



THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND BRITISH NORTH AMERICA

By
Eric Tolman





INTRODUCTION

- In 1763 when New France became a British possession, the 13 American colonies still saw themselves as English And they had large populations and growing economies and the most important part of BNA
- However by 1776 the colonies would erupt in revolution and independence from Britain which would shift British focus to her colonies in New France, Acadia, Newfoundland and the HBC
- An exodus of British loyalists, those loyal to Britain and the King, would flee the new republic of the USA and settle in possessions in Canada and settling in the fertile lands of the Maritimes, Quebec and what would later become Ontario
- British subjects would seek British law and in 1791 Quebec would be divided into upper and lower Canada
- These areas along with Nova Scotia, PEI, NFL, New Brunswick, Rupert's Land and all the are under HBC control would become British North America

AFTER THE FALL OF QUEBEC



- After the 1763 treaty of Paris, wars between Britain and France for control of North America ended and Quebec fell under military rule
- The first British governor, Guy Carlton, realized the French would not abandon their language and culture and rather liked the way he could get along with the French priests and seigneurs
- The British occupiers soon learned that ruling in co-operation and out of respect was possible and preferable, especially after the lessons of the revolution to the south
- French society and customs more or less continued with little disruption and when most French fur merchants headed back to France or south to Louisiana, Scottish and American traders took their place
- These new Anglo traders were rowdy and rough and would expand the fur trade west and later form the North West company



NATIVE PEOPLE'S RESISTANCE

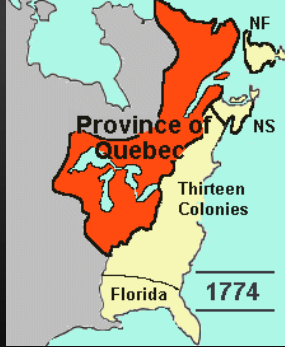
- In the west of the Great Lakes and beyond native groups who had carved out a relationship with French traders were very suspicious of the new Anglo traders
- Native leaders protested their complaints to British authorities in Canada but they did little to help
- Large British factories sold goods through the traders and land speculators like George Washington and Benjamin Franklin had a lot of support from the British
- Ottawa Chief Pontiac tried to unite FNs against the British and dreamed of a FN nation in the interior of NA
- The French were apprehensive to get behind Pontiac and his forces were defeated by the British



ROYAL PROCLAMATION OF 1763

- In 1763 the King of England issued a RP which cut off land speculation to the west of the Appalachian mountains which meant that settlers from the Thirteen colonies could not move west into the Ohio valley and other desirable areas
- FNs were satisfied because it meant that settlers and traders would not be able to enter their territory without permission
- From the perspective of the Anglo Americans it appeared that Britain was far more concerned with what was good for Britain than helping the 13 colonies
- It made the Americans feel they were not being treated as equals and would be a major contributing factor to the outbreak of the American Revolution

THE QUEBEC ACT



- In 1774 the British Government passed the QA making the conquered territory a new British colony and while it was relatively good for Canada and the French it caused major problems for the American colonists
- QA recognized the importance of the Catholic Church, kept French law for business and personal law matters and introduced English criminal law
- The Act also increased the size of Quebec to the north and east
- However the Act contained secret instructions to the governor to introduce English Civil law and suppress the Catholic church but it was leaked to the Bishop of Quebec and Governor Carleton stepped back to the original plans set out in the Act
- French rights appeared to be respected, old feudal rights of the Church and seigneurs were intact- habitants were not happy
- THE QA was designed to keep the Canadiens (French) loyal to Britain in a climate of increasing resentment of the Americans colonies to the south who wanted to expand into the Ohio valley

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION



- The British thought the American colonists troublesome and argumentative and they believed all the military missions against the French and native peoples should be paid for by those they deemed responsible and accountable
- When the British began to tax Americans without their consent they resisted, and combined with American anger over the Royal Proclamation and the Quebec Act, they reacted
- However, each of the 13 colonies had their own legislatures making it difficult to stand up in unity when there were such strong business and cultural ties between the two
- The mercantilist system seemed to work for both sides and a disruption of it was daunting to business and the economy in general
- With some sort of unity necessary, the 13 colonies decided at the Continental Congress of 1774 to work together in spite of what Britain may want

