

Companion to the Colonial Wars

Taken from Will Ferguson's *Canadian History for Dummies*

By this point, you may have gotten the impression that the early years of Canadian history were just one extended slugfest between Britain and France. And you'd be right. For more than 150 years the two sides fought it out, often during times of "official" peace. And if that's not confusing enough:

The North American phase of a war had a different name than it did in Europe. (For example, in the United States the Seven Years' War is known as the "French and Indian War.")

The dates were often different, as well. (For example, as noted, the Seven Years' War actually lasted nine years in North America.)

The important thing to know is this: the Seven Years' War was the final conflict between Britain and France for the control of North America. The conflict began on the frontier and then spread to Europe, where it eventually drew in a complex web of alliances (Britain, Prussia, and Hanover on one side; France, Austria, Sweden, Saxony, Russia, and Spain on the other). Winston Churchill called it the first "true" World War because it was fought on four continents and ranged as far as India. In North America, however, it was strictly a British/French grudge match.

Here is a summary of the many various conflicts that led up to the Seven Years' War and the Conquest of Canada, along with some of the highlights.

1613: Samuel Argall attacks Acadia in an attempt to drive the French from the east coast.

1629-33: The Kirke Brothers capture Quebec, taking Champlain prisoner.

1654-70: Acadia is under English control.

1686: De Troyes leads "North America's first commando raid" against HBC trading posts in James Bay. Although England and France are technically at peace in Europe, in Canada the "fur wars" will rage for years.

1688-97: War of the Grand Alliance (Europe) and King William's War (1689-97) (North America): William Phips captures Acadia and then sails on to Quebec, but Governor Frontenac stands tall and the attack fails.

Iberville captures HBC forts with wild abandon and leads a rampage across the Avalon Peninsula of Newfoundland.

1702-13: War of the Spanish Succession (Europe) and **Queen Anne's War** (North America): Acadia is captured and Port Royal is re-named Annapolis Royal.

With the Treaty of Utrecht, France cedes claims to the Hudson Bay, Acadia, and Newfoundland (other than fishing rights off the north shore). After the war, the French build fort Louisbourg.

1713-43: Thirty years of peace, considered a "Golden Age" for both Acadia and Canada.

1740-48: War of the Austrian Succession (Europe) and **King George's War** (1744-48, North America): Louisbourg is taken in 1745, but is later returned to France by treaty. The British immediately begin building Halifax.

1756-63: Seven Years' War (to the Americans it's known as the **French and Indian War**, 1754-63): the Acadians are expelled, and the British again capture Louisbourg.

Quebec is taken, and in the Treaty of Paris, France cedes all its territories in North America, except for a pair of small islands off of Newfoundland. It is the end of New France and more than 150 years of conflict between Britain and France for control of North America.