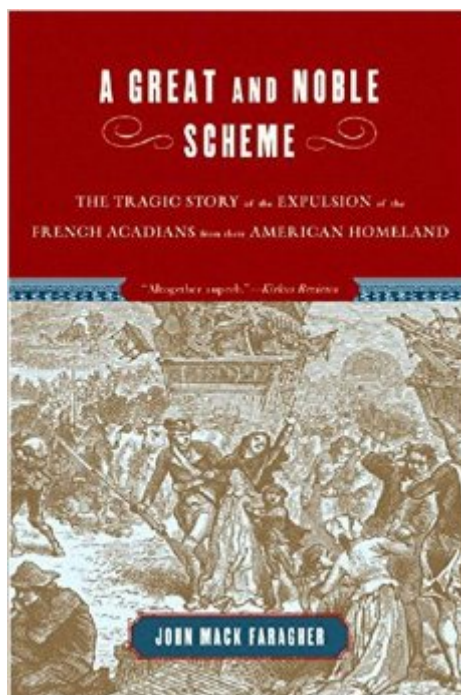


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A Great And Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story Of The Expulsion Of The French Acadians From Their American Homeland



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

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A newly published history describing the tragic expulsion of the 1755 French Acadians from their homes in Nova Scotia puts the account of this horrible incident into a readable format. "A Great and Noble Scheme", by John Mack Faragher presents the daunting facts about the terrible French removal in a logical history, combined in one nicely readable text. This year marks the 250th anniversary of Le Grand Derangement, a tragic episode in North American history known as the 1755 British expulsion of the French Acadians from Nova Scotia (called Acadie by the French at the time). Besides the tragic nature of the expulsion itself is the unfortunate lack of first person journals

describing the incident from a French Acadian's point of view. Popular Maine poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow gave his now classic interpretation of the Acadian separation from their homeland in his epic poem "Evangeline", written in 1847, or 92 years after the incident occurred. Faragher provides information about how the Acadians found themselves in a terrible vice with the British. The Acadians actually tried to remain neutral in the series of conflicts known as The French and Indian wars between the British and the French for control of Canada and North America. Acadians preferred trading to war. They continued their commerce with the French in Quebec and France, with the British and, also, with New Englanders. Acadians prospered with this economic freedom. Most historic accounts of the 1755 expulsion focus on the actual incident and what happened subsequently to the Acadians who were "scattered to the winds" in boats where they sailed to ports on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

This is a readable, well-researched history that lets us look at the well-trod landscape of colonial history in British North America from a novel and revealing perspective. In its own right, this is an interesting story with much vivid detail - which was undoubtedly a challenge for the author given the lack of detailed written source material for Acadia, especially as compared to Canada, New England, or even Newfoundland. The author does a good job of suggesting some of the deeper and more abstract historical analysis he gleans from his work without overburdening the story itself. There are some places where the author's own perspective is clearly revealed, as well as places where he brings some baggage from being an American rather than a Canadian looking at this relatively unfamiliar history (for example, he suggests intermarriage between the French and Native Americans in Acadia was unusual even by comparison to the rest of Canada, when such intermarriage was quite common in the Canadian interior). I suspect some of the analytical points look much different to those more steeped in Canadian history and its themes. But the book is most interesting read together with histories of New England or Canada. The Acadian story highlights some of the choices made that altered the cultures of each area, such as the differing relationships with Native Americans, or the differing relationships with the mother countries. For those interested in more popular and accessible history, I might suggest reading this together with "The Unredeemed Captive", for example.

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