

URBANISM IN A REGIONAL CONTEXT
with special reference to NORTHWESTERN NEW BRUNSWICK

A Thesis

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by

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ABSTRACT

This study is based both on library research made at the University of Manitoba and a field survey conducted by the author with the Community Planning Branch of the New Brunswick Department of Municipal Affairs in Northwestern New Brunswick during the summer of 1969. It may be regarded as a heuristic attempt to find throughout the literature on planning, the tools of analysis and planning that may be best adapted to that area of New Brunswick.

In order to achieve this goal, the author first examines the region from the point of view of the chronologic formation of settlement patterns, and the present form of the settlement of the area. In Northwestern New Brunswick, this settlement pattern possesses a rural character with all its advantages and challenges. The region is then re-examined as a planning field; homogeneous and polarized characteristics are pointed out, releasing the total region as it exists in 1970. An indefinite projection of the region is then attempted with the application of the concept of "villages-centres" as polarized centers for the "ville-fédération", possible form of the future region. The last finding of the research is that of an adequate structure to devise for the implementation of a programme regarding the new form to be taken by that area in Northwestern New Brunswick.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	vii
I A CHANGING REGION - THE MADAWASKA PLANNING DISTRICT	1
1. STUDY OF THE SETTLEMENT PATTERN	1
History of the settlement	2
2. THE CHALLENGES OF THE MADAWASKA PLANNING DISTRICT RELATED TO THE SETTLEMENT PATTERNS	8
The Settlement Patterns	8
Out-Migration, its Nature and Effects	10
Economic Potentials of non Urban Settlements	15
The Regional Infrastructure	18
II THE REGIONAL STRUCTURE	
1. HOMOGENEOUS CHARACTERISTICS UNIFYING THE REGION	25
The Cultural and Institutional Entity of the Popula.	25
The Natural Resources	30
Centripetal Forces	35
2. POLARIZED CHARACTERS OF THE REGION	36
Centers of Communities	36
Importance and Nature of Central Functions	44
Application of Central Place Theories	45
Emerging Communities	50
Final Step in the Delimitation of the Madawaska Planning District	52
3. THE REGION TODAY, COMMUNITIES WITHIN A COMMUNITY	54
III THE FUTURE REGION, A POLARIZED FORM OF SETTLEMENT	63
1. THE FUTURE OF REGIONAL CENTERS	63
The Trends Towards Larger Communities	64

2. BUILDING THE REGION	66
A Solution to the Principal Challenges	67
The Nature of the New Region	68
The "Villages-Centres"	70
The Future of Service Centers in the Region	73
IV IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAMME	81
1. THE NATURE OF THE PLAN	81
Basic Qualities of the Plan	81
Implementation	83
2. THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE	85
Regional Administration	85
CONCLUSION	89
APPENDICES	92
BIBLIOGRAPHY	97

TABLES

I	NEW INDUSTRIES SINCE 1950 STILL IN OPERATION	21
II	ROMAN CATHOLIC POPULATION	28
III	AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS SERVED PER CHURCH	39
IV	CLASSIFICATION OF MAJOR TRADE CENTERS IN NEW BRUNSWICK	46
V	INDEX OF RETAIL TRADE ACTIVITIES IN MADAWASKA PLANNING DISTRICT	49
VI	SETTLEMENTS BY CLASSES OF IMPORTANCE	56
VII	INDEX OF COMMUNITY CENTERS	59
VIII	THE FUTURE REGION - HIERARCHY OF SETTLEMENTS	78

FIGURES

I	POPULATION PYRAMID - PARISH OF STE.-ANNE	12
II	POPULATION PYRAMID - PARISH OF DRUMMOND	13

MAPS

I	THE MADAWASKA PLANNING DISTRICT	viii
II	THE FIRST LAND GRANTS	4
III	ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES	6
IV	DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION	9
V	DISTRIBUTION OF POTATO CROPLAND	17
VI	DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS OF FRENCH ORIGIN	27
VII	DISTRIBUTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN NEW BRUNSWICK	32
VIII	DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS	41
IX	INCORPORATED SETTLEMENTS	43
X	TRADE CENTERS OF NEW BRUNSWICK	48
XI	TRADE CENTERS OF THE MADAWASKA PLANNING DISTRICT	51
XII	COMMUNITY CENTERS	60
XIII	THE FUTURE REGIONAL STRUCTURE	79

INTRODUCTION

Gaston Bardet has defined "urbanism" in the following terms: "Présentement, l'urbanisme désigne l'aménagement du sol à toutes les échelles, l'étude de toutes les formes de localisations humaines sur la terre."¹ Land and settlement are therefore the central core to consider in urbanism, even though the ways of coping with them may be different.

