**John Cabot**



During the 1400's there were stories and legends repeated throughout Northwestern Europe of the rich lands across the Atlantic Ocean. These of course were handed down by the Vikings and came from their colonies and exploits which did in fact reach across the Atlantic.

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| There is evidence of English and French fishermen, who listening to these stories, made their way across the North Atlantic and were rewarded by the richest fishing grounds in the world, the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. They did not want to share their discovery with competing fishermen and hence the secret was probably closely guarded. (As were later Spanish discoveries when they also feared that other nations would send expeditions to the rich lands which they discovered and keep secret logs and records of almost all of their sea voyages. EG: West coast of North America) | | |  |
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|  | By 1497 the success of Christopher Columbus was leaking out to all areas of Europe and the response in England was to take a closer look at the position of the Kingdom in the North Atlantic and the potential for conquering new lands or more importantly, as with Columbus's original intentions, to discover a direct trading route to the Far East. | |

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| Henry the VII had recently finished the War of the Roses by taking power himself and killing the last direct challenger for the throne. Feeling somewhat secure at home, he was ready to send someone west, across the Atlantic in search of China and the Spice Islands. He choose a Genoese navigator, John Cabot (Giovanni Cabot) and on May 2nd 1497 he set sail from Bristol England on a ship named the Mathew and crossed the Atlantic. | | |
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| According to a Bristol merchant John Day, he probably landed in Newfoundland, Labrador and Cape Breton Island. He returned the following year on a second voyage of discover and like Columbus he believed that he had reached Asia and the natives were in fact Chinese. These initial voyages were enough to establish a claim by England to this new territory and served to open up the floodgates for other exploration and fishermen in search of the legendary Grand Banks. | | |

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|  | As Cabot arrived in Newfoundland's waters, he and his men were amazed by the sea life. They dipped baskets into the water and drew them out full of fish. This report triggered a rush of fishermen who were able to develop an huge industry for the European market. Cabot landed on the Newfoundland shore for only a few hours and found evidence of the native people. He did report the possible sighting of a couple of natives, but wasn't positive. | |
| Cabot Sights New-Found-Land |  |  |
| The following year 1498 he set out on another voyage to America but was lost somewhere at sea. He and his crew were never seen again. | | |

**Samuel de Champlain**

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| The founder of Quebec City and one of the most charismatic figures in Canadian history, Samuel de Champlain opened up the St Lawrence river and extended French influence throughout the Great Lakes basin.  Samuel de Champlain was born in 1580 and by the time he passed way in 1635, he was known as the father of new France. He was a protestant which was unusual for a Frenchman of that age and grew up on the west coast of France in the seaport of Brouage. He became a sailor and learned the skills of navigation and cartography. |  |

Champlain became involved with group who were interested in the fur trade and in 1603 was dispatched, aboard the Bonne - Renommee, for North America. He used his cartographers skills and produced a map of the St Lawrence river and upon his return to France published the map and his account of the trip in his work

Henry IV of France commissioned Champlain to explore and report further on the new lands in the Americas and in 1604 he helped found the Saint Croix Island settlement on the Bay of Fundy but after a particularly harsh winter the settlers were relocated along the coast of Nova Scotia to an new site named Port Royal. Champlain was able to use his base here to further explore the Atlantic coast for the next few years. During his 1605 - 06 explorations he found no friendly areas where he felt another settlement could be established. He returned to France in 1607 to organize another effort for colonizing the new lands in America.

In 1608 Champlain sailed from Honfleur France in command of the Don-de-Dieu along with two other ships. The ships arrived at Tadoussac on the St Lawrence in June of 1608 and continued by small boat on to the site of Stadacona which was the Iroquois village that Jacques Cartier had made contact with. The village was abandoned, possibly due to inter-aboriginal warfare between the Iroquois and the Algonquin's or the devastating effects of European diseases such as smallpox for which the Indians had no natural immunity.

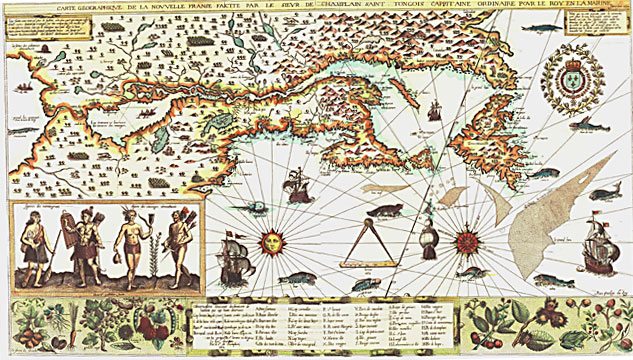
On July 3rd, 1608 Champlain landed with his settlers and established a new settlement named Quebec City. They began work immediately and built several multistory buildings.  During the first year, once the deep snows of Quebec had fallen, the dreaded disease of scurvy and smallpox also set in. 20 of the twenty eight settlers who stayed for the winter died.

In 1609 Champlain made contact and formed friendly relations with the Huron, the Algonquin, the Montagnais and the Etchemin. The mighty Iroquois were their enemy and they appealed to Champlain to help them with their fight against them. Champlain and 9 of his soldiers setout with 300 Algonquin's to explore the Iroquois lands to the south and travelled south along the Richelieu River to Lake Champlain.

