

Dear Hubert Lacroix

As Minister of Tourism, Heritage and Culture for the province of New Brunswick, I am writing to express my disappointment in the docu-drama, *The Story of Us*. If the production is to truly represent the challenges and struggles that define us, it must include the stories of thousands years of occupation by Indigenous people as well as the French exploration and Acadian settlement in what is now New Brunswick and the other Maritime provinces. Furthermore, it must include one of the greatest diaspora in history – the expulsion of the Acadians.

The omission of these significant historical facts and events fundamentally distorts the perception of the history of our province, our region and our country. If the intention is to inform and inspire our youth and future generations, the story of us must be told in a manner that does not perpetuate traditional regional perceptions.

When discussing early French settlement in North American, the first episode makes no apparent reference to the 1604 habitation established by Pierre Dugua de Mons on St Croix Island and, perhaps more importantly, Acadie in general.

Although the show initially alludes to Europeans visiting the Bay of Fundy and other areas of eastern North America, the show portrays European settlement (i.e. French Settlement) in northern North America essentially beginning in 1608 at what is now Quebec City.

In actuality, Pierre Dugua de Mons and cartographer Samuel De Champlain, visited the Bay of Fundy and, in 1604, established what was meant to be a permanent French settlement on St. Croix Island (now US territory in the St Croix River adjacent what is now New Brunswick). In fact, Parks Canada recognizes that St. Croix Island as the first attempt at year-round colonization by the French. In 1603, the King of France had granted to Pierre Dugua de Mons the privilege of trade and responsibility for settlement in the area now known as eastern Canada and the State of Maine.

The winter of 1604-1605 on Saint Croix Island was a cruel one for Pierre Dugua's French expedition. Iced in by freezing temperatures, 35 of 79 men died. The health of those remaining began to improve with the arrival of spring and with the help of the Indigenous people. Although the expedition moved on to establish Port Royal across the bay in present day Nova Scotia by summer, the French presence in North America had begun.

It is important to note that there is concern in Nova Scotia as well, since the settlement of Port Royal which was established in 1605 was also not referenced in this first episode. Nor was the welcome of the remaining French expedition by Membertou and the Mi'kmaq people.

Champlain did return to North America and, in 1608, establishes further settlement, this time at what is now Quebec City. While efforts were undertaken to increase the French population, relationships with Indigenous peoples continue to be built and the fur trading economy expanded west, the producers do not to tell the parallel maritime story - increasing French settlement in Acadie, extensive trade and relationship building with indigenous people, as well as amazing stories such as Madame Latour's heroic defense of Fort Latour in 1645.

As the episode ramps up highlighting the outcomes of the 1759 Battle of the Plains of Abraham and the challenges to come, it also fails to mention, for example, the fall of Louisburg and the *Grand Dérangement* by the British in Acadie.

In reviewing the episode guide for the series, it does not appear that these gaps in the story will be addressed. In light of these substantial and serious omissions, I would like to know how the CBC will rectify the situation. Updating the CBC website with a fuller and more accurate account under the heading of "Samuel de Champlain builds the first permanent European settlement in Canada" would be a positive first step. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely  
Minister John Ames  
Minister of Tourism, Heritage and Culture