A Vanishing Indian

Francis Parkman Versus His Sources

This paper is a consideration of the way in which the eminent nineteenth-century American historian Francis Parkman told the story of one of the most crucial occurrences in the history of colonial Pennsylvania: the many-sided negotiations in 1758 by which peace was re-established between British and Indian inhabitants after the hostilities of the province's first Indian conflict. Parkman's account of these events in *Montcalm and Wolfe* forms a part of the history which is generally acknowledged to be the culmination of his life's work. The book is accepted as a literary masterpiece, and shares the widespread acclaim for accuracy enjoyed by the bulk of Parkman's work.

Nevertheless, Parkman's account of the events leading to the Easton peace conference, and of the conference itself, is substantively erroneous; and comparison of his text with his cited sources discloses serious discrepancies even in statements put within quotation marks. The net effect of the differences is a diminishment and transformation in Parkman's pages of the roles played by Indians. While critics frequently have noted censorious attitudes in Parkman's writing about Indians, his expressions of bias usually have been judged to be typical of his times and harmless to the accuracy of his record of events. However, the errors disclosed in the present study seem to point to a need to review that judgment.1

1 Francis Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe* (New Library ed., Boston, 1909), II, hereinafter cited as *Montcalm*. This work was first published in 1884; the New Library edition is paged identically with the most recent, Centenary, edition, issued by the same publisher after 1922. The following source documents are cited by Parkman in *Montcalm*, 154, 157, 170: *Colonial Records* (Harrisburg, 1838–1853), VIII; *Pennsylvania Archives, First Series* (Philadelphia, 1852–1860), III; two journals of Christian Frederick Post (published in London, 1759) of his 1758 trips to the Ohio Indians "on a message" from the government of Pennsylvania. Following Parkman's citation, references herein made to Post's journals are to the edition in Neville B. Craig, *The Olden Time* (Pittsburgh, 1846–1847), I, 98–133, 145–177, and cited as *First Journal* and *Second Journal*. Citations are given by entry date rather than by page number,
In 1758, Pennsylvania was the scene of preparation for a British expedition to attack Fort Duquesne. A previous expedition under General Braddock had been badly defeated three years earlier, and the French forces had then organized a campaign of Indian raids against Pennsylvania's outlying settlements. This policy of terror enjoyed a temporary success until defense fortifications could be built and manned and retaliatory raids made against Indian villages. Though terrible on the warpath, the Indians were divided about the wisdom of attacking the Pennsylvanians. French pressure and threats kept them belligerent, but the Indians living under the domination of the French at the forks of the Ohio had some contact with their tribal brethren on the Susquehanna and Delaware rivers, and these, in turn, were in touch with the government of Pennsylvania, with whom they had made peace in 1757. In 1758, General John Forbes was put in command of a new campaign against Fort Duquesne. Keenly conscious of his predecessor's fatal mistake in underestimating the danger from Indian warriors, Forbes was alert to take advantage of any opportunity to win the Ohio Indians to neutrality or alliance.

The opportunity presented itself in June when two chiefs of the Ohio Indians came east to seek information about the possibilities of peace from Teedyuscung, the chief of the eastern Delaware tribes. The Ohio chiefs, Pisquetomen and Keekyuscung, were introduced by Teedyuscung to the Moravian missionary Christian Frederick Post, who, coincidentally, had come to Teedyuscung from Philadelphia with a message from Pennsylvania's Governor Denny. The Ohio chiefs assured Post of their desire for peace, and he told them of the governor's efforts to get in touch with them. It was proposed to Post that some white Pennsylvanian accompany Pisquetomen and Keekyuscung on their return home to add credence to their report. 

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2 At this time, Indians of a number of different tribes dwelt in the vicinity of the forks of the Ohio or on its Allegheny tributary. To reduce confusion, they are all called Ohio Indians.

3 "Journal of Frederick Post's Journey from Philadelphia to Wyoming, June the 20th, 1758," Colonial Records, 144-145. The spelling of Indian names varies in the documents. In the present article, quotations follow source variations, but my own narrative adheres to one variant of each name, chosen arbitrarily.
Before returning, however, they decided to talk directly to Governor Denny. Together with Post and Teedyuscung and about fifty of Teedyuscung’s people, they went down to Philadelphia. There they held solemn conference with Denny and his Council from July 7 to 12. The governor, under heavy pressure from the Assembly and the Quaker community, recited the terms of the peace already concluded between Pennsylvania and the eastern Indians. Teedyuscung asked Denny to put this in writing and give it to the Ohio Indians to take back with them. With a little further prompting from Teedyuscung, he also promised that there would be no reprisals for past conflicts. Teedyuscung then mentioned that he had called a meeting of Indians to be held at Easton, and Denny agreed to attend.