The main objective of the present research is to select methods of coping with land use and settlement within a region defined by the Community Planning Branch of the Department of Municipal Affairs of New Brunswick, and called the Madawaska Planning District. This region, shown on Map I, is located in the Northwestern part of the Province of New Brunswick: it includes all of Madawaska County and the parishes of Drummond, Denmark and Grand Falls in Victoria County. In a latter part of the research, the method by which the boundary was arrived at will be outlined.

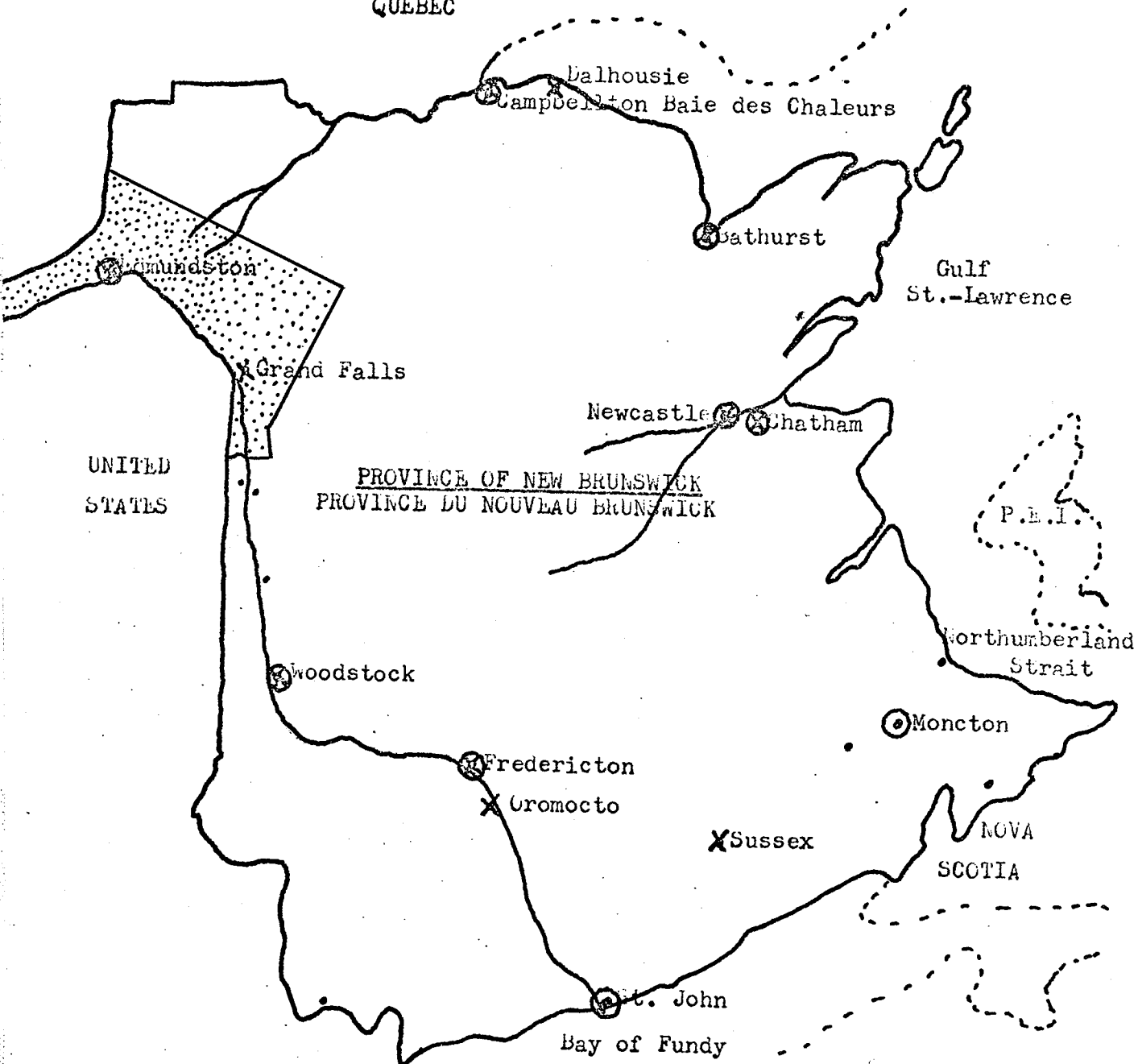
Essentially, the main issue of this present study will be to identify problems and assets related to the settlement of the region, and with the use of experiences and theories that have evolved elsewhere, do a synthesis of the problems for the Madawaska Planning District. The basic motive for this objective resides in the fact that each community of a region cannot be planned separately: In the

