Northern Armageddon: The Battle of the Plains of Abraham and the Making of the American Revolution

D. Peter MacLeod
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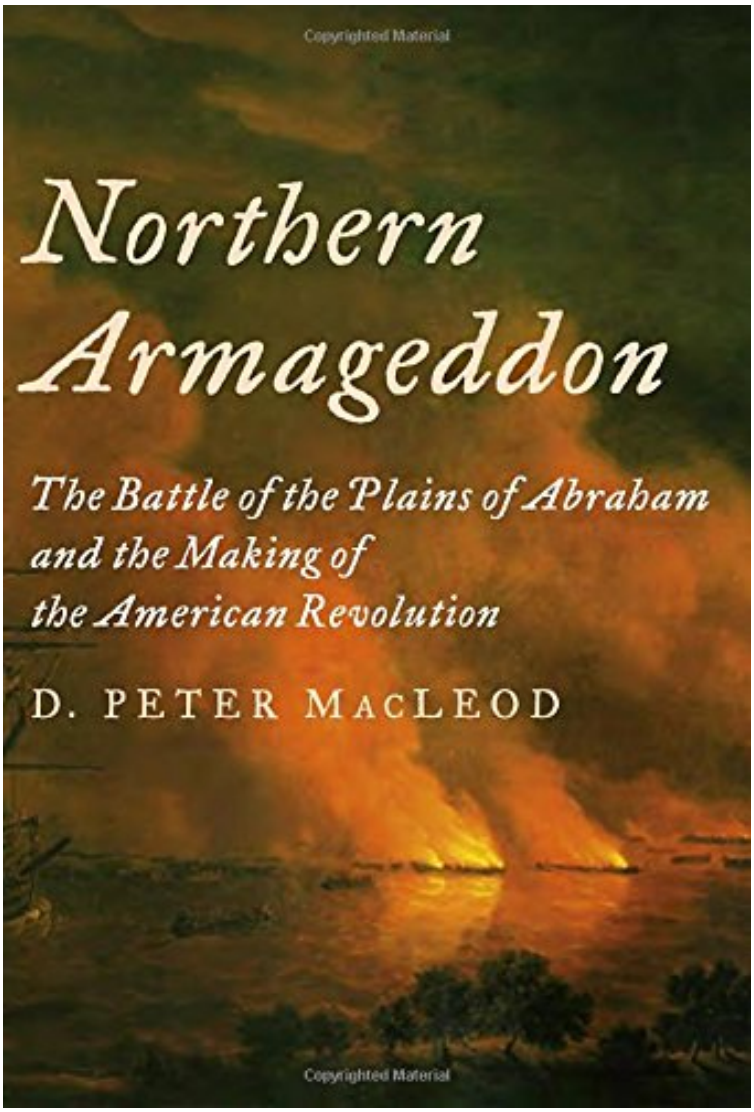

#346268 in Books MacLeod D Peter 2016-03-22 2016-03-22Format: Deckle EdgeOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.50 x 1.50 x 6.70l, 1.68 #File Name: 0307269892448 pagesNorthern Armageddon The Battle of the Plains of Abraham and the Making of the American Revolution | File size: 70.Mb

D. Peter MacLeod : Northern Armageddon: The Battle of the Plains of Abraham and the Making of the American Revolution before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Northern Armageddon: The Battle of the Plains of Abraham and the Making of the American Revolution:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Very good analysis of the battle for QuebecBy Steven PetersonThis is a welcome book on the battle for Quebec, which helped determine the outcome of the so-called French and Indian War. The focus in this book is that climactic battle, although it also provides a context for the struggle. The British had had difficulties fighting the French mixed forces (regular army, militia, and Native Americans) and the French were apparently well situated in their defense of Quebec.One point made by the author is that Quebec's defense was enhanced immensely by a geological formation going back 500,000 years. The Quebec Promontory was a raised formation six miles long and a half mile wide. Attackers had to scale a steep slop up from the river and elsewhere along the promontory. Quebec and French forces held that piece of ground.The leader of the French forces at Quebec was General Montcalm, who had established a pretty good record in the war. On the English side? General Wolfe. The English, with their fleet, had control of the river. The French forces--and citizens of Quebec--struggled with acquiring enough food and other needed goods. There is a nice discussion of how the French strove to create logistics to provide food and other needed goods.Wolfe and the English were quite frustrated in trying to take Quebec. Oddly enough, after his successes, Montcalm was "down" over his view of the French prospects. The story continues. . . . Observing the Promontory along the St. Lawrence River, he came to see that an attack might be made. And, because they saw the heights as unscalable, the French had only small forces guarding the heights. As many know, Wolfe was able to bring his troops up the steep grade to the Plains of Abraham. When the French became aware of this, they moved to meet the British.. Montcalm seemed to lose control of events.The battle was difficult. In the aftermath, with the French withdrawing and both commanding generals dead, the British moved to put Quebec under siege. Pretty much all that was left to defend to city were militia. With food supplies dwindling and British cannonades, morale dropped. The story goes on to consider the second battle of the Plains of Abraham (I had not realized that there was a second battle!). Although the French won the contest, it was too late. Quebec fell, the French retreated, and the inevitable British victory ensued.This book does a fine job outlining the process in detail, providing much information. The aftermath, too, is discussed. This book is worthy of being added to one's library.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Facinating HistoryBy CustomerThis is excellent and detailed coverage of the pivotal battle in the French Indian War portion of the world-wide Seven Years War - interesting and little known details of the various efforts leading up the fall of Quebec including the very tenuous 'hold' the British actually had over Quebec during the winter months until relief arrived in the spring - British ships and not French that arrived first; many facts regarding the naval aspects of this campaign including how 18th century landings were carried out; numerous details about the civilians (on both sides) and how the Canadians survived the British