Language, Identity, and Citizenship: Politics of Education in Madawaska, 1842-1920

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LANGUAGE, IDENTITY, AND CITIZENSHIP: POLITICS
OF EDUCATION IN MADAWASKA, 1842-1920

By

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The establishment of the international border between Maine and New Brunswick in 1842 through the signature of the Webster-Ashburton treaty divided the Francophone population of the Madawaska region along the Saint John River. As a result, each half became administered by an Anglophone government. The linguistic and cultural differences between the Madawaska French and the Anglo-Saxon Protestant ruling majority in both the state and the province complicated the establishment of new public institutions. The language of both administrations as well as the language of public education was English; a language that very few people among the Madawaska French spoke or understood. This dissertation compares the politics of education of the state of Maine and the province of New Brunswick in how they dealt with the rural Francophone minority of the Madawaska French. Maine and New Brunswick established their public school systems around the same time, following the school reform movements and later, the progressive school movement. Both the state and the province faced similar challenges and barriers as they worked at establishing their public school system in the
Madawaska region. Maine adopted a proactive approach with a clear assimilation agenda, while New Brunswick appeared slow to address the quality of education in its Francophone communities after the Compromise of 1875 and failed to provide a proper teacher training program for Francophones. Concurrently, the Madawaska French were seeking the services of the Roman Catholic Church for the education of their youth, forcing both Maine and New Brunswick to integrate religious orders in their public school systems in the region. I argue that the establishment of the public school system by both governments in the Madawaska region created a deep sense of alienation among the Madawaska French community, but it also created a powerful incentive for them to preserve their culture and traditions, forcing the authorities to compromise on the secular character of the public school system.
DEDICATION

To Denise Sance
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Francophones and Anglophones have coexisted in North America since the seventeenth century. This cohabitation was marked by periods of peace and conflicts. By the nineteenth century, Anglophones had become the majority in power in both the United States and British North America. Lower Canada remained a strong Francophone enclave in British North America, while other Francophone groups in North America existed in a linguistic minority context.

The nineteenth century was the theater of the settlement of several boundary disputes between British North America and the United States. These boundary disputes originated in the eighteenth century when the international boundaries between the two spaces started to take shape as a result of both the Treaty of Paris of 1763 and the Treaty of Paris of 1783. The first treaty put an end to the Seven Years War—also known as the French and Indian War—that opposed Britain and France, and the second followed the American Revolution. These two treaties were based on available geographical data which were as accurate as the technology of the time and the descriptions of the surveyors allowed them to be, thus leaving room for differences of interpretation. The map
that was used as a reference for these treaties was “a map of the British and French dominions in North America”\(^1\) published in 1755.\(^2\) (Figure 1)

The first of these boundary disputes regarded the section of the international border that fell between Maine and New Brunswick, which is the section of the border that we are interested in for this work. The area where the border was contested is significant because the delineation of the border between Maine and New Brunswick could have resulted in the separation of New Brunswick—and thus of the Maritime provinces as a whole—from Lower Canada and the rest of British North America. If this had been the case, British North America would have been split into two unconnected spaces. This scenario represented a threat as each section of British North America would have become more vulnerable to their American neighbor. In addition, this would also have made trading relations more challenging with a potential to hinder the economic development of British North America. Both economic and political interests weighed in on the resolution of the boundary dispute between the British and the Americans.


Figure 1. Map of the British and French dominions in North America, 1755. 

After long negotiations and two failed attempts at conciliation in 1814 and 1831, the resolution eventually came in August 1842 with the signature of the Webster-Ashburton treaty. The establishment of the international border between Maine and New Brunswick resolved an international dispute, but it also disrupted a Francophone community known as the Madawaska French who inhabited both sides of the Saint John river. As the river became the natural element used to delineate the official international border between Maine and New Brunswick, the Madawaska French community became split between two geopolitical spaces and as a result, each half of this community experienced a new government and would eventually have to adopt new institutions.

The authorities of Maine and New Brunswick reacted differently to the new situation of the Madawaska French. The state of Maine immediately sought to assimilate the Francophone population of the Saint John River valley. The Madawaska French had a distinct identity, and in addition to numerous institutional differences, the linguistic, religious, and cultural differences separated them from the rest of Maine’s population, which positioned the community to be construed as a potential liability for the security of the border. After all, as Béatrice Craig pointed out, the Madawaska territory was “separated from other populated areas by wide belts of timberland and barely populated townships.” This relative isolation could easily enable the community to continue its course undisturbed by the geopolitical change.

4 Nicholson, "Boundaries."
In contrast, the province of New Brunswick took no specific measures to actively transform the Madawaska French society. The Francophone population did not seem to represent a threat to the province. In fact, the Madawaska French were not new to the authorities of New Brunswick who had dealt with the community with regards to land granting and local politics from the onset of the French settlement in the Madawaska region. In addition, New Brunswick was home to numerous Acadian communities and was not new to the “fait français,” or more accurately the “fait Francophone,” contrarily to its American neighbor who had yet to deal with Francophone communities.

If Maine and New Brunswick dealt differently with their Francophone populations, they nonetheless both established English public schools to teach Francophone pupils. How did the authorities of both the state and the province address the specific educational needs of their Francophone population? Was there a significant difference in their approach and results? Do these approaches align with the national myths of Canada and the United States, the former with its vertical mosaic narrative and the latter with its melting pot narrative? These are the questions this dissertation seeks to answer.

1.1. The Madawaska Territory

The Madawaska Territory8 is not a clearly defined space in the sense that its boundaries were never officially drawn by the authorities.9 Rather than a geographic location, it is the space occupied by the Madawaska French on either side of the Saint John river.10 (Figures 2 & 3) Roger Paradis in his master’s thesis on the “History of the Madawaska Training School” delimited the area of the Madawaska Territory as follows:

The Madawaska Territory included all the present town on both sides of the River St. John as far north as Lake Temiscouata and westerly to Seven Islands and as far south as the Aroostook River in northern Maine. The New Brunswick counties of Madawaska, York, Restigouche, and Victoria formed part of this territory, an area 150 miles long, 40 to 80 miles wide, or approximately 9,000 square miles.11

This is the geographical space we will consider as the Madawaska Territory for this work. It is important to note, however, that the Madawaska region we are considering for this work should not be confused with the town of Madawaska in Maine, or with the county of Madawaska in New Brunswick.

Prior to the signature of the Webster-Ashburton treaty, the Madawaska French community existed as a rather autonomous entity at the crossroad between Quebec—which then became Canada East—, New Brunswick, and

8 Madawaska territory, Madawaska settlement or Madawaska region. We will use these expressions interchangeably in this work.
9 Béatrice Craig wrote that “the civil and ecclesiastical Madawaska were […] elastic geographic units” in *Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists*, 14-15.
10 Béatrice Craig wrote in 2009: “Madawaska is still loosely used to refer to the part of the Saint John Valley inhabited by French speakers, the area between the mouth of the St Francis River and Grand Falls.” See Craig, *Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists*, 15. In 2020, this still holds true.
Maine. As Béatrice Craig pointed out, the Madawaska settlement at the time was “labelled an aggregate of people rather than a defined space.”12 These people neither belonged to the United States nor to British North America. Yet, as a result of the treaty, each half of the Madawaska French community became administered by an Anglophone government that was somewhat foreign to the community. This is especially the case on the American side, since we know that the Madawaska French had interacted with representatives of the British government in New Brunswick prior to 1842. Language, identity, and citizenship all represented barriers to a seamless integration of the Madawaska French with their new administrations.

Figure 2. Excerpt of the *Map of the North Eastern Boundary*, 1842
Figure 3. Map of the North Eastern Boundary, 1842
1.2. A Borderland

The Saint John river was, and still is, an integral part of the Madawaska community. It acts as a point of reference in the population’s daily life. Crossing the river and, starting in 1842, the international border, has always been a part of the community’s everyday experience. This experience was motivated and affected by various factors related to the personal, professional or religious life of individuals.

Michel Boucher, who studied cross-border marriages in Madawaska from 1870 to 1997 in order to gauge the degree of openness of the international border over time, reported that infrastructures, but also international affairs as well as the economic context, all had a great impact on the community. Boucher showed that up until the beginning of the twentieth century, the poor transportation infrastructure, the lack of churches and the numerous kinship ties favored intense cross-border activities in the Madawaska region, while periods of economic recession or political conflicts hardened the border and thus limited cross-border interactions.13

Until the development of infrastructures made it so that churches and other institutions that were vital to the life of the community became accessible on both sides of the river, it was not uncommon for families to cross the river several times a week or even several times a day. One can go as far as saying that until the establishment of official border posts as well as other elements that

signified the presence of a different administration on each side of the river, the international frontier was nothing more than an imaginary line that bore little effects on the everyday life of the community.

Glynn Custred defined boundaries as a zone, or a borderland, where power dynamics can be modified by the reality of the community that lives within said borderland. He wrote:

Boundaries divide, yet at the same time they constitute lines where the power structures of neighboring states come into contact with one another, and where people on each side often make their own social, economic, and cultural arrangements. In this way strips emerge along the divide on both sides, creating zones that may differ in various ways from their respective interiors. A border, therefore, is not only a sharp line of demarcation, it is also the wider flanking borderland through which the boundary runs.14

In the case of the Madawaska French community, the population existed as a community prior to the establishment of the border, and thus already had its "own social, economic, and cultural arrangements" that differed from that of the societies that existed at its periphery. As a result, it is reasonable to expect that the community would take advantage of their new borderland situation. In other words, it was to be expected that the Madawaska French would not hesitate to take advantage of the two systems of governments within which they had to operate to suit their specific needs and agenda. In fact, Béatrice Craig pointed out that following the establishment of the international border, "[l]ocal people ignored the boundary and went about their business as usual," especially as the

terms of the Webster-Ashburton treaty “were designed to minimally disrupt the local economy.”

Eventually, the improvement of infrastructures, such as the building of roads and churches, would modify the pattern of border crossing because it meant that essential services became more readily available to the population on their own side of the border. There was a caveat however: when services put in place by the authorities on one side of the border did not meet the needs or were not in accordance with the population’s values and beliefs, the Madawaska French could easily look for an alternative on the other side of the border. For instance, with respect to education, families did not hesitate to send their children on the other side of the river—and thus of the border—for their schooling when the closest school was not in accordance with the family’s values.

Cross-border schooling was not unique to the Madawaska region. Indeed, as Anthony Di Mascio showed, the relative permeability of the border between Quebec and Vermont also resulted in a space where common assumptions about education on each side of the border were dissonant with the reality of the situation that exists within the borderland. I would argue that the importance for schools to be mindful of the values and beliefs shared by the Madawaska French community drove many of the compromises and adjustments that shaped the

15 Craig, Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists, 14.
public school systems of both Maine and New Brunswick in the Madawaska region.

1.3. Definitions

1.3.1. The Madawaska French

In this work, I will refer to the French speaking population of the Saint John River Valley as “the Madawaska French” as a way to identify this population but also to highlight their distinct language and cultural traits. These linguistic and cultural differences between the Madawaska French and the Anglophone ruling majority in both the state of Maine and the province of New Brunswick complicated the establishment of new public institutions. Indeed, one of the main issues preventing a “seamless” integration of the Madawaska population into that of Maine or New Brunswick was that the language of both administrations as well as the language of public education was English; a language that very few people—among the Madawaska French—spoke or understood. The cultural and religious differences between the Catholic Madawaska French and the Anglo-Saxon Protestant authorities also contributed to the tension that existed between this community and its new administrations.

1.3.2. Integration, Acculturation, and Assimilation

In this work, I will also use the terms integration, acculturation, and assimilation. Integration defines the process of uniting people under one nationality. This process can take different forms. It can be chosen and achieved willingly, it can be forced, or anything in between. The mechanism of integration varied greatly in both the United States and Canada, ranging from imposed
assimilation—where a community is forced to abandon its language, culture and traditions to embrace that of the majority—to some forms of negotiated acculturation—where adopting essential elements of the majority’s identity is not antithetical with retaining elements of the minority’s own sense of self.

1.4. Public Education

The public school project in North America in the nineteenth century called for the democratization of access to education. As the Industrial Revolution progressed, the need for a more skilled workforce justified a comprehensive education system available to all. The establishment of a public school system was also expected to fulfill a different imperative which was to foster a sense of citizenship and patriotism through citizenship education. Education shifted from an institution left to the devices of religious groups to become a government program destined to level out differences and prepare the citizens and the workforce of tomorrow.

However, the North American continent was already a land of immigration, and many minority groups coexisted alongside the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant majority, both north and south of the 49th parallel of latitude separating British North America from the United States. The language of instruction,
predominantly English, could constitute a major barrier for non-English speaking pupils. For instance, the public school system in both Maine and New Brunswick was initially designed solely as an Anglophone institution, yet both the state and the province where home to non-English speaking communities, and neither school system had, initially, accounted for linguistic minorities for whom English was not their first or dominant language.

Religion was another barrier to the establishment of public education since Protestants and Catholics had conflicting views on education. In particular, the Catholic Church was concerned by the Industrial Revolution and the effects it could have on its parishioners, contrarily to Protestants who readily encouraged it. In addition, course material and the curriculum of the public school in general had been designed by Protestants with the Protestant ethics in mind. Public schools were thus not necessarily agreeable to the Catholic population’s values and beliefs.

In a place such as the Madawaska region where, prior to 1842, the population existed as a Francophone community whose citizenship was not clearly defined, education was critical to help the young generations to function under their new national and local authorities. Scholars such as Thomas Albert and Béatrice Craig have shown that the Madawaska French had a distinct identity. The French language and the Roman Catholic religion were, and still are, important parts of this identity. They also represented important barriers with

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20 Even though we cannot yet talk about two nations at this point in time, part of the public education project aimed at fostering a sense of patriotism and belonging to one group with shared values and ideals. It is in this sense that I am using “national” here.
which the authorities as well as the Madawaska French would have to compose. It is the purpose of this study to identify these adjustments and to compare the approaches of both governments as well as to discuss the long-lasting effects of their choices on the region and on the politics of education in both the state and the province. Identity and language use are both difficult to measure and quantify, especially as the social and political context influences how people choose to identify themselves in the public sphere. In conducting research for this work, I strove to remain mindful of the fact that groups are not monolithic and that the local context may account for dramatically different experiences.

1.4.1 Public Education and Acadian Communities

This dissertation was inspired by both my Master’s work on Acadian identity and my interest in language acquisition and multilingualism. The question of access to public education in French was a recurring theme in the sources I consulted for my Master’s research. Scholars such as Marguerite Maillet have shown connections between the lack of formal education and key aspects of the culture and traditions of many Francophone communities in North America. In Acadian communities for instance, the creation of songs to record events such as weddings, mischief, or gossip was common. These narratives

21 This is a known phenomenon which plays a role in the accuracy of census data for instance.
were memorized and transmitted orally, or simply shared, during community gatherings. The French language itself was transmitted orally within the family unit\textsuperscript{25} as well as through religious education delivered by the Catholic Church.

In my Master’s thesis, I highlighted the role of the school system in the development of language insecurities. I also discussed the potential for the school system to contribute to the alienation of a population. With respect to the language of instruction, both English and French have been problematic in the Madawaska territory at different points in time. The former was problematic because most if not all the pupils from Francophone families had little to no knowledge of the English language. Coming to class for these students would likely have felt similar to entering a foreign country without speaking the local tongue. This feeling would have been reinforced if the teacher was not a Francophone. In addition, when French was taught in school, it was not the local dialect that pupils were speaking at home with their families, but rather the standardized version of the French language which was often—if not always—identified by the teacher as the only valid version of the language.

The teaching of a standardized version of French was not problematic in itself. It was the systematic denigration of the local dialect by a figure of authority that was problematic since it sent the message that the language pupils spoke at home was not proper, or not good enough, to be spoken outside the home. This experience, which left many scars in the Madawaska community, has

unfortunately been shared by many among Francophone groups in North America. Both the feeling of alienation and the development of language insecurities are complex issues that people continue to wrestle with today.

1.4.2. Barriers to Public Education

The establishment of the public school system in North America aimed at democratizing the access to education in order to foster integration and equality between students of all origins and socioeconomic backgrounds. Yet, there were many barriers to granting a universal access to public education. The language of instruction and a difference in religious beliefs were important barriers, but so were underdeveloped infrastructures and a lack of skilled teachers to staff the schools. The recognition and evaluation of those barriers, as well as finding ways to address them presented various challenges for the authorities in Maine and New Brunswick as Ava Harriet Chadbourne and Katherine F.C. MacNaughton highlighted in their respective surveys of the history of education of the state and the province. Both scholars brought their expertise in the field of education to the study of history and produced a comprehensive institutional history in which they presented the evolution of public schooling from its inception to the eve of the twentieth century.

26 The French language has been used throughout its history as a way to ascertain social status, particularly in the French colonies, but also in regions of France where regional languages were still alive and dominant. While there is today a greater appreciation for the variety of French dialects spoken around the world, the fact that the official "guardians" of the French language in France, the "académiciens," wear a sword as part of their uniform gives us an indication of how flexible the official French language can be.
In *A History of Education in Maine: A Study of a Section of American Educational History* which is an augmented version of her doctoral work previously published under the title *The Beginnings of Education in Maine*, Ava Harriet Chadbourne described the evolution of the education system in Maine, starting from its infancy in “a little fringe of towns” in the seventeenth century, to a full-fledged system organized at the state level by a board of education with the support of local authorities. Chadbourne pointed out that schools started to appear in Maine after its incorporation as part of the district of Massachusetts:

> Education in the form of schools did not begin until the early eighteenth century, after Maine as a district came under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts. Later, as the slow but steady tide of immigration set in and the settlers, influenced by the cheapness of the land, the richness of the soil, the abundance of valuable timber, and the vast extent of the fisheries, moved farther into the wilderness, the school followed, and in each succeeding decade, towns a little further entrenched yielded up a portion of their store in order that schools might be established.

Prior to the eighteenth century, the district of Maine was less populated than the rest of New England. It was a frontier and a place to extract primary goods. Due to its ties with Massachusetts however, Maine was influenced by the politics of education of its neighboring state, and the need for schools grew as more families settled in the district, and later, the state of Maine. In 1846, twenty-six years after achieving statehood, the state of Maine established its own Board of Education and started organizing education at the state level.

30 Maine only became a state in 1820 and was until then a district in the state of Massachusetts.
Chadbourne followed the evolution of the state apparatus of education in a chronological fashion. Her survey left little space for the education of minority populations. Yet, in a section covering the years 1854-1893 and titled “The Americanization of the French-speaking people of Madawaska, the Swedes of New Sweden and the education of the Indians,” Chadbourne briefly discussed dispositions made for the schooling of non-English speakers. The title of this section highlighted the make-up of non-English speaking minorities living in the state at the time, while its brevity reflected the political and demographic insignificance of these minority groups relatively to the majority in power.

The establishment of the public school system in all parts of the state was no small undertaking, and the realities of the Madawaska French was only one small part of the equation. After all, much remained to be done in Anglophone districts, and those represented the great majority of the school districts in Maine. Teacher training and modalities of certifications for teachers, for instance, had yet to be established to ensure that public schools were fulfilling their role in preparing the citizens of tomorrow.

Francophone minorities, given their demographic importance, occupy a much larger place in the survey of the history of education in New Brunswick.

32 The representation of the education of the Madawaska French in Chadbourne’s monograph corresponds in volume to its overall treatment in the state’s annual reports on education. It is important to keep in mind that while this work focuses primarily on the sections of the annual reports on education in the state of Maine that pertain to the Madawaska French, the majority of the content recorded in the reports dealt with the general role and progress of education in the state’s Anglophone districts, or in the state has a whole.
written by Katherine F.C. MacNaughton titled *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick, 1784-1900: A Study in Historical Background*. In her monograph, MacNaughton focused on the political history of education in New Brunswick as well as on the evolution of the field of education and its impact on public schooling in New Brunswick. She addressed the linguistic and religious challenges posed by the populations that coexisted in New Brunswick and highlighted that while they constituted a large minority in numbers, Francophones struggled to be represented in political institutions at the provincial level. MacNaughton showed that, as a result, the specific needs of Francophone communities were often unknown or ignored by the top-down government. Communication with the government happened in English, and similarly to Maine, decisions were based on the needs of the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant majority.

MacNaughton documented the difficult path for Francophones to access both teacher training and public schooling under conditions that were compatible with their cultural, linguistic and religious identity. In doing so, she highlighted the role of the Francophone clergy and congregations in providing viable alternatives to the regular public school system to remedy what has been perceived, at best as the province’s shortcomings, and at worse, as its de facto assimilationist agenda towards its Francophone Roman Catholic minority. Indeed, scholars such as Katherine F.C. MacNaughton and Alexandre J. Savoie have questioned the provincial government’s overall absence of proactive plan to address the needs of its large minority, and suggested that such a lack of intervention may
have been part of an untold effort to simply ignore the needs of populations that were different from the majority in power, thus encouraging a de facto assimilation of New Brunswick’s minority populations.

Correspondence between school districts and the department of education in New Brunswick in the nineteenth century does suggest that a disconnect existed between the top-down provincial administration and localities where there were specific ethnic, linguistic or religious differences among the ratepayers. The letters, however, also tend to show that at the local level, people were capable of reaching compromises in order to serve their common needs.34

With regards to education, religious beliefs may have been a greater source of division than linguistic differences. Scholars such as Sister Georgette Desjardins showed that religious congregations of the Roman Catholic faith were important actors in providing a proper education to Madawaska French pupils on both sides of the border. These congregations are often credited with having had an important role in maintaining the French language in the region. Once they became recognized by the state or the province, the alternative to the secular public school offered by religious congregations may have provided a space where acculturation, rather than assimilation, could take place.

Regardless of the school and of the religious and linguistic background of the teachers, Katherine MacNaughton demonstrated that while the status of education in Francophone New Brunswick was behind other modern public

34 See “Records of the Chief Superintendent of Education,” Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, Box RS116
school systems engaged in the education reform movement, both in terms of literacy rates and quality of education, the status of education in Anglophone New Brunswick also remained unsatisfactory on the eve of the twentieth century.

Conflicts can be the source of impetus for reforms, and in the case of education, World War I led to major transformations in public schooling in North America. In *The Politics of School Reform, 1870-1940*, Paul E. Peterson compared the experience of three urban school systems, Atlanta, Chicago, and San Francisco from post-Civil War America to the beginning of World War II. He showed that over the course of fifty years, public schooling went from being considered a charity school for the poorest that competed against private academies, denominational schools, and vocational schools, to becoming perceived as a vector for upward mobility for children from all origins and socioeconomic backgrounds. Peterson argued that public schooling was inseparable from politics and while schools had long been associated with the betterment of citizens and the opportunity to climb the socioeconomic ladder, in reality, access to secondary and higher education remained limited by design, proving a goal to aspire to as well as a way to perpetuate a social hierarchy.

While Peterson’s study focused on public schooling in American urban centers, his analysis of the role of class and status in public schooling is particularly relevant in explaining the attitude of the Anglo-Saxon Protestant majority vis-à-vis the rural Francophone community of the Madawaska region, the Anglo-Saxon Protestant model being the one to aspire to and catch up with.
1.5. Method

This work is a comparative study of Maine and New Brunswick. The American state and the Canadian province had much in common in terms of environment, resources, climate, and to some extent people. Both geopolitical spaces were governed by an Anglo-Saxon Protestant majority, and even though attitudes towards the British Crown divided them, culturally both majority groups could still be considered close. This commonality associated with their different style of government—top-down in New Brunswick and bottom-up for Maine—made the state and the province good candidates for a comparative study. The specific position of the Madawaska region reinforces the relevance of a comparative study, and I would argue that the Madawaska region remained a borderland for many years following the resolution of the border dispute between Maine and New Brunswick in 1842. That is, the Madawaska French identity continued for many years to supersede the Canadian identity, north of the border, and the American identity, south of the border, keeping the region on the margins of both societies. I would even go as far as arguing that the Madawaska region remains, in some ways, a borderland where individuals interact on a regular basis with the other side of the border because of their specific “social, economic and cultural arrangements” that result from their shared experience and history.35

35 Custred, “The Linguistic Consequences of Boundaries, Borderlands, and Frontiers,” 266.
In my preliminary research, I identified specific themes relative to schooling and identity that seem to have played a major role in the relationship between the public school system and French-speaking populations in Maine and New Brunswick: attitudes towards schooling, religious affiliation, language barrier, teacher training, and the emphasis on citizenship education. I am using the comparative approach as a tool to unearth new questions on a shared issue: the integration of a minority population through the public school system.

Because this work deals with identity, language, and citizenship, which can be difficult to measure and assess, I used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to capture their intangible quality as well as their tangible manifestations. The qualitative approach, which mostly consisted in rhetorical analysis, allowed me to gain insights on the communities themselves, but also on how they were perceived by authority figures, and particularly by the government and the teachers. For instance, in *Survey of Higher Education in Maine* (1932), the authors repeatedly use the expression “this interesting region” to refer to the Saint John Valley which they describe as a place where people lived a “primitive” and “secluded existence.” The repeated use of “interesting” in the context of this publication establishes a hierarchy between the Saint John Valley, presented as primitive and backwards, and the rest of Maine, where people are, by opposition, presented as educated and civilized. I have found this superior and paternalistic attitude towards the Saint John Valley to be a common assertion in sources authored by authority figures during the period in which I am interested. This attitude raises many questions. How did it influence decision-making with regards
to teacher training, and to the quality of the financial and institutional support of education in the region? What role did it play in the relationship between the authority figures and the population? What indicators were chosen to measure success in education programs? All these questions have a potential to help us understand the dynamic between the majority in power and the various French speaking minorities in Maine and New Brunswick. The analysis of statistical data produced by governmental entities as well as data found in school records, helped me to map out the public school system in Maine and New Brunswick, and to understand where the qualitative data fits within the larger picture.

My primary sources include both official and private documents. The most obvious sources are documents collected and produced by the departments of education of Maine and New Brunswick, by school superintendents, and by normal schools. These documents allowed me to access information on the public school system, on its legislation and how it was enforced, on school programs, and on teacher training and its evolution. Unfortunately, documents produced by public schools and their practicing school teachers are difficult to find since the documents they produced are not archived in the way governmental documents are. Newspapers articles and opinion pieces helped me get a sense of the different views that competed on the public stage with regards to education, identity and integration. I was hoping to find personal accounts such as autobiographies, diaries, and private correspondence with the authorities to access other points of view that might not have been represented in the media, but I only found the latter. I must add that the collection of letters I was
able to consult may not be entirely representative of the general situation since they likely were curated at different points in time, first by the addressee and their staff, then by the potentially numerous individuals who were involved in the transfer and treatment of the files, of which the collection of letters is a part, at their final archival center.

