



Rev. Ebenezer Parkman (1703-82)

No portrait exists of Rev. Parkman. This illustration appeared in Heman Packard DeForest and Edward Craig Bates, *The History of Westborough, Massachusetts* (Westborough: Published by the Town, 1891), with the notation: "This picture is reproduced from a pen and ink sketch made by a boy from memory. It is probably not a good likeness" (located opposite p. 66). Given that Parkman died in 1782, it is unclear when this sketch, published in 1891, would have been made or by whom.

"To Promote Civility and Benevolence":

Rev. Ebenezer Parkman
and an Acadian Refugee Family

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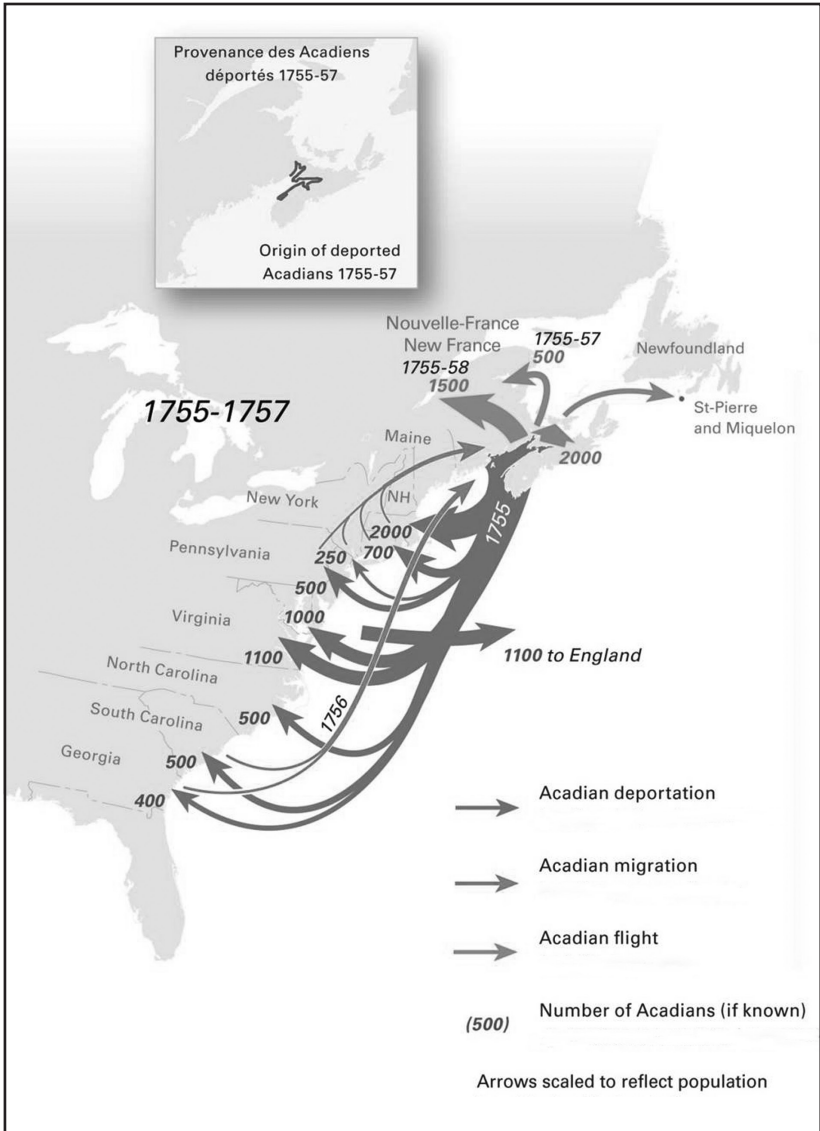


Abstract: *The diary of the Rev. Ebenezer Parkman of Westborough is a unique source for understanding the reception and experience of one Acadian family among some one thousand Acadians who were temporarily removed to Massachusetts in the 1750s. As a minister, Parkman was concerned about the spiritual and pastoral needs of Jean-Simon LeBlanc's family and as a farmer, he employed three of the family's teenage and young adult children. In addition to Rev. Parkman, several local families reached out to support the Acadians. The LeBlanc family's experience stands in marked contrast to the hostility and suspicion that characterized the reception of many Acadians in Massachusetts. Dr. Beales is a Professor Emeritus at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester.*

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BACKGROUND

In 1713 the Treaty of Utrecht ended Queen Anne's War, a European conflict that had spilled over into the North American continent, embroiling Spain and Great Britain in Florida and the Carolinas as well as Great Britain



Acadian Deportation, 1755-57

Source: Website of the Center for Canadian Studies, University of Maine.

and its New England colonies against the French and their native allies in New France. Under terms of the treaty, France ceded its territories of Hudson Bay, Acadia (the Canadian Maritime provinces and the Gaspée Peninsula), and Newfoundland to Great Britain.¹ The British thus gained territories as well as rule over French-speaking and indigenous inhabitants.²

This was not the first time that the lands and people had been taken from the French. In 1654, a fleet from Boston captured Port Royal (later named Annapolis Royal), and for sixteen years, "l'Acadie or Nova Scotia" was nominally controlled by New England until the territory was returned to French rule. In 1690, at the end of the seventeenth century, during King William's War, a fleet from Massachusetts again captured Port Royal; France regained the colony in 1697, only to see it fall once again to a fleet from New England.

For New Englanders and for the British, the allegiance of the conquered people was a matter of concern. As John Mack Faragher notes, the question of conquered populations' allegiance was not new. In 1690, during King William's War, the Acadians had insisted on neutrality between the English and the French. When the British regained the territory in 1713, Acadians were allowed to leave or, if they remained, to be secure in their property and religion as long as they swore an oath of loyalty—and that oath was to be unconditional. This was unacceptable to the Acadians who insisted that "we will take up arms neither against his Britannic Majesty, nor against France, nor against any of their subjects or allies, by which they meant their cousins, their Mi'kmaq, allies of the French." The British finally accepted this condition in 1730—hence, the terms "neutral French" or "French neutral."

When Britain and France again fought each other in King George's War (as it was known in the colonies, or the War of the Austrian Succession), New England's anti-French and anti-Catholic sentiments proved crucial in the emergence of an expulsion policy. Massachusetts Governor William Shirley believed that "Acadian neutrality was nothing but a sham and that the Acadians were treasonous supporters of the French." In 1745, he recommended "the immediate removal of some at least of the French inhabitants of Nova Scotia" and the settlement of New England families "in their room." With the war's end in 1748, no action was taken on Shirley's recommendation, but when a military government was established under Governor Edward Cornwallis, a primary goal was to end the Acadian problem, a task to which Cornwallis was unequal. But his successor, Lieutenant-Governor Charles Lawrence, was more resolute, seeking approval for expulsion of those Acadians who refused to take an oath of loyalty. Instructed to act on his own, Lawrence began implementing the process of expulsion. The process began in the fall of 1755

and lasted until 1778. Farms and businesses were destroyed. Acadians were shipped to many points around the Atlantic. Many moved or were removed several times. In November 1755, the first ships packed with Acadians arrived in Boston Harbor.