¹ BARDET, Gaston, L'Urbanisme, Paris, Que Sais-Je, Presses Universitaires de France, 1967, p. 27.

MAP I

THE MADAWASKA PLANNING DISTRICT

QUEBEC



- LEGEND:
- Primary Wholesale Centres
 - ⊗ Secondary Wholesale Centres & Complete Shopping Centres
 - ✕ Partial Shopping Centres
 - Full Convenience Centres
 - ▨ The Madawaska Planning District

Madawaska Planning District, there are over ten incorporated villages and towns in need of planning; but it is virtually impossible to deal with them separately. An alternative must therefore be attempted at the regional level.

This study will first seek to define the settlement patterns of the region and identify the challenges and assets that may be related to them. In a second chapter, the present regional structure of the region will be identified with the application of pertinent research methods. The third chapter will introduce measures that have been used in other areas and the application of these measures to the Madawaska Planning District. Finally, there will be an examination of the form that should characterize the plan and the administrative structure in order to cope with the problems of the region.

CHAPTER I

A CHANGING REGION - THE MADAWASKA PLANNING DISTRICT

Before coping with the problems of planning within any region, it is essential to know the area's assets; the challenges that may arise in its development; and the aspects that give the region its distinctive personality. These factors will determine how planning principles will be applied to make the Madawaska Planning District the field, the instrument and the growth factor of future planning endeavours in Northwestern New Brunswick. The first chapter will therefore look at the settlement patterns of the region as well as the more general facets of the development of the area. The settlement patterns, being the major aspect of the study, will constitute the first area of concern. Then, the main problems related to the settlement patterns will be pointed out, and finally, there will be a brief appraisal of the assets which may become the major growth factors of any future development: namely, the resources and the forces that unite the settlements of the region.

1. STUDY OF THE SETTLEMENT PATTERN

The settlement itself may first be looked at historically, and then from the point of view of the present geographic identification of population agglomerations.

HISTORY OF THE SETTLEMENT

Gaston Bardet set the terms of reference of any study of the chronology of the settlement patterns, as they may be related to planning, by saying:

Il va sans dire qu'il ne faut pas chercher à faire l'histoire des agglomérations; mais la connaissant à fond, il faut en tirer les faits qui permettent d'éclairer l'état présent ou futur de la ville ou de la région; tous les autres sont inutiles.²

An examination of the motives and the spirit of the people who settled the Madawaska Planning District may shed some light on the present state of the region: this is why some key documents on the history of the area were scrutinized to extract information relevant to the development of the settlement.

"Les historiens ont retracé l'existence d'un poste français à Grand Sault (Grand Falls) dès 1753, mais son histoire moderne commença en 1791 quand le gouverneur Thomas Carleton y établit un poste militaire".³ Practically speaking, European settlers first arrived in the Northwestern part of New Brunswick around these dates.

In June 1785, the Governor of New Brunswick approved the settlement of Acadians in the area which is today located between Edmundston and St.-Léonard:

2 BARDET, Gaston, Mission de l'Urbanisme, Paris, Editions Ouvrières, 1952, p. 54.

3 LAGACE, Anita, Grand-Sault Hier et Aujourd'hui, 1946, p.31.

The new settlers picked out their lots and began clearing them. While some of them chose to settle close to the south bank, others established their homes a bit below this temporary settlement, and still others on the banks of the Green River. Four families settled on the north bank of the Saint-John, Louis and Michel Mercure picking lots near the Indian Village (today, Iroquois), and Olivier and Pierre Cyr chose lots on the Iroquois River.⁴

The "Mazerolle Grant" was issued on October 1, 1790: the "Thibodeau Grant" in 1794. These concessions, illustrated by Map II were subdivided into river lots of 200 acres with a frontage of 60 rods. Map II also shows the 1872 grant to people from Denmark.