bombardments... a fascinating part of our American founding (what if the British kept the Caribbean islands and left Canada to the French in The Treaty of Paris - would the colonists have been so ready to over-throw the British who were 'protecting' them from the French and Indians to west?) presented in a wonderfully well written and engrossing manner! An excellent book - very highly recommended!1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good HistoryBy Allie RamseyFor history lovers the book was well worth reading. It was thoroughly researched and provided a good picture of all out warfare against everyone, including civilians. Wolfe is depicted as a merciless warrior who used any means to conquer Montreal. The hero of the Battle of Culloden was a careful leader and quick to seize opportunities, but completely focused on victory to the exclusion of everything else.

A huge, ambitious re-creation of the eighteenth-century Battle of the Plains of Abraham, the pivotal battle in the Seven Years War (17541763) to win control of the trans-Appalachian region of North America, a battle consisting of the British and American colonists on one side and the French and the Iroquois Confederacy on the other, and leading directly to the colonial War of Independence and the creation of Canada. It took five years of warfare fought on three continentsEurope, Asia, and North Americato bring the forces arrayed against one anotherBritain, Prussia, and Hanover against France, Austria, Sweden, Saxony, Russia, and Spain (Churchill called it the first world war)to the plateau outside Quebec City, on September 13, 1759, on fields owned a century before by a fisherman named Abraham Martin . . . It was the final battle of a three-month siege by the British Army and Navy of Quebec, the walled city that controlled access to the St. Lawrence River and the continents entire network of waterways; a battle with the British utilizing 15,000 soldiers, employing 186 ships, with hundreds of colonists aboard British warships and transports from Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, with France sending in a mere 400 reinforcements in addition to its 3,500 soldiers. The battle on the Plains of Abraham lasted twenty minutes, and at its finish the course of a continent was changed forever . . . New military tactics were used for the first time against standard European formations . . . Generals Wolfe and Montcalm each died of gunshot wounds . . . France surrendered Quebec to the British, setting the course for the future of Canada, paving the way for the signing of the Treaty of Paris that gave the British control of North America east of the Mississippi, and forcing France to relinquish its claims on New Orleans and to give the lands west of the Mississippi to Spain for surrendering Florida to the British. After the decisive battle, Britains maritime and colonial supremacy was assured, its hold on the thirteen American colonies tightened. The American participation in ousting the French as a North American power spurred the confidence of the people of New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts, who began to agitate for independence from Great Britain. Sixteen years later,

France, still bitter over the loss of most of its colonial empire, intervened on behalf of the patriots in the American Revolutionary War (17751783). In Northern Armageddon, Peter MacLeod, using original researchdiaries, journals, letters, and firsthand accountsand bringing to bear all of his extensive knowledge and grasp of warfare and colonial North American history, tells the epic story on a human scale. He writes of the British at Quebec through the eyes of a masters mate on one of the ships embroiled in the battle. And from the French perspective, as the British bombarded Quebec, of four residents of the citya priest, a clerk, a nun, and a notarycaught in the crossfire. MacLeod gives us as well the large-scale ramifications of this clash of armies, not only on the shape of North America, but on the history of Europe itself.A stunning work of military history.

