In 1629, two settlements were established in the northeastern North American colony of New Scotland. The first, on Cape Breton Island, survived only briefly before it was attacked and razed by a French warship. The second, at Port Royal, continued until late 1632, when the colonists were evacuated under the terms of the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye. No Scottish colonists are known to have remained under the French regime what was now known as Acadia. Only the name of New Scotland (or, in Latin, *Nova Scotia*) persisted, to be revived in mid-century and again following the British conquest of Acadia in 1710. Treating primarily the period to 1670, this paper will argue that the demise of New Scotland was no random event. In the imperial outreach to northeastern North America in this period, resource exploitation predominated and - with some local exceptions - colonization remained a by-product. Colonial endeavours were therefore inherently fragile. Even state support, when it was attained, was chronically vulnerable to the pressures of competing economic and strategic interests. Such pressures were crucial to the undermining of New Scotland, but they also exerted a longer-term influence that was evidenced not only by the failure of an earlier French colony of Acadia in the same territory, but also by the problems encountered by New Scotland’s French and English successor colonies. New Scotland was a lost colony built on the remnants of an earlier lost colony, and it was succeeded by the two further lost colonies of French Acadia and English Nova Scotia.

If colonization is taken to be the measure of the significance of a given territory in the Atlantic realm, it becomes easy to attribute limited significance to Acadia/Nova Scotia for either contemporaries or historians. Yet repeatedly during seventeenth-century treaty negotiations, as in the negotiations leading to the later Treaty of Utrecht, its disposition was among the last of the potentially treaty-breaking issues to be resolved. In reality, New Scotland and its successors
provide examples of the ‘lost colony’ as a mainstream phenomenon during what is often misleadingly referred to as the colonial era. Even where densely-concentrated colonial populations were eventually established - as in Canada, New England, and New York - they long remained exceptions to a more widespread pattern in northeastern North America by which colonization was initially an atypical product of imperial expansion and never during the seventeenth century became an invariable or even a predominant expression of it. Thus, the problem of lost colonies and of European failure in colonial activity is only a problem if it is assumed that imperial outreach inherently included migration and colonization. With the recognition that this was only one of a series of possible forms of outreach, that extraction of resources was also critically important, and that it was inevitable that there should be blurring of the various forms and false starts either way, then the lost colonies can be recognized as an entirely normal phenomenon.

New Scotland originated as the project of a single colonial promoter, Sir William Alexander. Although Alexander had previously entertained the possibility of involvement in the colonization of Newfoundland, the charter he received from the Scottish crown in September 1621 defined boundaries extending northwards from the St. Croix River as far as the St. Lawrence, and thence eastwards. In later geographical terms, it embraced Canada’s Maritime provinces and the Gaspé Peninsula.\(^1\) As Alexander made clear in a promotional tract published some three years later, the proposed colony was explicitly a national project: ‘my Countrimen would never adventure in such aa Enterprize, unlesse it were as there was a New France, a New Spaine, and a New England, that they might likewise have a New Scotland.’\(^2\) For all that, the venture was also coordinated with concurrent promotional efforts for New England, and in later years the use of the terminology of ‘Great Britain’ would signal its harmony with the goal of James VI and I (later of Charles I) to build further integration of the two states on the basis of the

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As master of requests for Scotland at the court of James VI, Alexander was ideally placed to frame his North American venture within the context of this and other current state objectives that would make it an attractive candidate for royal encouragement and support. Linking the notion of Scottish colonization also with the frequently-expressed concern that Scotland had an over-abundant supply of labour that was being wasted in the service of many Scots in foreign armies during the Thirty Years’ War, Alexander portrayed New Scotland as a means by which Scotland and the Scottish state could reap economic and fiscal benefits by channeling the population surplus more productively. Alexander also had more personal advantages. Connected by feudal ties to the Campbells of Argyll and linked by marriage to the Erskines of Mar, his range of patronage opportunities did not depend exclusively on his own position close to the crown but extended also to two of Scotland’s most powerful families. Among the basic qualifications for colonial promoters of the 1620s was an array of readily usable connections either at the heart of the state or in major Atlantic ports, but preferably in both. Alexander, although he made strenuous efforts towards the end of the decade to mobilize merchant capital in favour of New Scotland, had his main strength weighted - to a dangerous extent, as later became clear - towards the state end of the spectrum.

Thus, Alexander never personally lacked for state encouragement, and throughout the 1620s this translated into consistent efforts on the part of the Scottish crown to facilitate the colonization of New Scotland in ways that were requested by Alexander and did not imply expenditures from state revenues. The grant of the charter was followed three years later - with a colonizing effort ending unsuccessfully in the interim - by the institution of the order of knights-baronets of Scotland, a scheme explicitly designed to raise funds for New Scotland. Modelled on an earlier effort to advance the colonization of Ulster, the knights-baronetcies conferred not only a title of honour but also a 30,000 acre barony in New Scotland (of which just over half

