New France in the 18th Century

The Treaty of Utrecht

On April 11, 1713, in Utrecht, Holland, Françoise signed a treaty putting an end to the War of Spanish Succession. Louis XIV secured the throne of Spain for his Pretender, Philippe d'Anjou, who would soon reign as Philip V. But in exchange, he had to give up a large part of his colonial empire. He had no choice: war had bled his kingdom dry.

In North America, France recognized the British claim to the Hudson Bay and ceded mainland Acadia (Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) to Britain. France kept "the island of Île Royale (Cape Breton) and all the others located in the mouth of the Gulf of St. Lawrence."

A portrait of the French in Canada

Pehr Kalm, a Swedish naturalist, had spent nine months in the English colonies, in Philadelphia and New York. In the summer of 1749, he visited the valley of the St. Lawrence. The scientist was enchanted by what he saw:

"The countryside is quite beautiful everywhere and it's a pleasure to see how prettily it is inhabited, so densely on both sides of the river; one could almost say that it forms a continuous village which begins at Montreal and extends as far as Quebec."

What impressed him most about Canada was the behaviour of its people. "Between the extreme politeness which I have enjoyed here and that of the English colonies, there is all the difference... Here everyone is Monsieur or Madame, the peasant as well as the gentleman, the farm wife just as the greatest lady. The men are extremely polite and salute every person they meet in the streets by raising their hats."

Most of the inhabitants lived on seigneuries, large farms, along the river. For 35 years now, no enemy had attacked the St. Lawrence valley. The population was steadily growing and life was comfortable for the people who lived there. Many descendants of the pioneers had become large landowners. Agriculture had become more and more important. The colony now supplied all its own food. They even had enough wheat and peas left over to send to the French colonies in the Caribbean. For 15 years now, the colony's first highway, the King's Road, linked Montreal to Quebec. It took four days to travel between the two cities.

In 1749, when Kalm visited, New France had a population of 50,000 people while the English colonies had 20 times more, almost a million inhabitants. Despite the enormous difference in size, Kalm saw a glowing future for the little French colony.

"It is true that the habitants are poor, but they love their king. Anyone who cures to recall to what extent the houses of Canada are filled with children... and that the men and women of French origin are built better than anyone else to have children... anyone who considers how alive, joyous, courageous, inured to fatigue the Canadiens are... must equally foresee that Canada will, in the near future, become a very powerful country and the Rome of the English provinces."

Other French visitors also remarked on the Canadiens' special character. The Jesuit Pierre- François-Xavier de Charlevoix nicknamed the habitants the "Creoles of Canada":

"Fickleness, aversion to sustained and disciplined work and the spirit of independence... there you have the defects with which they are most often reproached... One would say that the air they breathe in this vast continent contributes to it."

In the Jesuit college in Quebec, which was founded in 1635, the Jesuits made similar observations about the Canadiens. The same curriculum was taught there as in France but the young Canadiens preferred a more practical education.

"Many people are convinced they are not suited to the sciences which demand a great deal of application and concentrated study... But no one can deny that they have a rare genius for the mechanical arts; they almost have no need of a master craftsman to excel and one sees every day people who are a success in their trade without having had an apprenticeship."

After more than a century, Canadians had developed their own customs and had adapted well to winter. Cut off from France for five or six months, free from work in the fields, Canadiens were free to relax and let off steam. The authorities had their hands full. Judge Pierre Raimbault strongly disapproved of one favourite winter pastime.

"In the city of Montreal, all those who drive vehicles or teams, officers as well as others...glory in always going through the streets at a full gallop... most of these boastful habitants drive their horses in town without being qualified to do so and run races to bowl over everyone they encounter in the streets."

But not all Canadiens loved winter. Élizabeth Bégon, widow of the governor of Trois-Rivières, hated the cold. Yet this 53 year old woman was born in Montreal and was a member of the new local aristocracy. "I shiver in anticipation when I think that here we are, in the snow for nine months. I want to be in France. At least I would not be at risk of freezing and perishing in a snowbank."

The following year, Élizabeth Bégon's wish came true and she moved to France. She who detested the Canadian winter so much was filled with hope. But she was soon bitterly disappointed.

"Every day I find things to make me reproach all those from whom I kept hearing so much that in France everything is done like nowhere else... I believe that with money one could have everything one wished for. But in truth... I find here
nothing better than in Canada, except for December, January and February, for all the rest is worse."

The aristocrats of Versailles give this great Canadian lady a nickname..."L'Iroquoise." She never returned to Canada.

The Acadians

Acadia took its name from the garden of the gods in Greek mythology. Some of the best lands in North America were found here, so fertile that the Acadians never suffered epidemics of scurvy, typhus or cholera. But they lived on a continental fault-line, on the colonial frontier between two great empires which held each other in mortal contempt.

Acadia has been handed back and forth between France and England at least six times. The treaties gave it two names at once: "Acadia or Nova Scotia". In 1713, Acadia was finally ceded to England for good. It was home to 1,800 peaceful, French-speaking farmers. The majority of Acadians decided to stay on their land. They were French and Catholic while their new sovereign was Protestant and English. The English demanded that they swear an oath of allegiance to George I. The Acadians stalled, and then refused. A delegation from Beaubassin explained why to the governor of Annapolis Royal (Port Royal): "When our ancestors were previously under English rule they were never required to swear such an oath."

There were not enough Englishmen to force the Acadians to swear the oath, and above all Lieutenant-Governor Thomas Caulfield wanted them to stay in the country. "If the French leave," he wrote, "we will never be able to support English families here, and protect them from harassment by the Indians, who are the worst enemies imaginable."

Governor Richard Philipps informed London in 1720 that the Acadians "will never swear the oath of allegiance, no more than they will leave the country." The Board of Trade replied to him: "As to the French inhabitants of Nova Scotia... we are apprehensive they will never become good subjects to His Majesty... for which reason we are of opinion they ought to be removed as soon as the Forces which we have proposed to be sent your protection shall arrive in Nova Scotia... but you are not to attempt this expulsion without His Majesty's positive order."

Nothing happened for ten years, and by 1730, the Acadian population had doubled. Philipps wrote that "they constitute a powerful group, which like Noah's offspring are spreading across the face of the province." Philipps and his assistant, Lawrence Armstrong, wanted to solve the problem by satisfying both their superiors and their subjects. They managed to get the Acadians to take the oath, on the condition that they were exempted from the duty of bearing arms. This clause appeared in the documents that the habitants had to sign. Philipps recommended that it be "written in the margin, next to the French translation, in the hopes of overcoming their repulsion, little by little." However, it was not included in the oath itself, which read,"I promise and swear by my Faith as a Christian that I will be entirely faithful and will truly obey His Majesty King George II, whom I acknowledge as the sovereign lord of Acadia or Nova Scotia, so help me God."

There is no doubt that the promise not to bear arms was made. Father Charles de Goudalie de Grand-Pré and Alexandre Bourg Belle-Humeur, a notary, were witnesses: "We witness that His Excellency Lord Richard Philipps... has promised the inhabitants of Mines and the surrounding area that he will exempt them from the requirement to bear arms and to make war against the French and the Indians... and that the said French have engaged themselves and promised never to take up arms in case of war against the kingdom of England."

Philipps could reassure London that four thousand Acadians had taken the oath. For their part, the Acadians believed they had found a way to protect themselves from the whims of empires, at the same time preserving their religion and language. From 1730 on, the English called the Acadians "neutrals" or "French neutrals".

Deportation

In 1755, a wind of hatred blew through North America, and Acadia was in the eye of the storm. The English wanted to take the Acadians' lands. Tensions were growing between French soldiers and English settlers and soldiers. That summer, the New York Gazette's correspondent in Halifax wrote:

"We are now upon a great and noble scheme of sending the neutral French out of this province, who have always been secretly our enemies... and have encouraged our Indians to cut our throat. If we effect their expulsion, it will be one of the greatest things that ever did the English in America, for by all accounts, that part of the country they possess is as good a land as any in the world... we could get some good English farmers in their room."

The new governor of Nova Scotia, Charles Lawrence, demanded that the Acadians swear a new oath of allegiance to the King of England, this time with no reservations. But the Acadians refused to renounce the promise made 25 years earlier by Richard Philipps:

"We, and our fathers, having taken for them and for us an oath of loyalty which was approved several times, in the name of the king... we will never be so inconstant as to take an oath that changes, however little, the conditions and privileges which our sovereigns and our fathers secured for us in the past."

On August 11, 1755, Lawrence wrote to Lieutenant-Colonel John Winslow, commander of a Massachusetts militia unit at Grand-Pré:

"You must have recourse to the most certain means to gather the inhabitants together and put them on board ship, using trickery or force as circumstances dictate."
The much more populous English colonies, from Halifax to Savannah, were hemmed in by the French and the Allegheny Mountains, a source of great frustration and bitterness to the English settlers.

The Indians lived uneasily among both groups – two hundred nations that were increasingly resentful of the English presence. Many were allied with the French, though it was a fragile alliance. And the Indians themselves were fractured along traditional battlelines.

In the 14 colonies of British America, economies were booming and the population was doubling in size every decade. There was only one direction to expand – over the mountains to the west into the Indian homelands and the land claimed by the French as Canada. Thousands of settlers from the American colonies streamed into the richest part of the interior – the Ohio Valley, where clashes broke out in the summer of 1754. The Indians saw a dark intent behind the tide. A Delaware chief wrote "...We have great reason to believe you intend to drive us away and settle the country or else why do you come and fight in the Land God has given us..."