1.6. Outline

This study compares the politics of education of the state of Maine and the province of New Brunswick in how they dealt with the rural Francophone minority of the Madawaska French. Chapter 2 entitled “An Alien Community to Assimilate” provides background information on Acadian ethnicity, community and language. It presents the origins of the Madawaska French community and discusses the various influences that contributed to the shaping of a unique Madawaska French identity. This chapter also explores the place of agriculture and education and their evolution in the community in the fast-evolving economic landscape of the nineteenth century.

Chapter 3, “A Key Institution to Shape Citizens,” deals with the transformation of schools in North America from a private affair to an institution designed to produce both good citizens and a skilled workforce destined to sustain the efforts of the Industrial Revolution. It also discusses the role of public education as a tool to preserve and enforce the social and political hierarchy in place. The emergence of “modern states” in the western world called for the implementation of citizenship education curricula with the purpose of fostering in all children a common sense of patriotism. This chapter explores the challenges
faced by the authorities with the establishment of their public school system in Madawaska, but also in both the state and the province in general. In this chapter I argue that the slow establishment of the public school system in Madawaska may not have been very different from other rural communities in the region at the time.

However, if the Madawaska French community shared common traits with other rural communities in Maine and New Brunswick, it also presented the authorities with specific challenges. Chapter 4 is dedicated to the examination of these barriers, from citizenship to linguistic, religious and cultural differences. It discusses the school laws that affected the Madawaska French on both sides of the border and highlights the importance of Roman Catholic congregations as a bulwark against a public school system that went against some of the core values of the Madawaska French. This chapter shows that despite the use of different approaches, the authorities of Maine and New Brunswick achieved similar results.

Since the linguistic difference constituted an important barrier to the establishment of the public school system in the Madawaska region, training bilingual teachers presented an interesting alternative. If the bilingual teachers were to come from the community itself, newly trained teachers could become a vector for the assimilation of Francophone pupils, which would contribute to progressively fade out the need for bilingual schools altogether. Chapter 5 examines the efforts of both Maine and New Brunswick in providing bilingual teachers to the Madawaska French and, in New Brunswick, to all of the
province’s Francophone communities. Maine appeared to be more successful in this endeavor than New Brunswick. Maine designed a training school for the sole purpose of supplying the workforce it needed, while New Brunswick created a preparatory training designed to enable Francophone applicants to undergo the regular teacher training course in English, which as a result extended the length of the training significantly for all Francophones. Maine’s approach fostered the state’s assimilation agenda since it consisted of training local Francophones to teach English in Francophone schools in the Saint John River valley. It also contributed to the overall elevation of the education level of the inhabitants of the region. In New Brunswick, the preparatory course only delayed the professionalization of Francophone teachers as very few made the investment to go through the Anglophone teacher training program.

Regardless of the solutions implemented by the authorities of the state and the province, the establishment of the public school system in the Madawaska region required some necessary adjustments. Chapter 6 delves into the reasons for these adjustments and their implications on the public school system as it was implemented in the Madawaska French communities. In this chapter, I argue that the Madawaska French succeeded in protecting themselves from assimilation through the concessions and adjustments that were eventually granted by the authorities. It is interesting to note that the contemporary place of religion in the public school system in the Madawaska region today originated from these concessions made in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
In conclusion, I argue that in the 1920s, the Madawaska region remained a borderland, even though each side of the river had started to adopt the institutions put in place by their respective governments. By making adjustments and concessions necessary to the establishment of the public school system in their community, the Madawaska French resisted assimilation and started to integrate through the process of acculturation fostered by the curriculum. I also argue that while Maine and New Brunswick differed in their approaches and in their timelines, there were no significant differences in the results of their politics of education in Madawaska at the close of World War I, before the implementation of the school reforms of the 1920s.
CHAPTER 2
AN ALIEN COMMUNITY TO ASSIMILATE

The signature of the Webster-Ashburton treaty on August 9, 1842 put an end to the Aroostook War, settling once and for all the delineation of the border between New Brunswick and Maine. While often considered a formidable show of diplomacy orchestrated by Daniel Webster, American Secretary of State, the treaty was also thought to have been one of Webster’s biggest regrets because of its impact on the Madawaska French community. Whether or not Webster actually had remorse remains to be proven. However, we do know that both parties were well aware of the presence of the Francophone settlement on each sides of the Saint John River. In fact, according to the correspondence between Lord Ashburton, Minister Plenipotentiary of His Britannic Majesty, and Daniel Webster, the former showed far more concerns for the Francophone community than the latter.

In his letter of June 21, 1842 to Webster, Lord Ashburton conceded that while it would result in granting the best agricultural lands in the region to Maine, using the Saint John River as a natural border would be acceptable, “if it were not for the peculiar circumstances of a settlement formed on both sides of the St. John.” Lord Ashburton proceeded to briefly remind Webster of the history of the

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settlement, before informing him that the Madawaska French had expressed
concerns, by way of a petition, regarding the possibility that the community would
be “surrendered by Great Britain.”

Conscious that setting the boundaries in such a way that the whole
Francophone community would become part of Maine was out of the question,
as it would deprive Great Britain from its direct access to Canada, Lord
Ashburton continued to expose his moral dilemma as follows:

It seems self-evident that no more inconvenient line of boundary could well
be drawn than one which divides in two an existing municipality; inconvenient as well to the inhabitants themselves as to the authorities
under which they are to live. There would be evident hardship, I might say
 cruelty, in separating this now happy and contented village, to say nothing
of the bickerings and probable collisions likely to arise from taking in this
spot the precise line of the river which would, under other circumstances,
satisfy us. [sic]

Effectively, Lord Ashburton invited Webster, and thus the United States, to weigh
in on the issue presented by the Madawaska French community. He reminded
his American counterpart that Great Britain was prepared to leave the fertile
region of Aroostook to Maine, as part of this treaty negotiation, all the while
reaffirming that they could not also give up the access to Canada the Saint John
River afforded. By communicating that Great Britain was mindful of the situation
of the Madawaska French, Lord Ashburton left it up to Washington to show
mercy for this people who accidentally found themselves right in the middle of the
northeastern boundary dispute. On record, through this official correspondence,

38 Letter from Lord Ashburton to Webster, June 21st, 1842, 8.
39 Letter from Lord Ashburton to Webster, June 21st, 1842, 8.
40 Letter from Lord Ashburton to Webster, June 21st, 1842, 8.
Great Britain appears to make an attempt at negotiating on behalf of the Madawaska community. Similar to Great Britain, the United States was not prepared to relinquish any more territory. The proposed boundary line was more or less in the middle of the disputed territory (Figure 4). In addition, the natural division offered by the Saint John River was appealing since it would offer consistency and facilitate, in some ways, the administration of this border.\textsuperscript{41}

In his response to Lord Ashburton, Webster argued in favor of adopting the Saint John River as a natural border between Maine and New Brunswick, in spite of the potential inconvenience it would be for the French settlement. He acknowledged the validity of Lord Ashburton’s concerns regarding the Madawaska French community, but he also pointed out that the river offered “a line always clear and indisputable,” and added that if they were to decide on finding another delineation for the border, this would likely give way to new negotiations and eventually risk the settlement of the boundary dispute altogether.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{41} “The experience of the world, and our own experience, shows the propriety of making rivers boundaries, wherever their courses suit the general objects; for the same reason that, in other cases to which they are applicable, mountain ranges or ridges of highlands are adopted for the same purpose; [...] Rivers and inland waters constitute the boundary between the United States, and the territories of Her Majesty for some thousands of miles westward from the place where the 45° of north latitude intersects the St. Lawrence, and along this line, though occasional irregularities and outbreaks have taken place, always by the agency and instigation of agitators and lawless men, friends of neither country, yet it is clear than no better demarcation of limits could be made.” Letter from Webster to Lord Ashburton, July 8th, 1842, 13.

\textsuperscript{42} Letter from Webster to Lord Ashburton, July 8th, 1842, 13.
Figure 4. Map of Maine and the Disputed Territory.
Besides, Webster seemed to have had a more “positive” outlook on the whole situation. Indeed, he suggested that contact with people of different origins, religion, and language was inevitable for the Madawaska French, as for any other community located in a borderland. He also argued that the Madawaska French would not lose their possessions as a result of the settlement of the boundary dispute which would leave them free to sell their lands and move to the side of the border that suits them best. Webster concluded his response on the matter of the French settlement by arguing that the political differences that existed between the two nations would affect neither kinship nor the social life of the community.

Yet, if the purpose of a border between two geopolitical spaces is to define the reach of two political entities, a border is also a line that can become more or less porous and more or less hard depending on the political context of the two entities. So, while Webster’s argument stands in times of peace and economic stability, when the border would typically be more porous, the capacity for the Madawaska French to maintain kinship ties and an uninterrupted social life could become greatly diminished if the border were to harden. And in fact, Michel

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44 Letter from Webster to Lord Ashburton, July 8th, 1842, 13.
45 Letter from Webster to Lord Ashburton, July 8th, 1842, 13.
46 “Upon the whole, my Lord, feeling that there may be inconvenience, and perhaps a small degree of hardship, I cannot admit that there is any cruelty in separating the Madawaska settlers south of the St. John, so far as political relations are concerned, from their neighbours on the north of that river. In the present state of society and of peace which exists between the two countries, the severance of political relations needs not to disturb social and family intercourse.” [sic] Letter from Webster to Lord Ashburton, July 8th, 1842, 13-14.
Boucher demonstrated in his thesis on “L’ouverture et la fermeture de la frontière canado-américaine au Madawaska entre 1870 et 1997 vue à travers les mariages interfrontaliers,” that the rate of cross-border marriages in the Madawaska region did fluctuate according to the relative hardness of the border and also to other factors such as the economic situation and the development of infrastructures such as roads and churches.47 This shows in retrospect that the border would indeed affect the kinship ties and social life of the community.

Before discussing the impact of the establishment of the border on the Madawaska French, and thus the differences that emerged in terms of governance and in terms of politics of education in the region, it is necessary to introduce the specific features of the Madawaska French communities. This chapter will thus introduce key points for the study of the politics of education in Madawaska from the establishment of the border in 1842 to the 1920s. First, we will present the origins and identity of the Madawaska French. Then, we will briefly describe the linguistic profile of the community to further explain the relation between language and identity in this community. We will then discuss the community’s apparent resistance to education. Finally, we will address the importance of farming and how it affected the life of the community.

2.1. The Madawaska French: Origins and Identity

The Madawaska region became home to Acadians and French Canadians towards the end of the eighteenth century. Acadians constituted the majority of

the first wave of white immigrants from 1785 on and were shortly followed by French Canadians. These two groups shared a language and a religion but their differences in origins, social make-up, dialects, and experiences in the “New World” made them two similar, yet distinct communities. Historian Jacques Paul Couturier showed that by the mid-nineteenth century, the newly formed Francophone community already counted about 5,500 people living on both sides of the Saint John river. This growing colony, because of its mixed population, soon developed their own identity: the “Madawaska identity.” This identity, shaped by common experience, is the product of the blending of the distinct cultures and traditions of the two Francophone groups overtime and through family alliances. The French language as well as the Roman Catholic faith both remain important elements of this identity. But “Madawaska” is not a French word, and the Madawaska French were not the first people to settle along the Saint John River valley.

Madawaska is a Mi’kmaq name composed of the words “madawes” for porcupine and “kak” which designates a place. So, in English, Madawaska can be translated to “Land [or Country] of the Porcupine.” Yet, sources dealing with the Acadian and French-Canadian settlement at the origin of the Madawaska French community hardly ever mention the indigenous people, Mi’kmaq and

49 Thomas Albert, Histoire du Madawaska d’après les recherches historiques de Patrick Therriault et les notes manuscrites de Prudent L. Mercure (1920), 45-46.
50 Albert, Histoire du Madawaska, 11.
Maliseet, who had been inhabiting the territory. Jacques Paul Couturier mentioned the presence of a small population of Maliseet prior to the initial Acadian settlement, but did not elaborate further,\textsuperscript{51} while Thomas Albert simply made no mention of the Maliseet in his chapter on the origins of the Madawaska population.\textsuperscript{52}

One reason for this apparent absence is that the occupation of the Madawaska territory by other colonists, prior to 1785, had already impacted the indigenous populations.\textsuperscript{53} Indeed, contacts between Maliseet populations and French colonists and missionaries, as early as 1604, can be traced through the introduction of French loan-words in Maliseet-Passamaquoddy and, to a lesser extent, of Maliseet-Passamaquoddy loan-words in French.\textsuperscript{54} In addition, Béatrice Craig and Maxime Dagenais, who found the indication of a Native settlement on a British map from 1778, wrote that while the French settlement grew, “the Native village, however, rapidly dwindled to a handful.”\textsuperscript{55} Their research on the subject led them to the conclusion that the “Native village” had few chances to be viable due to the loss of hunting and fishing lands as well as to the overall depletion of local game as a consequence of the fur trade industry.\textsuperscript{56} Finally, according to the findings of Albert, Craig and Dagenais, it is likely that beyond the potential

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{51} Couturier, "La République du Madawaska et l’Acadie," 25–54.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Albert, \textit{Histoire du Madawaska}. Albert did mention the first nations in a chapter that precedes his chapter on the Madawaska French, but there is no overlap in his chronology.
\item \textsuperscript{53} Albert, \textit{Histoire du Madawaska}, 31-44.
\item \textsuperscript{54} Robert M. Leavitt, "Malisan naaka muhsilepehk / Le marchand et monsieur l’évêque : les emprunts du malécite au français”. \textit{Recherches amérindiennes au Québec} 39, no. 3 (2009): 25–33. DOI: 10.7202/045800ar
\item \textsuperscript{55} Béatrice Craig and Maxime Dagenais, \textit{The Land in between: The Upper St. John Valley, Prehistory to World War I}. 1st pbk. ed. (Gardiner, ME: Tilbury House, Publishers, 2009), 57.
\item \textsuperscript{56} Craig and Dagenais, \textit{The Land in between}, 57-61.
\end{itemize}
influence of the fur trade experience, there was little to no cross-cultural exchanges leading to the Maliseet having a lasting impact on the French settlement of the Madawaska region, and thus on the Madawaska identity in the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.

The English presence, however, was indisputable. Following the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, Acadians who chose to stay in Nova Scotia—and they were many, much to the surprise of the British authorities—lived under British rule as subjects of the British Crown.\textsuperscript{57} Acadians' high birthrate, the quality of their lands, and their language, religious, social, political and cultural differences all represented potential issues for the British administration. However, it is important to note that, as Naomi Griffiths argued, eighteenth-century Great Britain was used to ruling over diverse subjects who did not share England’s religion, customs, or language.\textsuperscript{58} Under British rule, Acadians continued to cultivate a certain independence in how they went about their affairs—Independence that already existed when Acadians were still technically under French rule.\textsuperscript{59} Acadians also had their own political structure and were electing delegates that would represent their interests when dealing with British authorities.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{57} Naomi Griffiths, \textit{Contexts of Acadian History, 1686-1784.} (Montreal: MQUP, 1992), 36.

\textsuperscript{58} Griffiths, \textit{Contexts of Acadian History}, 37-38.

\textsuperscript{59} Contrarily to New France, Acadia was not administered closely by the French government, which led to Acadians creating their own system to provide for their community’s need. This hierarchical system relied heavily on elders who, for instance, officiated in religious ceremonies when a priest was not available.

\textsuperscript{60} Griffiths, \textit{Contexts of Acadian History}, 40-42.
As their numbers grew, both from newborns and through exogamy, Acadian settlements became larger and multiplied through the creation of sister colonies. Naomi Griffiths pointed out that by 1730, Acadians felt quite secure in their situation in Nova Scotia which they considered their home. Their commitment to remain neutral in case of a military conflict sheltered Acadians from finding themselves in the position to have to take arms against the French or against their allies amongst First Nation bands. It also meant that they would not side against the British, allowing Acadians to maintain trade relations with many different communities at once. However, the Acadian neutrality would increasingly become perceived as a threat for a few British officials. Furthermore, this Roman Catholic people represented a barrier to the establishment of a truly Protestant colony. It is despite the Crown’s concerns about removing the Acadians from their lands, that British officials in Nova Scotia went ahead and proceeded to the ethnic cleansing known as the Great Deportation or Great Upheaval which took place between 1755 and 1763, and resulted in the

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61 “The stereotype of Acadians as a people living in a land isolated from the rest of the world, self-enclosed and inward-looking, inbred and exceptionally fertile, has to yield to the reality of a people with considerable links to communities other than their own, welcoming outsiders into their families, and with a fertility level not significantly greater than that of other EuroAmerican communities of the time. In sum, since approximately 25 to 30 percent of recorded Acadian marriages involved a partner from elsewhere, the increase of the Acadian population between 1710 and 1748 was not only the healthy expansion of a self-generating population. It was also a population growth that owed something to the attraction and assimilation of outsiders.” Griffiths, Contexts of Acadian History, 47.

62 Griffiths, Contexts of Acadian History, 50.


64 John Mack Faragher qualified the Great Deportation as an ethnic cleansing in A Great and Noble Scheme. Queen Elizabeth II issued a Royal Proclamation on December 9th, 2003 acknowledging “the trials and suffering experienced by the Acadian people during the Great Upheaval.”
displacement and death of thousands of Acadians. The Acadian families who settled in the Saint John River valley were part of the Acadian families who fled to escape the deportation, and then again, a few decades later, felt the need to escape the massive influx of Loyalists who had rejoined British ground as a consequence of the American Revolutionary war.

At the crossroad between Quebec, New Brunswick and Maine, and surrounded by Anglophone counties, the Madawaska French, once settled on the banks of the Saint John River, mostly kept away from political debates, uncertain about the jurisdiction to which they belonged. Indeed, the delineation of the border between the three geopolitical spaces remained to be ascertained. Neutrality continued to be part of Acadian political culture. As for religious authorities, the Acadians of the Saint John River valley had to wait until 1792 to have their own Roman Catholic priest in residence due to the overall lack of priests in the Quebec diocese from which they depended.

Between 1785 and 1850, as more immigrants joined the frontier community of the Saint John River valley, the first wave of settlers described by

67 Between the first wave of Acadian immigration to the Saint John River valley in 1785 and the establishment of the Canadian-American border in 1842, Quebec became Lower Canada in 1791, and Canada East in 1840.
68 Similarly, Maine was a district of Massachusetts until it achieved statehood in 1820.
70 This will get resolved in 1842 for the border between Maine and New Brunswick, and in 1851 for the border between New Brunswick and Quebec.
Thomas Albert, “the charter families,” played a critical role in the stratification of the Madawaska society. In fact, Béatrice Craig reported that the charter families were very critical of the “invasion” of French-Canadians from the lower Saint Lawrence valley and discriminated against them. The reason behind this discrimination against French-Canadian immigrants was not so much about the preservation of the Madawaska French culture and traditions, which were still in development, rather it was motivated by the desire to keep all assets, lands and possessions within an established circle of families. And indeed, this self-made elite of the Saint John valley knew that economic resources would not match the population growth, a situation which could eventually threaten their way of life—and especially their economic and political status in the community.

By 1850, the population of the Madawaska region had become a very structured independent community according to Béatrice Craig. She wrote that it “was stratified along socio-economic and kinship lines” and that as a result, the international boundary meant to enforce a geopolitical division between the United States and British North America bore no effect on this tight-knit community. Since at that point, the border between Maine and New Brunswick had administratively divided the Madawaska region for eight years already, what Craig underlined is that the adoption by the Madawaska French of their new nationality was not a given. The community and its identity still prevailed over a

74 Craig, “Immigrants in a Frontier Community,” 278.
new national identity and a new citizenship. In other words, the ethnic identity of the Madawaska French, as defined by Mary Bucholtz and Kira Hall, acted as a way for the Madawaska French “to remain apart […] from the de-ethnicizing process of citizenship.”

2.2. Linguistic Profile of the Community

The French language spoken in the Madawaska region is, like many French dialects in North America, a variety of French that was mostly passed on orally. Madawaska French or Brayon is an Acadian dialect that bares characteristics that are particular to the Madawaska French community. Thus, while perfectly intelligible, the dialect of French spoken in the Madawaska region differs in several ways from what linguists refer to, today, as standard French or, more appropriately international French.

Acadian French has its roots in seventeenth-century France. At the time, the French language had yet to be standardized, and each region and even

76 “International French,” or “standard French,” was previously referred to as “Parisian French” in the scientific literature. It is understood to be the variety of French used for written documents and formal spoken language. Traditionally, the standard form for the French language has been dictated by the Académie française. However, one could argue that with the creation of the Office québécois de la langue française in 1977, and specifically its work in the francization of new and emerging words, particularly in the domain of technology and communication, the office also plays an important role in the standardization of the French language in the Francophonie. I chose to use “international French” rather than “standard French” because the use of “standard French” has too often been linked to discrimination towards a local dialect where “standard French” was thought to be superior to the local form of French, which as a result dictated a hierarchy between speakers of the French language. This is a damaging situation that the Madawaska French experienced for numerous years. By referring to the standardized version of the French language as “international French,” I acknowledge the usefulness of a standardized version of the French language as lingua franca for the Francophone world, all the while recognizing regional differences without engaging in value judgment.
county had its own dialect of French or its own language. The first Acadians settled in the New World in 1604 and came, for the most part, from central-western parts of France. According to Naomi Griffiths, by the end of the seventeenth century, the elements of what would constitute the Acadian identity were in place but it is only by 1730 that one can truly speak of an Acadian people, and thus of their language: Acadian French. When studying Acadian French, it is critical to not only take into account its roots in France, but also the influence of the Great Deportation which spanned almost a decade and resulted in the Acadian diaspora. The dispersion of the Acadian people in the eighteenth century had a major influence on Acadian French because of the distance and lack of infrastructure connecting communities from one location to another.

The main factors of the evolution of Acadian French are: education, contact with English and Amerindian languages, contact with speakers of other varieties of French, and the context of language use. Education, especially outside of the family settings, is likely to introduce normative elements of the target language.

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77 The Académie française, the French council established to define and regulate the use of the French language would only be established in 1635 with the support of Cardinal Richelieu.
78 Similarities between Acadian vocabulary and the vocabulary of the regions of France from which Acadians originated remain to this day. See Liliane Jagueneau and Louise Peronnet, “Lexique acadien et lexique poitevin-saintongeais : étude synchronique d’une ‘parenté.’” in L’Acadie plurielle : dynamiques identitaires collectives et développement au sein des réalités acadiennes (Moncton, New Brunswick: Centre d’études acadiennes, Université de Moncton, 2003), 189–227.
79 Griffiths, Contexts of Acadian History, 33.
into the vernacular, but as Ruth King pointed out, “in contrast to the situation in Quebec, there were no schools in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, or Prince Edwards Island until the early nineteenth century and most of the population was illiterate.”81 Until then, the transmission of the French language was mostly a family affair, which encouraged the development and multiplication of vernaculars, since each family or community brought about their own variations in the base language.82 The dispersion of the Acadian people, along with the mode of transmission of the language, resulted over time in the existence of many varieties of Acadian French dialects,83 spread out notably between Canadian provinces and northern Maine.84

Similarly to their Acadian neighbors, French-Canadians who settled in Quebec in 1608 originated for the most part from western France and brought with them those regional traits, also resulting over time in their own variations of the French language. The omnipresence of the Roman Catholic church and of religious congregations meant that there were more opportunities for French-Canadians to have access to a school, particularly since the clergy saw education as a tool to promote its political agenda.85

81 King, Acadian French in Time and Space, 7.
84 A discussion of Cajun French is not relevant to this work, which is why it was not mentioned here.
Madawaska French is considered to be an Acadian dialect that presents some traits of French Canadian. Due to the social hierarchy of the community, it is likely that the evolution of Madawaska French was driven in part by the charter families since this select group of early settlers were the key to social advances in the community.\textsuperscript{86} In this context, new immigrants who joined the community would have been drawn to adopting the traits of the charter family’s speech.

As for Acadians’ knowledge of English, it is unlikely that it was inexistent, especially since Acadians had been under British rule for decades and were surrounded by Anglophones. We also know that Acadians elected delegates that interacted with the Anglophone authorities. It is thus reasonable to assume that at least some members of the Madawaska French community had a working knowledge of English. And indeed, some of these individuals will be instrumental in facilitating the integration of the Madawaska French with the New Brunswick and Maine societies.

2.3. Resistance to Education

Until the mid-nineteenth century in Francophone North America, very few individuals had received a “proper” education except members of the elite which consisted in the clergy, liberal professionals, and small business owners.\textsuperscript{87} That is not to say that Francophone children were not receiving any form of education. In fact, in addition to the family unit, schools usually run by members of the


\textsuperscript{87} Ronald Rudin, \textit{Making History in Twentieth Century Quebec}. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 15.
clergy, or organized locally, provided education to at least the younger children. According to Omer Le Gresley, the French peasant who settled in New France dreamt of recreating the environment he had left behind, and primary education organized by the church was part of the picture. Le Gresley condemned early historians of Acadie for propagating the false idea that most Acadians were illiterate, and claimed that in fact, in the seventeenth century, about fifty percent of the Acadian population could sign their names, which was superior to rates measured in France during the same period. He also argued that the destruction of archival documents by the British accounts in part for the lack of evidence for Acadians’ rate of literacy. Yet, due to the unrest caused by both the Great Deportation, and then the American Revolutionary war which caused an influx of Loyalists in New Brunswick, Acadians struggled to maintain proper schools, and very few written documents were produced by Acadian themselves by the end of the eighteenth century. Their literature was oral and the illiteracy rate was high amongst French speakers.

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93 Maillet, *Histoire de la littérature acadienne*.

In addition to the lack of formal schools, the high level of illiteracy among Acadians can be explained by the relationship this people came to have with education. According to Craig and Dagenais, Acadians had a different attitude towards education in comparison to their English Protestant counterparts. Indeed, they noted that it was not rare to find “families where one child was a teacher, while his or her siblings were illiterate,” because Acadians considered literacy and numeracy to be vocational skills, and education to be a “strategy to establish children.”95 Furthermore, Craig and Dagenais suggested that the importance of Bible reading for Protestants made literacy a much more important skill to have than it was for Catholics and thus for Acadians. After all, education was seen by the Roman Catholic church first and foremost as a means to preserve the social order rather than a way to elevate the population as a whole. Acadian children would learn what they needed from their parents or from ad hoc schools in the community and through apprenticeship.