Champlain and his party had not run into any Iroquois so 7 of the 9 soldiers and most of the Algonquin were allowed to return to Quebec City. Subsequently they ran into a Iroquois war party of over 200 warriors. On July 30tha the 200 Iroquois attacked Champlain, his 2 soldiers and his 30 Algonquin warriors near present day Crown Point, NY. Champlain fired his arquebus at them and killed 2 of the Iroquois leaders with one shot. This was the first encounter that the Iroquois had experienced with gunpowder and they immediately scattered and fled.  The battle lines between the French with the Algonquin's and the English with the Iroquois was now set for the next 150 years.



Champlain sailed for France that fall and upon his return in 1611 he traveled upriver from Quebec City to the former village of Hochelega where he established Montreal. He strengthened his relations with the Algonquin and returned to France that fall more intent then ever on gaining additional support for the French colonizing efforts in what was now becoming known as New France. Champlain was named lieutenant and given the power to act as virtual governor in New France. He was empowered to expand the lands of the colony, make treaties with the native people, administer the colonies and explore to the west for the route to China and the Indies.



In September of 1615 Champlain departed from Lake Simcoe, in Ontario, with the Huron's and travelled up the Oneida River where the attacked the Iroquois. This attack failed and Champlain was hit in his knee and his leg with two arrows. The Huron's and Champlain retreated back to Huronia where Champlain spent the wither recovering and learning more about  the Huron. He returned to Quebec City the following spring.

Champlain oversaw the coming of the Jesuit Order in New France and their efforts at converting the natives to Christianity.

He administered and continued to explore eastern Canada for the next 20 years and on December 25, 1635 he died aftersuffering a stroke a month previously.

**Native Perceptions**

Native perceptions of the different explorers that appear differed as much with the intentions and objectives of the explorers as it did with the particular native groups that they encountered. Some natives greeted the explorers with curiosity and were eager to trade for their strange items. Some accepted them as strange visitors to be tolerated but were impatient for their departure. Yet others accepted the explorers and later settlers as potential new friends and allies.

The worse encounters took place with Spanish Conquistadors who looked upon the natives as sub-human creatures to be defeated subjugated and in many cases forced into slavery. One of the crucial problems with these first encounters centered around the transfer of disease and viruses which were alien to North American peoples and hence left them in many cases biologically unable to resist the sickness or produce antibodies to fight the germs. Estimates of the number of indigenous people that may have died from these new European diseases range from a few hundred thousand to millions. This was a process that occurred for hundreds of years throughout the Americas and was most devastating when the first contact took place between the Europeans and the natives.

For native groups in Canada who were technologically hundreds of years behind the Europeans, the wondrous ships, metal instruments, weapons and chemical inventions such as gunpowder must have seemed wondrous, yet in other ways the Europeans inability to live off the land in the knowledgeable, traditional way the natives did may have made the Europeans appear somewhat weak and uninventive. It was the natives who saved the starving Pilgrims and the Algonquin spruce tea that healed the scurvy that the first French settlers suffered from.

**The English Invasion**

Champlain realized that the settlements in New France would need more then just the fur trade and a few raw resources to send back to  France in order  to stimulate it's growth. New France would need settlers, soldiers, supplies and support. In 1627 Champlain retuned to France and convinced Armand Jean, and Cardinal Richelieu, who was the first Minister of the King of France, that new France would become an asset for the French if generously supported.

The company of 100 associates was formed to attract investors and capital for the New France venture and Champlain was made the Lieutenant to the  Viceroy of Quebec. The first Associate's fleet was sent out to Quebec and consisted of 400 colonists in 20 transport ships. The Kirke Brothers, who commanded an English fleet, were on the lookout for French ships and reinforcements. As the 3 English ships approached the American coast in 1628, a storm blew up and forced the ships into Gaspe Bay for protection. The French fleet also approaching America took refuge in the same bay and were immediately captured and redirected to England as prizes.

A second French feet, under Emery de Caen, also fell into the hands of the English and were also sent back to England. The Kirkes could smell blood and attempted to capture Quebec but ran short of supplies and were forced to return to England for the winter. They returned in 1629 and cut off New France from France, and then sailed up the St Lawrence where they assaulted the city. On July 19, 1629 they attacked and took the city. New France had fallen, Champlain was captured and returned to England where he was to discover that the war between England and France had ended 3 months before Quebec City was captured.

New France was returned to France in an agreement that forced Louis XIII to pay Charles I of England 1 million livres which was previously owed. The first fall of Quebec and been reversed.

**Seigneiural System**

The origins of the Seigneiural system were adopted from the feudal system in France to suit the conditions of North America. The intent of the system was to distribute, settle and cultivate the land with a structure which would support a land owning aristocracy similar to the nobles in France.

There system had two basic levels with the Seigneurs at the top. The Seigneurs were granted large parcels of land which usually consisted of a tract of land which had some waterfront along the St Lawrence or other river. The Seigneurs were granted their title and property in a ceremony which was usually conducted in New France at the Castle St. Louis. Their obligation to the King was to conduct a survey and census of the property, list the animals and resources and provide a system of defence for the land if under attack by the Kings enemies. His sworn loyalty to the King, and in the Kings name the Governor, obligated him to insure that the land would be productive and profitable for himself and hence the colony.