It is well to understand that the Ohio emissary Pisquetomen had been known in Philadelphia for nearly thirty years. He was a Delaware Indian of pre-eminent standing who had often negotiated with the government, had sold land to the Penns, had led raids on frontier settlements, and was brother to the recognized Delaware “King,” Shingas. As will be seen, he managed the peace negotiations at both ends of the province. How strange it is, then, to find no mention whatever of Pisquetomen in Francis Parkman’s pages.

But perhaps it is not so strange. Parkman specifically rejected the idea that Indian initiative was involved in negotiating the peace. The “seeming miracle” of the treaty which came about at Easton, he wrote, “was wrought by several causes.” Itemizing the cost of French trade goods in contrast with cheaper English goods, Indian fear of the strength of Forbes’s army, the 1757 peace made by the eastern Delawares, and the wavering councils of the dominant Iroquois overlords of the Ohio tribes, Parkman stated that “the influence most potent in reclaiming the warriors of the West was of a different kind.”

As Parkman tells it, this “influence” was a saint courting a martyr’s fate. “Christian Frederic [sic] Post, a member of the Moravian brotherhood, had been sent at the instance of Forbes as an envoy to the hostile tribes from the governor and Council of Pennsylvania. He spoke the Delaware language, knew the Indians well,

5 Ibid., 467-469.
6 Montcalm, 149-150.
had lived among them, had married a converted squaw, and by his simplicity of character, directness, and perfect honesty, gained their full confidence. He now accepted his terrible mission, and calmly prepared to place himself in the clutches of the tiger. He was a plain German, upheld by a sense of duty and a single-hearted trust in God; alone, with no great disciplined organization to impel and support him, and no visions and illusions such as kindled and sustained the splendid heroism of the early Jesuit martyrs. Yet his errand was no whit less perilous."

There is great drama in Parkman's picture of a missionary saint's heroic errand alone into the wilderness. But a look at Parkman's sources discloses that the Indians in whose hands Post placed himself carried the Moravian tenderly through the wilderness, watched over him waking and sleeping, fended off enemies thirsting for his blood, delivered him safely to his destination, and returned him home.

All that Parkman tells of Post's journey outward is contained in one sentence, "The Moravian envoy made his way to the Delaware town of Kushkushkee, on Beaver Creek, northwest of Fort Duquesne. . . ." To understand how this way was made, we must return to the sources and Pisquetomen.

An explanatory summary is in the minutes of the Easton Treaty.

Pisquitomen and another Ohio Indian, having come to Philadelphia last Summer, acquainted the Governor that the Indians in those Parts had not received any account of the late Transactions with this Government; nor any Message from it, and that they might be persuaded to Lay down their Hatcher; the Governor therefore took that Opportunity to send a friendly Message to those Indians by Pisquitomen, and appointed Mr. Frederick Post, a German, who understood the Delaware Language, to attend him, and acquaint the Indians at the Ohio of the Peace made by the Susquehannah Delawares, and other Indians, and the Disposition of this Government to forgive what was past, if they would return to their Antient Alliance. This Message was accordingly delivered and an answer returned by Frederick Post, Pisquitomen, and Thomas Hickman, an Ohio Indian, who having came down together as far as Harris' Ferry, Frederick Post went to wait on General Forbes, and left the two Indians to proceed with the Message, who being now arrived at Easton, Pisquitomen, who had the particular charge of it, introduced it as follows:

7 Ibid., 150-151.
8 Ibid., 151.
Brethren:
     When I was at Allegheny, the Chief Men sat together as we do here now. I was employed by the Governor, Teedyuscung, and Israel Pemberton [Quaker leader]. . . . Now, you, Gentlemen, who are Head Men, sent Frederick Post with me, desiring me to take and carry him in my Bosom there, and when I came there to introduce him to the Publick Council, I did this, and have brought him back safe again.9

We must note with care the phrase of Pisquetomen’s about carrying Post “in my bosom.” This was Indian metaphor for providing protection. All the sources, including Post’s journals, mention and describe the constant watchfulness of Post’s Indian guards. Perhaps more important is Pisquetomen’s plain statement, made in public meeting and officially recorded without contradiction, that he was employed by the “head men” and that Post was sent with him. This is quite a bit different from Parkman’s account. Parkman’s thesis is disqualified further when we examine Post’s true role in the Ohio mission. When Pisquetomen and Keekyuscung came to Philadelphia in July, they arrived at a moment when General Forbes was anxious for intelligence of the enemy French forces. Governor Denny, knowing this, asked Pisquetomen and Keekyuscung to return to the Ohio quickly, “to Observe what was doing at Fort Duquesne, and to send off a trusty Messenger from Beaver Creek, with an Account of the Motions of the French and the Disposition of the Indians.” The two chiefs, however, wanted white men to accompany them so that their report of Pennsylvania’s willingness to make peace would be believed. Charles Thomson, master of the Quaker school in Philadelphia, volunteered, but he was disqualified by the governor because of too great sympathy for the Indians. Finally, “Frederick Post was desired to accompany the Indians.”10 Post really fulfilled two functions. For Pisquetomen, he was a sort of notary public, certifying by his very presence that Pisquetomen was right in saying the whites would make peace. For Governor Denny and General Forbes, Post was an informant or spy, gathering vital intelligence of the temper of the tribes and the strength of the French. It is evident from his journals that he understood and worked hard at both functions.

