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INTRODUCTION

My reason for writing the first edition of this book in 1988 was to put French-English problems in perspective during the language tension of that period. This second edition is presented as an update of our progress and an attempt to keep the story alive for a new generation.

It is essential that the epic saga of the struggle between the French and the English not be lost in the dust bins of history. Future generations deserve to know the story. History is who we are. As the great professor, George Santoyana pointed out, “Those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it.” And our past is definitely not something that we should want to repeat. The story of the French and the English is one of brutality, persecution and misunderstanding. In the end, neither side actually won, but ordinary people on both sides paid a heavy price. Our common history is, for the most part, simply the story of poor people suffering and learning to survive in a hostile environment.

There are those who might suggest that this publication is biased due to my family connections. They would be wrong. While it is true that through my mother’s family and my wife, I am connected to a number of Acadian families, this has not in any way affected my presentation of the French-English struggle. I let the facts stand on their own merit with as little interpretation as possible. Although at times one side may appear worse than the other, I have let the chips fall where they may.

It is my belief that enlightenment is essential to peace and that the truth must always triumph over propaganda. The Great Divide is an accurate and balanced portrayal of past and current realities. I hope you enjoy it.

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Fredericton, N. B.
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CHAPTER 1

THE GREAT DIVIDE

Although there have been many difficult periods, relations between the French and the English were at one time more congenial. In fact the two groups were part of the same family of tribes and spoke essentially the same language. This is where our story begins.

When Julius Caesar, the great Roman Emperor, entered what are now Germany, France and England with his mighty army, he found in these regions a fierce, barbaric people who are today known as the Celts. After some years of violent fighting he managed to more or less subdue most of these people and make their lands into Roman provinces. Much of present day France became Gallia and much of England became Britannia. Although the Celts had their own language which was spoken in several dialects throughout Western Europe, eventually most of them fused their language with the Latin language of their conquerors. They also became somewhat less barbaric by assimilation with the more advanced Roman civilization. This was probably a fortunate thing since Julius Caesar does not leave us a very good impression of our early ancestors.

Most of the tribes in the interior do not grow corn but live on