THE STAMP ACT

- The idea that some in the British Empire should do things on their own was beyond comprehension of policy makers in Britain
- The 1765 Stamp Act made Americans pay a small tax similar to our GST in Canada by having them purchase a stamp that had to be bought and stuck on purchases- this money was to pay for defending the American colonies
- Because the Americans had no representation in Britain's parliament, they were furious to be taxed without representation or their consent
- Those sent to enforce the tax were often attacked and many were tarred and feathered and government offices were destroyed
- Many in Britain agreed with the protest and the tax was repealed. Taxes were instead put on tea and imports by the colonists but Americans protested that and the new tax was also repealed- except the one on tea



MORE TAX TROUBLE



- The British gov't could not recognize fault in this matter, but all these taxes and regulations hurt American business
- In addition, Americans were expected to billet American soldiers and pay for their lodging
- In 1770 as tensions ran high, nervous British soldiers in Boston shot on a crowd killing several people in the "Boston Massacre" spurring on a group of Americans called "The Sons of Liberty" who, in 1773, dressed as Mohawks and dumped tea into the harbour to protest the tea tax- The Boston Tea Party was well organized and was not a wild mob action
- The following year when the Quebec Act was passed in 1774, all colonies sent delegates to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia and took first steps to independence
- Leaders soon demanded a boycott of British goods and the British General Gage readied troops in Boston and the colonists began to train troops and store weapons



THE REVOLUTION BEGINS



- First shots were fired at Lexington Green in Massachusetts in a standoff where a nervous American likely fired a shot and the British army fired their muskets-few Americans were killed but the British were attacked by militia and many were killed- the revolution had begun
- Colonial general George Washington would put together a sizable force that held ground at Bunker hill near Boston and as a result Washington was made commander of the Continental Army
- Quebec was attacked by Americans in 1775 as a pre-emptive strike against Britain who may be coming through the “back door”
- In the cold winter of 1775 Americans led by Richard Montgomery and Benedict Arnold tried and failed to take Quebec
- This failure helped convince Canadiens in Quebec to remain loyal to Britain



THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE



- While the revolution was on its way, it lacked an overall plan and many did not want a complete split from Britain
- Many of the influential enlightened thinkers who inspired the Americans came from Britain like John Locke and Adam Smith
- As the colonial delegates met, it became clear that complete independence was the only option at this time and in 1776 figures like Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams collaborated on a statement to declare their independence from Britain
- Ultimately, the final document was mostly written by Thomas Jefferson and would become the Declaration of Independence, an important statement on principles of democracy and freedom
- As a result, war dragged on for 7 years and with French help, the British would lose the war and the USA would be created



THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND BRITISH NORTH AMERICA



- When Americans invaded Quebec they expected to be seen as liberators but the French recognized that the Quebec act was a far better deal than the Americans could give them
- When the Americans were in Quebec they were rough and took what they wanted- when they paid, they did so in worthless American money
- Back in the USA, 1 of every 5 citizens wished to remain loyal to Britain and many were new immigrants to the colonies from countries other than Britain
- These Loyalists, sometimes called Tories, were persecuted by revolutionary Patriots who humiliated them in the least, and had them killed in the worst.
- Loyalist property was seized, they were tarred and feathered, or strung up from a liberty pole

