

RESEARCH NOTE/NOTES DE RECHERCHE

Railway Tourism in the “Land of Evangeline”, 1882-1946

IN 1847 HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW wrote a poem purportedly based on a story he had heard of an Acadian girl and her betrothed who had endured the Acadian Deportation from Nova Scotia almost a century earlier. The publication of *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie* quickly gained the American poet international acclaim. The work sparked interest in the region as a vacation destination, especially among New Englanders, and promoters were soon exploiting the tale of unrequited love and lost homeland in order to draw tourists. Particularly active in this regard was the Windsor and Annapolis Railway Company (W&AR), incorporated in 1867 and later reinvented as the Dominion Atlantic Railway Company (DAR).¹ Among the earliest organized efforts to promote tourism in Nova Scotia, its colourful and evocative “Land of Evangeline” publicity beckoned tourists to Grand-Pré and its surroundings with the promise of a nostalgic step back in time. Most of this output took the form of timetables, brochures and guide books, some of which were authored by prominent writers and historians who expounded the merits of the landscape and its connection to the Acadian past.

These promotional materials reveal as much about the social and cultural context of their creation as they do about 18th-century Acadian life. Examination of the railway’s more prominent texts and images, as well as some of the factors that influenced their production, shows how they worked to both reflect and shape contemporary understanding and attitudes about the Acadian experience. The goal was to attract tourists to the region by way of the railway and the means to this end was to exploit the Evangeline story. Central to the approach was the creation of authenticity. This was done in part by establishing ideas and markers about and around Grand-Pré that branded it as an original and unspoiled locale while positioning it as a site of commodification. The railway also generated ideas of authenticity by suggesting that Longfellow’s story and characters were real while diminishing and misinterpreting the significance of the actual Acadian experience. Though the overall aim of these strategies was to increase tourism, a certain version of history was also endorsed – one that reinforced and validated the British legacy of the province over that of the Acadians, the very key to the railway’s tourism activities. The W&AR/DAR was not the only promoter of the poem, particularly after the turn of the 19th century, but it was an authoritative one. Its use of the piece shows how hegemony manifests itself through the tourism industry to support dominant ideas about the past and present. Scholarly work has been done on 20th-century tourism in Nova Scotia and in Grand-Pré specifically as well as on the popularization of the poem

1 D.E. Stoltz, *A Statutory History of Trains in Canada 1836-1986* (Kingston, 1987), p. 486. I have not located any company archives for the W&AR or the DAR. Original W&AR and DAR promotional materials were consulted at the Library and Archives Canada (LAC), the Nova Scotia Archives and Record Management (NSARM), and the Musquodoboit Harbour Railway Museum. Others materials in microfilm and microfiche form were consulted at the Scott Library, York University (SL) and the Robarts Library, University of Toronto (RL).

Railway Tourism in the Land of Evangeline 159

and its impact on the Acadian population.² While some of these works touch on aspects considered here, there is little sustained analysis of the products resulting from the corporate appropriation of the Evangeline tale.

At the time of the completion of the W&AR in 1869, railways were widely perceived as a ticket to economic growth and new ventures often aroused much interest and support.³ Primarily British-owned and backed by men of prominence such as former premier Charles Tupper, at one time a company shareholder along with then premier William Annand, the W&AR ran its initial rail line from Annapolis Royal to Windsor.⁴ The opening ceremonies of the Annapolis-Grand-Pré section were cause for great fanfare and anticipated the contradictions of the railway's tourism promoters concerning the Acadian past.⁵ Traveling on a locomotive christened "Evangeline", guests were greeted at the Grand-Pré and Wolfville stations with decorative arches and British flags reading "The Dominion of Canada", "Welcome to the land of Gabriel and Evangeline", "God Save the Queen" and "Equal Rights to All". At Kentville, the lieutenant governor gave a rousing speech including a caution that every man dissatisfied with British institutions, "who don't love the British flag in all his heart", should leave the province. With these assertions of British loyalty the W&AR turned to manufacturing an image of Acadian history with which to associate itself, albeit a fictional image arising from Longfellow's poem. By 1882 (perhaps earlier) the company was printing brochures with textual references and colourful imagery related to the poem that, by 1887, featured an artist's conception of Evangeline and information on connections for the "Land of Evangeline Route".⁶ Collaborating with the W&AR by transporting Americans to the

2 On the workings of early-20th-century tourism in Nova Scotia see works by Ian McKay such as "History and the Tourist Gaze: The Politics of Commemoration in Nova Scotia, 1935-1964", *Acadiensis*, XXII, 2 (Spring 1993), pp. 102-38 and *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal and Kingston, 1994). On the poem and its impact see Barbara Le Blanc, *Postcards from Acadie: Grand-Pré, Evangeline & the Acadian Identity* (Kentville, 2003); Robert Viau, *Les visages d'Évangéline: Du poème au mythe* (Beauport, QE, 1998); M. Brook Taylor, "The Poetry and Prose of History: Evangeline and the Historians of Nova Scotia", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 23, 1 (Spring/Summer 1988) and Naomi Griffiths, "Longfellow's Evangeline: The Birth and Acceptance of a Legend", *Acadiensis*, XI, 2 (Spring 1982). Both Le Blanc and Susan Phinney have looked at some aspects of the DAR's Evangeline promotions. See Phinney, "The 'Land of Evangeline': The Dominion Atlantic Railway and the Tourist Promotion of Nova Scotia", M.A. thesis, Carleton University, 1991.

3 Marguerite Woodworth, *History of the Dominion Atlantic Railway* (Kentville, 1936), p. 70.

4 On Charles Tupper, see Phillip Buckner, "Sir Charles Tupper", *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online* (Toronto & Laval, 2000), <http://www.biographi.ca/EN> (accessed December 2004). Woodworth lists Annand and Tupper as shareholders in 1871, but that Tupper's shares were held under C.H.M. Black. See Woodworth, *History of the Dominion Atlantic Railway*, p. 74.

5 On the opening ceremonies see the *Halifax Daily Reporter and Times*, 19 August 1869, p. 2, MF 6617, NSARM.

6 A W&AR timetable published in 1876 notes the "magnificent scenery made celebrated in Longfellow's 'Evangeline'", but does not include imagery other than an attached map. The earliest W&AR printed publicity including imagery related to the poem appears to be in Windsor and Annapolis Railway, *Windsor and Annapolis Railway of Nova Scotia, The Shortest and Cheapest Route Between Halifax, N.S. and St. John, N.B.* (n.p., 1882). It shows "Blomidon, Basin of Minas & Grand Pré", the three landmarks mentioned in the first verses of the poem, with "via Land of Evangeline" on the same cover. The earliest rendering of Evangeline I have seen in the railway materials is in the W&AR brochure *Windsor and Annapolis Railway, The Shortest Cheapest and Most Picturesque Route Between Nova Scotia and the United States via Annapolis N.S. Yarmouth N.S. and St. John N.B.* (n.p., 1887).

region from Boston was the Yarmouth Steamship Company, owned by a group of Yarmouth residents.⁷ Naming three of its vessels “Evangeline”, “Gabriel” and “Basil” (Gabriel’s father in the poem), the steamship company also produced publications for the tourist market and advertised in them its joint services with the railway. The W&AR expanded by acquiring another railway line and, in 1894, was renamed the Dominion Atlantic Railway.⁸ Soon after its incorporation, the DAR established its own line of steamships to compete with the Yarmouth Steamship Company and, by 1901, had driven the latter out of business.

