

# “A highly favoured people”: The Planter Narrative and the 1928 Grand Historic Pageant of Kentville, Nova Scotia

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Article abstract

*The 1928 historic pageant in Kentville, Nova Scotia, offers a fascinating example of the crucial role that a community's narrative self-conception plays in the construction of its history. As a tale of the Planter's presence in the Annapolis Valley, the pageant was both celebratory and exclusionary. The community elite created a story about the providential arrival of the Planters beginning in 1760 that served to minimize the Planter impact on both the Acadians and Mi'kmaq while emphasizing the progress of the Planter descendants in the modern town. Directed by a woman, the pageant was also a gendered narrative in which the expanding role of women in public life was highlighted.*

# “A highly favoured people”: The Planter Narrative and the 1928 Grand Historic Pageant of Kentville, Nova Scotia

ALISON NORMAN

*Le spectacle historique présenté en 1928 à Kentville, en Nouvelle-Écosse, fournit un exemple fascinant du rôle crucial que la façon dont une communauté se perçoit et se raconte joue dans la construction de son histoire. Le spectacle historique, qui racontait l'origine de la présence des colons de la Nouvelle-Angleterre dans la vallée de l'Annapolis, avait une fonction de célébration et d'exclusion. L'élite communautaire inventa une histoire au sujet de l'arrivée providentielle des colons de la Nouvelle-Angleterre à compter de 1760, histoire qui avait pour effet de minimiser l'impact de ces colons sur les Acadiens et les Mi'kmaq, tout en faisant ressortir les progrès accomplis par leurs descendants dans la ville moderne. Le spectacle, dirigé par une femme, réservait aussi un traitement différencié aux femmes en mettant en lumière le rôle grandissant de celles-ci dans la vie publique.*

*The 1928 historic pageant in Kentville, Nova Scotia, offers a fascinating example of the crucial role that a community's narrative self-conception plays in the construction of its history. As a tale of the Planter's presence in the Annapolis Valley, the pageant was both celebratory and exclusionary. The community elite created a story about the providential arrival of the Planters beginning in 1760 that served to minimize the Planter impact on both the Acadians and Mi'kmaq while emphasizing the progress of the Planter descendants in the modern town. Directed by a woman, the pageant was also a gendered narrative in which the expanding role of women in public life was highlighted.*

ON THE AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 14th 1928, 30 men and women, all descendants of Kings County Planters, sailed down the Cornwallis River in an open boat and landed at Town Plot in Kentville. In a re-enactment of the 1760 arrival of their New England Planter ancestors, the descendents – dressed in Planter costumes brought in from Boston – disembarked just below the Kentville iron bridge and posed for photographs “with the beautiful scenery of the Cornwallis Valley as a background,” and several of these photographs were subsequently featured on the front pages of *The Halifax Chronicle* and *The Advertiser* under the title “Not as Old as They Look.”<sup>1</sup> The re-enactors proceeded to the head of a mile-long parade where

1 “Brilliant Patriotic ‘Pageant of the Valley’ Is Outstanding Feature of Carnival Program,” *The Advertiser* (Kentville), 16 August 1928. These photographs appeared on the front pages of *The Advertiser* and *The Halifax Chronicle*. The phrase “a highly favoured people” in the title of this article is from an address by Lieut. Governor J.C. Tory at the opening of the pageant; see H.W. Porter,

Alison Norman, “‘A highly favoured people’: The Planter Narrative and the 1928 Grand Historic Pageant of Kentville, Nova Scotia,” *Acadiensis* XXXVIII, no. 2 (Summer/Autumn 2009): 116-40.

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“they were one of the chief attractions.” The landing of the Planter descendants and the parade through Kentville began the three-day Summer Carnival and Old Home Week, of which the “Grand Historic Pageant” was the feature attraction.<sup>2</sup>

The pageant served as the perfect occasion to celebrate and enforce a particular version of the Planter narrative, a story constructed by the Kentville elite to boost the town's image, attract tourists and business, and to seduce former residents to move back home. The planners of the pageant included local politicians and historians, Planter descendants, and business people (especially from the railway and apple industries). Kentville had “a good share,” stated Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton in the 1910, original edition of his *The History of Kings County*, of “intelligent, well-bred men and women of more or less education as the case might be, but of refined instincts and cultivated tastes” who were involved in the pageant.<sup>3</sup> The planners narrated a story of the Planters' providential arrival in 1760 and later successes in the Annapolis Valley, but the impact of their settlement on both the Mi'kmaq and the Acadians was minimized if not ignored. The pageant also overlooked other major events, including the arrival of the Loyalists, Nova Scotia's entry into Confederation, and Nova Scotia's role in the British Empire.

The narrative presented in 1928 thus contained a particular version of progress and development in the Annapolis Valley that commemorated certain events and completely omitted others. But it was not an antimodern narrative like many other pageants and commemorations of the time. The narrative's primary aim was to foster the Planter identity of a hardworking, sober, industrious, chosen people. The Planter identity was neither British, American, nor Canadian, but rather that of a particular group with a shared history of migration.<sup>4</sup> And while identities are never stable, to a great extent events like the pageant are often used to construct a community's identity. The establishment of a foundational narrative that traced progress from past to present served to foster community identity as well as pride in the Planter roots of King's County. As Lieutenant-Governor J.C. Tory stated in the carnival's opening address to the people of Kentville: “You of Kings County are a highly favoured people. You have a great heritage, rich in mythological lore and historic incident, and in educational and social opportunity. . . . Kings County, however, is not Nova Scotia, nor Canada, nor the British Empire, but it can be a splendid part of all these.”<sup>5</sup> Kentville newspaper

“Brilliant Pageant Opens Kentville's Summer Carnival,” *The Halifax Chronicle*, 15 August 1928. I would like to thank Kings County Museum Curator Bria Stokesbury and local historians Ed Coleman and Louis Comeau for their generous research help, and Caroline-Isabelle Caron for telling me where to find the souvenir program. I would also like to express my thanks to Cecilia Morgan, Jennifer Bonnell, Kristine Alexander, Derek Flack, and the members of the Larkin Group as well as the anonymous reviewers for *Acadiensis* for all of their thoughtful comments and suggestions.

- 2 Aside from brief comments in one diary, I have not been able to uncover any other diaries, letters, or other personal reflections on the pageant. Additionally, no archival records of the planning committee exist in either Kentville or Halifax. Thus, aside from newspaper reports of the production, it is difficult to uncover the intentions of the planners.
- 3 Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton, *The History of Kings County, Nova Scotia: Heart of the Acadian Land*, 2nd ed. (Belleville, ON: Mika Studio, 1972), 138.
- 4 Unlike the Loyalists (who also have a non-national identity), the Planters were entirely self-interested in their quest for land, moving and immigrating repeatedly in their efforts to own more property. They were not forced out of New England, but went to Nova Scotia to better their own interests.
- 5 Lt.-Gov. J.C. Tory, quoted in Porter, “Brilliant Pageant Opens Kentville's Summer Carnival,” *Halifax Chronicle*, 15 August 1928.

reporter H.W. Porter then summarized Tory's conclusion: "It is well to have the larger vision for it brings unity, and from unity comes power and liberty and national and imperial greatness."<sup>6</sup> Tory's comments, however, came before the pageant had occurred. Although it was full of "mythological lore and historic incident," the pageant's organizers were not particularly interested in the "larger vision" of Canada or the British Empire. The story they told was a local one. Through an examination of this historical pageant during the 1928 Summer Carnival in Kentville, this article explores how the community elite created a narrative based on local Planter history that was celebratory of the past and exclusionary while also being especially modern in its outlook (unlike other Nova Scotia commemorations of the time). This narrative was a gendered story in which women acted as allegorical and iconic figures. The selection of some of the female actors suggests that pageant director Daisy Foster saw women's expanding roles in public life as part of Kentville's modern future. The progress depicted in the pageant was also part of a civic tourism campaign through which those who had left the Valley, or whose ancestors had left years ago, might be drawn back "home" to join the continuing growth of the modern, progressive town.

The study of historical memory and commemoration is a relatively new but rapidly growing field in Canadian history. Pageants, parades, royal tours, radio addresses, and heroes and heroines have been widely studied as historical acts of the invention of tradition and identity that occurred across the country.<sup>7</sup> In Atlantic Canada, early work by Ian McKay set the stage for the interrogation of public memory of the region.<sup>8</sup> In his 1994 book, *The Quest of the Folk*, McKay argues that the folk culture that was

6 Porter, "Brilliant Pageant Opens Kentville's Summer Carnival," *Halifax Chronicle*, 15 August 1928.

7 Harold Bérubé, "Commémorer la ville : une analyse comparative des célébrations du centenaire de Toronto et du tricentenaire de Montréal," *Revue D'Histoire de l'Amérique Française* 57, no. 2 (2003): 209-36; Colin Coates and Cecilia Morgan, *Heroines and History: Representations of Madeleine De Vercheres and Laura Secord* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Robert Cupido, "The Medium, the Message and the Modern: The Jubilee Broadcast of 1927," *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, "Performing Canada" special issue, no. 26 (Fall 2002): 101-23; Alan Gordon, *Making Public Pasts: The Contested Terrain of Montréal's Public Memories, 1891-1930* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001); Craig Heron and Steven Penfold, *The Workers' Festival: A History of Labour Day in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Mark McGowan, *Creating Canadian Historical Memory: The Case of the Famine Migration of 1847*, Canada's Ethnic Group Series, vol. 30, (Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association, 2006); H.V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building: Spectacle and Pageantry at Quebec's Tercentenary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Ian Radforth, *Royal Spectacle: The 1869 Visit of the Prince of Wales to Canada and the United States* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); Ronald Rudin, *Founding Fathers: The Celebration of Champlain and Laval in the Streets of Quebec, 1878-1908* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); C.J. Taylor, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada's National Historic Parks and Sites* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990); Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).

