

This soon became apparent in the second and third generations of French-Canadians - passionately Catholic, sturdy, daring, conservatively attached to their way of life. It was indeed French-Canadians who provided the most daring commanders in the constant wars of the 18th century, and the most fool-hardy explorers in the expeditions which opened up the entire centre of the North American Continent - men like La Vérendrye who explored the great plains and reached the Rocky Mountains; Radisson who explored the North-West; Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville who, in the dead of winter, crossed half the continent to surprise the British on Hudson's Bay and capture the "impregnable" bastion, Fort Churchill; and his brother, who explored the Mississippi River and founded New Orleans.

These men had all the virtues of the French of France, but they also had that new spirit of intense individualism, love of liberty and freedom of spirit that we associate with the new world. They were, of course, intensely patriotic to the crown, but they were above all Canadians. And when Louis XV finally capitulated to the British and surrendered Canada, very few of them returned to France, though one of the articles of the Treaty of Paris provided for the repatriation of anyone who wished to go. They preferred to take the risks of living under an alien régime than abandon what by then had come to be their native land.

The separation of Canada from France required a very serious psychological re-adjustment. The British conquerors recognised fortunately that the conversion of the French-Canadians into Protestant Anglo-Saxons would be an impossible task, as the expulsion of the French from Acadia thirty years before had proved. The British crown therefore created a system of government eminently feudalistic or seigneurial, which recognised the rights of the Canadians to their language, culture, legal system and religion. Thus the basis for what has been called the French miracle in Canada was created. And it was on this basis that the French-Canadians were able to preserve their identity in an Anglo-Saxon sea - but their identity not as Frenchmen, but as Canadians of French language. Paris still exerts a very strong cultural attraction for Canadians, but it is precisely the same kind of attraction that it exerts for Colombians.

The history of English Canada has been considerably different. From the conquest until the end of the American Revolution, central Canada was indisputably French. Only Nova Scotia had an appreciable English population dating from its earlier cession to Great Britain. After the Revolution came the great influx of British settlers - the hard core, Loyalists from the Thirteen Colonies, and after them a great wave of immigration above all from Scotland and Ireland. The British element in Canada is therefore made up predominantly of these three strains.