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4Alexander, Encouragement to Colonies, 38-9.
would be held personally by the knight-baronet, with the remainder reserved for public uses) and the right to give counsel in matters of governance. In return, each knight-baronet would make a direct payment to Alexander of 1000 merks Scots (approximately £50 sterling), and would have the option of sending six men to settle in New Scotland or paying a further 2000 merks. Announced at the same time was the intention of dividing New Scotland into an elaborate structure of counties and parishes.⁶

Although the knights-baronetcies did not attract enough interest to improve Alexander’s finances significantly, a further state endorsement was forthcoming soon afterwards with the chartering of the English and Scottish Company. Forming an alliance between Alexander and the English/Huguenot Kirke family, the new company allowed the Kirkes to continue efforts they had begun in 1628 to dislodge the French from Canada. This they accomplished in 1629, holding the post at Quebec for some three years. The Kirkes’ earlier activities had led to tensions with Alexander, who himself held an extensive Scottish land grant in the St. Lawrence valley and was also apprehensive that the Kirkes would extend their reach into the New Scotland region. With the formation of the English and Scottish Company, Alexander was freed from the possibility of English competition in New Scotland and proceeded to send a colonizing expedition.⁷

The expedition of 1629 was Alexander’s third attempt to colonize New Scotland. A vessel sent in 1622 had turned back from Cape Breton to winter in Newfoundland, and had only briefly explored the coasts of New Scotland before returning. Colonists dispatched in 1628 had again spent the winter in North America, at a devastating cost from scurvy. Although there is no conclusive evidence regarding their location, it was probably again in Newfoundland, where Alexander also had landowning interests.⁸ The 1629 expedition, however, was the most serious

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⁸For fuller discussion, see Griffiths and Reid, ‘New Evidence on New Scotland,’ 496-7.
of the three. Symbolic of its importance to Alexander’s plans, it was commanded by his son, the younger Sir William Alexander. Its goal was to establish two settlements, one on Cape Breton Island and the other at or near the former French post at Port Royal. The numbers of potential colonists were small, though not unusually so for settlement attempts in northeastern North America in this era. Destined for Port-aux-Baleines, the Cape Breton site, were ‘60 or 80 English,’ according to Alexander’s own account. A French observer later put the number at Port Royal - who were likely Scots, although there is no firm evidence of their identities - at 70, of whom 30 had died during the first winter. Fragmentary references suggest that the 1629 groups, to an extent greater than in the earlier voyages, included a significant number of women.

The Cape Breton settlement was troubled from the start. Shortly after its landing, it became sharply divided along religious lines when a number of ‘Brownists’ identified themselves and separated from the main community. A greater disaster occurred later in the summer, when the small fort constructed at Port-aux-Baleines was stormed by a force commanded by the French sea captain Charles Daniel. Daniel, a member of the Company of New France, asserted the French right to this territory as part of the colony of Acadia. The New Scotland settlement’s leader - Andrew Stewart, Lord Ochiltree - later described the attackers as consisting of ‘threescore sojours and ane certaine number off savages.’ His comment suggests that, as well as suffering the misfortune of being discovered by a powerful French vessel, the colonizers had committed the cardinal error of failing to establish a respectful relationship with Mi’kmaq aboriginal inhabitants. The result was the destruction of the fledgling settlement and the removal of the colonists, some to be released in England and others (including Ochiltree) to be imprisoned in France.

The Scots fared better at Port Royal, despite the ravages of scurvy during the first winter. Here, the construction of Charles Fort was completed by late August on a site across the later-named Annapolis Basin from the site of an abandoned French habitation which had been

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9Sir William Alexander’s Information Touching his Plantation at Cape Breton and Port Royal, [c. 1630], British Library (hereafter BL), Egerton MSS, 2395, f. 23; Claude de Saint-Étienne de La Tour, quoted in Henry Percival Biggar, ed., The Works of Samuel de Champlain (6 vols.; Toronto: Champlain Society, 1922-36), VI, 176.
10See Griffiths and Reid, ‘New Evidence on New Scotland,’ 497.
11Relation of Richard Guthry, [1629], Ibid., 503.
12Memorial of Lord Ochiltree, [1630], Great Britain, Public Record Office (hereafter PRO), CO1/5, No. 46.
constructed in 1605 and destroyed by a Virginia expedition in 1613. While the evidence of Scottish-Mi’kmaq and Scottish-Etchemin relations is not extensive, what references do survive invariably indicate a diplomatic and trading relationship. Within the first five weeks of the Scots’ arrival, they had at least three visits from aboriginal parties. All were cordial, and characterized by trade and gift-giving. A Mi’kmaq sakamow appears to have travelled to the British isles that autumn, and was reported in early 1630 to have met with Charles I.13