REV. EBENEZER PARKMAN WELCOMES JEAN-SIMON LEBLANC

In mid-October 1756, the Reverend Ebenezer Parkman (1703-1782) of the central Massachusetts town of Westborough learned that a “Family of *Neutral French*” had been moved to town (Oct. 16, 1756).³ Headed by fifty-three-year-old Jean-Simon LeBlanc, this family was among the many hundreds that the British had removed from Nova Scotia, with more than one thousand people living, at least temporarily, in Massachusetts.⁴ The story of the enormous hardships suffered by the Acadians has been told many times, with one historian likening the removal to “ethnic cleansing.” Whether or not one accepts that description, the brutal facts of the removal are undeniable. Dispossessed of lands and nearly all possessions, with family members separated, sometimes permanently, some 7,000 Acadians were transported from Nova Scotia to the British colonies to the south, with many hundreds — possibly several thousand — dying from shipwrecks, disease, and extreme privation. Even more devastating was the impact on the Acadians who escaped deportation and became refugees, suffering through years of warfare, exposure, starvation, and a second round of deportations. John Mack Faragher concludes that “it is likely that some 10,000 Acadians—the majority of them probably infants and children—lost their lives as a direct result of the campaign of removal from 1755 to 1763.”⁵

For those who survived, there are many stories of extreme hardship, reflecting at best indifference and most certainly a widespread prejudice against the newcomers. The Massachusetts Assembly declared that it was “very disagreeable” to receive “so great a number of persons whose gross bigotry [that is, partiality] to the Roman Catholic religion is notorious, and whose loyalty to His Majesty is suspected.” In late 1755, the Assembly placed the refugees under the provincial poor laws and directed that families be distributed among the towns, which would be reimbursed for housing and food. If the exiles were unable to provide for themselves by the spring of 1756, local authorities were empowered “to employ, bind out, or support said Inhabitants.” Petitions from a number of Acadian families suggest that binding out (that is, to place an individual under a contract to work for a specified period), a practice that was uncommon among them, caused great

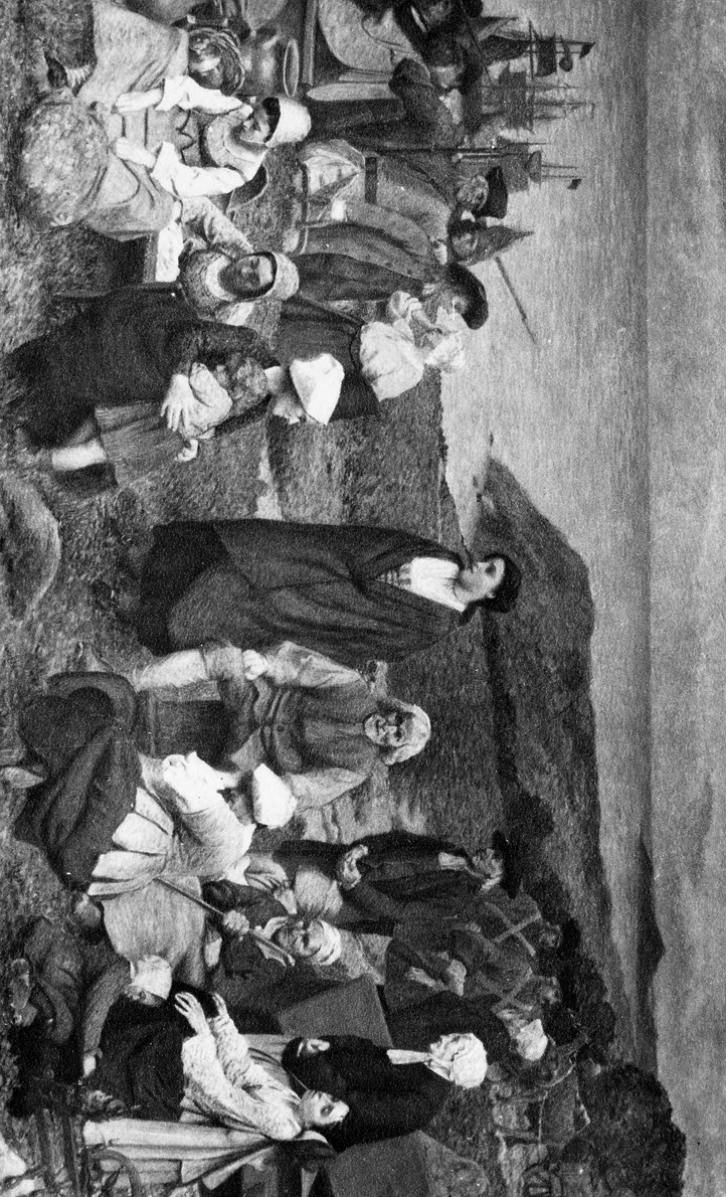
hardship.⁶ As one group of refugees wrote in a petition to the governor in 1756:

The loss which we have suffered from being deprived of our farms, from being brought here, and from being separated from each other, is nothing in comparison to that which we are now bearing in having our children torn from us, before our eyes. It is an outrage on nature itself. Had we the power to choose we would prefer to give up our bodies and souls rather than be separated from our children.⁷

This is the background against which the LeBlanc family arrived in Westborough. Official records of the Acadian removal and resettlement, including petitions from families, financial accounts, and petitions from the various towns in which they were settled, comprise the bulk of documentation about the experience of Acadians in Massachusetts.⁸ In the case of the LeBlanc family, however, Ebenezer Parkman's diary provides considerable evidence about the encounters between one Acadian family and the Westborough minister.⁹ The LeBlanc family lived in Westborough for eight years, about five of which are covered in Parkman's diary,¹⁰ and the evolving relationship between the Protestant minister and the Roman Catholic strangers permits an examination of the tensions and connections that both divided and united people from quite diverse backgrounds.

Ebenezer Parkman was born in Boston in 1703, the youngest son of William and Elizabeth (Adams) Parkman. His father was a shipwright, and his parents belonged to the New North Church of which his father was an original member and later a ruling elder. Parkman attended the North Latin School and entered Harvard College at the age of fourteen. Upon graduation in 1721, like many other graduates destined for the ministry, he taught school and preached where opportunity and need afforded. He was called by the people of Westborough in 1724, married soon thereafter, and was ordained on October 28, 1724, at the age of twenty-one. For the next fifty-eight years, he served as Westborough's minister, successfully weathering the discords and tensions of both the Great Awakening of the 1740s (he was a moderate New Light) and the American Revolution (he was at best a reluctant Whig).