In both its steamship and railway promotions the DAR continued to push the “Land of Evangeline Route” that had been initiated by the W&AR and, in addition to publishing timetables and descriptive travel brochures, in its first years of operation it hired two well-known authors to write a guide book and a history of the region and its people. Both these works presented a substantial challenge to the poem’s historical premise. In *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie* Longfellow did not delve into the political context of the Acadian Deportation, but did create a tragic story around it with the British as antagonists. The poet was particularly adept at contrasting the lives of Evangeline and Gabriel in their idyllic, peaceful lives in the village of Grand-Pré before the tragic events of 1755 with their years of suffering afterwards. At the time of its publication, almost a century after the fact, this account of what life was like for Acadians before, during and after the Deportation was rare and, though a piece of fiction, was convincing as historical reality because of its factual basis. Longfellow had referred to respected historical works by Abbé Guillaume-Thomas-F. Raynal and Thomas C. Haliburton for context and background, set it in one of the villages from which Acadians had actually been deported, and did little at the time to dissuade those believing that the tale was accurate in its detail.⁹

This caused some controversy among Nova Scotia historians, a situation aptly described by M. Brook Taylor.¹⁰ Many were members of the elite and clung to the idea that the provincial past had been one of steady progress built on the backs of their mostly British Protestant ancestors. They were its legitimate heirs. Longfellow’s depiction of Acadians as a prosperous, peaceful people dispossessed of their land and property and deported by acts of British cruelty did not correspond with these notions. The dominant stance in the province on the Deportation was that it had been unfortunate but necessary. Taylor explains how the desire to correct the poet’s

7 On the relationship between the DAR and the Yarmouth Steamship Company see Woodworth, *History of the Dominion Atlantic Railway*, pp. 109-24, 210. For an example of the advertising see Yarmouth Steamship Company, *Nova Scotia, Evangeline and the Tourist’s Paradise Reached in 15-17 Hours by the Yarmouth Steamship Company (Limited)* (Boston, 1893), p. 40.

8 In 1894 the sale was approved and the DAR incorporated in 1895. See Stoltz, *A Statutory History of Trains in Canada*, p. 124.

9 The works were Abbé Raynal’s *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (1766) and T. C. Haliburton’s *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia* (1829). See H.E. Scudder, *Evangeline* (n.p., n.d.), p. 6, cited in Naomi Griffiths, “Longfellow’s *Evangeline*: The Birth and Acceptance of a Legend”, *Acadiensis*, XI, 2 (Spring 1982), p. 32n19. On Longfellow’s initial insistence on the accuracy of his story, see M. Brook Taylor, “The Poetry and Prose of History: *Evangeline* and the Historians of Nova Scotia”, *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 23, 1 (Spring/Summer 1988), p. 51.

10 Taylor, “The Poetry and Prose of History”, pp. 51-61.

Railway Tourism in the Land of Evangeline 161

“history” prompted a number of publications including those by Nova Scotians Thomas B. Akins and Beamish Murdoch; their views on the matter were later championed by American historian Francis Parkman in his *Montcalm and Wolfe* (1884), widely considered authoritative. These works placed varying amounts of blame on representatives from France and Quebec for manipulating the Acadians, on New Englanders for actually carrying out the Deportation, and, finally, on the Acadians themselves for not being as neutral as they had claimed and for not taking an unqualified oath of allegiance to the British Crown. In short, fault was deflected from the British. Quebec historian and longtime Parkman correspondent, Abbé Henri-Raymond Casgrain, was one who challenged these interpretations, charging the Anglophone writers with having concealed archival documents sympathetic to the Acadians and of deliberately misinterpreting the evidence.¹¹ The argument was never officially resolved, but the debate on this chapter of Acadian history was carried on by others well into the 20th century.

This was the scenario within which the DAR published the two works, both of which discussed Acadian history at some length and both of which exhibited the imperialist views of their authors.¹² The first, *The Land of Evangeline and the Gateways Thither*, was written in 1895 by Charles G.D. Roberts. Roberts was a renowned poet and writer who often used Acadian themes in his work and who received several honours during his lifetime including induction into the Royal Society of Canada as a Fellow as well as a knighthood.¹³ Roberts had already been applying his skills to travel writing and, to that end, had been interested in collaborating with a railway company in a publication as other high profile writers and artists were then doing.¹⁴ His guide for the DAR, like the more typical of the brochures, does not provide the details of the Deportation but offers “clarification” of the reasons behind it in order that the reader may “keep one’s view of history undistorted”. Roberts praises the talents of Longfellow but cautions the reader that the poet did not “fully understand all the facts” behind the event, and instead presents the Acadians as England’s “enemies within the gate”. They had allowed themselves to be manipulated by the French, he explains, and because of their obstinacy had to be “removed from their homes with such humanity as was possible”. Moreover, the whole affair was not really England’s responsibility but was done to placate “New England” and indeed conducted by “New Englanders”.¹⁵ According to Roberts, the

11 Taylor refers to Doughty on the relationship between Casgrain and Parkman. See Howard Doughty, *Francis Parkman* (New York, 1962), pp. 303-13, cited in Taylor, “The Poetry and Prose of History”, p. 66n60.

12 Charles G.D. Roberts, *The Land of Evangeline and the Gateways Thither* (Kentville, 1895); James Hannay, *The Story of Acadia* (Kentville, 1900[?]). The publication date of the latter is unclear, but it was most likely between 1895 and 1900. On imperialism in Canada at this time see Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto, 1970).

13 Laurel Boone, ed., *The Collected Letters of Charles G.D. Roberts* (Fredericton, 1989), pp. 17, 53.

14 Roberts had co-authored *The Canadian Guide-Book: The tourist’s and sportsman’s guide to eastern Canada and Newfoundland. . .* (New York, 1891). See D.M.R. Bentley, “Charles G.D. Roberts and William Wilfred Campbell as Canadian Tour Guides”, *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 32, 2 (Summer 1997), pp. 83-4. Bentley speculates that Roberts may also have supplied the copy for a W&AR “Land of Evangeline” advertisement printed in *The Canadian Guide Book*, p. 86.

15 Roberts, *The Land of Evangeline and the Gateways Thither*, pp. 8, 7. The emphasis is in the original text.

Deportation occurred largely because of the insistence of New England officials that if Nova Scotia was to remain safe it would require the removal of the Acadians.¹⁶

Lest he offend the sensibilities (and pocketbooks) of his most important audience, Roberts is quick to then endorse the honour and resolve of New Englanders and try to justify the act from their end. Nine years before the Deportation, he suggests, French troops with their Indian allies, alerted by Grand-Pré villagers, massacred a group of New Englanders there under Colonel Arthur Noble. The remaining few struggled in the snow and made “so resolute a stand that they were able to capitulate on honorable terms”.¹⁷ In a later chapter, Roberts turns his attention to the character of his British ancestors. He praises the United Empire Loyalists as “the Fathers of Canada”, who “gave of their best and bravest blood to fill the waiting fields of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Ontario” and who “stood for the unity of the race, upholding that high principle at the cost of health, wealth, home and often of life itself”. Again, the author attempts to counter the negative implication for Americans with a backhanded compliment, adding, “The men who bled so freely for union in the war between North and South should do especial honour to the Loyalists who furnished their shining example”.¹⁸ Roberts seems unable to resist defending the historical reputation and character of the British on the one hand while, on the other, fulfilling his obligation to persuade wealthy Americans to visit the Land of Evangeline. This plays out to a lesser extent in other texts published by the railway such as *Nova Scotia, the Land of Summer Rest* (1907). In this work the citizens of Yarmouth are “unwavering in their loyalty to Britain’s flag and institutions, but none of King Edward’s subjects appreciate more or understand better their Yankee cousins”.¹⁹

The other early treatment of the Acadian historical experience published by the DAR was *The Story of Acadia* (c.1900), written by James Hannay. Hannay was a New Brunswick lawyer, influential newspaper journalist and writer of popular history who likewise believed that the history of Canada was one of steady progress characterized by a continuation and solidification of British institutions.²⁰ Hannay was already respected as a historian partly due to his service for the New Brunswick Loyalist Society in the 1890s and also because of his writing on historical topics including *The History of Acadia*, published in 1879.²¹ Indeed, the DAR book is noted as an abridgement of *The History of*

16 The views expressed by Roberts were not uncommon in other travel and popular writing in the province. Ian McKay has noted similar tendencies in the works of Will R. Bird and Thomas Raddall in his “History and the Tourist Gaze”, p. 122. On Raddall, p. 122n85, McKay cites Barry Moody, “The Novelist as Historian: The Nova Scotia Identity in the Novels of Thomas H. Raddall”, in Alan Young ed., *Time and Place: The Life and Works of Thomas Head Raddall* (Fredericton, 1991), p. 140.

