



18th Century Iroquois

wars — interrupted irregularly by peace — went on.

1748: The English won. The colonial English came north by the handful. Quebec, which had 65,000 native French speakers, got 400 Britishers.

1749: Halifax, the first planned town in North America, began going up in orderly squares in Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia was more Nova than Scotia — the British, having won the wars, were remaking French Acadia into a new province. They needed settlers.

The settlers, mostly demobilized soldiers and sailors, were given a free passage for themselves and their families, free land, and sustenance for a year. In the first summer, 1400 immigrants landed and soon Halifax had 3760 families at home in the new world, but scarcely comfortable. The immigrants knew nothing of farming. Prices were high (a shilling for a pint of milk) and many died of the cold, but the town survived.

A band of Lutherans came from Germany in 1753 and turned out to be “almost incredibly industrious.” Halifax was granted an Assembly and held the first election in Canada.

Sept. 4, 1755: As the Government built Halifax with its right hand it destroyed Acadia with its left. This September afternoon, Colonel Winslow called 418 of Acadia’s leading men to the Church of Grand Pre. He told them they were dispossessed — their land and cattle, 20,000 head, were forfeit to the Crown and they themselves were to be transported. Of some 8000 resident Acadians, 6500 were shipped out, four thousand in that first year. They went to Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, Philadelphia, Connecticut, New York, Boston and Georgia. Penniless and speaking a foreign tongue, they were seldom made welcome. Many slipped home. One small brave band went down the Mississippi to Louisiana, a French speaking place. They numbered between 300 and 400, but they inspired Longfellow’s Evangeline and they left a permanent mark. More Acadians joined them later, and their descendants in tens of thousands live today, many of them still on the bayous of Louisiana, still speaking French.

1759: Quebec fell. The victor, General Wolfe, and the vanquished, General Montcalm, both died on the Plains of Abraham.

1763: A federation of tribes led by Pontiac, the Algonquin chief, took many forts along the Great Lakes, but was smashed by the English at Detroit.

Dec. 31, 1775: The southern colonies revolted. Rebel General Montgomery, assisted by General Benedict Arnold, captured the Fort at St. John’s

and Montreal was captured for a while. Montgomery was killed in a skirmish and died a hero. Arnold lived to be a traitor.

1776: When General Howe evacuated Boston he took 900 “loyalists” north. In mid-Revolution it was estimated that one-third of the American colonists were loyal to the Crown. Many would migrate to Canada at War’s end. (Many who were not loyalists but farmers looking for new, good land went too.) Three thousand left Philadelphia in 1778. The migrants went first to handy Nova Scotia and made the village of Shelburne briefly the most populous town in Canada. Then they moved on, to Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton, and Shelburne became a village again. By 1784 there were 28,347 loyalists in Nova Scotia, but new waves were heading toward Kingston and York. In 1791 Britain carved “Upper Canada” out of Quebec. It would become the province of Ontario. York would become Toronto, the metropolis of the border.

1812: An unfortunate war occurred. One side burned York, the other Washington, D.C.

1815-1834: Emigration flowed across the seas. Undercrowded North America see-sawed up as overcrowded Europe came down. In twenty years 403,000 Britons would come to Canada (and 269,000 to the States). Emigrants left the U.S. too, heading north. One industrious gent, Colonel Thomas Talbot, gathered great land grants from the Crown and filled them full of English-speaking pioneers, mostly Americans. By 1837, he’d planted 50,000 people on 650,000 acres of rich Lake Erie land. John Galt, a Scot, found the Canada Company in 1826 and placed 4500 people in the Huron District. They found the future cities of Galt, Goderich, Stratford and Guelph.



W. L. Mackenzie

1837: War again, this time a Canadian rebellion. There were 400,000 people in English-speaking Upper Canada. They were rather evenly split, Tories and Grits. The Tories were the voice of the newly hatched aristocracy and in charge. William Lyon Mackenzie, the editor of the Colonial Advocate, Samuel Lount, and Peter Matthews started a Grits rebellion that didn’t quite come off. Mackenzie went south over the border. Lount and Matthews were hanged and the school boys of Toronto got a half holiday to watch.

In French Canada there was a bloodier and more significant rebellion—524,000 of the 697,000 residents of Lower Canada were French speaking, but the English were rulers in the cities and towns.

The British Rifle Corps, a semi-vigilante out-