

The Colonial Wars

The Colonial Wars were a series of conflicts fought between France and England (and their respective Native American allies) for control of the fur trade. There were three main causes of the conflicts:

- 1). Imperial expansion into the interior of North America of the French and British empires.
- 2). In Europe, kings were engaged in dynastic struggles with one another.
- 3). There was a struggle over control the fur trade in N. America.

First Colonial War (1689-97 AD)

The first colonial war was called King Williams' War. The fundamental cause of this conflict was competition over the fur trade. Governor Frontenac of New France conducted raids of the Thirteen Colonies. The English responded by capturing Port Royal, Acadia. An English force under the command of Phips sailed on to Quebec City to lay siege but the onset of winter forced the English to retreat. The conflict was brought to an end with the signing of the *Treaty of Ryswick* (1697 AD).

Second Colonial War (1702-13)

The second war was called Queen Anne's War. This conflict was also fought for control of the fur trade. England attacked the Spanish colony of Florida while French launched raids against the Americans to the north, i.e. Deerfield Massacre. The English task force under the command of Nicholson and Church recaptured Port Royal. The English laid siege to Quebec again and fail (again) but the British took Newfoundland back. The conflict ended with the signing of the *Treaty of Utrecht* (1713 AD). The treaty leaves the door open to future war between France and Britain, e.g. The French agreed to give up Acadia according to the peace treaty. The English took that to mean all of modern day Nova Scotia/New Brunswick. The French interpreted "Acadia" to mean simply Port Royal. Peace was established formally in Europe but an "unofficial" war continued in North America between New France and the Thirteen Colonies.

Third Colonial War (1740-48)

The third war was called King George's War. The causes of this conflict were more complicated than the previous two wars, i.e. the Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI died without leaving a male heir to the throne. France, Spain, and England, etc. competed with one another to control the Holy Roman Empire (basically all of Central Europe). In North America, the French launched raids on the English settlement of Canso, Nova Scotia. The French also attempted to recapture Port Royale (renamed Annapolis Royal by the English) but failed. The English, under the command of William Pepperella, counter-attacked and captured Fort Louisbourg in 1745. The conflict ended with the signing of the *Treaty of Aix-la-Chappelle* (1748 AD).

Fourth Colonial War (1754-63)

The fourth and final war has two names. European historians called it the Seven Years' War while American historians referred to it as the "French-Indian Wars". The cause of the Seven Years' War was French and American competition in the Ohio Valley. Both sides wanted to expand and control the fur trade in this region. This competition led to a general outbreak of hostilities in North America before war broke out in Europe itself.

The French had an advantage. They beat the Americans to the North American interior and established a series of forts to keep the Americans out. The French also had the good sense not to settle the interior. This kept France's Native American allies happy. The Americans, however, wanted access to Indian lands in the West for settlement purposes. Therefore, Native Americans gladly assisted France as it resisted the American efforts at expansion. The American colony of Virginia protested the French presence in the Ohio Valley. They sent a young officer named George Washington to complain to the French and ask them to leave. The French ignored the complaints. The Americans responded by launching a series of attacks against the French forts in the interior, e.g. Fort Duquesne. The American attempts to gain access to the interior were thwarted by the French; however, in 1757 the war started to turn in favor of the English and Americans, i.e. the Americans captured Fort Louisbourg. With Louisbourg firmly in English hands the French could no longer protect their supply lines and lines of communication. The French commander, Marquis de Montcalm, decided to abandon the defense of North America's interior to defend New France itself. In 1759, an English force under the command of General James Wolfe captured Quebec City following the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. Montcalm and Wolfe were both killed during this battle. In 1760, a French relief force attempted to retake Quebec

City. The French won the Battle of Saint-Foy but the English retained control of Quebec City. The *Treaty of Paris* was signed in 1763 formally ending hostilities in North America; it also was the official end of France's presence in North America (with the exception of two islands off the southern coast of Newfoundland).

Britain suddenly had in its possession a French Catholic colony of 65,000 people. The English Government entertained the idea of attempting to either expel or assimilate the French (just like they had done at Acadia previously); however, with the threat of France removed the Americans started to become more vocal in their desire for greater independence from England. The English, therefore, looked for ways to make the French happy. Thus, England passed the *Quebec Act* (1774) in to law granting the French religious freedom, linguistic freedom, the right to their lands and the right to continue practicing their own version of civil law. By 1776 the Thirteen Colonies started calling themselves the United States of America and rebelled against Britain. Quebec remained basically neutral during the war which subsequently became known as the American Revolution (1776-1783).