17 Roberts, *The Land of Evangeline and the Gateways Thither*, p. 9. There are different versions of this event in some of the other DAR brochures. *Acadian Trails in the Nova Scotian Summer Land* (Halifax, 1924), p. 18, explains that Colonel Noble and his men fell at the hands of the Acadians and Indians under the command of the French Coulon De Villiers. *The Land of Evangeline, Nova Scotia, Historical and Descriptive Guide* (n.p., 1947), p. 49, on the other hand, has the Acadians warning the New Englanders of the pending attack by the French from Quebec.

18 Roberts, *The Land of Evangeline and the Gateways Thither*, p. 83.

19 Dominion Atlantic Railway, *Nova Scotia, the Land of Summer Rest* (Kentville, 1907), pp. 10-11.

20 Gregory Theobald, “George Foster and James Hannay: Studies in the Imperial Idea in New Brunswick”, M.A. thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1971, pp. 153-8.

21 *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, IV, XXVII, (second series, 1898), cited in Theobald, “George Foster and James Hannay”, p. 148.

Railway Tourism in the Land of Evangeline 163

Acadia and, in the introduction, he acknowledges the assistance once given him by Thomas B. Akins as well as the influence and guidance provided by the work of Beamish Murdoch.²² Thus only the introduction to the DAR publication is original and works as an obvious enticement to the tourist, describing in nostalgic and romantic terms the landscape and the Acadian past. The Acadian people themselves are presented as “another race” who had replicated in their homeland the traditional conditions of France’s feudal system.²³ The subsequent chapters in *The Story of Acadia* are taken almost verbatim from Hannay’s book and offer an account that begins in the early-17th century. The “Expulsion” chapter begins with the author summarizing the viewpoint of one (unnamed) historian – that the Deportation was unjustifiable and something that should cause great shame. Hannay dismisses this opinion as one that could only have been arrived at by those too influenced by Longfellow’s tale and who do not fully understand the events: “Perhaps those who examine the whole matter impartially, in the light of all the facts will come to the conclusion that it would have been a real cause for shame had the Acadians been permitted longer to misuse the clemency of the government to plot against British power, and to obstruct settlement of the Province by loyal subjects”. He too describes the Acadians as bitter enemies of the English but, unlike Roberts, directly addresses the scholarly contention over the issue and in particular another claim, this time by “French writers”, that the Acadians were deported because the English had been coveting their prosperous farms. Hannay spends most of a page vehemently denying this, arguing that four to ten years had elapsed before the English-speaking settlers took up residence.²⁴

The leasing of the DAR by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in 1911 strengthened its position in Nova Scotia but did not diminish its use of the Evangeline story as a marketing tool.²⁵ The transaction was presumably of great interest to the province, not just because of the CPR’s high service standards and seemingly limitless resources but also because of its success in developing western Canada as a tourist region. John Murray Gibbon, appointed two years later as the railway’s general publicity agent in Canada, came to preside over promotional campaigns that in some cases used symbolic figures similar to Evangeline, such as Frontenac at the CPR Chateau in Quebec and the Mountie in the Rockies.²⁶ The DAR promotions with Evangeline and all her associations must have pleased him. In his history of the CPR, Gibbon notes that the acquisition of the smaller railway company “gave the Canadian Pacific in its right of way the willows and the well of Longfellow’s *Evangeline*”.²⁷ Although the head office was moved to Montreal after the takeover, the DAR name was retained as was its prominent company logo, which by then featured a likeness of the heroine.²⁸ Indeed, the marketing efforts

22 James Hannay, *The History of Acadia, From its First Discovery to its Surrender to England by the Treaty of Paris* (St. John, NB, 1879), p. vi.

23 Hannay, *The Story of Acadia*, Introduction page.

24 Hannay, *The Story of Acadia*, p. 119.

25 The lease was authorized in 1911 and officially approved in January, 1912. See Stoltz, *A Statutory History of Trains in Canada*, p. 124.

26 On the appointment and more on Gibbon, see E.J. Hart, *The Selling of Canada: The CPR and the Beginnings of Tourism* (Banff, AB, 1983), pp. 81-109.

27 John Murray Gibbon, *Steel of Empire: The Romantic History of the Canadian Pacific, the Northwest Passage of Today* (Toronto, 1935), p. 369.

28 The rendering of Evangeline in the logo was from an engraving of an 1856 painting by Thomas Faed. See “Thomas Faed”, www.groveart.com (accessed March 2006).

flourished under CPR ownership and, in 1913, the company even donated facilities in order to support the production of *Evangeline*, an early, feature-length film by the Canadian Bioscope Company of Halifax, which proved to be a hit both in Canada and the United States.²⁹ Following on this success, the DAR reprinted the Longfellow poem but its title, as in the film, was deprived of the title character's cultural identifier and entitled simply *Evangeline*, by Henry W. Longfellow.

The 1914 reprint includes an introduction by professor and poet Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton, an Episcopalian priest and descendant of a Puritan family that had located to Nova Scotia after the Acadian Deportation.³⁰ Elected as a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1913, Eaton had written works on religion and religious history including *The Church of England in Nova Scotia and the Tory Clergy of the Revolution* (1891) and, like Roberts and Hannay, was intrigued enough by Acadian culture to have written *Acadian Legends and Lyrics* (1889), *Acadian Ballads* (1905) and *The History of Kings County, Nova Scotia, Heart of the Acadian Land* (1910).³¹ He also shared the other authors' sympathies with the Loyalist tradition and had edited, in 1901, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist* by the late Elizabeth Lichtenstein Johnson. Unlike in most of the railway's publications, Eaton writes about the trials of the Acadians during and after the Deportation. He describes the difficult conditions under which they lived and the treatment they received in New England, offering as one example the prohibition in Boston against a group of Acadians visiting any compatriots in the immediate area, under threat of lashing and imprisonment. Like Roberts, however, Eaton also makes only brief mention of contemporary Acadians and the fact that they no longer occupy the same lands as they once did. He suggests that visitors go elsewhere in the province if they wish to see "Evangeline's people in the flesh", but not before he attempts to mediate such an encounter. He explains how Longfellow's poem should be understood, in part by saying that the poet's idyllic portrait of them was erroneous in that it had been copied from the writings of Abbé Raynal who "personally knew nothing of the people". Rather, the reader is urged to peruse Francis Parkman and take note of his claims that, like the Canadians, the Acadians "were a litigious race, and neighbours often quarreled about their boundaries" [with] "a bountiful share of jealousy, gossip and backbiting, to relieve the monotony of their lives". As with Hannay, he addresses the controversy around the history of the Deportation by promoting Parkman and dismissing claims by those "of French origin" who held that the English not only wanted the Acadians' land but persecuted them on the basis of their religion and nationality.³²

The railway's many tourist brochures generally avoided these more contentious

29 Peter Morris, *Embattled Shadows: A History of Canadian Cinema, 1895-1939* (Montreal & Kingston, 1978), pp. 49-50.

30 James B. Wasson, "Poet and Priest", *The Canadian Magazine*, 1907[?], pp. 3-8, CIHM 98496, SL.

31 Anon., "Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton, A.M., D.C.L." [n.p., 1915?], folder in the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, Digital Collections, Canadian Pamphlets and BroadSides Collection, <http://digital.library.utoronto.ca/broadsides/> (accessed December 2004). The full title of the last-named work is *The History of Kings County, Nova Scotia, Heart of the Acadian Land, Giving a Sketch of the French and Their Expulsion; And a History of the New England Planters Who Came in Their Stead, With Many Genealogies 1604-1910* (Salem, MA, 1910).