The peace mission spent twenty-six days (July 15–August 10) on the trip from Philadelphia to Kushkushkee. They swung up into

10 Minutes of Council, July 14, 1758, ibid., 147.
northern Pennsylvania, deep in Indian country and far from the army's line of communications. On August 7, they arrived at French Fort Venango, on the upper Allegheny, and got directions from the commandant for fording the stream. Post wrote, "We slept that night within half gun shot of the fort." Frenchmen saw Post there on August 8, and other Frenchmen met him on the 10th; but, because of his Indian escort, none attempted to molest him.

There was real danger to Post in the presence of the French; from the time of his arrival at Kushkushkee until his departure, they were almost daily in his immediate vicinity. In Parkman's account, the menace to Post is an undifferentiated forest rabble; Indians are "seized" with wild emotions, unpredictable, irrational, and melodramatic. Parkman reported accurately that Post was conducted to Fort Duquesne in order that the Indians there might hear the peace message; he wrote that Post "protested in vain"—words used also by Post—but he omitted the continuation of Post's sentence: "they . . . said that I need not fear the French, for they would carry me in their bosoms, i.e. engage for my safety."\(^{11}\)

Parkman's account of the arrival near Fort Duquesne is full of minor inaccuracies—transpositions of events from one day to another—which seem to be for the sake of literary style. These do no great harm, perhaps, but they are found among other errors of a tendentious nature which convey impressions untrue both to the detailed facts and to the significance of the events. Parkman wrote as follows: "On arriving near the fort, the French demanded that he should be given up to them, and, being refused, offered a great reward for his scalp; on which his friends advised him to keep close by the camp-fire, as parties were out with intent to kill him."\(^{12}\) Post wrote that the party "arrived in sight on this side the river in the afternoon [August 24] and all the Indian chiefs immediately came over." Some discussion was held in which a French Indian demanded Post's removal and was chastened by the others in picturesque terms. "You are quite rotten," they said, "you stink. . . . Go to sleep with your father [the French], and when you are sober we will speak with you." The French demanded that Post be delivered into the fort, in keeping, as they said, with "a custom among the white people." One can imagine a certain grim amusement at the campfire as this de-

\(^{11}\) Montcalm, 152; First Journal, Aug. 22.

\(^{12}\) Montcalm, 152. My italics.
mand was rejected. Next day, August 25, there was further conference, and "The French whispered to the Indians, as I imagined, to insist on my delivering what I had to say on the other side of the water, which they did to no purpose, for my company still insisted on a hearing on this side the water." It is clear that the difference between "near" the fort and "over the river" from the fort was for Post the difference between death and life. The French knew that if they could destroy Post while he was traveling under an Indian pledge of security, no Indian would dare go back to the English. The Indians knew it, too. But Parkman's account edits out the depth of the quarrel between the Indians and the French; the crux of the matter—the Indians' guarantee of safety—is nowhere in Parkman's pages.

What is more, Parkman changed Post's text just enough to eliminate clues to the guarantee. Post wrote on August 26 that "The Indians, with a great many of the French officers, came over to hear what I had to say." Parkman altered this, in quotation marks, to read: "'the Indians, with a great many French officers, came out to hear what I had to say.'" The French could not get Post over that river, but Parkman did. By omission and transposition, he eliminated the events of August 27, which highlighted the issue still more. Post wrote: "I set out before day, with six Indians, and took another road, that we might not be seen. The main body told me they would stay behind, to know whether the French would make an attempt to take me by force; that if they did, they (the Indians,) would endeavor to prevent their crossing the river, and coming secretly upon me." Parkman omitted the flight, writing that, "After waiting some days, the three tribes of the Delawares met in council, and made their answer to the message brought by Post." Thus the reader is left to assume that the deliberations continued to take place "near" Fort Duquesne, when, in fact, they were precipitately removed back to Kushkushkee.