The fears of the natives were well founded.

Soon, fueled by the Pennsylvania Gazette and its publisher's vision for the future, politicians, merchants and speculators all wanted a part of the Ohio Valley. Benjamin Franklin, convinced of the colonies' destiny, intended to see their one million people grow to cover the continent with one language and one religion: unified, English and Protestant.

Franklin wrote: "This Million doubling, supposed but once in 25 years, will in another Century be more than the People of England, and the greatest Number of Englishmen will be on this Side of the Water."

The French and the Indians considered the American settlers invaders and burned many out of their homes on the Canadian frontier. Three thousand settlers were killed or captured, thousands more driven away.

With the fighting over expansion and the burnings in the Ohio Valley, North America was becoming a regular and bloody battleground, a prelude to what would become Europe's most monumental confrontation, the Seven Years' War (1756-63).

**Rumblings of War**

**Clashes in the Ohio Valley**

In the mid-eighteenth century, France controlled the largest part of the North American continent. A Catholic, French-speaking society of 55,000 was centred in the cities of Quebec and Montreal, in the fortress of Louisbourg, and spread thinly through villages along the St. Lawrence and in small forts that advanced their territory into the interior. France also controlled the west. It was a frail empire that ran from Detroit to Louisiana at the mouth of the Mississippi River.
there could be no future for English America, until the French were eliminated.

"The French will... set the Indians to harass our frontiers, kill and scalp our people, and drive in the advanced settlers; and so, preventing our obtaining more subsistence by cultivating of new lands, they discourage our marriages, and keep our people from increasing; thus (if the expression may be allowed) killing thousands of our children before they are born."

Citing the need to protect the English colonies, Franklin published a call to arms. The French would have to be driven out of North America.

"The safety and security of all the English colonies in North America, their very Being as English Colonies, make such measure absolutely necessary, and that without any Loss of Time."

The Governor and the General

Quebec City was the centre of France's operations in North America, and in 1756 it became a wartime city, filled with soldiers and refugees. Canada had been rooted here for 150 years with many families into their fifth generation.

For some, France was a dim memory in stories told by grandfathers. But this was about to change. When Europe erupted into war, France and Britain brought their fight for world dominance to the farthest reaches of their empires, including Canada.

In April 1756, before Britain's official declaration of war in May, France sent Louis-Joseph, the Marquis de Montcalm to Quebec to command all the forces in North America. Montcalm, at forty-four, was a career soldier from a distinguished French family. He had begun his military training at the age of nine and had a good military record, but little money.

"I believed I must accept an honourable commission, but it would also be a sensitive one, because it must also secure my son's fortune. An important goal for a father, but it was a commission I never asked for nor desired."

Montcalm was short, impatient, determined and vain – the physical and temperamental opposite to Canada's Governor Pierre de Rigaud, the Marquis de Vaudreuil. Vaudreuil was the first Canadian-born governor of the colony. At fifty-seven, the colonial aristocrat was a big man who favoured directness. He was ambitious and confident that he could handle whatever might come. He didn't think an imported French general was the person to lead the North American troops.

"War in this country is very different from the wars in Europe...the Canadians and Indians would not march with the same confidence under the order of a commander of the troops from France as they would under the officers of this colony," wrote Vaudreuil.

The Governor and the General quickly came to detest each other and wrote regularly to France, each informing his superior of the other's perceived shortcomings.

"Monsieur de Montcalm is so quick-tempered that he goes to the length of striking the Canadians," Vaudreuil wrote to the Minister of the Marine. "How can he restrain his officers when he cannot restrain himself?"

Vaudreuil, in turn, was described as "a timid man and one who neither knows how to make a resolution or to keep one once made."

Montcalm believed that war was the business of Europeans and had no taste for the guerrilla tactics of the New World that Vaudreuil subscribed to. The European strategy was to deliver a single well-timed volley that devastated the enemy line. Battles tended to be brief and casualties were high. War came with a set of manners, although "civilized" warfare was far more destructive than the Indian guerrilla tactics, which inflicted a more specific cruelty on a much smaller number of the enemy.

Montcalm also wasted no time in showing his opinion of most Canadian officers: "...Langy excellent, Marin brave but stupid; the rest are not worth mentioning..."

War Begins

Attack on British forts and settlements

In May 1756 Britain declared war on France. France's General in North America, the Marquis de Montcalm, was ready. He moved into the wilderness with massive siege guns, transforming the brutal border war into a European battlefield.

In the first battles of the war, Montcalm took the British forts of Oswego on Lake Ontario and Fort William Henry on Lake Champlain using traditional tactics. At Fort Carillon he defeated Major-General James Abercomby's force of close to 16,000 with an army of 3,600 men, a stunning tactical rout.

By contrast, Governor Marquis de Vaudreuil assigned sorties conducted by Canadians and Indians that were designed to destroy the enemy's morale. They attacked a settlement of German immigrants in the Mohawk Valley who wished to be neutral. Three hundred raiders descended on the community of German Flats. They burned down 60 dwellings and granaries, killed 50 people and took 32 scalps. One hundred and fifty people, mostly women and children were taken prisoner.

Vaudreuil and Montcalm would never agree on how to conduct the war. Vaudreuil's war was a war of attrition. But Montcalm hated the guerrilla tactics.
"It is no longer the time," he said, "when a few scalps, or the burning of a few houses is any advantage or even an object. Petty means, petty ideas, petty councils about details are now dangerous and a waste of materiel and time."

There was also the worry that the Canadian style of war might catch on; that the Europeans would abandon the gentleman’s pretense that marked warfare and embrace the brutality of the new landscape. Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, Montcalm’s aide-de-camp, noted this worry in the journal he kept of his experience in Canada. "It is an abominable way to make war," he wrote of the Indian raids, "the retaliation is frightening, and the air one breathes here is contagious of making one accustomed to callousness."

**Fortress Louisbourg**

**Friction before the War**

In 1758, the first step in England’s plan to concentrate its war effort in North America was to capture Louisbourg, the French fortress that guarded the entrance to the St. Lawrence River. It sat on Île Royale (now Cape Breton Island), a fortified town that had become a detested symbol. It was the centre of the French fishing industry, a key military site and a training base for the French navy.

The French presence in Louisbourg was a source of great friction between the rival countries before the War. French privateers used Louisbourg as a base to plunder New England ships. In 1744 the French captured a New England fishing outpost at Canso, Nova Scotia. A year later, fed up with these attacks, a New England force attacked Louisbourg. It was a motley collection of boats and citizens aided by a British naval force from the Carribean. After a seven-week siege, the French surrendered their fortress and its people were deported to France.

But in the 1748 Treaty of Aix La Chapelle, Louisbourg was restored to the French. At the time of the Seven Years War, Fort Louisbourg was defended by a garrison of twenty-five hundred men, four hundred militia and ten ships.

**British invasion**

On June 1, 1758 a massive British force arrived at Louisbourg – forty-eight ships, 14,000 troops and almost 2,000 mounted guns set to attack the French fortress.

The siege began with European decorum: the British commander General Jeffery Amherst sending two pineapples to Marie-Anne de Drucour, wife of the French governor, Augustin de Drucour. In return the governor sent Amherst several bottles of champagne.

After this gesture of politesse, on June 8, 1758, the bombardment began. The British gunboats rained hundreds of shells into the town. "All the women and a great number of little children came out, running to and fro, not knowing where to go in the midst of bombs and balls falling on every side," Governor Drucour reported. "It seems the British intention is not just to breach the walls but rather to kill everyone and burn the town."

**Brigadier James Wolfe**

Among Louisbourg’s English invaders was a thirty-one-year-old brigadier named James Wolfe. He was frail, brave and obsessed with glory, and was beginning to gain a reputation as a daring gambler.

"All notions of peace are now at an end..." he wrote to his mother, days before war was declared. "We must, however, hope that fortune will favours us, since we do our best to deserve her smiles...your obedient and affectionate son, James Wolfe."

Wolfe was determined to avenge the French general the Marquis de Montcalm’s North American victories, even willing to take heavy casualties. On the rocky shores of Île Royale where Louisbourg sat, Wolfe gained the first risky landing. At Cormorant Cove, a place so dangerous and rocky that the French didn’t see any need to defend it, Wolfe got his first taste of glory and a reputation for recklessness that would grow.

"One boat in which were twenty grenadiers and an officer was stove and every one drowned. The difficulty of landing at this place was such that they thought the devil himself would not have attempted it," said one British soldier of the landing.

**Destruction and heavy losses**

By late July 1758, the British siege of Louisbourg had lasted for almost two months. The town was strewn with rubble, the batteries almost ruined. Only twelve cannons were still able to fire. The dead piled up like cordwood. But Governor Augustin de Drucour would not get any mercy from the British when he asked for help for Louisbourg’s wounded.

"When the French are in a scrape they are ready to cry out in behalf of the human species; when fortune favours them, none more bloody, more inhuman," wrote General Jeffery Amherst’s brigadier James Wolfe. "Montcalm has changed the very nature of war, and has forced us, in some measure, to a deterring and dreadful vengeance."