The anonymous author of Parkman's obituary wrote that he was "given to hospitality."¹¹ That hospitality, which often included lodging as well as meals, extended not merely to parishioners, kin, friends, local dignitaries, ministerial colleagues, and fellow Harvard graduates, but also to a wide range of lesser individuals—for example, individuals with mental and physical



The Expulsion of the Acadians

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow published his epic poem, “Evangeline, A Tale of Acadie,” in 1847. It follows a young Acadian woman and her search for her lost love, set during the time of the 1755 Acadian expulsions. It remains one of Longfellow’s most famous poems. Source: National Park Service, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana Papers.

disabilities, redeemed captives, Quakers, soldiers, and beggars. As he wrote one Sunday, "I had rather have some poor widows, than the richest Ladys at my Table, especially on sacrament Dayes" (Oct. 21, 1770). There were limits to hospitality, as illustrated one stormy evening after the family had retired for the night. They were awakened by a beggar "of ill behavior." When Parkman's wife Hannah and daughter Anna Sophia asked him not to let the beggar into the house, the minister "bid him go to the Barn, but he was high and Malpert"—that is, impudent, and he went off. Parkman regretted it. As he wrote, "I wanted to take him in, but I had not convenience to lodge him and it would have disordered my House, by reason of the Fright that several were put into by him" (June 17, 1773).

There was nothing frightening about the LeBlanc family whom Parkman visited three days after their arrival. "The Mans Name is *Simon LeBlanc*," he wrote. "He is about 55. From Nova Scotia about 9 Leagues off from *Annapolis*. Has with him a Wife and 4 Children: himself Rheumatic—appears Sociable; is a roman Catholic; but is able to read" (Oct. 19, 1756). Other sources help round out this description. LeBlanc was in fact fifty-three years old, but the hardships of removal may have affected his health and appearance, leading Parkman and other residents of Westborough to believe that he was older than his actual years. He was born at Port Royal and inherited his father's land holdings about twenty-two miles from Port Royal. While Parkman noted that LeBlanc was able to read, other sources indicate that he also knew how to write. And while Parkman knew a bit of French, it is quite probable that LeBlanc was more comfortable in English than Parkman was in French. LeBlanc was no peasant farmer. His godfather had served briefly as governor of Acadia, and two of his nieces married British officials: "*LeBlanc* tells me his sister *Mary* marryed an Englishman by whom she had a number of Daughters: one of which marryed Governor Cosby, another Governor Enfield, of *Annapolis*, the last of which is the present Governor there and that his Kinswoman is also now living there" (Jan. 6, 1757).¹²

LeBlanc and his fifty-four-year-old wife Jeanne (Dupuis)¹³ were brought to Westborough with the four youngest of their eight children: Pierre, age twenty-two; Amand, eighteen; Marie-Magdeleine, fifteen; and Marie-Josephe, twelve. Four older children had been scattered by the removal: the LeBlancs' oldest son, thirty-two-year-old Jean-Simon, was in Lynn with his family. Thirty-one-year-old Isabelle and her family escaped deportation and made their way to Quebec. Natalie, age twenty-nine, and her family were in Manchester, while Joseph, who was almost twenty-seven when his parents and siblings arrived in Westborough, was with his wife, Marguerite, and her parents, Louis and Jeanne (Bourgeois) Robichaux in Cambridge.¹⁴ In

Massachusetts, as Faragher notes, “there was no attempt to keep extended families together, and indeed there seems to have been a deliberate attempt to break them up, to isolate the Acadians from their networks of support.”¹⁵

The relationship between Parkman and LeBlanc was based on three aspects of the LeBlanc family’s circumstances: their religious beliefs, the parents’ poor health and poverty, and the availability of their children as workers. As a minister, Parkman was concerned about the LeBlanc family’s wellbeing, both spiritual and temporal, and he welcomed or at least invited them to his home and church and visited them and their extended family members and friends who came to Westborough. Because of the age and gender structure of his family and the scarcity of labor during the Seven Years’ War, Parkman was able to employ three of the LeBlanc children for at least a short period.

RELIGION

Parkman’s conversations about religion with the elder LeBlanc were a regular part of his visits over the first six months of the French family’s stay in Westborough, but after that Parkman no longer pursued, or at least did not record, efforts to convince LeBlanc that the Protestant persuasion was to be preferred to Roman Catholicism. In part, Parkman was satisfying his own curiosity about the practices of Roman Catholics. Early on, for example, he found that in one of LeBlanc’s books, “the Ten Commandments were very oddly disposed”: the Second Commandment was omitted, and the Tenth was divided to make up for the omission. According to Parkman, “the 2d Commandment wholly omitted, and to make up the Number 10, the 10th was divided; the 9th was thou shalt not covet thy Neighbours wife – and the 10th thou shalt not covet thy Neighbours House etc.” (Dec. 10, 1756).

On a subsequent visit, LeBlanc was “still much out of Health,” and Parkman found that he “could make very little Opportunity to convey Instruction about Religion.” When he did call upon LeBlanc and his wife “to mind those great Matters, etc.,” LeBlanc had a ready answer: “he told me they did more about those Things than the English People here did: the young People here, he said, were very wicked so that he would not let his sons go much among them.” Understandably, Parkman concluded, “This was to my great Grief and Obstruction in what I would fain do for them” (Dec. 22, 1756). But, of course, Parkman was well aware of the temptations of youth. Thus, on a later Sunday, he gave “Cautions to the people at Noon concerning the profanation of Sabbath and at Night concerning Disorders at the ensuing Election” (May 22, 1757). The reference to young people’s wickedness may

have reflected, in part, the rising rates of fornication in New England towns;¹⁶ in the case of Westborough, a young white woman had given birth to a black child shortly before the LeBlanc family came to town (Oct. 6, 1756).

On another occasion, Parkman found LeBlanc "more attentive to my Discourse of Religion." He urged LeBlanc to accept the idea that religion was "the Service of God" and that the only way to know God's mind was to read the Bible. LeBlanc replied that the people of Annapolis "never Speak to one another about Religion but are free and Willing that each Party Should enjoy their own Way; the English go to their own Church and the French to theirs." Parkman insisted that LeBlanc not be offended that he spoke to him about religion. "If I had any love to him I *must*. There was no such way to manifest my true and hearty Love to him as this." (Jan. 26, 1757)

Parkman had heard that some of the French were "afraid of the English and especially of ministers, lest they Should speak to them about religion; and more peculiarly did not love to have their Children to be among the English for fear they Should be influenced to turn Hereticks." But LeBlanc was "not afraid for either himself, or his Children," and Parkman "might Speak freely." Whereupon, Parkman challenged him, in effect, to compare their respective religious practices with the Bible: "we would throw away whatever, in either, was not agreeable to the *Bible*." To this, Parkman recalled, LeBlanc "was profoundly still." The minister concluded, "Every Body must see for Himself in matters of Religion. We must not go along in the Dark." Parkman added that he did not want his people to trust him but rather "examine all I Said by the Bible." (Jan. 26, 1757) The next Saturday, Parkman wrote a letter in French to LeBlanc, asking him to come to church on Sunday and to dine with him. LeBlanc did not reply (Jan. 29, 1757).

