustomed to going with the savages."²⁹ Col. Samuel Vetch, second English governor of Port Royal, noted in 1714 that as the Acadians had contracted marriages with Amerindians who had converted, they had a strong influence over them.³⁰ An anonymous letter published in London in 1758, purporting to be from a "Mons. de la Varenne," claimed:

We employ besides a much more effectual method of uniting them to us, and that is, by the intermarriage of our people with the savage women, which is a circumstance which draws the ties of alliance closer. The children produced by these are generally hardy, inured to the fatigues of the chace [sic] and war, and turn out very serviceable subjects in their way.³¹

Later in the same letter there is a description of Acadians, who had recently been dispersed by the English:

They were a mixed breed, that is to say, most of them proceeded from marriages or concubinage of the savage women with the first settlers, who were of various nations, but chiefly French.³²

That point had already been made by Pierre Antoine Simon Maillard (1709–1762), "Apostle to the Micmacs," who had written in 1753 that he did not expect more than fifty years would

elapse before the French colonists were so mixed with the Micmacs and Malecites that it would be impossible to distinguish them.³³ Acadians appear to have been well on the way toward realizing the official goal of "one race."

Such mixing would have been reinforced by the exigencies of the fur trade, which was the economic reason why the colony had been established in the first place. The trade, which remained the principal economic activity for the colony throughout the French regime, functioned best when certain formalities were observed. Not the least of these was intermarriage; Amerindian society, with its stress on kinship, much preferred this type of relationship as a basis for its trading alliances.

A contemporary description of such an arrangement tells us that

When a Frenchman trades with them [Amerindians—in this case, Ottawa], he takes into his services one of their Daughters, the one, presumably, who is most to his taste; he asks the Father for her, & under certain conditions, it is arranged; he promises to give the Father some blankets, a few shirts, a Musket, Powder & Shot, Tobacco & Tools; they come to an agreement at last, & the exchange is made. The Girl, who is familiar with the Country, undertakes, on her part, to serve the Frenchman in every way, to dress his pelts, to sell his Merchandise for a specified length of time; the bargain is faithfully carried out on both sides.³⁴

Historians of the fur trade in the Northwest will recognize this description, as it so closely parallels what happened in that region at a later date. In the eastern trade, no less than in that of the Northwest, women played a vital role, both because of their family connections and because of their particular skills. Only recently have historians begun to pay attention to this fundamental aspect of our early history, and then mainly in connection with the much better documented Northwest.³⁵

Such an arrangement for accommodating fur traders was facilitated by attitudes of Amerindians toward marriage. While kinship was all-important to them, they did not consider marriage as such to be necessarily permanent, particularly if no children were involved. Besides, polygyny was an integral part of their social and economic framework. As far as they were concerned, it was perfectly acceptable for a European trader to

take one of their women to wife even if he were known to have another back in his own community. Inevitably, such arrangements developed, not only within the framework of the fur trade, but also within that of military alliances: two outstanding French envoys who had concurrent French and Amerindian wives were Paul Le Moyne de Maricourt (1663–1704) with the Onondaga and Louis-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire (c1670–1739) with the Seneca.³⁶

This was one of the principal aspects of the “disorderliness” and “libertinage” which aroused the concern of missionaries, rather than intermarriages as such, which they generally supported as long as their rules were obeyed. Jesuit Paul Le Jeune’s relation for 1637 tells of a delegation to Huronia to ascertain “whether it would be acceptable to them that some of our Frenchmen should marry in their country as soon as possible.” This drew the response from the Huron, “. . . those Frenchmen who had resolved to marry were free to take wives where it seemed good to them; that those who had married in the past had not demanded a general council for the purpose but that they had taken them in whatever way they had desired.”³⁷ This was precisely what was worrying the French:

The Father replied to this that it was very true that the Frenchmen who had hitherto married in the country had not made such a stir about it, but also that their intentions were far removed from ours,—that their purpose had been to become barbarians, and to render themselves exactly like them. He said that we, on the contrary, aimed by this alliance to make them like us, to give them knowledge of the true God, and to teach them to keep his holy commandments, and that the marriages of which we were speaking were to be stable and perpetual; and he laid before them all the other advantages they would derive therefrom.³⁸

In other words, the French were not fully in control of the situation. Something of their feelings in this connection can be seen in their reaction to the Mohawk chief known as the Flemish Bastard, whom they described as “the monstrous offspring of a Dutch Heretic Father and a Pagan woman,”³⁹ and in their difficulties in controlling their own *coureurs-de-bois*. In this cultural contest, Amerindian societies displayed an unexpected strength, which in the eighteenth century caused French offi-

cialdom (as distinct from the missionaries) to turn against intermarriage as such.

