

# *European Expectations of Acadia and the Bermudas, 1603-1624*

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*Acadia and the Bermudas differed greatly in natural environment and in their human history prior to European colonization. Yet this study finds that European expectations of the two colonies were closely comparable during the earliest decades of the seventeenth century. During this exceptional period, differences in economic and environmental potential were obscured by prevailing assumptions, arising from geographical concepts and from the influence of the Spanish colonial example, and by the common effort to reconcile the fundamental conflict between commercial and colonial aims. The resulting similarities of experience between Acadia and the Bermudas were short-lived, but genuine.*

*L'Acadie et les Bermudes différaient fortement au point de vue du milieu physique et de leur histoire avant la colonisation européenne. Cependant la présente étude révèle que les attentes des Européens dans les deux colonies furent très comparables lors des premières décennies du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle. Pendant cette période exceptionnelle, les différences des possibilités économiques et physiques furent voilées par les prétentions dominantes nées des conceptions géographiques et de l'influence de l'exemple colonial espagnol, et par un même effort de concilier l'opposition fondamentale entre les objectifs commerciaux et politiques. Les similitudes entre les expériences de l'Acadie et des Bermudes furent brèves mais réelles.*

## I

In the rapid development of North American colonial history as a field for vigorous scholarly enquiry and debate in recent decades, it has become evident that neither the island colonies outside the Caribbean nor the continental colonies of the extreme northeast have attracted the interest of historians to the same extent as have the ultimately more populous provinces of the French, British, and Spanish empires which were located further west and south. Colonies such as Acadia and the Bermudas have by no means lacked altogether for modern historical analysis, and yet their place has never been secure in efforts to construct syntheses of important phases in the overall colonial experience.<sup>1</sup> While the works of such

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1. The recent historiography of the early colonization period in the Bermudas has focused largely on the origins and development of slavery. See Cyril O. Packwood, *Chained on the Rock* (New York: Torres and Sons, 1975); Packwood, "Origins of Blacks in Bermuda During the Somers Island Company Period, 1615-1684", in W. Michael Brooke, ed., *Blacks in Bermuda: Historical Perspectives* (Hamilton: Bermuda College, 1980); James E. Smith, *Slavery in Bermuda* (New York: Vantage Press, 1976). The major general treatments of the period are earlier works. See Wesley Frank Craven, "An Introduction to the History of Bermuda", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd series, XVII (April 1937): 176-215; *ibid.*, XVII (July 1937): 317-62; *ibid.*, XVII (October 1937): 437-65; *ibid.*, XVII (January 1938): 13-63. Also Henry C. Wilkinson, *The Adventurers of Bermuda: A*

authors as K.G. Davies and David B. Quinn have comprised rare exceptions to this neglect, the more typical pattern can be exemplified in a recent collective reappraisal of Colonial British America in which the introduction admits that of the contributing essayists, "no one treats in a systematic or sustained way the less populous island colonies of Bermuda, the Bahamas, and Newfoundland or the most northern continental colony, Nova Scotia."<sup>2</sup> What is less typical in the latter collection is that the editors, Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole, should have noted the omission and suggested an explanation for it. The underemphasis upon these colonies, they contend, is partial evidence of "the continuing failure of the colonial American historical community to adopt a larger conception of their subject or, perhaps, fully to accept the desirability of a nonteleological *histoire totale*."<sup>3</sup>

Failure to avoid a teleological influence has affected not only the spatial but also the temporal preoccupations of colonial historians. It is, of course, a truism that colonial settlement can lead to the development of new societies, whether distinctive in character or — as New England community historians have frequently argued in the past two decades — having much in common with traditional European societies from which the colonists were drawn.<sup>4</sup> The development of such societies is one legitimate object of the colonial historian's attention. Yet if *histoire totale* is to be attempted, attention must be directed also at the time period which necessarily preceded the establishment of a continuing colonial society: the time of initial adjustment, when early European inhabitants struggled to come to terms with the native peoples and natural environment of the Americas, by conquest, accommodation, or a combination of the two. Only after that crucial transition could settler societies be said to have existed, to have been able to begin in earnest the process of cultural transfer and social evolution that would lead in turn to the development of coherent social and economic communities. In a historiography that places prime emphasis, however, upon coherent communities and their characteristics as the proper study of historians, rigorous consideration of the earlier period of transition tends to be excluded.

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*History of the Island from its Discovery Until the Dissolution of the Somers Island Company in 1684* (Oxford: Oxford University Press; 1st ed., 1933; 2nd ed., 1958). The literature also includes a number of editions of primary sources, including most recently Vernon A. Ives, ed., *The Rich Papers: Letters from Bermuda, 1615-1646* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, for the Bermuda National Trust, 1984). Important aspects of the early history of Acadia have been treated in such studies as Andrew Hill Clark, *Acadia: The Geography of Early Nova Scotia to 1760* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968); Jean Daigle, "Acadia, 1604-1763: An Historical Synthesis", in Daigle, ed., *The Acadians of the Maritimes: Thematic Studies* (Moncton: Centre d'études acadiennes, 1982), pp. 17-46; Naomi Griffiths, *The Acadians: Creation of a People* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1973); Gisa I. Hynes, "Some Aspects of the Demography of Port Royal, 1660-1755", *Acadiensis*, III, No. 1 (Autumn 1973): 3-17; George A. Rawlyk, *Nova Scotia's Massachusetts: A Study of Massachusetts-Nova Scotia Relations* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973). For an effort to integrate Acadia into a wider regional framework, see John G. Reid, *Acadia, Maine, and New Scotland: Marginal Colonies in the Seventeenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981).

2. Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds., *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 9. See also K. G. Davies, *The North Atlantic World in the Seventeenth Century* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974); David B. Quinn, *North America from Earliest Discovery to First Settlements: The Norse Voyages to 1612* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977).

3. Greene and Pole, *Colonial British America*, p. 9.

4. See, for a recent example, David Grayson Allen, *In English Ways: The Movement of Societies and the Transfer of English Local Law and Custom to Massachusetts Bay in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981). For a valuable collective reappraisal of the larger question of the emergence of colonial identities over time, see also Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden, eds. *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987).