**Surrender**

On July 26, 1758 Louisbourg’s Governor Augustin de Drucour felt he had held out long enough to delay the British invasion of Quebec. He wrote to the English General Jeffery Amherst, offering to discuss terms of surrender. Amherst’s chilly reply arrived quickly. "We give your excellency an hour to determine on the only capitulation we are willing to grant, which is, you surrender yourselves prisoners of war."
Drucour accepted the terms and surrendered though he was despised by the people for holding out for so long and scorned by the soldiers for giving up. The evening before, priests had spent the entire night performing hurried marriage ceremonies for every girl in Louisbourg, worried that they would fall into the heretical, Protestant arms of the conquering English. It was the first substantial English victory in three years of fighting.

The people of Louisbourg were deported and in France Drucour was disgraced for relinquishing the fortress. His pension was denied and he died four years later in poverty. His wife Marie-Anne, La Bombardière, died two months later. On the order of the British Prime Minister William Pitt, Louisbourg was to be "totally demolished, and razed, and all the materials so thoroughly destroyed, as that no use may, henceforth, be ever made of the same."

James Wolfe appointed General

Brigadier James Wolfe, who distinguished himself at Louisbourg by making the first landing on the rocky coast of Île Royale, caught the attention of London.

He had already been in the military for seventeen years, a veteran of battles in Scotland and Belgium. His father was a lieutenant-general and his mother was controlling, melancholy and self-absorbed. Wolfe was an unlikely warrior, a thin, homely, humourless and excitable man. He suffered from rheumatism and bladder infections. Socially, he was awkward and spent time in France trying to refine his skills, learning the language, conversing stiffly with local coquettes. Amid the opulent sweep of Versailles he was presented to the king and queen. Wolfe shunned prostitutes and lacked the skills for seduction, a reluctant celibate who believed he would die young.

After Augustin de Drucour's surrender at Louisbourg Wolfe felt that there was still time to move up the St. Lawrence river and take Quebec that year but the rest of the British command and General Jeffery Amherst didn't agree. The day after the surrender, Wolfe wrote his mother, "I hope to be with you by Christmas; though I protest to you, that I had much rather..." Among his other ailments, Wolfe suffered horribly from seasickness and the voyage always left him thinner and paler.

Upon hearing of Wolfe's feats at Louisbourg, British Prime Minister William Pitt decided that he was the man to lead the assault on Quebec. He sent word for Wolfe to remain in Canada but he had already started back and spent the winter in London.

Wolfe was both ambitious and insecure and he fretted over the historical immensity of his new task. "I am to act a greater part in this business than I wished or desired," he wrote to his uncle, Major Walter Wolfe. "The backwardness of some of the older officers has in some measure forced the Government to come down so low. I shall do my best, and leave the rest to fortune, as perforce we must when there are not the most commanding abilities." Even William Pitt, who had appointed him, shared Wolfe's doubts. During dinner at Pitt's home one evening, Wolfe left the table, retrieved his sword and pantomimmed the slashing of imaginary enemies. Pitt observed this unhinged theatre and after Wolfe had left, commented, "To think that I have committed the fate of my country and of my ministry into such hands." Wolfe hadn't had much wine that evening; he wasn't drunk, and several people suggested that he might be mad. When King George II heard of the dinner party incident, he was buoyed. "Mad is he?" said the king, who was almost senile and flirting with madness himself, "then I hope he will bite some of my other generals."

Despite his physical frailty and self-doubt, Wolfe had a zeal for war. His inherent fatalism was fuelled by the various afflictions that already tormented him at thirty-one. He was a dying man seeking a noble death, and he led accordingly.

Leading fleet to Canada

Wolfe, the brigadier who returned to Canada in the spring of 1759 as General James Wolfe, arrived aboard the warship Neptune, the newly appointed commander of the British expedition.

He left London in command of a quarter of the British navy, an extraordinary fleet that had twenty-two ships of the line, each carrying up to eight hundred people; twenty-seven frigates; eighty transport ships; and fifty-five schooners – more than 200 ships in all.

They were carrying 2,000 cannon and 40,000 cannonballs as well as surgeons, ministers, prostitutes, wives and their children and livestock. There were 9,000 soldiers and 18,000 sailors. The fleet stretched for one hundred miles up the St. Lawrence River, a floating city with a population larger than Quebec.

But Wolfe, chronically seasick, suffering from rheumatism and tuberculosis, had more the air of an invalid than a warrior. And, knowing something of his fellow British officers in Canada, he wasn't cheered by what awaited him. "[General James] Abercromby is a heavy man & Brig Provost the most detestable Dog on earth, by everybody's account," he wrote, "These two Principal Officers hate one another; now to serve in an army so circumstances is no very pleasing business."

Wolfe wasn't pleased with the Canadian climate either. In a letter to his mother, the general wrote, "The Early Season in this Country, I mean the month of April & May, are intolerably cold & disagreeable – June & July are foggy, August rainy – September has always a Tempest – October is generally a dry and fair month and the winter sets in early November." Barely one good month out of twelve.

He felt the people were no better. "These colonies are deeply tinged with the Vices & bad Qualities of their mother Country & indeed many parts of it are Peopled with those that the Law or necessity has forced upon it..."
What the country had, in Wolfe’s opinion, was enormous potential. "They have all the materials ready, Nature has refused them nothing & there will grow a People out of our little spot (England) that will fill this vast space, & divide this great Portion of the globe with the Spaniards, who are possessed of the other half." Wolfe showed prescience in his prediction, though the pie wouldn’t be divided the way he envisioned.

**Battle for Quebec**

*Montcalm launches fireboats*

At midnight, on June 28th, 1759 while British General James Wolfe was trying to come up with a new plan for his attack on Quebec, the French General Marquis de Montcalm launched his own attack.

Boats and rafts carrying gunpowder were chained together and sent with the current toward the English fleet, anchored off Île d'Orléans. Aboard each craft, a man awaited the signal to ignite his cargo before plunging into the river. But one of the boats exploded too soon and the others took it as the signal to ignite theirs. The element of surprise was lost, but from the British camps it doesn’t look like a mistake.

"Nothing could be more formidable than these infernal engines on their first appearance," wrote John Knox, an Irish-born Lieutenant who kept a detailed journal of the war. "They were certainly the grandest fireworks (if I may be allowed to call them that) that can possibly be conceived, every circumstance having contributed to their awful, yet beautiful appearance; the night was serene and calm, there was no light but what the stars produced, and this was eclipsed by the blaze of the floating fires... the profuse clouds of smoke with the firing of the cannon, the bursting of the grenades, and the cracking of the other combustibles; all of which reverberated thro' the air, and the adjacent woods... afforded a scene, I think, infinitely superior to any adequate description." Despite their daunting appearance, the boats, which had been intended to blow up the British fleet, missed their mark and burned uselessly until morning.

"The project was beautiful, but badly executed..." wrote Jean-Claude Panet, a citizen of Quebec. "...the English who, at first, were dismayed, cried Hurrah! And mocked our operations."

A second attempt at fireboats was tried and thwarted. Wolfe was angry at the tactic and wrote Montcalm a letter. "If you send any more fire-rafts," he warned, "They shall be made fast to the two transports in which the Canadian prisoners are confined in order that they may perish by your own base invention."

*Bombing ignites the city*

The British siege of Quebec began the night of Thursday, July 12, 1759. Inside the city, François-Joseph de Vienne watched from his warehouse. He wrote: "At precisely 9 o'clock in the evening, the enemy sent a rocket from the heights of the Pointe de Lévy..."

Four large cannon and five mortars kept up a steady barrage until morning, sending cannonballs into the streets and smashing walls. Firebombs made of iron baskets filled with pitch, tar and powder were lobbed over the walls, spreading fire. In that first day three hundred British bombs fell on Quebec.

At his church, Notre-Dame des Victoires, Abbé Jean-Félix Recher watched the city burn around him. "At noon a bomb fell on the widow Morand's house, set it on fire and burned it to the ground as well as Widow Cheneverd's house, Mr Cardenas', Mr Dassier's and Madame Boishébert's."

"...the gunfire and the bombardment... terrorized the whole town... the women with their children, in great numbers near the citadel, were continually in tears, wailing and praying; they huddled together and said the rosary," Recher wrote.

Marie de la Visitation, a member of the order of nuns that ran the General Hospital, described the desperate scene in a letter: "Let us now, dear Mothers, endeavour to give you some of the details of a war and captivity, which our sins have drawn upon us... During one night, upwards of fifty of the best houses in the Lower Town were destroyed. The vaults containing merchandise and many precious articles did not escape the effects of the artillery.

During this dreadful conflagration, we could offer nothing but our tears and prayers at the foot of the altar at such moments as could be snatched from the necessary attention to the wounded."

The bombing continued, eventually destroying Recher's church and others. On August 10, a shell ignited brandy in a wine cellar, spreading flames until Notre Dame des Victoires had burned to a half-walled ruin. The Recollet Friar's Church had holes in the roof where the cannonballs had fallen and its pews were strewn into useless piles of lumber. The Jesuits' Church and the nunnery suffered the same fate.

"In addition to these misfortunes," noted Marie de la Visitation, "we had to contend with more than one enemy; famine, at all times inseparable from war, threatened to reduce us to the last extremity; upwards of six hundred persons in our building and vicinity, partaking of our small means of subsistence, supplied from the government stores, which were likely soon to be short of what was required for the troops.

*Division in Wolfe's camp*

The British bombing of Quebec lasted nine weeks. Every morning, every afternoon, every night, the bombs fell, crashing the city with almost 20,000 cannonballs. And still the British could not take Quebec.
General James Wolfe wrote to his mother of his frustration. "My antagonist has wisely shut himself up, in inaccessible entrenchments, so that I can't get at him, without spilling a torrent of blood, and that perhaps to little purpose. The Marquis de Montcalm is at the head of a great number of bad soldiers & I am at the head of a small number of good ones, that wish for nothing so much as to fight him – but the wary old fellow avoids an action; doubtful of the behavior of his army."