32 Dominion Atlantic Railway, *Evangeline*, by Henry W. Longfellow, with an Introduction by Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton (n.p., 1914), pp. 22, 34, 23, 24-5. Eaton quotes from Parkman's *Montcalm and Wolfe* (London, 1884), p. 259.

aspects of Acadian history in favour of its nostalgic and mystical features, particularly as they corresponded to Longfellow's tale.³³ Details of the Deportation were routinely skirted, with the fact of it often simply stated in a few sentences or qualified by suggesting that a reconciliation of sorts had been achieved. For example, *Old Acadia in Nova Scotia* (1939), after a brief mention of the Deportation, states: "But it is no purpose of this booklet to revive the bitterness of history. It has instead the happier aim of revealing how all schools of opinion have united in the noble task of establishing at Grand-Pré a shrine worthy of its surroundings, scenic and historic".³⁴ Creating authenticity was key to this marketing of nostalgia. Leisure travel in the late-19th and early-20th centuries was characterized by a search for people and places untainted by modernization, the "authentic", to counter the negative effects of industrialization and expanding cities. Dean MacCannell, for example, suggests that moderns seek to recreate the very "naturalness" and authenticity destroyed by modernization: "For moderns, reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods and other cultures, in purer, simpler lifestyles".³⁵ The W&AR/DAR capitalized and expanded on this anti-modernist sentiment.³⁶ In his introductory comments Hannay suggests that the Acadian "peasant" was "cut off by a mighty ocean from the home of his fathers, and living apart from the influences of the modern world, developed a type of life unique in its simplicity, piety, and dependence on the ecclesiastics".³⁷ Roberts too, while noting that part of the allure of the Land of Evangeline was also its climate and proximity to the United States, stresses its authenticity through anti-modernist sentiment. His brief mention of contemporary Acadians living in Clare notes that "they have kept to themselves, as it were, unspotted from the world. Change and the modern spirit have passed by these contented homesteads. Here is the old Acadian speech, the tongue of Evangeline, unmodified by time. Here are the old costumes, the old customs, the old superstitions".³⁸

The graphical elements in the DAR literature also convey this image of timelessness and otherworldliness. The "forest primeval" of the poem, its valleys and meadows, or a combination of one or the other with the ocean figure largely on the front covers and frontispieces. On the front cover of *Evangeline Land in Nova Scotia* (1946) (Image 1) is a photograph of the memorial church with the Evangeline statue and some branches of trees and other greenery in front of it.³⁹ Framing this is a graphic design of a corresponding background that connects to the real tree

33 With some exceptions, like Thomas F. Anderson's *Vacation Days in Nova Scotia* ([Kentville?], 1893), the authors of the DAR brochures are unacknowledged. Barbara Le Blanc notes that Francois F.J. Comeau, an Acadian and DAR employee, claimed to have written a certain number of them. See Barbara Le Blanc, *Postcards from Acadie*, p. 84.

34 Dominion Atlantic Railway, *Old Acadia in Nova Scotia* ([Kentville], 1939), p. 10.

35 Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (1976; reprint London, 1989), pp. 2-3 (see also pp. 95-105).

36 For more on the capitalization on antimodernist sentiment in Nova Scotia see Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk*.

37 Hannay, *The Story of Acadia*, Introduction page.

38 Roberts, *The Land of Evangeline and the Gateways Thither*, p. 30.

39 Dominion Atlantic Railway, *Old Acadia in Nova Scotia, History and Romance Cradled in Scenic Charm* [cover title: *Evangeline Land in Nova Scotia*] ([Kentville?], 1946).

Image 1



Source: Dominion Atlantic Railway, *Evangeline Land in Nova Scotia* ([Kentville?], 1946), LAC/nlc-3692 (last known copyright holder: Canadian Pacific Railway).

Railway Tourism in the Land of Evangeline 167

Image 2

CHEAP FARES
FIRST CLASS HOTEL ACCOMMODATION IN EVERY TOWN AT
REASONABLE RATES
SPLENDID STEAMSHIPS RUNNING IN CONNECTION TO
AND FROM BOSTON AND ST. JOHN, N.B.

MAP OF THE
WINDSOR & ANNAPOLIS RAILWAY
and its CONNECTIONS with the
RAILWAYS OF CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

Steamship Lines in connection
Stage Lines —————

WHILE DAILY CONNECTIONS ARE MADE PUTTING THE
PASSENGER IN TOUCH WITH EVERY RAILWAY
IN CANADA AND THE STATES

Source: Windsor & Annapolis Railway, *Illustrated Guide to "Land of Evangeline" Route* (n.p., 1893), Merrilees Transportation Collection, M-2377, LAC/nlc-3038.1 (last known copyright holder: Canadian National Railway).

Image 3



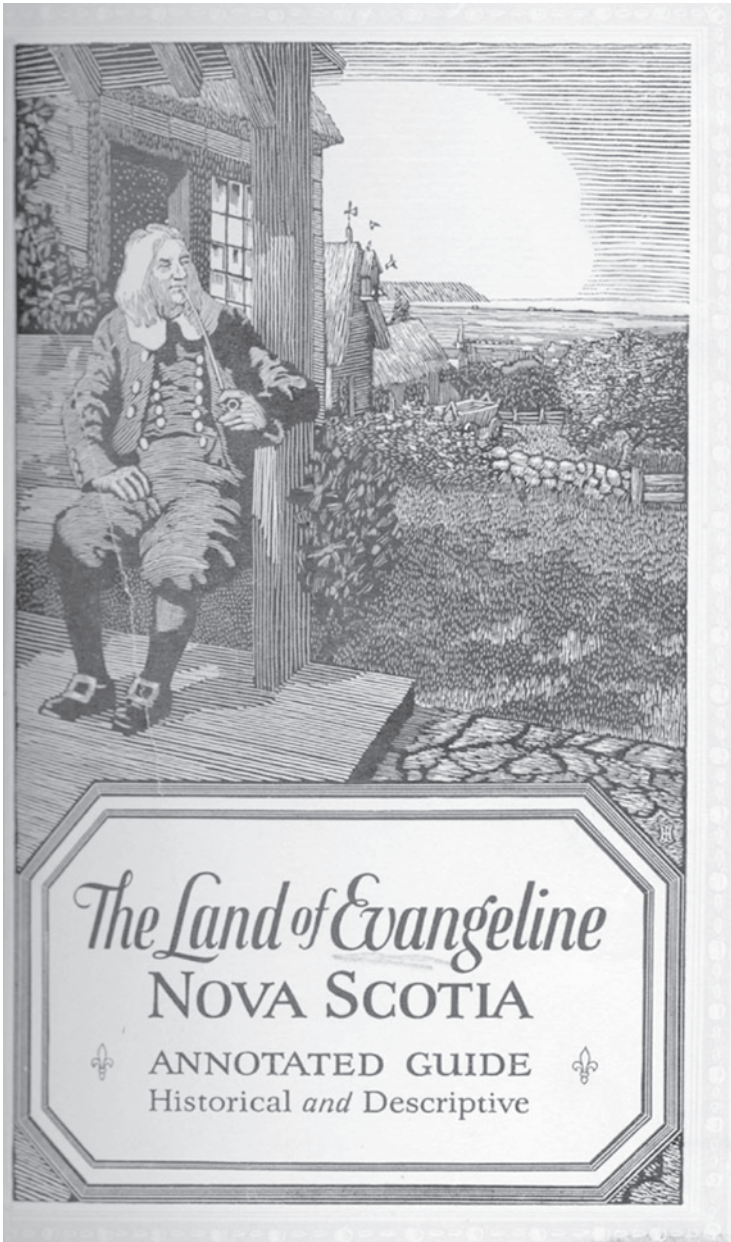
Source: Windsor & Annapolis Railway, *Illustrated Guide to "Land of Evangeline" Route* (n.p., 1893), Merrilees Transportation Collection, M-2377, LAC/nlc-3038 (last known copyright holder: Canadian National Railway).