Two weeks later, when Parkman made another visit, LeBlanc objected to the fact that many Protestants (for example, Quakers) were not baptized and that they did not practice penitence. Parkman replied that Protestants looked upon both Quakers and Catholics as heretical, that Christ had not appointed particular days of penitence, and that public fasts were set according to special occasions, with private fasts left to the "wisdom and Devoutness" of individuals (Feb. 14, 1757).

Parkman's efforts to engage LeBlanc in discussions of religion pretty much ended with his acknowledgment after another visit: "Can make very little progress in Opening his mind or convincing him of Errors. Our Conversation of little other avail than to promote Civility and Benevolence" (Apr. 25, 1757). Parkman was, in effect, acknowledging that his efforts had failed and that he was adopting the forbearance that characterized the residents of Annapolis who "never Speak to one another about Religion."

Over the next four years, despite visiting with or being visited by LeBlanc on many occasions, Parkman mentioned their religious differences only twice. Thus, when he borrowed a book in French “for the sake of a Trial with my Mr. *Blanc*,” he conceded that “being in French I presume not to read much of it” (Apr. 19, 1759).¹⁷ He said nothing more about the “Trial.” Later, on December 25, 1759, he noted that LeBlanc “went to Marlborough to trade” with a Mrs. Barns, herself an Anglican, neither of whom, he noted, “keep the Feast of the Nativity as they ought (in my Judgment) to do, considering their profession.” Parkman, by this point, was content to leave well enough alone—or at least to keep his thoughts to his diary, and even the diary remains largely silent on the subject of religion.

Parkman’s relationship with LeBlanc had become, by this point, largely pastoral and social. As he noted after his first visit, LeBlanc was “Rheumatic,” and his poor health, as well as language differences, may have contributed to the confusion about his age. Parkman said that he was fifty-five rather than the actual fifty-three. When the town of Westborough submitted its first account of expenses to the provincial government, June 1, 1757, “Simon Deblan” was listed as sixty-six years old, his wife sixty-seven; “Both have ben unfit for any Labour by Sickness Ever sence thay Cam to our Town.”¹⁸ A year later, May 22, 1758, the town described “the old man [as] Sixty Eight and his Wife Sixty Nine Both very Infirm and Not able to Support them Selves.”¹⁹

Given their poor health, it is not surprising that Parkman visited them on a regular basis, sometimes combining visits to several families in one circuit through the town. Thus, on July 1, 1757, he visited “old Mr. Rice, Mr. Joseph Bruce, LeBlanc, Deacon Tainter and Bond, but got home to dine with my wife.” A later visit included “Ensign Miller, Deacon Forbush and his sister Steward, Blanc etc.” (Mar. 6, 1758), and, still later, “the widow Forb., to Mr. *Daniel Forb.*, Blanc’s, Deacon Tainters” (Aug. 20, 1759).²⁰

HOSPITALITY & SOCIABILITY

As he noted on his first visit to the LeBlanc family, LeBlanc had appeared “Sociable.”²¹ Whatever the strangeness of his religion, he was a literate man of some social standing and, perhaps significantly, the same age as Parkman. He appears to have gotten along with his new neighbors—most obviously Parkman and his family but also other residents of Westborough. Parkman invited the LeBlancs to attend services in his church (although Simon declined), welcomed members of the family to his table, provided medicine when LeBlanc’s wife was ill (Dec. 11, 1756), and visited other members of LeBlanc’s family when they came to Westborough. When Parkman visited

the family of Claude du Gas who were lodged in a school house in Grafton, he noted, "They are not so Sociable, as our Neutrals" (Sept. 17, 1757).

Parkman's hospitality to the LeBlanc family was known among members of the scattered French community. Despite the Acadians' limited resources, they moved about frequently and over substantial distances on foot. Thus, when the LeBlanc family moved from Cornelius Biglow's house to the schoolhouse, Biglow brought Parkman to their new residence, where he found "*Joseph LeBlanc and Marien Gordeau, Monsieurs 2d son, and Cousin, the first from Cambridge the other from Sherbourne, to see 'em*" (Jan. 12, 1757). On a Tuesday morning, LeBlanc, his daughter Mary, and son Joseph (who had come out from Cambridge) were "early this morning on their Journey o'foot to visit their Friends down below" (May 31, 1757). They appear to have been gone for nearly a month: "Mr. LeBlanc and his Daughter Mary returned from their Tour" (June 25, 1757). Parkman noted Joseph LeBlanc's presence "(from Cambridge)" on other occasions, for example, when he and his father visited and dined with him (Jan. 13, 1758); when he and his brother John visited their father (Jan. 17, 1759), returning home the next week although Parkman "saw them not" (Jan. 23); and again when he visited his father (Feb. 25, 1760). LeBlanc's daughter Natalie, her husband Joseph Girouard, and their child visited Westborough at least once (June 15, 1759), and Parkman hosted relatives of the LeBlanc family, including two "Cousins (as they say) of our Neighbours" (Jan. 19, 1757).

Parkman invited other French neutrals to his home, visited them in other contexts, and, in one instance, responded, along with the church, to an appeal for a contribution. Members of the extended Robichaux family provide a good example of Parkman's contacts among the Acadians. As noted above, Simon LeBlanc's son Joseph married Marguerite, a daughter of Louis Robichaux. The elder Robichaux (1704-1780) was a leading member of the Acadian community. As genealogist Mary Brown LaRocca notes, he was "empowered by Charles Francois Bailly, Vicar General of the Diocese of Québec, with whom he had a close friendship, to oversee civilian baptisms, marriages, and burials of Acadians in exile, in the absence of priests of the Catholic Church." Given LeBlanc's connection to Robichaux, it is not surprising that Parkman visited Robichaux when he was in Cambridge (May 24, Dec. 9, 1757). Robichaux's son Edward visited Westborough (Feb. 4, 29, 1760), as did his sister Anne who, with Peter and Magdeleine LeBlanc, Modesty Landre from Acton, and one Duesett from Newbury, attended Parkman's "Lecture to Young people chiefly directed to the Society of young men." After the meeting, they went to Parkman's home "as were a great many other people occasionally" (Mar. 1, 1759).