The shortcomings of a teleological approach to early colonial history — concentrating only on those colonies which eventually accumulated large, organized populations, and on the processes of development which led with seeming inexorability to that end result — have long been recognizable to those historians who have looked for them. In the case of New England, for example, the tendency to begin serious historical study with the Pilgrims and Puritans, to the exclusion of earlier colonizing attempts, was attacked more than half a century ago by C.K. Bolton.<sup>5</sup> Yet it has remained true that the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay societies have claimed a massive and, arguably, a disproportionate share of the scholarship devoted to New England in the early decades of the seventeenth century, to the virtual exclusion of the ultimately less successful but more typical endeavours in such areas as Casco, Piscataqua, and Wessagusset. In recent years, new perspectives have arisen not so much from the study of colonies *per se* as from treatments of the native experience of colonization and of the general phenomenon of European overseas enterprise. Ethnohistorical studies of Amerindian societies and of native-European relations have not only emphasized the theme of discontinuity by showing the profound disruptions of native society caused by European contact, but have also shed light on the mistakes and insecurities of colonizers as well as colonized.<sup>6</sup> Studies of European overseas expansion, meanwhile, have established that colonization was only one of the possible goals, and not necessarily a dominant one even after the turn of the seventeenth century. “Colonization in the full sense of the term,” writes Kenneth R. Andrews, “was a concept which attracted much attention and discussion before 1630, but in practice it was not central to the development of English overseas enterprise and only became one of the leading themes in the Jacobean period.”<sup>7</sup>

The implications of these insights for the historiography of colonial development, however, have not so far been fully realized. Individual colonies might have their “starving times” or other difficulties, but as a general phenomenon the European participation in a time period when social disorientation and economic collapse were imminent dangers for native and non-native alike, and when the value of North American colonization from a European standpoint was accordingly in doubt, has not been widely considered. “Some correction of the usual perspective is necessary here,” Andrews has argued, “for history always distorts what it describes and modern views of the expansion tend for obvious reasons to magnify the importance of North America.”<sup>8</sup> And, as Joyce Appleby has

5. C. K. Bolton, *The Real Founders of New England* (Boston: F. W. Faxon Co., 1929).

6. Examples include Olive P. Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage: And the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984); Cornelius J. Jaenen, *Friend and Foe: Aspects of French-Amerindian Cultural Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976); Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Settling with the Indians: The Meeting of English and Indian Cultures in America, 1580-1640* (Totowa, N. J.: Rowan and Littlefield, 1980); Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); Bruce G. Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada's "Heroic Age" Reconsidered* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985). For a general discussion of trends in native history up until 1978, see James Axtell, “The Ethnohistory of Early North America”, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, XXXV (1978): 110-44.

7. Kenneth R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder, and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480-1630* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 357. Other discussions of the nature and the weaknesses of English overseas expansion in this period can be found in such works as Quinn, *North America from Earliest Discovery to First Settlements*; K. R. Andrews, N. P. Canny, and P. E. H. Hair, *The Westward Enterprise: English Activities in Ireland, the Atlantic and America, 1480-1650* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979); and J. C. Appleby, “An Association for the West Indies? English Plans for a West India Company, 1621-1626”, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, XV (May 1987): 213-41.

8. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, p. 357.

warned, “continuity and persistence” have been attributed as unduly “normative quality” in the history of the colonies.<sup>9</sup>

To be sure, this is not purely a historiographical problem. Although rarely recognized as such by contemporaries, it was also a problem which underlay — in the form of unrealistic expectations — the many difficulties encountered by colonizing ventures originating from the nations of northern Europe in the early seventeenth century. Superficially prepared by the example of Spanish and Portuguese imperialism in central and South America, the proponents of North American colonization — governments, investors, colonial propagandists — were, in reality, quite unprepared for the struggles that early colonies would undergo. The Iberian empires had achieved rapid conquest, and in so doing had gained access to precious metals and taken over virtually intact certain facets of native society. Social and economic organization of those empires had rapidly begun on a path of continuous evolution; this pattern of colonial development had also become, through an extensive literature, part of the common intellectual property of Europe. Later, the struggles which arose from unsuccessful attempts to apply the pattern to other parts of the Americas were to become the common property of the colonizing nations of northern Europe: the reconciliation of expectation and reality proved to be a laborious task and often a losing battle.

To exemplify the common character of these struggles, through consideration of the similarities of expectation and experience which could arise in the early colonizing years even between two such diverse colonies as Acadia and the Bermudas, will be one major purpose of this essay. In particular, the interaction of European expectation with colonial reality was analogous in the two colonies, and generated similar conflicts of interest. The essay will also contend that such similarity of experience was characteristic of the transitional period prior to the establishment, by conquest or accommodation, of a stable relationship between colonial society and the resources and environment of the territories claimed. Furthermore, by suggesting a comparison between two colonies which were not to develop into populous communities in the same sense as did their more westerly and southerly neighbours, it will be argued that through a nonteleological approach the role of these areas in early colonial historiography can be returned to its proper significance.

## II

It is necessary to begin by establishing that there were dissimilarities between Acadia and the Bermudas as areas for European colonization, which apparently present obstacles to a comparative treatment despite recent general discussion of the virtues of comparative analysis.<sup>10</sup> The most obvious contrast between Acadia and the Bermudas was geographical. The Bermudas, consisting of a group of islands with a total surface area of some twenty-one square miles, were tiny when measured against the extensive mainland and island territories of Acadia. Taking only a modest version of the several French claims that were made on behalf of Acadia at various times during the seventeenth century, the colony included all of what is now known as the Maritime region of Canada as well as coastal lands

9. Joyce Appleby, “Value and Society”, in Greene and Pole, *Colonial British America*, p. 308. See also the comments in James Axtell, “Europeans, Indians and the Age of Discovery in American History Textbooks”, *American Historical Review*, XCII (June 1987): 621-32.

10. See Raymond Grew, “The Case for Comparing Histories”, *American Historical Review*, LXXXV (October 1980): 763-78.

as far south-westwards as the Penobscot River in the modern State of Maine. The area of Bermuda was almost exactly one-hundredth of the area of the Ile St. Jean (later renamed Prince Edward Island), which was itself only a small portion of the colony of Acadia. The two colonies also contrasted in terms of climate. An early English resident of Bermuda wrote in 1612 that he was enjoying "more temperate and better weather than you have in England"; already in that year, the consistently warm temperatures and frequent sunshine of the Bermudian climate had combined with the commemoration of the role of the colonizer Sir George Somers in the development of the islands to produce the designation "Summer Islands" by which the Bermudas were henceforth frequently known to the English.<sup>11</sup> French experience in Acadia, despite the high hopes engendered at first by the continentally-influenced warmth of the summer, caused Samuel de Champlain to present an altogether different portrayal: "il y a six mois d'yver en ce pays."<sup>12</sup>