Image 4



Source: Dominion Atlantic Railway, *Acadian Trails in the Nova Scotian Summer Land* (Halifax, 1924), LAC/nlc-3702 (last known copyright holder: Canadian Pacific Railway).

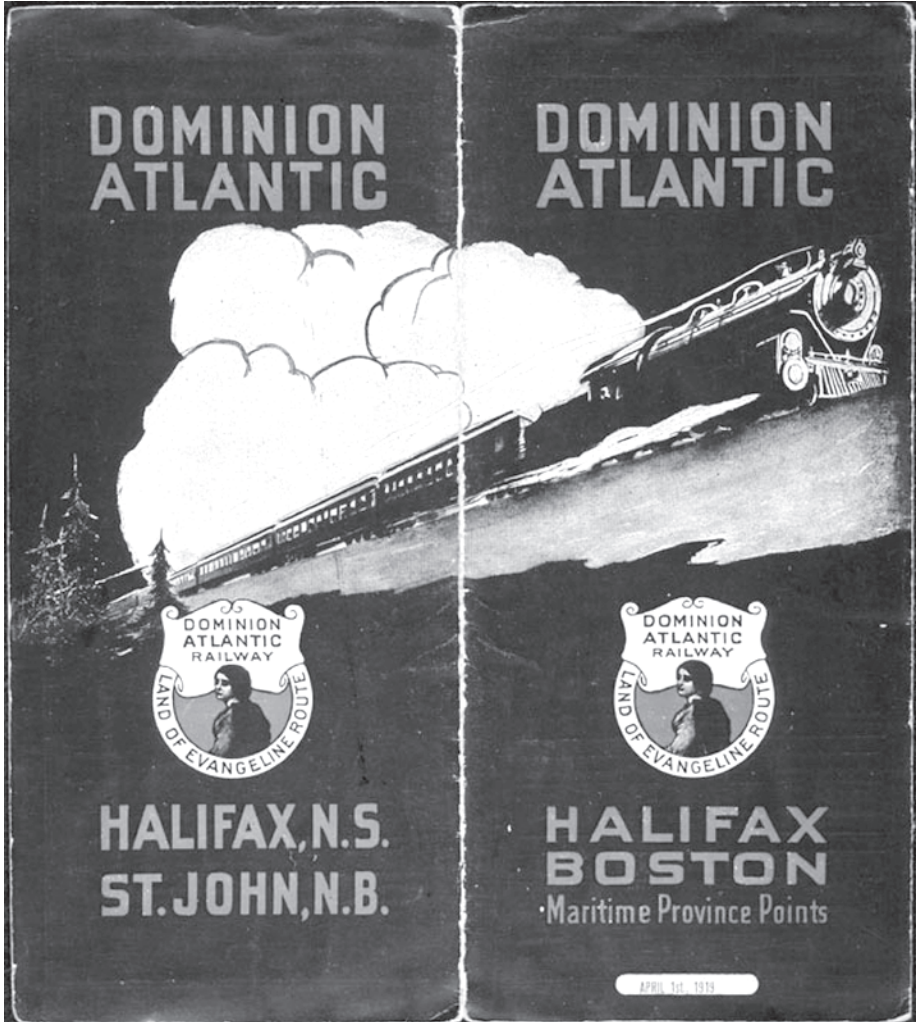
Image 5



Source: Dominion Atlantic Railway, *Land of Evangeline: Nova Scotia, Annotated Guide*, 2nd ed. ([Kentville?], 1935), LAC/nlc-2999 (last known copyright holder: Canadian Pacific Railway).

Railway Tourism in the Land of Evangeline 171

Image 6



Source: Dominion Atlantic Railway, *Dominion Atlantic, Halifax, Boston, Maritime Province Points* (Kentville, 1919), Merrilees Transportation Collection, M-2387, LAC/nlc-3040 (last known copyright holder: Canadian Pacific Railway).

branches and greenery in the photograph. Similarly, on the cover of *Old Acadia in Nova Scotia* a graphic depiction of Evangeline is superimposed on a photographic background of a valley with trees in full bloom.⁴⁰ These methods have the effect of making the real imagined and the imagined real, suggesting that at least some aspects of the mystical landscape remained unchanged since the days of the 18th-century Acadians. This notion extended beyond the tourist literature. Corresponding to Longfellow's setting of Acadians tending apple orchards in the "fruitful valley", an advertisement from 1893 notes that rows of apple trees had been specially planted all along both sides of the W&AR's train tracks.⁴¹

Such activities suggest an appropriation of not only the Evangeline story but also the land associated with it. One reason that Longfellow's heroine was ideal for the DAR's promotional efforts was because of the intimate and somewhat mythological connection the poet had already established between her and her compatriots and their natural surroundings. She was the embodiment of a landscape that was invoked from the first lines of the poem as ancient, mysterious and alive with natural phenomena:

This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,
Bearded with moss, and in garments green, indistinct in the twilight,
Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic,
Stand like harpers hoar, with beards that rest on their bosoms,
Loud from its rocky caverns, the deep-voiced neighbouring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest.⁴²

The railway capitalized on this by not only coining its route "Land of Evangeline" but by displaying its conception of her in a logo directly on the trains traversing the countryside, distributing the message to a large audience that the setting for the poem and the land owned by the railway were one and the same. This connection was also suggested in the text. Roberts's guide, one of the first published after the DAR was incorporated, announces "From whatever side the traveler would approach the Heart of Acadie, it must be by the great highway of Nova Scotia travel, the Dominion Atlantic Railway, which occupies every avenue".⁴³ Another guide claims "The Land of Evangeline . . . the unspoiled playground of Eastern Canada, is reached only by the Dominion Atlantic Railway".⁴⁴ The DAR texts periodically refer to the region as having to be reached by gates or gateways, serving perhaps to separate the modern world from the Arcadian Land of Evangeline, but also implying inaccessibility to those not traveling by the DAR.⁴⁵ Elsewhere in the country the CPR excelled at using

40 Dominion Atlantic Railway, *Old Acadia in Nova Scotia*.

41 Yarmouth Steamship Company, *Nova Scotia, Evangeline and the Tourist's Paradise Reached in 15-17 hours*, p. 40.

42 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie, with an introduction by C. Bruce Fergusson* (1951; reprint Halifax, 1991), p. 31.

43 Roberts, *The Land of Evangeline and the Gateways Thither*, p. 3.

44 Dominion Atlantic Railway, *Old Acadia in Nova Scotia*, inside cover.

45 For example, see Dominion Atlantic Railway, *Nova Scotia, The Land of Summer Rest*, p. 10 and Roberts, *The Land of Evangeline and Gateways Thither*, p. 4.

Railway Tourism in the Land of Evangeline 173

its connection to the landscape in this way, for example, with its popular slogan “Canadian Pacific Rockies”.⁴⁶ That the CPR at the time indeed provided one of the only ways to access the mountains enabled it to create symbolic images around them, exaggerating its association with that particular landscape and even suggesting possession of it. The maps included in most of the W&AR/DAR publications were also important for this purpose. Enlarged, boldly coloured lines such as in an 1893 W&AR map (they are red in the original) (Image 2) were used to graphically represent the railway’s geographical route but also served to indicate boundaries of the region and an inaccessibility to it except via the railway.