Wolfe had to get his troops back to England before the ice made the St. Lawrence impassable. While he was waiting for starvation to draw his enemy out, he was enduring constant skirmishes, mostly with Indians that resulted in regular casualties. The French were being bombed into numbness and the British were being slowly bled. If Montcalm could simply endure, he would win this war of attrition.

The British camp was confused and divided. Wolfe was not only very sick, in bed for days and stewed in medications, but when he wasn't plagued by illness, he was indecisive. The summer was half over. Wolfe couldn't decide where to attack and he faced opposition even within his own camp.

Wolfe's three brigadiers were members of the aristocracy. James Murray, Robert Monckton and George Townshend viewed their leader as a career officer of the middle class and they questioned whether he had the will or imagination for the job. Townshend drew caricatures of Wolfe, whose misshapen form lent itself to the job. One of the unflattering sketches was passed around the mess tent, and was finally intercepted by Wolfe himself. He glanced at his twisted likeness and crumpled the paper. "If I live," he said, "this shall be inquired into; but we must beat the enemy first."

Townshend wasn't found out, but his discontent was obvious. In a letter to his wife, he wrote: "I never served so disagreeable campaign as this. Our unequal Force has reduced our Operations to a scene of Skirmishing, Cruelty & Devastation. It is War of the Worst Shape. A Scene I ought not to be in... General Wolfe's health is but very bad. His generalship, in my poor opinion – is not a bit better, this only between us."

Wolfe had Montcalm's infuriating inaction on one side, while on the other were the doubts of his officers and the steady rebellions of his body. The brigadiers thought Wolfe should land upriver and initiate a two-pronged attack at Pointe aux Trembles and Deschambault. Wolfe waffled. At one point he ordered three different actions in the course of five hours, cancelling each as soon as he had ordered it.

**Invasion of the Beauport shore**

At the end of July 1759, General James Wolfe was faced with a divided council and winter drawing near. Suddenly, without consulting his brigadiers, he ordered a different invasion, not upriver as the officers had suggested, but at Beauport, where Montcalm's army was entrenched.

On the morning of Tuesday July 31st, near the falls at Montmorency, Wolfe launched the invasion of Quebec. Four thousand British troops stormed the beaches in front of the Beauport trenches. It was the same gamble Wolfe used a year earlier at Louisbourg and won. But this time the French troops and Canadian militia were ready.

As Wolfe's men landed on shore and moved up the heavily fortified hill, they were picked off at will, unable even to return fire. At the end of the battle there were 440 English dead or wounded compared to 70 for the French. The injured British were taken to the General Hospital, under the care of Marie de la Visitation. Wolfe sent a letter to the French General, the Marquis de Montcalm, offering to pay for the care of his men but Montcalm gallantly refused to take any payment. Observing the British disaster from the heights, the Governor, the Marquis de Vaudreuil, was jubilant.

"I have no more anxiety about Quebec. M. Wolfe, I can assure you, will make no progress... Deserters say that he will try us again in a few days. That is what we want; he'll find somebody to talk to."

**Wolfe's extended campaign**

After the stunning failure of his attack on Beauport, July 31, 1759, General Wolfe was humiliated and desperate.

He set into motion the darkest chapter of his campaign, embracing the guerrilla tactics of the New World. He told his officers: "I intend to burn the whole country from Kamouraska to the Point of Lévy." If he couldn't capture Canada, he would destroy its harvests, its granaries and its food for the winter.

The British ranged over one hundred miles along the St. Lawrence. They laid waste to deserted villages and torched hundreds farmhouses and barns.

News of the destruction travelled to Jean-Félix Recher, the abbé whose church in Quebec had already burned to the ground.

"I heard that on the South shore, the English, as well as burning the parish of St. Antoine, have burned St. Nicholas, and part of St. Croix. On the Île d'Orleans, houses in the parish of St. François, half the homes in Ste. Famille, and as well of those at Baie St. Paul; and that they sent 600 men to the Lower South Shore, to burn houses and wheatfields."

The most zealous in Wolfe's campaign were men from the American colonies who were bent on revenge for the burning of their own frontier settlements by the French and the Indians. But some of the other men were sickened by the task.

Lieutenant Malcolm Fraser of the 78th Highlanders was marching to Ste. Anne de Beaupré when his detachment was fired on by 200 Canadians and Indians. He was most disturbed by what his own side did. "There were several of the enemy killed and wounded, and a few prisoners taken, all of whom
the barbarous Captain Montgomery, who commanded us, ordered to be butchered in a most inhuman and cruel manner; particularly two I sent prisoner by a sergeant after giving them quarter."

**Planned invasion above Cap Rouge**

By August 19th, 1759, General Wolfe was stricken by fever, bedridden and consumed by indecision. He knew that failure in Quebec would mean public disgrace in England. His father had recently died and in his last letter to his mother, he made a stunning announcement.

"I approve entirely of my father's disposition of his affairs, though perhaps it may interfere a little matter with my plan of quitting the service, which I am determined to do the first opportunity – I mean so as not to be absolutely distressed in circumstances, nor burdensome to you, or to any body else."

Wolfe knew time was running out. In two weeks the Royal Navy would be forced to send all its ships back to their winter base in England. As hints of autumn appeared, Wolfe was fading. "I found myself so ill, and am still so weak," he wrote, "that I begged the general officers to consult together for the public utility. They are all of the opinion... to draw the enemy from their present situation, and bring them to an action. I have acquiesced in their proposal, and we are preparing to put it into execution."

Wolfe's three brigadiers – James Murray, Robert Monckton and George Townshend – dictated the next move. They planned an invasion thirty miles upriver, between Pointe aux Trembles and Cap Rouge. On September 9, five thousand men were in landing boats ready to attack. But they were delayed by rain. Instead of waiting out the weather, Wolfe wandered far downriver, much closer to Quebec, surveying the imposing north shore and wondering how to seduce it. An idea came to him, one that had the reckless earmarks of his Louisbourg landing at Cormorant Cove, or the order to charge the hill at Beauport. To the dismay of his officers, he cancelled the existing plan and shortly before midnight on September 12, he landed five thousand men at l'Anse au Foulon, a point which offered no plausible route to the fortress.

**Plains of Abraham**

**British forces assemble**

On the orders of a sick and dying General James Wolfe, 5,000 English troops landed at l'Anse au Foulon, just before midnight on September 12, 1759.

The soldiers were met with a steep rock face rising 200 feet above the river. A narrow goat path was their only access to the top. For six hours the British army climbed, reaching the field above by five o'clock in the morning Thursday, September 13, 1759.

Wolfe had only seen this place – the Plains of Abraham – through a spyglass on his ship's deck. It was an abandoned farmer's field, uneven with clutches of trees and a cornfield. A small hill, Butte a Neveu, obscured Quebec. Because the top of the hill was within cannon range of Quebec, Wolfe reluctantly placed his men at the bottom of the hill.

He didn't have enough troops for the customary triple line, the delicate choreography of shooting, kneeling and loading that the British favoured. Instead he set up two lines and had the men load two musketballs to maximize their firepower.

The men assembled into an incongruous regimental mosaic. The 78th Highlanders, known as the Fraser Highlanders, had the tartan wraps, broadswords and pipers that had been at Culloden, where some of them had fought for the Catholic Bonnie Prince Charlie. Now they were being commanded by a man who had fought against them at that bloody battle. Wolfe had suggested recruiting the Highlanders as mercenaries, noting their ferocity and fearlessness. Besides these qualities, he commented, it would be "no great mischief" if they were killed. Sergeant James Thompson, Simon Fraser, Alexander Fraser – these were the names of men from Highland Catholic families whose homes had been destroyed by the British.

**French forces mobilize**

On the Plains of Abraham, early in the morning of September 13, 1759, General James Wolfe and his various regiments of soldiers were situated between two French armies.

On the one side, along the Beauport shore, General Montcalm's main force; and scattered along the St. Lawrence behind them, Louis-Antoine de Bougainville's force of two thousand. Montcalm's men, stationed in the anticipation of another British assault on the hill at Beauport, were about an hour's march away. Bougainville's men, stationed to defend against a landing farther upriver, could be mobilized within a few hours.

Wolfe was gambling Montcalm would take the bait. If he couldn't tempt the French general into a quick battle on the Plains that morning, his position would be militarily desperate.

Montcalm's men at Beauport had been up all night and as Wolfe's men were assembling, the French soldiers were going to sleep. The British were soon spotted and word reached a disbelieving Montcalm, who ordered his army awake and quick marched them to Quebec. But Montcalm, uncertain about the British invasion plan, sent only five thousand men towards the Plains of Abraham, leaving four thousand behind to guard the Beauport trenches.