Excitement about Peter MacLeods NORTHERN ARMAGEDDON Significantly advances our understanding of the naval role in the battle of the Plains of Abraham and excels all previous studies . . . A vibrant portrait . . . A visceral narrative . . . Persuasive. David Preston, The Wall Street Journal Even-handed . . . Vivid . . . MacLeod has crafted a serious work of history that reads like an adventure novel. He skillfully illuminates the many ways Americans fit into the big picture of the continents conflicts, in which two big nations emerged out of a patchwork of contending powers. Clarke Crutchfield, Richmond Times-Dispatch Writing with a keen eye for the dramatic, MacLeod tells this story in a big way, giving equal parts to each side . . . The events of the battle are finely rendered, and MacLeod makes a strong case for their importance as a precursor to the American Revolution. Publishers Weekly MacLeod explores the extent of Quebecs insurmountable natural defenses and Wolfes inability to overcome them . . . The authors strong knowledge of every aspect of the fight prevails to produce an intricate, enlightening account . . . Students of American history will appreciate the detail and the thoroughness of this account of what Churchill called the first world war. Kirkus Definitive . . . superb in its combination of individual perspective and strategic narrative. Americans (who composed roughly a third of the conquering army) did not realize at the time that as Montcalms men surrendered they had taken the first steps on their own countrys path to independence. This book tells us brilliantly both how the battle was fought, and what it meant. Eliot A. Cohen, author of Conquered into Liberty: Two Centuries of Battles Along the Great Warpath that Made the American Way of War Masterful . . . his descriptions are chilling. Toronto Globe and MailAbout the AuthorD. Peter MacLeodis Director of Research at the Canadian War Museum. He is the author of The Canadian Iroquois and the Seven Years War. He lives in Ottawa, Ontario.Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.Chapter 1500,000 Years of HistoryHumans Make War; Geography Shapes the BattlefieldThe history of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham began with a gentle rain of sediment floating down to the floor of the protoAtlantic Ocean during the late Precambrian era. Time passed; minute grains of sand and clay settled, accumulated, and hardened into gigantic blocks of sedimentary rock. When tectonic shifts slammed them together, closing the proto-Atlantic and creating the Appalachian Mountains, some of these blocks shifted westward. One massive chunk of folded and faulted limestone, sandstone, and shale, six miles long, half a mile wide, and known to geologists as the Quebec Promontory, came to rest against the future Canadian Shield.Half a billion years later, the fate of Canada, the future United States, and the French and British Empires in North America turned on possession of this block of sedimentary rock.By September 1759, the Seven Years War, the titanic struggle for empire between France and Britain that Winston Churchill called the first world war, had been under way for just over five years. During those five years, British goals in North America had changed from the occupation of the Ohio valley to the conquest of Canada.Yet although the British enjoyed comfortable margins of naval and military superiority in the region, they had spent most of those years reeling from defeat after defeat at the hands of Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, governor-general of New France and commander in chief of the French armed forces in North America. Year after year, the British in North America contemplated or attempted the conquest of part or all of New France. Vaudreuil responded by sending Louis-Joseph de Montcalm, his senior field commander, to capture British outposts and smash British offensives before they could threaten Canada.Sheer force of numbers, however, allowed the British to bounce back from defeat, rebuild their forts and armies, and take to the field once more. As British strength increased, French objectives shifted from blocking British expansion in the Ohio valley to fighting for survival amid the farms and cities of New France.The crucial campaign of the war began when a British fleet and army commanded by Vice Admiral Charles Saunders and Major General James Wolfe reached Quebec in 1759. Whoever controlled Quebec controlled Canada. If Quebec fell, Canada would fall with it.As Canadas Atlantic port, Quebec was the sole point of contact between Canada and France. A minor colony with a population of just seventy thousand, Canada lacked the human and material resources to fight a major war on its own. In the words of an anonymous British strategist, Receiving supplies of men, stores, and provisions by sea ... [is] absolutely necessary for supporting maintaining that body of troops which they [the French] employ, Canadian or European, that number of posts which they possess in America.Breaking this link would suffocate the French Empire in North America. In theory, the supply lines between France and New France could also be severed by blockade. But despite manifest French naval weakness, the British never managed to isolate Canada. The doing of this by cruising [patrolling] merely, confessed the anonymous strategist, has already been tried in a certain degree ineffectually, is perhaps to an absolute degree impossible ... as the ... St. Lawrence River must still in a certain degree be open against the most vigilant cruise. Even in 1759, when a