Another aspect of constructed authenticity is in the suggestion that Evangeline and the villagers of the poem had really existed. Visually, this was conveyed by an artist’s conception of the fictional heroine in the logo displayed on the trains as well as other renderings of her in the brochures. The images follow Longfellow’s description of her as young, beautiful and dark-haired, and she is dressed simply and modestly with a hood or other head covering. Usually placed on the cover or frontispiece, she is always alone and in a natural setting: by the seashore or in a meadow, as in the image from 1893 (Image 3), or in a garden or wood, sometimes with fruit trees, as in the image from 1924 (Image 4).⁴⁷ These virginal surroundings, with few cultural indicators, serve to symbolize Evangeline’s own purity and attachment to the landscape, the portrayal part of a long practice of using women to depict nature or the natural.⁴⁸ In Image 3, the nature theme, with flowering tree branches, is continued onto the back even though that side is used to feature the map (Image 2). In some representations of Evangeline a small church appears in the background, either graphically, as in Image 4, or in a photograph of the heroine’s statue in front of the actual memorial church at Grand-Pré (both erected in the early 1920s), as in Image 1. This pairing helps support the site as a place of sanctity and mysticism but also reinforces the then-dominant idea of a woman’s role in society. Evangeline is the epitome of womanly sacrifice and fidelity, spending her life in search of her betrothed and not finding him, eventually taking vows as a nun instead of wedding another. According to Longfellow, this theme of female virtue was the most important of the poem.⁴⁹ It is also one that upholds the notion of the un-emancipated female, locked in a time where women had a more prescribed, “natural” way to act while passively accepting their lot as faithful servants to God and man.⁵⁰

Though these aspects of Evangeline are consistent with the poem, others are not. Her clothes always appear to be neat and clean and there is no indication of the

46 Some of these CPR posters are reproduced in E.J. Hart, *The Selling of Canada*, pp. 80, 83, 104, 105.

47 For example, see Dominion Atlantic Railway, *The Land of Evangeline* (Philadelphia, 1897); Windsor & Annapolis Railway, *Illustrated Guide to “Land of Evangeline” Route* (n.p., 1893); Roberts, *The Land of Evangeline and the Gateways Thither* (frontispiece); Dominion Atlantic Railway, *Acadian Trails in the Nova Scotian Summer Land* and Dominion Atlantic Railway, *Old Acadia in Nova Scotia*.

48 For more on this link between the representation of women and the natural world see, for example, Londa Schiebinger, *Nature’s Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (Boston, 1993) and Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco, 1980).

49 Taylor, “The Poetry and Prose of History”, p. 50.

50 Ian McKay also discusses Evangeline as an icon of “regional Innocence” and as an object of the male gaze. See *The Quest of the Folk*, pp. 261-2.

hardship she was to have suffered during the Deportation. She seems to have been removed from this nasty event that the poem itself recounted in great detail: the abruptness of the Deportation announcement, the Acadian families torn apart and forced onto the boats, and the death of Evangeline's father on the beach. Nowhere in the brochures is there more than passing reference to the event that is central to the poem and viewed, arguably, as the most defining feature of the actual Acadian experience. While the railway literature retains the qualities of purity and loyalty attributed to Evangeline by Longfellow, it also excludes much of the context in which he had placed her.

Images of characters other than Evangeline are rare in the railway promotions, although on the front cover of an *Annotated Guide* (1935) (Image 5) there is an old man wearing 18th-century clothing, seemingly meant to be Evangeline's 70-year-old father.⁵¹ He is sitting on a front porch, peacefully smoking a pipe and regarding his pastoral surroundings with the thatched roofs of other Acadian homes in the background; there is no hint of the impending tragedy nor of the existence of any other more formidable characters of the poem like the strong-willed Father Felician, the young Gabriel or his defiant father, Basil, the Blacksmith, whom the poet introduced as a "mighty man in the village" and who challenged the British soldiers when they came to announce the Deportation. The only two individuals presented in the brochures are decidedly non-threatening – a young woman and an old man. Also absent are indications of the Acadians' language and religion, two of their most distinguishing cultural features. That French was their primary tongue is essentially ignored in the publications and, although a hint of Catholicism appears mostly in later photographs of the memorial church, it is clouded by its unusual construction (apparently based upon an architectural style from Normandy) and juxtaposition with the romanticized statue of Evangeline. Only one of the publications consulted shows Evangeline wearing a cross, and this image does not appear on the cover; it is a black and white reproduction of a painting and so probably not made expressly for the brochure.⁵² None show her dressed as a nun.

If these visual depictions imply that Evangeline and the others were once living, breathing people, the texts are more blatant. A W&AR brochure notes that through the train windows, one can see the "locations of the well beside which Basil, father of Gabriel, erected his forge; of the old parish church, the bell of which summoned the ill-fated inhabitants to their doom and, later, of the narrow land in which Colonel Noble and his gallant band of seventy followers were surprised in the early hours of morning during a blinding snowstorm and massacred".⁵³ Advertisement copy for the W&AR in a Yarmouth Steamship Company brochure similarly identifies the "Site of the Church, and Basil's Blacksmith shop" and that here "Evangeline saw her people building the twenty-three miles of Dyke, to keep at bay the turbulent tides". The "embarkation" area is also pointed out "from which the Acadian exiles saw with

51 Dominion Atlantic Railway, *The Land of Evangeline, Nova Scotia, Annotated Guide, Historical and Descriptive*, 2nd ed. (Kentville, 1935).

52 Dominion Atlantic Railway, *The Land of Evangeline, Nova Scotia, Annotated Guide*, frontispiece.

53 Windsor & Annapolis Railway, *The Land of Evangeline: The Tourist's Paradise . . . The Sportsman's Arcadia . . . The Wonderland of Artists . . . The Best Climate on the Footstool* (n.p., 1893), p. 27.

streaming eyes the last of their old homes”.⁵⁴ Both descriptions meld the experiences of Longfellow’s characters with actual documented events, making the fictional seem historical. Roberts does the same in his DAR guide. He explains that some blacksmith’s tools were found in Grand-Pré near a well anointed “Evangeline’s well”, and he finds this sufficient evidence to justify that it must have been the site of the village smithy, leaving readers to make the connection with Gabriel’s father. He also draws attention to the well itself, stating that visitors could drink from it “with reasonable confidence that the lips of Evangeline’s people, if not of the heroine herself, had drunk there before him”. In order to clarify just what is authentic and what is not, he then cautions tourists against grabbing handfuls of pebbles, as he has seen them do, from alongside the train track in the mistaken belief that they are mementoes of Evangeline. Alas, he says, they are simply ballast brought from a gravel heap located miles away.⁵⁵ Roberts codes the blacksmith’s tools and well as markers of authenticity, enhancing their status as such by juxtaposing them with the worthless pebbles and using them to render more genuine the experience of visiting the Land of Evangeline.⁵⁶ His coding is authoritative largely due to his status as author of the DAR guide and other popular works on Acadia, and because of his position as a professor at King’s College in Windsor, Nova Scotia.

Manufactured authenticity in tourism also relies on the “Other”, a factor important to the creation of touristic myths pertaining to those who live or who are perceived to be living a pre-modern existence and who lend credibility to a particular tourist destination.⁵⁷ The W&AR/DAR presentation of Acadians corresponds to this concept, but only by being blended with the characters and events of Longfellow’s poem. They are therefore considered only in the past tense – contemporary Acadians are rarely mentioned. Roberts, for example, does not pay the “returned Acadians” much attention except to briefly observe the old-fashioned ways of the Clare residents; he emphasizes, instead, that the memory of the “old” Acadians has survived in the “amber of song and story”, in the willow trees that they planted, and in the “wide, rich meadows which their hands snatched from the sea” by the building of dykes.⁵⁸ What he chooses as noteworthy are selected markers of Acadians that highlight only the quaint and less troublesome aspects of their history or that underscore their connection to the landscape. In that era there were indeed few Acadians in the Land of Evangeline, their numbers greater elsewhere in Nova Scotia and more so in New Brunswick.⁵⁹ But consistently presenting them as only a people of the past and ignoring the living Acadian community may have served to

54 Yarmouth Steamship Company, *Nova Scotia, Evangeline and the Tourist’s Paradise*. Bentley notes that the text for this also appeared in an advertisement in Charles G.D. Roberts’s *The Canadian Guide Book*. See Bentley, “Charles G.D. Roberts and William Wilfred Campbell as Canadian Tour Guides”, p. 86.

