

The Development of Elites in Acadian New Brunswick, 1861-1881 (McGill-Queen's Studies in Ethnic History; Series One)

Sheila M. Andrew



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Challenging accepted notions that elite dominance defined Acadian ideology, Sheila Andrew attributes the development of the Acadian elites not to the "Acadian renaissance" or an Acadian nationalist spirit but to emerging economic and political opportunities. Through an objective analysis of the formation and composition of elites in New Brunswick from 1861 to 1881, Andrew argues that there was no single elite class among Acadians, only a series of elites who were neither united nor in a position to influence Acadian society as a whole. She identifies four elite classes - the farming elite, the commercial elite, the educated elite, which includes priests and professionals, and the political elite - and examines their family and community backgrounds and career paths to determine how they achieved elite status. She investigates patterns of networking growth and continuity among elites as well as the relationship between elites and non-elites. Arguing that Acadian nationalism did not fit the traditional pattern of nationalism in a colonized country because of the peculiar nature of Acadian society and the minority status of francophone Acadians within anglophone New Brunswick, she situates the Acadian experience within the context of other cultural and linguistic minorities.

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