There were also profound differences between Acadia and the Bermudas in the human history of the respective territories prior to European colonization. Acadia had a substantial native population of Algonkian-speaking peoples, of which the largest — the Micmac — may have numbered as many as 35,000 prior to European contact.<sup>13</sup> To be sure, the effects of European disease and acculturation had reduced this population considerably by the time colonization began in the early seventeenth century, but even this situation contrasted with that of Bermuda, where there was no native population at the time of the Europeans' arrival.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, for reasons that were not unconnected with the contrast in terms of native populations, Acadia had been much more frequently visited by Europeans during the sixteenth century than had Bermuda. The sixteenth century had seen the beginning of a flourishing European fishery off the Atlantic coast of Acadia, as well as intermittent fur trading between native people and Europeans. The Bermudas were visited by the Spanish navigator Juan Bermudez at least as early as 1515, but quickly acquired an unfavourable reputation for treacherous currents and dangerous rocky shoals. Despite occasional Spanish colonizing projects which were never put into practice, the islands were better known in the sixteenth century as "the Devil's Islands" — haunted by monsters and by spirits which brought evil luck to sailors — than as a possible area for colonization. They were, reported William Strachey, who was shipwrecked there in 1609, "feared and avoided of all sea travelers alive above any other place in the world."<sup>15</sup> Certainly Henry May, a

11. Anonymous, "An addition sent home by the last ships from our Colonie in the Barmudas", in J. H. Lefroy, ed., *Memorials of the Discovery and Early Settlement of the Bermudas or Somers Islands, 1515-1685, Compiled from the Colonial Records and Other Original Sources* (2 vols., London: Longman's, Green and Co., 1877-79), I, 71; Great Britain, Public Record Office (hereafter PRO), Domestic Correspondence, James I, SP14/68, No. 62, John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, 12 February 1612. The term "the Bermudas" has been adopted in the title of this essay as an accurate geographical usage which was favoured also by such seventeenth-century writers as Silvester Jourdain and Nathaniel Butler. See Jourdain, "A Discovery of the Bermudas, Otherwise Called the Isle of Devils", in Louis B. Wright, ed., *A Voyage to Virginia in 1609* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1964) pp. 103-16; [Butler], *The History of the Bermudaes or Summer Islands*, ed. J. Henry Lefroy (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1882). Use is also made, however, of two other designations which were also current during the seventeenth century: "Bermuda", referring collectively to the islands; and "Summer (or Somers) Islands".

12. Henry Percival Biggar, ed., *The Works of Samuel de Champlain* (6 vols., Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1922-36), I, 307.

13. See Virginia Miller, "Aboriginal Micmac Population: A Review of the Evidence", *Ethnohistory*, XXIII, No. 2 (1976): 117-27.

14. Wilkinson, *Adventurers of Bermuda*, pp. 19-20.

15. William Strachey, "A True Reportory of the Wreck and Redemption of Sir Thomas Gates, Knight, Upon and From the Islands of the Bermudas...", in Wright, *Voyage to Virginia*, p. 16.

previous shipwreck victim on the Bermudas and the first Englishman publicly to report having set foot on the islands, had not been sorry to leave in May 1594, after an enforced stay of some five months. For May and his French companions, the first landfall after leaving Bermuda was in Acadia, and it brought profound relief: "We fell with the land nere to cape Briton, where we ran into a fresh water river, wherof there be many, and tooke in wood, water, and ballast. And here the people of the cuntry came unto us, being clothed all in furs, with the furred side unto their skins, and brought with them fures of sundry sorts to sell, besides great store of wild ducks . . . This should seeme to be a very good cuntry."<sup>16</sup>

Between Acadia and the Bermudas, therefore, significant distinctions can be made both in physical environment and in human history. Yet early European expectations of the two colonies ran parallel to one another, as did the ways in which these expectations were brought into question as settlements were established and adjustments had to be made to cope with new realities. These similarities provide in themselves an indication of the extent to which European expansion into the North Atlantic in the early seventeenth century was initially predicated on assumptions that tended to obscure the real differences between the opportunities available in the various mainland and island colonies.

### III

Between the first European visits to Acadia and the Bermudas, and the first serious efforts at colonization, there elapsed in each case a period of approximately one hundred years. In 1603, a patent was issued by the French crown to Pierre du Gua, Sieur de Monts, for the colonization of Acadia. On this occasion, Acadia was generously defined as extending from the 40th to the 46th degree of latitude, but the resources at the disposal of de Monts permitted only a small colonizing expedition which set out in 1604 and established a settlement on Ste Croix Island. After spending a disastrous winter, during which many of the colonists succumbed to disease and to the severe cold, the survivors re-established themselves at Port Royal in peninsular Acadia. There the small colony prospered until its sudden abandonment in 1607 as a result of the French government's cancellation of de Monts' ten-year monopoly of the Acadian fur trade. Port Royal was resettled some three years later by one of de Monts' former lieutenants, Jean de Biencourt de Poutrincourt, and by Poutrincourt's son, Charles de Biencourt. From this time forward, the French presence in Acadia was continuous, and yet the colony faced formidable problems in finding an economic basis on which to attract investment. Quarrels between Biencourt and the Jesuit missionaries who had come to Acadia in 1611 were frequent and damaging. The greatest disaster, however, came in 1613, when an English raiding party under the command of the Virginia sea captain Samuel Argall destroyed not only the Jesuit mission near Mount Desert Island but also Port Royal itself. Biencourt, who had by now effectively taken over leadership of the colony from his father, was not in the settlement at the time, and with a handful of other colonists he remained in Acadia, supported meagerly by the fur trade and the fishery. By 1618, he had moved his headquarters to the southern part of the Acadian

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16. Henry May, "A briefe note of a voyage to the East Indies . . .", in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (Re-edition in 8 vols., London and Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1927), VII, 164; for more detailed discussion of May and his comments, see John G. Reid, "Henry May: An Early English Admirer of the Maritime Landscape," in Peter Thomas, ed., *The Red Jeep and Other Landscapes: A Collection in Honour of Douglas Lockhead* (Sackville and Fredericton, N.B.: Mount Allison University and Goose Lane Editions, [1987]), pp. 15-19.

peninsula in order to exploit the fishing grounds off the coast of that area. On the death of Biencourt in 1623, command passed to another of the colonists, Charles de Saint-Etienne de la Tour. With only a small group of followers, and still occasionally harassed by English raiders from further south, La Tour for the time being maintained only precariously the French foothold in Acadia.<sup>17</sup>

The English colonization of the Bermudas, meanwhile, had enjoyed greater success, despite having an accidental beginning. Of the nine vessels comprising the Virginia fleet which left the English port of Plymouth on 2 June 1609, all but one eventually reached the small Jamestown settlement in the late summer. The remaining ship, the *Sea Adventure* — carrying not only the fleet commander Sir George Somers, who had been one of the original members of the Virginia Company, but also the newly-appointed lieutenant-governor of the colony, sir Thomas Gates — had been wrecked in July on the coast of Bermuda. The 150 colonists and sailors on board, including men, women and children, had been safely brought to shore, and stayed on the main island of Bermuda for almost ten months until two pinnaces could be built to take the party on to Virginia, where they arrived in May 1610. Jamestown was by now in a state of famine, and the governor Thomas West, Lord De La Warr, impressed by Somers' reports of the abundant resources of fish, fowl and wild pigs in Bermuda, dispatched Somers on a food-gathering return voyage, in company with Samuel Argall. The voyage was not successful although Argall, who was prevented by bad weather from reaching Bermuda, eventually returned with supplies of fish and seal meat from the mainland coast further north. Somers had reached Bermuda but died shortly afterwards, whereupon his ship returned to England.<sup>18</sup>