British squadron sailed from Halifax to blockade Quebec, more than twenty French supply ships arrived safely by slipping through the same ice fields that prevented the Royal Navy from entering the Gulf of St. Lawrence before it was too late.The only sure way to isolate Canada from France was to take Quebec. By going to Quebec, wrote the British commander in chief in North America in January 1757, success makes us master of every thing.Success, however, proved elusive.Perched atop the eastern tip of the Quebec Promontory, Canadas capital towered from sixty-five to one hundred yards above the St. Lawrence River. Attacking Quebec from the river would leave an assault force stranded in Lower Town, clinging to the base of the cliff, trapped and vulnerable. Attacking from the landward side meant finding a way up the promontory. In 1759, the French reinforced these natural defenses by constructing a line of fortifications on the high ground along the Beauport shore between Quebec and the Montmorency River and a chain of outposts extending from Quebec to Cap-Rouge guarding ravines and roadways leading up the cliffs.When Saunders and Wolfe came to Quebec, they slammed into the Quebec Promontory and the Beauport entrenchments. For three months, Saunderss navy and Wolfes army tried and failed to take Quebec. Throughout that time, Vaudreuil and Montcalm remained safely inside a strong defensive perimeter, high above the St. Lawrence, protected by 264 cannon and mortars on the city walls and 39 at Beauport.While Saunderss ships whisked troops up and down the St. Lawrence River, Wolfes soldiers accomplished nothing beyond losing the Battle of Montmorency on July 31 and adding a new level of brutality to the Seven Years War as they shelled Quebec into ruins and burned more than a thousand farms in hope of forcing the French to come out and fight. By September, Saunders and Wolfe were teetering on the verge of a humiliating defeat.Bad news for Saunders and Wolfe. Bad news for the British Empire. But very good news for Ashley Bowen of Marblehead, Massachusetts. Chapter 2Sailing to ArmageddonAshley BowenFor the people of Canada, the British attack on Quebec was an unfolding tragedy. For Ashley Bowen, it represented an opportunity to advance his nautical career by acquiring experience as a ships officer. One among thousands of British and American mariners on the scene, Bowen is remembered for his autobiography, the first ever written by an American sailor.Even before he arrived in Canada, Ashley Bowen had led an active life. Born in Marblehead, Massachusetts, fifteen miles northeast of Boston, in January 1728, Bowen began his seafaring career at age eleven. Signing aboard as a ships boy in 1739, he sailed in the snow (a small, two-masted sailing vessel) Diligence, carrying a cargo of tar from Cape Fear, North Carolina, to Bristol, England.Four months after his return home, disaster struck. His mother died, an event he described as the greatest part of my ruining as may be seen the following year, and his father promptly remarried a fine rich widow. Unwanted at home (To obtain his wish [of marriage to the widow, his father] would separate his own family), Bowen returned to sea apprenticed for seven years to a merchant captain. A training program like this was meant to qualify a teenager to become a ships officer and perhaps one day a captain. Instead, the apprenticeship turned into an ugly round of beatings and abuse. In 1744, on a voyage to Gibraltar, wrote Bowen,the master would take his cat ... and give me a dozen strokes on my back ... then take his quadrant and look for the sun; then took a tiff of toddy, and so regularly he would do that office, one after another, till the Mate interfered for me and said if I should die on the passage out he would be a witness against him.Denied instruction in commerce and navigation, Bowen became a competent seaman but not a potential officer. In 1745, he deserted in the West Indies and signed aboard a British privateer. This marked the beginning of a new phase of a career that would take him all around the North Atlantic world and give him enough knowledge and experience to serve occasionally as a ships officer but mostly as a sailor.Finally, on March 29, 1759, opportunity knocked. While Bowen was ashore at Marblehead, Robert Hooper, a leading citizen, approached him with an invitation to join the British attack on Quebec, not as a sailor, but as a midshipmanan apprentice officer in the Royal Navy. Bowen accepted the next day. He thereby became one of the five thousand men [from Massachusetts] which were to be raised to go by sea on board His Majestys ships at Halifax under Rear Admiral Durell.The Quebec ExpeditionThe expedition that Bowen had agreed to join was a massive land and sea offensive, aimed at nothing less than the total elimination of French power in northeastern North America. In the western interior, British and American soldiers lunged at Fort Duquesne in the Ohio valley and Fort Niagara on Lake Ontario. In the east, two more armies headed for Quebec. One would advance down Lake Champlain, capture Montreal, then travel