In this context, it is thus not surprising that education in the Madawaska region at the beginning of the nineteenth century was in the hands of a few individuals who were acting as teachers.96 For instance, Craig and Dagenais gathered from a letter that Reverend Lagarde was teaching reading, writing, arithmetic and religion in 1819 to any male child regardless of income. They also found mentions of three schools in reports written by land agents Deane and Kavanagh in 1831. However, they did not find indications regarding the quality or

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95 Craig and Dagenais, *The Land in between*, 310.
96 Craig and Dagenais, *The Land in between*, 169.
efficiency of these schools. Ava Harriet Chadbourne also mentioned the existence of “one or two schools” prior to 1842 on the southern side of the Madawaska territory, and wrote that these schools were funded by the wealthier members of the community for the benefit of only a few pupils.97 Prudent Mercure identified eleven teachers in the Madawaska territory from 1792 to 1850, including a gentleman named Thomas Turner.98 According to Mercure’s findings, Turner was of British origins but was fluent in French. It is safe to assume that the other teachers were all native Francophones.

By the mid-nineteenth century, education in Madawaska did not resemble Protestants’ idea of education. What would appear to be a resistance to education in the eyes of both Maine and New Brunswick after 1842, stemmed from a difference in how each community valued education but it also derived from the consequences of historical events which deprived Acadians from access to institutionalized schools which existed prior to the Great Deportation. Education for the Madawaska French was a family matter and the degree of schooling a child would receive depended on that child’s vocation. In that context, one can better understand Acadians’ reluctance to pay taxes to fund schools in the nineteenth century since they had a different use for schools and schooling than their Protestant counterparts.

2.4. An Agrarian Society

The Madawaska French were an agrarian society, which means that much of their economy revolved around agriculture and domestic industries. In her extensive survey on the rise of market culture in the region, Beatrice Craig wrote that:

The existing sources describe Madawaska as a thriving farming region engaged in commercial agriculture from the 1820s onwards. It produced wheat surpluses until the mid-1830s, when a series of natural disasters forced farmers to seek alternative marketable commodities. They then turned to producing supplies for the lumber camps.99

Farming at this latitude presents many limitations. The growing season is short due to the climate, which limits the choices of crops that can be sown and successfully harvested. In addition, as Craig pointed out, crops can be affected by natural disasters, which can lead to economic losses and also to difficulties to provide for the communities’ own needs. Farming is also a seasonal activity which means that farmers would likely need to engage in another activity during the winter months. Craig showed that the Madawaska French, and other French settlers before them, engaged in “agroforestry,” a practice she described as “the symbiotic relationship between agriculture and forestry,” a system in which farmers get a much needed supplemental income from the lumber industry in the winter, while the lumber industry benefits from farmers’ cheap labor.100

The lumber industry represented a market for Madawaska’s commercial farmers. Goods were also sold on the local subsistence market or “shipped

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99 Craig, Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists, 139.
downriver" depending on the offer and demand. According to Craig, the charter families were more likely than other families in the community to engage in commercial farming, since they owned more and often better lands than the rest of the community. Interestingly enough, while commercial farming grew in the Madawaska region, it was by traditional means and not by way of technological advances. Craig explains that while farming methods remained the same, the labor of men, women, and children increased.

Farming is a labor-intensive activity which requires full participation during certain times of the year. The growing season in the Saint John River valley spanned roughly from May to the end of September. These were thus the months when children who were old enough were often working on the farm. The participation of children in the economy of the family farm would be an obstacle to the establishment of permanent schools in the region. Indeed, if the school schedule was to interfere with the seasonal needs of the farm, it would most likely result in deserted schools. Moreover, teachers or their families might have had a farm of their own to tend to. The needs of the local economy came into play as the Madawaska French negotiated the terms of the establishment of education.

104 This practice was an integral part of property transmission as Craig pointed out, since in exchange for their unpaid labor on the farm, children could expect that their father would establish them once they reached adulthood. See Craig, “Farm Transmission and the Commercialization of Agriculture in Northern Maine in the Second Half of the 19th Century,” 328.
105 The Madawaska Training School Catalogues, between 1894 and 1897, report in their alumni section that Theodore Bouchard was both a farmer and a teacher. Others like Bouchard went in and out of the teaching profession, alternating with years working as farmers.
2.5. Conclusion

In 1842, the Madawaska French existed as a specific ethnic group with a distinct language, shared history, values, traditions, and social, political, and economic structures. The formalization of the boundaries between Maine and New Brunswick encouraged the authorities to start investing their respective half of the Madawaska territory in order to fashion it in their own image. In the United States, language has often been used as a way to measure the degree to which a community assimilated to the American way of life. In the case of the Madawaska French, there certainly was an emphasis from the Maine government on ensuring that all of its population would speak English, so as to become proper citizens able to take an active part in the institutional life of the state. In New Brunswick, the emphasis on language does not exist in writing and mostly manifested itself by the relative lack of acknowledgment of the special needs of the linguistic minorities in the province.

Language, and specifically language maintenance can participate in the affirmation of group loyalty. It is part of the ethnic identity of the Madawaska French. In the case of the Madawaska French, taking actions to maintain their habitual language—Madawaska French—as a primary or at least as a language to use with one’s intimates, was one way to express group membership, but also group loyalty. Similarly, by engaging on their own terms in the learning of the

107 Fishman, “Language Maintenance and Language Shift as a Field of Inquiry,” 52.
108 In the twenty-first century, language tends to be dissociated from Acadian ethnic identities, especially as many Acadians in North America are no longer Francophones, Acadian French remains one of the elements of Acadian identity, but it is not exclusive by any means.
English language, the Madawaska French would adopt a language shift that could enable them to strengthen their economic position and status in their dealings with their new English-speaking governments. The community's values relatively to education as well as its economic structures were, in many aspects, antithetical with that of nineteenth-century New Brunswick and Maine. All these factors constituted challenges for the establishment and adoption of the public school system in the region.
CHAPTER 3
A KEY INSTITUTION TO SHAPE CITIZENS

In order to understand the politics of education in Madawaska in the mid-nineteenth century, it is useful to first look at how education had been institutionalized in the New World. There was initially no such thing as public schools in colonial North America. The Act of 1647 in Massachusetts ruled that towns of fifty families or more were to ensure access to elementary education, but funding to maintain a school and employ a teacher was not yet organized by law, and the idea of spending public money to fund schools was not popular at the time. Two centuries later, the idea of using public funds to support a public school system still received some opposition. The establishment and implementation of taxation to fund public schools was one of the reasons for these push backs, but beyond the financial burden, education was seen as a private matter, and the idea of having the government interfering with it was concerning for some.

Education in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century North America was closely linked to religious beliefs, and as S. Alexander Rippa pointed out, the religious minority groups who had fled Europe because they were the victims of persecutions were not prepared to be tolerant and accommodate other groups. Rather, they were actively protecting their religious freedom, and thus their right to educate their children according to their own religious beliefs. For colonial

109 MacNaughton, The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick, 14.
Francophone North America, religious orders and clergymen, from France and New France, acted as both protectors of the Catholic faith and purveyors of knowledge, while in colonial Anglophone New England, “all teaching and learning revolved around the Puritans’ interpretation of the Bible.” For both linguistic spheres, the colonial conception of schools derived directly from European practices. This connection to Europe continued to influence the history of education in North America well into the beginning of the twentieth century.

At the end of the eighteenth century, education in North America remained outside of any government’s purview. Indeed, in the United States, Rippa pointed out that “when the constitution was drafted in 1787, education was not regarded as an undertaking of either the state or federal government” since it was still considered to be both a religious and a private matter. Similarly, Katherine F.C. MacNaughton wrote that in the eighteenth century, “English education was the result of no government plan or statute” and was considered a “private voluntary affair, to be had by those who desired it and could afford to pay for it.” For both the United States and British North America, education was not yet seen as a tool to produce better citizens but rather as a way for communities to perpetuate a certain social hierarchy.

The nineteenth century marks an important turn in the history of education in North America. Teaching transitioned from a temporary occupation to a

111 Rippa, Education in a Free Society, 37.
112 Rippa, Education in a Free Society, 71.
113 MacNaughton, The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick, 5-6.
recognized profession and the “art of teaching” became a legitimate field of research, better known today as pedagogy. The nineteenth century was also the century of the Industrial Revolution which was responsible for an ever-growing need for qualified laborers and thus for an increase in the literacy rate of the population. Jim Carl wrote that even though it is difficult to establish the exact relationship between industrialization and the rise of public education, “we discern a general correspondence between the spread of industry and the rise of mass schooling” during the period that spans from the beginning of the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century to World War I. 114

In the United States, it clearly was the Industrial Revolution, 115 and with it the “breakdown of traditional ways of life,” that brought about the need but also the will to establish a free public school system. The mission of the public school was to become twofold: to protect the nation from the evils of city life—as opposed to the safe haven of the family farm—and to counter the threat represented by the increased influx of immigrants who needed to be Americanized. 116 This last point is particularly important in the case of the Madawaska French. Although they could hardly be considered immigrants, the Madawaska French would still be included in legislation targeting immigrant groups and pertaining to language and patriotism in school. Indeed, in the eyes of the government, the Madawaska French and immigrant communities shared

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115 Rippa, Education in a Free Society, 91.
116 Rippa, Education in a Free Society, 91-102.
similar traits, notably a substantial difference in language, culture, and identity in comparison to the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant majority in power.

In Canada, the school system and the language of education was one of the contentious topics that roused the Confederation Debates. Indeed, the school question was paramount to the rights of Francophones, who were the largest minority group represented in the Canadian Confederation Debates. The British North America Act of 1867, essentially Canada’s Constitution, recognized the rights of both its Anglophone and Francophone subjects. Section 93 in particular dealt with education. It ruled that each province was in charge of its own legislation pertaining to education. Section 93 also protected the rights to denominational schools, as well as the rights for religious minorities to have access to separate schools under the Union.

However, Benjamin Bryce pointed out that, as the nineteenth century came to a close and North America entered the Progressive Era, Anglophone bureaucrats and politicians in Ontario sought to ensure that English was omnipresent in schools, slowly relegating other languages, such as French or German, to the status of foreign languages. One of the drivers for such evolution was the importance of the English language for English-Canada’s idea of the nation, and particularly its usefulness in creating a sense of homogeneity in a diverse population. Concomitantly, Francophones were also working at

preserving their language and idea of the nation. The tension between English Canada’s idea of the nation and that of French Canada would be a point of contention throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth century, leading to numerous controversies related to languages and religious minority rights.

From a private matter to an essential tool designated to shape the citizens of tomorrow, education increasingly became regulated by the government. This chapter will discuss the changing role of education in North America in the nineteenth century. We will start by discussing the role of the public school in enforcing a social order in the era of industrialization in North America. We will then discuss the ideas of patriotism and nationalism and how they relate to identity, before moving on to education’s poor state of affairs in mid-nineteenth century Maine and New Brunswick. This will bring us to the necessary changes that both governments would need to implement in order to establish their public school system. Finally, we will discuss the evolution of the teaching profession and the creation of normal schools as concrete steps in the formalization of the public school system of both the state and the province.

3.1. Enforcing a Social Order

In 1849, the secretary of the two-year old board of education of the state of Maine wrote that “the time for argument to prove the importance of education has long since gone by. In New England, at least, it is regarded as a fixed fact that moral and intellectual culture is a blessing to the individual and to society.”

Indeed, in the nineteenth-century United States, education became recognized not only as an asset, but also as a necessary tool to unite the masses under one nation.

Before the creation of the public school system, the ideal of “Republican motherhood” defined the role of women in the production and training of the future citizens of the republic. This model, however, was no longer sustainable in a country with an ever-growing immigrant population whose mothers were naturally more likely to teach their children the values of their countries of origin rather than that of their new home country. These children, along with children of families who had lived in the United States for generations, were expected to take an active role in society and support the values and ideals of the nation.

One could argue that the public school system was created first and foremost to ensure that all citizens could participate in and would support public affairs, and more generally, their government. According to Paul E. Peterson, “class, status, and political power” were the main elements that stratified nineteenth-century America. Public schools would have to compete with a variety of well-established private institutions, ranging from private academies dedicated to the shaping of an elite, to vocational and denominational institutions, that were in effect the keepers of the existing social hierarchy.120 The “blessing” of public education—as it was understood by white Anglo-Saxon Protestants all along the Northeast—was still in its infancy. Yet, the democratic aspirations of the public school system would soon materialize and become a great point of pride for its

120 Peterson, The Politics of School Reform, 3.
contribution in fulfilling the mission of shaping a united citizenship under one nation, the Union.

As the Civil War broke out in the United States, access to public education was very much one of the ideological fronts of the war. The North had established public school systems and construed public education as a way to elevate society as a whole, while the South had made no efforts to establish a public service destined to educate all of its population by fear that this would lead to “disobedience” in a society where equality was not a desirable outcome for those in power. On the first page of his annual report for the year 1861, Edward P. Weston, Superintendent of Education for the state of Maine, praised the public school system for its contribution to “the intelligent patriotism of the people” who were now defending the ideals of the “Free State system” against “barbarism.”

According to Weston, the public school system was thus successful in its mission to educate and shape the citizens of the state. He continued by directly comparing the institution in the North and the South:

It cannot have escaped your notice that the free schools of the North have ever been an object of dislike to the aristocratic citizens of the South, who have looked upon them as tending to elevate the common people to an ungracious equality with the lords of the plantation, and who would reserve all places of honor and emolument in social and political life, to men of “patriarchal” wealth and ancient family.

Equality or equal opportunity was one of the cornerstones of the public school system in the North. Beyond the development of the minds of the youth, schooling was an exercise in democracy where, ideally, children from different backgrounds were given the same opportunities to succeed.

Weston used the platform of his annual report to confirm and emphasize the moral benefits of the education system of the North. The “free schools of the North” were part of an education system to which African Americans in the South aspired. In her *Legal History of the Civil War and Reconstruction*, Laura F. Edwards wrote that “African Americans characterized education as a right: it was something to which everyone deserved equal access because it was such a fundamental component of American life.” The division of the Civil War encompassed education, with a democratic approach in the North, and a classist and elitist approach in the South. Both systems were aimed at promoting the values and ideals of the majority in power and thus developed within the population a certain sense of patriotism.

In Canada, the dominion was also divided on the subject of education. This division stemmed from the differences between the majority and minority linguistic and religious groups. The Anglo-Saxon Protestant majority, who were involved in the industrialization movements, supported the development of the public school system. The minority group under study in this work, the Francophone Roman Catholics, rejected elements of industrialization and

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engaged in a simpler way of life based on primary sector activities, such as agriculture; an attitudes that was generally encouraged by the Roman Catholic clergy in British North America. These two groups had a different ideology of education and ideology of the nation which, according to Angéline Martel and Daniel Villeneuve, are in fact closely linked ideologies. Martel and Villeneuve argued that “[d]ans les milieux minoritaires, l’éducation et les droits scolaires prennent […] souvent une valeur symbolique beaucoup plus forte qu’au sein des milieux majoritaires,” suggesting that communities in a minority situation were more protective of their education system and school laws because they relate to the group’s identity and idea of their place within the nation. In this context, the fight or struggle to maintaining certain school rights participates in the development of a form of patriotism that pertains to the group and its place within the nation.

3.2. Patriotism, Nationalism and Identity

The idea of nation and nationalism is a product of the nineteenth century. It is shaped by the emergence of “modern states” as understood in the Western world. However, the idea that children are to be taught or at the very least educated in a manner that fosters a certain form of patriotism destined to perpetuate the values and ideals of the group, seems rather inherent to the human condition. Indeed, there is a common will to teach or educate children to

126 Ernest Renan, “What is a nation?” 1882.
agree and support a series of principles and values that define the group. As groups assemble under the larger umbrella of the state, patriotism seeks to federate a population around shared values and ideals for a common project.

Patriotism creates a common interest and allows an otherwise divided society to rally around a country, despite differences in social status. Social status can be derived from religious affiliations, language, heritage, race, sex or any additional criteria relevant to a given community. Unsurprisingly, the populations with the lowest class and status are often recent immigrants and ethnic or racial minorities.127 These differences that impact social status and class, and thus the hierarchy in a given society, can be cultivated by the political power in place in order to maintain the status quo. Alleviating these differences can also be the object of the efforts of a group or institution when there is a perceived benefit such as winning the vote of recent immigrants.128

In the case of the Madawaska French, the community and its identity continued to prevail over a new national identity and a new citizenship many years after the establishment of the international border that divided the community between Maine and New Brunswick. In 1842, the Madawaska French went from the status of independent community with a Francophone majority that was connected to Francophone Canada through the Saint John River, to becoming two linguistic and cultural minority enclaves, one in New Brunswick, and one in Maine. Both enclaves would face the demands of the white Anglo-

128 Peterson, The Politics of School Reform, 5-6.
Saxon Protestant majority in power, including demands related to education that were antithetical with the Madawaska French values and beliefs, all the while continuing to operate mostly as one community.

As members of a linguistic and religious minority, the Madawaska French were concerned by the values that were to be promoted in public schools through government approved curricula. Indeed, the use of King James Bible as a reader was an important point of contention for Roman Catholics, but so was the native tongue of the teacher. In addition, taxation to fund public schools was mandatory, even if a family chose not to send their children to it but rather to send them to a private Catholic institution that would teach a curriculum more in tune with the family values and beliefs.

It would take some negotiations on both sides of the border for the government approved curriculum to be established in the Madawaska region, but also for the Madawaska French to embrace some of the values of their new nations, through a chosen and fought for acculturation. The road to the establishment of the public school system in the Madawaska region was complicated, but so had been the establishment of this system to the rest of the population.

3.3. A Poor State of Affairs

In the mid-1840s, the provincial elite of New Brunswick grew more and more concerned by the quality of its education system. Katherine F.C.

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130 As opposed to giving in to forced or de facto assimilation.
MacNaughton wrote that New Brunswick at the time was “characterized by intellectual lethargy” and justified this state of affairs by explaining that the province was still emerging from its “pioneer stage.” In that regard, she argued that “indifference to education can hardly be interpreted as anything else but an indication of a society culturally poor because of economic stringencies, geographical isolation, or materialistic ideals.”131 Béatrice Craig and Maxime Dagenais found two reports, one written in 1845 and the other in 1846, that identified a series of causes for the dysfunction of the education system in New Brunswick. They listed the following as causes: “people’s apathy; teachers’ incompetence; unsatisfactory modes of payment for teachers […]; defective, or worse, American books;132 inadequate buildings; and imperfect supervision and control.”133

There were two major barriers to the improvement of the school system according to MacNaughton. The first was that a substantial amount of the population of New Brunswick was poor, and to them, education outside of what the family circle or the community already provided was simply a luxury they could not afford. The second was the skepticism of those who had succeeded economically despite the state of education in the province. This group considered investing in education as a waste of money.134

131 MacNaughton, The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick, 102.
132 American books were seen as problematic because of the political system they may be promoting.
133 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in between, 170. See also MacNaughton, The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick, 90-99.
134 MacNaughton, The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick, 84.
summarized this situation by writing that “[w]hen the pudding does not boil furiously, it must simmer longer in the pot,” 135 signifying that the road to better education in New Brunswick would be slow but steady. It would also be tributary of New Brunswick’s inefficient political system of the 1840s and 1850s as well as its overall conservatism. 136

By 1854, despite adopting a relatively slow pace in comparison to their neighbors in British North America or to the United States, New Brunswick had managed to establish important foundations for its school system. As MacNaughton pointed out, “[a] Board of Education, a Normal School, a Superintendent of Education, and a system of inspection had all been established by legal enactments and were functioning.” 137 There was thus a system to administer the provincial schools, and a system to train teachers to regulate and ensure the quality of education. These measures contributed to the overall improvement of the quality of primary schools in New Brunswick, particularly in Anglophone counties.

The measures adopted by the provincial government were unfortunately not transferable to the reality of the Victoria-Madawaska County, county from which the Madawaska French in New Brunswick depended. Indeed, as Craig and

135 MacNaughton, The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick, 85.
136 MacNaughton, The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick, 87.
137 MacNaughton, The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick, 89.
Dagenais pointed out, one of the major obstacles to the establishment of public schools then was the language difference. Another major obstacle underlined by the authors was that the province encouraged teachers to use textbooks produced by the Irish National Board of Education.139 These textbooks were obviously written in English and their content was not in accordance with Roman Catholic values and beliefs. Yet, these non-sectarian textbooks were considered to be the best textbooks available at the time according to Craig and Dagenais.140 As a result, Francophone children who were going to school were not sent by their parents to the public school system; rather they attended denominational schools taught by members of the Roman Catholic clergy and congregations.

The Victoria-Madawaska County was not the only one to be neglected by the centralized administration of New Brunswick. This was the common fate of all “Acadian districts.”141 Craig and Dagenais studied the language issue and found that the provincial board of education that was created with the Parish School Act of 1847 approved almost no French texts, limiting drastically teachers’ resources in French-speaking communities.142 They also pointed out that “before 1870 Madawaska teachers were almost always holders of third-class licenses granted by the county board.”143 Third-class licenses were granted to non-certified

139 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in between, 170.
140 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in between, 170.
141 “Acadian district” was used to designate all francophone districts, regardless of the actual composition of the group.
142 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in between, 171.
143 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in between, 171.
teachers, as a temporary remedy to the lack of a properly trained workforce. Yet, to be trained, Francophone teachers needed access to teacher training in French, which only truly existed in Quebec at the time. In that context, it is not surprising to find that a report written in 1855 on the state of education in the Victoria-Madawaska County mentioned that English-language schools improved while French-language schools were still struggling.144

Similarly to their neighbors on the New Brunswick side of the river, the Madawaska French who lived on the U.S. side were not overly interested in education, and at the end of the nineteenth century, the Maine authorities were faced with similar issues of “irregular attendance, lack of parental interest, lack of discipline, incompetent teachers, and improper classification of pupils,” according to Craig and Dagenais.145 In its first report on the year 1847, the Board of Education of the state of Maine also deplored the current state of its education system which, they argued, contributed to the growing gap between the children of “those who had received a competency or an abundance” and “the children of the people,--those who were so soon to hold in their hands the destiny of the county,--those on whom the state must depend for its defense in war, its prosperity in peace.”146 Through its school system, the state was seeking to foster the “intelligent patriotism of the people,” molding the pupils of today into the loyal citizens of tomorrow.147

144 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in between, 171.
145 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in between, 171.
146 "First report of the Board of Education of the State of Maine," 1847, 6-7.
After making a case for the institution of a permanent school fund, the board identified two areas on which to concentrate the state’s efforts: “teachers’ institutes” to train teachers in pedagogy and “the promotion of education in the new settlements.” The new settlements that the Board of Education was referring to were located in the northern parts of the counties of Franklin, Somerset, Piscataquis and Penobscot, and in the whole of Aroostook of which the Madawaska region is a part. Maine officials, like their counterparts in New Brunswick, referred to the people of the new settlements as “hardy pioneers, who are reclaiming our wilderness and making it rich to [the state].” This description portrayed the Madawaska French and others as people living on the margins of civilization and people in need to be assimilated to Maine’s society and societal norms. The commission in charge of education in the new settlements identified immigrants coming from Canada, and specifically from the St. John valley, as culprits, writing: “as emigration is always to a greater or less degree taking place, there is a constant influx of ignorance and educational indifference within the bounds of the state.”

The Board of Education of the state of Maine only truly started to implement its Americanization program in Madawaska in 1857, after spending many years establishing and improving its public school system in the state as a

150 "First report of the Board of Education of the State of Maine," 1847, 10.
whole, but from then on, the French settlement made a recurrent apparition in the board’s annual report.

3.4. No Longer an Improvised Profession

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, schools were facing high rates of student absenteeism and parents’ apathy, but they were also facing a lack of properly trained teachers.152 Prior to the institutionalization of teacher training, the level of qualification of all these individuals who served as teachers varied greatly in breadth and depth,153 and so did their level of engagement towards their teaching duties.

This was due in part because teaching was hardly considered to be a “true profession” at the time and was thus not a career of choice.154 After all, teaching in North America was often seen as an occupation for young men who had yet to embrace a real career.155 As for women, due to attitudes against married women embracing a profession, teaching was something to do before getting married and starting their actual “position” as a wife and a mother.156 Women who

152 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in between, 310.
153 In his annual report to the state board of education for the year 1851, the secretary mentioned extensively the issue of teacher’s incompetency: “Fifth Report of the Board of Education of the State of Maine.” State of Maine, Augusta, Maine, 1851, 24-27, Maine State Library. The topic of teachers’ qualifications and education was a subject of close interest from the inception of the board of education of the state of Maine: “First Report of the Board of Education of the State of Maine,” 1847, 62-78. See also J.E. Picot, A Brief History of Teacher Training in New Brunswick, 1848-1973. (Fredericton, N. B.: The Department of Education, Province of New Brunswick, 1974), 9: “Prior to 1848, there was no training school in New Brunswick. Schools were staffed by teachers who received their licenses without previous training, by authority of the Governor.”
155 Picot, A Brief History of Teacher Training in New Brunswick, 9.
156 Frances Heylar, “Thwarted Ambitions: Teacher Education in New Brunswick.” In The Curriculum History of Canadian Teacher Education. Routledge Research in International and Comparative Education. (Routledge, 2017). See also Gail Campbell, “I Wish to Keep a Record:”
remained in the profession were often members of religious congregations or women who chose to never marry.

Another factor in the low level of qualifications of teachers in the nineteenth century was the competitiveness of wages, or rather the lack thereof. Low wages and the often poor conditions of the classroom locales—both due in part to many communities’ reluctance to pay school taxes—deterred many from considering teaching as a promising career.157 Rather individuals were moving in and out of the teaching profession. Wages for men were far from competitive, especially for learned individuals, but wages for women were, by design, even lower for a similar position, based on the perceived inferiority of women’s anticipated knowledge.158

Finally, the lack of qualified teachers was due to the simple fact that very few people actually knew how to teach.159 In 1847, the Maine board of education directly linked the lack of qualified teachers to the relative failure of its school system, which in turn impacted the quality of Maine’s citizens, and decided to take action:

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157 Helyar, “Thwarted Ambitions: Teacher Education in New Brunswick.”
158 MacNaughton, The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick, 71 and 89-90. MacNaughton reported that in New Brunswick, in 1833 “inhabitants were not required to pay female teachers more than one-half of what they must pay masters” based on the belief that “teachers taught the things they knew, and that the female teachers of the time did not know enough.” The statistics for the state of Maine also show the disparities between the wages of male and female teachers.
159 Picot, A Brief History of Teacher Training in New Brunswick, 9. See also LaVorgna, “Lessons in Mid-Nineteenth-Century New Brunswick Teacher Careerism,” 8-9, and “First report of the Board of Education of the State of Maine,” 1847, 32.
To the want of thoroughly qualified teachers, more than to any other cause, is to be attributed the failure of our free schools in meeting the wishes and the wants of the people. [...] There can be no imaginary evil, whose existence is so universally conceded;--that can be no small evil whose influence is so wildly felt. I rejoice in the faith that for it there is a remedy, which an enlarged philanthropy, and a sound state policy, will in due time apply. To that subject I will more particularly invite attention, under the following title: Normal Schools and Teacher's Institutes.160

In New Brunswick as well, teacher training was seen as one of the obvious remedies to the ailments from which the school system had been suffering. The Progressive Era brought about a whole new educational movement in North America that would revolutionize education and more specifically “the art of teaching,” or pedagogy, which needed to be mastered by the teaching profession.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the need for teacher training institutions known as normal schools became evident. The reliance on the local elite and clergy to assess the competencies as well as the good morals of a teacher were no longer sufficient. Teachers were expected to have gone through a Normal School in order to qualify for a teaching position.161

3.5. Creating Normal Schools

The growing interest in the “art of teaching” or pedagogy in the mid-nineteenth century crystallized the role and expectations towards the

160 “First report of the Board of Education of the State of Maine,” 1847, 32.
161 Both Maine and New Brunswick instituted a system of licensure that certified the teaching credential of individuals. This tiered system would tolerate the employment of untrained teachers when a trained teacher was not available. This often happened in school districts where a Francophone teacher was needed, and was due to the initial lack of training accessible to Francophones.
qualifications of school teachers in North America. Good elementary teachers were not only expected to be learned, they also had to be well versed in the art of teaching. Teacher training colleges otherwise known as normal schools were established by governments to prepare their elementary school teachers to deliver the curriculum using state-of-the-art pedagogy. Maine and New Brunswick both established normal schools in the mid-nineteenth century to foster and support the professionalization of their teaching workforce. However, English was the language of the approved curriculum and of teacher training courses in both school systems. English was also a language in which very few people in the Madawaska region were proficient.