More complex were Scottish contacts with the few French who remained in the region. The habitation destroyed during the Virginia raid of 1613 had been empty or near-empty at the time, as the colonists had been absent on one of their regular resource-exploiting journeys - fishing, fur-trading, or both. Initially staying in the vicinity of Port Royal, probably in a new building close to the original site, they had moved by early 1618 to more southerly coastal areas of the Acadian peninsula. Since the death of Charles de Biencourt de Saint-Just, commander on behalf of his father (the original seigneur of Port Royal, Jean de Biencourt de Poutrincourt), the leading figures among the French had been Claude de Saint-Étienne de La Tour and, increasingly, his son Charles de Saint-Étienne de La Tour. The La Tours held a small fort at Cap de Sable. Alexander had apparently completed an important coup after the elder La Tour was captured at sea by the Kirkes in 1628 and brought to London. Alexander persuaded La Tour, in effect, to join him in the colonization of New Scotland, promising knights-baronetcies to him and to his son, and allocating to the La Tours an area of the peninsula that included not only Cap de Sable but also a number of other major harbours and a productive fur-trading area of which the La Tours and the Alexanders would share the profits.14 For the Scots at Port Royal, initial indications were that the agreement would hold. One of them, Richard Guthry, wrote in late August 1629 that ‘[La Tour] with his sonne we expect every houre.’15 Whether or not either La Tours ever arrived at the Scottish fort, Claude was ultimately unable to persuade his son to

14 Articles of Agreement, 6 October 1629, BL, Egerton MSS, 2395, f. 17. For further discussion, see Reid, Acadia, Maine, and New Scotland, 32-3 and 33n134.
15 Relation of Richard Guthry, [1629], in Griffiths and Reid, ‘New Evidence on New Scotland,’ 507.
accept the knight-baronetcy or the agreement, and in the following year he himself repudiated his alliance with Alexander.\textsuperscript{16} Although the failure of the relationship with the La Tours must have complicated matters for the Scots, both in terms of defence and in the establishment and maintenance of fur-trading networks among aboriginal inhabitants, it proved to be a surmountable hurdle. By 1632, they were in a position to take the offensive. In a reversal of the events that had taken place at Port-aux-Baleines some three years earlier, a Scottish expedition from Port Royal captured and plundered the La Tours’ other fort - and key fur-trading centre - at the mouth of the St. John River.\textsuperscript{17}

As yet unknown to the Scots at Port Royal, however, the end of the colonization of New Scotland had already been determined by the recently-signed Treaty of St-Germain-en-Laye. Formally ending the war between France and the kingdoms of Charles I which had begun in 1627 and had then been suspended in April 1629 under the interim Treaty of Suza, the 1632 treaty provided that the British crown would restore to France ‘all the places occupied in New France, Acadia, and Canada.’\textsuperscript{18} Behind this terse statement in the treaty lay intensive diplomatic exchanges. The French position was predicated from the beginning on the undisputed reality that both the Kirkes’ seizure of Quebec and Alexander’s settlement at Port Royal had taken place after the Treaty of Suza. For the French, these were two hostile acts committed outside of a time of war, and therefore they should be reversed. British negotiators made no demur in the case of Quebec, which they admitted had been seized by force. In the case of New Scotland, however, the British argued that the Scots had peacefully occupied a site long abandoned by the French, and did so in accordance with Alexander’s longstanding entitlement under the charter of 1621. Only when the British negotiators transmitted to London in early 1631 their opinion that the French were about to go back to war over the issue did the position of the British crown begin to

\textsuperscript{17}Reid, Acadia, Maine, and New Scotland, 82.
\textsuperscript{18}Treaty of St-Germain-en-Laye, 29 March 1632, in Mémoires des commissaires de sa majesté très-chretienne et de ceux de sa majesté britannique (3 vols.; Amsterdam and Leipzig: J. Schreuder and Pierre Mortier le jeune, 1755), II, 9. Original French: ‘tous les lieux occupés en la nouvelle France, l’Acadie & Canada.’ In this discussion, the terminology of ‘Britain’ and ‘British’ will be used, rather than separating the two crowns of England and Scotland. Although technically inaccurate, the terms are convenient and, more importantly, were used by contemporaries in accordance with the concurrent wishes of the crown.
change. Believing that the French position stemmed from a desire for satisfaction on a point of honour rather than the unlikely scenario that France was willing to risk the entire treaty for the sake of the colonization of Acadia, Charles I’s advisers devised a compromise proposal by which Port Royal would be evacuated but no formal surrender of Port Royal would take place. A series of diplomatic mishaps ensured that the relevant article in the final treaty put the matter more strongly by prescribing the restoration of Acadia, but the fiction continued to be maintained that - as put in a royal letter to the knights-baronets in August 1632 - ‘the Colonie ... [has been] forced of late to remove for a tyme by meanes of a treatie we have had with the French.’

In reality, New Scotland would never be revived as such. Its colonists removed by French shipping in late 1632, it had become a lost colony. Why so? The demise of New Scotland can be explained in part by factors particular to this venture. Diplomatic miscommunication and miscalculation in the negotiations leading to the Treaty of St-Germain, associated especially with the period during and immediately following the fatal illness of Secretary of State Viscount Dorchester in early 1632, played a significant role. The chief British negotiator, Sir Isaac Wake, complained to London in April 1632 that he had had no acknowledgment of his dispatches for five consecutive months. The results were seen both in the wording of the article by which Acadia was to be restored to France and in the ignoring of indications that France had every intention of sending a strong colonizing expedition as soon as the treaty was signed - which it did under the command of Isaac de Razilly.