55 Roberts, *The Land of Evangeline and the Gateways Thither*, p. 7.

56 See MacCannell on markers in tourism in his *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, especially pp. 41-5 and 110-34. See also Jonathan Culler, especially on markers and authenticity, in his “The Semiotics of Tourism”, *The American Journal of Semiotics*, 1, 1-2 (1981), pp. 127-40.

57 Tom Selwyn, “Introduction”, in Tom Selwyn, ed., *The Tourist Image: Myths and Myth Making in Tourism* (Chichester, NY, 1996), pp. 1-32, especially pp. 21-5.

58 Roberts, *The Land of Evangeline and the Gateways Thither*, p. 9.

59 The 1871 Census lists 44,907 Acadians living in New Brunswick, 32,833 in Nova Scotia and 10,012 in Prince Edward Island. Cited in Griffiths, “Longfellow’s Evangeline”, p. 37n43.

prevent recognition of their achievements as well as of their social and political concerns, which, at the end of the 19th century, were becoming increasingly visible.⁶⁰ Reaffirming their marginality in this way also served to validate the legitimacy and centrality of British heritage in the province. It is in this centre where ideas of authenticity, so often bound up with the Other on the periphery of society, are usually constructed.⁶¹

The railway brochures praise the comfort of its passenger cars and the excellence of its services within, but visual depictions of trains are few until the 1950s. An exception is a highly stylized brochure, published in 1919, featuring on the cover a sleek, fast-moving train and advertising the connections between Boston and Halifax and other “Maritime Province Points” (Image 6).⁶² On the surface, it represents technology, progress and reality instead of the usual nature, timelessness and mysticism; the large Evangeline logo placed below the train, however, still embodies the latter ideas. The landscape connection is also pictured in the form of trees in the foreground and, behind the rapidly moving train, a puff of dreamlike cloud. In these ways, while the presentation is more consistent with the actual function of the train as a mode of transportation, it retains some symbolic connotations of nature and pre-modernism. These dichotomies of timelessness/progress and dream/reality are similar to the speed/immobility paradox that Roland Barthes applies to all modes of transportation, in that the “illusion of immobility” is being sold at the same time as travel.⁶³ The brochures insist upon the ability of the railway to see to the tourist’s every comfort and suggest what stops may be explored. But they sometimes advise against disembarking at all as all needs can be met on board and indeed, most observations, like Roberts’s suggestion concerning the “scene of the Great Banishment”, can be made solely through the car windows. A similar text from a Yarmouth Steamship Company publication notes that the train stops at the Grand-Pré station but “only for a moment, in order that the passengers may photograph upon the tablets of their memory the characteristics of this most ‘sadly poetical’ place”.⁶⁴ The prevailing idea is that the forest, valleys and dykes of the poem should all be experienced, but there is no need to get one’s shoes dirty. The few scenes of the train interiors support this advice in that they highlight large windows, space and comfort and, being the most obvious indicator of the railway’s preferred clientele, the passengers exude an air of wealth and gentility.⁶⁵ The image projected is

60 On the increasing political, educational and social activity of the Acadians, see Griffiths, “Longfellow’s Evangeline”, p. 38 and also Jacques Paul Couturier, “‘L’Acadie, c’est un détail’: Les représentations de l’Acadie dans le récit national canadien,” *Acadiensis*, XXIX, 2 (Spring 2000), pp. 107, 116. Somewhat similarly, Ian McKay suggests that early-20th-century Nova Scotian cultural producers prized the supposed simple and quaint ways of fisher families while relatively ignoring the reality of their living conditions. See *The Quest of the Folk*, pp. 226-42.

61 Tom Selwyn, “Introduction”, *The Tourist Image*, pp. 9-14, 29.

62 Two other brochures showing trains are Dominion Atlantic Railway, *Dominion Atlantic Railway and Connections between Boston-Halifax, New York-Halifax, And All Points in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland* (Kentville, 1934) and Dominion Atlantic Railway, *High Lights of Nova Scotia History* ([Kentville?], 1936).

63 Roland Barthes, *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies* (New York, 1979), p. 144.

64 Yarmouth Steamship Company, *Nova Scotia, Evangeline and the Tourist’s Paradise*, p. 44.

65 For example, see the frontispiece of Windsor & Annapolis Railway, *The Land of Evangeline: The Tourist’s Paradise*; Yarmouth Steamship Company, *Beautiful Nova Scotia: The Brief Story of a Summer Outing in the Queen of Vacation Lands* (Boston, 1895), p. 30 and the CPR promotional image “Picture Window by Canadian Pacific”, reproduced in Le Blanc, *Postcards from Acadie*, p. 93.

Railway Tourism in the Land of Evangeline 177

of a room in one's own house, where the seats are cushioned, the lighting is good and there are not too many people about; a scene one might get without ever leaving home.

It is difficult now to assess the reception of the railway's promotional activities but there is some indication that not everyone was captivated. Eliza Chase was one who, although charmed enough by the poem to have made the journey there from Boston in the 1880s, retained some skepticism about the amount of fact contained in the poetic descriptions as well as in the claims of tourism promoters. She relates in her travel memoir, *Over the Border: Acadia, the home of "Evangeline"*, that although her trip was satisfying, some scenic views as described by Longfellow did not quite measure up.⁶⁶ She also describes how members of her group made fun of their W&AR conductor when he presented them with rather gruesome souvenirs upon their arrival at Grand-Pré – pieces of wood that he stated were taken from a recently disinterred coffin and that had contained a woman's bone.⁶⁷ The advertising overkill feeding this kind of practice was noted as early as 1893 by the Yarmouth Steamship Company, itself a promoter of the tale. In a brochure published that year it states that perhaps Evangeline "has been done to death" and that there are many other wonderful parts of the province to visit.⁶⁸ An editorial in the 17 May 1895 issue of the *Digby Weekly Courier* criticizes the travel brochures and guidebooks for other reasons. In it the author complains about this "style of literature", stating "we Nova Scotians do not all live in woods, we are not a race shut in mid beauteous nature's scenes who know no outside world and we resent such misrepresentation".⁶⁹ Roberts addresses the problem too, indicating in the Introduction to *The Land of Evangeline and the Gateways Thither* that with all of the hype caused primarily by Longfellow's pen, some might be disappointed and find "Nova Scotia unseen" more charming than "Nova Scotia seen". He assures, however, that this should not be the case because even though some elements may not be "just as one had dreamed them [they are] not less fair, and not less fitting scenes for all the romance which Time and Fate and the Poet have placed in their keeping". On a more practical note, he promises that in Wolfville, the town near Grand-Pré where many visitors would presumably find lodging, tourists "are not regarded as victims to be fleeced".⁷⁰

In reality, until the end of the 1910s there was little in the area able to live up to Longfellow's imagination. There were aspects of the landscape like the willow and apple trees. There was "Evangeline's" well and various sites marked as, for example, "Basil's blacksmith shop", the original church where the deportees of 1755 had been assembled or the location where Colonel Noble and some of his men had been killed. John Frederic Herbin, an Acadian who had purchased the property on which the original church was understood to have been, had erected a memorial cross on the spot thought to be the location of the cemetery.⁷¹ And over the years more dubious artifacts had made appearances like the pieces of coffin distributed by Chase's conductor. But

66 Eliza Chase, *Over the Border: Acadia, The Home of Evangeline* (Boston, 1884), p. 135.

67 Chase, *Over the Border: Acadia, The Home of Evangeline*, p. 136.

68 Yarmouth Steamship Company, *Nova Scotia, Evangeline and the Tourist's Paradise*, p. 40.

69 *The Digby Weekly Courier*, 17 May 1895, p. 2, cited in Susan Phinney, "The Land of Evangeline", p. 33n45.