Parkman also knew Louis Robichaux's brother Joseph who was settled with his family in Uxbridge. Simon LeBlanc and Joseph Robichaux visited and dined with Parkman on one occasion when workers were busy, but the Acadians' presence was "a far greater Hindrance to my Studys" (Apr. 19, 1757). Less of a hindrance were later visits from Joseph Robichaux and his wife Marie who dined with the minister and his family (Nov. 23, 1757; May 20, 1760). Another visit, on a Monday, prompted Parkman to "resent to him the Conduct of some Young French people (*Maran Gordow* and two or three with him, and one or more of the Blanc's, who travelled by the Meeting House in time of divine Service yesterday)." He also wrote a letter in French, "as well as I could," to LeBlanc, "testifying against it" (Nov. 20, 1758).

On another occasion, Amand LeBlanc brought Joseph Robichaux's son Stephen to Westborough: "he offers himself to be hir'd to reap to Day—and I set him to work. They reap Part of the Field behind the Meeting House" (July 22, 1757). The next day was "very rainy," and the two young men, "having lodged here last night, go off this morning." During a January storm, Stephen Robichaux and his father-in-law, Charles Barreve, stopped at Parkman's home. Robichaux came in, although Barreve did not, with Parkman noting that he went to his son Thomas's shop. As he noted, "There has been a great Deal of Travelling of late, of the French people" (Jan. 26, 1759).

Another branch of the Robichaux family was settled in Acton, with Francis Robichaux, his sister Nanny, and son Jacques, along with his sister Gordow and her son Isaac from Southborough, visiting and dining with Parkman (Aug. 29, 1758).²⁷ Two days later, Parkman had "some Close Conversation upon the Difference of our Religions" with Francis Robichaux. He apparently had no better luck with Francis Robichaux than with Simon LeBlanc, as he appealed to a higher authority: "O that God would please to Open their Eyes, that they might be convinced of their Errors, and See and embrace the Truth of the Gospel!" (Aug. 31).

Visits from other French families included Jacques Morris and his wife, "Neutral French" who lived in Leicester and paid a visit, dined, and "tarried till near Evening" (Nov. 16, 1757). John and Mary Melancon, "French persons from Lancaster," dined also with Parkman (Sept. 20, 1758). In returning to Westborough from a meeting of the Marlborough Association at the Second Church in Shrewsbury (later Boylston), he and the Rev. Job Cushing of Shrewsbury stopped "to See the old French folks Mons. Pierre LeBlanc, etc." (Aug. 23, 1758).

ASSISTANCE & GENEROSITY

While there were marked and seemingly irreconcilable religious differences between Parkman and the Acadians, his pastoral concern for their worldly welfare extended to an important act of charity by the Westborough church. On a visit to Framingham, Parkman was approached by "one James *Allen*, a French man, who has been burnt out, at Hopkinton." Allen asked "the Charity of our Congregation" (Feb. 25, 1756), and several weeks later Parkman read Allen's "Petitions" and "two Certificats concerning him" from the Rev. Samuel Barrett and Simpson Jones of Hopkinton. As Parkman noted, Allen "lost his Goods, though the House was not his." Parkman asked the church's deacons and the precinct committee to consider Allen's request and one from Robert Cook (Mar. 21, 1756). The deacons and the committee met with Parkman, voting unanimously against Cook's petition and for Allen's (Mar. 25, 1756). On the appointed Sunday, the contribution amounted to 17£ 10s. (Apr. 5, 1756). Here was an important distinction: the church judged that Robert Cook, the son of a Westborough family, was not worthy of a contribution, while at the same time recognizing and responding to the very real need of an Acadian family in a different town.

The social and pastoral dimensions of Parkman's relationship with the LeBlanc family are well illustrated on the day after the marriage of Parkman's daughter Lucy to Jeduthun Baldwin. As he wrote in his diary, "I waited on the Company, to visit Monsieur *LeBlanc* and his Family." In addition to Parkman, his wife, and the newlyweds, the company included the Rev. John Martyn of Northborough, who had performed the marriage, his wife, Jeduthun's brother Nahum, Lucy's close friend, Huldah Stone, and Parkman's son Thomas. After the visit, they returned home to dine, bringing Magdalene and Mary LeBlanc since, as Parkman noted, "we could not obtain the man and his wife" (Apr. 29, 1757). Significantly, Parkman then noted, "Isaiah 58.7," as if to record his motives. The scripture reads, "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" As the object of Parkman's charity, there is no record of LeBlanc family's reaction to the ten-person visitation.

Other residents of Westborough extended their hospitality to the LeBlanc family. When Parkman preached at the home of his close friend, Deacon Simon Tainter, LeBlanc and his wife were there, "the first Time that he has ever attended upon any of my sermons" (Dec. 1, 1757). When Tainter invited the Parkmans and Mrs. LeBlanc to dine with him, neither woman was well enough to go, but Magdeleine and Marie did go (May 2, 1759). On

a December day later that year, Tainter used “his Sleigh or Whirrey with two Horses” to carry Parkman and his daughter Sarah, along with LeBlanc, to Marlborough. The party dined with the Rev. Aaron Smith and then went to Henry Barns’ shop to trade. Parkman chided LeBlanc, at least in the privacy of his diary, for not properly observing Christmas (Dec. 25, 1759). Still later, when Parkman was ill and could not participate in a thanksgiving, LeBlanc was at the meeting and Parkman’s son William invited him to dine, “but he chose to go to Deacon Tainters” (Nov. 27, 1760).

Another Westborough resident who helped the LeBlanc family was “Esquire Baker”—that is, Edward Baker, one of the town’s leading men. Parkman found Baker with the LeBlanc family on one of his visits (Jan. 6, 1757), but the most suggestive, albeit short, entry in Parkman’s diary was on November 5, 1757: “Esq. Baker, *LeBlanc* and his sons and Daughters return from Lynn.” It appears that Baker had accompanied the LeBlancs, indeed, transported them in a wagon or carriage, to see LeBlanc’s oldest son, Jean-Simon, and his family.

LABOR ASSISTANCE

While Simon LeBlanc and his wife were too feeble to work, their children did work and, on occasion, provided Parkman with badly needed help. Pierre, Amand, and Magdeleine worked for Parkman and other families in town. Parkman was a minister, but he also had a farm that provided a substantial portion of his livelihood. Married twice and the father of eight boys and eight girls, he rarely did the physical work of farming and depended on his sons or hired men and boys. Self-sufficiency in labor depended on the age distribution of his sons. At times, he had no need to hire laborers; at other times, he depended on outsiders, and this was particularly true in the latter part of the 1750s. His oldest son, Ebenezer, was married and living on a separate farm in Westborough. His second son, Thomas, aged twenty-seven in 1756, was still living in the Parkman household but was trying to establish himself in his trade as a saddler, working in a shop on Parkman’s property but also lending a hand on his father’s farm. William, his third son, fifteen years old in 1756, was capable of doing a nearly full range of farm work, but in early 1757, he was apprenticed to his brother-in-law, Jeduthun Baldwin, to learn the trade of a housewright (Mar. 2, 1757).