Outside of these specific circumstances, two further characteristics of the New Scotland venture contributed to its downfall. First, no clear economic rationale had been established for New Scotland’s existence. From the beginning, Alexander’s strengths as a colonial promoter had inclined much further towards the state rather than the mercantile end of the spectrum. An officeholder who had originated from a landowning family in central Scotland, he had few

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20Sir Isaac Wake to Sir John Coke, 13 April 1632, PRO, SP78/91, ff. 120-1.
personal connections with the major ports and apparently failed to hire factors who could make up for his own deficiencies. Furthermore, now as royal Secretary for Scotland, Alexander spent little time in Scotland itself. Efforts to mobilize cash in London for his colonial interests were difficult at best, even to the extent he had Scottish bonds to offer. In 1630, he informed a Scottish patron that, ‘notwithstanding of the bandes your Lordship and others signed for me, I can lift no monie here in hast; the English marchants never taking Scottish securitie, and the Scottish factours not haveing monie.’

More generally, in the Scottish economy of the early seventeenth century, New Scotland was an exotic plant. Scottish trade was still heavily concentrated in east-coast ports which had networks that were either coastal or spanned the North Sea. Glasgow had not yet emerged as a serious rival. Of Alexander’s own colonizing expeditions, that of 1629 had left from England while the previous two had departed from the relatively small west-coast ports of Kirkudbright and Dumbarton. Fisheries, meanwhile, formed an important part of the Scottish economy but were heavily weighted towards harvesting Scottish waters for export to western Europe. An effort in 1617 to form a Scottish company that would have interests in eastern Europe and Asia, but would also seek whale oil in Greenland waters, collapsed in the face of opposition from established English trading companies. When the royal letter of 1632 to the knights-baronets noted that New Scotland ‘hath not takin the root which was expected ... partlie, as we ar informed, by want of the tymelie concurrence of a sufficient number to insist in it,’ this was an accurate indication that the project had never set down an economic foundation that could mobilize a critical level of support or even convincingly justify Alexander’s large expenditures on recruiting, transporting, and supporting settlers.

Alexander’s close connections with the state formed in themselves a second characteristic of New Scotland that also affected the venture’s longevity. His personal access to state support and patronage - assisted by his feudal and family connections to powerful families -

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24 Charles I to Knights-Baronets, 15 August 1632, Rogers, ed., The Earl of Stirling’s Register of Royal Letters, II, 619.
had been essential to the early stages of the chartering, planning, and attempted implementation of the scheme. The influence of the extent to which this support was personal to him, however, began in the early 1630s to operate quite differently. Alexander, up until the time of his death in 1640, never lost either office or royal patronage. Named Viscount Stirling in 1630, he became first Earl of Stirling three years later. In 1632, soon after the signing of the Treaty of St-Germain, he was granted a monopoly of the minting of copper coins in Scotland. In at least theoretical furtherance of his North American interests, in 1633 he was awarded a trade monopoly in the St. Lawrence valley (albeit that the French were now reestablished at Quebec), and in 1635 he received a land grant from the Council of New England that included not only an area of the later State of Maine extending from the Kennebec to the St. Croix Rivers but also Long Island. It was true that none of the honours and privileges he received was sufficient to save him from overwhelming debts to which the New Scotland scheme had contributed largely. The only one that might have done so, a warrant for the payment to Alexander of £10,000 sterling, appears never to have been paid. Nevertheless, a persistent effort had been made by the crown to ensure that Alexander’s prestige survived the evacuation of Port Royal without undue damage, and that financial opportunities were put in his way to the limited degree that a troubled treasury could afford.

27 Trade Patent, 11 May 1633, PRO, CO1/1, No. 13; Grant of Council for New England, 22 April 1635, PRO, CO1/8, No. 56.
From the beginning, state endorsement had been indispensable to the New Scotland scheme. The personal nature of crown support in this case, however, facilitated its shift from New Scotland itself to other forms of patronage rewards for Alexander as soon as the other priorities of the state dictated that it was prudent to remove the Scottish colony. While it had existed, New Scotland’s presence in northeastern North America had been as successfully established as in any other conventional colonial attempt, more so than the ones that had failed before it. It was true that the flow of English settlers to New England was creating a new model of colonization based on sustained migration, rapid environmental degradation, and increasingly dense settlement. As yet, however, it was unclear whether this model was either tolerable by the imperial state or sustainable in North America itself. Among colonizing efforts that adhered to the more common techniques of settler recruitment by a colonial promoter, harvesting natural resource items for export, and depending on aboriginal support or toleration for security, New Scotland had shown significant strength. Its persistence for more than three years gave one indication, as did its relationship with Mi’kmaq and Etchemin neighbours and ability to inflict military defeat on French competitors. However, lack of metropolitan mercantile support and, above all, the subtle but decisive redirection of state support from New Scotland as a colony to Alexander as an individual had proved to be formidable obstacles.