In New Brunswick, the first normal school opened in Fredericton in 1848. It was established by an “act to provide for the support and improvement of the Parish Schools” passed by the general assembly of her majesty’s province of New Brunswick on April 14th, 1847 and had for mission to instruct school teachers in the “Art of Teaching.” The act describes the curriculum on the Fredericton normal school as follows:

training shall include a thorough knowledge of the method of conducting a Common School, and especially the art of communicating the rudiments and elementary branches of Common School Education, in a manner best suited to the capacities, ages, and conditions of such of the Youth of the Province as the said School instructors may be afterwards required to teach.  

162 Acts of the General Assembly of her majesty’s province of New Brunswick passed in the year 1847, 113.
163 Acts of the General Assembly of her majesty’s province of New Brunswick passed in the year 1847, 113.
Despite what it could suggest, the capacities and conditions of the youth aforementioned are not inclusive of language difference. The curriculum of the Fredericton Normal School was exclusively delivered in English, at least until 1878. Francophones who were proficient in English were welcome to attend the normal school, but they would only be trained to teach the English curriculum.

The curriculum of the Fredericton Normal School included a practicum at the Model School that was to be attached to the Training School. The Model School would be a Common School used as “a model for the practical illustration of the Art of Teaching” where students of the normal school were to demonstrate their mastery of both pedagogical methods and school regulations established by the Provincial Board of Education. In his *Brief history of Teacher Training in New Brunswick, 1848-1973*, J.E. Picot noted that while the early curriculum of the normal school only included training in pedagogy, many students also required training in academic subjects. This hardly comes as a surprise if we consider that a commission appointed by the legislature to evaluate school conditions in New Brunswick between 1844 and 1845 showed that a large number of active teachers throughout the province had themselves received little to no education and struggled with the basics of literacy. This issue was not specific to New Brunswick. In fact, the need to provide training in pedagogy as

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165 Acts of the General Assembly of her majesty’s province of New Brunswick passed in the year 1847, 113.
166 Picot, A Brief History of Teacher Training in New Brunswick, 13.
well as in academic subjects would shape the evolution of normal schools and
teacher education in general throughout the continent, as part of the movement
towards the democratization of education.

In Maine, despite the fact that the state board of education had identified a
need for teacher training institutions as early as 1847, it took 16 years for the
state to move towards the creation of its own normal schools.168 Indeed, it is only
on March 25, 1863, that the Maine legislature approved an act for the
establishment of normal schools. In the act, the need for normal schools was
justified as follows:

Whereas, the interests of public education are suffering by reason of
incompetent teachers, and
Whereas, normal schools have proved in other states a very efficient
means of furnishing teachers better qualified for their work,

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in Legislature
assembled, as follows* […]169

The first normal school to be established was the Farmington State Normal
School in 1863. Eastern State Normal School in Castine was established in
1867, followed by Western State Normal School in Gorham in 1877, Aroostook
State Normal School in Presque Isle in 1903, and Washington State Normal
School in Machias in 1909. The location of these normal schools corresponds to
the population centers of Maine, with a larger population south of Bangor and a

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168 Prior to the establishment of normal schools in Maine, teachers would have to travel to other
states in New England if they wanted to receive proper training.
169 Act for the establishment of normal schools, Maine, 1863.
sparse population north of Bangor, mostly located along the border between Maine and New Brunswick due to the proximity of waterways. (Figure 5)

Figure 5. Map showing the location of normal schools in Maine

Prior to establishing normal schools, the state had sponsored teacher institutes as early as 1848. The purpose of these institutes was twofold. First, it sought to provide an opportunity for elementary teachers to exchange ideas on their teaching practices, attend lectures and participate in workshops related to "school instruction, discipline, and government."170 Second, it gave superintendents an opportunity "to become acquainted with each other, and with

the methods adopted by each in the examination of teachers, and thus be able to select and adopt the most approved.\textsuperscript{171} These institutes, although well-meant, only consisted in a yearly daylong meeting which could hardly compensate for the lack of formal training the majority of common school teachers at the time had received. Furthermore, and similarly to the situation in New Brunswick, Maine teachers needed training in academic subjects as well as training in pedagogy.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, there were five state normal schools in Maine (Farmington, Castine, Gorham, Presque Isle and Machias) but none of them prepared teachers for the specific needs of the Madawaska French.\textsuperscript{172} Similarly in New Brunswick, the French department of the Fredericton Normal School only prepared Francophone students to undertake the English program offered at the normal school, which meant that Francophones would have to attend the normal school for a longer period of time—a financial sacrifice that not everyone could make as students of the normal schools were full time students who could not maintain a secondary occupation.

Since the normal school did not offer a French equivalent to the English teacher training program, it de facto limited the access of Francophone teachers to a proper training, which in turn impacted Francophone communities as a whole. It is important to note, however, that lay teachers were not the norm in

\textsuperscript{171} "First report of the Board of Education of the State of Maine," 1847, 69
\textsuperscript{172} University of Maine, \textit{Survey of higher education in Maine by the University of Maine, in cooperation with Bates, Bowdoin and Colby Colleges}, under the direction of the Teachers College, Columbia University, (Orono, Maine, 1932), 16.
these communities. Indeed, Francophone communities tended to rely heavily on the Roman Catholic clergy and religious congregations for the education of their youth. However, in northern Maine and Atlantic Canada, clergymen tended to be itinerant to compensate for the shortage of priests in the region, a situation that limited considerably the services that could be offered to the community, including education.

3.6. Conclusion

For much of the nineteenth century, Maine and New Brunswick followed a similar education agenda that yielded similar results. Despite fundamental differences in their respective governments, Maine and New Brunswick are part of the Atlantic Northeast, a region that shares a similar white Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture, the same language, but also a similar climate and environment. While not identical, these two geopolitical spaces shared similar conditions and were faced with similar issues that stemmed from common views on education. The two governments may not have agreed on textbooks or on citizenship education since, on that front, their agendas differed, however their elite were likely to have received a similar education and to have had the same references as the field of education progressively developed through the school reform movement. Maine and New Brunswick were thus both starting from a similar understanding of what a good education looked like and shared a similar idea of what the outcome of public education should be.

As Maine and New Brunswick started to engage in the implementation of a public school system to provide skilled workers for their industries and to shape
citizens who would uphold their values and principles, various challenges and barriers emerged. The white Anglo-Saxon Protestant majority in power in both the state and the province would have to make a number of concessions to reach their main goal, which was to foster a sense of unity amongst a non-uniform population. These concessions or adjustments would be aimed at overcoming barriers.

In the case of the Madawaska French, the obvious barriers to the establishment of a public school system were the linguistic and religious differences between the Francophone community and the ruling white Anglo-Saxon Protestant majority. However, while these barriers existed and were part of the issue, it is also important to consider the general environment in which the community lived. The Madawaska region was rural and relatively isolated from more densely populated areas.

Logistically, children who lived outside of the nearest town might have had to travel far, alone, and by foot, to get to the closest school. After all, the Madawaska region was far less developed than the more industrial centers in the province and the state, and many families were involved in farming which does not happen in close quarters, but rather encourages the dispersion of the population over the arable lands available in the region.\textsuperscript{173} For some, due to the distance, school would only be an option in the form of a boarding school. In fact, some of the religious congregations in the Madawaska region that had their own

\textsuperscript{173} This is particularly true of the long-lot pattern characteristic of Francophone settlements.
school accommodated boarders, which would have been a good reason for the Madawaska French to favor these schools over a public school located far away from a child’s home.

The climate and season could also be a barrier to the adoption of public schools. Indeed, during the winter months, the snow and the cold temperatures rendered a long journey on foot to the nearest schoolhouse impracticable, particularly for younger children—never mind the lack of appropriate winter gear that elders in the Madawaska community remember all too well.174 In fact, the school calendar was highly dependent on the season, be it because of the weather, or because of labor intensive farm work that required full participation among the community.

In contrast, neighbors such as Massachusetts and Lower Canada were more developed, more densely populated and they benefitted from a higher ratio of clerics and religious congregations than the Madawaska region. These conditions created the need and capacity to organize education sooner, and in fact, people who sought an education beyond what was available to them in the Madawaska region, did so by traveling either south or west.

174 In 2016, I had the privilege to discuss my research topic with several members of the Valley Crafters who kindly shared with me their experiences of being a school girl in the Saint John Valley at the beginning of the twentieth century: The Valley Crafters, “Interview for Threads of Our Lives: Maine Folk Fiber Art at Fort Kent on April 2, 2016,” April 2016. Maine Folklife Center, University of Maine.
The people of this interesting region had been living in a primitive, secluded existence, using bunches of shingles and bushels of buckwheat as a circulating medium, and existed largely on their home products.  

As teachers in Maine and New Brunswick became better trained and the overall quality of education was improving in the North Atlantic region of North America, the Madawaska territory was thought to lag behind, seemingly incapable of catching up with the rest of society. The authorities of both Maine and New Brunswick were presented with very similar issues as they worked to establish their own institutions in the Madawaska region, but the dissimilitude of their system of government was to yield very different approaches. Craig and Dagenais described these differences as follows:

New Brunswick, like the other British North American colonies, developed a centralized, top-down system of public education, largely inspired by the Irish system. The organization of Maine public school system on the other hand, promoted those democratic tendencies rejected by New Brunswick. The Maine system was very decentralized and allowed local school committees to certify teachers and determine content.

This major difference in governance led to the initial neglect of the Francophone minority in New Brunswick, due to their highly centralized system that catered to the English Protestant majority, while in Maine, the decentralized power would eventually allow for the establishment of a school system tailored to serve the Madawaska community and its specific needs. But in the decades that followed
the establishment of the border, both the governments of Maine and New Brunswick would struggle to impose their views on education in the Saint John River valley.

Cultural differences, such as the importance of oral tradition, as well as language difference, caused difficulties for the establishment of new institutions on both sides of the international border, because the language of these institutions was English, and their value system was that of the Anglo-Saxon Protestant majority in power. As far as education is concerned, it is the difference in attitude towards schooling as well as the pre-existing hierarchical structure that governed the Madawaska French community that were clashing with those of the Anglo-Saxon Protestant powers. In fact, after examining the many cultural differences that had been pointed out by the authorities of the state of Maine, Craig and Dagenais concluded that the “Valley residents’ values appeared antithetical to American ones” and, I would argue, by extension antithetical to Anglo-Saxon Protestant values in general.

Among these values, Roman Catholicism would prove to be a far greater obstacle for the authorities of Maine and New Brunswick than language difference. Indeed, as George F.G. Stanley stated, “To the English-speaking Protestant, the law was a religion; to the French-speaking Roman Catholic, religion was the law.” A corollary to this statement would be that if the law goes against the Roman Catholic religion, it goes against the Madawaska French

177 Craig and Dagenais, *The Land in Between*, 173.
community and, for that matter, against all Roman Catholic communities, regardless of their language or country of origin.

In this chapter, we will consider two main barriers as well as two factors that played a role in the establishment of a public school system in the Madawaska region. We will start by addressing the barrier that comes from citizenship, and more precisely from what citizenship entailed for a community that became split between two nations through the settlement of a long-lasting border conflict. Then, we will discuss the effects of the linguistic and cultural barriers that existed between the parties involved. We will then move on to the factors that contributed to the overcoming of these barriers. The first factor we will consider is the changes in the law related to education in both Canada and the United States, and how these changes applied to the Madawaska region. The second factor we will discuss is the presence of religious congregations on both sides of the border and their role as educator in the community.

4.1. Citizenship Education: A Driving Force

By the mid-nineteenth century both the United States and British North America—and later the Dominion of Canada—were actively working at asserting the basis of citizenship in their respective jurisdictions. Glynn Custred defined the population of the modern nation-states as “a community of citizens self-consciously sharing a common culture and national identity.” 179 The United States and Canada are commonly referred to as “nations of immigrants.” As

such, the sharing of a “common culture” and the development of a “national identity” needed to be learned for a good portion of the population of these two nation-states. Public education was viewed as one of the vectors to instill in the population a deep sense of citizenship through a carefully crafted curriculum whereby English, history and citizenship education were the pillars of a common foundation on which to develop the population’s sense of citizenship and nationality.

This question of citizenship and the role of the school system in citizenship education are particularly important when looking at the Francophone community of the Saint John River valley. Indeed, this rather homogenous population had just been arbitrarily separated along the natural border formed by the Saint John River in such a way that one half of its community belonged to New Brunswick while the other half belonged to Maine. Yet, for a number of years, the Madawaska French’s allegiance would remain first and foremost to the Madawaska community.\textsuperscript{180} The language difference, the shared history and common experience of the Madawaska French naturally overpowered the newfound national bond that resulted from the signature of the Webster-Ashburton treaty.

The Madawaska French were not the only border community forced to wrestle with questions of citizenship and identity in the late nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{181} Western nations were still negotiating their borders, and other communities such

\textsuperscript{180} Craig, “Immigrants in a Frontier Community: Madawaska 1785-1850,” 278.
\textsuperscript{181} Custred, “The Linguistic Consequences of Boundaries, Borderlands, and Frontiers.” 265-278.
as the people of the Alsace-Lorraine region at the border between France and the German Empire, as well as other communities around the world who were subjected to European colonialism, shared in on this experience.¹⁸² In the case of Alsace-Lorraine for instance, language, identity, and citizenship were, beyond territorial claims, the very ground on which France and the German Empire were feuding.¹⁸³ For the Madawaska French, language, identity, and citizenship were what distinguished the community from both New Brunswick and Maine, and from Canada and the United States.

Under the paradigm of the nation-state, Custred reminds us that “borders and language take on a more emphatic instrumental importance […] and they assume a new and sometimes potent symbolic significance with an ability to shape the linguistic landscape as never before.”¹⁸⁴ Indeed, the strong sense of belonging,¹⁸⁵ which manifested itself in the Madawaska identity, could be perceived by the authorities as a threat for the newly established border, and thus for the peaceful resolution reached by the two neighboring countries. This situation justified the efforts of the authorities to establish English schools, based on Anglo-Saxon Protestant views of education, in the French districts of the Madawaska region.

4.2. Linguistic and Cultural Differences

Over the course of the nineteenth century, both Maine and New Brunswick adopted a series of measures to establish or fund secular and parochial schools, but as Craig and Dagenais pointed out, these measures remained unsuccessful for the most part in the Madawaska region.\textsuperscript{186} There are two main reasons for this lack of success. First, as we already mentioned, given the nature of the structure of their society, the Madawaska French had a limited use for literacy and numeracy. Second and most importantly, Maine and New Brunswick had refrained from investing in public services in the area prior to the establishment of the international border in 1842,\textsuperscript{187} de facto causing the Madawaska region to remain estranged from the educational movement that was put in place in both the state and the province.

In his first quarterly report to the Maine state board of education for the year 1844, James C. Madigan, superintendent and instructor of schools in the “Madawaska settlement,” highlighted “the absolute necessity” to have bilingual teachers in the region.\textsuperscript{188} At the time, the majority of people living in the Saint John River valley were French speakers and French was indisputably the language used at home. This linguistic situation—in the light of the state’s assimilation policy—called for the hiring of bilingual school teachers who, as

\textsuperscript{186} Craig and Dagenais, \textit{The Land in Between}, 176.
\textsuperscript{187} Craig, “Immigrants in a Frontier Community: Madawaska 1785-1850.” 279.
\textsuperscript{188} James C. Madigan, “First quarterly report of superintendent and Instructor of Schools in Madawaska settlement: June 13, 1844”, 1844, 4. Maine State Archives, Augusta, Maine. 2504-0207
Ernst C. Helmreich underlined, were difficult to come by in Maine in the mid-nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{189}

Maine’s relatively young board of education was aware of the differences that existed within the state, and particularly between its northern part—newly invested, and its southern part—already developed. (Figure 6) In fact, Maine’s Board of Education formed a special commission to investigate the state of education in the new settlements.\textsuperscript{190} This commission reported back to the board in 1847 highlighting three main issues that needed to be addressed.\textsuperscript{191}

First, the commission reported that it was not uncommon for adults to be illiterate. They found too few schools that qualified as proper common schools or, in other words, too few schools that met the standards set by the state of Maine. As for private schools, they were described as both ephemeral and undemocratic in character, since their existence depended on a number of variables that included: private funds, the teacher’s career plan, and the pupils’ ability to attend.

\textsuperscript{190} The new settlements, as defined in chapter 2, corresponded to a large area of land (6,000 square miles) in the north of the state which encompasses Aroostook county, and the northern part of the following counties: Franklin, Somerset, Piscataquis, and Penobscot. The contemporary population estimate for this part of the state was 10,000 inhabitants.
\textsuperscript{191} “First Report of the Board of Education of the State of Maine,” 1847, p 55
Figure 6. Map showing how developed southern Maine was compared to northern Maine.193
Second, the commission argued that for the people of the new settlements to receive a proper education, teachers would have to come from outside of these communities. There were three reasons why the commission came to this conclusion. Reason number one: the lack of proper schools in the new settlements meant that there was a lack of adequately educated individuals in the region who could fulfill the role of teachers. Reason number two: the large influx of migrants coming from Lower Canada and New Brunswick—where there were no free schools—was expected to increase the rate of illiteracy.194 Here, the commission is referring to the large migration of Acadians and French Canadians in the 1840s, who left their home for economic reasons to find employment in the farms and lumber camps of the Aroostook and Saint John River valleys.195 And finally, reason number three: with the population of the “older part of the state” starting to move north, the commission was foreseeing the differences in attitudes towards education as a potential source of conflicts.196 It would be unfortunate, if by moving north, Maine’s educated population was forced to compromise on the quality of their schools.

The third conclusion offered by the commission was that the solution to the education issue in the new settlements could be resolved by raising appropriate funds, both locally and at the state level, and by establishing

At this stage, linguistic and cultural differences were not factored in as an integral part of the equation. The sum of funding and teacher training was presented as the solution Maine was looking for to bring state-endorsed education to the northern part of the state.

The work of the commission on education in the new settlements only confirmed what the board of education already suspected: schools in the new settlements were sparse, and proper schools even sparser. This meant that it would indeed be necessary to promote and support education in these communities, for as stated in Maine’s constitution: “a general diffusion of the advantages of education is essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people.”

To this point, the committee argued that promoting education in the new settlements was not only necessary from a political and social standpoint, but that is was also an economic and moral imperative for the state.

The report of the commission on education in the new settlements did not discuss language differences between the state authorities and some of the communities that inhabited the section of the state identified as “the new settlements.” Rather, it emphasized the rural character of the population, described as still operating in a similar fashion to frontier communities.

Concerned, as it should be, by the quality and competency of its citizenry, the state of Maine had embarked on a quest to educate its northern folks to ensure that this population group could fully participate in the economy and


198 Quote from the constitution of Maine, as cited in the report of the commission on the new settlements in the “First Report of the Board of Education of the State of Maine,” 1847, 57
institutional life of the state. Yet, and despite the apparent good will of the board of education, very little progress was made between 1847 and 1857 in the Madawaska region. Indeed, the improvement of education, and the qualification of teachers in particular, was a state-wide concern, and the Madawaska region was not the only part of the state that was lagging behind.

The establishment of the public school system in Maine was a large undertaking, and efforts needed to be made in all corners of the state. Part of this effort consisted in communicating the content and application of the law regulating the common school system with each district. To this effect, the Maine Legislature passed a resolution in 1857 mandating the state superintendent to compile all school laws into a pamphlet to be distributed to school officers, districts and municipalities in order to assist public officials with the application of the school law. Mindful of the language difference, the state superintendent mentioned in his report for the year 1857 that he ensured that French districts would receive information regarding the conditions to secure state support for their schools, along with other relevant information, in both English and French.

Following his visit to the plantation of the Saint John valley, the superintendent highlighted the superior interest in education he witnessed in their

English school districts, reinforcing by his statement the lesser interest he witnessed amongst the Francophone population. However, the superintendent also made favorable comments regarding the French schools he visited and judged the efforts to be “satisfactory” or “respectable.” He also appreciated seeing the addition of a reading class in English in the curriculum of these schools.

Based on his observation, the state official argued in favor of using state aid as a leverage to encourage districts to establish proper schools. But recognizing that community buy-in was essential in this endeavor, he also emphasized that no state funding should be allocated without first securing the community’s financial participation. It was the superintendent’s belief that the encouragement of the state in the form of monetary aid “shall gradually increase the general intelligence of the French citizens [of the Saint John River valley], and thus prepare them for a more intelligent understanding and appreciation of the privileges conferred upon them by the government and laws of the State.”

Indeed, while the superintendent was able to see some positive progress, he also pointed out that the Madawaska region was still dominated by a Francophone population, the majority of which could neither read nor write.
The state superintendent was in favor of using legislation to encourage the “intellectual and social elevation of these citizens,” whom he described as “a kind, sociable and polite people” who lived on “some of the finest lands in the State,” and planned to return for a visit the following year, to measure the impact of state aid in the region. From 1857 on, the Madawaska region became a recurring subject of concerns in Maine’s annual school reports.

In 1858, having received no proof of improvement in the school system of the Saint John River valley, the superintendent decided to cancel the visit he had planned the year before. According to his report, not only were there no signs of significant improvement, but the districts that were granted state aid neglected to match the funding they were granted by collecting taxes in support of their schools. Community participation in the funding of the state’s common schools was a requirement to obtain state support. Authorities also thought of it as a proof that the community was convinced of the good of providing their children with a proper education that would make them good citizens. As for the English schools, only a few seemed to be striving in 1858 according to the state superintendent’s sources. Yet, one school in particular drew the attention of the state superintendent. It was a “large and flourishing” English school in Fort Kent that taught up to fifty pupils. This school was three years old and had first

benefitted from the experience of Miss Huntress who was described as an accomplished teacher, and was currently taught by a Miss Marshall who came all the way from New Portland.\textsuperscript{210} A few other schools were thriving according to Col. David Page of Fort Kent, the state superintendent’s correspondent in the Hancock plantation. So much so that the colonel happily reported that these schools could be credited for starting to spark the interest of parents who had previously seen no value in having their children become literate.\textsuperscript{211}

No such successes were reported in the French districts of the plantations of Van Buren, Madawaska, and Hancock.\textsuperscript{212} Contrarily to the previous year, and despite the encouraging information delivered by Col. David Page, it is on a bleak picture that the superintendent ended his report on the Saint John River valley for the year 1858, as he wrote: “[u]nless better educated, they will do little more than perpetuate the burden which their fathers have cast upon the State, and be as unfit as they to understand or perform the duties of citizens.”\textsuperscript{213} Of the three districts of the Saint John River valley—Van Buren, Madawaska, and Hancock—only the district of Hancock and mainly its English school located in Fort Kent were making efforts towards improving the education of its children according to the state’s annual report for the year 1858.

In 1859, the following year, the state superintendent’s report mentioned that the modest success of Hancock’s school district, and especially that of the English school of Fort Kent, were encouraging as French citizens were increasingly considering the benefits of having their children learn the English language. Yet, any progress made in this district alone remained statistically insignificant in comparison with the overall Francophone population of the Saint John River valley who were not attending a state supported school.

Ignorance and a certain reluctance to contribute to the funding of public education continued to be used as descriptors for the Madawaska French in following reports. These negative descriptors were consistently juxtaposed to a brief yet out of place positive description of the environment that the Madawaska French were fortunate to inhabit. In an era where industrialization pushed wilderness, and more generally, nature, away from the growing urban centers, making it a most coveted treasure, this juxtaposition seems to only have served one purpose, which is to emphasize that a population thought to be ignorant and unwilling to better themselves through education did not deserve to live on such a beautiful stretch of lands. In fact, however, the land was shaped by the work of this very community, who cleared, farmed and shaped the landscape so praised by the state official.

Along with this rhetoric, the title of the section dedicated to the Madawaska French became more targeted overtime in the state superintendent’s annual report, highlighting the change in the state’s understanding of the situation. At first, the Madawaska French’s education issue was discussed as part of the broader umbrella of “education in the new settlements.” The following year, the section was titled “education in the plantation,” and a year later “Hancock plantation,” to then become “the French Settlements.” Education in the Saint John River valley went from being considered a part of a broader issue tied to location and isolation, to being perceived as a more discreet issue identified by the linguistic and cultural background of the community.

The differences in apparent attitudes towards education, but also the climate of distrust between the community and the state authorities was in part due to the tension around school taxes, suggesting that progress regarding the establishment of the state’s public school system would be slow. The linguistic and cultural differences between the Madawaska French and the authorities of the state of Maine were making the establishment of the state’s public school system in the Saint John River valley a rather difficult task.

On the other side of the border, in New Brunswick, language difference was treated in a very different way. While in Maine there had been some efforts at times to provide information on important bills both in English and in French,

\[217\text{ As discussed in the introduction to chapter 3, school taxes were still relatively new and so was the idea to pay for education. Prior to the organization of schooling by the government through the public school system, education had been a private matter supplemented by religious education, such as catechism.}\]
there was no question regarding the language of official business: it was English, and English only. In New Brunswick however, Francophones made up a large and growing portion of the population of the province.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the linguistic minority was slowly gaining representation, first in the Assembly in 1842, and later on in the provincial ministry. Yet, the recognition of the French language at the higher levels of government was not self-evident. Francophone representatives had to be proactive about getting the French language into the political system of the province, and even then, their efforts were rarely met with actions by fear from the English majority to create undesirable precedents. Needless to say, the road to equitable recognition and representation was going to be long for the Francophone minority groups in New Brunswick.

