

The 1726 Treaty and Utrecht

The previous two chapters examined the first clause of the articles of peace and agreement. That clause outlined the historical conjuncture that had led to the treaty's signing and the steps to be taken for its ratification. In the next two chapters I analyse the six clauses of the treaty that created the legal structure intended to govern Mi'kmaq–British relations.

Central to the 1726 treaty was the Treaty of Utrecht, which was signed in April 1713 by France and by Great Britain and brought to a close more than a decade of war. Though most of the battles had been fought – and most of the casualties had been suffered – in Europe rather than North America, the war's end affected Acadians and Mi'kmaq. Buried within the treaty was an agreement by France to surrender sovereignty over Acadia to Great Britain.

Though pleased that Acadia had been added to its burgeoning empire, Great Britain lacked the money to make something of the colony. To be sure, after 1713 a regiment was dispatched to man the fort at Annapolis Royal, a governing council was set up, and some feeble attempts were made to extend British control over the mainland. But without money to grease the wheels of empire, efforts to establish a forceful British presence could not succeed. Acadia was part of Britain's empire, but it was a poor part. The colonial office's decision to rename 'Acadia' Nova Scotia was no more than a symbolic gesture: Nova Scotia remained what it had been before 1713, Acadian and Mi'kmaq.

British efforts to exert control in Acadia were also undermined by the French military presence at Île Royale and by the close political relationship the French enjoyed with the Mi'kmaq on the mainland and