The first church was built in the middle of the colony at the present site of St.-Basile, in 1793:

As if encouraged by the sense of progress and permanency suggested by the church, new houses were built on all sides. The Church had been built on Lot # 23 on the north east shore of the St. John, reserved for public use by the consent of Executive Council of New Brunswick... in answer to a request of the people of Madawaska.⁵

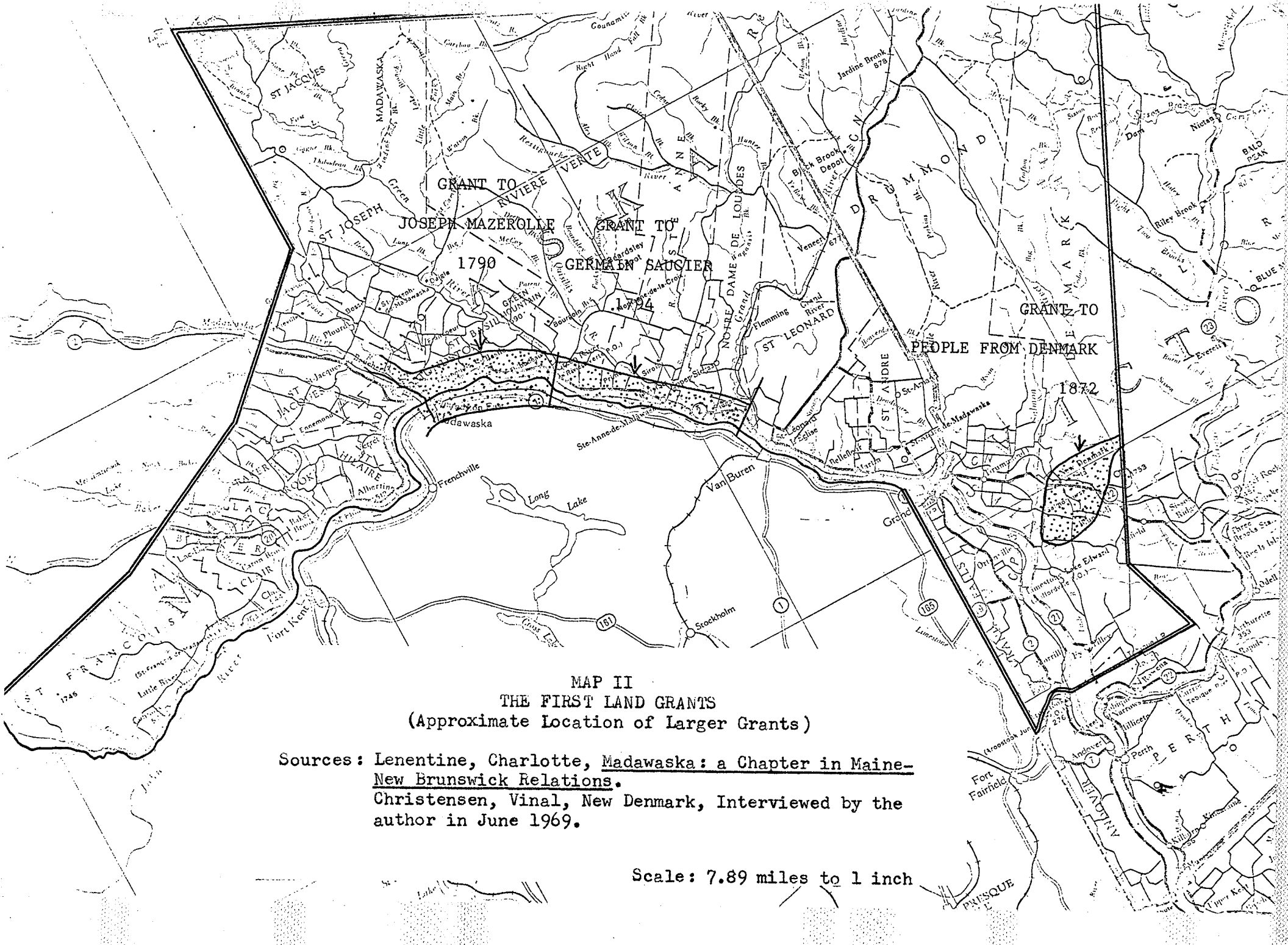
The settlement then spread to the east as far as St.-Léonard and toward the west to Fort Kent, and this on both sides of the river.