Despite such difficulties, to assume that mixed marriages always resulted in assimilation to the Amerindian side is to fly in the face of what little evidence has survived. The best known case is that of the Baron de Saint-Castin, who came to New France as an ensign with the Carignan-Salières Regiment in 1665 and stayed to marry Marie-Mathilde Madokawando (whose Amerindian name was Pidianske, unless sisters were involved). She was the daughter of an Abenaki chief, apparently a beautiful and accomplished woman. The baron elected to live in the land of his in-laws; in spite of that fact, he not only never lost his French connection but became extremely valuable to it, a tradition that was carried on by his sons, most prominently by Bernard-Anselme, but also by Joseph.⁴⁰ Several of Jean-Vincent's children (he had at least eleven) married into well-established French families, some of whom, such as the Mius d'Entremonts and the Damours, had other connections with Amerindians.⁴¹ In fact, a granddaughter (Marie Anselme, oldest daughter of Bernard-Anselme) married into lesser nobility in France.⁴² In 1709, Jeanne Mius d'Entremont married Louis Du Pont Duchambon, who was acting governor of Louisbourg during its siege by New England troops, 1744–1745. For a while she acted as official interpreter for Micmac, until the chiefs objected to the presence of a woman during their deliberations.⁴³ Charles Saint-Etienne de La Tour (1593–1666), another leading French settler in Acadia, had three daughters by an unnamed Micmac woman, whom he had married in 1626. Two of them became nuns, but the third, Jeanne, married Martin Aprendestiguy, Sieur de Martignon, who later became the proprietor of Fort Latour on the Saint-John River. In 1686 their daughter Marianne married Guillaume Bourgeois, a Port Royal merchant who was the son of Jacques, a surgeon and the founder of Beaubassin.

Still another example is that of Richard Denys, Sieur de Fronsac (c1654–1691), son of the pioneering Nicolas Denys. Richard married Anne Parabego, by whom he had a son, Nicolas, and a daughter, Marie-Anne. The son, who became Sieur de Fronsac in 1682, in his turn married an Amerindian woman who presented him with three children; however, they died in a fire in 1732. The family continued through Marie-Anne, who married a Quebecker.

A family that became noted for its interpreters was launched by schooner captain Claude Petitpas (c1663–1731/1733), son of the *Sieur de Lafleur*, when he married Marie-Thérèse, a Micmac, in 1686. They had seven children. Their son Barthélemy established himself at Port Toulouse, a convenient location for his work as official interpreter at Louisbourg. Another member of the family, Louis-Benjamin, worked with Father Maillard.⁴⁴

Such evidence speaks for itself. The Québec church declared the Micmac to be all Christianized by the end of the seventeenth century, although the quality of their Catholicism was not beyond doubt.⁴⁵ But the fact that they were considered to be at least officially Christian would have meant one less barrier to intermarriage. The colony's perennial need for manpower would also have ensured official efforts to keep the resultant children within the French community. This was particularly the case after the establishment of royal government in 1663. Jean Talon (intendant 1665–1668 and 1670–1672), even considered the feasibility of police action to prevent Amerindian women from nursing their children for extended periods. He saw this practice as inhibiting reproduction, an "obstacle to the prompt formation of the Colony."⁴⁶ There is no evidence that this suggestion was acted upon.

Official support for "one nation" also produced results in the St. Lawrence Valley. In 1638, Jesuits gave four arpents of cleared land to two Amerindian girls about to marry Christians; the next year, "a worthy and pious person" gave 100 *écus* for the wedding of a 'young Savage girl sought in marriage by a young Frenchman of very good character."⁴⁷ However, the earliest such marriage at Québec for which we have an actual record is that of Martin Prévost (c1611–1691), a settler who married Marie-Olivier Sylvestre Manitouabeouch in 1644. They had nine children. Probably the most prominent of such marriages was that of Pierre Boucher, *Sieur de Grosbois*, captain and later governor of Trois Rivières (1651–1667), who married Huron Marie Ouebadinskoue (also referred to as Marie-Madeleine Chrestienne) in 1649. She was one of the small group who had been educated by the Ursulines. However, she died in her first childbirth, and her baby did not survive. Boucher then married Jeanne Crevier, of the family that was deeply involved in the fur trade.

Another product of the Ursulines, Catherine Annennoutauk, "Créature de Dieu," was provided with a dowry of 260 *livres* on the occasion of her wedding in 1662 to Jean Durand. This union

proved more fruitful, producing three children. In fact, Catherine survived her husband to marry another Frenchman, Jacques Couturier, in 1672, by whom she had five children.⁴⁸ Also recorded in 1662 was another wedding involving a dowry, that of Huron Marie-Felix Arontio to Laurent Dubocq. The bride's dowry was for 500 *livres*, and had been provided by her mother, "an excellent Christian."⁴⁹ This union was blessed with seven children.