Yet the longer-term seventeenth-century history of the territory named New Scotland by Alexander gives evidence of a still wider interpretive framework within which to define the reasons for its becoming a lost colony. In effect, this was a graveyard for colonial ventures, a seemingly inexhaustible source of lost colonies. The initial French attempt to colonize Acadia, beginning in 1604, had failed for reasons that had some affinities with the experience of New Scotland, although also some differences. The principal promoter in this case had been Pierre du Gua, Sieur de Monts. In this case, there was no question that the project fitted with an existing area of mercantile interest. De Monts assembled a group of merchants from four major ports and signed them on to the ten-year fur trade monopoly he had received from the French crown. Experience would show that the solicitation of private subscriptions had serious deficiencies as a means of raising capital in the amounts necessary to launch a serious colonial expedition, by
comparison with later alternatives such as the crown-sponsored trading company or joint-stock company. De Monts’s total subscriptions of some 90,000 livres were sufficient, however, to allow him to lead a small expedition to St. Croix Island. Following a disastrous winter of cold and scurvy, the remains of the group set up the habitation at Port Royal in 1605. As in the case of New Scotland a generation later, a close relationship with Mi’kmaq neighbours was quickly formed and fur-trading activities began. Also as in the case of New Scotland but in a different context, changes in the role of the state proved destructive. De Monts’s principal claim to royal patronage came through his longstanding relationship with Henri IV, for whom he had fought during the Wars of Religion. However, the chief minister, the Duc de Sully, was personally sceptical of the value of colonization in northeastern North America and was open to the representations of merchants excluded from de Monts’s monopoly. When demand for furs, and prices, increased sharply French markets during the first three years of the monopoly, Sully intervened to have it cancelled. The removal of the French from Port Royal followed during the summer of 1607.

The Port Royal habitation was reoccupied by a small group under the seigneurial grant of Jean de Biencourt de Poutrincourt in 1610, but disputes between Charles de Biencourt and Jesuit missionaries damaged the colony’s ability to gather either state or private patronage. The raid by Samuel Argall’s Virginians in 1613 ensured that Biencourt, the La Tours, and a few other predominantly male fur traders and fishers would live a tenuous existence, respectively dependent on Mi’kmaq neighbours - Charles de Saint-Étienne de La Tour solidifying this relationship through marriage to a Mi’kmaq with whom he had three daughters - and a small group of individual La Rochelle merchants.

Although by the time of the Scots’ arrival in 1629 the La Tours had elaborated their fur trading operations and consolidated their base at Cap de Sable, Acadia remained a lost colony, from which metropolitan support had been withdrawn. As in the case of New France, the

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30 For more detailed discussion, see Reid, Acadia, Maine, and New Scotland, 16-18.
withdrawal of state support had been crucial. In other respects, the two cases differed. In targeting the fur trade, de Monts and the other leading advocates of colonization in Acadia, had rightly identified a growing and increasingly lucrative trade which since the 1580s had been of direct interest to merchants of all the French Atlantic ports. There was no difficulty comparable with the eastward orientation of Scottish trade. At the same time, de Monts’s personal associations with the state were not as strong as those of Alexander. They rested on earlier services to Henri IV and did not extend either to ongoing metropolitan officeholding or to family and feudal ties to powerful families. For Alexander, the result had been that his personal position in patronage networks was secure, but that in the absence of any economic justification for Scottish involvement in New Scotland the same security did not apply to his colonial interests. For de Monts, the fur trade proved too valuable for his monopoly to escape the protests of competitors, and his influence with the state was insufficient to support the mounting of an effective counter-argument. The consequences were the same for both: abandonment of colonial activity. De Monts did persist for some years in trading interests at Quebec, but only briefly with a trade monopoly there and even then with limited success.  

New Scotland, therefore, was a lost colony that had succeeded an earlier lost colony. Its own successors encountered difficulties that offer further comparisons and contrasts. Again, the roles of the state and of merchant investors proved central. Acadia began a new era as a French colonial project with the arrival of the Razilly expedition in 1632. Signs of renewed state interest in the territory had already been seen not only in what were - to the British negotiators at least - unexpectedly determined French diplomatic efforts prior to the Treaty of St-Germain, but also in the first state recognition granted to Charles de Saint-Étienne de La Tour. In 1631, La Tour was commissioned as royal lieutenant-general in Acadia, while Razilly arrived in the following year as lieutenant-general for all of New France.  

These governance arrangements, intended to be complementary, would lead over time to destructive factional disputes within the

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33 Azarie Couillard-Després, Charles de Saint-Étienne de La Tour, gouverneur, lieutenant-général en Acadie, et son temps, 1593-1666 (Arthabaska, QC: Imprimerie d’Arthabaska, 1930), 191-3; Concession to Razilly, 19 May 1632, France, Archives Nationales, Archives des Colonies (hereafter AC), C11D, I, f. 52. For discussion of these and other efforts to delegate royal authority in Acadia as a form of elite co-option, see Elizabeth Mancke and John G. Reid, ‘Elites, States, and the Imperial Contest for Acadia,’ in John G. Reid et al., The ‘Conquest’ of Acadia, 1710: Imperial, Colonial, and Aboriginal Constructions (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 36-8.
tiny elite of Acadia. Initially, however, they indicated the return of the French state (though without significant state investment) to encouraging Acadian colonization. As a colonial promoter, La Tour’s qualifications rested primarily on his longstanding merchant connections in La Rochelle and on his proven ability to maintain diplomatic and trading relationships with both Mi’kmaq and Etchemin. His ties to the state were much weaker. Razilly, by contrast, was a figure more closely comparable to Alexander. He was related by kinship to Cardinal Richelieu, chief minister at the time, and Richelieu’s family of du Plessis were feudal superiors of the Razilly family. Razilly brought as one of his senior lieutenants another kinsman, Charles de Menou d’Aulnay. Making up for his own and d’Aulnay’s lack of direct mercantile connections, Razilly also brought with him the La Rochelle merchant Nicolas Denys, who had taken prime responsibility for fitting out the expedition.34

