

= Raid on Grand Pré =

The Raid on Grand Pré was the major action of a raiding expedition conducted by New England militia Colonel Benjamin Church against French Acadia in June 1704 , during Queen Anne 's War . The expedition was in retaliation for a French and Indian raid against the Massachusetts frontier community of Deerfield earlier that year .

Departing Boston on 25 May 1704 with 500 provincial militia and some Indian allies , the expedition reached the Minas Basin on 24 June , after raiding smaller settlements at Penobscot Bay and Passamaquoddy Bay . Although he lost surprise due to the famously high tides of the Bay of Fundy , Church quickly gained control of Grand @-@ Pré , and spent three days destroying the town and attempting to destroy the dikes and levees that protected its croplands . The croplands were flooded by salt water , but the local Acadians quickly repaired the dikes after the raiders left , and the land was returned to production . Church continued his raiding expedition , striking at Beaubassin and other communities before finally returning to Boston in late July .

= = Context = =

When the War of the Spanish Succession (also called Queen Anne 's War) widened to include England in 1702 , it spawned conflict between the colonies of England and France in North America . Joseph Dudley , the governor of the English Province of Massachusetts Bay (which then included present @-@ day Maine) , sought in June 1703 to ensure the neutrality of the Abenakis who occupied the frontier between Massachusetts and New France . In this he was unsuccessful , because New France 's Governor Philippe de Rigaud Vaudreuil , knowing he would have to rely on Indian support for defense against the more numerous English , had already encouraged the Indians to take up the hatchet . Following the Wabanaki Confederacy of Acadia military campaign against the New England frontier during the summer of 1703 , the English colonists embarked on largely unsuccessful retaliatory raids against Abenaki villages . This prompted the Abenakis to participate in a raid on Deerfield , Massachusetts under French leadership in February 1704 . The severity of this raid (more than 50 villagers killed and more than 100 captured) prompted calls for revenge , and the veteran Indian fighter Benjamin Church offered his services for an expedition against the French colony of Acadia (roughly present @-@ day Nova Scotia , New Brunswick , and eastern Maine) .

Acadia was at the time dominated by a series of settlements dotting the shores of the Bay of Fundy and its adjacent bays . Its principal settlement and capital , Port Royal , was the only significantly fortified community , defended by a star fort with a modest garrison . The land at the top of the bay , on the shores of the Minas and Cumberland Basins was one of the major seats of food production in the colony , and Grand Pré was one of the largest and most successful communities on the Minas Basin , with a population of about 500 in 1701 . French settlers to the area had brought with them knowledge on the constructions of dikes and levees , which they used to drain marshlands for agriculture , and to protect those lands from the inflow of the exceptionally high tides (over 6 meters , or 20 feet , in some places) for which the Bay of Fundy is well known . The community of Beaubassin was the largest of several towns situated on the Isthmus of Chignecto and elsewhere on the shores of the Cumberland Basin .

= = Start of the expedition = =

Church had previously led expeditions against Acadia during King William 's War , and Governor Dudley issued him a colonel 's commission for the effort , giving him specific orders to obtain Acadian prisoners that could be exchanged for the English prisoners taken in the Deerfield raid . The expedition was also to be one of punishment : " Use all possible methods for the burning and destroying of the enemies houses and breaking the dams of their corn grounds , and make what other spoil you can upon them " . Dudley , however , specifically denied Church permission to attack Port Royal , the Acadian capital , citing the need to get permission from London before taking such a

step .

The force Church raised consisted of about 500 volunteers from coastal areas of Massachusetts , including some Indians . He left Boston on 15 / 26 May with fourteen transports and three warships . The warships include the Royal Navy vessels HMS Adventure , HMS Jersey (42 guns) and HMS Gosport (32) , which were also accompanied by the Massachusetts Province Galley of Cyprian Southack . (Church took a former prisoner of the Maliseet , John Gyles as his translator .)

The expedition first sailed for Mount Desert Island , near the entrance to Penobscot Bay . Church sent a force to raid Pentagoet (present @-@ day Castine , Maine) , where the Frenchman Baron Saint @-@ Castin had a fortified trading post . Saint @-@ Castin was absent , but Church took prisoner his daughter and her children . He also learned that a new French settlement was being built at Passamaquoddy Bay , so the expedition next sailed for that destination . Church sent a small force ashore near present @-@ day St. Stephen , New Brunswick , where they destroyed a house and raided a nearby Maliseet encampment , killing one Indian . Church then separated the warships , sending them to blockade the Digby Gut in the hopes of capturing a French supply ship , while the bulk of the expedition sailed for Grand Pré . The three ship captains on 24 June demanded the surrender of the garrison at Port Royal , threatening a frontal assault with 1 @,@ 700 New Englanders and " Sauvages " . Governor Jacques @-@ François de Monbeton de Brouillan , despite defenses in poor conditions and a garrison of only 150 able men , saw through the bluff and refused . Historian George Rawlyk speculates that Governor Dudley may have intentionally asked them to make this bluff without Church 's involvement .

= = Grand Pré = =

The principal detailed account of these events was provided by Colonel Church in his memoirs , first published in 1716 . French military officers later summarized the damage caused by the raiders .

= = = Day 1 : Arrival = = =

On 24 June / 3 July 1704 , Church arrived at Grand Pré on the frigate Adventure . Hoping to take advantage of the element of surprise , Church secretly approached the village from behind the heavily wooded Boot Island . His men unloaded the whaleboats to go ashore late in the day and started to move quickly toward the village . Church sent Lieut . Giles ahead with a flag of truce and a written notice demanding the village 's complete surrender .