Although he acknowledged the French price on Post's head, the effect of Parkman's changes and omissions is to throw responsibility for seeking Post's life not on the French, but on the Indians. Post

14 Post also reported that a Delaware who had been among his party on the journey from Philadelphia to the Ohio was bribed by the French to betray him, but that the other Indians would not consent. First Journal, Aug. 26, and Second Journal, Nov. 23.
seems to be at the whim of capricious and untrustworthy beast-creatures. Yet Post’s journal, Parkman’s source, shows conclusively that the Indians not only pledged protection to the Moravian, but honored their pledge at considerable hazard to themselves.16

Parkman continued his textual alterations in his account of Post’s return from the Ohio. This return journey had been complicated by several factors: the presence of English prisoners in the Indian villages, a fact which the Indians did not want detailed in Philadelphia; the passage through Kushkushkee of two hundred French and Indian allies on their way to Fort Duquesne, which “made a general stop” in Post’s journey; and the simple problem of finding strayed horses.17 Without mentioning any of these things, Parkman wrote that “the Indians were seized with an access of distrust” which was increased when they saw Post writing in his notebook.18 Then Parkman quoted Post’s remark that “It is a troublesome cross and heavy yoke to draw this people. . . .” He eliminated Post’s next sentence: “I suspect the reason they kept me here so long was by instigation of the French.” Instead of this, and without indicating any break in the quotation, Parkman substituted a sentence from the following day’s entry in Post’s journal; and this, in turn, runs into still another misquotation. Here is the full passage as it appears in Post’s journal. Parkman’s version is italicized; it is punctuated in his book as a formal quotation without any sign of ellipsis or condensation.

[September] 7th—When we were ready to go, they began to council which way we should go to be safest; and then they hunted for the horses, but could not find them, and so we lost that day’s journey.

16 In his Aug. 26 entry, Post wrote that “Three Indians informed me, that as soon as the French got over, they called a Council with their own Indians, among whom there happened accidentally to be a Delaware Captain, who was privately invited by one of his acquaintance to hear what the French had to say. And when they were assembled, the French spoke as follows:

‘My children, now we are alone, hearken to what I have to say. I perceive the Delawares are wavering; they incline to the English, and will be faithful to us no longer. Now, all their chiefs are here, and but a handful; let us cut them off, and then we shall be troubled with them no longer.’ Then the Tawaas answered: ‘No, we cannot do this thing; for though there is but a handful here, the Delawares are a strong people, and are spread to a great distance, and whatever they agree to must be.’”

Post fled the encampment next day, but the Indians gave him an escort, and their main body acted as his rear guard.

17 First Journal, Sept. 4, 5, 7, and 8.

18 These “seizures” occur often to Parkman’s Indians, commonly in the passive voice.
It is a troublesome cross and heavy yoke to draw this people. They can punish and squeeze a body's heart to the utmost. I suspect the reason they kept me here so long was by instigation of the French. I remember somebody told me, that the French told them to keep me twelve days longer, for that they were afraid I should get back too soon and give information to the General. My heart has been very heavy here, because they kept me to no purpose. The Lord knows how they have been counselling about my life; but they did not know who was my protector and deliverer; I believe my Lord has been too strong against them; my enemies have done what lies in their power.

8th—We prepared for our journey on the morning, and made ourselves ready. There came some together and examined me about what I had wrote yesterday. I told them, I wondered what need they had to concern themselves about my writing. They said if they knew I had wrote about the prisoners, they would not let me go out of the town. I told them what I writ was my duty to do.19 "Brothers: I tell you I am not afraid of you, if there were a thousand more. I have a good conscience before God and man. I tell you I have wrote nothing about the prisoners. I tell you, brothers, this is not good; there's a bad spirit in your hearts which breeds that jealousy; and it will keep you ever in fear that you will never get rest."20

Parkman's editing of Post's text for correct diction, a practice common enough in his day, need not concern us here; but the selective deletion of everything relating to the prisoner issue and French pressure changes materially the substance of Post's journal. It removes the Indians' reasons for delaying Post, and thus contributes still more to the cumulative effect of irrationality.

Parkman concluded his account of Post's first journey with a sentence that was wrong in several ways. Parkman wrote: "At last they let him go. . . ." They did not; Post was guided and guarded by Pisquetomen and Tom Hickman. Parkman continued: "and, eluding a party that lay in wait for his scalp, he journeyed twelve

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19 In Parkman's text, "I told them I writ what was my duty."
20 Montcalm, 153-154; First Journal, Sept. 7-8. The end of the Sept. 8 entry illustrates Post's tendency to exaggerate his own status. He wrote: "I told my men that we must make haste and go." One sees the true state of affairs from the entry of Sept. 6: "King Beaver and Shingiss spoke to Pisquetumen:

"'Brother, you told us that the Governor of Philadelphia and Teedyuscung took this man out of their bosoms and put him into your bosom, that you should bring him here . . . and we . . . now give him into your bosom, to bring him to the same place again, before the Governor.'"
days through the forest. . . .”