It must be noted that, until 1843 when the Webster-Ashburton treaty was signed, the Acadians settled freely on both sides of the St. John River:

The settlement at Madawaska was a community separate and nearly isolated from the world beyond Grand Falls to the south and Lac Témiscouata to the north. In the final decision, Madawaskans themselves were given very little consideration. No plebiscite was ever held. The Americans had no particular interest in acquiring Madawaska as such. Nor did the British

⁴ LÉVENTINE, Charlotte, Madawaska: A Chapter in Maine-New Brunswick Relations, Fredericton, M.A. Thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1955, p. 17.

⁵ Ibid., p. 24.



MAP II
 THE FIRST LAND GRANTS
 (Approximate Location of Larger Grants)

Sources: Lenentine, Charlotte, Madawaska: a Chapter in Maine-New Brunswick Relations.
 Christensen, Vinal, New Denmark, Interviewed by the author in June 1969.

Scale: 7.89 miles to 1 inch

weep much over losing a portion of the settlement.⁶

The treaty divided the colony into two parts, with the result that a large number of Acadians are still living along the St. John River in the State of Maine.

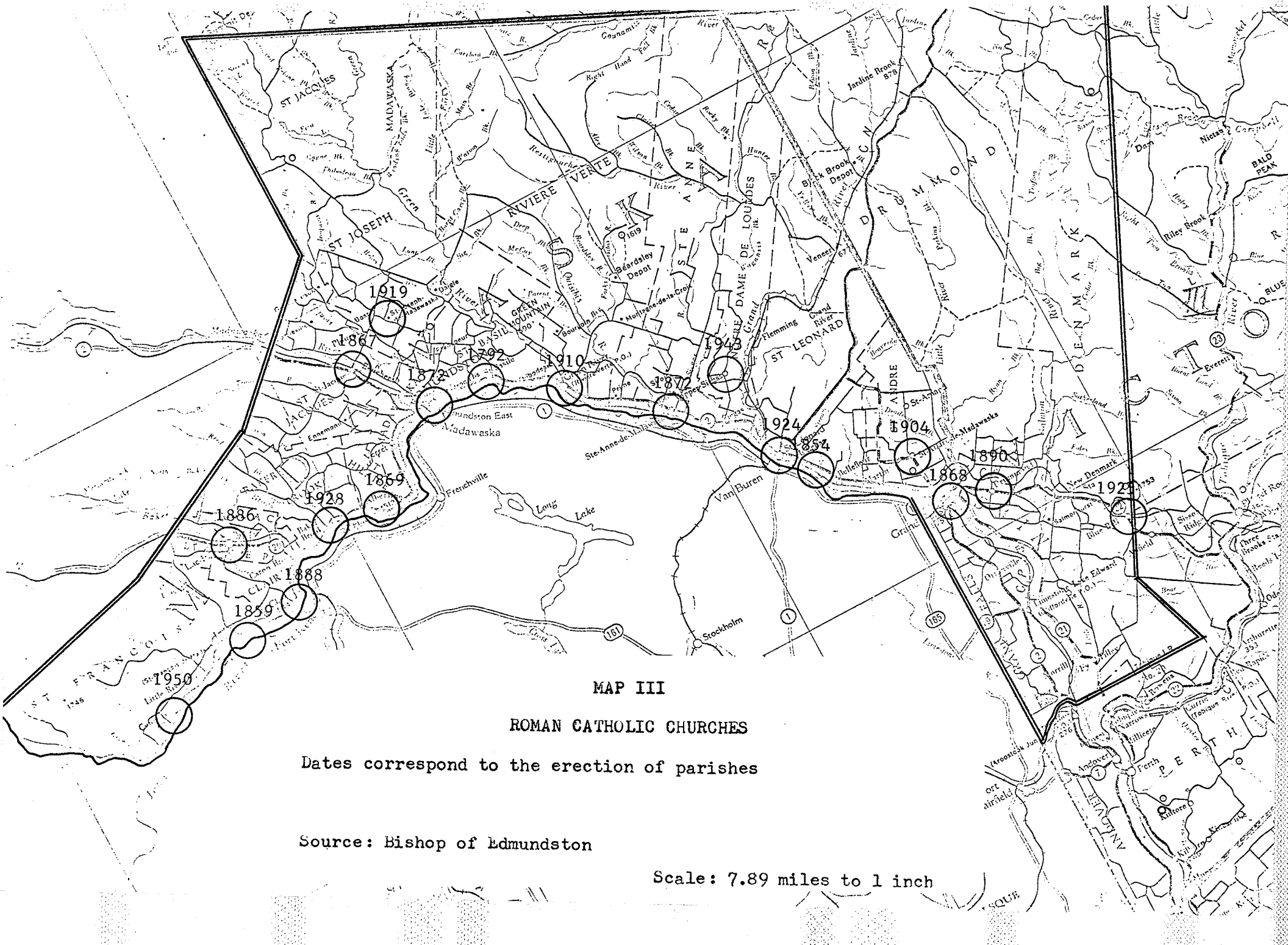
Before 1812, the settlement had spread out along the Grande Rivière into the present parish of Ste.-Anne, into the "Charitaqua" region, and soon little villages grew up at Grand Platin, St.-Hilaire, La Décharge (Later Fort Kent), St.-François d'Assise, St.-François Xavier, St.- Charles, St.-Léonard and St.-Jacques.