8 Caroline-Isabelle Caron, "Se souvenir de 'Acadie d'antan : représentations du passé historique dans le cadre de célébrations commémoratives locales en Nouvelle-Ecosse au milieu du 20e siècle," *Acadiensis* XXXVI, no. 2 (printemps 2007): 55-71; David Frank, "Minto 1932: The Origins and Significance of a New Brunswick Labour Landmark," *Acadiensis* XXXVI, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 3-27; Greg Marquis, "Celebrating Champlain in the Loyalist City: Saint John, 1904-1910," *Acadiensis* 33, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 27-43; Ian McKay, "History and the Tourist Gaze: The Politics of Commemoration in Nova Scotia, 1935-1964," *Acadiensis* 22, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 102-38; Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994); Ian McKay and Robin

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preserved by the likes of Helen Creighton and Mary Black, packaged and sold by the tourist industry and state bureaucrats, and purchased by tourists, was an invented tradition.<sup>9</sup> More recent work also investigates how civic leaders in towns and cities across the country have used particular versions of history to draw tourists to their towns.<sup>10</sup> Cecilia Morgan and Colin Coates suggest that a common theme found in the study of historical memory in Canada is “the anxious, integrative desire to create a common sense of destiny in the various sections of a disparate country.”<sup>11</sup> And the study of pageantry can also be seen as a useful way to learn more about how communities in the past have constructed historical narratives for themselves.

Pageantry became popular in the early-20th century when the Englishman Louis Napoleon Parker staged several pageants celebrating the medieval origins of small English communities beginning in 1905. Parker's pageants were explicitly antimodern and were intended to counter modernization, which he said “destroys all loveliness and has no loveliness of its own to put in its place.”<sup>12</sup> Pageants soon became popular in the United States, where they were used as a form of local boosterism, popular entertainment, and also for patriotic moralizing. Pageants on a large scale first arrived in 20th-century Canada with the Quebec tercentenary celebrations in 1908.<sup>13</sup> In both the United States and Canada, pageants were used by communities, and particularly community elites, to reinforce power relations by emphasizing the hierarchies that existed within the society. One use of history that was unique to pageantry in the early-20th century was the propagation of “the belief that history could be made into a dramatic public ritual through which residents of a town, by acting out the right version of their past, could bring about some kind of future social

Bates, *In the Province of History: Tourism and the Public Past in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010); Ronald Rudin, *Remembering and Forgetting in Acadie: A Historian's Journey through Public Memory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Paul Williams, “Erecting ‘an instructive object’: The Case of the Halifax Memorial Tower,” *Acadiensis* XXXVI, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 91-112.

9 In fact, McKay argues that “the concept of “invented tradition” is a useful one provided it is acknowledged that *all* traditions are historically constructed, and not merely those held dear by non-academics and marginalized nationalities.” See Ian McKay, “Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954,” *Acadiensis* XXI, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 14.

10 Robert Cupido, “Appropriating the Past: Pageants, Politics, and the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 9 (1998): 155-86; Robert Cupido, “Jumping on the Bandwagon: The Political Uses of Toronto's Centennial Celebrations” (paper presented at the 85th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, York University, Toronto, ON, 29-31 May 2006); Michael Dawson, *Selling British Columbia: Tourism and Consumer Culture, 1890-1970* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004); Karen Dubinsky, *The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooning and Tourism at Niagara Falls* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1999); Patricia Jane Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); McKay, *In the Province of History*; Francoise Noel, “Old Home Week Celebrations as Tourism Promotion and Commemoration: North Bay, Ontario, 1925 and 1935,” *Urban History Review* 37, no. 1 (Fall 2008): 36-47; James Overton, *Making a World of Difference: Essays on Tourism, Culture and Development in Newfoundland* (St. John's, NL: ISER Books, 1996).

11 Coates and Morgan, *Heroines and History*, 7.

12 David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 44.

13 Nelles, *Art of Nation-Building*.

and political transformation.”<sup>14</sup> The Kentville pageant of 1928 is a good example of this agenda as the pageant planners wished to build on past successes to help improve the future prospects of the community.

During the 1920s Kentville was experiencing some of the same economic problems as the rest of the province (although to a lesser extent). While the provincial economy had been given a boost during the First World War by the increased demand for steel, lumber, and iron, the recession that followed lasted longer in the Maritimes than it did in the rest of the country. Out-migration was one result, especially to the New England states as well as central and western Canada. Maritime Rights, a regional protest movement, began in 1922 in response to the region’s declining influence as well as the inability of regional leaders to protect Maritime interests in terms of federal subsidies, port development, transportation, and tariffs.<sup>15</sup> The Annapolis Valley, however, was somewhat protected from the recession by the apple industry, which experienced peak production in the 1920s and 1930s. McKay suggests that antimodernism was another prevalent phenomenon during this period, as “it transformed representations of the provincial identity” so that the region was promoted as a destination where one could get away from the stresses of modern life. He adds that “a loose network of cultural producers in Nova Scotia created their own distinctive variant of antimodernism,” and that the tourism economy was perhaps where this was most evident.<sup>16</sup>

The 1928 pageant got its start two years earlier, in 1926, when Mr. John Freeman Masters of Boston came up with the idea of a three-day summer carnival to celebrate the town’s centennial that would be held during the first-ever Old Home Week.<sup>17</sup> Masters was originally from Kentville and was descended from a Massachusetts family who arrived in Nova Scotia in 1760.<sup>18</sup> At the time, he was a manager of the Dominion Atlantic Railway Steamship Company in Boston and the president of both the Canadian Club and the British Charitable Society in Boston. Master’s enthusiasm and efforts to help organize the event resulted in a summer carnival that included a parade, a field day and sports at Memorial Park, an Old Time Fiddler’s Contest, a farmer’s picnic at the Experimental Farm, a golf tournament, horse races at Camp Aldershot, a band contest, and a street dance and carnival. Former residents were encouraged to come back to visit their home town during Old Home Week, and attendance was high as “many thousands of visitors enjoyed one or more days [in the area] and the housing accommodation within the town was taxed to capacity.”<sup>19</sup> The keys to the town of

14 Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, 4.

15 Ernest R. Forbes, *The Maritime Rights Movement, 1919-1927: A Study in Canadian Regionalism* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1979).

16 McKay, *Quest of the Folk*, 31, 33.

17 *Kentville Summer Carnival and Grand Historic Pageant. Souvenir Programme of Events. Kentville, Nova Scotia, August 14th, 15th, 16th, 1928* (Kentville, NS: Kentville Publishing Co., 1928), 2. The town was founded as Horton Corners in the 1760s. In June 1794 his Royal Highness Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, who was stationed at Halifax, journeyed to the Valley on horseback. Several years after his death, in 1826, the inhabitants decided to rename the village Kentville. It was the centennial of this renaming that was celebrated in 1926. See Eaton, *History of Kings County*, 123-4.

18 Masters was the “acknowledged Genealogist of the Nova Scotia Masters family.” His ancestors migrated from Connecticut and Massachusetts to Nova Scotia in 1760 and were granted lands in Hants County that fall. See “The Masters Family,” in Eaton, *History of Kings County*, 744-7.

19 “Kentville’s Great Summer Carnival a Glorious Success,” *The Advertiser*, 21 June 1926; “Kentville’s Summer Carnival Takes Definite Shape,” *The Advertiser*, 4 June 1926.



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Kentville were presented to the official representative of the governor of Massachusetts, the president of the Women's Auxiliary of the Canadian Club of Boston, and to Masters.<sup>20</sup> The event was considered, according to a press report, a success "beyond the hopes of the most sanguine members of the Carnival Committee." This report in *The Advertiser* concluded that "the people of Kentville and Kings County should realize that the 1926 Summer Carnival has probably never been equalled by any similar local celebration in the province of Nova Scotia and should accordingly honour the courage, enterprise, ability and determination" of the committee.<sup>21</sup> There was no historic pageant at this first carnival, but its success encouraged the town's civic elite to consider holding another celebration two years later.

Planning for the 1928 Old Home Week began in the spring of that year, with the formation of a Carnival Committee. Like most other commemorations and festivals, the Kentville Carnival and pageant were planned by the community leaders. Glassberg notes that in American pageantry of the same period, "the guardians of tradition concerned with the proper conduct of civic holiday celebrations came primarily from the ranks of the economic, educational, and hereditary elite. They stood apart from the mass of their fellow citizens not only because of their wealth, educational attainment, and family status, but also because they held positions of leadership in local and national cultural institutions."<sup>22</sup>

In Kentville, it can certainly be said that members of the local political and economic elite were the organizers of the event. The Carnival Committee was headed by Dr. William S. Blair, who was the president of the Kentville Board of Trade and the superintendent of the Kentville Experimental Farm. Blair had been working for years to improve the agriculture industry in the Annapolis Valley and had served as mayor of Kentville in 1920.<sup>23</sup> The honorary president was Mayor Raymond Crosby. The pageant chairman on the committee was Major Harris H. Bligh; he was the general manager of the British Canadian Fruit Association and worked out of its head office in Kentville, where apple exporting was the association's main business activity.<sup>24</sup> The publisher of *The Advertiser*, Clifford L. Baker, was the honorary secretary of the Carnival Committee; he also composed the finale song – "Hymn to Nova Scotia" – and his son acted in the pageant.<sup>25</sup> Aside from the mayor, local

20 "Distinguished Visitors Honoured by Great Audience," *The Advertiser*, 20 August 1926.

21 "Kentville's Great Summer Carnival a Glorious Success," *The Advertiser*, 20 August 1926.

22 Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, 31.

23 Dr. Blair was also a supporter of the Apple Blossom Festival. The 1934 coronation ceremony was held at the Kentville Experimental Farm, where he assisted at the coronation of his daughter Helen, as Queen Annapolis II. See Harold Woodman, "The Day Dr. Blair Blew into Town," *Kentville Town News*, April 1993; J.R. Wright, "The Station Establishment, Leadership, and Research Program," in *Advancing Agriculture: A History, Kentville Research Station 1911-1986* (Ottawa: Agriculture Canada, Research Branch, 1986), 10.

24 Souvenir program, 3. H.H. Bligh came from a long line of shipping men. After serving in the First World War, Bligh moved to Kentville in 1920 to run the Kentville office of the family fruit import and export business – Howard Bligh and Sons. He later founded the British Canadian Fruit Association. See "Death Ends Career of H.H. Bligh," *Halifax Herald*, 16 September 1935 and Eaton, *History of Kings County*, 576-7.