The presence of Quebec in the Canadian Confederation effectively made it impossible for the federal government to legislate against the use of the French language. However, and because of the negotiations led by French-Canadian representatives during the Confederation Debates, education was to remain a provincial matter, making it not only difficult, but also controversial for the federal government to intervene in school matters. While the province of New Brunswick was home to a rather large Francophone population, MacNaughton pointed out that “there was nothing in the Constitution of New Brunswick which obligated the

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218 MacNaughton, *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick*, 228.
220 New Brunswick became officially bilingual in 1969.
provincial authorities to accord to the French language any rights and privileges in the legislature or in the schools.” 221 And while that is true, there were also no restriction to “the use of French as the language of communication and study in the schools of Acadian districts” either. 222 In fact, the province counted several schools and institutions where the language of instruction was French. 223 These institutions were usually part of a religious institution or were funded directly by the church.

4.3. The Common School Act

New Brunswick established its non-sectarian public school system in 1871 with the adoption of the Common School Act. The goal of this act was to provide all children in the province with a proper education by setting official standards. The Common School Act resulted in three major changes: teachers needed to be certified by the province in order to work in a public school, the textbooks in use were carefully selected at the provincial level, and financial support from the province would only be allocated to secular schools.

The system aimed at providing every child with a free access to public education regardless of sex, religion, language and race, 224 but the fact that it was a secular system was perceived as a direct attack by the Roman Catholic populations of New Brunswick. George F. G. Stanley, who explored the reasons

221 MacNaughton, *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick*, 231.
222 MacNaughton, *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick*, 231.
224 Savoie, *Un siècle de revendications scolaires au Nouveau-Brunswick*, 55.
for the opposition of the Roman Catholic minority of New Brunswick to the Common School Act, found that regulation 20 was particularly controversial as it forbade “the display in the school room of symbols or emblems of any national or other society, or of any political or religious organization,” and thus prevented members of religious organizations from being employed as teachers in a public school. Indeed, the Common School Act did not directly favor one religion at the expenses of another, yet, its adoption injured both the French-speaking and the Irish-Catholic populations of New Brunswick who all relied heavily on the Roman Catholic Church for both school locals and teachers. It is thus not surprising that Acadians, French Canadians, Madawaska French and Irish Catholics all opposed the Common School Act: they feared that their children would be taught from books containing information that could offend Roman Catholic susceptibilities and resented having to pay taxes to fund a school system that did not embrace their values.

The non-sectarian clauses of the act became the subject of a province-wide controversy and the dissatisfaction of the Roman Catholic population of New Brunswick was brought up to the provincial government as well as to the Canadian House of Commons in Ottawa. To appease the tensions, the Board of Education of New Brunswick conceded to modify regulation 20 in 1872 to allow teachers to wear religious symbols and in 1873 to allow teachers to wear religious garb, but the school taxes in place to support secular schools

remained.226 The tax issue was particularly problematic because as MacNaughton pointed out it meant that Roman Catholics “were faced with the necessity of paying taxes for schools to which they could not send their children unless they disobeyed their clergy.”227 Roman Catholicism was an integral part of the Madawaska French identity and the prospect of having to disobey their clergy could not have been perceived as a light matter.

For the French-speaking Roman Catholic population, the Common School Act was problematic beyond the question of secularism as it provided no guaranteed access to school in French within the public system. George F.G. Stanley pointed out that the Common School Act mentioned the selection of French textbooks in regulation 16 which, he argued, suggests that the non-sectarian school law was not meant to eliminate French language schools.228 However, this reference to the French language was also the only one in the whole act. This shows some level of awareness vis-a-vis the Francophone presence in the province, as well as a lack of understanding of what it means to have an appropriate number of schools to serve both Francophone and Anglophone populations.

MacNaughton suspected that the people who were responsible for the Common School Act saw the implementation of accommodations based on language difference as “a potential obstacle to the creation of a unified system.”

227 MacNaughton, The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick, 212.
The repetition of the term “French-English” in official documents to refer to textbooks and the education of the French-speaking population in general reinforced her suspicion that education for the French-speaking population of New Brunswick was meant to be bilingual until students became able to pursue their education in the English language. She argued that while there is no specific document to prove it, pushing for the study of English and thus assimilation might have been foreseen as the solution. This was after all the position that legislators in Ontario decided to adopt, and they too were dealing with large linguistic minority groups. Scholars such as Alexandre J. Savoie go as far as questioning whether the apparent neglect for the need of its Francophone linguistic minority was not in fact serving the province’s hidden assimilation agenda.

In the case of the Madawaska community, regulation 20 resulted in a shortage of teachers able to serve its French-speaking populations. The Roman Catholic community relied in part on the Sisters of Charity of Saint John for the schooling of their youth at the St. Basile Academy located in Saint-Basile de Madawaska. The departure of the Sisters of Charity of Saint John from Saint Basile de Madawaska in 1873 was a direct consequence of the Common School Act. The congregation’s poor financial conditions as well as the move towards

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229 MacNaughton, *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick*, 232.
230 MacNaughton, *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick*, 231.
231 MacNaughton, *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick*, 231.
secular education made it impossible for them to stay in the Madawaska region.233

In addition, to the shortage of teachers, the relative poverty of the Francophone population prevented them, in most cases, from funding a private school where French would be the main language of education,234 leaving these communities with few to no alternative to the secular Anglophone schools. These factors explain why there were very few schools available to Madawaska French pupils on the New Brunswick side of the river by 1875. In fact, there were still no schools in operation under the Common School Act in the county of Madawaska, contrarily to most other counties in New Brunswick where the public school system was expending rather favorably.235

The Madawaska French were not the only Francophones in New Brunswick to suffer from the Common School Act. In Caraquet, the French Roman Catholic ratepayers opposed the school tax in place to fund the district school under the Common School Act.236 In 1875, the English Protestant ratepayers of Caraquet took it upon themselves to enforce the law, collect the school tax and provide a proper school for their children. In response, the Francophones staged a protest which degenerated into a riot. A few days later, the authorities attempted to arrest the rioters, which led to exchange of fire.

between both party and ended with two deaths, one of each side. This “unfortunate event,” which according to Stanley was never formally discussed at the provincial or federal levels, nonetheless yielded some important results for the Roman Catholic populations of New Brunswick.237 The government agreed to a “Compromise” in August 1875 under which the Roman Catholic minority obtained the right to send their children to the school that met their values, whether it was a part or not of the Common School Act sanctioned schools.238

4.4. School Laws in Maine

In his volume on religion and the Maine schools, Ernst C. Helmreich pointed out that, in the mid-nineteenth century, schools in Maine were associated with the churches and books in use in the classroom dealt mostly with religious themes, even though they were funded by the state as well as by local taxes.239 In order to remedy some of these issues, the state legislated in 1870 to abolish school districts, which often consisted in a one-room school for the entire district, and replaced them with town school systems.240 The benefit of this measure was that town schools were administrated locally by an elected school board and were serving the people directly where they lived. The school board was not totally independent, however, and a superintendent or someone assuming similar functions was to be the link between the town and the state.

239 Helmreich, Religion and the Maine Schools.
240 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in between, 310.
The Madawaska French did not keep up with the pace at which the rest of the state’s education system was evolving. The outbreak of the Civil War in the United States suspended for a few years the active assimilation efforts of the State of Maine in the Madawaska region to focus on the larger picture. While the weight of the paper used to print the annual report kept on decreasing, showing in a very material way that times were difficult and affected every part of life, the state was confirming its commitment to the ideals and values carried by the North.241 Pedagogy, Geography, and proper English pronunciation are amongst the topics discussed in Maine’s annual report on education for the years 1861 and 1862, but also the loss of teachers242 and the need to learn from the war.243

In 1863, the state superintendent’s report opened on a reproduction and discussion of an “Act to secure the proper expenditure of school moneys in the Madawaska Townships” that was passed by the legislature in view of improving the education of the French citizens of the Madawaska region. Once again, the situation seemed bleak and the improvement of the state of education in the Saint John River valley lagged.

By the year 1878, the state had conducted “various education experiments” destined to “Americanize” the Madawaska French and had so far not been able to reap nearly enough benefits to justify the expenses it had

The Americanization of the Madawaska French had yet to be achieved. In his annual report for the year 1878, the superintendent for the state of Maine justified the need for the Americanization efforts of the Madawaska French as follow: “to bring them out of their isolation in character, modes of life and thinking, and make them, as far as possible, homogenous with the population surrounding them.” In other words, the cultural differences that existed between the Madawaska French and the rest of the state in 1842 remained an issue to be addressed.

Vétal Cyr, an Acadian from the Saint John River valley who received a university education seemed to have understood early on that English was the key to success on the American side of the Madawaska region. With the help of the State Superintendent W.J. Corthell and the support of the Maine Legislature, Vétal Cyr established the Madawaska Training school in 1878. His goal was to provide pupils in the region with a proper education, which included the teaching of the English language. According to Craig and Dagenais, Major William Dickey “was instrumental in getting the state to support […] the Madawaska Training School.”

The state superintendent, N.A. Luce, described the Madawaska Training School in his annual report for the year 1878 as a “school for professional

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247 Craig and Dagenais, *The Land in between*, 314. See also “Acadian Madawaska,” 426.
training [of] far modest pretensions” in comparison to Normal Schools in operation in the state, “but destined to do a very important work.”248 The important work he is referring to is, of course, the Americanization of the “almost wholly French and French speaking”249 population of the Saint John River valley. Luce’s report highlighted “the peculiar character of the people”250 of this part of the state to justify the establishment of the Madawaska Training School. It is clear from this report that the Madawaska Training School was meant as a temporary remedy after it had proven too difficult to recruit trained bilingual teachers who could accept the smaller pay the modest local taxes could afford in the region.251

This state of affair was not acceptable for nativists,252 particularly because they were strong advocates of assimilation for all people living in the United States who did not speak the common tongue. Craig and Dagenais reported that the nativists introduced a bill in the legislature in 1895 that would deprive schools of public funding if the language of instruction was not English, which was largely the case for the Madawaska territory.253 In response to the demands of the

252 Nativists were part of a political movement called Nativism which had for program the protection of the interests of the “native” population against new waves of immigrants. In the United States, nativists generally were WASPs (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants). They are not to be confused with first nations.
253 Craig and Dagenais, *The Land in between*, 312.
nativists, Major William Dickey, a representative from Fort Kent, advocated bilingual education since it was both unrealistic and unfair to expect French-speaking pupils to attend school taught in English only. With the support of the Governor of the State of Maine, Major Dickey proposed a system where pupils were to receive a bilingual education in the lower grade and build up to an all-English education in the higher grades. Thanks to his action, Major Dickey was able to temporarily repel the anti-French bill.254

Following the establishment of the town school systems in 1870, the State of Maine created two laws to increase both attendance and literacy in English. The law of 1887 made it compulsory for children between the ages of five and fifteen to attend school, and the law of 1909 made it a requirement for anyone between fifteen and seventeen years-old to go to school if they “could neither read nor write a legible sentence in English.”255 The need to legislate to specifically ensure that the young generations would not leave the school system at fifteen years-old unless they were capable of reading and writing in English shows that in 1909, there were still much to do to encourage the Americanization of minorities in Maine, including the Madawaska French.

4.5. The Role of Religious Communities

Religion and education in the Madawaska region have long gone hand in hand. In fact, with language, religion has been at the heart of the tensions that

254 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in between, 314. See also Laurel J. Daigle, Fort Kent. (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Pub., 2009).
255 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in between, 310.
existed between the authorities and the Madawaska French. Yet, the example of
the St. Basile academy shows that religious communities have been essential in
the efforts to provide the Madawaska French with a proper education, and that
despite the difficulties they encountered along the way.

In 1857, a priest named Antoine Langevin donated land for the
establishment of a school for young women in Madawaska. This institution
known as the Madawaska or St. Basile Academy was run by the Sisters of
Charity of Saint John from 1859 to 1873. Subsidized by the province, the
Academy actively contributed to alleviate the lack of Francophone trained
instructors by preparing young women to become teachers. The education
received by these women was considered highly valuable by provincial
authorities as they were trained in both the French and the English language and
would provide the province with much needed professional instructors.

However, with the passing of the Common School Act, religious
communities could no longer receive state funding to run their school, forcing the
Sisters of Charity of Saint John to leave the community for lack of sufficient
funding for their institution to survive.

In 1873, in spite of a dire lack of funding, seven Sisters of the Hotel-Dieu
de Montréal led by Sister Louise-Virginie Davignon took upon themselves to
continue the mission of the Sisters of Charity of Saint John. Contrarily to the

256 Desjardins, “Le rôle des religieuses hospitalières de Saint-Joseph dans l’éducation au
Madawaska depuis 1873,” 57-58.
257 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in between, 171-172.
258 Desjardins, “Le rôle des religieuses hospitalières de Saint-Joseph dans l’éducation au
Madawaska depuis 1873,” 57-58.
sisters of Charity of Saint John, the sisters of the Hotel-Dieu were traditionally not educators, rather they were a nursing order, and it took the will power of several members of the congregation to commit to this transition which proved instrumental in providing young girls and later on young boys of the Saint John River valley with an education in French.259

In her history of the sisters of the Hotel-Dieu in the Madawaska region, sister Desjardins discussed the impact of the non-traditional choice for these sisters on the community of the Madawaska region since their arrival in 1873. She wrote that, initially, funding for this private institution was rather scarce as only the humble and the poor were supporting the sisters in their endeavor. According to sister Desjardins, the wealthier people were worried that the congregation would become a burden for the community and were thus not inclined to help them.

The St. Basile Convent must have been in severe disrepair when the sisters of Hotel-Dieu de Montréal arrived in Madawaska. Against all odds, the Common School Act and local politics created a situation that helped the congregation to overcome the crisis. Indeed, Craig and Dagenais reported that Levite Thériault, a representative for the Madawaska area who had voted in favor of the Common School Act—a vote that made him lose all support in this Acadian county—sought to make amend by donating lumber to the sister of

Hotel-Dieu de Montréal to help them rebuild the convent. This donation allowed them to stay in Madawaska.260

Subsequent fundraising efforts and the growing success of the Madawaska Academy allowed for its survival. Eventually the Academy was officially recognized by the province of New Brunswick in 1884 as part of the public school system, following the nomination of Sister Trudel as its director.261 Sister Trudel obtained the credential required by law to occupy such a position in New Brunswick, and the Academy continued to prepare boys and girls from New Brunswick and from Maine for the Normal School. In fact, several of the sisters of the Hotel-Dieu attended the Fredericton Normal School themselves.

What is remarkable is that this institution strove to adapt to the needs of the community. As an example, the sisters tried their best to provide English lessons to their Francophone students,262 in order to prepare them for the Normal School. Boys and girls from New Brunswick as well as from Maine benefitted from the St. Basile Academy which eventually became officially recognized by the province in 1884 as part of the public school system.263 The fact that their students came from both sides of the Saint John River can be explained both by the geographical proximity and by the choice made by the parents to send their children to a school in accordance with their religious beliefs.264

260 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in between, 307-308.
264 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in between, 175. See also Desjardins, "Le rôle des religieuses
Catholic education was very important on both sides of the river for the Madawaska French. On the Maine side, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the “Public Parish School” system was accepted as an alternative to the English public school system. In fact, the state recognized that there were actually many advantages in relying on sisters for the education of the youth and the fact that they wore the religious habit in the classroom was not perceived as an issue. As Craig and Dagenais highlighted, sisters were considered as assets to their community since the money spent on their wages was actually directly reinvested in the community itself. Sisters were also often in charge of a hospital and took in the elders who could not or chose not to stay at home. On the New Brunswick side, there had been some opposition to the presence of religious symbols in the classroom, which included the wearing of religious garb, between 1871 and 1875, but the government eventually compromised and amended its Common School Act to allow religious congregation to resume their important role in the education of Roman Catholic in the province.

4.6. Conclusion

Over the years, and with the recognition of the authorities, religious congregations have continued to serve the Madawaska French on both sides of the border, adapting as needed to new circumstances, legislations and requirements. In doing so, religious congregations have contributed to filling in the gaps between the needs of the population and that of the authorities, as both
sides were navigating the barriers—namely language, identity, and citizenship—that stood in the way of the integration of the Madawaska French to their new nation-state.

From citizenship to linguistic, religious and cultural differences, the Madawaska French presented several challenges to the authorities of Maine and New Brunswick. Both governments were designing their public school system for their white Anglo-Saxon Protestant majority. In doing so, they were failing to appropriately respond to the needs of their minorities. As school laws began to be implemented, Roman Catholic congregations served as bulwark against two public school systems that went against the core values of the Madawaska French.

Despite the use of different approaches to overcome the barriers to the establishment of their public school system in the Madawaska region, the authorities of Maine and New Brunswick achieved similar results. The Madawaska community was holding on to its core values and identity, and while some Roman Catholic schools had added English lesson to their French curriculum, pupils were not necessarily exposed to the curriculum designed by the government for its citizens in the making.

The question of the language of instruction, and specifically of how to deal with language difference as it related to public education in the Madawaska region may have been what truly distinguished the approaches of both governments. Since the linguistic difference constituted an important barrier to the establishment of the public school system in the Madawaska region, training
bilingual teachers presented an interesting alternative. Although both the state and the province arranged for the training of bilingual teachers, their approaches and results led to very different outcomes for education and for the progression of the English language in the Madawaska region.
BILINGUAL TEACHERS NEEDED

The creation of normal schools served the Anglophone populations of Maine and New Brunswick but left out many Francophone communities. As James Madigan pointed out, the Madawaska region called for a special category of teachers: bilingual teachers who could understand their Francophone students, teach them English, and eventually deliver the entire curriculum in English. Yet, as Ernst Helmreich pointed out, such professionals were rare in the nineteenth century. In addition, the low pay offered to teachers in the region made recruiting such a specifically skilled workforce difficult, since their bilingualism would not be rewarded by a higher compensation in comparison to that offered to teach in Anglophone districts.

Bilingual trained teachers were hard to find but there was no other alternative since the idea of creating a Francophone teaching body was not a conceivable solution. In Maine, this was out of the question because of the state’s assimilation agenda which was clearly expressed in official documents. In New Brunswick, the assimilation agenda was not clearly spelled out; however there were elements that pointed to a similar impulse as well. For instance, the expression “French-English school” was used in official documents to designate schools attended by Francophones which, as MacNaughton argued:

emphasizes the fact that the so-called French schools were not separate language schools, but were bilingual schools, in which the primary pupils,
whose vernacular was French, might learn both French and English, until they reached a point at which they could continue their education in the English language.268

If French was to make it to the primary school system, it would be in the lower grades, and it would only be used as a support until pupils were able to follow the whole curriculum in English, at which point, there would be no need for separate schools anymore. This means that bilingual teachers were only needed for the lower grades, although the development of Americanization programs in Maine would, in turn, create a need for adult education as well.

The project of training bilingual teachers to assimilate the Madawaska French through the public school system faced several challenges. As we already mentioned, the issue of the low pay offered to teachers in the region was one of these challenges. Narratives about the region depicted both an idyllic landscape and a backward community. The Madawaska region was also described as a frontier where a proper society, as it was conceived and understood by the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant majority, had not yet taken form. Such description might not have appealed to all and could have added to the difficulties of recruiting teachers who were not local.

The origins of the bilingual teachers, and particularly their religious and language background could also be problematic. The French vernacular spoken by the Madawaska French was different from international French. It was possible to teach French to Anglophone teachers to provide the sought out

268 MacNaughton, The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick, 232.
bilingual workforce needed in Francophone school districts, yet, training local Francophones to become teachers would yield a better result. Indeed, this specially trained workforce would then be more likely to stay in the region and contribute to the assimilation effort themselves. They would be more easily accepted by the community than Anglophone strangers. These considerations differ slightly in the case of the religious congregations who shared the same religion, but were likely to speak a different French vernacular, often closer to international French due to their education.

In this chapter, we will compare the initiatives of both governments to provide the bilingual workforce they needed to encourage the participation of the Madawaska French in the public school system, and more broadly the participation of the Francophone community in the life of their new institutions through a curriculum-induced assimilation, or rather acculturation.

5.1. The Preparatory Department of the Fredericton Normal School, 1878-1883

In New Brunswick, the Fredericton Normal School created a preparatory department dedicated to the preparation of Francophones to enroll in the regular English program of the normal school in 1878 to remedy the shortage of properly trained teachers in French districts. The mission of the preparatory department of the Fredericton Normal School between 1878 and 1883, could be compared to the role of English institutes in North American universities in the twenty-first century where the goal is the mastery of the language of instruction and not the

teaching of content. MacNaughton, citing the words of Superintendent Crocket, described the work of the preparatory department of the normal school as follows:

On the whole, the benefits of this department do not seem to have been very great. After it was discontinued in 1884 Superintendent Crocket wrote: “During the five and a half years of its existence it had done nothing towards the training of its students, nor was it established with this view. It gave good instruction in the elementary branches to those who did attend, but not any better than they ought to receive in a well-taught District School”\(^\text{270}\)

This program had a rather low enrollment rate—113 students total over five and a half years—and all but one or two students who enrolled in the program offered by this department never went on to complete the English curriculum of the normal school, and thus learned about pedagogy.\(^\text{271}\) Instead of seeking proper training, these graduates of the preparatory department chose to apply for the third-class license which became available to them after the completion of what was meant to solely be the first and not the final step in their teacher training journey.\(^\text{272}\)

The third-class license was meant to be a temporary measure in place until the need and demand for properly trained teachers in the public school system of New Brunswick were met. Third-class teachers were not considered to be trained and knowledgeable enough to deliver the provincial curriculum using state of the art pedagogy. In the case of the preparatory program, graduates

\(^{270}\) MacNaughton, *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick*, 232.


\(^{272}\) MacNaughton, *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick*, 232.
were given the option to apply for a third-class license valid for three years after which, students were expected to pass the entrance exam, enroll in the English program of the normal school, and thus complete their teacher training so as to obtain a second- or first-class teaching license.\textsuperscript{273}

However, the third-class license incentive actually worked against the idea of helping Francophones to gain access to the training offered by the normal school. Indeed, it instead created an easy pathway for French teachers to gain permission to teach for three years without compelling them to undertake proper training, only thus contributing to the status quo in French districts. In bilingual districts where ratepayers had to agree on the language of instruction, this state of affairs was particularly upsetting because it could lead to the hiring of a less qualified teacher if the majority imposed that a Francophone, and thus a third-class teacher, be hired for the school district.\textsuperscript{274} Based on the lessons drawn from this experience, the preparatory department of the normal school was replaced by a proper French department in 1883.

5.2. A True French Department at the Fredericton Normal School

Until the 1880s, religious congregations ran the only schools in the Madawaska region that offered Francophones a quality of education such that graduates had the capacity to attend the Fredericton Normal School. In contrast, the public schools in French districts were generally employing less than qualified

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{273} MacNaughton, \textit{The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick}, 232-233.  
\textsuperscript{274} The next chapter deals with teaching licenses and the conflicts that arose around them in more details.}
French speakers as educators, and as a result, the graduates of those schools lacked proper preparation. In 1883 the French department of the normal school in Fredericton finally started to offer a truly bilingual curriculum that more native speakers of French could realistically consider attending.275 Subsequently, the number of students enrolled in the French program of the normal school started to increase.276 While this could be considered as a great improvement, Alexandre Savoie pointed out that this state of affairs highlighted a common phenomenon in which it is up to the minority to make efforts to become bilingual and adapt to the majority.277 Savoie also pointed out that there were no classes taught in French in public schools until 1875. According to him, the secular aspect of the public school system deterred French Catholics from enrolling their children in those schools. In addition, until 1872 there were no secular textbooks written in French, which might also have contributed to this situation.278

Despite the efforts of the province through the establishment of the French Department, the number of schools that were taught by third-class teachers in the French districts of New Brunswick remained high in the late nineteenth century. MacNaughton highlighted two main reasons for this state of affairs: first, although they were meant to disappear eventually, third-class licenses continued to be available, and second, thanks to funds from both the province and the

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275 Savoie, *Un siècle de revendications scolaires au Nouveau-Brunswick*, 103.
276 MacNaughton, *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick*, 234.
277 Savoie, *Un siècle de revendications scolaires au Nouveau-Brunswick*, 106. This critic found echoes in many of the documents dealing with education in French in New Brunswick available at the Centre de documentation et d’études madawaskayennes in Edmundston.
county, districts themselves hardly needed to contribute towards the wages of a third-class teacher, making the hiring of a third class teacher appealing in districts where the population did not embrace the public school system. We know that there was a difference in attitude towards education between Roman Catholics and Protestants, but also between rural and urban areas, and the Madawaska region was predominantly Roman Catholic and rural. The lack of willingness to invest further in education must have partly stemmed from this difference in attitude. However, another element might have encouraged the practice of only hiring third-class teachers, and that is the fact that until 1901, there was no Francophone inspector appointed by the board of education, which meant that there was no one at the provincial level who was truly competent to inspect and report back on the situation of public schools in French districts in New Brunswick. Without a system in place to enforce good practices and to troubleshoot challenges faced by communities, or in other words without a system of checks and balances, there could be no proper implementation of the public school system as it was meant to be.

The language of education in the bilingual French schools was an additional challenge. French textbooks used in these schools were not of the same quality as the carefully chosen English textbooks, and in addition to the

279 MacNaughton, *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick*, 234.
281 MacNaughton, *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick*, 235. See also folder RS116: Records of the Chief Superintendent B1G5 Form Letters on textbooks and examinations for the years 1897 and 1915-1921 at the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick in Fredericton, New Brunswick.
regular curriculum, Francophone pupils were expected to master the English language, which they were learning from a non-native speaker who might not have been fully fluent themselves. MacNaughton pointed out that according to a contemporary—Bishop Fallon—the bilingual French schools in Ontario only resulted in ignorance and incompetence.282 In support of Fallon’s remarks, MacNaughton reported that according to a survey conducted by the province, very few Francophone students were capable of passing the entrance exam to go to high school in Ontario at the beginning of the twentieth century.283

In New Brunswick, if the situation of bilingual schools at the onset of the twentieth century was likely to have been similar to that of Ontario, it is difficult to evaluate, due mainly to the fact that the board of education appointed its first Francophone inspector in 1901, years after the establishment of such schools. Yet, according to MacNaughton, there are records of one inspector, Philip Cox, who did report in 1883 that he witnessed poor mastery of the English language among both teachers and pupils in bilingual schools.284 Cox highlighted two main issues as a result of the lack of fluency in English in bilingual schools. First, the students’ poor mastery of the English language forced teachers to make great efforts to translate the content of the English textbooks to make it accessible and intelligible to their pupils. If the teacher was also not fluent in English, one can

283 MacNaughton, *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick*, 235.
question the quality of the translation and thus of the content conveyed to the students. Second, since students had difficulties accessing the content of the textbooks on their own, they were likely struggling to prepare for recitation. Based on this information, and since course content was to be delivered in English, it is reasonable to question how much students could learn in bilingual schools. In addition, the challenge of learning course content in English could not be alleviated by the use of French textbooks, since there were no authorized French textbooks for subjects such as history, geography, composition, and sciences in general beyond basic arithmetic. This brings into question the level of proficiency in English of the few Francophone graduates of the normal school, as well as that of third-class teachers who may have received little to no training other than attending classes themselves that had been taught by a third-class teacher. The struggle to provide properly trained bilingual teachers for the public schools of the Francophone districts in New Brunswick continued well into the beginning of the twentieth century.