Here is the effect again of the heroic, singlehanded venture against all odds. The odds were heavy enough. Not only one party was after Post; “there was gone out a great scout, to lie in wait for me.” Post’s party actually met with “20 warriors, who were returning from the inhabitants, with five prisoners and one scalp.” Instead of adding Post’s hair to their other trophies, the warriors “sat down all in one ring together” with him and his escort to discuss the peace proposals. That Post could have managed a feat like this all by himself is doubtful, to say the least. He had to hide from the “great scout” because it was French-instigated, but he could parley with the raiding warriors because they were akin to his escort. Parkman made no such distinctions and simply deleted the incident which required explanation. He concluded his sentence by saying that Post “reached Fort Augusta with the report of his mission.” Insofar as this means simply that Post arrived at Fort Augusta it is correct, but it is erroneous if understood to mean that Post delivered his report at the fort. The ambiguity remains unresolved because Parkman failed to follow Post’s further travels.

The sources tell us, however, that after Post, Pisquetomen, and Thomas Hickman arrived at Fort Augusta (today’s Sunbury) on September 22, they continued to journey together to Harris’ Ferry (Harrisburg). Here they parted. Pisquetomen then traveled eastward to Philadelphia to present the Ohio Indians’ reply to Governor Denny. Post traveled almost the same distance in the opposite direction to Raystown (Bedford) where he made his report to General Forbes. It is clear from the records that Post did not make a formal report at Fort Augusta; certainly, whatever he said was not the basis for action by the government. We know this because Pisquetomen carried to Philadelphia a paper which proved to be “only a Letter from the Commanding Officer” of Fort Augusta. If

21 There is a minor error in arithmetic here. Post left Kushkushkee on Sept. 8, and arrived at Fort Augusta on Sept. 22; even if the terminal days are omitted, the total comes to a minimum of thirteen days instead of Parkman’s twelve.


23 Ibid., Sept. 19.

24 Post did not leave Kushkushkee until Sept. 8, but already on Sept. 2 he was urging Shingas to have him taken to Gen. Forbes. He recorded on Sept. 3 the Indians’ message to “the Governor and People of Pennsylvania,” but, as the event showed, this was not his most pressing concern.
Post had reported to that officer, the commander must surely have transmitted the report to the governor; and if the report had been so transmitted, it would not have been “only a letter.”

Parkman’s reader, lacking the information that Post had reversed directions and traveled westward from Fort Augusta, tends to assume that Post continued eastward to the treaty at Easton. Such an assumption is strengthened by an erroneous statement made later in Parkman’s pages that when the Easton conference finished its deliberations it chose Post to carry its proposals back to the Ohio. The confusion is compounded, of course, by the total absence, from Parkman’s account, of Pisquetomen.

Disorientation is still further complicated by Parkman’s conclusions as to the result of Post’s first journey. “As the result of it,” he wrote, “a great convention of white men and red was held at Easton in October.” The absurdity of this statement simply could not have been hidden from Parkman; his sources show unequivocally that the Easton conference was organized before Frederick Post even started on his journey to the Ohio.

When Pisquetomen and Thomas Hickman arrived in Philadelphia, they found Governor Denny in the midst of preparations to leave for Easton. After some welcoming ceremonies and a little confusion over papers, both parties decided to remove to Easton where the governor was to treat with the Iroquois and eastern Delawares; the Ohio question could be added to the agenda of the conference. Parkman’s account of the Easton treaty, compressed into a page and a half, makes it appear that the conference dealt only with the question of the Ohio Indians. Actually, the business of the messengers from the Ohio, though relevant, came almost as an interruption to the transactions. The delegations had matters of great weight to settle; the

25 Minutes of Conference at Easton, October, 1758, Colonial Records, 174, 187. Post’s arrival at Raystown is dated by a letter of Gen. Forbes to Secretary Richard Peters, Oct. 16, 1758, to be found in the Peters Manuscripts, V, 55, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. No copy of this letter is among Parkman’s papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society. However, Post’s departure for Raystown is dated by the Colonial Records citation above, one of Parkman’s cited sources.
26 Montcalm, 154.
27 Colonial Records, 174–223, especially 177; Pennsylvania Archives, 468–469.
whole future of the Iroquois-British alliance was at stake, and the successful outcome of this conference was one of the turning points in colonial history. It originated a new, imperial policy for Indian relations, which developed into the Royal Proclamation of 1763. However, we need here concern ourselves only with the fact, reported by Parkman, that at Easton “all present agreed on a joint message of peace to the tribes of the Ohio.”

Parkman continued, “Frederic Post, with several white and Indian companions, was chosen to bear” the message. This statement is contradicted by Parkman’s cited source, the minutes of the Easton conference. The source says that the conference agreed to send to the Ohio a delegation consisting of two representatives of the Iroquois Six Nations, one or two of Teedyuscung’s eastern Delawares, Pisquetomen, and Thomas Hickman. The Indians also “desired that at least two of our Inhabitants” might accompany them.29 On October 21,

Pisquitomen and Thomas Hickman, came to take their leave of the Governor, accompanied with Captain Bull,30 William Hayes, and Isaac Still,31 the Persons appointed to attend them to the Ohio, who were particularly recommended to their Care and Protection by a String of Wampum.