25 Souvenir program, 9. *The Advertiser* also paid for the silver "Loving Cup," which was presented to the Carnival Queen Miss Grace Lacey in 1926 as well as to later queens. The trophy now sits in the Kings County Museum in Kentville. See Mabel G. Nichols, *The Devil's Half Acre* (Kentville: Kentville Centennial Committee, 1986), 151.

politicians were also involved in the pageant in important ways. For example, George Nowlan was elected to the provincial legislature for Hants-Kings in 1925, and he played the Mi'kmaw mythical leader Glooscap in the pageant.<sup>26</sup> The wives of many prominent business leaders and politicians were also involved in the pageant, either through costuming, staging, music, or as actors. Representatives from five local organizations also sat on the committee, and their members not only volunteered to run many of the events but these organizations were to receive the profits from the carnival to use for "community and philanthropic purposes."<sup>27</sup> These social, business, and political leaders of the community were the Kentville elite.

The committee decided that the carnival would include the usual entertainments: a parade, sports competitions, fireworks, and a beauty contest. However, the historical pageant, advertised as the first-ever such event in the province, would be the main draw. According to the local paper: "While historic pageants have been all the rage in summer celebrations in English and American centres, nothing of the kind has ever been seriously undertaken in Nova Scotia."<sup>28</sup> Many of the planners no doubt benefitted financially and/or socially from the carnival and the added tourism and business that it brought to the community and, clearly, the pageant was an example of entertainment "largely for, but not of, the people."<sup>29</sup> It is difficult to determine, but the cost of the pageant at 60 cents for an unreserved seat and 85 cents for a reserved seat might have been too expensive for many people living in the Annapolis Valley. In his study of the celebration of Champlain and Laval in Quebec, Ronald Rudin argues that pageants were exclusionary and often took place in privatized public space.<sup>30</sup> This is certainly true of the Kentville pageant, as it took place in an enclosed hockey arena. The parade through town that kicked off the carnival, however, seems to have been widely attended as well, and this is an example of more accessible pageantry taking place in public space in Kentville. So while the pageant was the main draw, the parade in a public space attracted a large crowd because it was free.

Not only were Kentville community leaders intimately involved with the planning and production of the carnival and pageant, but descendants of Planters were well represented both on the pageant stage and as donors. It was important for them to take

26 Nowlan was a Great War veteran, a graduate of Acadia University, and was involved in the Maritime Rights movement. He maintained a high profile in his constituency, working on local issues and attending various public functions and ceremonies while also becoming involved in many voluntary organizations. He was re-elected in October of 1928, just two months after the pageant, and it is likely that Nowlan's participation in the pageant contributed to his success. He played Glooscap again in the first Apple Blossom Festival Parade in 1933. See Margaret Conrad, *George Nowlan: Maritime Conservative in National Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 33, 36.

27 The street dance, night carnival, and fire works display on Thursday evening, for instance, were "managed by the Olympic Chapter, I.O.D.E, co-operating with the officers and men of the Kentville Fire Department." See souvenir program, 16. Other organizations included the Red Cross, the Park Commission, and the hockey club.

28 "Historic Pageant to Be Feature Event of Mammoth Carnival," *The Advertiser*, 21 June 1928; "Will Be First Historic Pageant Staged in N.S.," *The Advertiser*, 5 July 1928. See also Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*.

29 John R. Gillis, ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 9.

30 Rudin, *Founding Fathers*, 177.



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part in, and have some control over, the telling of the Planter narrative through pageantry. For those who participated, the pageant was a means of reaffirming bonds of community. Forty-two Planter family names were represented by descendants who re-enacted the first landing at Town Plot on the afternoon of 14 August, who marched in the parade, and who then acted as Planters in the historic pageant later that evening.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps the most prominent actor in the pageant was Helen Wickwire, who played “Miss Nova Scotia”; she was a descendant of one of the original 1760 Cornwallis land grantees, Captain Peter Wickwire.<sup>32</sup> Planter family names, however, were common not only among the “stars” of the production but many of the other actors and participants as well. The pageant also received funding from Planter descendants, which suggests that it was important to them that the Planter narrative was told – and on their terms. John Masters, for instance, donated \$100. *The Advertiser* reported that the donors were “particularly interested in this historical pageant, and have asked that their donations be used toward the expense of costumes, etc., necessary to make the pageant an unqualified success.”<sup>33</sup> These Planter descendants were all involved in the production of the pageant that was, in part, ancestor worship.

Like many other pageants and historic commemorations, the planning of the Kentville Summer Carnival was intimately connected to tourism and civic boosterism in the town and the Annapolis Valley. The events were planned as key attractions for the second Old Home Week in Kentville, and were aimed at bringing former residents home from New England. Old Home Week celebrations were widespread in North America before the Great War and, not coincidentally, pageantry grew in popularity during this period. The growth of these festivities during the early-20th century may well have been the result of increased urbanization and the movement of people to larger urban centres from small towns and rural areas during this time, the consequent growth in longing for the simpler, less hectic way of life in the countryside, and an attempt to reconnect with those who had moved away from a community in search of opportunities elsewhere.<sup>34</sup> After the war, notes Francoise Noel, these celebrations were once again popular in towns and cities across Ontario and in other provinces, and they usually included all of the elements of traditional celebrations “with aspects of ritual, public drama, commemoration and pageantry.” In her recent study of Old Home Week in North Bay, Noel suggests how the pageants were often the main attraction during the week and “were used to celebrate the local in Ontario at a time when large numbers of the Ontario-born population had moved to the United States and the West or had been displaced from the countryside.” To be sure, the pageant presented during Kentville’s Old Home Week celebrations was also used to celebrate the local as well as attracting people who had left the town back for a visit. Although few studies of these celebrations in Canada have been done, Noel

31 The names represented were Avery, Bigelow, Bishop, Best, Burbidge, Borden, Blanchard, Beckwith, Brown, Bentley, Cox, Crane, Cogswell, Calkin, Caldwell, Chipman, Dennison, Dodge, Davidson, Eaton, Fuller, Fitch, Griffin, Harris, Jordan, Martin, Masters, Moore, Newcombe, Porter, Pineo, Rockwell, Starr, Strong, Sweet, Stuart, Turner, Tupper, Webster, Weaver, Wickwire, and Walsh; see souvenir program. All of these families have entries in Eaton, *History of Kings County*.

32 Helen embodied “The Wickwire Family.” See Eaton, *History of Kings County*, 867-70.

33 “Carnival Plans Maturing Rapidly,” *The Advertiser*, 19 July 1928.

34 J.M.S. Careless, *The Rise of Cities in Canada before 1914*, Canadian Historical Association Booklets, vol. 32 (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1978).

maintains that the “such celebrations, like parades, can profitably be used to study the social order of the city in the past, and that their considerable significance in the area of tourism promotion should not be neglected.”<sup>35</sup>

As was the case in the Old Home Week and anniversary celebrations in Saint John, Montreal, and Quebec City, “tourism was central to the planning” in Kentville.<sup>36</sup> The planners of the festivities wanted to attract tourists and former Nova Scotians to the region, and used advertising to do so. The carnival and historic pageant were publicized throughout the province and in New England. The local paper reported that “nearly one thousand copies of a huge two-colour poster have been circulated. This, with many other advertising features will bring the Valley’s premier Summer entertainment to the attention of practically everyone in Nova Scotia and many outside.”<sup>37</sup> In the months leading up to the carnival, *The Advertiser* ran multiple announcements stressing the civic importance of attending the pageant: “Every child, man and woman in NS, who can possibly do so, should see the historical pageant. . . . [It] will constitute the greatest effort ever made in this province to produce an historic pageant along traditional lines.”<sup>38</sup> The month before the carnival, the paper optimistically reported that “it is known that many scores of Kings County folks now living outside the province are planning to attend. Actually it is expected that the number of non-residents attending the Carnival functions will run into the thousands.”<sup>39</sup> In another article entitled “Important Epoch Commemorated in Pageantry,” the author (quite possibly the publisher and Carnival Committee member Clifford Baker) argued that the pageant would be “one of the most important events in the history of Nova Scotia” and that, apart from the artistic value, the pageant “will constitute a memorable patriotic demonstration.” He also spoke well of the Planter lineage:

Descended from those [Planter] families are many thousands of the finest type of present day Nova Scotians; and of all the constituent elements of the province’s population none has been productive of more leaders and men and women of influence in every department of industry, commerce, and art. Many descendants, after generations of life in Nova Scotia, have returned to the New England States to attain positions of prominence and honour in that country.<sup>40</sup>

Undoubtedly, these were the people that the planners hoped to attract back to the Valley. Masters was in charge of publicizing the event in Boston, and “he had discussed the proposed Carnival with many Nova Scotians in New England and they were enthusiastically behind it.” It is hard to know how many former residents actually returned for the festival but, as promised by Masters, representatives of the

35 Francoise Noel, “Old Home Week Celebrations as Tourism, Promotion and Commemoration,” 36, 37, 45. In terms of what happened in the United States, see Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, 18-21.

36 Marquis, “Celebrating Champlain in the Loyalist City,” 33.

37 “Lieut.-Governor Tory to Open Summer Carnival?” *The Advertiser*, 26 July 1928.

38 “Advertisement,” *The Advertiser*, 9 August 1928.

39 “Lieut.-Governor Tory to Open Summer Carnival?” *The Advertiser*, 26 July 1928.

40 “Important Epoch Commemorated in Pageantry,” *The Advertiser*, 19 July 1928.

