The French and Indian War

American Diary

Commanded by General James Wolfe, about 1,800 British troops landed “on the North Shore [of Quebec] . . . an Hour before Day Break.” To get in position to attack, the soldiers had to climb a steep cliff. Scrambling up the slope, the British soldiers ran into “a little Firing” from French guards. They continued to climb until they “gained the top of the [cliff].” By the time the sun rose over Quebec, British and French soldiers were prepared to battle on the Plains of Abraham outside the city.

—from a letter by General George Townshend

In 1759 British troops climbed steep cliffs in order to attack the French stronghold of Quebec.
The British Take Action

Main Idea: William Pitt helped turn the tide of the French and Indian War to the colonists’ favor.

History and You: Has a friend ever given you advice that you wished you had followed? Read to learn why one British general was defeated because of his failure to accept advice.

The Battle of Quebec, fought in 1759, was a deciding moment in the conflict between Britain and France. That conflict was known as the French and Indian War. This war raged in North America through the late 1750s and early 1760s. The French and Indian War was part of a larger struggle between the British and the French. That struggle involved, or included, control of world trade and power on the seas.

In 1754 the governor of Massachusetts made an announcement to the colonial assembly. He told them that the French were on the way to “making themselves masters of this Continent.”

The French were building well-armed forts throughout the Great Lakes region and the Ohio River valley. Their network of alliances, or unions, with Native Americans allowed the French to control large areas of land, stretching from the St. Lawrence River in Canada all the way south to New Orleans. The French and their Native American allies seemed to be winning control of the American frontier. The final showdown was about to begin.

During the early stages of the French and Indian War, the British colonists fought the French and the Native Americans with little help from Britain. In 1754, however, the government in London decided to intervene in the conflict. It was alarmed by the new forts the French were building and by Washington’s defeat at Fort Necessity. In the fall of 1754, Great Britain appointed General Edward Braddock commander in chief of the British forces in America. Braddock’s mission was to drive the French forces from the Ohio Valley region.

Braddock Marches to Duquesne

In June 1755, Braddock started out from Virginia with about 1,400 red-coated British soldiers and a smaller force of blue-coated colonial militia. George Washington served as an aide to Braddock during the campaign.

Primary Source: Two Heroes: Wolfe and Montcalm

Known as outstanding commanders, both the British General Wolfe and the French General Montcalm lost their lives in the Battle of Quebec. During the fighting, Wolfe was shot in the chest and was “carried off wounded to the rear of the front line.” He reportedly heard cries of “they [the French] run.” Told that the French lines had broken, Wolfe died peacefully, satisfied that the British had won. Montcalm also was wounded in battle. As he lay in bed, Montcalm asked how long he had to live. When told “about a dozen hours,” the French general said, “So much the better…. I am happy I shall not live to see the surrender of Quebec.”

—from Historical Journal of the Campaigns in North America

Critical Thinking:

Making Generalizations: Why are Wolfe and Montcalm considered heroes? What qualities do you think make a person a hero?
On the march to Fort Duquesne, Washington reported that Braddock:

**PRIMARY SOURCE**

"[halted] to level every mole hill, and to erect bridges over every brook, by which means we were four days in getting twelve miles."

—from *Life of Washington*

Washington told Braddock that his army’s style of marching was not well suited to fighting on the frontier. Lined up in columns and rows wearing bright-colored uniforms, the troops became easy targets. Braddock ignored Washington’s advice.

Native Americans and French troops ambushed the British on July 9. The British were confused and frightened. They could not even see their attackers, who were hidden in the forest and shooting at them from behind trees. Braddock was killed. Defeated, the British lost nearly 1,000 men. Washington led the survivors back to Virginia.

**Britain Declares War on France**

The fighting in America helped start a new war in Europe. This war was known as the Seven Years’ War. After arranging an alliance with Prussia, Britain declared war on France in 1756. Prussia fought France and its allies in Europe. Britain fought France in the Caribbean, India, and North America.

Early in the war, French troops captured several British forts, and their Native American allies began raiding frontier farms from New York to Pennsylvania. They killed settlers, burned farmhouses and crops, and drove many families back toward the coast. French forces from Canada captured British forts at Lake Ontario and at Lake George.

**Pitt Takes Charge**

Great Britain’s prospects, or chances for success, in America improved after William Pitt came to power. Pitt served as secretary of state and then as prime minister of Great Britain and was a great military planner.
To avoid arguments from the colonists about the cost of the war, Pitt decided that Great Britain would pay for the war supplies—no matter the cost. Pitt ran up an enormous debt. After the war the British raised the colonists’ taxes to help pay this debt. Pitt had only delayed the moment when the colonists had to pay their share of the bill.

Pitt wanted more than just a clear path to the Western territories. He also intended to conquer French Canada. He sent British troops to North America under commanders Jeffrey Amherst and James Wolfe. In 1758 a British assault recaptured the fortress at Louisbourg. That same year a group of New Englanders, led by British officers, captured Fort Frontenac at Lake Ontario. Still another British force took Fort Duquesne in Pennsylvania, which was renamed Fort Pitt.