As long as Razilly lived, and continued to exert from the small Atlantic coastal settlement of La Hève the authority of his commission to govern all of New France, the four leading elite figures coexisted. When Razilly died in 1635, it was the signal for fragmentation. While La Tour continued to trade on the St. John River, d’Aulnay gathered colonists in family groups at Port Royal. By 1650 - the year of d’Aulnay’s own death by accidental drowning - following fifteen years of intermittent recruitment, the Port Royal population had reached some 300.35 Denys, meanwhile, pursued commercial fishing and lumbering ventures in a number of the harbours of the region. Not surprisingly in view of his state connections, d’Aulnay was successful in having his own claim to exclusive governance over Acadia formally endorsed. In 1647, he received sweeping powers as governor and lieutenant-general.36 D’Aulnay had already inflicted military defeat on La Tour by storming his fort at the mouth of the St. John River in 1645, and he set about a successful campaign to expel Denys from his most recent fishing and trading centre at Miscou. However, d’Aulnay’s ascendancy was never complete. First, both La Tour and Denys personally survived his attacks. Secondly, all of d’Aulnay’s efforts, while

facilitated by state encouragement, were financially underwritten by a particular merchant house of La Rochelle, that of Emmanuel Le Borgne. Like Alexander before him, d’Aulnay accumulated crushing debts, largely held by Le Borgne. When d’Aulnay died in 1650, Acadia fell apart again, as Le Borgne struggled to recoup his losses by intervening in the colony’s fisheries and fur trade, while Denys and La Tour reasserted their interests. Matters were brought back into an uneasy balance only when a small English naval squadron captured Port Royal and certain other Acadian ports in 1654.37

Acadia was again a lost colony and, for the time being, Nova Scotia prevailed. This time, there were certain continuities, both with the Acadia that had been launched in 1632 and with the earlier New Scotland. With Acadia, the continuities included the persistence of the small colonial population at Port Royal, though without the French officials, garrison, and clergy. Also, Le Borgne refused to accept that a legitimate conquest had taken place, and continued with commercial activities and occasional military thrusts at Port Royal from the Atlantic coast of the Acadian peninsula. With New Scotland, the primary continuity lay in the cooption of the old Scottish claim - in its Latin form of ‘Nova Scotia’ - as a justification for the refusal of the English interregnum regime to restore Port Royal to the French.38 Charles de Saint-Étienne de La Tour, ironically, provided the direct connection through his knight-baronetcy and land grant from Alexander, while Sir Thomas Temple and William Crowne provided, respectively, the necessary state and mercantile connections. In 1656, the three received a patent for ‘the Country and Territories called Lacadie and that parte of the Country called Nova Scotia,’ with a fur trade monopoly.39

La Tour was soon marginalized, retiring to Cap de Sable where he died in 1663. Sir Thomas Temple, whose patronage value to the venture came not only from a military career on the Parliamentary side during the Civil War but also from a family connection with William Fienes, Viscount Say and Sele, moved to North America, although Boston was the closest he

37Reid, Acadia, Maine, and New Scotland, 135-6.
came to any long-term residence in Nova Scotia. Crowne was a Parliamentary supporter, and briefly a Member of Parliament, who had mercantile connections in London. He also took up residence in New England, but confined his trading activities to the western part of the territory designated as Nova Scotia and notably to the Penobscot River region.\(^{40}\)

In practice, the new Nova Scotia was dominated by Massachusetts commercial interests. ‘T. Temple dwells idly at Boston,’ scathingly wrote a contemporary, ‘and is fooled by them.’\(^{41}\) Temple himself persisted in sending optimistic reports to London, although to his kinsman Lord Nathaniel Fiennes he was sometimes more frank. Not only, he informed Fiennes in September 1659, was he having to wage a costly battle with Le Borgne for control of La Hève and by extension of the entire Acadian/Nova Scotian peninsula, but also a recent shipwreck had left him with ‘the greatest loss I ever received in my life.’ Still, Temple continued to busy himself setting up fur-trading centres around the Bay of Fundy and on the rivers draining into it, which were then operated to the benefit of Massachusetts merchants such as Thomas Lake, Hezekiah Usher, and Thomas Breedon.\(^{42}\) Lake for one was critical of Temple’s retinue of friends and lax control over expenses, urging on him ‘a frugall management.’\(^{43}\) Although the Boston merchant was no doubt justified in his strictures, the deeper reality was that his own growing involvement in the Nova Scotia fur trade and that of other Boston merchants, was also a factor in the inability of Temple to supply satisfactory returns to his London investors. Temple’s Nova Scotia was clearly a commercial venture, no matter how the terminology of its founding patent might imply a wider colonial purpose, but it was no simple one. London merchants had provided the initial capital, and should the state’s commitment waver, their support could reasonably be expected to be essential. Yet the trade was now largely in the hands of Massachusetts merchants whose local commercial influence was considerable but lacked an imperial dimension.