Bermuda, however, was not forgotten by the Virginia Company, and on 25 June 1611 the company's Court took an important decision: "the State and hope of the Bermodes was there fully dyscuss", reported a contemporary newsletter, "And Concluded to send a Collony thither, the place is so opulent fertile and pleasant that all men were willing to go thither."<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, in the following year the company obtained a new charter, which extended the offshore boundaries of Virginia so as to include the Bermudas, and a group of some sixty settlers was sent to the islands under the command of Richard Moore, designated governor for the first three years.<sup>20</sup> There followed a period of rapid population growth, and in 1615 a separate company was chartered "for the Plantation of the Summer Islands", although with a membership composed almost exclusively of persons who were also members of the Virginia Company.<sup>21</sup> By 1624, the Bermuda Company and its colony were sufficiently strong to survive even the crisis which resulted in the dissolution of the Virginia Company in that year. For most of the intervening period, the population of Bermuda had exceeded that of Virginia, and a Bermuda petition of 1622 estimated the

17. The events summarized in this paragraph are discussed at greater length in Reid, *Acadia, Maine, and New Scotland*, pp. 14-19, 29-30.

18. Wilkinson, *Adventurers of Bermuda*, pp. 43-52; Quinn, *North America from Earliest Discovery to First Settlements*, pp. 454-8. On Somers' return to Bermuda, see PRO, Colonial Papers, CO1/1, No. 21, Sir George Somers to Lord Salisbury, 15 June 1610; and *ibid.*, No. 22, Thomas West, Lord De La Warr, to Salisbury, [1610].

19. David B. Quinn, ed., "Advice for Investors in Virginia, Bermuda, and Newfoundland, 1611", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, XXIII (January 1966): 144.

20. Wilkinson, *Adventurers of Bermuda*, pp. 57-8. For a full interpretation of the kindling of the Virginia Company's interest in Bermuda, see Craven, "Introduction", especially XVII (April 1937), pp. 186-94.

21. PRO, Colonial Entry Books, CO38/1, Bermuda Charter, 29 June 1615; Craven, "Introduction", XVII (April 1937), p. 195.

number of residents as being “not fewer than fiftene hundred soules.”<sup>22</sup> This was not to say that the colony’s rapid peopling implied that harmony and prosperity had universally prevailed. On the contrary, damaging internal quarrels had taken place both within the company and within the colony itself. Also, the laying of a sound economic foundation had proved difficult, with several potential export commodities having failed to yield expected returns. Nevertheless, the reputation of the former “Devil’s Islands” had permanently been changed. As the author of an anonymous tract had remarked in 1610, “all the Fairies of the rocks were but flocks of birds, and all the Divels that haunted the woods, were but heads of swine.”<sup>23</sup>

Birds and hogs were preferable to fairies and devils, not least because they provided sources of food. So too did the wildlife of Acadia, with which the French colonists rapidly became familiar under the tutelage of their Micmac guides. Yet food resources alone were not sufficient to establish colonies on the scale envisaged in both Acadia and the Bermudas. The patent granted to de Monts by the French crown in 1603 provided explicitly that one hundred French colonists should be sent out annually to Acadia. Although this figure was subsequently reduced to sixty, the intention that the colony should be rapidly peopled was evident. The Bermuda charter of 1615 revealed a similar intention in making provision for the division of three-quarters of the land of the islands into eight “tribes”: land divisions, each to be subdivided into fifty shares. With the remaining quarter of the land to be retained by the company in order to yield profits for the offsetting of administrative expenses, the entire area of the islands was intended for settlement. Thus, both colonies were envisaged not merely as trading ventures but as enterprises involving extensive settlement. Trade, however, was specified in each case as a fundamental support for colonization, and both charters conferred trade monopolies as well as providing for exemptions from customs duties. The commercial provisions of the two documents were not identical, either in the concessions granted or in the financial structure within which trade was to take place: whereas the Bermuda Company was a joint-stock company, the grant to de Monts was a personal one, on the basis of which he subsequently set out to recruit investors. The interdependence of trade and colonization, however, and the expectation that the two would be compatible, were basic principles in each case.<sup>24</sup>

As was true of many seventeenth-century colonizing attempts across the North Atlantic, the reconciliation of the respective demands of trade and colonization proved to be no easy task in either Acadia or Bermuda. One difficulty lay in the tendency to underestimate the costs of colonization. Transportation of potential colonists, and provision for their subsistence during an initial period, were expenses that apparently were predictable. Just as de Monts had been well aware in 1605 that only the arrival of “secours ... [et] rafraichissemens” from France, along with reinforcements, could enable his party of colonists to remain in Acadia, so the Virginia Company in 1612, having sent “sundrye necessarye provisions and 50 persons or thereabouts” to Bermuda, made clear to Governor Moore

22. [Butler], *Historye of the Bermudaes*, p. 294.

23. Lefroy, *Memorials*, I, 13.

24. France, Archives Nationales, Archives des Colonies (hereafter AC), C11D, I, ff. 17-26, Royal letter, articles, and remonstrances of de Monts, 1603; PRO, Colonial Entry Books, CO38/1, Bermuda Charter, 29 June 1615. For further analysis of the commercial provisions of the Acadia and Bermuda patents, see H. P. Biggar, *The Early Trading Companies of New France: A Contribution to the History of Commerce and Discovery in North America* (Toronto: University of Toronto Library, 1901), pp. 51-66; and Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Period of American History* (4 vols., New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934-38), I, 236-7.

that supply shipments would "from tyme to tyme be sent from hence for your Releife".<sup>25</sup> When the need for such assistance persisted over a period of years, however, unexpectedly heavy demands were inevitably put upon European investors. In 1620, the Bermuda resident John Dutton complained to the Earl of Warwick, a member of both the Bermuda Company and the Virginia Company, that the islands were short of basic supplies such as clothing, canvas, and soap, and indicated that the Bermuda Company's strict enforcement of its trading privileges at the expense of island residents was to blame. The complaint of Charles de la Tour, writing to Louis XIII of France from Acadia some seven years later, was even more extreme: under pressure from competing traders, both French and English, and lacking the support of any significant body of investors, La Tour described how he and his few colonists had been forced to live off the land and to clothe themselves in the way of the Micmac.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the early experiences of both colonies revealed that without costly investment the ambition to establish a transplanted European society could easily miscarry.