The Belts and Strings were numbered, as well in the written Paper containing the Message, as on Labels tied to each of them, and delivered to Pisquitomen, and the Written Message was delivered with the Passports, to Captain Bull.

The 22d of October, the Six Nation Chiefs held a private Council, and named Two of their People to send to the Ohio, Vizt: Tojenontawly, Cayuga Chief, and the youngest Shick Calamy, who joined Pisquitomen, and set off this afternoon. As they were setting out, Mr. Frederick Post arrived with news from General Forbes . . . which news he Communicated to the Indians.32

Post was later dispatched after Pisquetomen’s party, joining them at Reading on October 27. Here Pisquetomen invited Post to travel

29 Colonial Records, 208.
30 Some writers identify Capt. Bull as Teedyuscung’s son, who went by that name, but there was a white Capt. Bull who accompanied Post on missions in later years. Internal evidence of Post’s journal fixes on the white Pennsylvanian as the man meant here.
31 Isaac Still, a Delaware Indian converted by the Moravians, was employed as a provincial interpreter.
32 Colonial Records, 212. My italics.
with the treaty delegation, and Post urged the delegation to “go the same way as I must go.”

That there was a distinction between the mission of Post and that of the delegates is clear. The nature of the difference is revealed in the minutes of the provincial Council, which note that Post “had been sent by General Forbes, and by the Governor, among the Indians on the Ohio, to gain Intelligence. . . .” Post himself, in later correspondence, was at pains to point out that “I had but one [wampum] Belt, which I gave to the General to form a Speech from, & Pesquitom had all the rest.”

No explicit authority exists for Parkman’s assertion that Post carried the message of the Easton conference; but he persisted in the error, stating later that “Post delivered the peace message from the council at Easton, along with another with which Forbes had charged him.”

It is true that a hurried reader of Post’s second journal might be misled by Post’s tendency to dramatize and aggrandize himself, but Post never identified himself as the treaty messenger, though he did bask in a little reflected glory by writing of our message and how we delivered it. In the light of the official records, this harmless small egotism is quickly seen through. Indeed, close attention to the journal itself clarifies the matter.

33 Second Journal, Oct. 27.
34 Colonial Records, 223. My italics.
35 Frederick Post to Richard Peters, Apr. 7, 1759, Pennsylvania Archives, 581. Forbes’s speech is introduced in Post’s second journal with these words: “Brethren, I embrace this opportunity by our brother, Pisquetumen who is now on his return home with some of your uncles of the Six Nations, from the Treaty of Easton, of giving you joy of the happy conclusion of that great council.” Second Journal, Nov. 25. Forbes did not name Post.
36 Montcalm, 156–157.
37 The relevant journal entry is dated Nov. 25. It contains Gen. Forbes’s message, cited in Note 36 above, and the following from Gov. Denny: “Brethren, we received your message by Pisquetumen and Frederick Post, and thank you for the care you have taken of our messenger of peace; and that you have put him in your bosom, and protected him against our enemy, Onontio [the French], and his children, and sent him safe back to our council fire, by the same man that received him from us. (A string.) “Brethren, I only sent Post to peep into your cabins, and to know the sentiments of your old men, and to look at your faces, to see how you look. And I am glad to hear from him, that you look friendly; and that there still remain some sparks of love towards us. . . . “And brethren, the chiefs of the United Nations, with their cousins, our brethren, the Delawares, and others now here, jointly with me send this belt, which has upon it two figures, that represent all the English, and all the Indians, now present, taking hands, and delivering it to Pisquetumen, and we desire it may be likewise sent to the Indians, who are named at the end of these messages.”
After transposing the roles of Post and the party he joined, Parkman continued, "A small escort of soldiers that attended him as far as the Alleghany was cut to pieces on its return by a band of the very warriors to whom he was carrying his offers of friendship. . . ." Post also wrote about these soldiers, but his account varied considerably from Parkman's in significance. To begin with, Post mentioned that the Indians of his party had recommended that the military escort be made larger than it was. The Indians did not desire greater protection for themselves, but anticipated the moment when the escort would part from them to return to its base. The soldiers then "could be more able to defend themselves in returning back, 'for we know, say they, the enemy will follow the smallest party.'" The advice of the Indians was not taken, and, just as they had forewarned, the soldiers, commanded by Lieutenant Hays, were waylaid. Five were killed, including the lieutenant, and five were made prisoners, of whom one was designated to be burned at the stake. Post wrote that the prisoners informed their Indian captors "of our arrival, on which they concluded to leave the French, and to learn what news we brought them."\(^{38}\)