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mayor of Boston and the governor of Massachusetts traveled to Kentville as did members of the Canadian Club of Boston.<sup>41</sup> Traffic through the port of Yarmouth was also reported to have been high that month.<sup>42</sup>

Once tourists arrived, they received an official souvenir program – “Kentville Summer Carnival and Grand Historic Pageant. Souvenir Programme of Events” – with its welcome by Mayor Crosby in which he pontificated on the achievements of the Kentville Experimental Farm, the railway, and the apple industry. His pride in local endeavours is part of what McKay suggests was the dominant story line for locals and tourists alike in 1920s Nova Scotia: the province was “a land of prosperity and enterprise.”<sup>43</sup> The mayor encouraged people to stay for more than a short visit by extolling the area’s virtues: “Beautiful, spacious, paved streets, unsurpassed public services, cheap power, and low taxes make Kentville a desirable place wherein to visit, to dwell, or to locate industry.”<sup>44</sup> This was the hope of the planners of the Summer Carnival celebrations – that former residents or their descendants would be attracted back to the town by the pageantry and fun. Aside from the carnival, Crosby suggested a visit to the Land of Evangeline, the Look Off, and the villages on the Bay of Fundy (all typical Annapolis Valley tourist stops accessible by car or rail). Clearly, the longer tourists stayed the more money they would spend and the better it would be for businesses that relied on tourism.

After much planning and rehearsal, and with the arrival of the much-anticipated tourists, the pageant was performed by 400 men, women, and children at 8 pm in the local arena on two successive evenings: Tuesday, 14 August, and Wednesday, 15 August. Over 3,000 people were in attendance the first night (a full house) and, considering that in 1931 the population of the town of Kentville was 3,033, this represented excellent attendance – even if a significant proportion of the audience was from out-of-town.<sup>45</sup> On the second night, according to the paper, the audience of 2,500 “was slightly smaller, but, if possible, more appreciative.”<sup>46</sup> Attendance at many of the other attractions of the three-day carnival, though, was lower than expected, as it seems that people spent their money on tickets to the pageant rather than for the baseball games, horse races, or the tug of war tournament.

Following the opening remarks by the mayor and the lieutenant-governor, the pageant, according to a press report, began “at a time shortly after the departure of the Acadians.”<sup>47</sup> The first scene was set in 1755, and “Glooscap,” the Mi’kmaq spirit,

41 “Historic Pageant to Be Feature Event of Mammoth Carnival,” *The Advertiser*, 21 June 1928. See also Porter, “Brilliant Pageant Opens Kentville’s Summer Carnival,” *Halifax Chronicle*, 15 August 1928.

42 “Passenger Traffic through Yarmouth Very Heavy: Exodus of Tourists Taxes Accommodations to Utmost — Tourists Still Arriving,” *The Advertiser*, 30 August 1928.

43 Ian McKay, “Of Runic Stones and Lockean Dreams: Life in Nova Scotia’s ‘Province of History,’ 1935-64” (paper presented at the Historian’s Craft, York University, 18 October 2007), 16.

44 Souvenir program, 15.

45 Porter, “Brilliant Pageant Opens Kentville’s Summer Carnival,” *Halifax Chronicle*, 15 August 1928. In 1921 the population of Kentville was 2717 persons, in 1931 it was 3033, and in 1941 it was 3928. See Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Canada 1941*, vol. II, *Population by Local Subdivisions*, Table 10.

46 “Brilliant Patriotic ‘Pageant of the Valley’ Is Outstanding Feature of Carnival Program,” *Halifax Chronicle*, 15 August 1928.

47 “Brilliant Patriotic ‘Pageant of the Valley’ Is Outstanding Feature of Carnival Program,” *Halifax Chronicle*, 15 August 1928. This slick phrase suggests that the Acadians had merely moved on to greener pastures, not that they had been forcefully deported by the military.

“soliloquizes on the desolate valley.” Local women played the spirits of “the lonely Rivers,” “Roads,” and “Deserted Farms,” and through song and dance they called across the sea to the New England Planters to come to the Valley. In the subsequent scene, a proclamation was read in various parts of New England offering grants of land to new settlers. The “Planters” then began to arrive, played by the same Planter descendants who had sailed down the Cornwallis River earlier that afternoon.<sup>48</sup> After they had settled into the Valley on stage, there were several tableaux in which the four seasons were acted out. At the beginning of each seasonal scene, “Glooscap” “summon[ed] the spirits” of the season and then the essence of that season was portrayed. During “Spring,” for instance, children dressed as apple buds and blossoms, and later the fruit itself (apparently ripened by children dressed as the breezes and sunshine) danced across the stage. In terms of “Fall”, actors were seen gathering the harvest as well as weaving and dipping candles. Again, children dressed as apples graced the stage, as did eight boys dressed as railway workers whose job it was to pack up the apples for export.

After the four seasons, the pageant continued along a chronological trajectory with a depiction of the visit of the Duke of Kent and the naming of the town in his honour, the founding of Acadia University, the arrival of the railway, and the launching of the largest sailing ship ever built in Canada at Kingsport. To represent the Great War, a shadow fell across the stage and a bugle was blown. The conclusion of the pageant focused on the present day, with first “Glooscap” looking down contentedly over the Valley and then a woman dressed as “Nova Scotia” appearing. She was held up by more women playing the allegorical figures of “Religion,” “Knowledge,” “Hope,” and “Ambition,” and they were all surrounded by 18 more women who represented the counties of the province, each bearing the symbol of the industry of that county. The music for “The Land of Hope and Glory” was then played while the entire 400-person ensemble gathered on stage. After a moment of silence, the entire cast sang the newly written “Hymn to Nova Scotia,” and the audience joined in for the final stanza by referring to the lyrics available in their souvenir program. Clifford Baker had written the lyrics for this song to the tune of “Rule, Britannia!,” and it was a love song to the province.<sup>49</sup> “The song was sung by the entire group of 400 people,” noted *The Chronicle*, “gorgeous in bright and colourful costumes, glittering under the powerful lights, who turning as one to ‘Nova Scotia’ stretched out their hands in adoration, and the hearts and voices of Nova Scotia’s children were raised in a hymn of homage.”<sup>50</sup> The national anthem (“God Save the King”) was then sung by the cast and audience, while the Union Jack and flag of Nova Scotia were folded together at the rear of the stage.<sup>51</sup>

48 Souvenir program, 8.

49 Souvenir program, 8, 9. “Land of Hope and Glory” is a British patriotic song, popular in the Commonwealth during the first few decades of the 20th century. The following week, the lyrics to the song were published in *The Globe*, along with comment that “Lieutenant-Governor J. C. Tory . . . and Nova Scotians from all parts of the Province proclaim it as one of the finest songs, from a patriotic standpoint, that they have ever heard, and declare that it should be adopted as the Provincial anthem for Nova Scotia.” See “Hymn to Nova Scotia,” *The Globe*, 21 August 1928.

50 Porter, “Brilliant Pageant Opens Kentville’s Summer Carnival,” *Halifax Chronicle*, 15 August 1928.

51 “The Finale of the Pageant,” *The Advertiser*, 9 August 1928. Interestingly, there was a distinct lack of focus on Scottishness, despite Ian McKay’s findings on the “commonsense” notion that Nova Scotia is essentially Scottish. See McKay, “Tartanism Triumphant.”

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And with that, “Nova Scotia” was able to move forward off the stage into the future – a “jewel in the crown of the empire.” The pageant was declared “a decided success” and “little short of marvellous” by the local paper, although one important attendee was less enthusiastic.<sup>52</sup> Lieutenant-Governor J.C. Tory, official patron of the carnival, made the following entry in his diary: “[It] was a very credible show, though weak in spots. On the whole the pageant was regarded as quite a success and was really very enjoyable.”<sup>53</sup>

There is much to be read into the particular narrative the pageant conveys. The planners conceived of a Planter narrative that celebrated the New England settlers as possessing a love of the soil, sobriety, industry, thrift, and a providential claim to the region. Even subsequent historians, such as G.G. Campbell, have been caught up in the excitement; Campbell argued, for instance, that while the Planter migration was “not the largest single migration to enter the province, it is unquestionably the most important.”<sup>54</sup> Clearly the pageant planners would have agreed. The pageant was about remembering and strengthening the bonds and connections between New England and Kings County. It was a story for the masses, informed by Kings County historian Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton, and it stressed the importance of the arrival of the Planters to the history of the Valley. They were presented as the founders of the fertile region and the reason for the present-day success, and they would also be the source of future successes. For the pageant planners and the Planter narrative they created, the Planters were clearly the most important aspect of the region’s history.<sup>55</sup>

It is clear that the familial connections between Nova Scotia and New England were central to both the Planter narrative described in the pageant and the ongoing economic relationship between the two regions. Not only did New Englanders first resettle the Valley after the Acadian expulsion, but people continued to travel between the regions in the following centuries. Historian R.S. Longley notes that the Planters were originally English Pilgrims or Puritans from the south of England before they became Planters in a “new” New England. They were people who were always in search of new land, and they responded in significant numbers to the proclamation made by Nova Scotia’s Governor Charles Lawrence in 1758. This need for land, combined with the high numbers of children borne by Valley Planter women, eventually resulted in the division of the original land grants and then the settling of land west of the settlements. Due to the limited amount of land, the final result was that “in the 19th and early 20th centuries many sons and daughters of Planters found their way back to New England. Here their descendants still reside.”<sup>56</sup> The movement of peoples between Nova Scotia and New England continued, with key proponents of the pageant idea living in both areas. During

52 “Brilliant Patriotic ‘Pageant of the Valley’ Is Outstanding Feature of Carnival Program,” *The Advertiser*, 16 August 1928; Porter, “Brilliant Pageant Opens Kentville’s Summer Carnival,” *Halifax Chronicle*, 15 August 1928.

53 “1928 Diary,” J.C. Tory Papers, MG 2, vol. 709, #2, Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM).

54 G.G. Campbell, *The History of Nova Scotia* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1948).

55 As McKay has written, for Nova Scotian author and historian Thomas Raddall “these New England settlers and their descendants, and a select few of the other English immigrants and Loyalists, really are Nova Scotia, or at least constitute the parts that count.” See McKay, “History and the Tourist Gaze,” 122.

