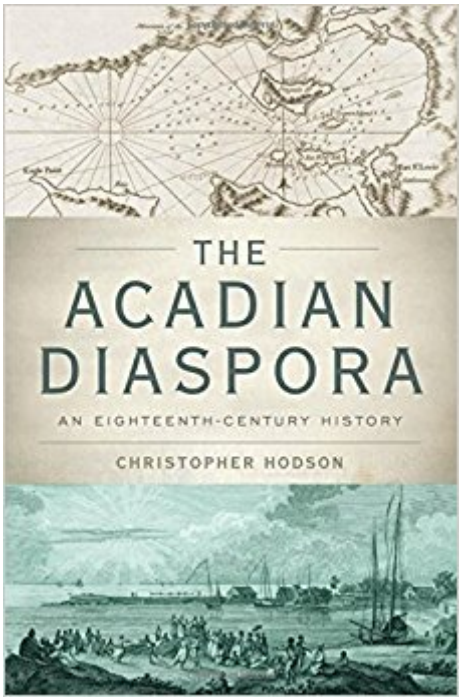
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The Acadian Diaspora: An Eighteenth-Century History (Oxford Studies In International History)



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Synopsis

Late in 1755, an army of British regulars and Massachusetts volunteers completed one of the cruelest, most successful military campaigns in North American history, capturing and deporting seven thousand French-speaking Catholic Acadians from the province of Nova Scotia, and chasing an equal number into the wilderness of eastern Canada. Thousands of Acadians endured three decades of forced migrations and failed settlements that shuttled them to the coasts of South America, the plantations of the Caribbean, the frigid islands of the South Atlantic, the swamps of Louisiana, and the countryside of central France. The Acadian Diaspora tells their extraordinary story in full for the first time, illuminating a long-forgotten world of imperial desperation, experimental colonies, and naked brutality. Using documents culled from archives in France, Great Britain, Canada, and the United States, Christopher Hodson reconstructs the lives of Acadian exiles as they traversed oceans and continents, pushed along by empires eager to populate new frontiers with inexpensive, pliable white farmers. Hodson's compelling narrative situates the Acadian diaspora within the dramatic geopolitical changes triggered by the Seven Years' War. Faced with redrawn boundaries and staggering national debts, imperial architects across Europe used the Acadians to realize radical plans: tropical settlements without slaves, expeditions to the unknown southern continent, and, perhaps strangest of all, agricultural colonies within old regime France itself. In response, Acadians embraced their status as human commodities, using intimidation and even violence to tailor their communities to the superheated Atlantic market for cheap, mobile labor. Through vivid, intimate stories of Acadian exiles and the diverse, transnational cast of characters that surrounded them, The Acadian Diaspora presents the eighteenth-century Atlantic world from a new angle, challenging old assumptions about uprooted peoples and the very nature of early modern empire.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Hodson skillfully synthesizes the imperial and personal experience of the Acadian diaspora through an emphasis on two lines of analysis: the grand designs of imperial visionaries that would be made possible by Acadian labor and the personal experience of imperialism through the lives of individual Acadians involved in such imperial designs on the ground. In doing so, The Acadian Diaspora contributes to our historical understanding of the nature of imperialism as well as the role of the individual in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world...An insightful and personal analysis of migration, The Acadian Diaspora deepens our understanding of global history by portraying the eighteenth century as an imperial world in flux that created opportunities for some while closing the door to prosperity for many."--H-Net"[A] welcome addition to the growing field of French Atlantic history on at least two fronts. ... [A] brilliant marriage of the day-to-day microworld of Acadians forced to make choices across space and time and the macrodynamics of imperial experimentation over three decades." --Journal of Modern History"Hodson’s thorough research takes him through a vast archive of documents... Recommended." --CHOICE"Engaging.... The key themes that emerge from of this study are, first, the disorganization and unreality of imperial dreams in the eighteenth century and, second, the price that a vulnerable population whose members had flourished for decades in the interstices of two empires paid when imperial gambles trumped the family and cultural ties that bound them together." --American Historical Review"The Acadian Diaspora is a fine debut performance by a young historian of rare sensitivity and talent. Christopher Hodson has taken a long-familiar episode--the expulsion of French settlers from eastern Canada following the Seven Years War--and transformed it into a story of very deep historical significance. As he follows those expelled to their many far-flung destinations, he manages to connect their diaspora with imperialism, slavery, nascent capitalism, and other forces that were just then reshaping the early modern world. His research is impeccable, his interpretive approach altogether sound. And, perhaps most important of all, his writing is so lively and graceful that a reader is carried to a place of great emotional as well as intellectual resonance. In sum: a triumph of artful reconstruction!" --John Demos, author of The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story From Early America"A wondrous

