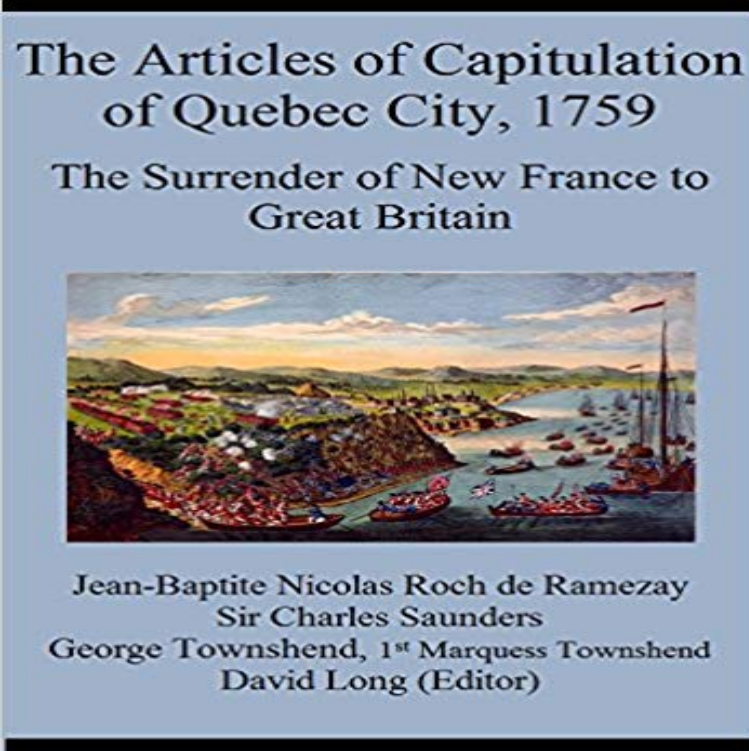


The Articles of Capitulation of Quebec City, 1759: The Surrender of New France to Great Britain



The Articles of Capitulation of Quebec City is a historical document that lists the terms of surrender. This document was agreed to, and signed, by the French commander of Quebec City, Jean-Baptiste Nicolas Roch de Ramezay (1708-77), and the British commanders Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Saunders (c.1715-75), and Brigadier-General George Townshend, 1st Marquess Townsend (1724-1807). The articles of capitulation were agreed upon, and signed, after the decisive Battle of the Plains of Abraham, which ended in British victory. That battle brought an end to the 3-month long Siege of Quebec, and effectively marked the end of French colonial rule in Canada. During the battle the British commander, James Wolfe (1729-59), was killed. The French commander, Louis-Joseph de Montcalm (1712-59), died the following day from wounds sustained in the battle. In the days that followed the battle, the French and British officers negotiated the surrender of Quebec City to the British, on behalf of the French King Louis XV and the British King George II. The fall of Quebec City to the British as one of the defining moments in Quebec, Canadian, and North American history. The surrender of Quebec, in September 1759, took place during the French and Indian War- the North American theatre of the Seven Years War. It effectively marked the end of the French colony of New France, and of Frances colonial presence in Canada and North America. Quebecs other major city, Montreal, was not captured by the British until 1760, and France maintained nominal control of the vast Mississippi Basin until it sold Louisiana Territory to the United States in 1803. But the heavily fortified city of Quebec was the main French base in North America. Once it was captured by the British, the French colonial presence in Canada, and, eventually, in North America, was doomed. The capture of Quebec City

was the culmination of about 150 years of intermittent fighting between France and Britain for control of eastern North America. The British and French both began to colonize the North American mainland around the same time- the French settling in Canadas St. Lawrence River Valley, and the British in Virginia and along the eastern seaboard of the United States. After the fall of Quebec City, France formally ceded Canada to Britain in the Treaty of Paris (1763). The British conquest of Quebec City, and, by extension, Canada, set the stage for the future development of Canada, the American Revolution, and the development of Quebecois, Francophone Canadian, and Canadian national identities. The American Revolution was partly inspired by the fact that Anglo-American colonists no longer felt the need for British protection after the expulsion of the French from North America. By cutting ties between France and the French-speaking settlers in Canada, the British conquest helped to foster the development of a distinct cultural identity among the Francophone Canadians of Quebec. Some of the terms of capitulation of Quebec City in 1759 foreshadowed the subsequent British colonial rule of the province of Quebec (Lower Canada). For example, the French requested that the British allow the French to continue to practice their Roman Catholic faith. This request was granted by the British commanders. During the British colonial era, British administrators decided to allow the French to maintain their religion, language, and laws. These policies helped to ensure that most of the French-speaking population of Canada remained, if not enthusiastically loyal, at least ambivalent, to their new British rulers.

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