Official encouragement became more systematic in 1680, when 3000 *livres* were budgeted to provide dowries of 50 *livres* each for French and Amerindian girls who married Frenchmen. Officialdom had apparently acceded to persistent pressure from the Jesuits, who had been lobbying for such a measure for something like half a century. One of the benefits they had seen resulting from official support was greater marriage stability.⁵⁰ But support, even when official, did not produce the results the Jesuits had so confidently forecast. Few claimed the money, and officials were soon complaining that Amerindian girls were not marrying into the colony.⁵¹ The dowries remained in the budget until 1702; His Most Christian Majesty also provided 1,000 *livres* annually to pay women to teach Amerindian girls French household skills with a view to making "marriages customary between these girls and the French."⁵²

In spite of disclaimers concerning Amerindian marital preferences, not to mention those unclaimed dowries, mixed marriages were recorded more frequently toward the end of the century than at its beginning. Not, as those officials who still supported "one race" had hoped, within the settled areas where French civility more or less prevailed, but on the frontier of the "Old Northwest"—the area of the Great Lakes and the Ohio Valley. Most of the Frenchmen established in this region by the turn of the century were reported to have taken Amerindian wives. The much-publicized irregularities of frontier life to the contrary, missionaries did find something to approve of in this situation, which after all represented a measure of success for the "one race" they had been working for ever since their first days in Acadia. Father Julien Binneteau wrote from the Illinois country in 1669:

There are also some women married to some of our Frenchmen who would be a good example to the best regulated households in France. Some of those who

are married to Savages manifest extraordinary care in maintaining piety in their families.⁵³

However, by the early 18th century, opposition to intermarriage was growing. On the official level, this reflected the difficulties the French were having in maintaining alliances in the Old Northwest; in that region at least, "one race" was proving to be of doubtful value as a political instrument.⁵⁴ Socially, a certain ambivalence had always been present, as we have seen. For instance, when the elder Baron de Saint-Castin died in 1707, a lawsuit was launched by relatives in France who claimed family lands and titles on the grounds that his marriage had not been legitimate, despite abundant evidence to the contrary produced by colonial authorities. Bernard-Anselme was only partially successful in maintaining his claim. In Québec on military service in 1718, Claude-Michel Bégon de La Cour permanently damaged whatever career potentialities he would have had in France by marrying Marie-Elizabeth de La Morandière, known as "la iroquoise."⁵⁵ He did well in Canada, however, first as an officer, and finally, in 1743, becoming governor of Trois Rivières. Another scandal erupted in 1754 when an ensign serving at Louisbourg married a Métisse without his commanding officer's consent. Part of the objection in this case was that the girl's mother, Irene Mius d'Entremont, had issued from a union that had not been sanctified by Christian ritual.⁵⁶ Thus, in spite of individual exceptions, neither official encouragement nor economic necessity ensured social acceptance. One can reasonably assume that such acceptance was probably greatest during the seventeenth century, particularly when the colony was first being established. As for the intensifying climate of official opposition, it manifested itself in the Old Northwest in a regulation restricting the right of Amerindian women to inherit their French husbands' property. This was followed in 1735 by an edict requiring the consent of the governor or commanding officer for all mixed marriages.⁵⁷ Thus foundered the ideal of "one nation."

The establishment of the French in the Americas had been a long and difficult process, involving much trial and error. The first French attempt to colonize on the St. Lawrence—that of Cartier-Roberval in 1541–1543—had ended in failure. Subsequent attempts to establish in Brazil and "Florida"—including part of the Carolinas—had met with a no better fate.⁵⁸ In ana-

lyzing these disasters, the French had concluded that, among other things, there had not been proper co-operation with Amerindians. This was particularly true in Canada where an unfamiliar and intimidating climate and separation from the mother country by a difficult ocean crossing⁵⁹ put a premium on native survival skills. By the time the French settled permanently in Acadia, they had a lively appreciation of the advisability of keeping on good terms with the Natives, and that they lived up to this is attested by their record with the Micmac, Malecite and Abenaki. Their bonds of friendship with these Peoples lasted as long as the French maintained a presence in North America. For a century and a half French and Amerindians lived and fought side by side in a symbiotic relationship that is without parallel in the colonial history of North America.⁶⁰

This relationship appears to have been encouraged by the fact that French and Amerindian developed mutually reinforcing lifestyles in Acadia. The fur trade, of course, called for cooperation between the two Peoples wherever it was carried on. Farming, which usually had the opposite effect, in Acadia developed harmoniously as French farmers utilized tidal flats, lands of little interest to Amerindians.⁶¹ The result was that the French agricultural settlement did not infringe upon the Amerindian way of life; until the dispersal of the Acadians by the British, friction between the two groups rarely reached the point of violence.⁶² Another factor strongly encouraging this happy state of affairs was their frontier situation in the prolonged confrontation between English and French. A common enemy in dangerously close proximity did much to encourage good relations between allies and blood relatives.