The early flour mills were water driven and the first seems to have been at St.-Basile, where it was built by Paul Poirier. Others soon appeared at St.-David, Grande-Isle, Grande Rivière,⁷ and Violet Brook, as well as St.-François and Chataqua.

The turning point in the growth of any settlement seems to have been the arrival of a parish priest and the erection of a church that would give birth to new parishes. Map III shows the dates when churches appeared in different settlements of the area. The people of the region were very religious, and the building of churches with a resident priest was a sign of prosperity which, in relation to the other settlements in the area, proved to be true. As shown earlier for St.-Basile, the building of the church marked a turning point that encouraged the growth of the villages and towns of the area. These villages even though they were not incorporated as such, were in fact the centers for all the religious parish that extended spatially as far as what the people still call "les conces-

⁶ LENENTINE, Charlotte, Madawaska: a Chapter in Maine-New Brunswick Relations, Fredericton, M.A. Thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1955, p. ii.

⁷ Ibid., p. 43.



MAP III

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCHES

Dates correspond to the erection of parishes

Source: Bishop of Edmundston

Scale: 7.89 miles to 1 inch

sions". Demographic growth did not always mean growth of the economic base, however, and Lenentine relates the severe difficulties that the land settlers had to go through. The suitability of the land for agriculture, (as will be seen later) is not consistent throughout the settled area, and many difficulties are recounted by historians.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, following the Napoleonic wars, Britain turned toward America for lumber sources. Lumbering operations appeared in the Lac Baker area and gave birth to a further expansion of the settlement of the land. Around Grand Falls, the land was settled first by the discharged British soldiers, and in the 1860's by Irish people who came to Canada following the great crisis of 1838. Around 1870, Danes arrived along the Saint John River below Grand Falls and settled the New Denmark area.⁸

In the 1880's the St.-André and Drummond area became the last part of the oecumene of the region to receive new settlers. A group of French Canadians from Kamouraska County in the Province of Quebec were granted lots in the area just north of Grand Falls.

From that time on, urbanization trends started to set in with the coming of the railroad and other modern facilities, including mainly the industrialization of the wood industry. In 1882, the Murchie lumber mill initiated the growth of Edmundston, now the largest settlement in the region. In 1911, the mill was purchased by Fraser Companies Limited, and in 1918, it made its entry into the pulp industry.⁹ Still today, this industry is the dominant function