Parkman thus had to look beyond his family for labor, a search that was unusually difficult because young men were enlisting to fight the French. According to Fred Anderson’s calculations, “*at least* 30 percent of all Massachusetts men who were between sixteen and twenty-nine years of age

during the war would have served in the provincial army." There is no reason to think that Westborough was an exception to this generalization; indeed, as Parkman lamented in late August 1758, "Was exceedingly put to't to get any work, in Haying, done. There has occurred no Such time as this; ... the War has called off So many thousands" (Aug. 28). Even Parkman's sons were drawn into the war. Thomas enlisted in May of 1759 and died of a fever at Stillwater later that year. William also enlisted, serving with his master and returning safely.

Under these circumstances, the LeBlanc family was a natural source of labor—at least in 1757. Parkman did not describe negotiations or the terms under which the young men worked for him, but they were clearly capable of the wide range of work that a farm required. Early in the planting season, twenty-two-year-old Pierre worked in Parkman's garden (May 9), plowed "with a feeble Team" (May 10); furrowed for planting (May 12), planted (May 13), and then probably worked for someone else. In the fall, he returned on two occasions. He came from Benjamin Tainter's, where he had probably been working, and he, Eleazer Whitney, and Joseph Harrington, "each of them a Yoke of Oxen and a plough, and sowed and ploughed in 3 Bushell of Rye for me. They dined here; and got done very Seasonably before Night. A great Kindness to me" (Nov. 19). Given Parkman's expression of gratitude, the work was likely gratis. Ten days later, Deacon Simon Tainter brought Peter LeBlanc with him to "kill for me a Steer which was wont to be called the Sagg" (Nov. 29). Again, this was likely work without pay.

Eighteen-year-old Amand worked at various tasks, first in the garden and assisting a mason, Ebenezer Kimball, who was plastering a bedroom and hallway (Apr. 18-20, 1757), and, as the season progressed, on the full range of agricultural tasks that followed the season until late August: plowing among the corn (June 6-7), hoeing the corn (June 13), dividing "the Cow Yard at the Barn," fencing "a piece of Ground for Tobacco" and clearing "beyond the Orchard" (June 13), digging a well for the cattle at "t'other house" where Parkman's son and his family lived (June 15), planting tobacco (June 20), hoeing "the Island Field" with Parkman's sons Alexander and Breck (June 21-24), finishing the second hoeing with the boys (June 27), beginning to mow—"The Grass most exceedingly thin and dry—next to none of it: but we cut it in hopes it will Spring again through the Great Mercy of God" (June 28-29), clearing ground, again with the boys (July 4, 1757), getting in "a little Corn which is all he does for me to Day" because of the "Very great Rain" (July 5), then hoeing, mowing, and hilling (July 12-19), reaping, raking, and securing hay (July 20-22, 25-28, Aug. 2), working for Moses Twitchell to pay him for working at Parkman's farm (July 30, Aug. 10),

working for Joseph Bruce (Aug. 1) and then for Edwards Whipple to pay for Whipple's assistance in bringing hay to the barn (Aug. 3), and reaping oats and mowing bushes (Aug. 15).

He was then absent for several days, partly because of rainy weather. Finally, at the end of August, Parkman noted, "*Amon Blanc* comes no more to work for me, having Leave from me to work where he can Employ, and for any better wages than I can afford, my haying being over" (Aug. 29, 1757). While Amand no longer worked for pay, he did lend a hand for the kind of communal contribution of work that was typical of rural life. Thus, he joined a number of neighbors and young men to work on a well (Apr. 24, 1761).

Magdeleine LeBlanc also worked for the Parkmans. She spun and wove thirty-three yards of cloth that she and her sister brought to the Parkman home, staying for the mid-day meal (May 18, 1757). Parkman did not mention where she had worked or with whose spinning wheel and loom—tools that her family was unlikely to have brought with them in exile. She also washed clothes (July 31, 1758). In addition to this kind of work, she was, on one occasion, "going to reap for Joseph Baker" (July 31, 1758), an interesting reference to the kind of work that young English women typically did not perform. But her services were not always available. Thus, on one occasion, when in need of a maid, Parkman "Went to Monsieur Blanc for Magdalene but in Vain" (Apr. 23, 1759).

Parkman recorded only brief information about wages that he paid to the LeBlanc children. He recorded nothing about paying Pierre. Twelve days after Magdeleine finished the thirty-three yards of cloth that she spun and wove, Parkman gave her "one Dollar" (May 30, 1757). When Amand and Magdeleine were on their way to Cambridge, Parkman "Could not get a piece of Gold changed—therefore paid them only 5£ and Sixpence old Tenor. Viz. to Amon £2-13, to Magdalene 47/6" (Sept. 5, 1757). Amand received two dollars five weeks later (Oct. 14, 1757). And seven months later, Parkman paid Magdeleine "in full for spinning and weaving" (May 5, 1758).

While there may have been other payments, the money was most likely turned over to their parents. Since the senior LeBlancs were unable to work, the wages from Parkman and other residents of Westborough were surely an important supplement to the £3 that the town appropriated each year for their support. Indeed, in granting funds to the LeBlanc family, the town might reasonably have expected that the children would work. This may account for the seemingly large discrepancy between what the LeBlanc family received and the £6 that widow Mary Woods received. How the money was spent in either case is not known, but there is no doubt that the LeBlanc family's

circumstances (and undoubtedly cultural tradition) required that children work and turn over their wages.

As Parkman surmised, they probably found better wages working elsewhere. Pierre appears to have worked for Benjamin Tainter and his father, Deacon Simon Tainter (Nov. 19, 29, 1757). Amand probably worked for Capt. Benjamin Fay, as he was among a group of eleven individuals who hoed one of Parkman's fields. As was his custom, Parkman listed them by name, including "Amon Le Blanc for Capt. Fay" (June 16, 1759). Parkman found himself hiring some men on a daily basis, relying on the good will and charity of parishioners who donated their labor, and turning to his younger sons—noting, for example, that eleven-year-old Alexander, helped by seven-year-old Samuel and five-year-old John, got "7 Turns of Muck" out of the barn (May 3, 1758). On another occasion, Alexander was "so manly as to hill the Corn in the Orchard" (July 22, 1758). But it was a year of "Sore disappointments" with respect to laborers (June 9, 1758).

* * * * *

There is no record of the LeBlanc family's removal from Westborough to Salem. After a three-year gap in his diary, Parkman noted on a Saturday that LeBlanc "from Salem" dined with him, and he invited him to the next day's church services and to dine with him between services. "He consents; which I think he never did before" (Feb. 2, 1765). Now removed from Westborough, it was perhaps easier for LeBlanc to attend Parkman's preaching in the Westborough meetinghouse. He attended both services and dined with Parkman's family, including John Cushing (Parkman's future son-in-law),³² Parkman's son-in-law, Col. Jeduthun Baldwin, a veteran of the Seven Years' War, and his son Alexander. Four days later, Deacon Tainter took Parkman and his daughters Sarah and Anna Sophia to the home of Jonah Warrin where Parkman preached and noted, "Monsieur Le Blanc attended with us." Parkman did not record where LeBlanc stayed while in Westborough, but Deacon Tainter's presence at the private sermon suggests that he may have hosted LeBlanc.

