

Colonization of north america essay sample



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Introduction

The colonization of North America went through long period of war between major European powers. Unlike other region in the world where the scramble for colonization witnessed less incidences of hostility, North America was a battle ground between major European powers including Britain and Frances. France and Britain who were traditional enemies were involved in major struggle for the control of North American leading to a seven year war in 1760s which claimed 900, 000 to 1, 400, 000 lives. In the ware Prussia, Electorate Brunswick-Lunenburg, and Great Britain waged war against Austria, France, Russian Empire, Sweden and Saxony. Later the conflict drew Portugal which fought on the side of Britain and Spain which fought on the side of the France. Many historians including the U. S president Winston Churchill have described the seven year war as the First World War. This was the first conflict in the history of the world that was fought around the world although the combatants were mainly from Europe.

At end of the war, France had ceased to be the major colonial power in America and it lost most of its possession including the rich West Indies. On the other hand Great Britain was able to conquer New France colony and emerged as the most powerful colonial power in the world. The France Navy, which had been successfully used in France conquer mission was severely cripple and it took an ambitious rebuilding program in collaboration with Spanish fleet to rebuild it once again. Great Britain Royal Navy emerged as the most dominant navy commanding the sea. Through investment of the thousands of well trained army and the use of superior military equipments, Britain was able to conquer France. The Britain Royal Navy successfully cut

off New France from reinforcement by French government and its allies which gave time for Britain to build its influence in the 13 colonies completely destroying the presence of France in these colonies. Therefore we can say that the supremacy of Britain Naval force and the escalation of war in North America completed sealed the fate of New France by the end of the seven year war.

The seven year war

[1]Britain and France have been global enemies long before the seven year war broke out. The two countries have fought in other wars and the seven year war has been named the fourth greatest war between the two countries. The war is also described as the last major conflict between Great Britain and France after the French naval forces were completely destroyed.

Prior to the war, France had explored and expanded its influence on a large part of the interior of North America. [2]France controlled the land between St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes to the north of Mississippi River and to the south they stretched to Orleans. Due to the expansiveness of the region, France had established a number of forts and trading posts, which were located in four prime cities including Montreal, Quebec, Detroit, and New Orleans. One of the important aims of establishment of these forts and post was to restrict English settlement in the region.

[3]The conflict between the two colonies had been boiling slowly over the years. While most of its colonies were located in the North American coast, including Maine and Georgia, Britain still claimed some of the land as far as Mississippi. Between 1689 and 1748, the two countries had fought series of

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wars which were aimed at controlling the interior of the North American region.

[4]Historian accounts that the conflict between the two nations did not arise from settlement pressure but it was rather a reflection of their state of affairs. The interest in the settlement of these unutilized land remained speculative since the whole of North America had not been occupied and there no enough settlers to occupy the entire region. However, it is recounted that by 1750s Britain colonies were feeling increased population pressure as more settlers settled in the region and this could have been one of the factors that sparked off the war.

In another dimension, it is recounted that economic interest between the two countries was generating more tension in the region. For example fur trade and fishing rights in the Newfoundland on the Grand Banks are some of the economical factors that led to the conflict.

[5]Therefore the two nations had for a long time been preparing for the eventual breakdown of the war. As we have recounted the seven year war was as a part of the global war that had been fought between France and Britain. The country countries did not only fight in North America but they also fought in another regions including India, Europe, and in other areas. Given that fact that there were many threats of new war emerging, each country was setting its different degree of important and every country was setting its own priorities.

For England, it was very easy to set its priorities. Its supreme Royal Navy was one of the greatest advantages that England had over France. [6]This

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means that England did not have to field a large part of its land army along its shores to defend its colonies. Since its interest was in the sea trade and amassment of colonies, commonsense had it that the country would prioritize defense of its colonies through the sea. Its prime priority was therefore to defend its interest through the sea.

However, England was faced by one major problem of protecting the Kingdom of Hanover which was in Union with England. In order to overcome this problem, Britain formed an alliance with Frederick who was commanding Prussia. Apparently Fredrick the Great was the greatest general of the time. To diversify her tactical means, Britain also financed the German army in order to fight in Hanover and they also sent their own troops to fight along German army.

On the other hand, France faced a hard time in setting its priorities. Unlike Britain, France was generally divided. [7]There were those who favored concentrating on naval and colonial warfare in order to define its interest and on the other hand there were those who are favoring sparking a war in Europe feeling that naval war was just secondary to seizing Hanover. For several times, France had tried to exert its continental power through conquering Europe. For example some Frenchmen in the 17th Century like Jean Baptiste Colbert who was an advisor to Louis XIV who called for the building of a colonial empire that would extend power and wealth of France. However, these men were just minority

However, the country was faced with the new challenge in Hanover. They were faced in a tussle with dedicated and powerful enemy, Britain, which

had a powerful Royal Navy. Unlike France, Britain was not concentration on building its power in Europe. Britain had set its eyes in Hanover but did not commit its large army in Hanover. This was a tactical move that France did not understand. Britain was drawing France to the conflict in the region without committing its forces in order to keep France occupied in Hanover so that Britain could expand in other region.