It also did much to discourage the emergence of the Métis as a separate group. The tensions of protracted frontier warfare, lasting until the final defeat of the French in 1760, polarized the racial situation in Acadia even as it encouraged good relations. In other words, the children of mixed unions tended to indentify with either the French or the Amerindians rather than considering themselves as a separate entity. This would have been particularly true for the men.⁶³ The two areas where Métis heritage as such would have given them an advantage, the fur trade and diplomatic relations with Amerindians, provided only limited opportunities in the East during the latter part of the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries. Other occu-

pational fields, particularly prestigious ones such as the missionary and military, demanded identification with the French.⁶⁴ The alternative would have been to join allied Amerindian guerrillas in their "petite guerre" against the English, which would have meant identification as Amerindian. If they stayed within the colony in any other occupation, Métis would have been considered French. The British take-over of Acadia in 1710, which became official with the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713, did not alter this. Thus the Acadians, even as they cited their blood ties with the Amerindians as one of their reasons for not taking the oath of loyalty insisted upon by the British, never thought of themselves as anything other than French. With the aid of missionaries, French officialdom worked hard to encourage this sense of identity. It was not a conviction that was wholeheartedly shared by the British, who profoundly distrusted Acadian-Amerindian connections.⁶⁵

The situation was somewhat different in the Old Northwest, and much more so in the Far Northwest. To begin with the former: while the Ohio Valley, like Acadia, was a disputed frontier area, it was even farther removed from the centers of colonial government. On the face of it, such a state of affairs should have encouraged French-Amerindian alliances, as it had done in Acadia. However, the English by this time had become more knowledgeable in dealing with Amerindians, and were able to prevent the French from consolidating their position with the peoples of the region; what alliances the French succeeded in establishing were never as firm as their earlier partnerships had been in Acadia.⁶⁶ Consequently, the forces influencing the Métis to identify with either French or Amerindian were much weaker; instead, they began to look upon themselves as representing a distinctive blend of two cultures. This was encouraged by the overriding importance of the fur trade, more so than it had ever been in Acadia. It put a premium on the services of the Métis who had grown up in the trade and who were qualified uniquely to carry it on.

There was also the fact that Anglo-French rivalries placed them in a good bargaining position. A feeling of economic and cultural self-esteem expressed itself in dress, which became a distinctive blend of Amerindian and French. The Métis of the "Old Northwest" were a short step from the "New Nation." But it was a step that was never taken, as it was forestalled by the rush of settlement.

Instead, it was in the Far Northwest that a sense of separate identity finally crystallized.⁶⁷ It was only there that appropriate conditions were found: isolation, slowness of settlement, and the enduring importance of the fur trade.⁶⁸ In this context, French-English rivalries encouraged the new spirit, contrary to what their effect had been in the East. The fur trade allowed it to be born; the isolation, far from the pull-and-haul of intercolonial warfare (except, perhaps, for the period 1670–1713 on Hudson Bay, which did not involve Amerindians), allowed it to develop. When settlers finally arrived at Red River in 1812, they were too few to overwhelm this spirit; instead, their presence was the catalyst which transformed mild awareness into conviction. From that point, the Métis knew they were a distinct People with a way of life that was worth defending. Although Canadian historians have attributed this phenomenon to the machinations of the North West Company,⁶⁹ the process was actually much more profound and complex than such an explanation allows for. There is no doubt, however, that the North West Company encouraged the situation for its own ends.⁷⁰