70 Roberts, *The Land of Evangeline and the Gateways Thither*, pp. 1, 2, 5.

71 In the early 1980s Parks Canada staff indeed found evidence of a cemetery at the location where Herbin had erected his cross. See Anita Campbell, *Archaeological Investigations at Grand Pré National Historic Park*, Parks Canada Research Bulletin #204 ([Ottawa], 1983), p. 1.

what had been largely marketed to tourists was just an assortment of images and ideas. A provincial legislative act was passed in 1908 to protect the property, but nothing was done until 1917 when Herbin, self-described as the sole descendant in the area of the deported Acadians, sold it to the DAR.⁷²

The aim of the purchase was to establish a commemorative park at the site to better satisfy and exploit tourist interest. The DAR began by landscaping part of the premises (a process thought later to have flattened existing grave mounds) and by building a gatehouse at the entrance.⁷³ In 1920 it placed a statue of Evangeline nearby looking much as she did in the DAR's tourism literature. The unveiling of the monument was cause for much ado, with Lady Burnham doing the honours in the presence of delegates of the Imperial Press Conference.⁷⁴ Expressing relief that the old hatred with France was over, and referring to the "Acadian story" as a painful one in British history, Burnham nevertheless used the opportunity to affirm imperialist sentiments regarding the Deportation, declaring that "British policy was not as black as it was painted" and describing Evangeline as "the type of devoted Ministrant that has contributed its full share to the strength and sweetness of the British Empire".⁷⁵ No Acadians responded since none had been invited.⁷⁶ Reporting on the event, an article in the Halifax newspaper *The Evening Echo* states that it was "a stroke of genius" that an English woman was chosen to express contrition in this way for the Deportation, an occurrence "so relatively minor in its inception growing with time and the imaginative power of man into a picturesque epic of world interest".⁷⁷ In 1922, through funds raised by members of the Acadian community and fulfilling a condition set out by Herbin at the time of the DAR purchase, construction began of the memorial church.⁷⁸ In the ensuing years the DAR added to its existing inn at Kentville an expanded resort and golf course in Digby and another inn near Yarmouth, all within easy rail access to Grand-Pré.⁷⁹

72 The date of the purchase is in Woodworth, *History of the Dominion Atlantic Railway*, p. 141. The description of Herbin is in the subtitle of his work, *History of Grand-Pré, the home of Longfellow's Evangeline by the only descendant of the exiled people who lived in the Grand-Pré of the Acadians* (Saint John, 1913), a title clarified in a later edition – [...] *by the only descendant of the exiled people now living in the Grand-Pré of the Acadians* (Kentville, 1969).

73 The Grand-Pré park superintendent in 1972 indicated that grave mounds from Herbin's time "which still did exist" were leveled by the DAR during the landscaping. See Frank Korvemaker, *Report on the 1972 excavation of two Acadian Houses at the Grand Pre National Historic Site, Nova Scotia* ([Ottawa], 1972), p. 34. That various landscaping activities in the 20th century helped destroy evidence of the Acadian occupation and other pre-20th-century contexts is supported by Campbell, *Archaeological Investigations at Grand Pré National Historic Park*, pp. 3, 6.

74 Le Blanc, *Postcards from Acadie*, p. 120.

75 Dominion Atlantic Railway, *Acadian Trails in the Nova Scotian Summer Land*, p. 12.

76 Le Blanc, *Postcards from Acadie*, pp. 120-1. Le Blanc notes that articles in *L'Évangéline* newspaper demanded an explanation and while a DAR representative responded that it had been the company's intention to invite members of the Acadian community, he was unable to provide an adequate reason as to why this had not been done.

77 Article in *The Evening Echo* of 30 July 1920, p. 9, reprinted in Ernest Martin, *L'Évangéline de Longfellow et la Suite Merveilleuse d'un Poème* (Paris, 1936), p. 232, and cited in Jacques Chevalier, *Semiotics, Romanticism and the Scriptures* (Berlin, 1990), p. 25.

78 Le Blanc, *Postcards from Acadie*, pp. 117-22. For Herbin's conditions see Martin, *L'Évangéline de Longfellow et la Suite Merveilleuse d'un Poème*, p. 229.

79 Woodworth, *The History of the Dominion Atlantic Railway*, pp. 142-9.

Railway Tourism in the Land of Evangeline 179

The commercial benefits of tourism were obviously responsible for the DAR's activities in and around Grand-Pré, and when the site was no longer financially viable it was sold. In the DAR company history, Marguerite Woodworth writes that the railway carefully guarded the "sentiment" around the park and, despite those whom she considered to be working to the contrary, the DAR had managed to retain the site's charm and "freedom from the taint of commercialism".⁸⁰ Similarly, in *The Land of Evangeline and the Gateways Thither*, Roberts describes the DAR as "the least commonplace of railroads, the one most concerned with matters beyond mere freights and fares", and that "to the tourist it seems to have its *raison d'être* in a poem".⁸¹ But its *raison d'être*, like any other business with shareholders, was profit. By the 1930s the automobile had begun to undermine train travel and gradually changed the nature of tourism in Nova Scotia and Canada in general. By the 1950s the DAR's publishing efforts had diminished, and the logo with Evangeline was phased out during the next decade.⁸² The site became the property of the federal government in 1956.⁸³ The year before, to mark the 200th anniversary of the Acadian Deportation from the area, the province of Nova Scotia donated to the site a bust of Longfellow and, in 1968, the site inherited a 19th-century blacksmith's shop from a nearby village.⁸⁴ More recently, the Grand-Pré Rural Historic District was established by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and, on the 150th anniversary of the publication of the poem, the federal government provided funds through its "Citizenship and Canadian Identity Program" for commemorative purposes. A new visitor's centre opened in 2003. While W&AR/DAR materials are now found mostly in library, archival and museum collections across Canada, its Evangeline logo is still in use, evoking the nostalgia of the railway perhaps more than Longfellow's tale of Acadian lovers.⁸⁵

The W&AR/DAR was well positioned to promote particular ideas about the Acadian experience through its publishing and advertising as well as through its activities at the park at Grand-Pré. It engaged historians to write about the Acadian past, which they did in terms praiseworthy of the British legacy of the province while at the same time appropriating and interpreting selected parts of Longfellow's legendary poem that worked to the company's benefit in attracting tourists. The company's attempt to create an authentic atmosphere for visitors focused on emulating the unspoiled and pre-modern aspects of Longfellow's characters and settings as well as by confusing these characters and settings with real people and events. An optimistic perspective on these actions is that they may have helped, like the poem itself, to distribute some idea of Acadians and their experience to a larger

80 Woodworth, *The History of the Dominion Atlantic Railway*, p. 142.

81 Roberts, *The Land of Evangeline and the Gateways Thither*, p. 3.

82 Anon., "99 Years of the Dominion Atlantic Railway", *Maritime Express*, no. 3 (December 1968), p. 9. The phasing out of the logo in the 1960s seems to be substantiated by the photographic record.

83 Le Blanc, *Postcards from Acadie*, p. 141.

84 Parks Canada Grand-Pré website, http://parks.canada.gc.ca/parks/nova_scotia/grand_pre/grand_pre_e.htm (accessed December 2002).

85 After the DAR's demise in 1994 the logo was used from 1997 to 2003 on the "Evangeline Express", a seasonal weekly passenger train operated by the Windsor and Hantsport Railway in Nova Scotia. It is currently used by the Nova Scotia Railway Heritage Society.

180 Acadiensis

community. However, the legitimacy and significance of the Acadians' history and culture, as well as their past grievances and contemporary concerns, were consistently misinterpreted or devalued by the railway's efforts while other aspects, mostly in association with the poem's fictional characters, were exploited for tourist dollars. In the end, the railway passenger service and the park at Grand-Pré were treated like any commercial service or product that falls out of popular favour. Examining the works used to promote them in light of some of the factors behind their production reveals how dominant interests worked to shape understandings and attitudes about the Acadian past and present.

Monica MacDonald