\(^{41}\) Notes Relating to America, c. 1667, PRO, CO1/21, No. 174.


\(^{43}\) Thomas Lake to John Leverett, 2 September 1657, Massachusetts Archives, Vol. 2, ff. 504-5.
In 1660, the Restoration abruptly put state support for Temple’s Nova Scotia in jeopardy. Temple’s earlier state connections - and those of Crowne - were now liabilities rather than assets. A hurried journey to London saw Temple claiming that in the later stages of the Civil War he had secretly worked for the mitigation of Charles I’s treatment by the Parliamentary victors - on the very scaffold, he recalled, the king had commended ‘honest Tom Temple’ to the care of his son and successor - and defending his stewardship of Nova Scotia. His efforts had apparent success, as he ultimately returned to Boston with a new patent as Nova Scotia governor and a knight-baronetcy to boot. However, in reality the price had been high. Temple had had to buy off a rival claimant by agreeing to make an annual payment of £600, and his standing with the state remained uncertain in the event of a serious test. Eventually, in peace negotiations following the second Anglo-Dutch War, the English crown conceded the restoration of Acadia to France in the Treaty of Breda in return for the reciprocal restoration of the English half of the Caribbean island of St. Christopher. Temple prevaricated for three years, but the final surrender took place in 1670 and involved the dismantling of the trade networks which had been established since 1657. Nova Scotia, commercial as its character had primarily been, had become again a lost colony.

Although the sequence of weak colonizing ventures in Acadia/Nova Scotia would persist for more than a century, with only the Loyalist migration finally establishing a non-aboriginal ascendancy, 1670 did mark a turning point of sorts. When Acadia was reestablished, it was with a royal governor and with a clear plan to integrate the colony into the commercial and strategic

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44Sir Thomas Temple to [Thomas Povey], [1660], CO1/14, No. 64.
45Warrant to Attorney-General, 7 July 1662, PRO, SP44/7, 148; Bounds of Sir Thomas Temple’s Patent, July 1662, PRO, CO1/16, No. 86.
46See Reid, Acadia, Maine, and New Scotland, 147, 156-7.
imperatives of the French Atlantic - even though the plan quickly failed and the royal
governors were subsumed one by one into New England-oriented trade patterns. The conquest
of Port Royal by the British in 1710 was followed by the creation of yet another Nova Scotia -
this one confirmed in its existence though not in its boundaries by the Treaty of Utrecht, and
continuing for more than forty years to have a colonial population which was primarily Acadian
- but again with a governance structure that relied on royal direction rather than elite cooption.

What does the history of New Scotland, and the more general history of Acadia/Nova
Scotia to 1670, reveal about the nature and significance of lost colonies? First, the recurrent
patterns evident in this case confirm that European imperial outreach could be expressed in a
variety of forms, of which intensive colonial activity was only one. This principle held in
northeastern North America and the North Atlantic world just as it did in Africa and Asia.
Colonization in the seventeenth century had its proponents, and for some promoters and potential
migrants it had its merits. The arguments in its favour were strongest when there were ‘push’
factors at play such as displacement of population from rural areas of England, through a
combination of rising numbers, succession practices that favoured elder sons, and tensions in
traditional industries such as textile production. The establishment of local economies in the
Americas based on cash crops could also supply ‘pull’ factors, since colonial settlement was an
obvious prerequisite for development of a plantation economy, even though non-European
labour would also emerge in the creation of a variant on colonial society that had affinities with
earlier and continuing Portuguese practices in Brazil. Migration itself could provide new ‘pull’
factors, not only in such a region as the Chesapeake but also in some areas of southern New
England, where the thrusting aside of disease-stricken aboriginal populations and rapid
environmental degradation combined to facilitate the growth of a non-aboriginal economy that
soon extended into surplus agricultural production, urban development, and a proliferation of
radial lines of trade. Thus, there were local areas of North America where colonization
effectively generated its own logic.

These are the areas that have primarily attracted the attention of historians of the Atlantic
world, even though in a more sophisticated context than that of the earlier historiographical preoccupation with the notional ‘colonial America.’ David Armitage’s recent theoretical analysis of ‘Three Concepts of Atlantic History,’ for example, frames an important book of essays by taking full account of the complexities of Atlantic political economy, notably in the contexts of ‘circum-Atlantic’ and ‘cis-Atlantic’ approaches, while another leading collection begins with an introduction by Amy Turner Bushnell and Jack P. Greene which elaborates on ‘the unevenness of actual [European] hegemony’ in the Americas by distinguishing usefully between an ‘ecumene’ and a ‘sphere of influence.’\(^48\) Yet the elucidation of a full range of patterns of Atlantic outreach and exchange requires that more sustained attention than hitherto be given to those models that involved little or no migration, where the feasibility of migration was contested, or where limited migration took place only as long as aboriginal leaderships chose to tolerate it. The historical significance of European transatlantic migration and its consequences is, of course, beyond dispute. There is also, however, an alternate historical perspective, in which colonial settlement in a seventeenth-century region such as northeastern North America can be seen as essentially peripheral to aboriginal societies that continued to control all but a few coastal and riverine enclaves.\(^49\) There was also an alternate contemporary perspective on transatlantic exchange which not only did not envisage mounting any effective challenge to this ascendancy but in which also - at least in the view of important metropolitan commercial interests - it was undesirable to do so.