8 Interview with Vinal Christensen, New Denmark, June, 1969.

9 ALBERT, Julie, Madawaska Centennial, 1969, p. 88.

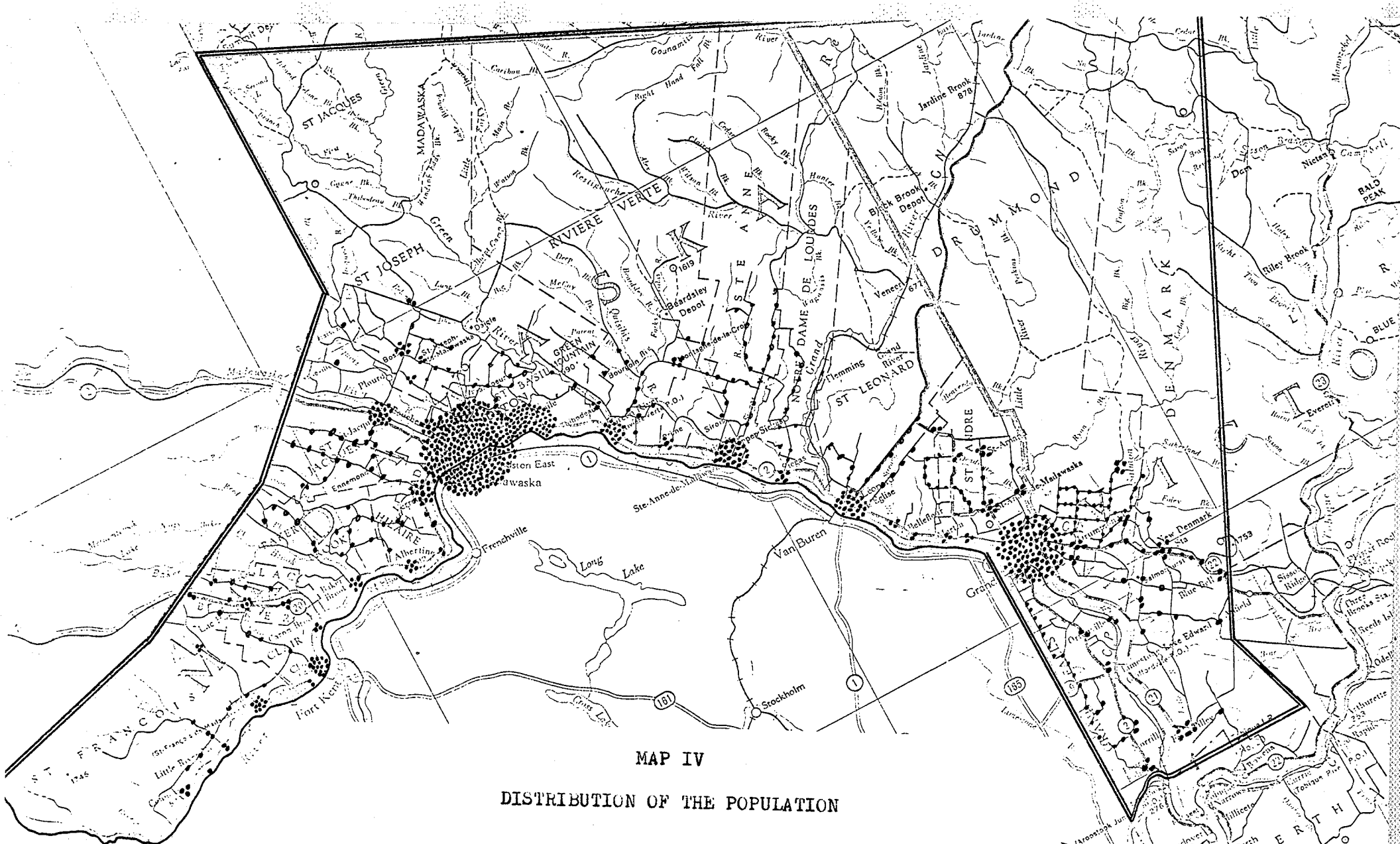
of Edmundston. The agricultural industry which has surrounded Grand Falls, apart from the lumber mills that have come and gone through the years, has made it grow into a prosperous agricultural center.

Other settlements in the region have lived essentially from agriculture and forestry. The spatial importance of more dense settlements, (as opposed to the open country), has manifested itself, as seen earlier, by their becoming religious and commercial centers for their surrounding parish.

2. THE CHALLENGES OF THE MADAWASKA PLANNING DISTRICT RELATED TO THE SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

THE SETTLEMENT PATTERN

The population is somewhat evenly distributed throughout the settled portion of the district. Map IV shows the general form of the settlements throughout the district. A total of 48,000 people live in this ribbon of land, 90 miles long, having a width varying between one and twelve miles. Only two settlements account for a population in excess of 2,000; those are Edmundston (12,517) and Grand Falls (4,158). St.-Basile, St.-Léonard and Ste.-Anne de Madawaska all account for more than 1,000 population. Seven more locations appear in the ranks with a population of 500 people or more: St.-Jacques, Verret, Rivière Verte, Iroquois, Clair, La Côte du Sault and St.-François. Another 21,000 people live in the 65 more modest settlements found in the region or have their home located along the roads that separate these numerous settlements. In seven parishes throughout the region we find more than one third of the population of the parish living



MAP IV

DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION

One dot to 50 persons

Source: 1966 Census

Scale: 7.89 miles to 1 inch