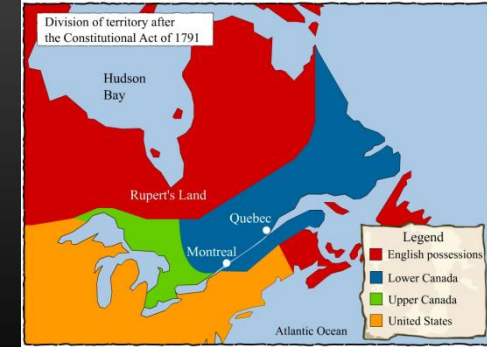
LOYALIST ARRIVAL IN CANADA



- Loyalists felt forced to leave their homes and 43 000 would come in what was to become Ontario and 8000 would go to the Maritime colonies which resulted in the formation of New Brunswick in 1784
- The 60 000 Canadiens felt overwhelmed with this exodus and the new arrivals were not interested in adjusting to French traditions which led to the split of Quebec into two colonies- Lower Canada to the east and Upper Canada to the West
- Mohawks loyal to Britain and represented by Joseph Brandt, pleaded the British for land set aside for them in loyalist Canada and would eventually get land along the Grand River in southern Ontario
- The Mohawk alliance would continue and be of great assistance to Britain in the War of 1812 against the Americans



THE CONSTITUTIONAL ACT



- The CA of 1791 established two completely different colonies in Upper and Lower Canada with French and British preferences in law, religion and culture each with an elected assembly, a governor and two councils
- The British government had the intention of giving these colonies the type of democracy that had caused so many problems in America
- Power in both colonies was firmly held by landowners and business people who passed laws to benefit themselves at the expense of the lower classes
- Most new immigrants to Canada departed for England and travelled in appalling steerage conditions
- Others sought passage by indenturing themselves to wealthy families- a type of slavery where 5-7 years of service in Canada would be required to cover the cost of the trip

PIONEERS OF UPPER CANADA



- By 1815, Upper Canada went from 10 000 to 95 000 people most coming from the USA and Britain and drawn by cheap land and opportunities in what is now southern Ontario
- Many Scots who lost their rented farms in the Highland Clearances came to Canada and those suffering the ills of city life during the transition to an industrial economy
- Most who came were farmers and they confronted a harsh climate and landscape often rocky and tree filled but once here they had to make the best of it
- Some found work in timber mills, boat yards and breweries and education was set up for children by the Anglican Church for the upper classes
- Non Anglicans were exempt and expected to find their own education
- Cooperation amongst farmers was crucial in stump removal and barn raisings which became community affairs with food and drink, music and dance



JOHN GRAVES SIMCOE



- First governor of Upper Canada, JGS, was appointed to ensure that the colony would follow a British model with its law, the Anglican Church, and an aristocracy to lead and control- The US model was frightening to many
- Simcoe, an aristocrat, believed the upper class would provide leadership, an army, and the Church but his fear of the US made defense central
- He built several roads to move troops from east to west, but it also linked scattered communities and the building the basis of Toronto
- Simcoe supported FNs in their fight against the Americans because he hoped that strong native allies could help protect Upper Canada
- Simcoe's focus on infrastructure put Upper Canada on a firm course and by his departure from Canada in 1796, Upper Canada had grown by many thousands

THE WAR OF 1812



- By 1800 relations between the US and Britain was strained because of the loss of American trading privileges within the Empire
- In addition, Britain seized or stopped American ships during the war with France for fear of an alliance between the two foes
- At the time, York had 1500 inhabitants with a total of 500 000 in BNA and the United States had a population of 8 million
- In the US James Madison and the War hawks wanted war and while they had support in the West the New Englanders were completely opposed
- Americans over estimated British support of native peoples who were in conflict with the USA as settlers continued to move west
- When war was declared in 1812, the New Englanders stayed, more or less, neutral

COURSE OF THE WAR



- Had the US been completely united against BNA they may very well have won but New England's lack of interest helped many Americans lose enthusiasm
- The US would attack Detroit and Niagara and a British force led by General Brock and Tecumseh, his native ally, attacked first at Detroit and forced an American surrender, but the war would continue in a back and forth manor
- At Queenstown Heights, Brock is killed and in following years, York is captured by Americans, but retreated
- The end of the Napoleonic wars in Europe allowed Britain to send their toughest veterans and the last battle was fought at New Orleans, in 1815, after the war ended
- 1812 was the final invasion of Canada, changed no boundaries and confirmed Canada's existence. Canada became more loyal to Britain and Tecumseh became a genuine hero who helped save Canada