La Tour's reference to English harassment, moreover, indicated a further source of expense which was by its nature unpredictable: the need for fortification and defence. At a time when European territorial claims in the Americas were large, ill-defined, and frequently contradictory of one another, raids by competing nationalities were necessarily feared in all nascent colonies. In Acadia, as in other mainland colonies, the possibility of conflict with native peoples provided another incentive to look to effective defence, but it was the possible arrival of hostile Europeans that Champlain had in mind when he appraised the geographical situation of Ste Croix Island in 1604: "de soy elle est en fort bonne situation, et n'y a qu'un costé où elle baisse..., qui est aisé à fortifier, les costes de la terre ferme en estans des deux costey esloignees de quelques neuf cens à mille pas. Il y a des vaisseaux qui ne pourroyent passer sur la riviere qu'à la mercy du canon d'icelle." Similar thoughts were in the mind of Silvester Jourdain in 1610 when he remarked of the future Castle Harbour in Bermuda that "the coming into it is so narrow and strait between the rocks as that it will with small store of munition be fortified and easily defended with all advantage the place affords against the forces of the potentest king of Europe."<sup>27</sup> Subsequent events were to prove that both observers were well justified in their concerns. For all the work of Champlain in fortifying Ste Croix Island, and then fortifying the new settlement of Port Royal in the following year, Acadia's inability to withstand the Argall raid of 1613 brought disaster to the colony. In Bermuda, Governor Richard Moore had set about the construction of "eight or nine forts, called the *Kings Castle*, *Charles Fort*, *Pembrookes Fort*, *Smiths Fort*, *Pagits Fort*, *Gates Fort*, *Warwicks Castle*, *Saint Katharines Fort*, etc., mounting in them all the Ordnance he had..."<sup>28</sup> Moore's preparations were made all the more urgent in late 1612 and 1613, when Spanish diplomatic protests of the English occupation of Bermuda implied an obvious threat of invasion. The Virginia Company took the threat seriously enough to send in late 1612 "an adviso with thirtie Passengers and good provisions, to prepare with all expedition for their defence against the *Spaniard*, whom

25. Marc Lescarbot, *The History of New-France...*, ed. W. L. Grant (3 vols., Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1907-14; first published 1618), II, 527; Bermuda Archives, Bermuda Records (hereafter BR), Vol. A, 1612-23, Commission of Richard Moore, 27 April 1612.

26. Ives, *Rich Papers*, p. 204, John Dutton to Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick, 17 October 1620; Université de Moncton, Centre d'études acadiennes, Fonds René Baudry, 20. 6-17, La Tour to Louis XIII, 25 July 1627. See also Craven, "Introduction", XVII (April 1937), p. 192.

27. Biggar, *Works of Champlain*, I, 271; Jourdain, "Discovery of the Bermudas", p. 113.

28. Edward Arber, ed., *Capt. John Smith of Willoughby by Alford, Lincolnshire; President of Virginia, and Admiral of New England: Works, 1608-1613* (2 vols., Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co., 1895), II, 644.

they understood ere long would visit them.”<sup>29</sup> A contemporary observer in the following year reported that the residents of Bermuda were “nothing dismayed” at the threat, and when two Spanish ships finally did approach Bermuda in March 1614 they were easily dissuaded from attacking. “Findeing the ordinance to speake more loud and hotly than they expected...”, reported Nathaniel Butler in his history of the Bermudas written shortly afterwards, “they presently retraicted... and tooke their leave” after only two shots had been fired.<sup>30</sup> Yet despite this anti-climactic ending, the skirmish proved anew what the experience of other North American colonies had already established: that effective defence, with all its attendant costs, was a necessity.

#### IV

Experience showed, therefore, that colonization involved large and often unpredictable expenses, which were capable of upsetting the delicate balance between commercial and colonial expectations. Given that large-scale state involvement in American colonization was not forthcoming in either England or France during the period prior to 1624, a limited range of options was open to investors and colonists. In both Acadia and the Bermudas, three possible solutions were seriously advanced. The first was a simple one, inferred from the Spanish experience in central and South America. If mines of precious metals could be found, comparable with those of Mexico and Peru, the expenses of colonization obviously would be insignificant compared to the profits gained by investors and colonial residents alike. The descriptions of Acadia in the works of Champlain give ample evidence of the search for such wealth, in Champlain’s repeated reports of silver mines, along with mines of lesser metals such as copper. Even Marc Lescarbot, the French lawyer and author who visited Acadia in 1606-07 and who was more sceptical than Champlain regarding the finding of precious metals, speculated that the Acadian copper-mines might also yield gold, and noted that he himself had several times seen “des petits rochers couverts de Diamans y attachés.”<sup>31</sup> William Strachey, in his report of Bermuda based on his enforced stay in 1609-10, was hard pressed to find solid evidence of precious metals, but nevertheless found one significant clue: “I never saw ... any venomous thing ...”, he wrote, “or any creeping beast hurtful, only some spiders, which, as many affirm, are signs of great store of gold.”<sup>32</sup> Scarcely more convincing were traditions that buried Spanish gold might be found, and yet Richard Moore as governor was sufficiently intrigued shortly after his arrival in 1612 to interrogate three island residents as to whether they had found any “Treasure”.<sup>33</sup> They had not. Nor, despite the confident reports of Silvester Jourdain and others of the “great store of pearl” to be found in oyster beds generously distributed around the Bermudian coasts, did pearl fishing yield commercially significant results.<sup>34</sup> Within only a few years, it was evident in both Acadia and the Bermudas that instantly-acquired wealth in the form of precious commodities was not to be expected. Hopes might persist, but conviction was lacking. When the Bermuda Company in 1616

29. *Ibid.*, p. 645.

30. PRO, Domestic Correspondence, James I, SP14/74, No. 89, John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, 27 October 1613; [Butler], *Historie of the Bermudaes*, pp. 30-1. See also Wilkinson, *Adventurers of Bermuda*, pp. 62-7.