It must be kept in mind that, after Post's first trip to the Ohio, Pisquetomen had been authorized to return to Philadelphia only with proposals for peace; the state of belligerence was in effect until peace should be confirmed on both sides. This, in fact, was the reason why the Easton conference had constituted such a formal delegation to carry its message, a delegation that represented all the groups participating in the conference. This was also the reason why the ambushing warriors at the Ohio, upon hearing of the peace mission from their prisoners, instantly left the French and hurried to hear the message. But all this is missing from Parkman. His account converts a dangerous episode in the early stages of negotiation between belligerents into irrational and treacherous bloodletting by the Indians.

Parkman next wrote that Post's reception, on arriving at the Ohio Indian towns, "was ominous." According to Post's journal, his party arrived at Kushkushkee to find only two men and some women at home, besides five Frenchmen. The rest were off fighting. "Those that were at home received us kindly."\(^{39}\) The next day he conferred

\(^{38}\) Montcalm, 155; Second Journal, Nov. 9 and 17.

\(^{39}\) Ibid., Nov. 16.
with the chief, Delaware George, who agreed to go to General Forbes. On that day, also, came the news of the ambush of Lieutenant Hays's soldiers and the decision of the Indians to leave the French so as to hear the message of the Easton conference. Post persuaded those in the village to intercede, successfully as it turned out, for the life of the prisoner who was to be burned.

Supporting his characterization of Post's "ominous" reception, Parkman wrote: "The young warriors said: 'Anybody can see with half an eye that the English only mean to cheat us. Let us knock the messengers on the head.' " We have seen that the young warriors were not at home when Post arrived, but the quotation is accurate when its proper context can be found. This context occurs three days after Post's arrival, the intervening time being filled with incident. It will be worth our while here, as background for later analysis, to recite an extensive extract from Post's journal. (Parkman's quotation is italicized when eventually we get to it.)

[Under date of November 17, the journal notes the return to Kushkushkee of the ambush party; it mentions Post's pleas for the doomed prisoner.] Afterwards the warriors informed us that their design had not been to go to war, but that they had a mind to go to the General and speak with him; and on the road the French made a division among them, that they could not agree; after which they were discovered by the Cherokees and Catawbas [their enemies], who fled and left their bundles, where they found an English color. So Kekeuscung 40 told them he would go before them to the general, if they would follow him, but they would not agree to it; and the French persuaded them to fall upon the English at Loyal Hanning; they accordingly did, and as they were driven back, they fell in with that party which guided us, which they did not know. They seemed very sorry for it. . . .

[November 19] A great many of the warriors came home. The French had infused bad notions into the Indians, by means of the letters they found upon Lieutenant Hays, who was killed, which they falsely interpreted to them, viz: That in one letter it was wrote that the general should do all that was in his power to conquer the French, and, in the meantime, the messengers to the Indians should do their utmost to draw the Indians back and keep them together in conferences till he, the general, had made a conquest of the French, and afterwards he should fall upon all the Indians.

40 Keekyuscung, the chief who accompanied Pisquetomen to Philadelphia in June. Note the mention of the Cherokees and Catawbas; as they were enemies to the Ohio Indians, an English flag in their hands seemed to signify that the English had abandoned peace approaches. Involved were tribal feuds independent of and long antedating the conflict with the English.
and destroy them. And that if we should lose our lives, the English would carry on the war so long as an Indian or Frenchman was alive. Thereupon the French said to the Indians:

"Now you can see, my children, how the English want to deceive you, and if it would not offend you, I would go and knock these messengers on the head before you should be deceived by them." One of the Indian captains spoke to the French and said: "To be sure it would offend us if you should offer to knock them on the head. If you have a mind to go to war, go to the English army and knock them on the head, and not these three men that come with a message to us."

After this speech the Indians went all off and left the French. Nevertheless it had enraged some of the young people, and made them suspicious, so that it was a precarious time for us. I said: "Brethren, have good courage, and be strong; let not every wind disturb your mind; let the French bring the letter here; for, as you cannot read, they may tell you thousands of false stories. We will read the letter to you. As Isaac Still can read, he will tell you the truth."

After this all the young men were gathered together, Isaac Still being in company. The young men said: "One that had but half an eye could see that the English only intended to cheat them; and that it was best to knock every one of us messengers on the head."