Parkman's last reference to Simon LeBlanc may have been to work that one of his children did for the minister. On February 28, 1766, "Monsieur *LeBlanc* Came up the Day before yesterday for his money—but not Succeeding, he returns to *Salem*." Several of LeBlanc's children returned to Canada in 1767, but, as one source suggests, Simon and Jeanne LeBlanc stayed behind: as Clarence J. d'Entremont and Hector J. Hébert write, "Like many of his Acadian contemporaries, it seems that Monsieur LeBlanc's

destiny was that of an unmarked grave in a Salem cemetery.” His wife, now a widow, was later recorded in St-Ours, Quebec, on September 28, 1775.

Was the LeBlanc family uniquely fortunate in being placed in Westborough? Despite religious differences, Simon LeBlanc’s relatively high status, age, literacy, fluency in English, and sociability were positive traits in his interactions with Parkman, and his children’s ability to work for Parkman and other families in Westborough provided mutually advantageous opportunities at a time of labor scarcity. While Acadian families in other towns described extreme hardships in petitions for redress, the record is silent for the overwhelming majority of families. Does silence indicate satisfaction (hardly to be expected of individuals who had experienced removal and loss of possessions and separation from family members and communities), resignation, or passivity in the context of life in a strange and perhaps hostile culture?

Parkman was certainly not unique in his charitable impulses that welcomed members of the LeBlanc family and other Acadians to his table, but only his diary, unique in its detail and length, provides the kind of information that allows one to examine and understand the relationship between a minister and an Acadian family. Other ministers may have welcomed Acadian exiles, but there are no records to confirm this. The three dimensions of the relationship between the LeBlanc family and Ebenezer Parkman—religious differences, pastoral concern for the LeBlancs’ well-being, and the availability of the LeBlanc children as workers for Parkman and other Westborough residents—suggest that the LeBlanc family, despite all the limitations of their status as refugees, fared well in their temporary home in Westborough. After it became clear that LeBlanc was comfortable and firm in defense of his religious beliefs, “Benevolence and civility” characterized their relationship and extended to a wider circle of Acadian families.



**Blessing of Cross Commemorating Acadian Deportation
Horton's Landing, Nova Scotia, 1924**

Notes

1. According to *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, “The name ‘Acadia’ most likely originated with Giovanni Verrazzano, an Italian explorer serving the King of France. In 1524 Verrazzano made his first trip to the New World and gave the name ‘Archadia’ to a region stretching along the Atlantic coast near Delaware, explaining the choice in his diary with a reference to ‘the beauty of its trees.’ In ancient Greece ‘Arcadia’ referred to a Peloponnesian plain that was thought of as a sort of earthly paradise. Sixteenth- and early 17th-century cartographers and explorers moved variations of the name further up the coast. By the 1620s, the name Acadia was commonly used for the region of what is now the maritime provinces of Canada.” www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/acadia, accessed Jan. 6, 2022

2. This summary is based on John Mack Faragher, “A Great and Noble Scheme’: Thoughts on the Expulsion of the Acadians,” *Acadiensis* 36: 1 (Autumn 2006), 82-92.

3. Dates in parentheses are from Ebenezer Parkman’s diary. Extant portions of the diary through 1755 (except 1736 and 1742, which the American Antiquarian Society acquired in 1985) appear in *The Dairy of Ebenezer Parkman, 1703-1782: First Part, Three Volumes in One, 1719-1755*, ed. Francis G. Walett (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1974). The years 1737 and November 1778 through 1780 are printed in *The Diary of Rev. Ebenezer Parkman, of Westborough, Mass., for the Months of February, March, April, October and November, 1737, November and December of 1778, and the Years of 1779 and 1780*, ed. Harriette M. Forbes ([Westborough:] Westborough Historical Society, 1899). Unpublished portions of the diary are held by the American Antiquarian Society (1736; 1742; 1756-May 1761; June 1764-June 1769; Nov. 10-21, 1772; June 1773-Oct. 1778) and by the Massachusetts Historical Society (Aug. 1771-June 1773; 1781-1782). A transcription of the diary may be found at: <http://diary.ebenzerparkman.org>.

For a sketch of Parkman (1703-1782), see John Langdon Sibley and Clifford K. Shipton, *Biographical Sketches of Graduates of Harvard University, in Cambridge, Massachusetts* (18 vols.; Cambridge and Boston, 1873-1999), 6:511-27 (hereafter referred to as *SHG* for “Sibley’s Harvard Graduates”). Sibley authored v. 1-3 (1873-85); Shipton, v. 4-17 (1933-75); Conrad Edick Wright and Edward W. Hanson, v. 18 (1999).

4. Richard G. Lowe states that there were 1,017 French neutrals in Massachusetts in 1760 but also gives the figure 1,105; see Lowe, “Massachusetts and the Acadians,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 25: 2 (Apr. 1968), 221, 225.

5. John Mack Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story of the Expulsion of the French Acadians from Their American Homeland* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), 424-25. On ethnic cleansing, Faragher suggests that “the events of 1755 bear a striking similarity to more recent episodes of ethnic cleansing — the purposeful campaign of one ethnic or religious group to remove, by violent and terror-inspiring means, the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from a certain geographic area”; *ibid.*, xix; also 469-73.

6. *Ibid.*, 374, 375, 378-79.

7. *Report Concerning Canadian Archives for the Year 1905 in Three Volumes (Being an Appendix to the Report of the Minister of Agriculture)* (Ottawa, 1906), 2, Appendix E (Extracts from the Archives of Massachusetts [v. 23]), 88.

8. Many documents appear in the French Neutrals Manuscripts, 1755-1760, Massachusetts Archives, XXIII-XXIV. On the Acadians in Massachusetts, in addition to Lowe's article, see particularly Faragher, *Great and Noble Scheme*, ch. 13, and Christopher Hodson, *Acadian Diaspora: An Eighteenth-Century History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 70-78.

9. The relationship between Parkman and the LeBlanc family has drawn the attention of several authors. Clifford Shipton, while not mentioning the LeBlanc family in particular, places Parkman's relationship with Acadians in the welcome that Parkman extended to "the needy and unfortunate"; *SHG* 6:520. Parkman's relationship with the LeBlanc family and other Acadians has been celebrated in genealogical-based studies, particularly Clarence J. d'Entremont and Hector J. Hébert, S.J., "Parkman's Diary and the Acadian Exiles in Massachusetts," *French Canadian and Acadian Genealogical Review* 1:4 (Winter 1968-69), 241-94. The article by d'Entremont and Hébert is especially useful in sorting out the family connections of Acadians whom Parkman mentioned in his diary, as is Mary Brown LaRocca, "The Robichaux Family of Acadia, Massachusetts, and Maine: A French Connection," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 143 (Jan. 1989), 2-23.