We do also declare , that we have already made some beginnings of killing and scalping some Canada men , which we have not been wont to do or allow , and are now come with a great number of English and Indians , all volunteers , with resolutions to subdue you , and make you sensible of your cruelties to us , by treating you after the same manner .

Church stipulated the Acadians and Mi 'kmaq had one hour to surrender . Although he expected to reach the village by the time the hour had past , Church 's force became delayed by stream crossings made more difficult by the receding tide : " But meeting with several creeks near twenty or thirty feet deep , which were very muddy and dirty , so that the army could not get over them , were obliged to return to their boats again . "

Because Church 's forces were stuck in the mud exposed by the retreating tide , they lost any element of surprise , and the Acadians took the opportunity to evacuate Grand Pré with some of their cattle and the " best of their goods " . Church 's forces waited in their boats for the tide to rise . Church expected the high stream banks to provide some cover , but when tide rose that night , it was so high that the boats were exposed to gunfire from the local militia , who had gathered in the woods along the banks . According to Church , the Acadians and Mi 'kmaq " fired smartly at our forces " . Church had a small cannon on his boat , which he used to fire grape shot at the attackers on the shore , who withdrew , suffering one Mi 'kmaq killed and several wounded . Church 's forces then waited out the rest of the night .

= = = Day 2 : Inhabitants driven off = = =

Having withdrawn from the village , the next morning the Acadian and Mi 'kmaq militia waited in the woods for Church and his men to arrive . At the break of day , the New Englanders again set off toward the village , under orders from Church to drive any resistance before them . The largest body of defenders fired on the raiders ' right flank from behind trees and logs , but their fire was ineffective and they were driven off . The raiders then entered the village and began plundering . Some of the men broke into the liquor stores they found and began drinking , but Colonel Church quickly put a stop to that activity . They spent the rest of the day destroying much of the village . According to one of Church 's dispatches , they destroyed 60 houses , 6 mills , and many barns , along with about 70 cattle .

At one point some of the men noticed that some of the Acadians were nearby , driving off some of their cattle . Church detached Lieutenant Barker and some men to give chase , warning them to advance with care . However , Barker was somewhat rash in pursuing the chase , and he and another man were killed before the raiders retreated back to the village .

That evening the raiders built a fortification out of logs while burning the church and the rest of the village . Church reported that " the whole town seemed to be on fire all at once . " All but one home was burned .

= = = Day 3 : Destruction of the harvest = = =

On the morning of the third day , Church gave the orders to destroy the dykes and , in turn , all of the crops . Seven dykes were broken , destroying most of the harvest and ruining over 200 hogsheads of stored wheat .

To give the impression to the Acadians and Mi 'kmaq that his forces were leaving , Church had his soldiers burn the fortifications they had built the day before . He also had them load themselves and the whale boats back onto their transport vessels . Some of the Acadians returned in the night and immediately began to mend the broken dykes . However , Church had anticipated this , and sent men back to the town to drive the Acadians off .

= = End of the expedition = =

The next day Church left Grand Pré and went on to raid Pisiguit (present day Windsor and Falmouth , Nova Scotia , not far from Grand Pré) , where he took 45 prisoners . He then sailed for Port Royal to rejoin the fleet blockading Port Royal . According to uncorroborated French reports , the blockaders had made some landings in the vicinity of Port Royal , burning a few isolated houses and taking some prisoners . Governor Brouillan organized defenses that successfully prevented further landings .

After rejoining the warships Church held a council to discuss whether or not to launch a large @-@ scale attack against Port Royal . The council decided that their force was " inferiour to the strength of the enemy " , and that they would " quit it [Port Royal] wholly and go about [their] other business " . The expedition then sailed back up the Bay of Fundy to Chignecto , where the village of Beaubassin was raided . Its inhabitants had by then been alerted to the English activities , and under the leadership of Father Claude Trouve had removed their possessions and as much livestock as possible from the village to Chedabucto (Guysborough , Nova Scotia) . Church , after some ineffectual skirmishing with villagers hiding in the woods , burned the village 's houses and barns and slaughtered 100 head of cattle , before sailing for Boston . Church reported that six of his men were killed over the course of the expedition .

= = Aftermath = =

The prisoners that Church took were brought to Boston , where they were at first given relatively free access to the town . The town selectman complained , and the Acadians were then confined to

Castle William . They were exchanged in 1705 and 1706 for prisoners taken in the Deerfield raid , although the negotiations were complicated by Dudley 's initial refusal to release the noted French privateer Pierre Maisonnat dit Baptiste , who was ultimately exchanged , along with Noel Doiron and other captives , for Deerfield 's minister John Williams .

The direct effects of the raid were fairly short @-@ lived . Because of the destruction of the crop and stored grain , the colony suffered a flour shortage that winter , although it was not severe enough to cause significant hardship . Grand Pré was rebuilt , the dykes were repaired , and there was a successful harvest in 1706 . The memory of the raid however , lasted in the population . As late as the 1740s (after Acadia had become British Nova Scotia) Grand Pré 's inhabitants worried about a return of English raiders , and were cautious in their dealing with British authorities .

Dudley 's decision to deny Church permission to attack Port Royal had political ramifications : his opponents in Massachusetts accused him of protecting Port Royal because he was benefiting from illicit trade with Acadia . These allegations continued for several years , and Dudley eventually chose to deal with them by launching the failed attacks on Port Royal in 1707 .