31. Biggar, *Works of Champlain*, I, 181-3, 246-8; Lescarbot, *History of New France*, II, 503-4.

32. Strachey, “True Reportory”, p. 23.

33. Arber, *Works of Smith*, II, 642.

34. Jourdain, “Discovery of the Bermudaes”, p. 112; see also Wilkinson, *Adventurers of Bermuda*, pp. 68-9.

instructed its new governor, Daniel Tucker, to "use all your best meanes ... to discover what likelyhood there is of mynneralls", it went on to explain that it had no intention of incurring any "greate charge from hence to sett upon that buisness without some good encouragement." Similarly, the Jesuit Pierre Biard, writing of Acadia in the same year, suggested cautiously that "si le pays estoit habite, il pourroit profiter ses mines", but warned also that "il faut ... ne point estre ou avare, ou impatient, qu'on veuille, comme les usuriers, aussi tost le profit que le prest."<sup>35</sup>

In the absence of mineral wealth on the pattern of central and South America, a further possibility was to cover the expenses of colonization on the basis of trade involving not precious commodities such as gold and silver, but other colonial products. In Acadia, fish and furs were two commodities for which there was a proven European market. In view of the rise in the price of beaver skins which had been under way since the early 1580s, it was not surprising that the fur trading monopoly of de Monts was seen, in the absence of precious metals, as the chief economic support of the colony. After the revocation of the monopoly and the subsequent resettlement of Acadia by the Poutrincourt-Biencourt expeditions, the fishery assumed increasing importance; following the Argall raid of 1613, Biencourt's colonists survived largely through the dry cod fishery, trading their products to La Rochelle merchants.<sup>36</sup> For the Bermuda colony, the natural product which initially seemed the most promising for trade was ambergris, a resinous substance originating as a biliary product of the whale, which was used in the production of perfumes. The presence of ambergris on Bermudian beaches was reported by early observers such as Jourdain, and optimistic reports of its quantity soon reached London. "From the Bermudas or Sommerylands," wrote the London scholar John Chamberlain in 1613 to his friend Sir Dudley Carleton, English ambassador in Venice, "there hath come great store of amber-greece this year, which is the only commoditie they have there as yet, but they hope for more hereafter of many kindes though nothing so rich, and begin to nestle and plant there very handsomely."<sup>37</sup> Yet the supply of ambergris proved not to be as abundant as initially hoped, or at least not as easily renewable as the Bermuda Company believed when it informed Governor Tucker in 1616 that "Ambergreece upon the shore ... is driven up by every storme where the winde bloweth...."<sup>38</sup> More productive at this time was the sending to Bermuda by the company of "Mr. Tickner a skilful planter and curer of tobacco," who was charged to give instruction to the colonists in order to "affect that comoditie to the benefit of us the adventurers and you the planters."<sup>39</sup> Four years later, the cultivation and export of tobacco had grown in importance to such an extent that the Virginia Company was able to declare (convincingly although disingenuously, in the context of a customs dispute) that "the Somers Islands ... [have] no means to subsiste but merely by the vent of their tobacco."<sup>40</sup>

35. BR, Vol. A, 1612-23, Commission of Daniel Tucker, 15 February 1616; Pierre Biard, *Relation de la Nouvelle France de ses terres, naturel du pais, et de ses habitations* (Lyons: Louis Muguet, 1616), pp. 32, 304.

36. See Robert Le Blant, "L'avaitement du Port-Royal d'Acadie par Charles de Biencourt et les marchands rochelais, 1615-1618", *Revue d'histoire des colonies*, XLIV (1959): 138-64.

37. PRO, Domestic Correspondence, James I, SP14/74, No. 89, John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, 27 October 1613. Chamberlain went on to report that one piece of ambergris had been found that was "as bigge as the body of a giant and answerable or resembling almost in all points saving for the want of the head and one arme"; however, the piece had been broken into smaller pieces by mishandling.

38. BR, Vol. A, 1612-23, Commission of Daniel Tucker, 15 February 1616.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Quoted in Wilkinson, *Adventurers of Bermuda*, p. 152.

Yet trade, essential as it was, did not in itself offer any guarantee of reconciliation of the conflicting demands of commercial profit and colonial development. On the contrary, in Acadia and the Bermudas as in other seventeenth-century colonies, trade was often the focus of dispute between investors and colonists. For the investors, a quick return on capital was essential, and in the case of Acadia the merchants with whom de Monts was dealing were in many cases accustomed to the reaping of annual profits from seasonal fishing and fur trading voyages to the North American coast. When the expense of colonization became evident, support dwindled. "Le sieur de Monts et ses associés," Lescarbot was forced to admit in 1607, "étans en pert..., c'étoit chose qu'ils ne pouvoit faire sans beaucoup de difficulté, que d'entretenir une habitation pardela."<sup>41</sup> The same pressures were soon felt in Bermuda, as the instructions given to Richard Moore in 1612 made clear: "wee advise and pray you to be as prudent as you may, to send us some fruits of your labors to give encouragement to the adventurers, to make the more speedy and better supplie unto you, especially of Ambergreece...."<sup>42</sup> In the event, Moore drew a shrewder conclusion from this instruction than the company had intended: realizing that the availability of ambergris was a major inducement for the sending of supply shipments by the company, he refused to release in late 1612 all of the ambergris collected. By this means, he succeeded in attracting a further supply of provisions and colonists in 1613, but at the same time made himself, as described by Captain John Smith, "amongst the Merchants marvelous[ly] distastfull, for the detaining so long the Ambergreece...."<sup>43</sup> Nor was Moore the only Bermudian resident who perceived the difference of interest between adventurers and colonists with regard to the ambergris trade. Some four years later his successor Daniel Tucker issued a proclamation against private trading of ambergris either among island residents or with visiting mariners, and the detailed character of the document as well as the severity of the promised punishments gave every indication of a flourishing private market.<sup>44</sup>

In Acadia, the conflict of interest between merchant and colonizer was shown in the case of the de Monts colony not so much in the form of private trading by colonial residents, as in competition from those merchants who had been excluded from de Monts' monopoly. Not only Dutch traders, but also rival French interests persisted in voyages to the Acadian coast, and the unpleasant truth soon became apparent that the lesser expense involved in seasonal voyages — as opposed to maintaining a year-round colony — enabled such interlopers to compete with great effect. In those circumstances, monopoly rights had doubtful value. Monopoly rights also tended to arouse resentment among those excluded, and thus to be liable to pressures for revocation. This was the fate of the monopoly of de Monts, cancelled in 1607 following the complaints of rival merchants and of hatters' corporation of Paris.<sup>45</sup> A joint attempt by the Bermuda and Virginia companies in 1622 to monopolize the entire importation of tobacco to England met a similarly effective series of protests, and the scheme soon foundered amid the confusion that led eventually to the dissolution of the Virginia Company.<sup>46</sup> While the companies had staunchly maintained that the cultivation of tobacco was not envisaged as the only economic base for Virginia or the Bermudas, and that other staple commodities would soon be developed, they had been

41. Lescarbot, *History of New France*, II, 574.

42. BR, Vol. A, 1612-23, Commission of Robert Moore, 27 April 1612.

43. Arber, *Works of Smith*, II, 645.

44. Lefroy, *Memorials*, I, 121, Proclamation of Tucker, [c.1616].

45. For further discussion, see Reid, *Acadia, Maine and New Scotland*, p. 18.

46. See Andrews, *Colonial Period of American History*, I, 150-64.

forced to recognize the commercial importance of tobacco as an export crop. Yet even in this recognition, differences of interest readily arose between merchants and colonists, as in the case of the grievances presented to James I in 1622 in the name of "the Inhabitants of the Somer Islands". Certain of the adventurers — the petitioners prudently singled out those "of inferior ranke" rather than the highest officers of the Bermuda Company — were alleged to "lay yearly Impositions upon your poore subjects Tobacco ... under pretense of supplying the Islands with necessarie men, and necessarie munition, which yet wee never saw effected."<sup>47</sup>