56 R.S. Longley, “The Coming of the New England Planters to the Annapolis Valley,” in *They Planted Well: New England Planters in Maritime Canada*, ed. Margaret Conrad (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1988), 14, 27-8.

the 1926 Carnival, Mr. Burrell, the official representative of the governor of Massachusetts, addressed the crowd:

In passing, let me say that on the latter day, years ago, we gave to Nova Scotia some of the best blood in New England and their descendants continue to bind together Canada and the American states. We shall always look back with pride to our help at the time of the Halifax disaster. . . . Each year, now, our tourists are turning their eyes towards the beautiful Annapolis Valley, and they come back refreshed in mind and body, and full of pleasure that they have been permitted to see "God's Country."<sup>57</sup>

As such, not only was the special relationship between Nova Scotia and New England celebrated in the pageant; the planners also hoped that tourists from New England would continue to visit or return home to the Valley in increasing numbers to experience their history.

For both locals and former residents the Kentville pageant, like most public commemorations, functioned to establish a stable and progressive historical narrative from which purpose and pride could be derived. As Glassberg states: "Civic officials piled historical artefact, narrative, and image upon image in antiquarian detail to bring the full weight of tradition to bear upon their neighbours, discharging what they felt was their sacred duty to teach their beliefs and values to the public and to explain the present residents' place in a succession of past and future residents who together constituted the historical community."<sup>58</sup>

In Kentville this was most evident in the involvement of the pre-eminent historian of the county, Dr. Eaton, who was himself a descendant of several Planter families.<sup>59</sup> Eaton was born in Kentville in 1849, and was schooled there before leaving for Boston to study for the ministry at Harvard. He returned to earn a master's degree from Dalhousie University in 1904.<sup>60</sup> Eaton was also a poet, historian, and genealogist. In 1910 his book, *The History of Kings County*, was published in Boston, and in it he paints a picture of industrious, hard-working people who emigrated to rich lands and made the best of a good situation. He writes very little about Kings County prior to the arrival of the Planters, with less than 10 pages on the Mi'kmaq and less than 40 pages (out of 900) on the Acadians. The bulk of the book is devoted to detailing the arrival, successes, and family histories of the Planters throughout Kings County.<sup>61</sup> By the 1920s Eaton was recognized as the "Kings County historian, and one of Nova Scotia's outstanding literary men."<sup>62</sup>

57 "Distinguished Visitors Honoured by Great Audience," *The Advertiser*, 20 August 1926.

58 Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, 19.

59 Eaton was descended from the Massachusetts Planter David Eaton, who came to Cornwallis Township in 1761. See "The Eaton Family," in Eaton, *History of Kings County*, 648-55. Eaton himself wrote that he had "no less than five great grandfathers and their New England wives" as ancestors. See Arthur Wentworth Hamilton, "Nova Scotia and Her New England People," *The Advertiser*, 19 July 1928.

60 Ed Coleman, "Remembering Arthur W.H. Eaton (1839-1937)," *The Advertiser*, 30 April 2004.

61 Although the script of the pageant no longer exists, it seems as though Eaton's *History of Kings County* was used by Foster to write the pageant, especially Chapter VIII: "Kentville, the Shire Town."

62 "Historic Pageant to Be Feature Event of Mammoth Carnival," *The Advertiser*, 21 June 1928.



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When Eaton was informed of the plans for a pageant by John Masters in the early summer of 1928, he “expressed hearty endorsement” and “offered to write a short series of articles on the coming of the New England Planters to Nova Scotia, and other local historical features.”<sup>63</sup> And Eaton followed through on this commitment; a month before the pageant, for example, *The Advertiser* published a lengthy article by Eaton entitled “Nova Scotia and her New England People,” which was an overview of the arrival of the Planters and a list of their accomplishments.<sup>64</sup> The purpose of this article was clearly to serve as a history lesson for the residents of Kentville and to remind them of their great heritage. One week before the pageant the paper published Eaton’s poem “Puritan Planters,” which described the coming of the Connecticut Planters to Kings County and their subsequent happiness there.<sup>65</sup> The editors explained that this poem was a prelude to the historic pageant taking place the following week. Even those residents who did not attend the pageant but who read the local paper could still get their fill of Planter history. For those who had pageant tickets, they were being primed for the show. The articles were part of the process by which a historical consciousness was being crafted.

Eaton’s articles, however, failed to mention Nova Scotia’s First Nations population. As Colin Coates and Cecilia Morgan maintain, the colonial context of Canadian history has meant that “aboriginal peoples’ histories and memories have been both appropriated and forgotten” in historical narratives.<sup>66</sup> This was especially true in the Kentville pageant as not only were the original Mi’kmaq inhabitants of the area completely ignored in the Planter progress narrative, but their spiritual culture was usurped by local (white) politician George Nowlan wearing a Glooscap costume. As a representative of the government, Nowlan was the very agent of colonialism in the region.

There was also no acknowledgement that the celebrated arrival of the Planters only further removed Native people from their homelands.<sup>67</sup> Prior to 1760, although social, cultural, and political changes had taken place among the Mi’kmaq, they were not dependent on European trade and had maintained not only good relations with the French but also their own language and culture.<sup>68</sup> If it is the case that the Mi’kmaq were still self-sufficient in 1760, then it follows that their decline was due, at least in part, to the arrival of the Planters. Although the initial migration of Planters had to be delayed from 1759 to 1760 due to Mi’kmaq attacks on European and Euro-American settlements, the 1760-61 peace treaty between the British and the Mi’kmaq ensured more peaceful relations between them and their new neighbours.<sup>69</sup> As Greg Marquis

63 “Historic Pageant to Be Feature Event of Mammoth Carnival,” *The Advertiser*, 21 June 1928.

64 Eaton, “Nova Scotia and Her New England People,” *The Advertiser*, 19 July 1928.

65 Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton, “Puritan Planters,” *The Advertiser*, 9 August 1928.

66 Coates and Morgan, *Heroines and History*, 7.

67 The Mi’kmaq population had been in decline since the arrival of the French centuries earlier, but Planter settlement certainly added to their difficulties. See Virginia P. Miller, “Aboriginal Micmac Population: A Review of the Evidence” *Ethnohistory* 23, no. 2 (Spring 1982): 117-27 and Virginia P. Miller, “The Decline of the Nova Scotia Micmac Population, A.D. 1600-1850,” *Culture* 2, no. 3 (1982): 107-20.

68 William Wicken, *Mi’kmaq Treaties on Trial: History, Land, and Donald Marshall Junior* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002). See also Daniel N. Paul, *We Were Not the Savages: A Mi’kmaq Perspective on the Collision between European and Native American Civilizations* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2000).

69 Longley, “They Planted Well,” 23.

has written about commemorations of Champlain's arrival in Saint John, "none of these early conflicts or tensions, or the European introduction of diseases, firearms and alcohol, were addressed in the celebrations of the tercentenary. Similarly, there was no mention of the basic reality that the arrival of the French explorers, traders and missionaries, friendly or not, was the beginning of a long process . . . of the eventual subjugation of the Indigenous peoples." The ignorance of the impact of colonialism on the Mi'kmaq may have been the result of severely decreased numbers of Native people in the Valley and the province by the 1920s; it may also have resulted from a lack of knowledge about the colonial processes themselves. Just as in Saint John, First Nations people were "far removed from public life" in Kentville.<sup>70</sup> This may have been the reason why a Mi'kmaw chief or elder was not chosen to play Glooscap: there were few Native people in the county, and they were absent from the Kentville community. The Pageant Committee, however, was certainly aware of the early history of the Mi'kmaq, if only from Eaton's book (which seems to have provided them with much of their information). Pageant director Daisy Foster could have chosen to begin the pageant with a scene that featured a pre-contact Mi'kmaw encampment to set a more adequate historical context concerning the area's first inhabitants for the pageant audience. Eaton's book describes Mi'kmaw life, culture, mythology, and contact with the French – information Foster might have used. But this aspect of the region's history was almost entirely absent from the pageant.

The pageant planners, however, were not above using the Mi'kmaw spirit, Glooscap, to help bolster the Planter narrative in the pageant. Indeed, the appropriation of the character of Glooscap is part of a long and feather-filled tradition of "playing Indian." American historians Philip Deloria and Elizabeth Bird have both written about the practice of non-Native Americans dressing up in buckskin and feathers and acting out their fantasies about "Indians."<sup>71</sup> Kentville organizers, however, were not alone in this approach; as part of North Bay's Old Home Week celebrations in 1925, there was a Native village staffed by non-Native members of the Lions Club. They sat in a tepee with a "squaw," held bows and arrows, and smoked a peace pipe.<sup>72</sup> In the 1904 celebrations of Champlain's arrival in Saint John, the "Indian part of the program" consisted of members of the Neptune Rowing Club; no Mi'kmaq or Maliseet took part.<sup>73</sup>

In other examples of historical pageantry in Canada, Native people had been hired to "play Indian" as well. Often this meant donning a non-traditional or historically inaccurate costume, but at least they were active participants. Hundreds of Native people were hired to take part in the celebrations of the Champlain tercentenary in

70 Marquis, "Celebrating Champlain in the Loyalist City," 35. By 1929 the Department of Indian Affairs reported that there were only 1,929 people registered as status Indians in a band in the province, and only 72 in Kings County. See Government of Canada, *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended March 31, 1929* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1929). Of course these numbers were not always, or even often, accurate.

71 S. Elizabeth Bird, *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996); Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

72 Noel, "Old Home Week Celebrations as Tourism, Promotion and Commemoration," 40.

73 Marquis, "Celebrating Champlain in the Loyalist City," 34.

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Quebec in 1908, and they were an important attraction for the event, even though they wore buckskin costumes, headdresses, and bows and arrows purchased from the Plains.<sup>74</sup> One hundred and fifty Mohawks took part in the 1909 Lake Champlain celebrations discussed by Ronald Rudin.<sup>75</sup> In the spring and summer of 1920, Native peoples participated in pageants celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Hudson's Bay Company in Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, and Winnipeg.<sup>76</sup> Native people also took part in many other pageants and re-enactments during this period, and were always a crowd-pleaser.<sup>77</sup>

Despite the fact that there were no Native participants and only one appropriated Native spirit in the Kentville pageant, Mi'kmaq history was briefly acknowledged in the souvenir program. In the "Note Concerning Glooscap" that appeared at the beginning of the pageant description, a brief history of the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia was given as well as an explanation of who Glooscap was. Author Clifford Baker describes the Great Spirit of the Mi'kmaq and tells "tales of Glooscap's prowess" and his death by drowning in the Bay of Fundy. At the end he notes that "Glooscap now reappears in his native haunts to greet new scenes and faces and to foretell a great future for Nova Scotia."<sup>78</sup> The suggestion that Glooscap is pleased with the progress brought by colonialism is not only highly questionable, but it also erroneously implies that the Mi'kmaq must also be happy with their situation and that the pageant audience had nothing to worry about.

