

= Siege of Port Royal (1710) =

The Siege of Port Royal (5 ? 13 October 1710) , also known as the Conquest of Acadia , was conducted by British regular and provincial forces under the command of Francis Nicholson against a French Acadian garrison and the Wabanaki Confederacy under the command of Daniel d 'Auger de Subercase , at the Acadian capital , Port Royal . The successful British siege marked the beginning of permanent British control over the peninsular portion of Acadia , which they renamed Nova Scotia , and it was the first time the British took and held a French colonial possession . After the French surrender , the British occupied the fort in the capital with all the pomp and ceremony of having captured one of the great fortresses of Europe , and renamed it Annapolis Royal .

The siege was the third British attempt during Queen Anne 's War to capture the Acadian capital , and it had profound consequences over the next 50 years . The conquest was a key element in the framing of the North American issues in French @-@ British treaty negotiations of 1711 ? 1713 . It resulted in the creation of a new colony ? Nova Scotia ? and introduced significant questions concerning the fate of both the Acadians and the Mi 'kmaq who continued to occupy Acadia .

The Conquest of Acadia was a foundational moment in the history of the Canadian state ? it was a precursor to the British conquests of Louisbourg and Quebec , and it portended the end of French power in North America more generally .

= = Background = =

Port Royal was the capital of the French colony of Acadia almost since the French first began settling the area in 1604 . It consequently became a focal point for conflict between English and French colonists in the next century . It was destroyed in 1613 by English raiders led by Samuel Argall , but eventually rebuilt . In 1690 it was captured by forces from the Province of Massachusetts Bay , although it was restored to France by the Treaty of Ryswick .

= = = Early expeditions = = =

With the outbreak of the War of the Spanish Succession in 1702 , colonists on both sides again prepared for conflict . Acadia 's governor , Jacques @-@ François de Monbeton de Brouillan , had , in anticipation of war , already begun construction of a stone and earth fort in 1701 , which was largely completed by 1704 . Following a French raid on Deerfield on the Massachusetts frontier in February 1704 , the English in Boston organized a raid against Acadia the following May . Led by Benjamin Church , they raided Grand Pré and other Acadian communities . English and French accounts differ on whether Church 's expedition mounted an attack on Port Royal . Church 's account indicates that they anchored in the harbour and considered making an attack , but ultimately decided against the idea ; French accounts claim that a minor attack was made .

When Daniel d 'Auger de Subercase became governor of Acadia in 1706 , he went on the offensive , encouraging Indian raids against English targets in New England . He also encouraged privateering from Port Royal against English colonial shipping . The privateers were highly effective ; the English fishing fleet on the Grand Banks was reduced by 80 percent between 1702 and 1707 , and some English coastal communities were raided .

English merchants in Boston had long traded with Port Royal , and some of this activity had continued illegally after the war began . However , the business was being hurt by the war , and some merchants began making vocal calls for action , and public outrage rose over the failure of the Massachusetts defenses to stop the French and Indian raids . Massachusetts Bay Governor Joseph Dudley had made repeated requests to London for support without any success , and finally decided to act independently to fend off accusations of complicity in the illegal trade . In spring of 1707 , he authorized an expedition against Port Royal . This expedition made two separate attempts to take Port Royal ; for a variety of reasons , both attempts failed despite the expedition 's significant numerical superiority .

= = = British expedition organized = = =

In the following years , France failed to send any significant support , while the British mobilized larger and better @-@ organized forces for the conflict in North America . Samuel Vetch , a Scots businessman with colonial ties , went to London in 1708 and lobbied Queen Anne for military support to conquer all of New France . She authorized a " great enterprise " to conquer all of Acadia and Canada in 1709 that was aborted when the promised military support failed to materialize . Vetch and Francis Nicholson , an Englishman who had previously served as colonial governor of Maryland and Virginia , returned to England in its aftermath , and again appealed to the queen for support . They were accompanied by four Indian chiefs , who caused a sensation in London . Nicholson and Vetch successfully argued on behalf of colonial interests for British military support against Port Royal .

Nicholson arrived in Boston on 15 July 1710 , bearing a commission from the queen as " General and Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief of all and sundry the Forces , to be employed in the expedition design 'd for the reducing of Port Royal in Nova Scotia " . In addition to 400 marines brought over from England , four New England provinces raised militia regiments : Massachusetts Bay provided 900 , Rhode Island 180 , Connecticut 300 , and New Hampshire 100 . Some of the provincial troops were drilled in the arts of siege warfare by Paul Mascarene , a Huguenot officer in the British Army . A band of Iroquois was also recruited to serve as scouts on the expedition . When the fleet sailed on 29 September , it consisted of 36 transports , two bomb galleys , and five warships . Two ships , HMS Falmouth and HMS Dragon , were sent from England , while HMS Feversham and HMS Lowestoft were sent from New York to join with HMS Chester , which was already stationed at Boston . Nicholson sent HMS Chester ahead of the fleet to blockade the Digby Gut , which controlled naval access to Port Royal .

= = = Port Royal defences = = =

Port Royal was defended by about 300 troops , many of whom were poorly trained recruits from France . Subercase had taken steps to improve the local defences since the 1707 sieges , building a new bomb @-@ proof powder magazine and barracks in 1708 , and clearing woods from the river banks to deny attackers cover . He completed the construction of another vessel to assist in naval defence , and engaged privateers with great success against New England fishing and shipping . From prisoners taken by the privateers he learned that plans were continually being made in 1708 and 1709 for new attempts on Port Royal .