Under the Seigneurs came the censitaires who committed themselves to paying a yearly rent and providing a certain amount of services to the Seigneurs in exchange for a grant of land to work. The censitarie could expect certain additional services from the Seigneurs such as an administrative centre for managing the system, a mill to grind the grain, and  a court to settle issues or disagreement between the censitaries. The censitaries would be required to provide military service when the colony was threatened and pay an additional minimal fee to the crown.

As long as the Seigneurs met their obligations their land would be handed down through their family as the censitaries could also insure continued family occupancy of their section by living up to their obligations. The land grants to the Seigneurs tended to be planned in long thin strips in order to accommodate the need by each grant to access the river - see map above. The water access to rivers tended to dictate the size and layout of the grants.

**Filles de Roi**

One of the challenges that New France faced was that of becoming a self sustaining society able to increase it's population through birth as well as immigration. The issue was lack of females. Most of the colonists were soldiers, businessmen with charters, fur traders, tradesmen or farmers. Danger from the Iroquois discouraged voluntary female settlers and the rough conditions also made it difficult for any women who lived in New France. One of the differences between New France and the English settlements to the south was that the French government took a more direct interest in the development of the colony.

From 1663 to 1673 Louis XIV supported a plan to increase the female population of marriageable age in New France. The belief was that the society would become more stable, grow faster with indigenous production of babies, and hence lead to a self sufficient colony which might contribute to the wealth of France and not drain the King's resources. The population of New France in 1663 was around 2500 people which were mainly men and mainly concentrated along the north shore of the St Lawrence between Quebec City and Montréal.

The girls were selected in France via a screening process which was to insure that they were single, healthy, and of child bearing age. They were then prepared for the crossing of the Atlantic and 1663 the first group of 36 girls arrived in New France. The girls were housed in a dormitory which was overseen by the church. Interviews were arranged for interested men to come and meet the girls. A mutual agreement between the man and the women had to be archived in order that for a marriage to take place.. More girls arrived the following year but it was soon decided that girls would be exclusively recruited from peasant stock and not from the city population, due to the difficulty experienced by the city girls in adapting to the rigorous conditions in New France.

By 1671 Jean Talon, governor of New France, declared that with the birth of over 600 babies, the program had proven to be a great success and by the following year with war breaking out in Europe, France decided to end the program.

**Acadia**

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| The Acadians took their name from the area of New World in which they landed and choose to settle.  The explorer Verazanno had sailed through this area in 1524 and named it Acadia. In 1604 Samuel de Champlain landed on St Croix Island on the west side of the Bay of Fundy and established a settlement. After a terrible winter of starvation and disease he moved it across the Bay to Port Royal where a permanent settlement was established. |  |
| The colonization of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, new Brunswick and the south-eastern areas of Quebec was all considered to be a part of the expansion of the Acadians and their particular culture. They were a peaceful people who felt their bonds to France melt away as the years passed by. When the politics of the British French confrontations intruded upon their peaceful and prosperous life. | |

The constant shifting of power and interest continued until 1713 when present day Nova Scotia (excluding Cape Breton) was ceded to England by the treat of Paris. The Acadians were allowed to remain in Nova Scotia but by 1754 with rising tension between France and England they were required to swear an oath of alliance to England. They refused and in 1755 the expulsion of the Acadians by the British, to other areas such as New England, Louisiana and France plus many more areas began.

**The Seven Years War**

The fall of New France to England was a defining point of the seven years war between England and France and was a part of Prime Minister Pitt's (England) master plan to fight and defeat the French by use of naval power on a world wide basis. The Seven Years War was started on the frontiers of the 13 colonies and the French territory of the Mississippi basin but quickly spread and the first few years saw English defeats throughout the Americas. Pitt regrouped naval and military power and began the process of taking French positions along the Atlantic and then up the St Lawrence. Louisbourg fell to General Amherst and the English forces after a siege in July of 1758. This effectively provided England with a cut off point for any French reinforcements going up the St Lawrence to Quebec City and Montreal. Quebec City was the main starting point for supplies to the Mississippi basin and hence that western area would also become weakened and fall to English forces.

The next phase of the plan began the following year as the St Lawrence became ice free, the British sailed up to Quebec City with forces under the command of James Wolfe. The siege lasted into September and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham resulted in the death of Wolfe and the French commander Montcalm and the fall of Quebec City to the British. 1760 brought the conclusion of the campaign when Montreal fell to the British and then all awaited the result of the peace treaty that would determine whether New France was given back to France, as it had been in the past, or it would be absorbed into British North America.

The Treaty of Paris gave New France, with the exception of a few islands to be used for fishing rights, to England permanently. Thus began an new era in the history of Canada. This may rightly be considered the birthplace of Canada as it is today because this is where the British/French population in New France. accommodations began in an effort to develop together rather then a battle to defeat each other.

**France vs England**

The contest between France and England unfolded on European battlefields, in tangled and complicated alliances throughout the corridors of European Capitals, on frontiers in Asia, Africa, the Atlantic and of course in North America.