The absence of any reference in the pageant to the history of the Acadians in the Valley – either their "Golden Age" or their deportation – is another telling omission. As Caroline-Isabelle Caron suggests, "l'exclusion est trop patente pour n'être qu'un simple oubli." There were no characters dressed as Acadians, but the physical marks that they left on the land did play a significant role in the narrative. It was, after all, the "spirits of the desolate farms" who called across the sea to the Planters to come and end their loneliness. These spirits were accompanied by the spirits of the "Rivers" and "Roads" of the Valley. Surely the "desolate farms" could have been left out entirely so as to ignore the subject of the Acadian deportation as a whole. The fact these farms were a part of the pageant, however, suggests that it was not a burden for Kentville's historical conscience that their Planter ancestors came to previously inhabited lands. The absence of Acadian history in Anglo-Protestant pageantry was common in early-20th-century Nova Scotia, but it did not go unnoticed by Acadians. Caron's work, for instance, explores how in the mid-20th century Acadians themselves used pageantry, especially at the bicentennial of the expulsion in 1955, to counteract the absence of their history within anglophone celebrations: "Les fêtes commémoratives acadiennes visent aussi à compenser l'absence quasi complète de l'histoire acadienne dans les commémorations historiques des communautés anglo-

74 Nelles, *Art of Nation-Building*, 172-81. Nelles notes that the Natives were the only paid actors in the pageant – all others were volunteers (174-5).

75 Rudin, *Founding Fathers*, 210-11, 225.

76 Peter Geller, "'Hudson's Bay Company Indians': Images of Native People and the Red River Pageant, 1920," in *Dressing in Feathers*, 65-78.

77 Daniel Francis, "Chapter 5: Performing Indians," in Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), 87-108.

78 Souvenir program, 6.

protestantes, notamment dans la vallée de l'Annapolis.<sup>79</sup> Through their own pageantry, Ronald Rudin maintains, the Acadian communities of Nova Scotia were able to reconcile with their traumatic past and, in part, heal their wounds.<sup>80</sup> This is something that the organizers of the Kentville pageant had apparently no interest in doing. While the Planter past was not nearly so traumatic, their arrival did result in trauma to both the First Nations and Acadians; yet these effects were absent in the narrative told in the pageant. Unlike the Kentville pageant, later Acadian pageantry contributed to a conversation about the diverse history of the Annapolis Valley and, not surprisingly, made the Acadian story central to the narrative. Whether anyone outside of the Acadian community was listening, however, is uncertain.

Finally, the last major group left out of the pageant was the United Empire Loyalists. Between 1775 and 1785 thousands of Loyalists arrived in Nova Scotia, with some settling in towns in the Annapolis Valley.<sup>81</sup> These events, however, were completely omitted from Kentville's pageant, and no credit was given to them for the success of the region. This may have been due to the fact that the Loyalists are hardly mentioned in Eaton's *History of Kings County*.<sup>82</sup> Historian J.B. Brebner, however, suggests that the Planters and "Nova Scotia itself worked upon the Loyalists and other subsequent immigrants to produce an amalgam far more similar to New Hampshire and Maine than to the other Loyalist refuge in Upper Canada (Ontario)."<sup>83</sup> So their absence from the pageant may have, at least in part, reflected an absence of Loyalist identity in the province by the 1920s. On the other hand, the absence of the Loyalists may have had more to do with the general feelings of the Planters and their descendants towards the Loyalist migration. Neil MacKinnon suggests several reasons for the Planter antipathy towards the post-revolutionary refugees. Throughout the province, he writes, "what the old Nova Scotian community feared and resented was the Loyalist exclusiveness and their attempt to get a stranglehold on the virtue of loyalty."<sup>84</sup> The Planters were also worried about "a denigration of their own position as old settlers" and some colonial officials were concerned as well about fraudulent behaviour on the part of the Loyalists – a point that Eaton makes clear when he explains that the Loyalists who came to Kings County settled in the relatively unpopulated Aylesford Township between September 1782 and December 1783; Eaton adds that "among the grantees whose names stand on the Aylesford plan will be found not a few who are conspicuously known in the annals of the Revolution on the unpopular side."<sup>85</sup> He thus suggests (with evident distaste) that some Kings County Loyalist settlers might have fought for the American side in the Revolution. His comments are indicative of the

79 Caron, "Se souvenir de l'Acadie d'antan," 62, 60.

80 Rudin, *Remembering and Forgetting in Acadie*.

81 Prior to their arrival, in 1775, three-quarters of the population of Nova Scotia were New Englanders. See George A. Rawlyk, "The American Revolution and Nova Scotia Reconsidered," *Dalhousie Review* 43, no. 3 (Autumn 1963): 379.

82 He writes that "the complete history of the Loyalist migration to Nova Scotia between 1776 and 1784 remains yet unwritten." See Eaton, *History of Kings County*, 106.

83 John Bartlet Brebner, *The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia: A Marginal Colony During the Revolutionary Years* (New York: Columbia University Press 1937), 24.

84 Neil MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil: The Loyalist Experience in Nova Scotia, 1783-1791* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986), 101.

85 Eaton, *History of Kings County*, 90; MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 95.

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complicated relationship between Planter and Loyalist settlers in the Annapolis Valley. The pageant, however, presented an uncomplicated view of history: one with no Loyalists at all.

While the pageant left out First Nations, Acadians, and Loyalists, women were well represented. The pageant was directed by a woman and women played the majority of the roles, which was indicative of the gender concepts at work in the community. The first scene of the play, the "Pageant of the River, Roads, and Spirits of the Farms," featured women dancing about the stage in "attractive costumes."<sup>86</sup> The entities they represented were empty and lonely, and they called across the sea for the New England Planters to come and fulfil them. The feminization of unknown land in the New World by explorers, cartographers, travelers, and playwrights is a recurring theme in narratives of exploration and discovery; it allowed colonists to eliminate some of the fear associated with the unknown and instead perceive it as either maternal and nurturing or passive and virginal.<sup>87</sup> Certainly Nova Scotia was not terra incognita by 1760, but it was a new landscape for the Planters and it was a feminized one – waiting for men to come and improve it. No men appeared in the scene, and it was not until after the proclamation was read that the Planters appeared. These Planters were of both genders, although historically the first boats held men.<sup>88</sup> It is telling, however, that the director chose to have the physical embodiments of the empty land played by female actors.

Women also played all of the allegorical and iconic figures in the pageant, which was a common way for women to participate in pageantry and processions in the 19th century.<sup>89</sup> According to David Glassberg, allegorical tableaux that represented abstract virtues "offered women, who generally were excluded from the line of march, their major opportunity to appear in public celebrations, seen but not heard as they adorned floats pulled by their fathers, husbands, sons and brothers."<sup>90</sup> In the Kentville pageant, women played both allegorical figures and symbolic ones. Helen Wickwire played two roles in the pageant, a "spirit of the desolate farm" and the more important role of Miss Nova Scotia. As such, Wickwire wore classical robes, as well as a helmet, and she carried a shield featuring the provincial flag and a staff topped by a cross. This costume is similar to what women wore in allegorical tableaux in the United States and Canada; they were often draped in pseudo-Grecian robes while holding flags or other symbolic objects. Miss Nova Scotia looks somewhat like a warrior, however, with her militaristic accessories.<sup>91</sup> The convention of symbolic women warriors can be traced

86 Porter, "Brilliant Pageant Opens Kentville's Summer Carnival," *Halifax Chronicle*, 15 August 1928.

87 See Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

88 Longley, "They Planted Well," 26. Longley notes that on one of the first ships to land in 1760, the *Charming Molly*, there were 31 men and 2 women, as most of the men had left their wives at home until they had prepared living quarters for their families.

89 Bonnie Huskins, "The Ceremonial Space of Women: Public Processions in Victorian Saint John and Halifax," in *Separate Spheres: Women's World in the Nineteenth-Century Maritimes*, ed. Janet Guildford and Suzanne Morton (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1994), 153. See also Craig Heron and Steven Penfold, *The Workers' Festival: A History of Labour Day in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 72-6.

90 Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry*, 18.

91 For more on the woman warrior tradition, see Coates and Morgan, *Heroines and History*, 24-7.

back to the Amazon and the mythical Greek female warriors as well as Diana, the virginal Roman goddess of the hunt. Amazons appeared in Renaissance literature and culture alongside great men and women of history, and were generally associated with chastity.<sup>92</sup> Importantly, Miss Nova Scotia was played by an unmarried woman.<sup>93</sup>

The Kentville pageant also featured 18 women dressed as the counties of Nova Scotia, but these women seem to have been wearing contemporary clothing. The allegorical roles played by women in the pageant – “Hope,” “Ambition,” “Religion,” and “Knowledge” – are also quite revealing. Successful and strong women were chosen to play these roles, and this suggests some comfort with women in positions of power in the community. It is unclear who chose the actors, but quite possibly it was director Daisy Foster. Dr. Eva Mader, who played “Knowledge,” was a recent graduate of Dalhousie Medical School and worked at the Kentville Sanatorium in 1928.<sup>94</sup> The following year she left for Toronto where she began a long career at Women’s College Hospital before becoming chancellor of the University of Toronto in 1974. Her background certainly made her a good candidate for “Knowledge.” The choice of these four virtues also tells us something about the community, or at least the narrative the community’s elite wanted to tell. Hope, ambition, religion, and knowledge were all part of the Planter identity; they were held to be characteristics of the New Englanders who immigrated to the Valley as well as characteristics of Kings County residents in the 1920s.

