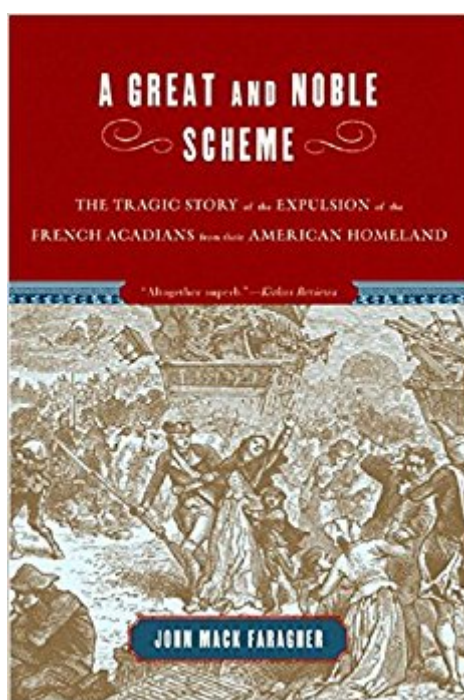


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A Great And Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story Of The Expulsion Of The French Acadians From Their American Homeland



Synopsis

"Altogether superb; a worthy memorial to the victims of two and a half centuries past."--Kirkus Reviews, starred review
In 1755, New England troops embarked on a "great and noble scheme" to expel 18,000 French-speaking Acadians ("the neutral French") from Nova Scotia, killing thousands, separating innumerable families, and driving many into forests where they waged a desperate guerrilla resistance. The right of neutrality; to live in peace from the imperial wars waged between France and England; had been one of the founding values of Acadia; its settlers traded and intermarried freely with native Mikmaq Indians and English Protestants alike. But the Acadians' refusal to swear unconditional allegiance to the British Crown in the mid-eighteenth century gave New Englanders, who had long coveted Nova Scotia's fertile farmland, pretense enough to launch a campaign of ethnic cleansing on a massive scale. John Mack Faragher draws on original research to weave 150 years of history into a gripping narrative of both the civilization of Acadia and the British plot to destroy it. 40 illustrations, 6 maps

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Customer Reviews

Faragher relates, in all its complex, searingly sad details, the story of how the hapless French Acadians were run out of their Nova Scotia homes—a story known to most from Longfellow's *Evangeline*. Caught between French and British empires, these peaceful farming and fishing families, descendants of French settlers, struggled to maintain their neutrality and their birthright ways. But in 1755, British and colonial New England forces rounded them up and dispersed them by sea throughout North America. Families were broken up; hundreds died on their voyages; their towns were torched; and only small, scattered communities, like the Cajuns of Louisiana, survived

into the modern era. "The removal of the Acadians," concludes Faragher (the Yale biographer of Daniel Boone), "was the first episode of state-sponsored ethnic cleansing in American history." More than that, the communities destroyed, some 150 years old, had lived peaceably and intermarried with the Mikmaq natives of the Canadian shores. A way of life that could have been a harbinger of our own era of diversity was destroyed. Unfortunately, the book overwhelms the reader with detail, as if Faragher wanted to set down every fact of Acadian history so it would never again be lost. Instead, it is readers who'll be lost in this gripping tale of a dishonorable affair in American history. B&w illus. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

French Acadia--today's Nova Scotia and New Brunswick--was destroyed in 1755 when British officers expelled an entire people. Here Faragher perceptively narrates the 150-year-long history of French Acadia, profiling its founding personages, significant events, and the Acadians' gradual acquisition of a distinct identity. Grown from intermarriage with the indigenous Mikmaq, this identity resisted pledging fealty to the French or British sovereigns, but to say the Acadians' fate was the consequence of being crushed between imperial millstones would be simplistic. To paraphrase the author, not inexorable forces but willful men determined what happened, a thesis supported by lenient and diplomatic British officials (Britain held Acadia after 1709) who understood the Acadians. Army officer Charles Lawrence was not such a man--with expedient though specious arguments about Acadian hostility, he ordered destruction and removal as a preliminary to the incipient French and Indian War. Faragher estimates expulsion cost about 10,000 lives; the survivors scattered to Louisiana and elsewhere. From the author of the definitive Daniel Boone (1992), this is a superior work of history. Gilbert Taylor Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"A GREAT AND NOBLE SCHEME" is a wonderful, well-researched and well-documented book about the complex story of the Acadians... much more complex than "EVANGELINE" might lead us to believe... still a tragic story, but with a lot more twists and turns than I would ever have imagined. I appreciate John M. Faragher's passion for telling the whole story.