France with strong government support had been building up a colony along the ST Lawrence river since the early years of Jacques Cartier's voyages along the Atlantic coast of North America. Under Frontenac and Champlain the colony had grown and the Fur trade had provided a lure for exploration of the continent south along the Mississippi to New Orleans.

England had settled and expanded along the eastern seaboard of North America from the Maritimes down to Georgia. The competition for the abundant fisheries along the Grand Banks also served as a source of irritation to the relationship between the French and English Colonies.

European wars spilt over into the new world and in 1629 Kirke of England destroyed the French colony of Port Royal. Both sides also recruited and drew Indian nations into this conflict. The Iroquois became solid allies of the English and by the 1680's Iroquois raids had become a grave and constant danger not only to the daily life of New France but to the actual survival of the colony.

In 1689 the War of the League of Augsburg broke out and the Iroquois were unleashed on New France descending upon Lachine killing 24 during the attack and another 42 after the surrender of the settlement. Frontenac who had returned as governor of New France organized his Indian allies and launched a counterattack on the outlaying settlements of New England.

This conflict - hot and cold continued for the next 80 years with raids by the English on Louisbourg, the capture by the Hudson Bay by the French and it's return to England, the expansion and establishment of French forts.

This set the stage for a confrontation between the English and The French not only in the America's but across the globe. The competition came to a head in 1755 when a young inexperienced commissioned British Officer named George Washington, under General Braddock become embroiled in a pre-emptive effort by the British to force the French from one of their Mississippi basin forts - Fort Duquesne. This action lead to a series of events which quickly escalated into what was really the 1st global war between the empires of France and England.

**13 Colonies**

The 13 British colonies along the Atlantic seaboard had an immediate and lasting influence on New France and English settlement in Canada. In 1607 The Jamestown colony in what would come to be known as Virginia was established as the first permanent English settlement in North America. By 1620 the Plymouth colony is founded by the Pilgrims in Massachusetts.

The area of New Hampshire and Maine are colonized and the Massachusetts Bay colony is established at Boston which is to become the most important city in the New England colonies. From 1634 to 1636 Maryland, Connecticut, and Rhode Island are established.

The initial colonies were mainly charted by the king or were groups looking for religious freedom. Some were established with indentured servants who were colonists that had agreed to take a subservient role almost approaching that of a slave, for a period of time in exchange for their passage to America or for a sum of money. The period could last anywhere from a few months to several years. This structure allowed richer colonists to assure themselves manual labours to build up their interests in America.

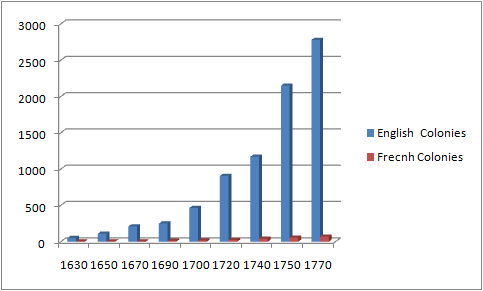
By 1670 the practice of indenture servants was dying out in the colonies and was being replaced by slavery. African natives were captured - sold into slavery, transported to America and sold at auctions. The popularity of tobacco and growing demand for cotton required many labourers in the south although slavery was initially present in all of the colonies.

The English colonies were sandwiched by the Spanish settlements to the south and New France to the North. Colonial relations were merely an extension of European politics and when war was declared in Europe, it was also conducted in America. The English colonies grew very quickly in America and were much more diversified the economy of New France which really revolved around the fur trade. A brief examination of the population growth shows that the French colonies were always on the verge of being overwhelmed by the English colonies.

Population In Thousands in America

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1770** | **1750** | **1740** | **1720** | **1700** | **1690** | **1670** | **1650** | **1630** |
| English  Colonies | **2780** | **2148** | **1170** | **905** | **466** | **250** | **210** | **111** | **50** |
| French Colonies | 70 | 55 | 42 | 25 | 16 | 12 | 3.2 | 3.1 | 3 |

Population in Thousands



The American colonies were not as closely controlled by Britain as New France was by France. This resulted in an open dynamic economy in the British settlements with religious, economic and political freedom somewhat above that of New France. Initiatives in the British colonies were usually undertaken by the colonists and this built up an independence, confident ruling class that were prepared to take action and in fact more then willing to in situations such as the taking of Louisbourg during the War of Austrian Succession. New France was able to compete with the English colonies for land, influence of the native people, on the battlefield and in commerce and it was a tribute to New France that they were able to expand as much as it did until the final confrontation in 1759 which was a close run thing.

**The Fur Trade**

The development of the fur trade had exploded once the fashion demands of Europe had acquired an insatiable desire for felt hats made from the short hairs of the Beaver. The fur trade had formed an important part of the early economies of both the English and French colonies.

The initial system was based upon some Indian groups trying to control the trade by playing the middleman between the European settlers and other outlaying Indian nations. This developed into a system where the colonists began to travel to the hinterland to trade directly with the native groups and eventually the French Coureurs des Bois began to lay their own trap lines and would travel thousands of miles each year by canoe.