5.3. The Madawaska Training School

In 1878, after two decades of concerns around the education of the Madawaska French, the state of Maine decided to create an institution—ersatz of a normal school—dedicated by design to the training of bilingual teachers: the

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285 MacNaughton, The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick, 235.
286 MacNaughton, The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick, 235-236.
287 The Madawaska French had been a recurring cause for concerns and appeared regularly in the superintendents’ annual reports to the board of education of the state of Maine. See for instance the Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Common Schools, 1878, 45.
Madawaska Training School. I am using the term *ersatz* here to emphasize the
difference between normal and training schools. This difference, that Roger
Paradis called the “raison d’être”\(^{288}\) of the Madawaska Training School, can be
explained by both the assimilation policy of the state of Maine and the perceived
backwardness of the population of the Madawaska region that appeared
consistently in official reports such as the annual report of the state
superintendent of education.

The Madawaska Training School was founded in 1878 to train existing
teachers as well as promising pupils to deliver content in English in the common
schools of the French districts of the Aroostook county. The administrators of the
Madawaska Training School described its purpose as follows:

> The school was established to educate French teachers in the English
language, especially for the common schools in the Madawaska territory. It
takes from the schools existing teachers and some of the most advanced
pupils, and endeavors to give them a thorough knowledge of the elementary
branches taught in the common schools. It seeks, by constant drill to so
perfect in reading, writing and speaking the English language that they may
teach it intelligently in the schools of this territory.\(^{289}\)

Similar to the French department of the Fredericton Normal School, the
Madawaska Training School was established to produce bilingual teachers who
would be able to educate the local French-speaking population in English.
Although they came later, academic subjects were not initially the focus of the
training, rather students were to be trained in basic literacy in English as well as
in pedagogy.

\(^{289}\) *Catalogue and Circular of the Madawaska Training School*. 

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Why was the Madawaska Training School not created as a “normal school” comparable to any other normal schools in the state of Maine? First, its mission was very much that of an immersion school for French-speaking students learning English. In order to graduate as teachers, the students of the Madawaska Training School had to become fluent in English as much as they needed to master pedagogy and the various subjects in which school teachers needed to be proficient, such as history and composition. Second, as Roger Paradis pointed out, the Madawaska Training School compared more to a high school than to a normal school. This situation persisted well into the beginning of the twentieth century and contributed in part to the general perception that the Saint John River valley lagged behind the rest of the state in terms of education.

The relative lack of prestige associated with the Madawaska Training School in comparison to the other five normal schools in the state did not keep the institution from recruiting students at an increasing rate. Indeed, the publication of the list of students enrolled, as well as that of alumni in the school’s catalogues, showed constant growth; a proof of success that Richard F. Crocker, then Adjunct Principal of the Madawaska Training School made a point to highlight in his report to the state for the year 1924:

Another very gratifying state of affairs is the demand for better trained teachers throughout the Madawaska Territory. This demand has been growing gradually for some time and is becoming more insistent each year. The school is preparing to meet these needs and assume its whole responsibility to the district.291


291 “Report of the state commissioner of education of the state of Maine for the school biennium
Accessible even to the poorest of students, the institution could meet the growing demand for bilingual teachers in the St John River valley—a demand in line with the rapid population growth in the region—and provide its students with career prospects in education that had previously remained inaccessible.

The program of the Madawaska Training School kept on improving, judging by its yearly catalogues, and sent many of its students out to teach English in the common schools of the French districts over the years. This institution was particularly valuable to the state as it provided the Saint John River valley with the bilingual teachers the region needed. However, and despite its success, the Madawaska Training School drew some criticism according to Béatrice Craig and Maxime Dagenais. Indeed, the goal of the training school was clearly to assimilate and Americanize its students who would in turn contribute to assimilate and Americanize their future pupils. In order to ensure that the graduates from the Madawaska Training School would really contribute to the Americanization of the Valley, their diploma was by design not recognized elsewhere in the state. The teachers who graduated from this institution were thus expected and somewhat coerced to fulfill the state’s agenda in regard to the Americanization of the Saint John River valley.

period July 1, 1924-June 30, 1926,” 147.
293 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in Between, 284.
294 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in Between, 316.
5.4. Language Proficiency of the Bilingual Teachers

The language proficiency of the teachers employed in French districts in New Brunswick seem to have been questionable, as Philip Cox, school inspector in New Brunswick reported, based on his observations in the field.\textsuperscript{295} This may not be that surprising, since New Brunswick struggled to adapt its normal school curriculum to provide a reasonable accommodation for Francophone individuals to attend a program that was not by design created to produce a bilingual workforce. On the other side of the border, because the state of Maine focused on finding a local solution to a local issue, rather than on adapting an existing formula, we have an institution dedicated to the production of bilingual teachers. Was this a more successful solution? In terms of outreach, the answer was most certainly. But what about in terms of language proficiency?

At the Madawaska Training School, students took both English and French lessons among other courses. English was taught mainly through drills and translation exercises. The other course contents were instructed in English and students were encouraged to converse directly in English whenever possible when they were in class,\textsuperscript{296} which must have acted somewhat as an immersion program. French courses dealt with standard French, as opposed to Valley French which is the local French vernacular.\textsuperscript{297} Unfortunately, gradebook cards

\textsuperscript{295} MacNaughton, \textit{The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick}, 235.
\textsuperscript{296} \textit{Catalogue and Circular of the Madawaska Training School}, 1892. The “General Regulation” section, bullet point 6 reads: “All conversation in the school-rooms must be, as far as possible, in the English language.”
\textsuperscript{297} \textit{Catalogues and Circulars of the Madawaska Training School}. 126
do not give us any qualitative information as to the proficiency level of the graduates in both English and standard French.\footnote{Joseph Francis Cyr Papers; MCC:92-00144, Acadian Archives, University of Maine at Fort Kent. The Ste-Agathe historical society also had a few gradebook cards on display in its museum in 2015.}

The first annual report to the state commissioner of education regarding the Madawaska Training School indicated that an important number of students enrolled had very few notions of English.\footnote{“Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Common Schools, State of Maine, 1879.” 42.} Yet, these students were expected to become fluent enough in English over the course of only a few months. The school described its teaching method as follow:

It seeks by constant drills to perfect them in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, --to develop the power to think and express thought- - and in the meantime to train them in those methods of teaching and school management best adapted to the peculiar condition of the schools which they are to teach.\footnote{Catalogue and Circular of the Madawaska Training School, 1884. Augusta, 1884, 9.} [sic]

Drills and translation exercises were combined with academic and pedagogic subjects to prepare the students to conduct their class entirely in English. And in fact, graduates were not necessarily granted a license to teach French at all, even if it was their first language and a language they had studied and demonstrated a certain mastery in through their grades.\footnote{Joseph Francis Cyr Papers.}

Anyone with training in the teaching of modern languages today knows that the use of drills is not necessarily the best way to teach a language, at least not in isolation. The same can be said of the Grammar-Translation method. Both...
were common methods used to teach foreign languages at the time, and both presented some limitation in the achievement of fluency. However, the combination of these two methods might have been one of the strengths of the Madawaska Training School. The Grammar-Translation method was driven by the goal to enable students to read the literature written in the target language. This method, also called the Classical Method because it was first used to teach how to read Latin and Greek, aimed at giving students the skills necessary to read and understand the literary written form of a foreign language. Needless to say, this method alone does little to nothing in the development of students’ oral proficiency and understanding of the spoken target language. The use of drills, however, suggests the use of a form of the Audio-Lingual Method which, contrarily to the Grammar-Translation method, puts the emphasis on pronunciation and on communication in the target language. Properly used, drills can help students to recognize patterns in the target language and thus inform their understanding of the grammar and overall structure of the language. However, drills are by design limited to a set of sounds, words, or sentences. Students would then need to make the effort to connect what they learn to create their own sentences and improve their fluency. It is likely that the French department of the Fredericton Normal School used a similar approach and yielded the same results.

The effectiveness of the program of the Madawaska Training School is difficult to assess today, as Roger Paradis pointed out in his article on the Americanization of the teachers of the Madawaska territory. One would need to access a sizable representative sample of alumni’s work as students and teachers to evaluate their level of fluency. The compilation of such a sample may not be realistically feasible so far removed from the period under scrutiny since these documents would most likely be considered as private documents and thus are less likely to be preserved in archival centers.

During my visit to the Acadian Archives in Fort Kent in 2015, such samples of documents written in English by graduates of the Madawaska Training School were nowhere to be found, at least in the private collections that were available at the time. Yet, a note published in The Educational Review of Saint John, New Brunswick in May 1910 provides us with the opinion of a contemporary observer on the quality of the graduates of the Madawaska Training School. The brief, titled “An Interesting School” reads: “[t]he graduates, almost without exception, return to French-speaking schools, and take up the teaching on the best and newest lines, correct and fluent English being a specialty of the work of the training school.” This source, which praises the work and expertise of two professors—Miss Ethel Duffy of Nauwigewauk, New Brunswick and Miss Mary E. Sterrett of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia—both graduates

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of institutions in the Maritime provinces—suggest that the Madawaska Training School had acquired an excellent reputation on both sides of the border.

The information gathered in the catalogues of the Madawaska Training School regarding the method employed for the teaching of English allowed us to make inferences about the reading and communication skills the graduates of the Madawaska Training School could acquire. The reproduction of a student’s essay (Figure 7) published in the *Educational Review* of May 1910 can provide us with some insights regarding writing skills. The language of this essay is relatively simple and contains an abundance of repetitions that resemble drills and are a feature of the form of speech that can be achieved by a beginner to low-intermediate language learner. All in all, this is a very understandable short essay, but an essay that does not demonstrate fluency yet.
The following naive but charming little composition, written by a pupil who was unable to speak any English a year ago, speaks for itself:

**COMPOSITION ABOUT DOMESTIC SCIENCE.**
I like very much to go in Domestic Science. The first class is going on Monday, the second class is going on Tuesday, and the first division of the third class are going on Wednesday, and the second division of the third are going on Thursday, and we are going on Friday. Last week we made fish balls, and it was very good. I am very anxious to know what we are going to do tomorrow. We are fifteen girls in our class. Our room is very nice and we have a desk for two girls. We are always cooking two together. When we are ready to cook the teacher makes what we are going to do, and we listen very carefully, and when she is done we make just the same as she did. When the food is cooked we divide it and we bring it down stairs for our dinner. Then each girl has her work and we make the room look very nice and clean. Then we copy the lesson on the board and we go to our dinner.

Figure 7. Composition about domestic science.305

305 "An Interesting School," 308.
The same year, an editorial titled “Acadian Madawaska” published in *The Journal of Education*, on November 3, 1910, described the success of the Madawaska Training School as follows:

Already there is the language of the United States in every home where there are children, and the time is not distant when the industries will be equally those of the United States. Aroostook County, larger than Massachusetts, is to unfold into a wonderfully productive country. Its one lone railroad with one solitary train a day is to have as companions several lines opening up this vast world, and the future is already foreseen in brilliant anticipations.306

While these expectations seem now to have been an unattainable ideal, as the Aroostook County never matched the comparison to the wonderfully productive country described in the editorial, the author was correct to link bilingualism with a hopeful opening towards the rest of the United States.

5.5. Who Were the Teachers?

The Madawaska Training School catalogues provided a running list of their alumni, their place of residence, and starting in 1888, their occupation. Year after year, the catalogues also provided updates on their growing number of alumni,307 which allows us to make inferences as to the alumni’s career trajectory. In addition, the very mission of the school informs us on the students’ linguistic background, and, with few exceptions, most of the students were all local or connected to the Madawaska region.

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307 There were no indications in the catalogues as to how these updates were obtained or how frequently they were obtained for each alumn, which means that the information presented in the catalogues may not have always been complete or up-to date.
Unfortunately, I have not been able to find an equivalent for the Fredericton Normal School. If such documents exist, they are not kept in the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick in Fredericton, at least not at the time of my visit in the fall of 2017. The official register of the Fredericton Normal School was the closest document to the catalogues we found for the Maine side of the border, but this document does not allow us to draw much conclusions for two reasons: first, it was too difficult to isolate the Francophones from the Anglophones, notably due to the tendency for Francophones in New Brunswick to Anglicize their names when dealing with the monoglot administration of the province. Second, the presence of at least three distinct Francophone linguistic minority groups in the province made it impossible for us to identify the students who came from the Madawaska region. In addition, the school register was not a public facing document. It only needed to be intelligible to the people who worked with it, and thus did not provide us with additional information on the everyday life and organization of the school as a public facing document.

308 The register mentions religious affiliation but makes no mention of first language. Until 1908, almost all the names associated with a Roman Catholic religious affiliation in the registers were Irish names or Anglophone names. It is only in the register that covers the period 1908-1910, that we start to see French names appear. The mention FD on the register may indicate “French Department” but without a key on the register, this can only remain a hypothesis. Koral Lavorgna, whose dissertation dealt with mid-nineteenth-century New Brunswick teacher careerism, and with whom I had the great pleasure of meeting during my visit to the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, confirmed that religious affiliation was far more important than language or ethnicity at the time, which would explain why the latter was not recorded in the register. In her own research, she found that when interacting with French teachers, Anglophone school inspectors would often Anglicize their names. For instance, Pierre would become Peter in the records. It isn’t clear whether or not Francophone teachers initiated this change, but it seemed to her that French teachers were capable of navigating the Anglophone system.

309 Linguists typically divide New Brunswick into three main French areas based on their vernacular: one centered around Caraquet, one around Moncton, and one around Madawaska. Within each area, one can find additional subdivisions with well identified differences in dialects that are specific to a town or cluster of towns.
might have done. For these reasons, this section will only deal with students and graduates of the Madawaska Training School.

Students of the Madawaska Training School came for the most part from the Madawaska region. Yet, there were a few “anomalies” in the early years of the school, notably students coming from as far as Montana, Minnesota or New Hampshire. A plausible hypothesis would be the existence of a family connection. Indeed, it is a known fact that Francophone communities remained in contact after the westward expansion through the diffusion of local newspapers. Hence, it is possible that in order to receive training to become a bilingual teacher in their community out west, individuals with family connections in the Saint John River valley chose to attend the Madawaska Training School.

310 Between 1882 and 1898, only 11 out of 114 students who came to the Madawaska Training School were not Maine residents.
Figure 8. State of residence of the Madawaska Training School students, 1882-1885

The Madawaska Training School catalogues also show that most students who embraced a career in education remained on the south bank of the Saint John River. Yet, there were still a few graduates who went across the border to teach in New Brunswick or even left to teach in other states such as Minnesota, Idaho or Massachusetts.
By 1885, students were coming from a variety of places along the Saint John river. (Figure 9) The fact that the majority of the students came from the region they will be teaching in is important if we consider the assimilation agenda of the state. Once teachers, the Madawaska Training School alumni would be more likely to connect with their students thanks to their shared origins but also their shared experience. Indeed, they themselves had to learn English as part of their training and knew what it was like to learn a second language.

In terms of gender representation, there were more women than men who attended the Madawaska Training School between 1878 and 1898. (Figure 10)
This is not surprising if we consider that teaching was one of the very few paid professions open to women at the time.\footnote{Cott, \textit{The Bonds of Womanhood}, 7.}

![Gender representation at the Madawaska Training School, 1882-1898](image)

Figure 10. Gender representation at the Madawaska Training School, 1882-1898\footnote{Some of the first names of the students and graduates of the Madawaska Training School were gender neutral and in the absence of other elements in the catalogues that could help us identify their gender and/or sex, they were left as unknown.}

What is particularly interesting to note, however, is that many of these female graduates got married and left the profession shortly after entering it, if they entered it at all.\footnote{New Brunswick was faced with the same issue as Frances Heylar pointed out in “Thwarted Ambitions: Teacher Education in New Brunswick,” “The availability of teaching jobs dictated loyalty to the region. Many women chose to leave the province, or to leave the profession for marriage.”} (Figure 11) From 1882 to 1898, 51\% of the women who attended and graduated from the Madawaska Training School had left the profession, simply because they were married. The two women who took the veil went on to teach at the Saint Basile Academy, across the river in New Brunswick.
They thus continued to serve the educational needs of the Madawaska
community on both sides of the border, since we know that the pupils of the Saint
Basile Academy came from both sides of the Saint John River. As for the
remaining 48%, they did not all continue to teach. Some women became
dressmaker, milliner or merchant and seem to have alternated between
professions.

Figure 11. Marital status of female graduates, Madawaska Training School,
1882-1898

One might wonder about the benefit of training women how to teach if
more than half of them left the profession only a few years after entering it. First,
the age at which an individual could be admitted to the Madawaska Training
School was 14 years old according to the conditions of admissions described in
the catalogues, which would have allowed women to work as a teacher for a few
years before getting married. Second, according to the first report of the Board of Education of the State of Maine written in 1847, the average compensation of teachers in the state of Maine was $15.40 per month for male teachers and only $1.20 per week for female teachers, which per month represented between 31 and 39 percent of a male teachers’ wages, depending on the number of weeks in the month. Women were thought to be less capable than men to be knowledgeable teachers, and as Nancy Cott convincingly pointed out in The Bonds of Womanhood, women at the beginning of the nineteenth century were becoming an increasingly greater part of the primary-school teaching workforce, in large part because, “they consistently commanded much lower salaries than men.” Third, the ideal of the Republican Motherhood – born a century earlier from the American Revolution – encouraged the education of women since they were the ones in charge of nurturing the citizens of tomorrow. And finally, by studying to become teachers, these women were able to stay in the community rather than have to seek work in a factory far away from home. In summary, women may not have had long careers in public education, but they would stay local, provide cheaper labor and once they became mothers, their own education would benefit their children, and contribute to the elevation of society as a whole, and maybe even to the assimilation agenda of the state.

315 Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood, 7.
317 This last point presupposes that Madawaska French teachers conformed to the state sanctioned curriculum and language of education, which remains to be proven. Yet, it is reasonable to assume that some of the teachings from the Madawaska Training School did affect
These men and women who graduated from the Madawaska Training School and were part of the Madawaska French community existed within the borderland community. In his study of the Eastern Townships, Anthony Di Mascio argued that borderlands, at least prior to events that harden the border, force us to challenge the preconception according to which national divisions are strictly observed in all matters of public life, schooling included. By looking into the career trajectory of its alumni, we can show that the Madawaska Training School was in fact contributing in some ways to the training of school teachers on both sides of the border.

We already mentioned the case of two women who took the veil and went on to teach at the Saint Basile Academy on the New Brunswick side of the border. Another example is that of Mae G. Maley, a resident of Van Buren, Maine who graduated from the Madawaska Training School in 1883. (Figure 12) Maley was listed in the 1892 and 1894 Madawaska Training School catalogues as a school teacher in Saint Leonard, New Brunswick, which is located directly across the Saint John River from Van Buren. This is not surprising, as Michel Boucher showed in his study of cross-border marriages that strong connections existed between communities such as Van Buren and Saint Leonard. Until the further development of infrastructures by both Maine and New Brunswick, they remained strongly interconnected. By 1896, Maley had moved back to Maine, and lived

its graduates view of education and helped foster the state’s assimilation agenda, even if it was to a limited extend.

318 Di Mascio, “Cross-Border Schooling and the Complexity of Local Identities in the Quebec-Vermont Borderland Region, 37–54.
319 Boucher, “L’ouverture et la fermeture de la frontière canado-américaine au Madawaska.”
in Caribou where she worked as a merchant. No change in marital status was reported in the school catalogues. People were also moving across the border for personal reasons. For instance, Mattie S. Wheelock of Saint Francis, Maine (class of 1894) taught in Saint John Plantation, Maine until she became Mrs. Bion Harmon in 1897 and moved to Connors, New Brunswick. The tight-knit Madawaska French community was conducive to these cross-border exchanges, be it for work or for marriage, and was not limited to the teaching profession.

Similar to Mae G. Maley, many alumni of the Madawaska Training School embraced more than one profession throughout their careers. Among those professions, the most common ones were clerk, farmer, lumberman, seamstress/dressmaker, or school principal. This indicates that beyond its contribution to the region by producing bilingual teachers, the Madawaska Training School also contributed to the overall goal of the Progressive Era, which was to elevate society as a whole in order to have better educated citizens and workers. Several individuals alternated between teaching and other professions, or cumulated teaching and farming which was perfectly compatible seeing that farming activities dictated the school schedule.
Figure 12. Map showing the career path of Mae G. Maley, class of 1883
5.6. Conclusion

Judged by the acknowledgment, by both governments, that education still lagged behind in the French districts of Maine and New Brunswick at the beginning of the twentieth century, we can conclude that their respective attempts at providing bilingual teachers for French schools were not fully successful. However, there was a major difference between the approach of Fredericton and that of Augusta. In Maine, the authorities decided to tackle the issue of the education of the Madawaska French from a local standpoint, creating an institution that aspired to progressively “elevate” the Madawaska French to the level of the rest of the state. In New Brunswick, the top-down approach consisted in adapting, with more or less success, a solution that worked for the majority without directly evaluating and addressing the needs of the minority.

The Maine approach brought a teacher training program designed for the Madawaska French to the Saint John River valley and empowered the community to become actors in the public school system, while New Brunswick invited Francophones to attend an existing normal school located in a different county and undergo a teaching training program that was not made with the needs of the Madawaska French community in mind. Where Maine saw that a regular normal school was not adapted due to the language difference but also to a different understanding of what a good education was, New Brunswick was asking Francophones to quickly adapt to taking courses in English and grasp a vision of schooling that was different from their own experience. In other words, Maine sought to ease the adoption of the public school system for the
Madawaska French by creating a teacher training school that would teach student teacher English and give them the tools to elevate the education of the region as a whole over time, while New Brunswick expected Francophones student teachers to learn English and be at the same level as their Anglophone peers, when we know that due to a difference in attitude towards schooling, Catholics and Protestants had most likely received a very different education.

The state of Maine appeared to be making cultural adjustments since it created a unique institution to advance both its public school and assimilation agendas while accounting for the specificity of the Madawaska French. The province of New Brunswick on the other hand, as Alexandre Savoie and others have argued, appeared to be forcing its minority into the existing system. While the province experimented with accommodations, with the preparatory department first and then with the French department, the administration was not prepared to fully acknowledge the specific needs of its French minority groups, an issue that transpired at all levels of governance. Indeed, the “fait francophone” was largely ignored by the authorities in New Brunswick and Francophones were not well represented at the government level. At a time when teaching was still emerging as a real career path, the assumption that an individual would have the means and the will to put their life on hold to attend a program that could cause them to feel alienated was unrealistic at best, especially when more suitable alternatives existed in other provinces or even across the border.

320 Savoie, Un siècle de revendications scolaires au Nouveau-Brunswick.
By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Madawaska French community participated more in public school education, even though the community continued to rely on religious congregations and on the Roman Catholic clergy in general for the education of its youth. The increase in the availability of bilingual teachers able to serve the population of the region contributed to improve the standard of education in the Madawaska region. As expected, in addition to a more skilled teaching workforce, and thus better educated pupils, the region was producing a better skilled workforce overall. Yet, this would only become possible with numerous concessions, notably with regards to the Roman Catholic faith. The Madawaska French community continued to operate as a borderland, and the authorities of both Maine and New Brunswick would have to negotiate with the Francophone minority to further their education program.
CHAPTER 6
NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS

When Lord Ashburton raised his concerns regarding the delineation of the border between Maine and New Brunswick, he had foreseen the struggle that would come from dividing the Madawaska French community between two countries and two citizenships. Despite the attempts from both governments to invest in their part of the Madawaska territory, the region remained a borderland where family ties, language, identity and religion continued to dictate the rhythm of life for the Madawaska French community. Both governments would need to learn to compose and compromise with the community in order to truly impose their administration and institutions in the region.

In the realm of education, this meant compromising on the space dedicated to religion in the classroom, on the language used in school, and on teacher training and teaching credentials. It also meant providing appropriate course material, and more specifically textbooks, that would be suitable to the Francophone students and teachers in the public school system who were, for the most part, all English learners.

In New Brunswick, even though the British North America Act protected the rights of linguistic and religious minority groups, the authorities were not open to the creation of Francophone public schools per say, and instead created bilingual institutions which yielded poor results. As we discussed in previous chapters, in 1871, the province started to implement a new government-run common school system under the Common School Act. Under this act, the
school was to be free of any religious symbols, including in the instructor’s attire. Since Roman Catholic populations relied heavily on the Church to provide education for their youth, the act was problematic. It also meant that Roman Catholics would be subjected to the new school tax to fund schools that went against their values and beliefs. After several years of protests against the Common School Act, the Compromise of 1875 ensured that all Roman Catholic communities, and by extension all Francophone communities, could benefit from the public school system. However, the passing of the Common School Act and the resolution offered by the Compromise were far from sufficient in terms of ensuring quality education for all. Indeed, the general quality of the education system in New Brunswick was still lacking at the end of the nineteenth century. This was true in all communities, but it was more acutely felt in Francophone communities were teachers often had received less training than their Anglophone counterparts—when they had received any training at all—prior to working in a classroom. Thankfully for Francophone communities, Roman Catholic religious orders continued to provide them with what the province could not: teachers who spoke the language of their pupils and who provided an education in line with the French Catholic communities.

Language rights and religion have often been conflated when dealing with Francophones in North America when in fact, they were not mutually inclusive. In her survey of the history of teacher education in New Brunswick, Frances Helyar argued that “Francophone teacher education represents an example of minority language resistance to assimilation,” while also pointing out that “controversies
surrounding the introduction of common schooling in late nineteenth-century New Brunswick centered on taxation and religion, not language.”  

Indeed, religion and taxation touched on values while Francophone teacher education is more closely related to access.

In Maine, the assimilation agenda that emerged from the establishment of the border in 1842 eventually became the driver for concessions by way of cultural adjustments. At first, and until 1857, the state was working on the overall improvement of its school system and was not overly focused on the state of education in the Saint John River valley. This changed after the state superintendent visited the region in 1857. From that point, the state of education in the Madawaska region was to be carefully monitored and became a recurring topic in Maine’s annual school reports. After all, how to secure a border when the people who live alongside it as well as their institutions appear alien to the rest of the state and the country?