Bougainville was informed of the British landing by a dispatch from the Marquis de Vaudreuil. "A quarter to seven, September 13th. To Monsieur de Bougainville...It seems quite certain that the enemy has attempted a landing...M. le Marquis de Montcalm has just left...As soon as I am sure of what is happening, I will notify you...Postcript. The enemy forces seem considerable..."
With this news, Bougainville began to marshal his army and march east. The French soldiers, who had been on half rations for months and awake for thirty-six hours, began to advance toward the awkward alliance of British regiments. Like the soldiers on the opposing side, many of the French were landless and unemployed. Some had travelled thousands of miles to fight in this war, each with his own motive. Those of France’s surplus labour force—carpenters, apprentice wigmakers, cloth cutters and others without work—had little choice but to come. They sported romantic noms-de-guerre: François Mouret, 24, Sansquartier (Gives no Quarter); Antoine Mouret, 21, LaDouceur (Sweetness); Barthelemey Girave, 27, Prestaboire (Likes a Drink). Like the army they were facing, few of them had heard of Quebec until they had been shipped there.

For the French officers, the battle on the Plains was just another encounter among the many in the imperial wars of Europe. Among them: Fiacre-François de Montbeillard, commander of the French artillery and veteran of the war of the Austrian Succession; Captain Jean-Baptiste Duprat, a commoner who rose up through the ranks, fighting in Italy, Bavaria, and the Rhine; and Lt. Col. étienne-Guillaume de Senezergues, an aristocrat who’d fought in Italy, in Bavaria and the Netherlands. On the morning of September 13, it was Quebec.

The French army was joined by men from the great Canadian families—Boucher, Repentigny, Courtemanche, d’Argenteuil. They were defending one hundred and fifty years of history, land and family and, unlike the French soldiers beside them, the Canadians had everything to lose.

François-Clement Boucher de la Perrière, who at fifty-one, was feeling his age, stood all the same with the others, defending their homes and their way of life. "I can no longer see clearly now," Boucher de la Perrière wrote, "though I have glasses on my nose." Not far from him was the next generation of his family: René-Amable Boucher de Boucherville. And some Acadians were there as well. Charles Deschamps de Boishébert, who spent two years protecting fleeing Acadians from the British, led the Acadian militia on the Plains. Under him, Joseph Trahan, 18, an Acadian who escaped the Deportation, was now a refugee and a soldier-at-arms.

Montcalm marched his men to the crest of Butte à Neveu, the hill above the Plains of Abraham, where they formed a line. One of the first to arrive was the French artillery commander Fiacre-François de Montbeillard. From the top of the hill, he scanned the Plains below him, surveying the British line, a mile wide. Montcalm, standing on the crest in the morning sun and now pleasantly warm weather, was still uncertain. The British position seemed so reckless; he didn't know if this was their full invasion force, or if they would face a second landing at the Beauport trenches.

His choices were to attack, or wait for Bougainville to arrive with reinforcements. Thinking that the British army facing him could be part of a two-pronged invasion, he felt he had to deal quickly with this threat, then return to Beauport.

Even before Montcalm and his men reached Butte à Neveu, eight hundred Canadian militia and Indian snipers arrived from Quebec, firing on the English from the cornfields and the woods. Lieutenant John Knox witnessed men falling around him.

"What galled us most was a body of Indians and other marksmen they had concealed in the corn opposite to the front of our right wing, and a coppice that stood opposite to our centre..."

The battle

Gathered on the Plains of Abraham and confronted with sniper fire from the Indians and Canadian militia, the British artillery began firing around 8:00 a.m., September 13, 1759. The purpose was to unnerve the enemy army.

"...we had two pieces of short brass six pounders playing on the enemy," wrote the Irish-born Lieutenant John Knox, "which threw them into some confusion, and obliged them to alter their disposition... about nine the two armies moved a little closer together."

The French General, the Marquis de Montcalm was employing a textbook manoeuvre: advancing with a massive centre column to crush the British and two shallow side columns to finish them off. He rode the length of the formation, shouting the question, "Are you tired?" The game, untruthful response was a resounding no. The French artillery commander, Fiacre-François de Montbeillard, received his instructions from his general.

"I spoke for a moment with M. le Marquis de Montcalm who told me: "We will not be able to avoid the battle... If we give them enough time to establish themselves, we will never be able to attack with the kind of army we have." At around 10:00 the French shouted "Vive le Roy!" and the battle formally began with Montcalm ordering a general advance.

"The enemy began to advance in three columns," Knox wrote, "with loud shouts – two of them inclined to the left of our army, and the third to our right, firing obliquely at the two extremities of our line."

But the French formation that started down the hill was uncoordinated. The troops, made up of Canadians and French soldiers who had not trained together, were moving in disorder. The left was too far in the rear and the centre too far in front. Major Malartic, an officer in the French regular army, observed the problem: "The Canadians who formed the second rank and the soldiers of the third fired without orders and, according to custom, then threw themselves on the ground to reload.

This false movement broke all the battalions." They had fired too soon and their volleys were ineffectual and disruptive.
The French resumed the advance, their lines more confused and disordered with every step. Forty yards from the British, the ragged French line stopped again and formed for a second volley. This time, they were able to see the faces of the men in the British line. Redcoats slumped as the crude balls ploughed through flesh and shattered bone.

As the French reloaded, the British took their position. Before he gave the order to fire, General James Wolfe was spotted in his new uniform by a sniper and shot through the wrist. The wound was dressed with a borrowed handkerchief and at 10:15 Wolfe raised his cane, giving the order to fire – the last military order of his life.

The British volley fired across a line a mile wide, with the power of double-loaded muskets. The French troops were paralyzed with confusion and terror. Whole sections of the line collapsed as the massive volley ripped through them. Then the Highland yell was taken up, the piper played Lovat’s March and the Fraser Highlanders charged with their broadswords, hacking through the retreating French army. A full British bayonet advance followed in their awful wake.

Wolfe was shot in the groin and had to be helped forward. A third shot, into his chest, was fatal and he slumped to the ground, happily receiving the whispered news that the enemy was in retreat. The battle on the Plains of Abraham lasted just more than fifteen minutes.

On the other side of the line, engulfed in a stream of retreating men, Montcalm received a mortal wound below his ribs. He fell just as he was about to enter the Saint-Louis gate and was then carried by his men to the General Hospital.

**The French retreat**

Just over fifteen minutes after the battle on the Plains of Abraham had begun, the French line crumbled under the advancing sword-swinging Highlanders and the pressing wall of British bayonets.

The French scattered back up the hill with the Scottish Highlanders pursuing the retreating army to the woods.

"I can remember the Scotch Highlanders flying wildly after us," Joseph Trahan, of the Acadian militia, later related, "with streaming plaids, bonnets and large swords – like so many infuriated demons – over the brow of the hill. In their course, was a wood, in which we had some Indians and sharpshooters, who bowled over the Sauvages d’écosses in fine style. Their partly naked bodies fell on their face, and their kilts in disorder left a large portion of their thighs, at which our fugitives on passing by, would make lunges with their swords, cutting large slices out of the fleshiest portion of their persons."

The bloodied Highlanders waited until the British troops caught up and resumed pursuit but they were fired on from sharpshooters on the ramparts of Quebec and cannon barges on the St. Charles River. "It was at this time," wrote Malcolm Fraser of the Highlanders, "and while in the bushes that our Regiment suffered most... Captain Thomas Ross was mortally wounded in the body by a cannonball from the hulks, in the mouth of the River, of which he died in great torment... I received a contusion in the right shoulder, or rather breast... which pained me a good deal... We suffered in men and officers more than any three regiments in the field."

Trahan, still in retreat, ran toward the town walls. "I was amongst the fugitives and received in the calf of the leg a spent bullet, which stretched me on the ground. I thought it was all over for me; but presently I rose up and continued to run towards the general hospital, in order to gain the Beauport Camp over the bridge of boats."

Trahan was able to make Quebec, one of the lucky ones, but it was a woeful place. "On my way to the Beauport camp, I came to a bake-house, in which the baker that day had baked an ovenful of bread. Some of the exhausted fugitives asked him for food, which he refused, when in a fit of rage at such heartlessness, one of them lopped off his head with his sword. The bloody head was then deposited on top of the pile of bread. Hunger getting the better of me, I helped myself to a loaf all spread with gore, and with my pocket knife removing the crust, I greedily devoured the crumb."

Even though the French vastly outnumbered the British, the governor, the Marquis de Vaudreuil, decided they would not fight again the next day.

**The abandoned battlefield**

Shortly after eleven a.m. on September 13, 1759, Louis-Antoine de Bougainville arrived on the Plains with 1,200 French troops but by that time the battle was over and the field had been left to the dead and dying. Colonel Étienne-Guillaume de Senezergues, mortally wounded, would die the next day. François Clement Boucher de la Perrière, who had fought though his eyes were failing him, would be dead by evening.

James Wolfe, the British General who had been sick and frail before the battle, lived only a few minutes after receiving a fatal shot to the chest. His body was sent back to England where he became the Empire's newest hero. His coffin was carried through streets filled with silent mourners and he was buried beside his father at St. Alfege’s, Greenwich. He was 32 years old.

Louis-Joseph, the Marquis de Montcalm, would survive for one more day. He died of his wounds at the General Hospital, glad, he said, not to have seen the fall of Quebec. There were no coffins left and his body was put into a makeshift box and buried in a crater made by a British cannonball that had landed in the Ursuline nuns' chapel. He was 47 years old.

One thousand, three hundred men were killed or wounded on the Plains of Abraham. The Canadians from the parishes and
cities of New France, the youths of the English Midlands, the dispossessed of the Scottish Highlands, the unemployed from Normandy and Provence – all were buried, French and English together, in common pits on the Plains. The location of their graves would never be marked.

Ten days after the Battle, the French artillery commander Fiacre-François de Montbeillard wrote in his journal: "I have nothing but misfortune to write about. Twenty times I have picked up my pen and twenty times sorrow has made it fall from my hands. How can I bring to mind such overwhelming events?...We were saved and now we are lost."

