The Acadians suffered grievously during their days of capture and imprisonment by the English, and even more on their voyages to exile. In the Beaubassin region, some 400 men assembled to hear the governor's proclamation of exile, and they were immediately placed under armed guard. Military detachments were dispatched to round up all other Acadians in the area.

When ships arrived to take them into exile, the English authorities ordered the men onto the ships first. Some 400 men were taken, and then about 150 of the wives and children. No attempt was made to keep families together, and for the most part, husbands were separated from their wives and children from their parents.

At Grand Pré, some 418 men reported to hear the proclamation, and the same number of women and children. Those who escaped the soldiers had to make a long journey to Canada and with little more than their hands to sustain them.

On Oct. 27, 1755, 14 ships carrying 1,600 Acadians from Grand Pré and 1,300 from Piquiuit and Port Royal joined 10 transports in the Bay of Fundy with 1,900 Acadians from Beaubassin. This was the first wave of imprisonment and transportation that continued throughout 1763, until the Treaty of Paris ended the French and Indian War.

Food and water were inadequate aboard ship. In many instances, the Acadians crowded into small ships so tightly packed that they could not lie down. The mortality rate was especially high among the old and the young, and this, coupled with a lack of knowledge of other members of their families, made the voyage a nightmare for most.

Husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, parents and children, fiances and friends were separated, as they thought for only a few days or weeks, but for the vast majority, they were never to meet again on earth. Unknown to them the Atlantic seaboard, only he neglected to inform the authorities of these colonies that the Acadians were coming. They were dumped ashore with no friends, no money, no food, and only the clothing they had on their backs. For South Carolina, were hit by a storm and forced into Boston for repairs. The Boston authorities reported the Acadians landed sick and polluted water. They were not seaworthy, it was reported, and the exiles thus were disembarked in Boston.

"They were made indentured slaves"

They were made indentured slaves. Those who still had their children had them torn away and distributed in Protestant homes in various Massachusetts villages. The Acadians were crowded into small ships so tightly packed that they could not lie down. About 450 were sent to Pennsylvania, where the governor said he did not know what to do with them and demanded that Lawrence take them back. Smallpox broke out in the ships, and many died.

Nearly 1,000 Acadians were sent to Maryland, and there alone they received a welcome, since the Maryland Church had been made by English Catholics, to the Acadians were not considered to be aliens. They were allowed to settle in private homes at first and then helped to find and build houses for themselves.

A suburb of Baltimore became known as "Acadian Village," too, refused to receive the exiles, kept them from coming ashore, and here, too, epidemics broke out and many hundreds died. Finally, the survivors were taken to England, where they were treated as prisoners of war.

About 1,000 Acadians were landed in South Carolina, where they were indentured to work in the cotton and indigo fields. By dint of much suffering they gained their freedom and gained permission to leave the colony. Their ships, being unserviceable, ran aground off Virginia.

The Acadians confiscated all of their belongings and forced to them to sea again, where they ran aground on the Maryland coast. Finally, they were able to make their way to St. Mary's and to sea again, finally arriving in Canada after 1763. Of the 2,000 of this group who departed from Nova Scotia, only 900 were alive by the time they reached Canada.

Georgia received 400 exiles, where they were put to work to slave in the fields. In 1768, they received permission to leave, and bought a ship to take them back to Canada, where fewer than 100 finally arrived.

Some 60 percent of the exiles died before they were repatriated, and there were many in every English colony who died because of their suffering, infirmity, illness or other reasons. Particularly melancholy was the fate of hundreds of orphaned children who had been separated from their parents in Nova Scotia, whose parents died later. There was no place for them to go. Most of them died, and those who survived grew up as Englishwomen. Their descendants today usually do not know the history of their ancestors, nor that they were Acadians.

In Nova Scotia, too, the fugitives who escaped the ships were hunted down by the English and the Indians. The English paid the bounty of 30 pounds sterling for each male slave over 16, and 25 for younger males or women and children. Although this was ostensibly limited to Indians, some Englishmen naturally made every effort to escape their cruel fate. The British colonists, hostile to everything French, made no effort to help the Acadians. The only exception was Maryland, where the Acadians were made welcome, and many of them settled.

For others, however, their only hope lay in escaping to French territory. They had a choice of four routes. They could take a church party to return to Canada, which after the peace treaty of 1763 was in British hands. They could sail to French colonies in the West Indies, such as St. Domingue, Martinique and Guadeloupe. They could go to France. They could go to Louisiana.

All four routes received their share of the Acadian exiles, but the largest majority finally came to Louisiana. Those who had been born in the northern colonies, such as St. Martin, St. Louis, and Martineau and Guadeloupe. They could go to France. They could go to Louisiana.

All four routes received their share of the Acadian exiles, but the largest majority finally came to Louisiana. Those who had been born in the northern colonies, such as St. Martin, St. Louis, and the islands of Dauphin and St. Pierre, were made welcome by the Acadian exiles.

Through the Shippe of the Acadian Exiles.

In 1764, a large group of these newly released Acadians, led by Joseph Broussard (dit Beausoleil), migrated to the West Indies. They had not been there long, however, before they were driven off that fever-ridden island. They decided to come to Louisiana, and when they arrived, Louisiana authorities gave them land in the Attakapas and the Poste des Attakapas, in the southwestern part of the colony.

From these original settlers and others who followed them, descended the present-day inhabitants of St. Martin, Lafayete, Iberia, Vermilion and St. Mary parishes.

We have no record of the dates of the arrival of the Acadians in the Attakapas country, but their chief leader, Broussard dit Beausoleil, signed a contract with a retired French army captain, Antoine Bernard d'Hauterive, who agreed to supply the Acadians with the beginnings of a means of livelihood elsewhere. In addition to Beausoleil, the contract, signed on April 4, 1765, contained the names of Alexandre Boureau, Jean-Baptiste Broussard, Victor Broussard, Jean Dugas, Joseph Guillebeau and Olivier Thibaudau.

Despite the fact that the same year, probably from the plague that seems to have accompanied the Acadians from St. Domingue, they were able to establish themselves.

Among other Acadians whose deaths were recorded in the official registers in the St. Martin Parish courthouse, are Andre Broussard, Francois Bellefontaine; Augustin Bergeron; Sylvain Breaux; Alexandre Broussard and his wife, Marguerite Thibodeaux; Victor (Continued on page 11)
Broussard and his wife, Isabelle LeBlanc; Jean Dugas and his wife, Marie-Charlotte Gaudin; Joseph Girouard; Jacques Hugon; René Robiceaux; and Charles Thibodeaux’s widow, Brigitte Breaux. The registers also announce the christening of Anne Thibodeaux, daughter of Olivier Thibodeaux and Madeleine Broussard. This notice was signed by the Rev. Jean François, who signed himself as curé de Nouvelle Acadie des Attakapas.

Throughout the 1760’s, Acadians continued to arrive in Louisiana from Canada, Nova Scotia and the West Indies, and joined their confreres who had already settled in the colony.

Truman Stacey
(To be continued)