Then Isaac began to speak, and said: "I am ashamed to hear such talking from you; you are but boys like me; you should not talk of such a thing. There have been thirteen nations at Easton, where they have established a firm peace with the English; and I have heard that the Five Nations [Iroquois] were always called the wisest; go tell them that they are fools, and cannot see; and tell that you are kings and wise men. Go and tell the Cayuga chiefs so, that are here; and you will become great men." Afterwards they were all still, and said not one word more.41

Post's account stresses the decisive importance of the French deception and incitement. Parkman's omission of this factor transforms the meaning of the Indians' behavior. That the omission was deliberate is proved by a later passage of Parkman's concluding his account of the peace council at Kushkushkee. In direct quotation marks, he ran together, without any indication of omitted matter, two extracts from the journal, separated in the original by a meaningful half page. The original journal entry follows; Parkman's version is italicized.

The messages pleased and gave satisfaction to all the hearers, except the French Captain. He shook his head with bitter grief, and often changed his

41 Montcalm, 155-156; Second Journal, Nov. 17 and 19.
Isaac Still ran down the French Captain with great boldness, and pointed at him, saying, “There he sits.” Afterwards Shingiss rose up and said:

“Brethren, now we have rightly heard and understood you; it pleaseth me and all the young men that hear it; we shall think of it, and take it into due consideration; and when we have considered it well, then we will give you an answer, and send it to all the towns and nations, as you desired us.”

We thanked them and wished them good success in their undertaking; and wished it might have the same effect on all other nations, that may hereafter hear it, as it had on them. We went a little out of the house. In the mean time Isaac Still demanded the letter, which the French had falsely interpreted, that it might be read in public. Then they called us back, and I, Frederick Post, found it was my own letter I had wrote to the General. I therefore stood up, and read it, which Isaac interpreted. The Indians were well pleased, and took it as if it was written to them; thereupon they all said: “We always thought the French report of the letter was a lie; they always deceived us”; pointing at the French Captain; who, bowing down his head, turned quite pale, and could look no one in the face. All the Indians began to mock and laugh at him; he could hold it no longer, and went out. Then the Cayuga chief delivered a string, in the name of the Six Nations. . . .

Not only the letter, with all its implications, was edited out of Parkman’s account, so also were the Cayuga representatives of the Six Nations. In Parkman’s pages, as we have seen, these are merely undistinguished “companions” of Frederick Post. In reality, they bore the authority of the grand council of the Six Nations. When they spoke, each word had behind it the Iroquois reputation as the policemen of the woods. The climax of the council at Kushkushkee began at precisely the moment when Parkman cut off his narrative, when Petiniontonka, the Cayuga chief, rose to speak. After customary greetings and a formal recess of one day, he spoke in the style of a man who expected no back talk.

Cousins, take notice of what I have to say; . . . We desire you would lay hold of the covenant we have made with our brethren, the English, and be strong. We likewise take the tomahawk out of your hands, that you received from the white people; use it no longer; sling the tomahawk away; it is the white people’s; let them use it among themselves; it is theirs, and they are of one color; let them fight with one another, and do you be still and quiet in Kushkushking.

42 Shingas was the Delawares’ great war chief.
43 Montcalm, 157; Second Journal, Nov. 25.
44 The phrase is taken from Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 1696-1760, Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia, 1945), 44.
We desire you to be still; we do not know as yet what to do; towards the spring you shall hear from your uncles what they conclude; in the mean time do you sit still by your fire at Kushkushking. 45

The Delawares' response was properly respectful. Beaver said for them: "I have heard you. You told me, you would set me at Kushkushking easy down. I took it to heart; and I shall do so, and be still, and lay myself easy down, and keep my matchcoat close to my breast. You told me, you will let me know in the next spring, what to do; so I will be still, and want to hear from you." He explained to the omnipresent French captain: "I have not made myself a king. My uncles [the Iroquois] have made me like a queen, that I always should mind what is good and right." 46

With all this before us (as it was before Parkman), it is impossible to give serious consideration to Parkman's thesis that Christian Frederick Post was "the influence most potent in reclaiming the warriors of the West." The diplomacy of the Indians themselves, epitomized in the Easton treaty which they organized and managed from first to last, was the crucial factor in bringing peace to the Ohio. Beside this, the personal influence of Frederick Post was gossamer.

It is hard to gauge Parkman's full effect today. His works are read far more widely than the many excellent monographs which modern scholars have devoted to the events we have reviewed. Though these events have been reported more accurately since Parkman's history was published, later scholars have failed to state in so many words that their findings contradicted his; and even scholars are susceptible to a thesis presented, like Parkman's, persuasively, authoritatively, artistically, consistently, and unchallenged. Perhaps the best indication of how Parkman's theses have become imbedded in our thought is the contrasting treatment given two personages in the Dictionary of American Biography, edited under the auspices of the American Council of Learned Societies. Christian Frederick Post is recognized, in an article under his name, as the emissary of Pennsylvania to the Ohio Indians, the man who swayed them to peace. Pisquetomen is not to be found.

Delaware Valley College  
of Science and Agriculture  
FRANCIS P. JENNINGS