Less useful is Pierre Belliveau, "The Massachusetts Preacher," ch. XVI in *French Neutrals in Massachusetts: The Story of Acadians Rounded Up by Soldiers from Massachusetts and Their Captivity in the Bay Province, 1755-1766* (Boston: Kirk S. Giffen, 1972), 200-21. D'Entremont and Rev. Hector J. Hébert, S.J., assiduously mined Parkman's diary, suggesting that Parkman had a "long and close friendship, not only with the LeBlancs, but also with other Acadians in exile"; "Parkman's Diary and the Acadian Exiles in Massachusetts," 263. Christopher Hodson examines Parkman's relationship with Simon LeBlanc in *The Acadian Diaspora*, 74-77, describing Parkman's friendship with LeBlanc as "strange" (77); suggesting, with some exaggeration, that "Parkman acted as a magnet, drawing Acadians and New Englanders together" (76); and losing track of the LeBlanc family after early 1759.

10. Parkman's diary is not extant for the period June 1, 1761-June 13, 1764. As Parkman noted, the family arrived in October 1756. As late as November 12, 1764, the Westborough town meeting "voted 3£ "to Supporte the French Family." Westborough Town Records, 1:172 (<https://archive.org/details/townrecords01west/page/172/mode/2up>, accessed Apr. 5, 2021).

11. *Boston Gazette* (Jan. 6, 1783), p. [3].

12. Alexander Cosby served as acting governor of Nova Scotia for Richard Phillips, 1739-1740. (www.acadiansingray.com/Appendices-Governors%20of%20Acadia.htm; accessed Apr. 2, 2021). "Governor Enfield" was John Handfield (d. c. 1763); see *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*.

13. D'Entremont and Hébert, "Parkman's Diary and the Acadian Exiles in Massachusetts," 246, suggests that Jeanne Dupuis was born about 1701-2.
14. For genealogical data on the LeBlanc family, see *ibid.*, 245-46. Robichaux is variously spelled Robichaud (d'Entremont and Hébert), Robishow (Parkman), Robertshaw, Robeshaw, Robershaw; usage in this essay follows LaRocca, "The Robichaux Family of Acadia, Massachusetts, and Maine: A French Connection."
15. Faragher, *Great and Noble Scheme*, 374.
16. Daniel Scott Smith and Michael S. Hindus, "Premarital Pregnancy in America, 1640-1971: An Overview and Interpretation," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 5:4 (1975), 537-70.
17. Pierre Du Moulin (1568-1658), *De l'accomplissement des Prophetes, ou troisieme livre de la defense de la foy catholique, contenue au livre de... Roy Jacques I. Roy de la grand Bretagne: Contre les allegations... de R. Bellarmin, et F. N. Coeffeteau* (Geneve: Gabriel Cartier, 1612). An English edition was published in 1613: *The accomplishment of the prophecies; or The third booke in defence of the Catholicke faith: contained in the booke of the high & mighty King Iames. I. by the grace of God King of Great Brittain and Ireland. Against the allegations of R. Bellarmine; and F.N. Coëffeteau & other doctors of the Romish church:* by Peter Du Moulin minister of the word of God in the church of Paris. Translated into English by I. Heath, fellow of New College in Oxford. Printed at Oxford: By Ioseph Barnes and are to be sold by Iohn Barnes dwelling neere Holborne Conduit [London], 1613.
18. Westborough Expense Account, June 1, 1757, Massachusetts State Archives, 23:418.
19. Westborough Expense Account, May 22, 1758, Massachusetts State Archives, 24:36.
20. Apr. 28, 1760: "Was at Mr. Solomon Millers. Lieut. Harringtons. LeBlanc's." Sept. 9, 1760: "Visit Cornet Brigham who is Sick of a Fever. P.M. visit Abner Warrin who languishes; and Ebenezer Miller who also is in a relaxed wasting State; Mr. Daniel *Forbush* and one of his Daughters, who are Sick — Monsieur LeBlanc." Oct. 10, 1760: "I visited Mr. Elijah Rices wife, and LeBlanc, also Abner Warrin." Feb. 18, 1761: "Rode to Deacon Bonds, Deacon Forb., Blanc's etc."
21. *Oxford English Dictionary*: "inclined or disposed to seek and enjoy the company of others; friendly or affable in company; disposed to conversation and social activities."
22. Parkman made other visits to the DuGas family (Jan. 19, 1758; Apr. 26, 1761), and DuGas and LeBlanc visited Parkman (Apr. 4, 1759; July 5, 1760).
23. Parkman identified them as "Peter and Simon Blanc."
24. For the various members of the Robichaux family who lived, at least for a time, in Massachusetts, see LaRocca, "The Robichaux Family of Acadia, Massachusetts, and Maine."
25. *Ibid.*, 6.
26. Visitors and the obligations of family and farm were a regular "hindrance" to his studies, often requiring him to repeat sermons.

27. Parkman visited the Gordow family in Southborough on several occasions (Mar. 1, 1758; Apr. 26, 1758; Apr. 9, 1759). On the latter visit, he learned that Mrs. Gourdot had “lost her son, his wife and a Child in *Canada*, at the Isle de *Orleans* of the small pox” and that “700 Neutral French had dyed of the same Distemper” (Apr. 9, 1759).

28. Visits from other French families included Jacques Morris and his wife, “Neutral French” who lived in Leicester and paid a visit, dined, and “tarried till near Evening” (Nov. 16, 1757). John and Mary Melanchon, “French persons from Lancaster,” dined also with Parkman (Sept. 20, 1758). In returning to Westborough from a meeting of the Marlborough Association at the Second Church in Shrewsbury (later Boylston), he and the Rev. Job Cushing of Shrewsbury stopped “to See the old French folks Mons. Pierre LeBlanc, etc.” (Aug. 23, 1758).

29. Fred Anderson, *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 60.

30. Tainter frequently castrated animals for Parkman and even more often slaughtered and butchered animals — always without pay other than the minister's gratitude.

31. As late as November 12, 1764, the Westborough town meeting voted £3 “to Supporte the French Family.” At the same meeting, the town voted twice that sum “to Supporte the widow Mary Woods the year Ensuing.” Westborough Town Records, 1:172 (<https://archive.org/details/townrecords01west/page/172/mode/2up>, accessed Apr. 5, 2021).

32. Cushing (1744-1823), Harvard 1764, married Sarah Parkman, Sept. 28, 1769.

33. d'Entremont and Hébert, “Parkman's Diary,” 292.