The English decided upon a different approach when they claimed the Hudson Bay and all of the lands that had waters which flowed into the Bay. This system fell under a private company - The Hudson Bay Company - which was granted it's charter by King Charles II in 1670. The HBC constructed trading posts called forts, factories or Houses at the mouths of rivers, along the western shore of the Hudson Bay and initially relied on the natives travelling down the rivers to trade their furs. As sources and the quality of the furs began to deteriorate, the Bay men used the natives to help them explore and establish new forts further and further away from the Hudson Bay.

The expansion of these two fur trading systems inevitably brought them into contact and conflict. There were only so many furs and the question became who was going to secure and dominate the trade. It is an interesting fact that the furs from Canada were usually considered to be more desirable due to the colder winters and hence the greater development of the fur to keep the animals warm.

**The Hudson Bay Company**

The Hudson Bay Company  was incorporated on May 2, 1670 by Charles II of England under Royal Charter. It was, has and still is a defining feature of Canada's character and is the oldest incorporated company in the world still conducting it's original business. It ruled almost half the country for almost 2 centuries and still exerts a strong influence on Canada today. It's charter granted it all of the land with waters that ran into the Hudson Bay. The real objective of this company was to establish itself in the frozen wilderness as an alternative t the French Canadian fur traders and to expand and dominate the trade from North America to Europe. The area that the charter covered became known as Rupert's land which was form Prince Rupert who was the First Director of the Company and as a cousin to King Charles was instrumental in the acquiring of the charter. The area of Rupert's land was about 3.9 million square kilometres.

The Hudson Bay Company or HBC was given the exclusive right to trade furs in the are granted to them. The name of the company signified the geographic access to the heart of North America's rich fur trading area. The Hudson Bay lie like a big circle in the middle of Canada so during the summer months when the ice melted the company ships could bring supplies to the forts or factories (named for the HBC person or factor, trading items for furs) as they were referred to, and pickup the furs to be taken back to England. During the winter the animals would be trapped with their rich thick winter fur. In the spring the natives could bring their winter haul of furs downstream to the closest HBC trading post and exchange them for English or German manufactured products such as blankets, rifles, alcohol, knives or other handy produced items.

The first place where the HBC established a headquarters was at the mouth of the Nelson River, named Fort Nelson,  which lead into the interior river network. They then slowly established other posts in order to collect as many furs as possible. Cumberland House in Saskatchewan, was next and was built by Samuel Hearne.

This system of building forts at strategic points on the river system in order to attract the natives to bring in their furs contrasted shapely with the French system which was to send traders to the native camps and settlements and trade directly on site with the Indians. As the two systems/countries came into conflict violence sometimes broke out. The most famous example of this was when Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville, in 1697,  sailed into the Bay, defeated a small squadron of 3 Royal Navy ships and then captured the HBC headquarters York Factory. The HBC claim to the area surrounding the Bay was finally recognized in the Treaty of Utrecht.

The influence of the HBC on Canada cannot be underestimated in that it eventually spread into almost all areas of the country. Rupert's land as the HBC and was known was eventually handed over the Canada in 1870 and the HBC became an important retail landmark in almost every city and town in the country and still plays a predominate role on the retail landscape in Canada today.

**The American Revolution**

The American Revolution was slow in coming and was one of the most important events in North American history. After the end of the Seven Years War in 1762, many of the English colonists along the Atlantic seaboard felt they would be able to migrate west and find new land to settle on. With the threat from the French removed, there would be nothing to fear during westward expansion. The colonies felt that they had participated as partners in the defeat of the French and would share in the spoils within a benevolent and protective British Empire.

Britain had emerged from the conflict bathed in glory and victory. Her empire now stretched around the world and continual expansion would inevitably transpire.  The challenges that remained were financial and structural. The debt that had been built up during the 7 Years War had to be paid down and the budget brought under control. A fundamental belief in economic philosophy relating to mercantilism was that the colonies existed for the benefit of the mother country. Now that peace was established and threats removed from the colonies in North America, they would have to pay their share of the costs to maintain law and order, the military, and various other costs including the paying down of the debt.

The British were also anxious to have English colonists move into the newly won former French colony of Quebec and slowly begin the process of Anglicizing it. One Act of Parliament was intended to force potential settlers for the Ohio country to resettle in Quebec first and then proceed from there. It was hoped that this would help increase the percentage of English subjects in Quebec. The former Indian allies in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys were also to be granted lands for their support against the French.

The failure by the British to recognize a way in which the colonists could participate in government in London and the passage of various Acts which directly imposed taxes and obligations upon the colonists fuelled a growing resentment among many of the leading citizens of the colonies. These acts were referred to as the intolerable acts and slowly an awakening of the colonies indigenous power was expedited by resistance to these acts. There were many in Parliament that recognized the growing rift with the colonies but the governing party and fractions took a hard line against appeals for some sort of participation by the colonies and insisted on obedience to the crown.

With civil unrest and mob resistance growing the British began to revoke some of the colonial charters and strip power form some of the colonial legislatures. A Continental Congress was called for leaders of the colonies to assemble and discuss developing affairs. By July 0f 1776 the Declaration of Independence was proclaimed and America had separated.