The Fall of New France

Main Idea The fall of Quebec and Montreal ended the French and Indian War in North America.

History and You What factors lead to success or failure in battle? Read to learn how the British defeated the French in the French and Indian War.

The British had so many victories in 1759 that people said the church bells of London wore thin with joyous ringing. The greatest victory of the war, though, took place in the heart of New France.

The Battle of Quebec

Quebec was the capital of New France and was located on top of a cliff overlooking the St. Lawrence River. Quebec was thought to be impossible to attack. In September 1759, British general James Wolfe’s scouts spotted a poorly guarded path along the back of the cliff. During the night, Wolfe’s soldiers overwhelmed the French guards and scrambled up the path. The British troops then surprised and defeated the French army on a field called the Plains of Abraham.

The Treaty of Paris

The fall of Quebec and General Amherst’s capture of Montreal the following year brought an end to the fighting in North America. The Treaty of Paris of 1763 forced France to give Canada and most of its lands east of the Mississippi River to Great Britain. Great Britain also received Florida from France’s ally, Spain. Spain acquired French lands west of the Mississippi River—the Louisiana Territory—as well as the port of New Orleans.

The Treaty of Paris marked the end of France as a power in North America. The continent was now divided between Great Britain and Spain.

Reading Check Determining Cause and Effect What happened to France’s territory as a result of its defeat in the war?
Trouble on the Frontier

Main Idea Continued conflict between Native Americans and British settlers led to the Proclamation of 1763.

History and You How would you feel if a CD you ordered and paid for never arrived? Read to learn why some land investors were furious about the Proclamation of 1763.

The French loss dealt a blow to the Native Americans of the Ohio River valley. They had lost their French allies and trading partners. The British raised the prices of their goods and, unlike the French, refused to pay the Native Americans for the use of their land. Worst of all, more British settlers began moving west onto Native American lands.

Pontiac’s War

Pontiac, chief of an Ottawa village near Detroit, regarded British settlers as a threat to his people’s way of life. Just as Benjamin Franklin tried to bring the colonies together with his Albany Plan, Pontiac wanted Native American groups to unite to fight the British.

In the spring of 1763, Pontiac gathered forces and captured the British fort at Detroit and other British outposts. That summer, Native Americans killed settlers along the Pennsylvania and Virginia frontiers during Pontiac’s War. The war finally ended in August 1765 after the British defeated Pontiac’s allies. Pontiac signed a peace treaty, and the British pardoned him.

The Proclamation of 1763

To prevent more fighting, Britain called a halt to the settlers’ westward expansion. The Proclamation of 1763 set the Appalachian Mountains as the temporary western boundary for the colonies. The proclamation especially angered those who owned shares in land companies. These speculators, or investors, had already bought land west of the mountains. They were furious that Britain ignored their land claims. More conflicts would soon arise between Britain and the colonists.

Reading Check

Examining Why were some colonists angered by the Proclamation of 1763?

Vocabulary

1. Using complete sentences, define the following terms:

Main Idea, prospect, speculator

Main Ideas

2. Identifying Before Pitt took charge, what advantages did the French have in North America?

3. Summarizing What effect did the Treaty of Paris have on France?

4. Discussing Why did Pontiac want the Native Americans to join forces?

Critical Thinking

5. Identifying Problems and Solutions Use a chart like the one below to list the problems of General Braddock’s army. List actions he could have taken that might have brought about France’s defeat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Solution</th>
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6. Creative Writing Write a conversation between two French fur trappers that describes how they might have felt about the Treaty of Paris.

Answer the Essential Question

7. How did the outcome of the French and Indian War determine who controlled North America?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Idea</th>
<th>Supporting Details</th>
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| Geography affects the economic development of the American colonies. | • Regional geographic characteristics lead to:  
- subsistence farming and commerce in New England,  
- an economy based on cash crops and industry in the Middle Colonies, and  
- a farming economy dependent on slavery in the South. |
| A distinctly American culture begins to develop during the colonial period. | • Americans embrace religion, education, science and the arts, the family, and freedom of the press. |
| American ideas about government have their beginnings in both British law and colonial government. | • The colonists are inspired by the English Bill of Rights and by the English ideals of limited government and representative government. |
| Native Americans generally have better relations with French settlers than British settlers. | • The British want the support of Native Americans in fighting the French but seize Native American land without paying them for it.  
• The French receive more Native American help because they trade with them and do not try to take their land. |
| Worldwide competition between Britain and France for wealth and land leads to conflict in North America. | • Both Britain and France want control of North American resources.  
• Conflicts over fur trading in the Ohio River valley eventually lead to the French and Indian War. |
| The French and Indian War shifts the balance of power in North America. | • The Treaty of Paris divides North America between Britain and Spain.  
• Conflicts build between the settlers and the Native Americans, as well as between the colonists and Britain. |

*New England whalers*