To consider briefly the West Coast before concluding, Amerindians and Europeans met and interacted there from the latter part of the eighteenth century. However, the particular conditions required to create a separate Métis identity either were non-existent or not in place long enough to produce such a result. To begin with, the climate was such that special survival skills did not need to be learned; secondly, the fur trade (at least on the coast) was dominant for less than a century, soon giving way to agricultural settlement, to be augmented later by gold rushes. Europeans and Amerindians never developed the kind of symbiotic relationships they had achieved in other areas, which meant that there was never any question, officially or otherwise, of encouraging mixing of the races. This is not to say that intermarriage did not occur, but that it was without official support. Neither did colonial rivalries produce alliances with Amerindians, as they had on the East Coast and in the Old Northwest; indeed, the very suggestion of such a possibility by that ex-furtrader, Governor Sir James Douglas, aroused considerable unease on the part of the settlers.⁷¹ There never was any fighting side by side against a common enemy. Rather, what fighting there was occurred between Amerindians and the White community, with colonial authorities applying heavy-handed "justice." It is not surprising that under such circumstances there

was very little Amerindian influence noticeable at all on colonial society, despite the fact that Douglas's wife, Lady Amelia, was a Métisse. The only area where such influence was destined to become appreciable at a later period was in the visual arts.

To sum up: France's initial policy of creating one race in New France may have very largely failed, but what it did do was to set in motion a train of developments which eventually culminated with the emergence of the "New Nation" in the Far Northwest. In Acadia and Québec, the tendency was for Métis to identify with one side or the other; if it did not eliminate Amerindian cultures as the French had hoped, it at least kept their Peoples in alliance. In the Old Northwest, a sense of separate identity began to manifest itself on the part of the mixed-blood inhabitants, but became submerged in the sweep of events following the establishment of the United States. It was in the Canadian Far Northwest that conditions allowed for the development of a "New Nation," destined to collide with the new confederation, Canada. This was not at all what centralist French authorities had envisioned when they had declared in 1627 that Christianized Amerindians were to be considered fully Frenchman. The original concept of "one people" had, through the course of time and the pressures of unforeseen circumstances, produced instead a "New Nation."

NOTES

1. I would like to acknowledge the helpful comments on this paper by Dr. Lewis H. Thomas, University of Alberta.

2. Cited by Donald B. Smith, *Le Sauvage*, (Ottawa, National Museums of Canada, 1974), 88.

3. An example of this approach is Jacques Henripin, *La population canadienne au début du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1954). Jacqueline Peterson made some cogent observations in this regard in "A Social Portrait of the Great Lakes Métis," *Ethnohistory* XXV #1 (Winter 1978), 45-46.

4. Lionel Groulx, *La naissance d'une race* (Montréal, Granger Frères, 1938), 24-27. Groulx maintained that 94 mixed marriages and four "alliances" were known to have occurred before 1665, but that none of these left descendants who survived after the end of the eighteenth century. See also Georges Langlois, *Histoire de la population Canadienne-française*, (Montréal, Albert Lévesque, 1934), 99-100.

5. Smith, *Le Sauvage*, 70-91. See also Isabelle Perrault, "L'Historiographie de la dissolution," *Recherches Amérindiennes au Québec* X #4 (1981), 273-275. This is an extract drawn from her master's thesis, "Le métissage en Nouvelle-France," (M. Sc. (Sociologie), Université de Montréal, 1980).

6. Marcel Trudel, *La Population du Canada en 1663* (Montréal, Fides, 1973), 27–28, 149. According to the record, the colony included four French-American families and one French-Métisse, with a total of nine surviving children. However, the surviving official record is far from complete, particularly for the very early period of the colony.

7. Marcel Trudel, *Initiation à la Nouvelle-France*, (Montréal, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), 147. Earlier, in *L'esclavage au Canada français*, (Québec, Les Presses Universitaires Laval, 1960), 290, he had observed that it was not the incidence of intermarriage itself that was important, but rather the number of children.

8. Cyprien Tanguay, *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles canadiennes depuis la fondation de la colonie jusqu'à nos jours*, 7 vols., (Montréal, 1871–1890).

9. Emile Salone, *La colonisation de la Nouvelle-France*, (Paris, E. Guilmoto, [1906]; Brown Reprint, 1970), 116. "Cela ne signifie pas qu'il n'y ai pas eu quelques infractions à la règle, mais elles n'ont pas eu de conséquences. Les enfants métis sont abandonnés à la tribu, perdus pour la colonie." Benjamin Sulte had already expressed the same idea. ("Les Canadiens-français et les Sauvages," *Bulletin des recherches historiques*, IV #12, (1898), 362). Contemporaries who see métissage as a phenomenon of Amerindian rather than French society include Cornelius J. Jaenen, *Friend and Foe* (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1976), 153–189; W. J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier 1534–1760*, (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), 190–191; and Alfred G. Bailey, *The Conflict of European and Eastern Algonkian Cultures 1504–1700* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1969), 113.

10. Abbé J.-A. Maurault, *Histoire des Abenaki*, (Sorel, PQ, 1866. Johnson Reprint, 1969), 6; Lucien Campeau, *La Première Mission d'Acadie (1602–1616)*, Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, (1967), 118*; and Bailey, *Conflict*, 113.