The basing of colonization upon trade, therefore, was an answer to the basic problem of how the expenses of the colonies were to be borne, and one that had obvious attractions in the absence of mines of precious metals. It was not a simple answer, however, involving as it did a number of significant conflicts of interest. It was not surprising that grievances should arise, both on the part of the investors, who demanded a return equivalent to the profits they could obtain in purely commercial ventures, and on the part of colonial residents who regarded commercial ambitions as exploitative. Certainly Charles de Biencourt revealed the depth of his frustration when he appealed to the town authorities of Paris in 1618 for help in obtaining financial support for Acadia, and blamed the colony's lack of development on the ignorance and the malice of merchants who were not prepared to be patient with the special needs of a small colony. In the same year, the Bermuda governor Daniel Tucker complained similarly of the "many Covetous Adventurers that rather with greediness Desire their instant gaine, than with noble mindes to consider the infancy of the business." Tucker's successor, Nathaniel Butler, found himself "delivered up to a world of confusion," and blamed the Bermuda Company for many of the shortages that existed: only through proper support, he warned the company member Sir Nathaniel Rich, could the colony flourish. Yet underlying the grievances on either side were the deeper questions of whether conflict of interest between colonizer and merchant could be overcome, and whether trade in such commodities as fish, furs, ambergris, or tobacco could ever generate sufficient wealth to support the establishment of colonial communities. The standard complaint about French colonies in North America, wrote Biencourt, was that "on n'en voit aucun fruit." It was easy enough, he pointedly continued, "de parler entre oisifs ou assis dans une chaise." For Biencourt, one indication of the potential success of colonization was the way in which the English colonies of Virginia and Bermuda were rapidly being populated. As regards Bermuda, however, the investor George Carew took a very different view: "what will be the successe of that plantation", he wrote in early 1617, "is muche to be feared, for my particular I am hopelesse of any proffitt from thence."<sup>48</sup> Support of colonization through trade was still a questionable principle.

A third answer to the problem of reconciling the interests of trade and colonization lay in the development of food production through agriculture. If the colonial population could be made self-sufficient in all essential commodities, trade could then proceed without the burden of providing supply shipments, and the colonial residents in turn would prosper

47. Lefroy, *Memorials*, I, 275-6, Grievances of inhabitants, [1622].

48. *Collection de manuscrits contenant lettres, mémoires, et autres documents historiques relatifs à la Nouvelle-France recueillis aux Archives de la province de Québec ou copiés à l'étranger* (4 vols., Québec: Imprimerie A. Coté et Compagnie, 1883-85), I, 57-9, Biencourt to town authorities of Paris, 1 September 1618; Ives, *Rich Papers*, p. 97, Daniel Tucker to Sir Nathaniel Rich, 10 March 1618; *ibid.*, pp. 193-4, 227, Nathaniel Butler to Sir Nathaniel Rich, 23 October 1620, 12 January 1621; Lefroy, *Memorials*, I, 126, George Carew to Sir Thomas Roe, 18 January 1617.

through their own industrious cultivation of the land. As early as 1612, the Virginia Company showed itself well aware of this approach to colonization, in its instructions to Richard Moore in Bermuda. "We... give you an especial charge", the instructions read, "to have a dilligent eye and Care to cause the ground to be fitted in due and seasonable tyme for the settinge and sowinge of Come, and other provisions for the releife of your companie to free us from the Care and Charge of Continually supplies from hence the neglect whereof hath bene a great mayne and scandall to manye other worthie accons heretofore undertaken in this nature."<sup>49</sup> With that sentiment, Marc Lescarbot agreed entirely. For him the unsuccessful sixteenth-century French attempts in Florida gave a prime example of failure to attach proper importance to agriculture, for the colonists there had experienced famine conditions despite a favorable climate. The Florida colonizers had had, Lescarbot continued, "le grande faute de leur part de n'avoir nullement cultivé la terre, laquelle ils avoient trouvée découverte: ce qui est un prealable de faire avant toute chose à qui veut s'aller habiter si loin de secours. Mais les François, et préque toutes les nations du jour'hui (j'enten de ceux qui ne sont nais au labourage) ont cette mauvaise nature qu'ils estiment deroger beaucoup à leur qualité de s'addonner à la culture de la terre, qui néantmoins est à peu près la seule vacation où reside l'innocence."<sup>50</sup>

Lescarbot's comments found an echo in the observation of John Smith that at least one early shipment of colonists to Bermuda contained "many Gentlemen ... [who were] very unproper for what they undertooke"; and yet the process of attaining any degree of self-sufficiency was in reality more difficult and complex than Lescarbot implied.<sup>51</sup> In Bermuda, as Smith explained, the necessity to work on such common tasks as the construction of defensive fortifications tended in the early years to draw effort away from agriculture, causing "famine and misery".<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, insofar as the commercial profitability of the islands was tied to the production of cash crops, an obvious difficulty existed in the division of available land between those crops and the production of food for local consumption. Smith, by 1624, was sceptical as to whether tobacco, any more than pearls or ambergris, could ever produce any significant profit in Bermuda. All of the other possibilities he suggested, however, involved agricultural cultivation in some form: "by Silke, Saffron, Indico, Madar, Sugar-canés, Wine, Oile, and such like, great profit may be expected."<sup>53</sup> Whether the production of these commodities could ever coexist, on a group of islands of the size of the Bermudas, with substantial food production, was a question that remained to be answered. In Acadia, meanwhile, one possible answer had been put forward by the missionary Biard. For him, colonization could best be approached by inducing wealthy patrons to subsidize settlement in order that religious conversions of native peoples could proceed. Small agricultural communities of French settlers would thus be established independently of the demands of merchant investors, and only later might trade be added to the colonial economy. Yet even Biard, with his customary realism, refused to assert that such a scheme could ever enjoy quick or easy success. "Il y faudra tousjours despenser les premières années," he warned, "justques à ce que la terre suffisamment

49. BR, Vol. A, 1612-23, Commission of Richard Moore, 27 April 1612.

50. Lescarbot, *History of New France*, II, 529. See also Marguerite Maillet, "Acadian Literature: Bibliography", in Jean Daigle, ed., *The Acadians of the Maritimes: Thematic Studies* (Moncton: Centre d'études acadiennes, 1982), esp. pp. 513-4.