Although there are many factors which eventually led to the defeat of France, one of the greatest factor was the France did not set any priority at all. France was torn between preoccupying its efforts in Europe and protecting its interest in its colonies. Therefore we can say that France did not set any priority at all. By setting multiple aims, France risked being defeated in the war.

[8]At the end, France failed to raise the tactical efforts that had been set by Britain in order to defend Hanover. Britain had raised a tactical strategy that had ensured that it did not mobilize a large segment of its force initially in the course of the war. France failed to secure enough force that could subdue Hanover, reinforce its colonies, protect its interest, and invade England. We can therefore say that lack of unity of purpose in its strategy had drastic effect on ability of France to defend the New France.

Despite lack of focused strategy of war in Paris, French forces in the region were able to hold the enemy forces and secured a number of victories. Before the French forces were cut off supplies by the Royal Navy, French forces had held in the course of the war and struggled with enemy forces. In the first years of the war, France was reinforced by the Native allies who

compensated for the general lack of numbers in the French army. The Native allies had superior knowledge of the terrain. They also understood frontier tactics compared to the British forces and combined forces of American forces. In the early years of the war, French forces combined with the American forces defeated British and American force in a number of battles and capture several frontier posts. The French forces utilized the frontier posts and interior lines of communication and skills of French commander Louis-Joseph de Montcalm.

Montcalm was one of the most skilled French soldiers who had a vast wealth of military experience. Montcalm made several improvements at Fort Ticonderoga and at the same time destroyed and captured Fort Oswego in 1756. Montcalm destroyed the fort and also defeated Fort William Henry in 1757 and also Fort Carillon although his force was outnumbered five to one. [9] However he was criticized after his native allies attacked a defenseless British force which had been allowed to withdraw from Fort William Henry which had already been captured by French forces. Later Montcalm witnessed the turning tides as British later regained control of the region with reinforcement as they captured Louisburg and later advanced deep to Ohio Valley. Montcalm's career ended when he was fatally wounded in the Battle of the Plains.

Towards 1760, Britain's fortunes were increasing. By 1758, Britain had amassed more than 42,000 troops who marched westward in North America. One quarter of the Royal Navy which operated mainly in the coastal area were deployed. The navy force effectively cut off the New France from

any further reinforcement from the sea. This was a major reinforcement for the British forces.

Despite the incompetence of General James Abercrombie in 1758s battle of Carillon, The British forces in alliance with American force had developed new tactics and with time they adopted to the surroundings. [10]Earlier, the French forces in alliance with the Natives had gained advantage of the terrain but now Britain and American forces were gaining new knowledge of the terrain and therefore they had adapted well to face the French and Native alliances.

Apart from a combination of the above mentioned factors, there were two events which acted in favor of the Royal Navy. The first event was the capture of the Fort Frontenac which had been a major supply center for the French Forts in the Ohio regions. Capturing of this Fort meant that all forms of communication between Quebec and Western Fort were completely eliminated.

One of the most crucial battles that decided the fate the seven year war was the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. The British forces concentrated on the Plains of Abraham while Montcalm gave an order to half of his force to meet the British forces. In the battle the English had a slight numerical advantage although each side advanced towards the other with equal forces. As the Montcalm forces advanced and fired toward the British forces sporadically, British forces meanwhile withheld their fire after an order from their Commander Wolfe until they came within a 40 yard distance to the French forces. French forces began delivering their folly at 130 yards distance

without much damage to the British forces. On the other hand at a 40 yard distance, the British forces delivered their volley which completely destroyed the French forces. [11]After winning the battle, the remaining French forces were forced to withdraw to Quebec City.

Although this tactical battle is considered to have been the end of the seven year war, there were sporadic hostilities which extended for more than one year. After the British forces had established their command in Quebec, the new British commander Major General George Murray was attacked by 8,500 French forces and was defeated at the Sainte-Foy Battle. However, the British forces were able to retreat and they withheld the French forces until there was reinforcement from the Royal Navy which scuttled the French force to Montreal. Once again, we find that the superior Royal Navy came in hand to rescue British forces from the hand of defeat.

However the end of the war was very near and in the summer of 1760, three British armies surrounded the Montreal Island and within two days, The French garrison had to surrender to General Amherst. This marked the fall of New France and consequently the end of the North America war.