Invitations were constantly issued to Nova Scotia, Quebec and the other British Colonies to join the 13 rebelling colonies but none were answered. Hostilities had begun in 1775 and in December 1775 an American army under Benedict Arnold attacked Quebec City in an attempt to force Quebec into the rebel camp and join the southern colonies against the British. The attack was defeated and Quebec was never really threatened again during the war.

The war continued with victories and defeats for both sides until 1781 when the Americans and their French allies defeated Lord Cornwallis and the British army at the Battle of Yorktown. This marked the end for British efforts to force the 13 colonies back into the British Empire and peace was negotiation. The remaining British colonies which comprised present day Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, PEI, Newfoundland, Quebec and Ontario became a safe haven for British loyalists and were to slowly develop separately from the United States until they were prepared to unite as Canada in the 1860's and some later.

**The Loyalists**

The American Revolution pitted brother against brother, father against son and husband against wife. Some estimate that about 1/3 of the colonists supported the revolution, 1/3 supported the British cause and 1/3 were neutral. As the war progressed those supporting the British cause became know as loyalist and they became increasingly anxious about their future as it became apparent that the cause of independence was going to win. Many of them began to contemplate sailing for Britain while many others considered alternative British Colonies as destination for re-settlement.

The Canada's and the Maritimes were the closest and easiest destinations to travel to and a large migration of loyalists began as the war drew to a close. It is estimated that approximately 34,000 loyalists when to Nova Scotia, 2,000 to PEI, 10,000 to Ontario and Quebec. These colonies began to absorb the majority of new loyalist immigration and rapid growth occurred for the next 10 years. Although the newly independent United States did intimidate a percentage of British immigrants that would have migrate to the US with hesitation, a large number considered the still British colonies of the Maritimes and the Canada's as a safer, friendlier alternative.

On November 9 1789, the governor of Quebec,  Lord Dorchester, gave the title United Empire Loyalist to those that had arrived from the 13 colonies. This was later shortened to UE on the end of the name.

The British also began to assert themselves on the west coast of North America with the epic voyages and exploration of Captain James Cook in the 1770's and Captain George Vancouver in the 1790's. The Hudson Bay Company was very active in the mapping and exploration of the interior of present day Canada in the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia with a chain of trading posts to back their claim to the areas.

**ATTACK**!

With the festering of politic agendas in the 13 colonies coming to a head with the meeting of the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, those delegates naturally looked to the absent British American colonies such as Quebec, Nova Scotia, and other potential allies. The Continental Congress must have felt that to bring these additional colonies into the revolutionary circle would not only increase their voice in England, increase resources to draw upon and hence chances of success, but would also take away potential bases of support and attack that the British could use against the member colonies of the revolution. A large British naval base existed at Halifax in Nova Scotia and Quebec City, and as in the time of the 7 years war,  were looked upon as a dagger pointed at heart of New England and the mid-Atlantic colonies.

Washington was appointed the commander of the continental army in the autumn of 1775 and was ordered to turn this group of state militia's and other volunteers into a real army. One of the first decisions that Washington and the Continental Congress made was that Quebec needed to be brought into the revolution as allies. It was felt that the French Canadians would be more then willing to break away from Britain and either join the other colonies or establish it's independence. Om June 27, 1775 the decision was made to send an army of liberation to Quebec to force the British out.

The attack was to be a double pronged approach with Richard Montgomery leading a force from New York to take Montreal and Benedict Arnold taking his canoe army up along the river routes to Quebec City. Arnold departed Massachusetts on September 13th and heading into the wilderness towards Quebec. Montgomery also so out and by November 2nd had taken St Johns.

When Montgomery arrived at Montreal he attacked and occupied the city on November 13th. The British commander General Carleton had abandoned the city and set out for Quebec City with his army. Arnold had arrived at Quebec City on November 8th but decided to wait for Montgomery and his army before attacking. When Montgomery arrived on December 5th, the Americans started a siege of Quebec and demanded that Carleton surrender which he refused to do. Time was against the Americans due to expiration of most of their soldiers enlistments on January 1, 1776. They attacked on December 27th and nearly took the city but were rebuffed. They decided to gamble all on an all out attack on December 31st, the night before their army might well dissolve with ending enlistments. A terrible snowstorm hit Quebec City on December 30th but they decided to proceed with the attack anyway.

The attack began a 2 in the morning of December 31st when Montgomery brought his 300 troops around to the west side of the city and Arnold prepared his 600 soldiers to attack form the eats side. They had planned to charge into the lower area of the city and then make their way through the streets and to the upper area where they could force Carleton out of the city or defeat him in detail. Carleton however, had been informed by an American deserted that the attack was coming and quickly rushed his men down to the lower part of the city and threw up a defensive barrier to meet Montgomery and planned an ambush on the east side to rebuff Arnold.

When Montgomery's men reached the barrier on the west side, the English opened fire with rifles and one canon. They killed three men immediately, including Montgomery, and the rest fled in panic and did not return. Arnold men attacked from the eats but Arnold was wounded almost immediately. Captain Morgan took the command of the rest of Arnold's men and they rushed through the lower city brushing aside all resistance. They then stopped before finishing Carleton's men off to wait for Montgomery, He did not come and by morning they decided to finish the attack without him. Carleton had used the precious time to bring more men into the lower town and they had re-occupied the barriers and taken positions in many of the buildings throughout the area. When Morgan started the final push he and his men found that they were being shot at form almost every house, angle and hidden position. They were slowly killed or captured and finally Morgan capitulated the remnants of his force.