51. Arber, *Works of Smith*, II, 646.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 646-7.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 632. On agriculture in early Bermuda, see also Craven, "Introduction", XVII (July 1937), p. 329.

cultivée, les artifices introduicts, et les mesnages accomodés, le corps de la colonie ait prins une juste accroissance, et fermé: et à cela faut se resoudre."<sup>54</sup>

## V

Acadia and the Bermudas, therefore faced a series of problems as commercial and colonial enterprises that were common to both. At the same time, the significant differences between the two colonies that were already emerging by 1624 should not be underestimated. The colony of Acadia by the 1620s had shown little sign of ever being able to meet the high expectations with which de Monts, Champlain, Poutrincourt, and others, had begun in the first decade of the century. Trade in fish and furs with La Rochelle merchants had enabled the colonists led by Biencourt and La Tour to remain in peninsular Acadia, but only in small numbers and surviving by the narrowest of margins. Bermuda, by contrast, had suffered during its early years from overcrowding and other difficulties arising from a rapidly growing population. The minister Lewis Hughes was inclined to take a moral viewpoint: "the number of people encreasing, and as they encreased, sin and disorder did also encrease, which brought the correcting hand of God upon you many wayes, so as divers did perish very miserably; but consider, I pray you, that most of them that so dyed were ungodly, slothful, and heartlesse men...."<sup>55</sup> Whether or not Hughes was right to regard this population pressure as a chastisement from which the community emerged strengthened, there was no doubt that Bermudian society henceforth showed signs of a complexity not yet evident in Acadia. As well as colonists from a variety of social backgrounds who came from London, from the counties of Essex and Kent, and to a lesser extent from such other parts of England as East Anglia, the first Indian and Black slaves arrived on the islands as early as 1616 and thenceforth comprised an increasing proportion of the population.<sup>56</sup> The calling of the first Bermuda assembly in 1620, and the promulgation by the Bermuda Company some two years later of a series of 212 laws that served effectively as a constitution for the islands, were clear reflections of this growing complexity. That the future of Bermuda was widely regarded with optimism was demonstrated by the tone and contents of the report of the Privy Council commission set up in 1623 to investigate the condition of Virginia and Bermuda in the wake of the damaging factional quarrels which had plagued both companies in the preceding years. Although the commissioners worried that there was "no Staple commoditie there raysed", except for the small annual tobacco crop, they concluded that the Bermudas could expect to prosper under the continuing rule of the company. Thus, the Bermuda Company escaped dissolution in 1624, and would survive the Virginia Company for some sixty years.<sup>57</sup>

By 1624, therefore, the characters of Acadia and the Bermudas as European colonies had begun to differ, and the course of their histories would henceforth diverge. Yet, given the original differences between the two in terms of physical environment and of human

54. Biard, *Relation de la Nouvelle-France*, pp. 102-3.

55. Wesley Frank Craven, ed., "Lewis Hughes' 'Plaine and True Relation of the Goodness of God Towards the Somer Islands'", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd series, XVII (January 1937): 78-9. On the role of the Puritan ministry in early Bermuda, see Babette M. Levy, "Early Puritanism in the Southern and Island Colonies", *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, LXX (1960), esp. pp. 164-200.

56. Wilkinson, *Adventurers of Bermuda*, pp. 93-100; Craven, "Introduction", XVII (July 1937), pp. 359-62.

57. Ives, *Rich Papers*, pp. 268-71, Draft of Commissioners' Proposal to James I, ca. June 1623; see also Wilkinson, *Adventurers of Bermuda*, pp. 175-9.

history prior to colonization, it is not surprising that that should be so. What is more remarkable is that European expectations of the two colonies should so often have run parallel during the early decades of the seventeenth century, and that common difficulties should have thus emerged. The expansion of northern European nations into the North Atlantic lands through a process of colonization was a new phenomenon at this time. The assumptions that governed European expectations were as yet largely untested, and tended to be generalized regardless of what local conditions in individual colonies might turn out to be. The applicability of the Spanish example from central and South America to more northerly colonies, with the implied aim of discovering mineral wealth, was one such assumed principle. Also assumed was the interchangeability of the concepts of climate and latitude. That Acadia should be able to support colonists with much the same material culture as their compatriots in central France, and pursuing agriculture in a similar way, was one apparently logical expectation that was confounded by the realities of North American climate. Similarly, the latitude of Bermuda suggested not only the possibility of finding pearls, but also the hope of providing commodities such as wine, silk, and olive oil, which were customarily imported to England from southern Europe. Confusion over climate differences between Europe and the Americas thus led to unrealistic expectations in both colonies.<sup>58</sup> What was not assumed, moreover, was any fundamental differentiation between island and continental colonies. While colonial promoters were not unaware of the eventual possibilities for extending European influence over large mainland areas, colonial expeditions in the North Atlantic territories during the early seventeenth century were small in scale and established settlements that were small in area. Several such expeditions chose to establish their settlements on islands for defensive purposes, even when mainland sites were available, the choice of Ste Croix island in Acadia in 1604 being one example. Even when mainland settlements were set up, they were — at least initially — islands in what was perceived by Europeans as a wilderness. In terms of settled area, if not in terms of territories claimed, a mainland colony such as Acadia was fully comparable with an island colony such as Bermuda.

In the context of these assumptions and perceptions, the comparability of certain aspects of the development of Acadia and Bermuda becomes more understandable. Even so, the existence of a time period within which these two colonies can be so closely compared might seem remarkable considering the dissimilarities that were evident both before and after the early decades of the seventeenth century. The phenomenon is less remarkable, though still significant, when considered as part of the transitional period of early colonization. Prior to the establishment of a firm social and economic basis for colonization, the interaction of colonists with the human and physical environment was dominated by a maelstrom of unanswered questions which led in turn to unfulfilled expectations and the constant possibility of failure. In the historiography of those colonies which conspicuously did not fail, but instead were ultimately able to gather large settled populations, there is a natural tendency to ignore early struggles as having only a marginal relevance to later development. For colonies such as Acadia and the Bermudas, which did not attain such comparatively large populations and which continued to encounter periods of instability in their development, the historiographical integration of the early period of adjustment and transition can more readily be accomplished. Their experience, however, was not initially atypical. For a brief time, differences in economic and environmental potential

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58. See Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "The Puzzle of the American Climate in the Early Colonial Period", *American Historical Review*, LXXXVII (December 1982): 1262-89.

between the various North Atlantic territories were obscured by prevailing assumptions and by the common effort to reconcile the fundamental conflict between commercial and colonial aims. Soon, the testing of assumptions through practical experience, and the diversification of the North Atlantic economy would allow the real complexities and variations to be more fully understood. Yet during the exceptional period of early colonization, even such diverse colonies as Acadia and the Bermudas might show fleeting but genuine similarities of experience. These similarities, in turn, provide evidence of the more general struggles of northern European colonizers in the face of realities they could not yet comprehend, much less control or change.