**Winter 1759-1760**

**British in Quebec**

On September 18, 1759, the British flag was raised near the top of Mountain Street in Quebec.

The English had taken the city, but it was a desolate prize. "Quebec is nothing but a shapeless mass of ruins. Confusion, disorder, pillage reign even among the inhabitants...each searches for his possessions, and not finding his own, seizes those of other people. English and French, all is chaos alike," observed Benoît-François Bernier. He had been the commissioner of war in Quebec and was now a prisoner of war.

About a month later, when news of the British victory reached London, there was no talk of the city's disorder, only celebrating in the streets. The writer Horace Walpole didn't sleep for three days.

"It is still all gold...one would think we had plundered east and west of sunshine. Our bells are worn threadbare with ringing for victories..."

In Versailles, Madame de Pompadour, the King's mistress, saw the fall of Quebec as one less problem for Louis XV. "At last", she said, "the King can get some rest."

The British fleet returned to England, leaving a small garrison to hold the city. James Murray, who had served as a brigadier under James Wolfe, had become military governor. Malcolm Fraser, who'd fought with the 78th Highlanders had survived, though most of his regiment had not. Those who remained were faced with a familiar problem; the failure of the crops and encroaching famine. As winter threatened, British soldiers worked alongside the Canadians, collecting a desperate harvest of rotting crops and roots.

Bishop Pontbriand, the bishop of Quebec from 1741 to 1760, saw his people burning little fires of survival in shattered streets. "...the inhabitants of the town are without wood for the winter, without bread, without flour, without meat. They survive only on a few biscuits and on the salt pork which the English soldiers sell them from their rations."

Alongside the starving inhabitants, their European uniforms inadequate to the December cold, the British military looked more like medieval peasants than a triumphant force. "Our guards, on the grande parade, make a most grotesque appearance in their different dresses," wrote the Irish-born Lieutenant John Knox, "and our inventions to guard us against the extreme vigour of this climate are various beyond imagination: the uniformity, as well as the nicety, of the clean, methodical soldier, is buried in the rough fur-wrought garb of the frozen Laplander."

With famine came the blight of scurvy, which killed far more British soldiers than the French army had. "The scurvy, occasioned by salt provisions and cold," noted Malcolm Fraser, "has begun to make fierce havoc in the garrison, and it becomes every day more general. In short, I believe there is scarce a man of the army entirely free from it...Numbers of sick and dead since September 18th, 1759: Sick: Two thousand, three hundred and twelve. Dead: Six hundred eighty-two. The skin of the dead turned black and their limbs bloated into obscene balloons. The ground was frozen and they were buried in snowbanks, waiting for spring.

Amid the hunger and sickness, General James Murray, now the military governor of Quebec, had to cope with the growing civil disorder as winter pressed in on the conquerors and conquered alike. "A soldier of the 48th..." wrote Murray, "tried and convicted this day of robbing a French inhabitant, the instant it was reported the sentence was put into execution...at the same time, executed an inhabitant, heretofore a drummer in the French service, for having incited one of our soldiers to desert."

**French army prepares in Montreal**

While a desolate Quebec with its few inhabitants and small British garrison limped through the winter of 1760, Montreal was a place of renewal.

The defeated French army had not given up and François-Gaston de Lévis, the officer who had replaced General Montcalm, planned to recapture Quebec.

Lévis had 7,000 troops and sent word to France to send 4,000 more. "If the king decides not to give us any help, I must warn you that you will no longer be able to count on us at the end of May. We will be obliged to surrender out of misery since we are lacking everything."

Unlike Montcalm, Lévis did not disdain the fighting ability of the Canadians. He trained them to fight in harmony with the French troops, in order to avoid the disastrous pairing on the Plains of Abraham. Jean-Baptiste Duprat, veteran of the battle on the Plains, would make the Canadians a vital part of the renewed army.

**Another fight for Quebec**

**Battle of Ste. Foy**
At the end of the winter of 1760, as the ice in the St. Lawrence slowly cleared, British General James Murray in Quebec and French General François-Gaston de Lévis in Montreal watched anxiously to see what Europe would bring. They had no news of the war there, no idea which fleet would sail triumphantly up the river.

Lévis hoped that the 4,000 reinforcements he had asked for would come. He marched to Quebec with his army of 7,000, prepared to wage battle. Also with him were about 300 Indians and a troop of 83 armed Black men.

At about 8 a.m. on April 28, 1760, Lévis stood on the Plains of Abraham where the British General James Wolfe had stood seven months earlier. Only about 3,900 of Lévis' troops joined him on the battlefield. The rest, still marching through the woods, wouldn't arrive until the next morning. Murray took his 3,800 troops to Butte à Neveu, the hill above the Plains where the French General, the Marquis de Montcalm, had been. The English and French were about to replay the battle of the Plains of Abraham, having changed positions.

"...about eight-o'clock in the morning the whole garrison, exclusive of the guards, was drawn up on the parade," Malcolm Fraser, of the 78th Highlanders, wrote, "and about nine o'clock we marched out of Town with twenty pieces of Field Artillery. When we had marched a little way out of Town, we saw the advanced parties of the enemy nigh the woods about half a league distant from us. When we were about three quarters of a mile out of Town, the General ordered the whole to draw up in line of Battle, two deep, and take up as much room as possible."

Murray thought that the French lines hadn't fully formed, and he attacked, hoping to catch them in disarray. In doing so, he made the same mistake that Montcalm had made in abandoning the high ground. The cannon sank in the spongy spring ground and the soldiers laboured in the muck. The two armies fired volleys into one another for two hours, with brutal, intense and often hand-to-hand fighting. The tide finally turned in favour of the French and the British retreated to Quebec.

The verdict of the Plains of Abraham, with the same armies, on the same field, was reversed. At the Battle of Ste. Foy, as it was called, the French were victorious but the British remained in control of Quebec.

Still, there was a new hope that Canada could be regained. Sister Marie de la Visitation made note of the triumph: "The intrepidity and valour of the French and Canadians drove the enemy from their strong position...We remained masters of the field, and of their cannon, and made many prisoners. The enemy retired within the walls, and dared not again venture out."

Reinforcements from Europe

After the French victory at the Battle of Ste Foy, both the French and British armies waited to see whose navy would come up the St. Lawrence, to see who would be vindicated.

"I am obliged to delay manoeuvres and play for time, while we wait to receive assistance that could arrive from France. If we do receive cannons and powder, we could soon take the town," wrote the French General François-Gaston de Lévis.

After years of bitter guerrilla sorties and the rabid exchanges on the Plains, the two commanders reverted to barely remembered European military etiquette. Lévis sent General James Murray a basket of spruce boughs upon hearing he liked spruce beer. And Murray sent Lévis a basket of Cheshire cheese.

After eleven days of polite suspense, a ship appeared. It didn't have a flag but eventually the HMS Lowestoft revealed its colours in front of the ramparts; the British had won the transatlantic race.

William Pitt had sent twenty-two ships from England. "The gladness of the troops is not to be expressed," wrote John Knox. "Both Officers and soldiers mounted the parapets in the face of the enemy, and huzzaed, with their hats in the air, for almost an hour:;:"

French surrender at Montreal

When the British were the first to arrive up the St. Lawrence in May 1760, the French General François-Gaston de Lévis had no choice but to retreat to Montreal, where he planned to make a last stand. But three British armies totalling 17,000 men began to converge on the town, burning villages along the way and prompting mass desertions from the Canadian militia.

By September the armies had surrounded Lévis at Montreal with General Jeffery Amherst's men arriving at Lachine on September 6, 1760. Although Lévis wanted to fight, Governor Marquis de Vaudreuil felt there was nothing left but to surrender the town.

Amherst, who had agreed to Vaudreuil's terms of surrender, refused to grant Lévis the military honours of war. This courtesy, usually granted to a defeated commander who had fought well and bravely, would have allowed Lévis and his men to depart from Montreal with dignity, their uniforms and regimental flags intact.

British control of Quebec

Capitulation and Religion

In negotiating the terms for the surrender of the colony, Quebec's governor Pierre de Rigaud, the Marquis de Vaudreuil, managed to obtain one adroit and critical concession. Included in the Articles of Capitulation was a clause to insure religious freedom.
"The free exercise of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Religion, shall subsist entire, in such manner that all the states and the people of the Towns and countries, places and distant posts, shall continue to assemble in the churches, and to frequent the sacraments as heretofore, without being molested in any manner, either directly or indirectly."

This was a dramatic gain, given that in Protestant England, Catholics had no religious or civil rights. They were unable to vote, hold office and certain professions were closed to them. On September 8, 1760, half of the continent changed hands; George II now had 65,000 French-speaking Catholic subjects.

In the American colonies, where Benjamin Franklin and others had been pushing for further settlement into Canadian territory, there was mass jubilation at Quebec's capitulation. For Franklin, the future was clear and bright.

"No one can rejoice more sincerely than I do on the Reduction of Canada. If we keep (Canada), all the country from the St. Laurence to Mississippi, will in another century be fill'd with British people...."

Franklin thought the battle for the continent was won, but remarkable events would prove him wrong.

**Carving the spoils**

Peace talks between England and France began in Europe in the spring of 1761. William Pitt was negotiating for the English. He had been plagued by gout for twenty-five years and was imperious, sharp-tongued and hated France. The French negotiator was étienne-François de Choiseul, a court gentleman who was offended by English arrogance in general and Pitt's arrogance in particular. Negotiations proceeded slowly.