After decades of trying to establish their own institutions in the Saint John River valley with little results, the authorities of the state of Maine had to choose a different approach. The establishment of the Madawaska Training School, along with the adoption of stricter laws regarding school attendance and operation, participated in the successful adoption of the public school system in the Saint John River valley.

321 Helyar, “Thwarted Ambitions: Teacher Education in New Brunswick.”
In this chapter, we will discuss the key adjustments that Maine and New Brunswick made to further and implement their politics of education. First, we will discuss the use of temporary teaching authorization, what it meant for mixed communities in New Brunswick, and what it meant for the Americanization movement in Maine. We will then discuss the issue of textbooks used in schools attended by Francophones in both the state and the province. Finally, we will discuss Roman Catholicism in public classrooms in the Madawaska region.

6.1. Temporary Teaching Authorizations

In order to establish their public school system in the Madawaska region, the authorities of Maine and New Brunswick had to staff their schools with adequate teachers. However, appropriately trained teachers did not exist. They needed to be recruited and trained to meet the specific needs of the region. This endeavor would take time because teaching was hardly considered to be a “true profession” in the early days of the public school system, but also because even when training institutions were put in place, the demand for trained professionals far exceeded the capacity of those institutions to recruit and train enough teachers.

Anglophones who lived in the region seemed to have embraced the public school system right away. Anglophones only did so reluctantly. When they had a choice, they preferred to send their children to a Roman Catholic school operated by local religious congregations rather than to send them to an English

public school. Parents were concerned, not without reasons, that their children would be exposed to readings that were antithetical to Roman Catholics beliefs and values. They were concerned about their children becoming indoctrinated by a curriculum designed by and for the Anglo-Saxon Protestant majority in power.

In the absence of teacher training programs adapted to the needs of Francophone populations, the authorities had to find temporary measures to staff the public schools that happened to be in Francophone and bilingual or mixed districts. The authorities also needed to establish a trustworthy system to counter the multiplication of private schools taught by self-appointed teachers who did not necessarily possess the qualifications and knowledge valued by the authorities for someone to host a proper school.

To remedy the discrepancy between the supply and demand of properly trained teachers, and to curve the reliance on less than adequate private initiatives, one of the first concessions both governments had to make involved the attribution of temporary teaching authorization to staff public schools with reasonably competent teachers. These authorizations took the form of a license in New Brunswick and a certificate in Maine.

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323 Readers and reading materials used in the nineteenth century public school system were most often based off of King James Bible, which is a version of the text used by Protestants that contradicts the Douay-Rheims Bible used by Roman Catholics. See also O’Neal, “Citizenship Education in the 1920s.”

324 Even after the establishment of the Madawaska Training School in Maine and the French Department of the Fredericton Normal School in New Brunswick, the demand for bilingual teachers would continue to exceed the supply for a number of years.

6.1.1. The License System in New Brunswick

In New Brunswick, the level of qualification at which a teacher could be employed in a given district was directly correlated to its ratepayers’ wealth. The value of a district determined the type of license a teacher needed to possess to teach in said district. In addition, ratepayers, because of their contribution, had a voice when making decisions such as building and maintaining a school, or hiring a school teacher.

Three classes of teaching licenses existed in New Brunswick. First-class licenses were reserved for fully trained teachers who were capable of teaching content that went beyond the content of the required curriculum. Second-class licenses were awarded to teachers who were sufficiently qualified to teach the required curriculum but would not be able to offer anything beyond it. Finally, third-class teaching licenses were held by individuals who had received a license to teach that was limited due to their limited training to spelling, reading, writing, the province’s history and geography, and simple arithmetic.326 For the most part, teachers who held a third-class license had received no prior training in pedagogy. The third-class teaching license was meant to remain temporary and was expected to disappear eventually.

Prior to the 1880s, Francophone teachers were almost all holders of third-class licenses due to the barriers they faced in obtaining access to teacher training offered by the province at the Fredericton Normal School. As discussed

326 MacNaughton, *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick*, 118. See also Heylar, “Thwarted Ambitions: Teacher Education in New Brunswick.”
in chapter 4, the public school system, being bilingual for Francophones, was not structured in a way that ensured that pupils would actually be able to reap the benefits from attending a bilingual school. Instead, it caused graduates from the public school system to master neither language and little from the subjects that were taught. As a result, most graduates from bilingual schools were ill-prepared for secondary education. Graduates from schools held by religious congregations, on the other hand, were better prepared to apply to and enroll in a teacher training program. When they did, they often chose to attend a Roman Catholic institution for their secondary education rather than enter a public high school.

Roman Catholic Francophones seemed to have preferred that route rather than attempting to receive their training from the province’s monolingual normal school. In a discussion of bilingual education, Frances Heylar highlighted that “for almost two centuries, the province’s education system primarily benefitted Anglophone and Protestant learners.” Heylar explained that it was only in 1924 that Acadian communities finally obtained their own normal school at St. Joseph’s convent in Memramcook, but even then, much remained to be done to offer Francophones similar opportunities to that of Anglophones in New Brunswick.

327 MacNaughton, *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick*, 235.
328 Craig and Dagenais, *The Land in between*, 320-326.
329 Craig and Dagenais, *The Land in between*, 320-326.
330 Helyar, “Thwarted Ambitions: Teacher Education in New Brunswick.”
The difference in training and in teaching licenses between Anglophones and Roman Catholic Francophones could lead ratepayers to address formal complaints to the chief superintendent of education when the choice of the teacher failed to reach a consensus. This was a province-wide struggle. Some of these letters remain and provide us with interesting information regarding the variety of situations that could emerge in New Brunswick’s mixed districts.331

On January 18, 1899, Patrick Swift from District #7, Parish of Harcourt, New Brunswick wrote the following letter to Mr. Inch, Chief Superintendent of Education:

Sir, in this district they have engaged a third-class French teacher. Now there are only one French family in the District but as that Frenchman has unfortunately been appointed a trustee he has influenced one of the others. Now there has been at least 7 or 8 applications from good second-class teachers who were willing to teach for the salary that they were giving, and one in particular who could teach both languages, but as she was not French they would not engage her. They were also notified by Inspector Smith that they must not hire a French teacher. Now I do not think that a French teacher should be employed in an English district and interfere with the rights of English Teachers. Hoping that you will see the matter immediately, I remain, Patrick Swift, District No7 Parish of Harcourt.332

In this letter, Mr. Swift expressed his disagreement with the trustees of his district who turned down several good English-speaking candidates with a second-class license, including one individual who was bilingual but whose first language was English, all to accommodate someone he described as an influential “Frenchman”. As we can see in Mr. Swift’s letter, the linguistic makeup of the

community as well as local politics could further complicate the issue of recruiting a proper school teacher.

Figure 13. Map of places mentioned in letters addressed to the chief superintendent of New Brunswick in relation to the hiring of third-class teachers in mixed school districts.
The chief superintendent of education was prepared to act as arbitrator in these kinds of conflicts. An earlier case in Bathurst had prompted the board of education to clarify the conditions under which a Francophone third-class teacher may be employed by a school district. The clarification was made official through its addition to Regulation 33 of the School Laws of New Brunswick on December 1, 1897, and reads as follows:

Third Class Teachers who have received License after attendance at the French Department of the Normal School, and who have not subsequently passed through the English Department of the Normal School, shall be employed only in Acadian Districts or in Districts in which the French language is the language in common use by a majority of the people, unless by the written consent of the Chief Superintendent; and no such Teacher shall be employed in any District whether such District is Acadian or French speaking as aforesaid, or otherwise, if the Chief Superintendent shall notify the Trustees of such District that no such Teacher shall be employed therein; provided, that if such Teacher is engaged under contract entered into with the District prior to the giving of such notice, the employment of such Teacher shall continue only to the end of the term current when such notice is given, and shall then terminate, unless previously terminated by the terms of the contract itself.

This text shows that the government was aware of the linguistic situation in New Brunswick and of the specific needs of some of its school districts. Yet, one could argue that it also illustrates how the province proceeded to push a de-facto assimilation agenda by ensuring that employment for Francophone teachers would be limited by the use of the third-class license. The text also emphasized the idea that the program offered by the French department was sub-par and that

Francophone teachers would only truly complete their teacher training program once they attended the English department of the normal school and graduated from it. Only then could they pretend to a proper second- or even first-class teaching license.

It is interesting to see evidence of the agency of Francophone communities, such as what transpires from the letter Theresa McManus wrote to the chief superintendent of New Brunswick on August 9, 1901. McManus, a native English-speaker and third-class school teacher of Memramcook, New Brunswick contacted the chief superintendent of education after being offered a position in a district she knew to be “valued above the limit” for third-class licensed teachers. She wrote the following: “Dear Sir, the trustees of District No 25 Dorchester wish me to teach a school in their district (said district being valued above $15,000). I hold third-class license, consequently cannot engage without consent of chief superintendent.” McManus continued by explaining that “the majority of ratepayers are French but wish to engage an English teacher who understands French.”

Similarly to the preceding letter, according to the district valuation, the district of Dorchester was required to hire a second-class teacher. Yet, the community, or more accurately the trustees of the district, wished to hire Theresa

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335 Letter, “Theresa McManus to R. B. Wallace, August 9, 1901,” RS116 B2d Language, Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick, 1901. McManus refers here to Regulation 33 which stipulated that “Third Class Teachers shall not be employed (except as classroom assistants) in Districts having an assessable valuation of fifteen thousand dollars or upwards, unless by the written consent of the Chief Superintendent.” Manual of the School Law of New Brunswick, 1901, 120.
336 Letter, “Theresa McManus to R. B. Wallace, August 9, 1901.”
McManus, a third-class teacher, due to her linguistic abilities. What is particularly interesting in this case is that the Francophone ratepayers are not opposed to hiring an Anglophone to teach their children, as long as this individual could understand their French pupils. And indeed, Francophones knew that there would be advantages for their children to learn English. For instance, the Religious Hospitaliers of Saint-Joseph at the Saint Basile Academy in the Madawaska region started teaching English to their pupils, at the request of the community, so that graduates would be better prepared to attend the Fredericton Normal School. This deliberate choice to encourage the learning of English shows that Francophones were not powerless victims of an assimilationist government. They were in fact taking matters into their own hands to ensure that their children would be prepared as best as possible to fully take part in the public life of the province.

From experience, Theresa McManus knew that if she asked, she may be granted permission to teach in the district of Dorchester since she had received waivers in the past. She wrote: “Mr. Inch has allowed me to teach in districts valued above the limit. Kindly let me know as soon as possible what to do in the matter, as the trustees are anxious to have school begin at once.” And since the vetting of a local school inspector was important for third class teachers,

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338 Mr Inch was the previous Chief Superintendent for the Board of Education in New Brunswick
McManus added as a postscript, “I feel quite sure that Inspector Smith would approve.”

Since bilingual teachers were scarce, McManus’s linguistic abilities may have played a major role in prior decisions by the authorities to allow her to teach in districts that otherwise would have had to seek the services of a higher class teacher. However, it is important to also point out that in the case of Theresa McManus, we have a school district with a French-speaking majority seeking to employ a bilingual teacher whose first language is English, and not the other way around. McManus was likely better prepared to teach the approved curriculum than a Francophone third class teacher, simply due to the fact that she was a native speaker of English. She would thus better contribute to further the province’s education agenda.

In another example, a Mr. McCurdie of Belledune wrote a series of letters to the Chief Superintendent of Education to report that a third-class French teacher had been hired in a district with both English and French families. McCurdie disapproved of this teacher for several reasons. First, his district qualified for a second-class teacher and he thought that hiring a third-class teacher was not good enough for the pupils. He wrote that “the larger children […] require a better teacher. The French children are not so far advanced.”

According to McCurdie, the hiring of this teacher placed the Anglophone pupils at

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339 Letter, “Theresa McManus to R. B. Wallace, August 9, 1901.”
341 Letter, “Thos A. McCurdie to James R. Inch, February 26, 1901.”
a disadvantage. Second, McCurdie argued that the teacher who was hired was not capable of teaching English. Unfortunately, the letters provide no elements that would allow us to assess the individual’s fluency in English. It is thus impossible to know whether the issue was with the individual’s actual linguistic abilities, or rather with McCurdie’s own evaluation thereof. And third, McCurdie took the time to compile the assessable valuation of both the English-speaking and the French-speaking families that lived in the district to point out that not only was the French-speaking population paying a smaller amount of taxes than the English-speaking population, but some of them also defaulted on their payments on a regular basis.

The sense of injustice McCurdie expressed throughout his correspondence with the chief superintendent of education is best captured by the way he chose to end his letter of February 26, 1901: “but of course it is the majority that counts, and those children will have to wait for the smaller ones” [sic], highlighting once again the tensions between linguistic groups and local politics. In response to Mr. McCurdie, Mr. Inch, the Chief superintendent of education agreed to forbid the employment of a third-class teacher in the district and advised to look for a bilingual teacher who could meet the needs of both populations. Unfortunately, in 1901 New Brunswick, bilingual teachers with a

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342 Letter, “Thos A. McCurdie to James R. Inch, March 5, 1901.”
343 Letter, “Thos A. McCurdie to James R. Inch, February 26, 1901.”
344 Letter, “Thos A. McCurdie to James R. Inch, February 26, 1901.”
second- or even first-class license were still not common, and this was the case for the whole province.

Through the correspondence preserved at the Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, we can see that chief superintendents were well aware of the issue that existed with providing competent French teachers to French and bilingual school districts. English ratepayers might want to hire a better teacher but if the teacher is not bilingual, it would be unfair to the French pupils in the district who often did not speak a word of English. It would also be unfair to assume that a third-class English teacher was a better teacher than a third-class French teacher. The situation was undoubtedly more acute for Francophones, but Anglophones also struggled with a low number of appropriately trained teachers.

6.1.2. Teaching Certificates in Maine

Teaching certificates in Maine in the nineteenth century, before the establishment of proper normal schools, were as much about the teacher’s moral and ethics than about their knowledge and skills. Similar to New Brunswick, in the case of temporary authorization for untrained teachers, individual who sought a certificate needed to be vetted by a local figure of authority. Along with other credentials, a clergyman could be asked to write a letter of support on behalf of a teacher who was seeking a teaching certificate, to guarantee that this individual was an honest member of their community. Until a teacher had gone through proper teacher training, they could ask for a temporary certificate, which was very

useful, especially in the Madawaska region where the number of trained teachers was low, at least until the late nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.

Certificates also served to list the subjects that a given individual was qualified to teach, but also the subjects they were not allowed to teach. I found an interesting case in the Acadian Archives in Fort Kent that suggests that certificates may have been a way to enforce the assimilation agenda of the state. Looking at the teaching certificates received by Joseph Cyr, whose native language was French, I was surprised to read that none of his successive certificates allowed him to teach French. Indeed, his April 24th, 1886 certificate for instance reads as follow: “This certifies that we the undersigned superintending school committee of Van Buren have examined Mr. Jos Cyr as a teacher and that exclusive of French he is well qualified to teach all other branches usually taught in common schools of this town.”\textsuperscript{347} Was it because he did not speak or write the “right” kind of French?

According to Cyr’s report cards from the Madawaska Training School, his academic French was nothing to be ashamed of since he received grades of 90/100 and above in French. Then, this raises the question: was this restriction a way to prevent teachers from conducting their class in French, and thus foster assimilation instead? Was Mr Cyr’s experience an isolated case? Unfortunately, I was not able to find any other example of Maine teaching certificates for teachers

\textsuperscript{347} “Joseph Francis Cyr Papers,” MCC:92-00144, Acadian Archives, University of Maine at Fort Kent.
who worked in the Saint John River valley and was thus not able to confirm my hypothesis. Mr. Cyr was part of the class of 1886 at the Madawaska Training School. He left the teaching profession momentarily in 1892 to work as a merchant and clerk, and eventually became the principal of a grammar school.348

6.2. The Americanization Movement in Maine

The Americanization movement is widely associated with the beginning of the twentieth century, and World War I in particular. This movement stemmed from the fear that a continuous high rate of immigration would tear apart the United States. Americanization at the beginning of the twentieth century was a process that consisted in ensuring that immigrants would be fluent and literate in English and would become loyal to their new homeland: America.

The goal was for all citizens of the United States to be united under one nation. This goal became embedded in the mission of public education, making school a place to learn how to function in society. In fact, Americanization was a key part of the 1919 Maine School law. In his report for the school year ending in June 1920, the state superintendent of public schools explained that “the legislature in its 1919 session enacted a number of measures of far reaching importance to the educational affairs of the state.”349 He pointed out that World War I had exposed “weaknesses” in the public school system which in turn led the legislature to pass a number of laws destined to strengthen the whole school system.

348 Information from the Madawaska Training School catalogues.  
Americanization was the subject of the second bill of Maine’s 1919 School Law and was described by the superintendent as follows:

Under the act, evening schools are established, and persons of foreign birth and foreign tongue are taught not only to read and to write the English language but receive instruction in the responsibility of citizenship. This work will be broadened and extended from year to year.350

In addition to the establishment of evening schools, the state superintendent explained that the third bill required “common school subjects in the elementary schools be taught in the English language only,”351 with the caveat that, while the legislature expected this provision to be enacted as quickly as possible, it also recognized that “recruiting teachers who are perfectly proficient in the English language” could be a challenge.352

For the Madawaska French who lived on the south bank of the Saint John River, the Maine School Law of 1919 was only a continuation of the state’s efforts. Indeed, Americanization started as early as 1842 in the Saint John River valley with the signature of the Webster-Ashburton treaty and the realization that the Madawaska French were different from the majority of the state of Maine. The creation of the Madawaska Training School to meet the specific cultural needs of the Madawaska French and ensure that the region would progressively mind the educational gap that existed with the rest of the state was one of the solutions the authorities found to foster the Americanization of the Madawaska

French. At the Madawaska Training School, Francophone students, much like their colleagues in the state’s normal schools, were learning to deliver the state approved curriculum by means of a teacher training program that was adapted to their special linguistic needs. Together with the passing of legislation that rendered schooling mandatory for all in 1887 and 1909, the number of children who attended school increased and as a result, literacy improved overall. The school law of 1919 would only increase the means put into the Americanization efforts already in place.

The Madawaska French were learning to speak English and they were learning to be good citizens according to the standards of the state and the nation. Literacy was a first step towards Americanization, but fluency in English, as well as learning how to be a proper citizen of the state of Maine and of the United States as a whole were the true end goals. The assimilationist policy of the state of Maine, and thus its desire to Americanize the Madawaska region, explains why the graduates of the Madawaska Training Schools were limited in the geographical locations where they were allowed to teach. They were part of a special workforce designed for the Madawaska region. Similarly, the exclusion of French as one of the subject one was allowed to teach, as in the case of Joseph Cyr, may have participated in the Americanization effort. However, it is important

Craig and Dagenais, *The Land in between*, 310-317. The state of Maine passed a law in 1887 that made it compulsory for children between the ages of five and fifteen to attend school, and another law in 1909 made it a requirement for anyone between fifteen and seventeen years-old to go to school if they were not able to read or write properly in English. The need to legislate to specifically ensure that the young generations would not leave the school system at fifteen years-old unless they were capable of reading and writing in English shows that in 1909, there were still much to do in the state to encourage English literacy.
to consider the agency of these men and women who were groomed to become agents of assimilation. I would argue that while they did a lot to spread the English language in the Valley, these teachers may also have been instrumental in fostering the acculturation rather than the assimilation of their pupils.

6.3. Textbooks for Bilingual Schools

The creation and selection of textbooks followed the establishment of the public school system, but as for everything else related to education, both the state and the province initially based the majority of their choices on local politics and on Anglo-Saxon Protestant moral values. This presented a challenge for Roman Catholic communities. Since readers and other reading materials were based on the King James Bible, they were often not in accordance with Catholics’ beliefs. Bilingual teachers were hard to find in the nineteenth century, but there was also a lack of textbooks that were adapted to the needs of Francophone Catholics. The selection of officially approved French and bilingual textbooks would only come later, once the need was identified or could no longer be ignored.354

That is not to say that textbooks in French were not available—some came directly from France while others were produced in Francophone British North America—but they may have been difficult to procure. In addition, contrarily to Protestant households where reading the Bible was an essential aspect of the personal practice of religion and thus a copy of the Bible could be used as a reader, Catholic households were more likely to only possess one

354 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in between, 169-177.
book: a catechism manual directly provided by the Church. This difference in religious practice likely affected how reading was taught and what “reader” children would bring to school in the absence of textbooks.

In the case of Maine, the use of French textbooks to teach the children of the Madawaska region would go directly against the state’s assimilation agenda. Alternatively, the use of English textbooks was rendered useless by the pupils’ and teachers’ relative ignorance of the language. As a result, Maine had no dedicated textbooks and pedagogical material adapted to the linguistic and cultural specificities of the Madawaska region in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1879, the Maine legislature authorized the use of French-English bilingual textbooks from New Brunswick in schools attended by Francophone pupils to remedy this state of affairs. Since the goal for the state of Maine was to ultimately assimilate Francophone students, one can imagine that the state was not interested in investing in the creation of its own bilingual pedagogical material. Interestingly, Maine did not seem to worry about the potential influence of the Crown in New Brunswick’s bilingual textbooks, while the province disapproved of using American textbooks because they promoted the love of democracy. This suggests that textbooks used in Maine may have striven to weave in citizenship education.

As for New Brunswick, Alexandre J. Savoie, and Katherine F.C. MacNaughton before him, both highlighted the fact that there were no references

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to the French language in the School Act of 1871. MacNaughton noticed a repetition of the term “French-English” in official documents to refer to textbooks and education of the French-speaking population in general, which reinforced her suspicion that education for the French-speaking population of New Brunswick would be bilingual until students became able to pursue their education solely in the English language. On the importance of French as teaching language in school or in the public space, MacNaughton wrote that “there was nothing in the Constitution which obliged the provincial authorities to accord to the French language any rights or privileges in the legislature or in the schools.” However, she also stated that there were no restriction either to “the use of French as the language of communication and study in the schools of Acadian districts”. Savoie drew the attention to the lack of textbooks produced in French in important subjects such as arithmetic, history, geography and sciences and wrote that it was a clever way to anglicize Acadians little by little, which to him only strengthened the suspicion of an assimilation agenda at the provincial level.

A proper discussion of the textbooks in use in Maine and New Brunswick between the mid-nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, as well as a survey of the many controversies that surrounded textbooks and school library books warrants its own research project. For our purpose, it is sufficient to

357 MacNaughton, *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick*, 232.
358 MacNaughton, *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick*, 231.
acknowledge that the use of French and/or bilingual textbooks was implemented in both Maine and New Brunswick for the same reason: the willingness to make concessions in view of elevating the population as a whole through education.

6.4. Roman Catholicism in the Classroom

Roman Catholicism is an integral part of the Madawaska French identity. One might even argue that without the presence and support of the Roman Catholic church in the Madawaska region, the Madawaska French would have been assimilated and would have lost many elements of their identity, including the French language. Indeed, despite the various pressures put on the community at different points in time through reforms that aimed at establishing non-secular public schools, religious congregations continued to participate in the efforts to increase the literacy rate in the Madawaska region. They did so by opening their own schools as part of the public parish school system or simply by seeking employment in the public school system itself. Religious congregations even conformed to demands of the state and the province in terms of teaching authorization in order to have their schools be recognized by the board of education and thus obtain funding that would allow them to pursue their mission.

In Francophone North America, the children who were most educated in each family were often those who pursued a religious career since the need for a formal education was closely tied to vocational skills. As a result, when Maine

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360 Craig and Dagenais, *The Land in between*, 321-323.
361 Craig and Dagenais, *The Land in between*, 310.
and New Brunswick worked at training a truly bilingual workforce, Roman Catholic congregations were better prepared to respond to the needs and wants of the population, and sought to offer English as part of the curriculum. The addition of English courses fulfilled the interest of the authorities as well as the request of the Francophones who saw an advantage in becoming bilingual.

Catechism in the public school system of the mid- to late-nineteenth century could not be taught during the regular school day since there was supposed to be a clear separation between school and the religious life. Yet in the Saint John River valley, Catechism was often taught in the very buildings used to teach the regular curriculum, only outside of school hours, thereby effectively blurring this separation.362

The separation of school and church was not welcomed by Roman Catholics in general. In the case of the Madawaska French, this separation would turn out to be particularly difficult to put into place. Indeed, in his monograph titled *Religion and the Maine Schools, An Historical Approach*, Ernest Helmreich pointed out that the display of religious imagery in public classrooms in the Saint John River valley was common practice, and while he noted that this practice was in decline by the mid-twentieth century, he also pointed out that crucifix remained a common feature in most classrooms.363

Since the formal education of children—as it was understood and promoted by both the state of Maine and the province of New Brunswick—was

not considered a priority by the inhabitants of the Madawaska region, the state authorities would have encountered much resistance had they attempted to impose a mandatory school system with rules and regulations that went against the religious beliefs of the local population. New Brunswick had to make concessions early on, after the major crisis it faced in 1871 with the passing of the Common School Act. Maine, contrarily to New Brunswick, had welcomed the contribution of religious congregation to the education of the Madawaska French, but there also, a number of concessions, or cultural adjustments, were made.

In 1924, Augustus O. Thomas, state superintendent, highlighted the differences between the public schools in Madawaska and that of the rest of the state. He noted that schools in the Saint John River valley were financed by public funds even though they were housed in buildings that belonged to the Catholic Church or to religious congregations. Thomas also wrote that sisters were allowed to wear their religious garbs when teaching in public schools as long as they had obtained a teaching license from the state. This compromise, which seems to have gone directly against the core principles of a secular public school system, shows that the authorities were more concerned with fostering the Americanization of the Madawaska French than with the secular aspect of the public school system. In other words, the State of Maine was willing to make

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364 Craig and Dagenais, *The Land in between*, 310.
365 The use of texts that were not in accordance with the practices of the Roman Catholic Church—notably the use of King James Bible or KJB—as readers was particularly problematic, especially for Francophone Roman Catholic communities. See Helmreich, *Religion and the Maine Schools*, 23-25. See also O’Neal, *Citizenship education in the 1920s*, 14, on public schools and Catholic populations in Maine.
concessions to reach its goals. It is important to note that in the case of allowing sisters to teach in the public school system, the compromise benefitted the state not only through the buy-in of the population but also because, as Craig and Dagenais pointed out, the salary given to members of religious congregation was immediately reinvested in the community, so as to serve those in need.367

In spite of the compromises made by the state regarding the school premises as well as the teaching staff, Thomas noted that the Madawaska French had feared that the curriculum and omnipresence of the English language would be incompatible with their religion—fear better expressed through the well-known aphorism: “qui perd sa langue perd sa foi.” However, once this fear was dispelled, Thomas found that the Madawaska French not only adopted but also recognized the usefulness of the English language in the community:

For a time, it was difficult to induce the people of this section of the state to believe that the state sought to do no violence to their religious freedom, when it demanded that the children who are growing up in this country to become citizens should become conversant with the language of the land, but at the present time, it is evident that these people now understand that the English language is an asset and the fact that it is required to be taught does not in any way militate against their religious faith and privileges. As a consequence, we are getting better cooperation than we have had before.368

In other words, what Thomas highlighted is that the state worked with the community at promoting the teaching of the English language which constituted a step forward on the way to Americanization. Complete assimilation on the other end was not necessarily successful since Thomas pointed out that the teaching

367 Craig and Dagenais, *The Land in Between*, 321-322.
of the English language did not “in any way militate against their faith and privileges.” The Madawaska French managed to preserve important features of their culture and everyday life while welcoming some of the American culture and values through the education system.