11. François-Edme de Rameau de Saint-Père, *Une colonie féodale*, 2 vols., (Paris, Plon, 1889). Marcel Giraud's much acclaimed *Le Métis canadien* (Paris, Musée de l'Homme, 1945), deals exclusively with the West. The best English-language treatment of métissage is that of Bailey, *Conflict*. Bailey is an anthropologist. Manitoba is currently active in Métis studies.

12. Naomi Griffiths, *The Acadians: Creation of a People*, (Toronto, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1973), 5.

13. Biographies of various members of the Saint-Castin family are in the second and third volumes of the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1966–). (Hereinafter referred to as DCB). Also, Robert Le Blant, *Une Figure Légendaire de l'Histoire Acadienne—Le Baron de St.-Castin*, (Dax, 1934).

14. Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Louis XIV's great Minister of the Marine, was particularly keen on such a policy. See, for example, his letter to Talon, dated 1671, cited in Cary F. Goulson, ed., *Seventeenth-Century Canada: Source Studies* (Toronto, Macmillan, 1970), 307.

15. Olive Patricia Dickason, "The Myth of the Savage and the Beginning of French Colonialism in the Americas," (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1977), 68–72; 75–76; 228–229. For some latter-day comments on hybridization, see Bailey, *Conflict*, 115–116.

16. Ruben Gold Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 73 vols., (Cleveland, Borrows Brothers, 1896–1901), V: 211; X: 26.

17. For instance, the French used such an approach when they attempted to establish a colony at Maragnan, in northern Brazil, 1612–1614. (See Yves [d'Evreux], *Suite de l'histoire . . . en Maragnan . . .*, (Paris, 1615), 270.) However, Père Yves expressed doubt that such a policy would be workable: "Nous ne verrons pas ces choses." That this was not the case in New France is witnessed by French complaints to the Huron that "you have not allied yourselves up to the present with our French people. Your daughters have married with all neighbouring nations but not with ours . . . Not that we have need of your daughters. . . But we would like to see only one people in all the land." (Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, IX: 219).

18. *Édits, ordonnances royales, déclarations et arrêts du Conseil d'état du roi concernant le Canada*, 3 vols., (Québec, Frechette, 1854–1856), I: 10. My own translation.

19. Dickason, "Myth of the Savage," 231–233; Samuel de Champlain, *Works*, ed., Henry P. Biggar, 6 vols., (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1922–1936. Reprint, 1971), II: 48. The persistence of this belief may also have been the result of physical resemblances between Amerindians and Europeans. Today, anthropologists explain this by theorizing that Amerindians represent an early form of *Homo sapiens*, before differentiation between Caucasoids and Mongoloids.

20. An outstanding exception was Marguerite, who accompanied the colonizing expedition of Jean François de La Rocque de Roberval in 1542, and who, because of an affair, was abandoned with her lover on an island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. See Marguerite of Navarre's *Heptameron* (Paris, 1559); a different version of the story is found in André Thevet, *Cosmographie*, (Paris, L'Huillier, 1575), 1019–1020v.

21. Rameau de Saint-Père, *Une Colonie Feodale*, I: 152–153; Bailey, *Conflict*, 111–113; Andrew Hill Clark, *Acadia: The Geography of Nova Scotia to 1760*, (Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 377.

22. See Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood* (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1980), and Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, (Winnipeg, Watson & Dwyer, 1980).

23. This point was also made by Benjamin Sulte, *Histoire des Canadiens-français, 1608–1880*, 8 vols., (Montréal, Wilson, 1882–1884), I: 154. The brazil-wood trade, like the fur trade, provided an economic basis for the Métis. See Darcy Ribeiro, *The Americas and Civilization* (New York, Dutton, 1972), 190–191.

24. For some comments by Rameau de Saint-Père on this subject, see *Collection de documents inédits sur le Canada et l'Amérique publiés par le Canada-Français*, 3 vols., (Québec, Demers 1888–1890), III: 134–138. Later he illustrates these difficulties as presented by the Martin and Lejeune families, (141–151). Also, Bailey, *Conflict*, 111–113.

25. An example of this was Philippe Enault, Sieur de Barbaucannes, a physician who established himself on his seigneurie at Nipisquit, N. B. (today's Bathurst), in 1676. After his death, his children apparently opted for the Amerindian way of life. See DCB II; also, *Chrestien Le Clercq, New Relation of Gaspesia*, ed., William F. Ganong, (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1910), 160–161, n2. In spite of this, Le Clercq had a high opinion of Enault (177–185).