World empires were being redrawn and entire lands bartered. Among the questions was who would take Canada, or rather, was Canada worth taking? Many merchants in England argued that a more valuable prize lay in the tiny island of Guadeloupe in the Caribbean. Guadeloupe, which had also been captured from the French, was worth twice as much in sugar exports as all of Canada's furs. And there wouldn't be the ongoing grief of governing 65,000 Catholics.

Frustrated at the glacial pace of the negotiations, Choiseul finally jotted down a dozen lines on a piece of scrap paper. His suggested terms were: France would return Minorca and England would return Guadeloupe; the English would keep Canada but the French would retain fishing rights off the coast, the most valuable aspect of Canada, in their view.

"The King cedes and guarantees to the King of England without restriction, Canada as it was possessed, or deemed to be possessed, by France," Choiseul wrote.

Pitt refused these terms and negotiations broke off. England then engaged in a weary war with Spain though it had neither the money nor an appetite for more death. Peace talks resumed in the summer of 1762 with both Pitt and Choiseul removed from the negotiating table. On November 3, 1762 an agreement was reached, one that closely resembled Choiseul's hasty proposal from the previous year.

The French would give Canada to the English, while retaining fishing rights in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. France also obtained the deed to two islands – St. Pierre and Miquelon, off the Newfoundland coast – where the French could dry their fish.

Three months later, on February 10, 1763, the Treaty of Paris was formally ratified in the British parliament. Pitt's gout was inflamed but he crawled melodramatically to his seat in parliament to protest the terms. Choiseul, a pragmatist, felt the treaty was neither glorious nor profitable for the French, but was the best they could hope for under the circumstances. He took limited joy from the prediction, made to King Louis XV, that the English would eventually be crippled by a revolution in the American colonies.

**Pontiac's revolt**

**Indians reject British control**

By 1763 the territorial battles between English and French had been resolved but the Indians, most of whom had been allies of the French, had been excluded from the process.

Pontiac, the war chief of the Ottawas, rejected the idea that Britain would now control his people's fate. Supported by other chiefs, he urged the Indian nations to attack the English.

At Fort Michilimackinac, by Lake Superior, the Ojibway chief Minavavana issued a warning to a group of English traders. "Englishman, although you have conquered the French you have not yet conquered us! We are not your slaves. These lakes, these woods, and mountains were left us by our ancestors. They are our inheritance; and we will part with them to none... Englishman, our Father, the king of France, employed our young men to make war upon your nation. In his warfare, many of them have been killed; and it is our custom to retaliate, until such time as the spirits of the slain are satisfied.

But, the spirits of the slain are to be satisfied in either of two ways; the first is the spilling of the blood of the nation by which they fell; the other, by covering the bodies of the dead, and thus allaying the resentment of their relations. This is done by making presents. Englishman, your king has not sent us any presents, nor entered into any treaty with us, therefore he and we are still at war."

The French defeat had disturbed almost two hundred years of alliances and a new instability threatened the interior. For nine years the Indians had been using guerrilla tactics to keep British and American settlers out of their traditional territories. But now the British occupied all the French forts and new
settlers were arriving in greater numbers. Part of the success of the French/Indian alliance lay in the fact that the French were traders and soldiers – they inhabited the land the way the Indians did, nomadically and seasonally. The English were settlers who were marking the land into grids, clearing and cultivating it, moving west, encroaching on the Indian hunting patterns.

Pontiac, distressed by the changing face of the frontier, travelled among the Indian nations recounting a vision from the Master of Life. "The land where ye dwell I have made for you and not for others. Whence comes it that ye permit the Whites upon your lands? Can ye not live without them?... drive them out, make war upon them. I do not love them at all; they know me not, and are my enemies, and the enemies of your brothers. Send them back to the lands I have created for them and let them stay there."

Pontiac made plans to capture various forts in the interior, which the British now held. Described as "proud, vindictive, warlike, and very easily offended," Pontiac was a leader respected by all sides.

On May 5th, 1763, he addressed hundreds of Ottawas, Huron and Potawatomis in Grand Council, calling for the total annihilation of the English. "It is important for us, my brothers, that we exterminate from our lands this nation which seeks only to destroy us. You see as well as I that we can no longer supply our needs, as we have done, from our brothers, the French. The English sell us goods twice as dear as the French do ... When I go to the English commander and... ask anything for our sick, he refuses with the reply that he has no use for us...you can well see that they are seeking our ruin. Therefore, my brothers, we must all swear their destruction and wait no longer. Nothing prevents us; they are few in numbers, and we can accomplish it. All the nations who are our brothers attack them, – why should we not attack? Are we not men like them?"

**Attacking the interior**

Inspired by Pontiac's call to arms at the Grand Council, May 5th, 1763, the Indians drew up a plan of war against the English. They captured Fort Pitt, Fort Venango and Fort de la Rivière au Boeuf. They surrounded all the frontier forts: Michillimackinac, Ouiatanon, St. Joseph, Edward Augustus, Niagara and the others.

At the biggest, Fort Detroit, Pontiac's warriors arrived in sixty-five canoes, killing the settlers outside its walls and laying siege to the fort itself. Ninety soldiers from the eastern English colonies were sent to Fort Detroit to help but were attacked outside its walls. Several soldiers were killed and forty-six were captured.

Robert Navarre, a notary inside Fort Detroit, observed the gruesome scene. "The savages disembarked their prisoners, one company after another, upon the strand and made them strip naked, and other Indians then discharged their arrows into all parts of their bodies...the poor victims had to keep standing till they fell dead in their tracks and then those who had not engaged in the killing fell up on the dead bodies and hacked them to pieces, cooked them, and feasted upon them. Some they treated with different cruelty, slashing them alive with gun-flints, stabbing them with spears, cutting off their hands and feet and letting them bathe in their own blood and die in agony; others were bound to stakes and burned by children in a slow fire."

For five weeks, Pontiac's war bands massacred settlers and held the interior in terror. But Pontiac wasn't able to bring the Canadians to his side in his war with the English. He occasionally had to plunder their farms for food, which angered them. And there was a problem in uniting the Indian nations too. Some were being appeased by the English. As the siege of Detroit dragged on, members of Pontiac's own band drifted home for the hunting season. The Indian uprising appeared to be waning. And the British had conceived their own brutality.

**Germ warfare**

In July 1763, the English Colonel Henry Bouquet wrote to his commander suggesting a chillingly modern plan; they would send smallpox rather than soldiers to fight the Indians.

"I will try to inoculate the Indians by means of Blankets that may fall in their hands," Bouquet wrote, "taking care however not to get the disease myself. It is a pity to oppose Good men against them. I wish we could make use of the Spaniard's methods and hunt them with English Dogs."

An infected blanket was cut into small pieces that were placed in small tin boxes. They were given to a delegation of Ottawa Indians at Fort Pitt who were told the boxes contained medicine and they shouldn't open them until they were home.

It wasn't until the Indian uprising was over that the deadly boxes did their killing. The war parties returned to their tribal lands, some of them carrying the small silver boxes that the British soldiers had given them at Fort Pitt. Andrew Blackbird, the adopted son of an Ottawa chief, wrote down the oral account of what happened when they were opened:

"Accordingly, after they reached home they opened the box; but behold there was another tin box inside, smaller. They took it out and opened the second box, and behold, still there was another box inside the second box, smaller yet. So they kept on this way till they came to a very small box, which was not more than an inch long; and when they opened the last one they found nothing but moldy particles in this last box... Pretty soon burst out a terrible sickness among them. The great Indian doctors themselves were taken sick and died. The tradition says that it was indeed awful and terrible. Everyone taken with it was sure to die. Lodge after lodge was totally vacated – nothing but the dead bodies lying here and there in their lodges. The whole coast of Arbor Croche... which is said to have been a continuous village some fifteen or sixteen miles long... was entirely depopulated and laid waste."
The British commander wrote later that by sending germs instead of British soldiers, he had "saved the lives of better men."

**Attempts at peace**

In October 1763, Pontiac received word finally that the French had made peace with the English in Europe. He sent the commander of Fort Detroit a message. "My brother, the word that my father [the king of France] has sent to make peace I accept; all of my young men have buried their hatchets. I think that you will forget the bad things that have happened this past while. For my part I shall forget, which you can show me how to do, in order to think only of good things."

Even with the uprising over, and Britain's germ warfare weakening the Indians, the British government was looking for a more enduring stability on the frontier. It would recognize Indian rights to the North American interior. Britain issued a Royal Proclamation – All the interior was to be Indian land, protected by the King. American encroachment was forbidden.

"...We do hereby strictly forbid, on Pain of our Displeasure, all our loving Subjects from making any Purchases or Settlements whatever, or taking any possession of any of the lands above reserved, without our especial leave and License...."

The consequences of the Proclamation would be both immediate and enduring. It would stir the American colonies to political fury. And its legacy would shape the continent for centuries to come.

Initially, the carefully worded proclamation led to a temporary peace. In 1765 Pontiac signed a preliminary peace agreement, stipulating that peace didn’t imply English ownership of the land. They had merely defeated the French, who were tenants, not owners, he argued. A final treaty was signed in 1766.

On April 20, 1769, Pontiac was assassinated by a Peoria Indian who resented his new message of peace. Pontiac was buried by the French near St. Louis, Missouri.