Arnold managed to escape and collect the remains of the American troops and tried to continue the siege. He was eventually forced to retreat to Montreal and in May when British General Burgoyne arrived with over 4,000 soldiers, Arnold began the retreat from Canada. The Americans would not invade or threaten Canada again during the war.

**The Northwest Company**

The Northwest Company was officially created in 1783 in opposition to Montreal fur trading interests and the Hudson Bay Company. Many traders who had pushed west from the Great Lakes had been considering various partnerships for a few years before the launching of the Northwest Company and some had cooperate associations, working with other traders or some sort of organized effort to compete.

In 1779 a sixteen share partnership was formed but broke down over the next few years only to be succeeded by the 1783 agreement. Their competition in Montreal was Gregory, McLeod and company wit Alexander Mackenzie as a shareholder. By 1787 the Northwest company had taken over that partnership by offering them 4 shares in the newly reorganized Northwest Company which then had a total of 20 shares. This became the favoured method of overcoming competition and in 1800 a "New Northwest Company", which was to become known as XY Company, began to compete with the Northwest Company but they were also absorbed in 1804 with a 1/4 share interest the Northwest Company which now had 100 shares.

The real competition throughout these years was the Hudson Bay Company which was a chartered company formed on May 2nd, 1670 by King Charles II. The HBC was not a partnership of its workers so its' employees rarely worked as hard or as aggressively to find the new furs or explorer new territory. They did however grow into a formidable organization across the expanses of Canada and continually expanded its trading system and its forts throughout Western and Northern Canada and the North Western United States. In 1812 Lord Selkirk who owned a considerable amount of stock in the HBC was granted land in present day Manitoba to begin a colony. This area was right in the middle of many of the trading routes of the Northwest Company and threatened its flow of furs.

The Northwest Company paid out profits to it's partners and did not retain earnings for the company itself. This served to centralize the decision making process of how the run the company. Until 1812, the company had expanded and grown as it's explorers such as David Thompson and Alexander Mackenzie opened up vast new territories for trade and development. While the HBC could use all of the waters that flowed into the Bay to transport its furs downstream, the Northwest Company had to ship all of its furs across thousands of miles of wilderness to Lake Superior where they were then shipped to Montreal. The Selkirk settlement cut off this route and threatened the survival of the Northwest Company.

Another assault that fell on the Northwest Company came form the south. With the outbreak of the war of 1812 one of the first actions by the Americans was the invasion of Sault Ste. Marie and the subsequent destruction of the Northwest Company trading post. The over harvesting of furs and particularly beaver in many of the areas of trade also served as a negative factor in the fortunes of both the HBC and the Northwest Company.

Matters came to a head in 1816 with the massacre of Seven Oaks resulting in the death of 21 people. One June 19th the HBC attacked the Northwest Company's Fort Gibraltar at the fork of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers and killed most of the North western men. The HBC then refused to compensate, withdraw or allow North Western fur brigades through the area.

in 1820 the British Secretary of State for War and Colonies was forced to step in and issues directives to both companies to restrict and cease their aggressive actions against one another. By July of 1821 a merger was forced upon the Northwest Company which resulted in their 97 posts and forts being amalgamated into the HBC system at the end of the great company. George Simpson became the new head of the HBC and their new head quarters was located in Lachine Quebec.

**The War of 1812**

The war of 1812 was a war that the British and the Americans were waiting for since the end of the Revolutionary War. Tensions and confrontations had come and gone since 1782 and war just barely avoided at times but by 1812 the issues and passions caught up with the politics. The war was a side show of the Napoleonic wars raging in Europe and was declared by the United States against Great Britain.

England had been desperately trying to blockade France and French controlled Europe with naval power and claimed the right to board American ships in search of sailors of British origin and forcibly remove them. Britain also was attempting to prevent any trade between France and her allies. The other main point of contention was American complaints about British encouragement of Indian resistance to American expansion into the Ohio and Mississippi valleys.

On June 18, 1812 President  James Madison declared war on Great Britain. Madison was from the anti-British, pro-French fraction that Jefferson had lead for years. The expansion of the U.S. had taken pace quickly under Jefferson with the purchase of the Louisiana Territory and the belief in manifest destiny or that all of North America would become a pat of the United States was gaining hold in Washington. The U.S. believed that it would be an easy adventure to defeat the merge British forces and Canadian Militia stationed in the British colonies. The initial attacks however were not effective or successful and the British quickly captured Detroit.

The second figure to emerge for this war was Laura Secord who overheard American soldiers discussing their plans while occupying her house and made her way through to the British and relayed all of the enemies plans. The result was a British victory and the capture of almost 600 Americans as they were attempting to capture Beaver Dam in the Niagara area.

The war dragged on until December of 1814, with victories for both sides, when a peace treaty was signed and the war ended. The news of the peace did not reach North America until 1815 after more fighting had  occurred.