The book delves into the interconnected realm of Native people, French settlers in Acadie, and even those in New England. The events between England and France produced a very independent people, neither French nor English, and might explain much regarding our American 'Cajuns. I

found a number of names linked to my father's family, and was amazed to discover the roles they played in the settlement of Acadie. At times the book jumps from one period to another, but a bit of back reading produces an explanation and logic behind the sudden movement to another subject/time. I would recommend this book to anyone researching Acadian ancestors or culture connected with the mid-17th to late 18th century period in this very different part of the New World.

The story of the expulsion of the Acadians from what we now call the Canadian Maritimes is told here with a rare combination of passion and objectivity. Faragher shows how the Yankees and the British, at both the governmental and the individual level, systematically set out to wipe the Acadians from the land -- and from the earth. Looked at with 21st century eyes, this historic episode is clearly seen as a shameful American story of ethnic cleansing. Faragher does not call for collective guilt, but for acknowledgement; yes, this is part of our nations' histories -- Canada, Britain, and the US --it happened here. This is particularly poignant in 2005, which marks the 250th anniversary of the beginning of Le Grand Derangement, where thousands of children, women and men died and thousands more were deceived, robbed, brutally treated, sent into a most painful exile and in some cases held in de facto slavery. This is not an easy subject to read -- but it is an important one, and its lessons will stay with me for a long time.

Let me start by saying that I'm originally from Louisiana and my mom's family is overwhelmingly Cajun. I'm also a librarian by profession and have done a lot of genealogical research on her family. This book really put things into perspective for me because at least half of the names mentioned in it also appear in my family tree. I highly recommend that anyone of Cajun ancestry who has an interest in the subject read this book. I have yet to come across its equal on the subject of Acadian history.

This is the most complete story I have ever read on the Acadians. The author has left no stone unturned in his research for this book. I was amazed at all I had learned about the Acadians relationship with the Mic Mac indians. I was so impressed with this book that I bought one for each member of my entire family. It was a difficult read at first but if you persevere and read on you will be richly rewarded. This is the one and only book I highly recommend if you are interested in the history of the Acadians.

This is a real 5-star book. I was amazed at the level of research, and the abundance of primary

sources quoted. A very thorough explanation of the Acadian tale. I wish all popular history books were this good. For those interested in Louisiana Acadians, I would recommend reading this in conjunction with Carl Brasseaux's books; they pick up the story where Faragher's leaves off. I hope to find a similar book about the northern Acadians. If any other reviewers know of one, please add it to your review.

The Expulsion of the Acadians has always remained an emotional issue among Americans and Canadians descended from them. We commiserate in the romantic version of Longfellow's *EVANGELINE*; yet we cringe at the "historic" versions of Parkman and others, not always as objective as many would have us think. It is a welcome relief to peruse the objective and well-documented version of Faragher, a professional historian. While not an easy read, the book should be on the shelf of every Acadian-Cajun descendant. It gives us a fresh, if not always "comfortable," view of this incident, somewhat different from the version most of us were sold: frequently one-sided in favoring the Anglo (even Elizabethan) view of that incident, which was so tragic for so many. Richard MacDonough, Ph.D.

Remarkable details. A must read for anyone of Acadian ancestry. You never learned this in history class! This work helps to clarify early politics of Massachusetts. It is not a fast read; instead, the reader is compelled to reach out to other texts to develop greater understanding of events.

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