Women also played the roles of “Spring,” “the Autumn Wind,” and “Acadia University.” Gladys Richardson Porter played “Acadia” and, although she was born in Sydney where her father was a long-time mayor, she moved to Kentville in 1912 and worked for the Dominion Atlantic Railway (DAR) as a stenographer before marrying. After her participation in the pageant, Porter continued her work in the community for better health care, was active in the local United Baptist Church, and was a founding member and first president of the local chapter of the Business and Professional Women’s Club. After serving several terms on the Kentville Town Council in the early-1940s, Porter was elected the first female mayor of Kentville (and the first in the Maritimes) in 1946.<sup>95</sup> She was mayor for 11 years until she was elected a member of the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly, and she was later presented with an Honorary Doctor of Civil Law by Acadia University in 1966.<sup>96</sup> As a pageant about progress and modernity in Kentville, the selection of Mader and Porter as “Knowledge” and “Acadia” suggests that women’s work in education, politics, and medicine was the way of the future.

92 Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), 205-6.

93 Helen Lovitt Wickwire was born in Kentville on 20 June 1906. She married Norval R. Waddington from Toronto and died soon after in Toronto on 11 August 1935.

94 “Biographical Sketch,” in *A Guide to the Dr. Eva Mader MacDonald Collection*, Dalhousie University Archives.

95 “Kentville Elects Province’s First Woman Mayor,” *The Register* (Berwick, NS), 7 February 1946. Richardson married Henry Wyman Porter. Porter’s father, W.E. Porter, was mayor of Kentville until 1912. H.W. Porter wrote the article about the pageant that were published in the *Halifax Chronicle*. See Porter, “Brilliant Pageant Opens Kentville’s Summer Carnival,” *Halifax Chronicle*, 15 August 1928.

96 Library and Archives Canada, “Gladys Muriel Porter,” in *Celebrating Women’s Achievement: Canadian Women in Government*, <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/women/002026-841-e.html>.



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While women played the allegorical figures, in general, men played the “mortals” in the pageant. They played the “Duke of Kent,” the “Sherriff,” the “Soldier,” “Farmers,” and some of the “Planters.”<sup>97</sup> This gendered division of acting roles stayed true for male and female children as well, although the only roles for boys in the pageant were as “Railway Section Men.”<sup>98</sup> There were many more roles for girls, including the “apples,” “blossoms,” and “baby snowflakes,” which was a twist on conventional historical narratives in which men got most of the parts. These gendered notions of proper theatrical roles suggest that it was acceptable for males to be involved in pageantry if they played “serious” roles as important (mortal) figures in the region’s history. Glooscap was the one exception. It was also quite appropriate and common in British and North American pageantry of the time for women to play allegorical and symbolic roles. The convention of the female personification of abstract virtues comes in part from semantic foundations in which abstract qualities such as beauty, peace, and justice are feminine in the Greek and Latin languages.<sup>99</sup>

Women not only acted as allegorical and iconic figures in the Kentville pageant; they were also heavily involved in the production. For instance, Edna Milliken Bligh (Mrs. Harris H. Bligh) was the “Director of Stage Ensemble,” and several women sat on both the Costume Committee and the Music Committee.<sup>100</sup> More significantly, as mentioned before, the pageant was written and directed by the experienced Halifax director Frances “Daisy” Foster. By the time she was asked to direct the Kentville pageant, Foster had been involved in music and theatre in Halifax for two decades. She had already directed multiple variety shows and musicals, and was an early member of the Halifax Ladies’ Musical Club.<sup>101</sup> She also appears to have been friends with folklorist Helen Creighton, who participated in one of Foster’s variety shows in the mid-1920s.<sup>102</sup> Foster had directed a musical comedy in Kentville in the spring of 1928 and, based on its success, was then hired by the Carnival Committee to write and direct the historic pageant. The committee had great faith in Foster, suggesting that her presence “promises success” as she was “an expert in productions of this kind.”<sup>103</sup> Foster moved to Kentville a month before the pageant in order to start work on it and, according to the financial records, was paid \$500 for her role as director of the pageant (a significant amount for the time).<sup>104</sup> Although female playwrights and directors were

97 Souvenir program, 7-8.

98 For instance, carnival secretary Clifford Baker’s son George acted as one of the “Railway Section Men” at the age of ten. See author’s personal communication with Mr. George Baker, Kentville, NS, 14 February 2008.

99 Warner, *Joan of Arc*, 218-36.

100 Souvenir program, 10-11. In her work on 19th-century parades in the Maritimes, Bonnie Huskins discusses how women often worked behind the scenes as stage hands, sewing costumes, and decorating floats. See Huskins, “The Ceremonial Space of Women,” 148.

101 “Historic Pageant to Be Feature Event of Mammoth Carnival,” *The Advertiser*, 21 June 1928.

102 Photos, Helen Creighton Fonds, 1987-178, no. 252, 253, NSARM. For more on Helen Creighton, see chap. 2, “Helen Creighton and the Rise of Folklore,” in McKay, *Quest of the Folk*, 43-151.

103 “Historic Pageant to Be Feature Event of Mammoth Carnival,” *The Advertiser*, 21 June 1928; “Will Be First Historic Pageant Staged in N.S.,” *The Advertiser*, July 5 1928.

104 “Kentville Summer Carnival Results in Small Financial Loss to Guarantors,” *The Advertiser*, 30 August 1928. Foster’s reputation as a talented director seems to have only improved after the Kentville pageant. In 1930, she wrote and directed “Onward: An Historic Pageant of Nova Scotia,” which was put on by the Young Professional and Business Women’s Club of Halifax. The following

few in number, their work in local communities and small theatres was important in the establishment of a home-grown, Canadian drama tradition in the early-20th century. Women such as Sarah Anne Curzon, Mary Reynolds, and Catherine Nina Merritt “fostered the artistic and feminist development of Canada,” and it is clear that Daisy Foster also made a significant contribution with her work on the Kentville pageant.<sup>105</sup>

While women were important players in the pageant, two industries dominated by men — the railway and the apple industry — were also prominently portrayed in the pageant. The DAR was an important part of the Planter narrative, as it was the epitome of industrial and technological progress in the Valley. As such, it was featured prominently in the historic pageant and it also helped to advertise the carnival. The DAR grew out of the Windsor-Annapolis Railway and it ran from Halifax to Yarmouth, down the length of the Annapolis Valley. Kentville became the headquarters of the DAR in 1868, and this resulted in new jobs, population growth, and, later, the establishment of Camp Aldershot in 1904. The history of the company and its importance to the region was portrayed in a pageant scene featuring a donated railway car and boys dressed as “Railway Section Men” as they complete the Halifax to Annapolis Royal rail line.<sup>106</sup> The DAR initially intended to carry Valley produce to Halifax, but officials found that tourists proved more profitable and so carried both.<sup>107</sup> As the company hoped to benefit from increased tourism, they advertised the carnival. On the back cover of the souvenir program, tourists were encouraged to stay at one (or both) of the two hotels operated by the company: the Pines Hotel in Digby and the new Cornwallis Inn in Kentville. The railway company had a long history of reliance on tourism; almost immediately after their incorporation in 1895 the DAR began to publicize the region, in particular as “the Land of Evangeline,” to tourists in the United States.<sup>108</sup> Through their publications, the company promoted tourism and

year, she directed a show for the Commercial Club of Halifax at the Capital Theatre, and it seems that soon after that she married Bernard Russell, also of Halifax, and left Nova Scotia for New York City. Although she continued to live in New York, she did return to Kentville in 1933 to direct the pageant for the first Apple Blossom Festival. That production illustrated the history of the apple, from its sinful role in the Garden of Eden to its present celebrated position as the main industry in the Annapolis Valley. See “Blossom Festival Proves Outstanding Achievement,” *Halifax Herald Tourist Edition*, 7 June 1933; Daisy Foster, *Onward: An Historic Pageant of Nova Scotia. At Fraser Memorial Hall on Thursday, Friday and Saturday May 15th, 16th and 17th, 1930* (Halifax: Young Professional and Business Women’s Club of Halifax, 1930); and Mary Smith, “People, Place, and Performance: Early Years of the Halifax Academy of Music,” *Dalhousie Review* 75, no. 3 (Winter 1996): 409-39.

105 Yvonne Hodkinson, *Female Part: The Art and Politics of Women Playwrights* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1991), 8-9. See also Kym Bird, *Redressing the Past: The Politics of Early English-Canadian Women’s Drama, 1880-1920* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004); Cecilia Morgan, “Staging Empire, Nation, and Gender: Catherine Nina Merritt and Imperial Pageantry, Southern Ontario, 1890s-1910s” (paper presented at the 83rd Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 3-5 June 2004).

106 Souvenir program, 11. Incidentally, Mayor Crosby had worked for the company for decades, and later returned to the railway to work as a conductor after his term of mayor was over. See Ed Coleman, “Money and Men of the Old Railway,” *The Advertiser*, 27 October 2007 and Marguerite Woodworth, *History of the Dominion Atlantic Railway* (Kentville, NS: Kentville Publishing Co., 1936).

107 Woodworth, *History of the Dominion Atlantic Railway*, 115-16.

108 Starting in 1900, they also offered a steamship from Boston to Yarmouth and subsequently a Pullman car ride through the Valley to Halifax. See Dominion Atlantic Railway, *Boston and the Maritime*

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travel in the province, but it also aimed to educate readers about the history of the regions they visited.<sup>109</sup> It is not surprising, then, that the DAR was both involved in advertising the Kentville Summer Carnival and the subject of a pageant scene.