journey, luminously told, The Acadian Diaspora invites readers into the social and cultural richness of the French Atlantic. Through stories of exiles, migrants, and seekers, Hodson reconfigures our understanding of empire and analyzes the conjoined creation of American and European eighteenth-century worlds." --Laurent Dubois, author of Haiti: The Aftershocks of History "Hodson is a superb ironist. The Acadian story will never look the same again. But then neither will that of the French Empire: its brutally consequential entanglements with Enlightenment thought wrecked peasant lives long after the initial deportations by the British." --Catherine Desbarats, McGill University"Christopher Hodson movingly tells the stories of the Acadian exiles who scattered all over the Atlantic world after British forces expelled them from their homes in 1755. But his book also reveals tells a much broader tale about eighteenth-century utopian schemes. With wit and humanity, he traces how Acadians became the objects--and often the victims--of countless ill-conceived efforts by imperial officials whose grandiose plans depended on the labor the exiles were expected to provide." --Daniel K. Richter, author of Before the Revolution: America’s Ancient Pasts"I would recommend this well written and researched book. It gives a fine narrative account of an important aspect of North American history and describes the plight of a significant Catholic population." --Catholic Books Review"An extremely compelling and valuable contribution to both cultural studies and imperial history Will be of particular interest to those researching the francophone Atlantic world." --French Studies"The first academic book to cover the wide diaspora across the transatlantic world of the later 18th century into the early 19th century in scrupulous concrete detail." --The Eighteenth Century Intelligencer"A decade of research has netted fresh archival material and important insights into the ordeal of Acadians transplanted to the southern American colonies, the French coastal island of Belle-ÃƒÅ le-en-Mer, and other locales." --Canada’s History"This book tells the familiar story of the Acadian experience of deportation and exile with a new focus . [It] weaves a comprehensive narrative that provokes a reconsideration of the importance of colonial ventures in late eighteenth-century France as well as sympathy for the refugees whose lives were further wrecked by those ventures’ failures." --Journal of American Studies"This engagingly written and excellently researched study is the first to explore fully the Acadians’ role in the reconstruction of French imperialism after the end of the Seven Years’ War in 1763... The Acadian Diaspora ensures that the Acadians can no longer be seen in essence as mere victims of imperial cruelty.... Hodson shows instead they were energetic and canny actors who survived against tremendous odds on the cutting edge of French Enlightenment agricultural experimentation. It is this emphasis on Enlightenment experimentation that marks this return to the best tradition of grand and erudite imperial history as a quintessentially ’Eighteenth Century History.’" --Kenneth Banks, H-France

Christopher Hodson is Assistant Professor of History at Brigham Young University.

Very interesting read!

the book depicks my Forest family who were deported to Connecticut & England for 7 years until the treaty was signed.

History is always interesting.

I have not completely read through it. I bought it as a gift, but the parts that I have read are great.

A excellent book on the Acadians. My sons and I liked the book a lot. I'm looking for more books of that kind.

While this book is dry, dry, dryÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •and definitely has an academic styleÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •it is relatively easy reading. Not long, and is chunked up into logical sections. I used this to help research my husband's family. I learned a lot that I really had no idea about (not being a Cajun myself). Even those who do descend from the original group of Acadians forced out of Nova Scotia, and eastern Canada in 1755 will learn much. Many do not know how they got to LouisianaÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •that it wasn't a direct migration at all! That many moved via a circuitous route to places all around the Atlantic basin in both hemispheres and stayed there. Many don't realize just how long ago it wasÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •some family memories seem to stop with the civil war. I heard from my own family, assertions that records were lost in "Church fires." Not so for those parishes deep in the southern swamps. Other records showing their Canadian existence and migrations are really fascinating. Not all of this is in this bookÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •but it gives you a really good background to learn more. Recommended. Good citations of source material.

Well written but disappointing. As a Louisiana Cajun, I expected more about the Louisiana Cajuns and less about general history.

I was able to be in Prof. Hodson's class throughout college, and I have to say though the courses were extremely difficult, the man was riveting in his lectures. This book is no different than those

classes. Excellent read on the Acadians or French-Americans who lost their land after wars with Britain. I've yet to read any other book that tracks these peoples down and reveals their new destinations. Highly recommend the book for anyone who is interested in early North American history.

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