In order to understand the reason why British won the war, we have to look at the specific factors that worked in favor of the Britain and how France failed to organize its forces in order to rise to the level of organized and disciplined British forces. [12]In the years that followed, France also lost many of its forts, cities, and at the end New France colony. However understanding why France lost in these battles is important to come up with the main reasons why British defeated France in the war.

There are two key factors which we had mentioned earlier that helped British to defeat France in the war. The first factor was the superiority of the Royal Navy which dominated the seas. Unlike the modern wars which are determined by the tactical technology applied, the war in the American colonies depended on the number of men and supplies which were shipped from the mother countries. This means that the sea was an important asset same as a rifle was important in the war. The domination of the sea by one side meant that they were in a better position to reinforce its armies while at the same time cut off supplies to their enemies. For British, this strategy worked tactically through capturing French trade routes, building more ships and blocking French fleet in their ports.

Apart from sea domination, the Royal navy also played a very crucial role in the outcome of the war. The royal navy allowed for reinforcement of the 13 colonies and at the same time denied any form of reinforce for the French forces. In many instances, the Royal Navy reinforced the British troops when they were under siege. For example, it reinforced the British forces when they were under siege in Louisburg when it landed more troops and provided fire support. The Royal Navy also ferried more troops to St. Lawrence and also assisted Wolfe when his troops were held under siege in Quebec City. [13]The Royal Navy can therefore be said to have secured the fate of New France owing to the number of intervention it made when New France seemed to gain advantage over the British forces. The Royal Navy therefore played an important decisive role in the course of the seven year war. Its intervention also shaped the future of North America.

[14]Right from the beginning, British had been tactical in the course of the war. This means that unlike France which was torn between advancing its European interest and defending its acquired New France territory, British was well prepared to the war in North America. It had prepared its Royal Navy as the main tool that would lead the country in the war. The second reason why British defeated France was that it had invested enough men and equipment which helped it to further its interest of annexing New France in North America. Although this could not have been accomplished without the vital assistance of the Royal Navy, it was clearly evident that the input of its men and equipment tipped the balance in the course of the war.

[15]Although French had a very small population in North America that would have helped the country to exert influence in the entire thirteen colonies, France has been able to hold in the previous wars and therefore had maintained a significant presence in North America. Therefore Britain had prioritized the North American war this time round learning from what France had done in the previous three wars. By 1758, British had sent more than 42, 000 troops and about a quarter of its Royal Navy to North America in preparation for the war. In this situation, the French forces were outnumbered and the rest of the battles they fought can be declared as merely defensive.

[16]With the numerical advantage, the British forces were able to launch consecutive attacks with unraveling offensive in New France. British first conquered Fort Frontenac and cut off communication lines between Quebec and the forts in western part of New France. Next the British conquered Louisburg and thereby opened St. Lawrence for further invasion. The last

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blow came with conquering of Quebec which led to seizure of Quebec. To establish full control of the region British forces then marched to Montreal in 1760s forcing the French forced to surrender.

In the previous wars, Britain had been greatly disadvantaged and lost several wars to France. However, British had from the start laid a tactical plan and prioritized the North American war. [17]British also used well its naval power and England committed large number of forces to North America. These are the two key factors that eventually led to the fall of France. On the other hand, France was no quite decided on which area to prioritize. Right from the start, France did not know which area was more critical for it to further its interest. [18]It had interest in building large empire in Europe which would have made it emerge as the most powerful nation on earth. At the same time, it understood the threats that were posed by the North America war. However it seems like France considered the New France as an appendage to France and therefore not quite important in light of the other interest that the country had in mind. While British sent a large continent of its army in North America, France did not send enough reinforcement and supplies to its forces which were greatly outnumbered. Although France tried to increase its supply in North America in wake of possible defeat, this was further constrained by capturing of its important forts which cut off supplies and communication lines.

Conclusion

British and France had been two European powers that had tried to exert their authority in North America for a long time. Before the outbreak of the

seven year war, the two countries had in several occasions fought for supremacy on the region. France had annexed a large part of North America while British were confined to the coastal areas. In the seven year war, British had started expanding Westward claiming areas around Mississippi. Right from the start of the war, British was well prepared for the war through equipping its Royal Navy and preparing its men for the war. Britain had prioritized the North American war and it was assured of a win. On the other hand, France was not well prepared for the war. It was occupied with advancing its interest in Europe and in North American. Although France defeated British in the initial phases of the war, British and American force got reinforcement from the Royal Navy. The presence of the Royal Navy, more men and superior equipment were the main reason why British defeated France in the war.

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