26. Gabriel Sagard-Théodat, *Histoire du Canada, et voyages que les frères mineurs recollets y ont faits pour la conversion des infidèles depuis l'an 1615*, (Paris, Sonnius, 1636), 166.

27. For some examples, see the writings of Marie de l'Incarnation in *Word From New France*, ed., Joyce Marshall, (Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1967).

28. Sieur de Diéreville, *Relation of the Voyage to Port Royal in Acadia or New France*, ed. John C. Webster (Toronto, Champlain Society, 1933), 94. Interestingly enough, the word "métis" does not appear to have been used in early seventeenth-century documentation connected with New France.

29. PAC, Preconquest Papers, J3: 39, Memoir of Gregoire (or Robert) Challe, 1716.

30. Abbé H. R. Casgrain, "Coup d'oeil sur l'Acadie," *Le Canada Français* (1888) I: 116-117.

31. *An Account of the Customs and Manners of the Micmakis and Maricheets Savage Nations*, (London, Hooper & Morley, 1758), 89-90. The letter has been attributed to Father Pierre Maillard.

32. *Ibid.*, 101-102.

33. Michel Le Courtois de Surlaville, *Les derniers jours de l'Acadie (1748-1758)*, ed., Gaston du Boscq de Beaumont, (Paris, Lechevalier, 1899), 85.

34. Diéreville, *Voyage to Port Royal*, 187.

35. The two principal works in this connection are cited in footnote 22.

36. Robert-Lionel Seguin, *La vie libertine en Nouvelle-France au XVII^e siècle*, 2 vols., (Montréal, Lemeac, 1972) I: 47. Several members of the Chabert de Joncaire family followed this path. (PAC, C11A 18: 82; Giraud, *Le Métis canadien*, 321-322.) Biographies of members of the Chabert de Joncaire family are in DCB II, III and IV; for Le Moyne de Maricourt, II. Also, E. B. O'Callaghan and J. R. Brodhead, eds., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 15 vols., (Albany, 1853-1887), IX: 580. (Hereinafter referred to as NYCD). Its index lists Philippe-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire (1707-c1766) as a French Amerindian. See also PAC C11A 18: 147-148.

37. Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, XIV: 17-19. Similar assurances were made by an Iroquois delegation to the French at Trois Rivières in 1645. (*Ibid.*, XXVII: 283).

38. *Ibid.*, XIV: 19.

39. *Ibid.*, XXXV: 213.

40. Pierre Daviault, *Le Baron de Saint-Castin*, (Montréal, Editions de L'A.C.F., n. d.), 185; Clarence J. d'Entremont, "The Children of the Baron de St. Castin," *French-Canadian and Acadian Genealogical Review*, III #1 (Spring 1971), 9-28.

41. For some official observations on the Damours brothers, see Beamish Murdoch, *A History of Nova Scotia or Acadie*, 3 vols., (Halifax, Barnes, 1865-1867), I: 216. The Amerindian connections of the Mius family are touched on by Rameau de Saint-Père in *Collection de documents inédits*, III: 165.

42. Webster, John Clarence, *Acadia at the End of the Seventeenth Century*, (Saint John, The New Brunswick Museum, 1934), 196.

43. PAC, C11B 5: 398-399, de Mézy to Council, 20 Nov. 1722.

44. As this family was engaged in coastal trade, including smuggling to the English, it attracted official attention. In one official's view, the fact that the family was "allied by blood" with Amerindians made it advisable to keep on good terms with them. (PAC C11B 2: 38-39, Soubras to Council, 10 April 1717. See also Rameau de Saint-Père, *Collection de documents inédits III*: 165-168).

45. Olive Patricia Dickason, "Louisbourg and the Indians: A Study in Imperial Race Relations," *History and Relations*, 6 (1976), 60-61.

46. PAC Archives des Colonies, C11A 2: 355, "Memoire sur l'estat présent du Canada," 1667. See also *Rapport de l'Archiviste de la Province de Québec pour 1930/31*, 63. In the words of Talon, ". . . c'est obstacle à la prompte formation de la Colonie peut estre surmonté par quelque régleme[n]t de Police aisé à introduir, et faire valoir, si on n'empesche pas les sauvages de s'y sousmettre."

47. Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, XIV: 263; XVI: 35.

48. *Ibid.*, XLVII: 289.

49. *Ibid.*

50. *Ibid.*, XIV: 261–263; XVI: 251–253; and XXI: 137ff.

51. NYCD IX:207, La Barre to Seignelay, 4 November 1683. The budgets are in PAC FIA, Fonds des Colonies, I-X.

52. *Ibid.*; NYCD IX: 269–271.