Canada had held off the Americans and a the birth of a new national consciences began to form. This was the last war between Canada and Britain. If the Americans had successfully invaded Canada it is unlikely that they would have given it back to Britain after the war and that it would have been absorbed by the U.S..

**Lord Selkrirk**

In 1801, Thomas Douglas the Earl of Selkirk read a book about the adventures and exploits in western Canada, of a fur trader and explorer named Alexander Mackenzie. Selkirk was  thrilled by the potential opportunities and options this vast land seemed to offer and decided that he would organize and back a program which would recruit and send his fellow Scotsmen to this land to settle it and start a new civilization. He felt that Scottish farms who had no land , or had  lost their land would be perfect candidates for this venture.

In order to initiate this process Selkirk bought shares of the Hudson Bay Company which he felt held the rights to vast tracts of the Canadian North and would provide a homestead for his settlers. The Hudson Bay Charter granted it all of the lands which had waters that ran into the Hudson Bay. In 1811 Selkirk choose some property along the Red River in Manitoba. This land was about 300,000 Square kilometres and was good farm land. Problems arose however when the Northwest Company claimed that the land actually belonged to them  and they believed that Selkirk was actually trying to cut off their trade routes between the west and the Great Lakes. The other group which was upset by these plans was the Métis who believed that farming the land would destroy the Buffalo habitat and drive them and the Métis away.

The Settlers arrived in North America  at York Factory on the Hudson's Bay in 1811 during the winter and prepared to travel up the Churchill River to Lake Winnipeg and then up the Red River. Upon arriving at their destination on August 29, 1812  they built Fort Douglas,  near the current site of downtown Winnipeg, and the second group arrived in October. They had no crops to harvest and were forced to survive on the supplies that they had brought with them and the limited amount of game they were able to kill.

Selkirk's first choice as governor of Fort Douglas was Miles Macdonnell who sent a group to form a second settlement about 100 miles to the south near Pembina, North Dakota. Food production remained the over riding issue and on January 8, 1814 Macdonell issued the "Pemmican Proclamation which forbad the export of provisions from the area. This directly threatened the administration and support of the Northwest Company system. In 1815 the North-westerners convinced many of the settlers that land  in Canada was better were assisted in leaving the Red River area to travel to Canada. Macdonell was arrested and the settlement disbanded by the Métis and the Northwest Company but was re-occupied that same year by new settlers under Robert Semple. By 1816 matters came to a head and the Seven Oaks Incident occurred in which many were killed. Selkirk arrived on August 16th with mercenary soldiers and took the NWC Fort William. By July he had arrived at the Red River settlement and re-established the colony yet again. The settlement began to grow and the HBC eventually absorbed the NWC which pacified affairs until many of the same issues re-emerged in 1870 with Louis Riel.

The Great Migration of Canada saw one of the biggest movements of people around the globe

**Who were the people that made this journey?**

Many of us around the world find we have a family history connection with Canada. In Britain we take it for granted that a branch of our family left their home country and set off for Canada. But what was happening at home to cause this migration? Where else were the migrants coming from and why and once they had arrived in Canada, what other factors then made them migrate internally?

[](http://www.intriguing-history.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/liverpool-uk-emigrants-statue-Google-Search.png)

So what caused the Great Migration of Canada?

**There were a number of factors at work that just happened to peak at the same time.**

**Firstly, the American War of Independence**. Not all Americans during the War for Independence, wanted independence and many loyalists left America during and after the American Revolution. The British offered freedom to any slave who would join the British troops and 3500 of them came and settled in Nova Scotia. Native Indian loyalists who were worried about the loss of land if the British lost, moved to Canada and of course there were many Americans who did not favour independence from Britain, whose position in America became untenable.

**Britain was in the middle of an**[Industrial and Agricultural Revolution](http://www.intriguing-history.com/historic-themes/major-events/industrial-revolution/)**.**People were being squeezed out of the countryside and a rural employment and moving to the towns. It wasn’t always easy to find work though in an increasingly mechanized workplace. Conditions and pay were poor and labourers felt a sense of exploitation.

But industrial revolution was not just confined to Britain, Europe, America and Canada were also in the throws of industrial change.**Skilled workers were sought after and tempting offers were made to British workers** to take their chances at earning a good living in a new land and they took it.

In Britain, the end of **the Napoleonic Wars released an enormous number of men onto the streets looking for work,** just at the time when employment opportunities were stretched very thinly. Enclosure and mechanization of cottage industries such as weaving, meant more people were out of work and struggling to feed their families.

**The mines in the south west of England were becoming depleted** and families were moving en mass to other areas to find work. Some moved to the north of England others took their chance overseas.

In Britain the cursed[Corn Laws](http://www.intriguing-history.com/corn-laws/) forced the price of bread ever upwards and in Ireland, the horror of the potato famine gave people no choice but to leave and start over again somewhere else.

The Great Migration of Canada took place when life offered few opportunities

Even now many of us have few opportunities to improve our prospects and change our lives in radical ways. In the 19th century, many families had little to lose because they had nothing to start with. The offer of a chance of work and fresh opportunities must have seemed like a Godsend for families and individuals facing destitution and starvation. The prospect of going to a new country must also have been exciting