**Governing Canada**

**Establishing peace**

At the end of the Seven Years War, with the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, Britain found itself with a colony of French Catholics.

The British weren’t sure what to do, but Benjamin Franklin, intent on realizing his dream of a unified English society in the colonies, reassured London the Canadians would not be a problem for long.

"... many will chuse to remove if they can be allowed to sell their lands, improvements and effects: the rest, in that thin-

settled country, will in less than half a century...be blended and incorporated with our people in both language and manners," Franklin predicted.

General James Murray, a survivor of Louisbourg, the Plains of Abraham and the Battle of Ste. Foy, was appointed governor over the territory. Murray, who had spent two years of his life invading, bombarding and occupying Quebec, would now have to forge a society out of the disparate citizens and years of blood.

The British had won, but the peace would be harder than the war. In governing the peace, Murray would find an improbable ally: a Catholic priest, Jean-Olivier Briand. Briand was a quiet, private man who had inherited the leadership of Canada's Catholics. In charge of ensuring the Church's survival, he ordered his parishes to accept the new King.

"The God of armies...who extends or restricts at his pleasure the boundaries of empires, having by his eternal decrees put us under the domination of his Britannic Majesty, it is our duty, based on natural law, to be interested in all that concerns him. We order you to submit to the king and to all those who share his authority."

The priest who tended the French wounded on the battlefields of Quebec, and the general who commanded the British forces there, formed a tactical alliance that would grow into a lifetime friendship.

"Monsieur Briand...has constantly acted with a candour, moderation, and disinterestedness which bespeak him a Worthy Honest Man, and that I know none of his Gown in the Province so justly deserving of the royal Favour," Murray wrote a friend.

Murray oversaw 65,000 French-speaking Catholics, whom he liked, and a handful of recently arrived English-speaking Protestant merchants, whom he detested. "All have their fortunes to make and I hear few of them are solicitous about the means where the end can be obtained," he wrote to a friend, "in general, the most immoral collection of men I ever knew." In addition to the merchants and French Canadians there was a small garrison of British soldiers and a few hundred disbanded French soldiers who had elected to stay. They made for an uncomfortable society.

**Thomas Walker**

Presenting a particular problem to Governor James Murray was the most vocal of all the newly arrived English merchants: Thomas Walker, an Englishman who had come to Montreal from Boston.

He was leading the Protestant merchants in demanding an elected legislative assembly, which, like the English model, didn't allow Catholics to vote. Walker and the merchants wanted to control everything in the new regime—including the justice system. They insisted all juries should be picked only
from the English; French Catholics should be prohibited from sitting as jurors.

Murray disagreed. "As there are but 200 Protestant subjects in the Province," he argued, "the greatest part of which are disbanded soldiers of little Property and mean Capacity, it is thought unjust to exclude the new Roman Catholic subjects to sit upon Juries, as such exclusion would constitute the said 200 Protestants perpetual Judges of the Lives and Property of not only 80,000 of the new Subjects, but likewise the Military of the Province..."

Not having succeeded with Murray, the enraged English merchants sent a petition to the King of England. They wrote: "We...believe that the admitting of persons of the Roman Religion...as Jurors, is an open Violation of our most sacred Laws and Libertys, and tending to the utter subversion of the Protestant Religion and his Majesty's power, authority, right and possession of the province to which we belong."

Ninety-four of the most respected men in Canadian society, including the merchant Pierre Guy, signed a counter petition. "Who are those who wish to have us proscribed? About thirty English merchants, of whom fifteen at the most, are settled here. Who are the proscribed? Ten thousand heads of families who feel nothing but submission to the order of Your Majesty."

Meanwhile, the Canadians were becoming frustrated with the worsening economic situation. François Baby, one of the emerging Canadian leaders, described the disheartening situation: "Business is advancing very slowly in this country. Money is rarer than ever, and bad faith is everywhere."

Walker, succeeding in alienating himself from Murray and the Canadian subjects, had also become an enemy of the British army. Soon after arriving in Montreal, Walker was sued by his clerk and appeared in military court where the clerk won his case.

**James Murray recalled as Governor**

As the fight over religious and constitutional rights continued in Canada, Governor James Murray urged London to resist the demands of the English merchants. They were now pushing for an elected assembly – one in which only they could sit, since Catholics were barred from holding office in the British empire. Murray could see no good in excluding the Canadians.

"Little, very little, will content the New Subjects [Canadians] but nothing will satisfy the Licentious Fanaticks Trading here, but the expulsion of the Canadians who are perhaps the bravest and the best race upon the Globe, a Race, who could they be indulged with a few priveledges which the laws of England deny to Roman Catholicks at home, would soon get the better of every national antipathy to the Conquerors and become the most faithful and most useful set of Men in this American Empire."

Thomas Walker sailed to London to fight for Protestant juries, a Protestant assembly, and for the removal of Governor Murray. He lost on all counts but one – James Murray was recalled.

In one of his last letters from Canada, Murray addressed his old Roman Catholic ally, Jean-Olivier Briand, who had just been anointed Bishop of Quebec. "I have ardently wisht to take you by the hand and sincerely congratulate you on your promotion, an event which has made me very happy, as I did everything in my power to contribute to it... My Canadians I recommend to your care, they have behaved so as to fix my affection for them forever."

Murray would never see Canada again.

**Guy Carleton**

Thomas Walker and the English merchants had been denied an English assembly and a British declaration had granted all citizens of Quebec the right to sit on juries.

But the merchants had succeeded in getting rid of James Murray as governor. They saw his departure as a triumph, but Murray's replacement, Guy Carleton, would turn out to be as unsympathetic as Murray to the merchants' cause.

General Sir Guy Carleton was 42, Irish-born, distant and reserved. Having spent all his life in the British Army, he'd fought in Quebec and had been wounded at the battle of the Plains of Abraham.

Carleton's sensibilities echoed Murray's; in order to be viable, he said, Quebec had to be accepted as a French colony. He argued that the imposition of English law on a French colony was barbaric and benefited no one.

In a letter to his superior, the Earl of Shelbourne, Carleton wrote: "...barring catastrophe shocking to think of, this Country must, to the end of time be peopled by the Canadian race, who already have taken such firm root, and got to so great a Height, that any new stock transplanted will be totally hid, and imperceptible amongst them..."

Carleton's support of the Canadians was also part of a practical strategy.

**Quebec Act**

In 1770, the new governor, Sir Guy Carleton, returned to London to find a solution for the uncertainty in Canada.

He wanted to see his vision for the colony – one that would have a place for its French Catholic subjects – made into law. But Carleton found London more concerned with the American colonies and it would take four years for the Quebec Act to reach the House of Commons.
The Americans were in an agitated state over what was seen as grossly unfair taxation as the British tried to pay off their war debts. There was rioting in Massachusetts and British troops were sent to restore order. On March 5, 1770, a mob charged British soldiers at the Customs House, who fired on them. It became known as the "Boston Massacre." Three years later there were more new taxes and in protest Americans dumped crates of tea into the Boston harbour. To retaliate, Britain shut down the port. London abolished all elections in the colonies and passed a series of coercive acts, which the Americans denounced as "The Intolerable Acts."

Finally, with the continent unravelling, London turned its attention to Canada and to Carleton. And Carleton wasn't alone. François Baby, a powerful Montreal merchant, followed the governor to London with a petition signed by some of the most influential names in Canada. They were asking for the restoration of French law and the extension of full civil rights to Catholic subjects.

"...dissipate these fears and this uneasiness, by restoring to us our ancient laws...and customs, and to extend our province to its former boundaries...grant us, in common with your other subjects, the rights and privileges of citizens of England. Then our fears will be removed, and we shall pass our lives in tranquillity and happiness, and shall be always ready to sacrifice them for the glory of our prince and the good of our country."

In the spring of 1774, the Quebec Act passed in the House of Commons. The Act guaranteed Canadians the right to their religion, restored French civil law and allowed Canadians to hold public office. It also upheld the seigneurial system of land ownership. Catholics now had rights that they didn't have in Britain. Instead of assimilation or deportation, the French would now live in a colony which in many important respects was not that different from New France.

There were objectors in the House, among them Lord Cavendish, who warned, "I should think it material not to give them directly their own law again; it keeps up that perpetual dependance upon their ancient laws and customs, which will ever make [them] a distinct people." The Act was approved by a margin of fifty-six in favour, twenty opposed. Publicly, it remained unpopular though. When George III came to sign the Bill into law, he drove through angry mobs shouting, "No Popery."

The American colonies also saw the Quebec Act as a betrayal. The legislation of a French colony and its extension to the Ohio Valley was called one of the "Intolerable Acts" and a wave of expansionism and anti-Catholic sentiment swept through the colonies. Ministers preached to their congregations of Protestant triumph and the defeat of Satan. The expanded borders of Quebec also curtailed American expansion. More than a million New England colonists were restricted by 65,000 French Catholics.

Newspapers and budding statesmen railed. In The New York Journal: "The finger of God points out a mighty Empire to our sons; the Savages of the wilderness were never expelled to make room in this, the best part of the continent, for idolators and slaves."

Benjamin Franklin said: "It appears to me the greatest stake that was ever played for, no less than whether Americans, and their endless generations shall enjoy the common rights of mankind, or be worse than Eastern slaves; the trial must now come to issue as 'open war' is declared by the Boston Port Act...and above all the Quebec Bill."

Franklin met with George Washington, Alexander Hamilton and the leaders of the colonies to adopt a resolution.