\(^{47}\) These factors and others are usefully summarized in Alison Games, Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 13-17.  
In this wider context, within which New Scotland and its successors must be set, the rationale for colonization was highly controvertible and the state and mercantile energies devoted to it were correspondingly intermittent. Thus, the reasons for the weakness of colonization efforts in Acadia/Nova Scotia cannot be sought only in specific flaws that may have afflicted a given venture. Rather, the creation of lost colonies was a normal and even - to the contemporary sceptics - a predictable phenomenon. Yet it was so because there was a possible case that could be made for colonial activity. There were areas of North America, Hudson’s Bay offering a conspicuous example, where colonization per se was so clearly unfeasible that only commercial enterprises merited serious consideration. In Acadia/Nova Scotia - as in Canada and, to a lesser degree, Newfoundland - there were arguments for and against. The case in favour of colonization might rest in the early seventeenth century on such considerations as the aggrandizement of the state, either through conquests of territories and peoples to rival the attainments of the Iberian empires or in geographical advances such as the location of the Northwest passage. Pre-emption of the claims of competing states to possession or influence was also a possible justification, and one which by the later part of the seventeenth century had emerged into a more consciously strategic appreciation of the value of North American territory.

At a commercial level, as well as the consideration that a colonial population might help to defend access to valuable resource commodities, settlers had the advantage of a year-round ability to guard favoured locations such as fishing harbours or maintain the health of essential relationships with aboriginal trading partners. On the contrary side, however, colonization was an expensive strategy for merchants who opted to position employees in commercially sensitive areas, just as it was for colonial promoters such as Alexander and d’Aulnay who attempted to recruit mixed groups of men, women, and children for their personal domains. Again from a commercial perspective, a colonial settlement (especially, though not exclusively, if

accompanied by a trade monopoly) could be seen to represent an undue competitive advantage. Should the colonial population involved be self-perpetuating through natural increase, the problem was all the greater, and all the more worthy of the attention of the state as well as of commercial interests.

Doubts regarding the feasibility or desirability of colonization did not signify that northeastern North America and its resources were unimportant to the relevant western European states or mercantile interests. Indeed, the reverse was true. As Leslie Choquette has shown, the French state and interested merchants laboured long, though against the tide of traditional migration patterns, to recruit colonists for Canada.\(^50\) This despite periodic metropolitan doubts as to the value of colonial settlement even in the St. Lawrence valley.\(^51\) Comparable expressions of state and merchant interest in Acadia/Nova Scotia, however, showed a lesser commitment to settlement and a greater preoccupation with the harvesting and trading of resource commodities. The fur trade was the outstanding commerce that was specific to the area. However, its coastline was also one of the perimeters of the North Atlantic fishery. Always keenly contested in Anglo-French treaty negotiations during the seventeenth century, Acadia/Nova Scotia came strongly into play during those leading to the Treaty of Utrecht. Following intense discussion of fisheries in early April 1712, French negotiators reported to Versailles that their British counterparts had ‘protested to us a hundred times that they have express orders to break off [negotiations] entirely’ rather than make concessions on either Acadia/Nova Scotia or Newfoundland.\(^52\) An accurate expression of the importance of these areas to the imperial outreach of the respective states, it was not necessarily - even in the early eighteenth century - an

\(^{50}\)Leslie Choquette, Frenchmen into Peasants: Modernity and Tradition in the Peopling of French Canada (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 247-77.


\(^{52}\)[French Plenipotentiaries] to Louis XIV, 3 April 1717, PRO, SP103/99, 343-5. Original French: ‘[ils] nous ont protesté cent fois qu'ils avoient ordre exprès de tout rompre....’
endorsement of colonization.

Hence the persistent ambiguities that attended the succession of lost colonies of which New Scotland was a conspicuous example. Sir William Alexander was initially well equipped to gain the support of the Scottish state for his colonial enterprise, but failed to mobilize significant merchant support and was powerless in its absence to prevent competing interests of the state from turning away from support for New Scotland. Alexander faced particular difficulties in the context of an eastern-oriented Scottish economy, but French and English counterparts were no more successful in harnessing state and mercantile connections together in the interests of colonial promotion. Together, these examples illustrate the way in which lost colonies represented, in seventeenth-century northeastern North America, not an aberration but a mainstream phenomenon. They were products of the debatability of colonization’s value in the context of resource exploitation, and also of the many nuances of the spectrum of interactions among imperial, colonial, and aboriginal interests. In some locales, colonial settlements thrived. In others, they did not. The complexities of early modern empires could hardly have allowed it to be otherwise.