The completion of the railway from Halifax to Annapolis Royal in 1869, celebrated in a pageant scene, “marked the beginning of a new era for the farmers of the Annapolis Valley,” notes Margaret Conrad, as the export of the area’s major crop – apples – had long been a mainstay of the area’s economy.<sup>110</sup> But apples were included in the historical pageant not only because they were the main source of Valley livelihood; the involvement of members of the apple elite in the planning of the pageant, such as Dr. Blair and Major Bligh, also helped ensure that apples would be part of the story. By the beginning of the 19th century, several townships in the Valley were producing large amounts of fruit,<sup>111</sup> and by the end of that century, as Conrad demonstrates, apples had fundamentally altered Valley farming by 1914 as production picked up and exports to the United States and England increased, especially as a result of improved steamship service and reduced freight rates.<sup>112</sup> A contemporary account by R.H. Whitbeck asserts that the Valley, “eight miles long and eight wide, [became] almost a continuous orchard.”<sup>113</sup> Although the onset of the Great War caused the collapse of the export market, peak production occurred in the decades after the war with huge crops harvested from apple trees planted before 1914.<sup>114</sup> The apple business was booming and, as such, featured prominently in the pageant. The success of the Kentville summer carnivals in 1926 and 1928, as well as the desire to continue promoting the apple industry, led to the creation of the Apple Blossom Festival in 1933, and the apple industry continues to be a vitally important industry in terms of both agricultural production and tourism.<sup>115</sup>

*Provinces: Dominion Atlantic Railway, Evangeline Route, Superb Nineteen Knot Electric-Lighted Twin Screw Steamship Service and Pullman Palace Car Flying Bluenose Expresses Via Yarmouth: Shortest Quickest Route between Boston and Halifax, St. John, N.B., Evangeline's Land and Cape Breton* (New York: J. Polhemus, 1900).

109 See, for instance, *Acadian Trails in the Nova Scotian Summer Land: "Land of Evangeline Route." A Short sketch of Grand Pre Park and Acadian Memorial Hall in the heart of Evangeline Country* (Halifax: Dominion Atlantic Railway, 1924); *Vacation Days in Nova Scotia: The Land of Evangeline Route* (Boston: Boston & Yarmouth Steamship Co. and Dominion Atlantic Railway, 1927).

110 Margaret Conrad, “Apple Blossom Time in the Annapolis Valley 1880-1957,” *Acadiensis* IX, no. 2 (Spring 1980): 15. See also Willard V. Longley, “Some Economic Aspects of the Apple Industry in Nova Scotia” (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 1931) and N.H. Morse, “An Economic History of the Apple Industry in the Annapolis Valley in Nova Scotia” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1952).

111 Eaton, *History of Kings County*, 195.

112 Conrad, “Apple Blossom Time in the Annapolis Valley,” 16.

113 R.H. Whitbeck, “A Geographical Study of Nova Scotia,” *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 46, no. 6 (June 1914): 415.

114 Production between 1910 and 1914 averaged about 2.8 million bushels, but dropped to an annual average of 2 million bushels between 1915 and 1918. Production soon recovered, though, with almost 5 million bushels harvested in 1919. See Conrad, “Apple Blossom Time in the Annapolis Valley,” 17-18. See also Anne Hutten, *Valley Gold: The Story of the Apple Industry in Nova Scotia* (Halifax, NS: Petheric Press, 1981).

115 Harold Woodman, *A Pictorial History of the Apple Blossom Festival* (Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1992). Interestingly, between 1880 and 1970, the year that produced the highest yield of apples was 1933, with over 8.2 million bushels. This was also the first year of the Apple Blossom Festival. See Conrad, “Apple Blossom Time in the Annapolis Valley,” 18, 27. According to the current festival

One significant fact, however, was not divulged during the performance of the pageant: apples were originally planted in the Valley by the Acadians and not the Planters. Eaton explains in his book that “the French had found the soil and climate of Nova Scotia well adapted for fruit raising and had set out small orchards, from which they gathered a considerable crop of apples. . . . This fruit industry the New England planters continued, and with the ripening of their apple crops they set up ciders presses as the French before them likewise had done.”<sup>116</sup> Some supporters of the present-day apple industry suggest that although the Acadians first planted apple trees with seeds brought from France, “it was not until the Planters, and later the Loyalists, arrived from New England that apple production was taken seriously.”<sup>117</sup> It was Planter descendant Charles Prescott, for example, who first brought modern apple varieties and horticultural techniques to the Valley.<sup>118</sup> The Kentville pageant might well have included some forlorn apple trees among the lonely “Deserted Farms” that called across the sea to the Planters, but it did not. While pageant planners failed to acknowledge that the apple trees were already there when the Planters first arrived, they also did not claim that the Planters planted them. They were just there, blossoming in the first spring, waiting to be picked by the deserving Planters in the fall. By not clarifying the origin of the apple trees in the Valley, and by taking credit for the growth of the industry, they further erased the presence of the Acadians in the region.

The importance of the apples to the 1928 pageant, and to the successive Apple Blossom festivals, suggests that the industry was important to the identity of Valley farmers. In 1910, Ralph Samuel Eaton, past president of the Kings County Board of Trade and a successful apple farmer, explained:

The breadth of the valley in Kings County, its central position in the fruit belt of Nova Scotia, and the intelligence of its fruit growers, combine to make the county one of the most progressive fruit-raising sections of the whole American continent. Already the development of the fruit industry has increased the value of the county’s farms many times over that they would otherwise have been, and with the future certain progress of the industry this value will doubtless in the future still further increase.<sup>119</sup>

There was pride in the achievement of the apple farmers of the Valley and this was reflected in the virtues espoused by the Planter narrative – hard work, honesty, ingenuity, and providence.<sup>120</sup> They were fortunate that the apple trees were there when

website, “although the sweet scent of apple blossoms has wafted over the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia for almost 400 years, it was only in the early 1930s that it was recognized as a resource, and that something should be done to exploit it.” See Apple Blossom Festival Committee, “A History of the Apple Blossom Festival,” <http://www.appleblossom.com/History.asp> as well as Nova Scotia Fruit Growers Association, “Nova Scotia Apples,” <http://www.nsapples.com/index.htm>.

116 Eaton, *History of Kings County*, 190-1.

117 Apple Blossom Festival Committee, “A History of the Apple Blossom Festival.”

118 Hutten, *Valley Gold*, 20-3.

119 Eaton, *History of Kings County*, 206. Ralph S. Eaton was Arthur W.H. Eaton’s cousin.

120 Conrad explains that “it was a source of great pride to the inhabitants of Kings County that, within a 25-mile radius of the shire town of Kentville, 75% of all Nova Scotia apples grown for export were produced.” See Conrad, “Apple Blossom Time in the Annapolis Valley,” 19.

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they arrived, but it was their industry that converted the trees into a massive export industry for the region.

In the end, the Grand Historic Pageant of the 1928 Kentville Summer Carnival was declared a great achievement. "To say that it went over big would be putting it mild," the *Halifax-Chronicle* declared. "It was a decided success, from start to finish, and as an educational, patriotic, and historic spectacle, it is doubtful if it has ever been surpassed in this Province. The characters came from all parts of the Valley, and they carried through their parts in a brilliant manner. It was little short of marvellous."<sup>121</sup> Despite the success of the pageant, though, the carnival suffered financial losses. The proceeds were to have been divided among five local organizations whose volunteers were involved in the running of the carnival, but unfortunately the carnival events were not as heavily attended as the organizers had hoped. As reported in the local paper soon after the carnival, however, the guarantors were "most outspoken in their praise for the Carnival, and [were] prepared to pay up their share, feeling that the effort was well worth the cost."<sup>122</sup>

Of the 1908 Quebec Tercentenary festivities, H.V. Nelles asks the following question: "Ostensibly it was the past being celebrated, but what past?"<sup>123</sup> It would be equally appropriate to ask another question: "Whose past was being celebrated?" In the historical pageant of the 1928 Summer Carnival, it was the Planter past that was memorialized. The pageant featured a Planter narrative that focused on the migration of New Englanders to the Annapolis Valley and the subsequent progress and development of the Valley. It espoused a Planter identity of hard-working, industrious, enterprising, and deserving farmers, and celebrated the farmers of the 1760s and the 1920s. This narrative, based on Eaton's work and on Planter family histories, had no room for the Acadians, the Mi'kmaq, or even the Loyalists. The carnival was planned to attract attention and tourism to Kentville and Kings County, especially from New England. Certainly they hoped to increase business in the area, and maybe even seduce a few former residents to return home. It is an example of the tourist planning and civic boosterism that was occurring in many communities across the country during this era.

Importantly, the pageant was not part of the antimodern trend that was so prevalent in the province during this period. Ian McKay has written about "the cultural producers who redescribed Nova Scotia as a land innocent of modernity," but these were not the planners of the Kentville pageant.<sup>124</sup> The pageant celebrated the modern and progressive aspects of the region's history, such as the establishment of Acadia University, the arrival of the railway in Kentville, and the construction of the largest ship in the Dominion in Kingsport. These events might have been completely ignored in an antimodernist pageant that would have commemorated the unspoiled agricultural past of the Valley; the pageant was not about the creation of a farmer folk to complement Helen Creighton's fisher folk of the coastal communities. Although the pageant planners were keen to celebrate their rural origins, they were firmly

121 Porter, "Brilliant Pageant Opens Kentville's Summer Carnival," *Halifax Chronicle*, 15 August 1928.

122 "Kentville Summer Carnival Results in Small Financial Loss to Guarantors," *The Advertiser*, 30 August 1928.

123 Nelles, *Art of Nation-Building*, 11.

124 McKay, *Quest of the Folk*, 37.

focused on the future and the ongoing development of the town as a modern place on the rise. For them the way forward was not in celebrating the pastoral past, but in focusing on a progressive, dynamic future.

The pageant certainly had many similarities to other pageants and commemorative spectacles in Canadian towns and cities, especially those that took place during other Old Home weeks and the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of 1927. Kentville, although a small town of 3,000, was a participant in the particularly modern cultural tradition of pageantry that was popular during the period. Looking at pageantry at the local level suggests that particular notions of place and history come together to shape these events; the regional identities that emerge are often quite different from the identities and stories told in national pageantry. The 1928 Kentville pageant stressed the importance of the town to the Valley as well as to the entire province. It was also a self-congratulatory narrative suggesting that although Kentville was a small town in Nova Scotia, its inhabitants believed that people should sit up and take notice of them. As the first major historical pageant in Kings County, and possibly the province, the Kentville production set the stage for the ongoing celebration of the agriculturally productive Valley. The Apple Blossom Festival was founded, in part, on the success of the 1928 carnival and pageant and, starting in 1933, it became an annual festival that attracted tourists to the region and reinforced the apple as a central piece of Valley identity.