53. Thwaites, *Jesuit Relations*, LXV: 69, 263. See also the table of marriages in Michilimackinac, 1698–1765, in Peterson, "A Social Portrait," 50; Marcel Giraud, *Histoire de la Louisiane française*, 2 vols., (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1953–1958), I: 315–316; Louise Phelps Kellogg, *The French Régime in Wisconsin and the Northwest*, (New York, Cooper Square, 1968), 386–405; and Natalie Maree Belting, *Kaskaskia under the French Regime*, (New Orleans, Polyanthos, 1975), 13–16.

54. PAC C13A 3: 819–824, Duclos to minister, 25 December 1715.

55. It is tempting to speculate that Marie-Elizabeth was an Amerindian who had been adopted by Robert de la Morandière.

56. PAC, F3 50: 504v–524, Superior Council, 17 February 1755; PAC, G2 189: 270–360, Greffes des Colonies, 1754–1755. See also Rameau de Saint-Père, *Collection de documents inédits III*: 170; and *Une colonie féodale*, II: 376.

57. Belting, *Kaskaskia*, 74–75; Jaenen, *Friend and Foe*, 164–165.

58. The principal attempts were those of Nicholas Durand de Villegaignon, at Rio de Janeiro, 1555–1560; Jean Ribault and René Goulaine de Laudonnière, in the Carolinas, 1562–1564; and François de Razilly and Daniel de La Touche de La Ravadière at Maragnan, northern Brazil, 1612–1614.

59. The generally easiest route from Europe to America with the sailing and navigational techniques of the time was that taken by Columbus, which had brought him to the West Indies.

60. Clark, *Early Nova Scotia*, 376–377.

61. *Ibid.*

62. One case where Micmac dispersed a French village was the 1692 attack by Halion on a settlement near Bathurst, N. B. (Abraham Gesner, *New Brunswick; with notes for emigrants* (London, Simmonds & Ward, 1847), 29). There was also forbearance on the part of the French when Amerindian hunters did not differentiate between livestock and game (Dickason, "Louisbourg and the Indians", 121). Apparently the Micmac of the Gaspé, after the British conquest, claimed that Acadians were trespassing on their hunting and fishing grounds, and asked for protection. Although this indicates some friction, there is enough evidence to the contrary to suggest the author is assuming too much when he concludes that this means that "bad feeling between Acadians and Micmac dates from very early." (David Lee, "Gaspé, 1767–1867," *Canadian Historic Sites, Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History* #23, 166.)

63. I am indebted to Colleen Glenn, Edmonton, for pointing this out.

64. In the case of the French army, this requires no explanation; as for the missionaries, those born in the colony appear to have been sometimes of mixed blood, although this may not show in the record. For example, Antoine Gaulin (1674-1740), who was particularly troublesome to the British, was referred to by one governor as "that half-breed." (PAC, PRO, Colonial Office Series, 217/4: 125-131. Doucett to Lords of Trade, 2 July 1722). At a later period, one of the most effective missionaries in the West was Albert Lacombe, a mixed-blood.

65. The British view of the Acadians as a mixed, and therefore inferior race, may have been a factor in the decision to deport them. (Clark, *Early Nova Scotia*, 316.) On the other hand, the British, in 1729, had issued an offer of 10£ sterling and 50 acres of free land to any British subject who married an Amerindian woman. (PAC, AC, Misc. Docs. 2: 196).

66. Giraud, *Louisiane*, II: 318-319.

67. For a discussion of Métis identity, see Richard Slobodin, *Métis of the Mackenzie District*, (Ottawa, Canadian Research Centre for Anthropology, 1966), 149-168.

68. See D. Bruce Sealey and Antoine Lussier, eds., *The Métis: Canada's Forgotten People*, (Winnipeg, Manitoba Métis Federation Press, 1975), 9.

69. A. S. Morton, *History of the West to 1870*, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1973), 575, 805 *passim*; "The New Nation," *Proceedings and Transactions, Royal Society of Canada*, XXXIII, Sect. II (1939), 137-145; W. L. Morton, "The Canadian Métis," *The Beaver*, Outfit 280 (1950), 3-7; George F. G. Stanley, "The Métis and the Conflict of Cultures in Western Canada," *The Canadian Historical Review*, XXVIII #4, (1947), 428-433.

70. There are some who see the English conquest of New France as a factor in the emergence of Métis nationalism. If the conquest had any influence at all in this regard, it would at most have been tangential, effective only in so far as the Métis identified with the French. However, not all of them had French blood; some of the most active of Métis nationalists were of English or Scottish descent.

71. Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict*, (Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1977), 64; Margaret Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History* (Vancouver, Macmillan, 1971), 129.