This situation closely resembles the compromise granted to the Roman Catholics of New Brunswick at the resolution of the Common School Act crisis. The schools were supported by public taxes but were hosted in church buildings, and classes were taught by sisters in religious garb but to teach, the sisters had to be approved by the authorities. The selection of teachers was severe and only individuals who spoke the English language perfectly could be given certificates to teach in public schools, which guaranteed the higher quality of education for the citizen in the making\textsuperscript{369}

6.5. Necessary Adjustment: Conclusion

The major difference between New Brunswick and Maine was that in the latter, the emphasis was clearly put on citizenship and Americanization, which pushed the state to actively find ways to include the Madawaska French in its school system. In New Brunswick, no significant improvements appear to have been developed by the province for the minority group. Rather, the situation of education in New Brunswick in the years that followed the Common School Act of 1871 and the Compromise of 1875 seemed to have remained rather stagnant. The establishment of a public school system and the creation of a normal school

\textsuperscript{369} Helmreich, \textit{Religion and the Maine Schools}, 41.
in Fredericton were important steps in the direction of providing a universal access to education in the province, yet minority groups remained on the margins of the system, forced to rely on other entities for their education.

In Maine, the Madawaska French were known to the authorities and their Americanization was of great concerns to the state. In New Brunswick, as Craig and Dagenais justly pointed out, the disconnect between the government and local Francophone communities came from the fact that “the system was more Anglo-centric than anti-French.” The absence of a sizeable Francophone representation at all levels of governments may have contributed to hinder the potential for the main stakeholders to express their needs and wants as citizens of New Brunswick. It is reasonable to assume that the poor quality of education provided in public schools for Francophones was partially responsible for this relative lack of representation.

Overall, it seems that Maine yielded more successes than New Brunswick by making continuous and informed compromises and adjustments based on local realities, while in New Brunswick, the top-down system struggled to apply its “one size fits all” system shaped by the Common School Act of 1871 and its Compromise of 1875.

By imposing stricter standards for teachers’ qualification, New Brunswick sought to dramatically improve it education system. Yet, the wide disparities in terms of access and attitudes towards education made it challenging to effectively provide the same chances to every child in every district. In fact, one

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370 Craig and Dagenais, *The Land in Between*, 172.
could argue that the school question in New Brunswick only found a true resolution in the late twentieth century with the various reforms on language rights.

Through the concessions and adjustments that made possible the establishment of the public school system of Maine and New Brunswick, the Madawaska French have succeeded at preserving important elements of their identity and values. They took steps to resist assimilation all the while proceeding to their own acculturation to their new government. It is interesting to note, however, that the geopolitical situation of the Madawaska French community may have been the principal motor to push Maine to make adjustments to its public school system in the region in order to ensure the full cooperation of the Francophone community. Indeed, the Madawaska French received a rather special treatment that rendered the version of the public school they experienced a lot more flexible than anywhere else in the state. The Franco-American communities who migrated to the state in the later part of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries were not as fortunate, having to rely on their own parochial schools to achieve some comparable measure of acculturation for two or three generations.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

In the years that followed the establishment of the international border between Maine and New Brunswick, the Madawaska region remained a borderland. As the state and the province established their own institutions in the region, the language, identity and citizenship of the Madawaska French acted as barriers to the integration of the community to their new home country, which presented a challenge for the governments of Maine and New Brunswick.

The politics of education in Maine and New Brunswick in the nineteenth century presented several similarities. Both systems were inspired by the education reform movement and were designed to provide a secular education in English—the language of the government—to all. The state and the province established their public school system with two main goals: to educate the masses to provide skilled workers for their industries, and to shape children to become good citizens who love their home country. Maine and New Brunswick also faced similar challenges, notably the slow progress of education in rural areas.

In 1842, New Brunswick already had a long experience of cohabiting with Francophone minority groups, but this was not the case for Maine. Large-scale French-Canadian migration to New England had not yet started. The Madawaska French were used to dealing with the authorities in New Brunswick and that of Quebec, but not with Augusta. This difference in degrees of familiarity can explain, in part, the strong reaction of the state of Maine that, early on, set to fully
assimilate the Madawaska French and thus ensure the interests of the state at the border. On the New Brunswick side, if there were such concerns at the government level, they were not apparent. In fact, New Brunswick has often been criticized by Francophone leaders and scholars for its lack of intervention and lack of support of its Francophone minority in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, contributing to what some have called a de facto assimilationist agenda.371

The challenges posed by the establishment of the public school system in the Madawaska region were shared with other Francophone groups who existed as a minority within a system governed by Anglos-Saxon Protestants. These challenges were language, religious and cultural differences, as well as a different attitude towards schools and schooling. What was specific to the Madawaska French, however, was a sense of citizenship that went beyond the sense of ethnic identity one can find among Acadian, French-Canadian and Franco-American groups. This sense of citizenship had been shaped by a common experience and history that predated the formalization of the border; thus the clear identification of a home country within which the community existed. As such, the Madawaska French continued for decades to identify to their community more than to their new home countries.

The politics of education in Maine and New Brunswick differed in their approach towards the Madawaska French. The former intentionally sought to find

371 See Savoie, _Un siècle de revendications scolaires au Nouveau-Brunswick_. See also MacNaughton, _The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick_.
ways to assimilate the population, and education was an important part of this effort, while the latter designed a system for the Anglo-Saxon Protestant majority, without giving much thoughts to the Francophone minority and its needs. Despite adopting different approaches, the authorities of Maine and New Brunswick both established English public schools to teach Francophone pupils in the Madawaska region. They also both designed their public school system as a secular institution, and had to compromise by allowing Roman Catholic clergymen and religious congregations to be a part of the public school system with the condition that they were properly trained in pedagogy as well as in the subjects of the approved curriculum.

The authorities as well as contemporary scholars placed much emphasis on the rural character of the Madawaska region and on the tendency for Francophone Roman Catholics to have little interest in education. In reality, education was far from being non-existent amongst the Madawaska French, but it was more of a private and religious affair in comparison to their Anglo-Saxon Protestant contemporaries who had moved away from this format and were more likely to privilege institutionalized schooling where every child was given the opportunity to acquire the same base knowledge. It is also important to note that education overall was far from perfect; that was true in both the state and the province. Indeed, there were few excellent teachers in the nineteenth century and the teaching profession, as it expended to the public school system, was still very much emergent and developing.
With a few exceptions, schools in the Madawaska region were not equivalent to schools in the rest of Anglophone Maine and New Brunswick. The community relied on female religious orders on either side of the border for the education of their children, and they did so for numerous reasons. First, there were concerns in the community that the curriculum of the public school was not in line with their religious values and beliefs. Second, the public school system on both sides of the border was designed as an Anglophone school system and few children spoke the language. Third, the Madawaska French resented having to pay taxes to fund a school system they had no use for since they preferred to send their children to schools organized by Catholic orders. Maine and New Brunswick thus needed to make some adjustments if they wanted the Madawaska French to participate in their public school system.

Francophone pupils in the Madawaska region would need to learn English to be able to access the content of the curriculum, which meant that the Madawaska French needed bilingual schools, at least in the lower grades. To this effect, the governments of Maine and New Brunswick needed to recruit bilingual professionals, and since properly trained bilingual teachers were more or less nonexistent in the region at the time, they had no choice but to create this specialized workforce. Both the state and the province had been training teachers in their normal schools, but in the overwhelming majority of cases these professionals were monolingual English speakers. If there had been bilingual individuals who graduated from the normal school, it was not very likely that in a high demand market, trained teachers would have accepted the lower than
average salary Francophone districts typically offered, unless they had a personal tie with the community.

The issue with training bilingual teachers however was that it would legitimize the existence of an alternative version of the public school system. The Madawaska Training School was created as a temporary measure meant to help the Madawaska French to “catch up” with the rest of the state. The French Department of the Fredericton Normal School was first created to train Francophones in English so that they could then attend the regular Anglophone teacher training program. It morphed into a teacher training program for Francophone only after it became clear that Francophones would not come back to the Fredericton Normal School to attend the regular Anglophone teacher training program. Neither the state nor the province seemed willing to create permanent Francophone or bilingual institutions, but I would argue that their response to this issue had a lasting impact on the integration of the Madawaska French and, in New Brunswick, of the Francophone population as a whole.

7.1. Assimilation Through School, to What Extent?

After 1842, Maine’s agenda was clear. It was necessary to assimilate the Madawaska French of the Saint John River valley to ensure that they would become fully integrated to the state. In other words, the Madawaska French needed to be “Americanized.” For the state, dealing with a Francophone community was a rather new experience. In New Brunswick, the situation played out differently. The province was home to several Francophone communities and cohabitation was not something new for the authorities. In fact, since New
Brunswick had been involved in the granting of lands to the charter families of the Madawaska community, it is safe to assume that as far as the authorities were concerned, the Madawaska French had always been part of the population of New Brunswick. However, at the time, the official language in the province was English only and while the presence of Francophones was tolerated, the British colonial territory was not in the business of providing equal access to services to this minority group, whatever its demographic weight in the province. Yet, in both Maine and New Brunswick, the establishment of a public school system was meant to reach every household and elevate society at a whole.

In Maine, the public school system was to become a tool at the service of the Americanization agenda in the Madawaska region. We know that the state worked with the community to promote the teaching of the English language, which constituted a step forward on the pathway to Americanization, but how does one measure the degree to which a community has become Americanized? In our case, the politics of education in the state can provide us with some hints.

In 1895, a bill was presented to the legislature with the goal to deprive of public funding all schools where the language of education was not English. This bill, championed by the growing nativist movement, shows the tensions that existed over the existence of linguistic minorities in Maine. The existence of publicly funded schools that tailored to linguistic minorities was unacceptable for the nativists who were great supporters of assimilating every non-English speaker living on the American soil. The Madawaska French community was directly targeted by the bill but it was not the only one since there were also other
linguistic minority groups in the state. This bill, however, was not passed as it was, thanks to Major William Dickey. This representative from Fort Kent, in the Saint John River valley, was familiar with the situation. He recommended instead that bilingual education be a necessary condition for schools with non-Anglophone students to be eligible for public funds. The original bill would not have fostered the integration of linguistic minorities to the Maine society. Rather it would have contributed to further alienate communities and encourage them, if they so choose, not to acculturate, and thus the risk was that they would not learn to function harmoniously with the rest of the state. With the support of Maine’s governor, Dickey contributed to the amendment of the bill.372 This problematic issue was not new to Major Dickey who had helped with the creation of the Madawaska Training School. The Fort Kent representative saw value in having bilingual institutions as opposed to English only institutions that the Madawaska French community were likely to shun. The ultimate goal of the state however was to get rid of bilingual schools.

In 1909, the state adopted a law that rendered school mandatory for all individuals between the ages of fifteen and seventeen who were not capable of reading or writing a correct sentence in English. While this law was not specific to the Madawaska French, or to non-English speakers for that matter, the need to legislate is a good indication that the rate of literacy still needed to improve in the state.373 Ten years later, in 1919, several states, including Maine, passed school

372 Craig and Dagenais, The Land in Between, 312-314.
laws to ensure that English was the language used at school and public affairs, to promote loyalty and to better define citizenship. Among the measures that stemmed from the school law of 1919, was the creation of an evening school program destined to teach English and citizenship education to adults. The statistics collected for the year 1922 by the superintendent of education of the state of Maine showed that Americanization programs for adults existed in Fort Kent. As for the selection of teachers certified to teach in the school of the Madawaska region, the annual report of 1924 showed that it conformed with the school law of 1919 since all the candidates were asked to know and recognize the American institutions, as well as to demonstrate a perfect mastery of the English language in order to earn their teaching certificate.

The most important tool in the state’s assimilation machine was the Madawaska Training School. Its administrators were well aware of their direct participation in the assimilation efforts carried on by the state in the region. Hence, one can read in the report to the state superintendent of education of 1926 that “[t]he instruction in this training school is to be in English, it being the design and intention of the State to educate the citizens of this region in the English language.” And if this was not proof enough to assess the role of the

377 “Report of the state commissioner of education of the state of Maine for the school biennium ending in June 30, 1924,” 1924, 41.
school in the assimilation agenda of the state of Maine, the rest of the report only made it clearer:

The School population of this interesting portion of our State numbers nearly thirty-five hundred. The State wishes to educate all its children in the language of the State and Nation, and to make them an English-speaking people. The laws are printed in English, the business of the courts is transacted in the same language, the deeds under which this people hold their farms are written in, to some of them, a foreign language.378

The Madawaska territory is referred to as “this interesting portion of our State,” which underlines not only the gap perceived by the authorities between the Saint John River valley and the rest of the state, but also the need felt by the authorities to “normalize” the region. It is precisely this “pragmatic need” that, according to Roger Paradis, justified the assimilation policy of the state of Maine, which he argued could have been carried out in a “less brutal manner,” by fostering bilingualism and acculturation rather than assimilation:

Les exigences de l'état pour unir ses citoyens en les obligeant à parler anglais pourraient être atteintes de façon moins brutale si on mettait l'accent sur l'étude d'une seconde langue, non pas dans une atmosphère stérile, mais plutôt dans un contexte intégré à la culture et à l'histoire d'un groupe ethnique.379

The need to federate citizens around unifying elements such as a language was far from being a new concept. However, as Paradis discussed, what matters is the ways in which union is achieved. Assimilation is problematic because it aims at ridding a population from all traces of a prior identity in order to shape the population to the identity of the assimilating group. The use of the

378 Report of the state commissioner of education of the state of Maine for the school biennium period July 1, 1924-June 30, 1926, 147.
term “interesting” to designate the region indicates a hierarchy between Maine and the Madawaska territory which stems from cultural and linguistic differences. The cultural heritage of New England is valued while that of the Madawaska territory is denigrated.

By the 1920s, Maine had managed to impose the English language as the language of education in the Saint John River valley, but it came at a price. According to Augustus O. Thomas’s report written in 1924, the population of the Madawaska region feared that the English language would get in the way of their faith – fear which is well described by the common saying: “qui perd sa langue perd sa foi.” Thomas argued however that once they realized that English would not impact the religious life of the community, the Madawaska French embraced the teaching of the English language and recognized its values.380

Complete assimilation on the other end was not necessarily successful since Augustus O. Thomas pointed out in his 1924 report that the teaching of the English language did not “in any way militate against their faith and privileges.” The Madawaska French managed to preserve important features of their culture and everyday life while welcoming some of the American culture and values through the education system.

Education on the Maine side of the Madawaska region remained an issue all the way into the twentieth century, and one could argue that it remains

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problematic to this day with regards to the community’s language, identity and citizenship.

As for New Brunswick, from 1871 to 1936 the public school system in the province had been perceived as an assimilationist school. Roger Doiron, president of the New Brunswick association of Francophone teachers in the 1970s, argued that if it were not for convents and colleges, French would probably no longer be spoken in New Brunswick, when in fact, the relative lack of intervention of the government may have been part of the reason why the French language persists in New Brunswick today. Doiron accused the province to have put in place an assimilationist school system, suggesting that the alternative was not necessarily available to all. Yet, the Compromise of 1875 did allow Roman Catholic institutions to become a part of the public school system under specific conditions, and it is undeniable that the development of the French Catholic school system in New Brunswick has been essential in providing alternatives to the Anglophone institutions put in place by the provincial government. Acadian leaders also contributed, through their activism, to the cause of public education for Francophones in the province. A growing number of Francophone voices appeared in politics and in the public arena in general in the late nineteenth century with the Acadian Renaissance movement. The right to a

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proper education in their first language was part of the revendications of this group.\textsuperscript{382}

In New Brunswick, the British North America Act and its protective measures towards the education rights of minority groups forced the authorities to compromise with its Roman Catholic population and by extension with the Francophone Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholic Church has been instrumental in providing Francophones in New Brunswick with an education and with the preservation of the French language. Roman Catholic convents provided elementary education, and Roman Catholic colleges provided, among other program, an alternative to the Fredericton Normal School for the training of teachers. The connection with neighboring Quebec provided an existing model of Francophone education and many of the colleges founded in New Brunswick by Catholic institutions continue to exist as universities today. However, to respond to the demand, New Brunswick would have needed many more convents with sisters who chose to dedicate their lives to education. Not all orders had teachers amongst their ranks, and not every Francophone community had a convent nearby. This left many Francophone and mixed districts without any other option but the Anglophone public school system.

As we discussed in chapter 6 on necessary adjustments, there is evidence that at the local level people were trying to find ways to meet the needs of all the children served by their district. If there was a bilingual teacher available, the

\textsuperscript{382} Gérard Desjardins, \textit{Le Madawaska raconté par Le Moniteur Acadien, 1867-1926}. (Dieppe, Nouveau-Brunswick, 1999).
option would be considered. However, the valuation of the district determined the class of license the school teacher needed to hold, and due to the low numbers of Francophone teachers with a first or second class license, Anglophone teachers were often the only choice available in the absence of an alternative provided by the Roman Catholic Church. In addition, the superintendent of education in New Brunswick reserved the right to approve or disapprove the hiring of a teacher, and there were limitations in place to the hiring of Francophone teachers with a third class license who had not attended the English normal school program. Indeed, Regulation 33 of the New Brunswick School law ensured in 1897 that the superintendent had the power to limit the employment of Francophone teachers, even though in practice, some superintendents seemed to have been willing to compromise, as the letters examined in chapter 6 showed.

Whereas Maine decided to create an institution dedicated to the training of the teachers who would be working in the Madawaska region to advance its assimilation agenda, New Brunswick did not commit to creating a separate institution. Rather the province created an addition to its program in the form of a French department—addition that was considered a prerequisite to the English teacher training program. Graduates of the French department would only be eligible for a third-class license and were limited to teaching in Francophone districts. I would argue that it is thanks to this situation that Francophones in New Brunswick had to rely so heavily on their Roman Catholic institutions and on the few individuals who could provide them with an education in their first language,
leaving them with the choice to acculturate on their terms. Section 93 of the British North America Act as well as the Compromise of 1875 contributed to legitimize the existence of the Roman Catholic institutions in the province.

Under pressure from both sides of the border, the Madawaska French still managed to preserve important parts of their identity by holding on to their language and religion. On the Maine side of the border, the success of the Madawaska Training School brought the English language to many homes, not necessarily on the Madawaska French’s terms. On the New Brunswick side, the presence and activism of Francophones throughout the province provided a layer of support that did not exist in Maine. While the Madawaska French engaged in frequent border crossing and did not hesitate to send their children to school on the side of the river that suited them best, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the Mainers were more at risk for assimilation than the New Brunswickers.

The mosaic and the melting pot narratives emerged at a later date, yet it is interesting to observe that already in the mid-nineteenth century, Maine adopted a “melting pot” approach to its dealings with the Madawaska French through its assimilation agenda, while New Brunswick, likely because of its history, was used to cohabiting with Francophone populations, and did not seem eager to proactively act on the assimilation of the Madawaska French, or of the rest of its Francophone population for that matter. One could thus argue that their respective approaches align with the national myths of Canada and the United States.
7.2. Lasting Effects of the Politics of Education in Madawaska

In the years surrounding the Great War, major transformations occurred in public education in both countries. The years following the First World War were characterized by a surge in nationalism in North America. Canada and the United States feared that the cultural and linguistic diversity of the population would become a barrier to the development of patriotic feelings among new immigrants. Indeed, cities were divided into aggregates of communities of different origins, each one living in its own quarter. In that context, many immigrants sought to perpetuate their own culture and language within their community, raising concerns regarding their allegiance to the country they lived in.

Canada and the United States both emphasized citizenship education in order to foster patriotism amongst their population. Citizenship education aims at teaching all school-aged children to become enlightened and active citizens of their nation. Concurrently, the authorities in both countries sought to integrate communities who did not speak the language of the majority. The ability to communicate in the language of the majority was critical to be part of the institutional life and was a key element of the various integration efforts. In other words, school was where the mind of future citizens was shaped. It was the place where children learned to love their homeland and its institutions, and the place where a diverse population was meant to come together and become one.

The politics of Maine and New Brunswick were in line with the politics of education adopted by the rest of their nation. The changes brought about by the politics of education in Madawaska would take time, especially as the community
had the option to rely on religious congregations for the education of their youth if they so choose. As a result, in order to measure the lasting effects of the politics of education in Madawaska, it is useful to look at some later accounts that attest of the Madawaska French’s agency and resilience.

In her study of the language and cultural heritage of the Francophone population of the Madawaska region, conducted in the 1960s, Marie Anne Gauvin highlighted the importance of the family unit in the transmission of oral French from generation to generation. She added that families were actively supported by the Catholic Church in their efforts to preserve the French language.\textsuperscript{383} As for English, Gauvin points out that the language was associated with the hostilities from British Crown towards the Acadians. She wrote that in Francophone households, children do not use English in the presence of their parents:

None would have dared to converse in English under the parental roof for use of English represented the very much feared and abusive English. In retaliation for British hostilities, the Acadians spoke English to their animals assigning them English names [...] Under these conditions the language of the parents was strictly adhered to by the children and was transmitted from generation to generation under the family roof.\textsuperscript{384}

Gauvin pointed out that Francophones in the Madawaska region “are so determined to preserve the French language, imperfect though it may be, in their homes and churches that they often bring criticism upon themselves; in Maine they are frequently told that they are un-American,”\textsuperscript{385} which indicates that more

\textsuperscript{384} Gauvin, *Linguistic and Cultural Heritage of the Acadians in Maine and New Brunswick*, 43.
\textsuperscript{385} Gauvin, *Linguistic and Cultural Heritage of the Acadians in Maine and New Brunswick*, 47.
than a century after the southern banks of the Saint John River became part of
the United States, the question of their belonging to the state of Maine remained.
Yet, the Madawaska French also chose to take it upon themselves to become
bilingual and ensure that they could be a part of the wider society in which they
live.

In the 1970s, Béatrice Craig highlighted the importance of bilingualism in
the Saint John Valley and pointed out that both languages—English and the St.
John Valley French—are not only still relevant, but they also have a distinct role
in communication: people would choose to express themselves in one or the other
language based on circumstances.386 Craig however also used the terms
“progression” of the English language and “regression” of the French language,
which only shows that in the 1970s, the regression of the French language was
measurable but also that it was felt by the population.

By prohibiting the use of French in schools, particularly the St John Valley
French, the local dialect, the politics of education in Madawaska contributed in
the long run to an impoverishment of the culture and traditions of the Madawaska
French community which can be measured today by the decline in the number of
Francophones in the region but also by the lack of access to bilingual
education.387 The introduction of international French as a foreign language in

386 Béatrice Craig, A French Speaking Community in the Upper St John Valley (Maine-U.S.A.),
Note de recherche présentée en vue de l’obtention de la maîtrise par Béatrice Chevalier-Craig,
Octobre 1974, 47-52.
387 The Valley Crafters, ”Interview for Threads of our lives : Maine Folk Fiber Art at Fort Kent on
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the curriculum of the Madawaska Training School a few years following its establishment was another issue since instead of legitimizing French as one of the two languages spoken in the region, the teaching of international French contributed to another form of discrimination against the local dialect of Valley French.

In a communication at The French in New England, Acadia, and Quebec Conference organized by the NEAPQ Center in Orono, Maine in May 1972, Marcella Bélanger-Violette pointed out that "[f]or too long the Acadian Valleyite has been made to feel that he has ‘never amounted to anything and never will.’ He had been treated for generations, by many, as an ignorant and uncouth ‘nobody.’" And indeed, the Madawaska French, or as Bélanger-Violette calls them, “the Acadian Valleyite,” had been considered by many as an inferior people based on their cultural differences and the idea that Anglo-Saxon societies were modern and progressive. The fact that in 1972 someone could write with authority that the people of the Madawaska territory still experienced feelings of inferiority that had been imposed of them generations after generations is an indication of the lasting effects of the discriminatory attitudes of the governing powers.

The attitude of the governments of Maine and New Brunswick when establishing their public school systems had implications in terms of language, identity, and citizenship in the Madawaska region, while religion was one aspect

of the Madawaska identity that was largely preserved on both sides of the border. Through school, the governments of both New Brunswick and Maine were hoping to foster the love of their institutions among the young generations and to have them become good citizens. It would be helpful to review the textbooks used in the region at the time to gain a better understanding of what citizenship exactly entailed then in both countries. As for the French language, there was a definite push for bilingual education with the intention to eventually transitioning into an all English education on both sides of the river. The degree to which these efforts were successful in both Maine and New Brunswick remains to be evaluated. I would argue that the establishment of a public school system reinforced the visibility of the linguistic and cultural border that separates the Madawaska region from Maine and New Brunswick through the compromises that were negotiated with either the state or the province. The establishment of the public school system by both governments in the Madawaska region created a deep sense of alienation among the Madawaska French people, but it also created a powerful incentive for the Madawaska French community to preserve their culture and traditions. Remarkably, they forced the authorities to make adjustments and to compromise on the secular character of the public school system.
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Elisa Sance was born in Château-Thierry, France. She graduated from the Lycée Jean La Fontaine in Château-Thierry (High School) with a Baccalauréat in Sciences. She went on to study International Business and Languages and obtained her A.A at the Université Picardie Jules Verne in Amiens, France and her B.A. at the Université d'Angers, France. Between her A.A. and her B.A. in International Business and Languages, she received a B.L.S. in Archival Sciences from the Université d'Angers. At the University of Maine, Sance studied North American French and received a M.A. in French. Sance has taught in the Department of Modern Languages and Classics and in the History Department at the University of Maine. During the final years of her doctoral program, she started working full-time as an Instructional Designer at the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning at the University of Maine. Her first peer-reviewed publication: “L’École publique au Madawaska et la politique assimilationniste du Maine, 1842-1920” was published in the volume 29 of Port Acadie. Elisa Sance is a candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in History from the University of Maine in August 2020.