= = Siege = =

As the fleet sailed north , it was met by a dispatch vessel sent by Thomas Matthews , captain of the Chester . She carried deserters from the French garrison , who reported that morale was extremely low . Nicholson sent the ship ahead with one of the transports ; when they entered Digby Gut they received some fire from parties of Mi 'kmaq on the shore . The ships returned fire with their cannons , without either side taking casualties . On 5 October , the main British fleet arrived at Goat Island , about 10 kilometres (6 @. 2 mi) below Port Royal . That afternoon , the transport Caesar ran aground while attempting to enter the Annapolis River , and was eventually swept onto the rocks . Its captain , some of its crew , and 23 soldiers died , while a company commander and some 25 others struggled ashore .

The following day , 6 October , British marines began landing both north and south of the fortress and the town . The northern force was joined by four New England regiments under Colonel Vetch , while Nicholson led the remaining New England troops as part of the southern force . The landings took place without incident , with fire from the fort answered by one of the fleet 's bomb ships at long range . Although later accounts of the siege claimed Vetch 's detachment was part of a strategic plan to surround the fort , contemporary accounts report that Vetch wanted to have a command that was somewhat independent of Nicholson . These same accounts claim Vetch never got to within

range of the fort 's guns until after the siege ended ; his attempts to erect a battery of mortars in a muddy area across Allain 's Creek from the fort was repulsed by cannon fire . The southern force met with guerrilla @-@ style resistance outside the fort , with Acadian and Indian defenders firing small arms from houses and wooded areas , in addition to taking fire from the fort . This fire resulted in three British killed , but the defenders were unable to keep the British on the south side from establishing a camp about 400 yards (370 m) from the fort .

Over the next four days the British landed their cannons and brought them up to the camp . Fire from the fort and supporters outside it persisted , and the British bomb ships wrought havoc within the fort with their fire each night . With the opening of new British batteries imminent , Subercase sent out an officer with a parley flag on 10 October . The negotiations got off to a bad start because the officer was not properly announced by a drummer , and deteriorated from there . Each side ended up holding an officer of the other , principally over matters of military etiquette , and the British continued their siege work .

By 12 October , the siege trenches had advanced , and cannons that were within 300 feet (91 m) of the fort opened fire . Nicholson sent Subercase a demand that he surrender , and negotiations began once more . By the end of the day , the parties reached an agreement on the terms of surrender , which was formally signed the next day . The garrison was allowed to leave the fort with all the honours of war , " their Arms and Baggage , Drums beating , and Colours flying . " The British were to transport the garrison to France , and there were specific protections in the capitulation to protect the local residents . These terms called for the " Inhabitants within Cannon shot of the Fort " to be allowed to remain on their properties for up to two years if they so chose , provided they were willing to take an oath to the British Crown .

= = Aftermath = =

The British took formal possession of Port Royal following a ceremony on 16 October , in which they renamed the place Annapolis Royal in honour of their queen . Samuel Vetch was inaugurated as the new governor of Nova Scotia . Massachusetts and New Hampshire proclaimed a day of public thanksgiving .

The first attempt to retake Annapolis Royal happened the next year . After a skirmish in which a party of British soldiers was ambushed , Bernard @-@ Anselme d 'Abbadie de Saint @-@ Castin lead a force of 200 Acadians and native warriors in a siege of the fort , without success .

The capture of Port Royal marked the end of French rule in peninsular Acadia , and inaugurated a struggle for control of the territory that lasted until the British conquests of the Seven Years ' War . The status of Acadia was one of the more contentious issues in the negotiations leading to the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht , and very nearly led to renewed war . French negotiators were unable to recover Acadia , although they were able to retain Isle Saint @-@ Jean (present @-@ day Prince Edward Island) and Île Royale , (present day Cape Breton Island) , which provided access to the important Atlantic fisheries .

Acadia 's people were placed in a difficult position by the conquest . The British on numerous occasions demanded they take oaths to the British Crown , but many refused to take oaths requiring them to take arms against the French , preferring to proclaim their neutrality . For this and other reasons , hundreds of Acadians left peninsular Nova Scotia over the next decade . Most of them avoided the principal French colonial settlements and went to French @-@ occupied Isle Saint @-@ Jean .

Acadia 's border was not formally demarcated by the Treaty of Utrecht , which became a cause of ongoing friction between the British and French , especially on the Isthmus of Chignecto , which both sides eventually fortified . The French interpreted the phrase ancient boundaries to imply only the peninsula of present @-@ day Nova Scotia , thereby excluding the mainland between New England and the St. Lawrence , Île St. Jean , and Cape Breton . This helped the Amerindians of Abenakis , Malecites , and MicMacs to retain their sovereignty over their old hunting grounds .

In 1746 , the grand expedition was organized in France under the command of the Duc d 'Anville . The expedition was composed of 20 warships , 21 frigates , and 32 transport ships , containing 800

cannons , 3 @, @ 000 soldiers , and 10 @, @ 000 marines . The expedition was to retake Louisbourg and then Annapolis Royal . However , after a three months crossing , and the dispersal of the fleet between Sable Island and the mainland , the expedition turned out to be a disaster for the French , and they would not try to recapture Port Royal again .

The territorial dispute would not be fully resolved until the British conquest of New France in 1760 , and the informal boundary between the British and French in the dispute (the Missaguash River) now forms the border between the Canadian provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick .

= = Historic fiction = =

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