down the St. Lawrence to Quebec. The other would sail straight up the St. Lawrence.A British-American as well as a Royal NavyBritish Army venture, the Quebec expedition involved people and ships from all across Britains transatlantic empire. On land, about one-third of Wolfes nine thousand soldiers had been recruited in the American colonies. This surprisingly high percentage reflects both the years that many British units had spent in the colonies during the war and the rising population of British America.The naval component of the British amphibious force included a quarter of the Royal Navyforty-nine warships, crewed by 13,500 sailors and 2,100 marines. One hundred and nineteen transports crewed by a further 4,500 sailors carried troops and supplies. Vice Admiral Saunders described seventy-four of these transports as American, forty-five as English.With the fleet in great want of seamen, Saunders asked for colonial sailors. In response to this request, an unknown but significant number of Americans volunteered to serve with the Royal Navy during the siege of Quebec. Like American provincial troops, they took part in the campaign, then demobilized and returned to their homes in the fall. Two hundred and forty sailors from Boston caught up with the fleet in Halifax before the expedition began. More arrived from New England over the summer. Senior naval officers treated the Americans as a distinct group known as New England volunteers, a group

that included Ashley Bowen.Prior to the opening of the campaign, Saunders had written to the governors of New York and Massachusetts. After informing them that the fleet and part of the army in North America will proceed early up the River St. Lawrence to Quebec, and consequently stand in need of frequent supplies of all kinds of refreshments, he asked that they encourage American merchants to send shipments of provisions to the British forces at Quebec. The merchant community seized this opportunity. Throughout the siege, American shipping sailed up the St. Lawrence carrying supplies to the British forces at Quebec.At least three African American teamsters, Jack, Leto, and Jeremy, accompanied the expedition. They formed part of a body of civilian contractors who cared for eighty oxen and forty-two draft horses that were embarked with Wolfes army to haul supplies and artillery. A floating herd of 591 cattle from Boston came along to provide fresh meat for the army and the fleet.Bowen JoinsHMS PembrokeNow a midshipman, Bowen recruited thirty-two sailors and departed with them aboard the schooner Apollo on April 12. Bowen and his followers were not the only American passengers aboard Apollo who were heading for Quebec. We have, he wrote, Captain [Joseph] Goreham with a company of Rangers on board.On April 16, the Apollo entered Halifax harbor. On the seventeenth, Bowen joined HMS Pembroke, along with fifteen other New Englanders and fifty-eight soldiers of the Royal American Regiment.When Bowen came aboard, John Simcoe, captain of HMS Pembroke, took some time to get to know his new American midshipman. Bowen recorded their conversation:He said to me, What country are you of?I said I was born in Marblehead.Did you serve your time to the sea?I said, Yes, Sir.What trade did you use?I said, up the Mediterranean.What part?I said, From Gibraltar to Port Mahon and to Cagliari on the Island Sardinia for salt and back to Mahon and home to Boston again.A day later, Bowen described his accommodations:The last night I lodged on board His Majestys Ship Pembroke. This morning at eight I turned out and got breakfast. Note: I mess with Mr. Buckels and Mr. Crisp [two other midshipmen]. I mess on the starboard side just abaft the pump well in the orlop [the lowest deck of the ship], and lodge in the best bower tier [where anchor cables were stored] on the same side.Aboard HMS Pembroke, Bowen came under the command of Rear Admiral Philip Durell.Educated by his aunt, Durell went to sea for the first time aboard his uncles ship at the age of fourteen in 1721, then spent the next five years learning his trade while serving off the Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and New England coasts. Promoted to lieutenant in 1731 and captain in 1743, he took part in the first siege of Louisbourg in 1745. In the course of that siege, he assisted in the capture of a French warship and two merchant ships and charted Louisbourg harbor. Ten years later, Durell briefly returned to North America to reinforce a British squadron operating off Louisbourg and Newfoundland. In 1758, he played a key role in the British landing at Louisbourg.As the British admiral with the most experience in North American waters, Durell could expect to be in the forefront of future campaigns in the region. When most of the army and the fleet that captured Louisbourg sailed for Britain, New York, or New England, Durell and his squadron remained at Halifax, ready to take the lead in the next operation.From Halifax to the St. LawrenceAs troops and ships assembled in Britain and British America, Durell received orders to blockade the St. Lawrence River as soon as the spring breakup of ice in the Gulf of St. Lawrence allowed him to sail from Halifax.Following the siege of Louisbourg in 1758, the British had confirmed Canadas vulnerability to a spring blockade when one of Wolfes officers questioned the crew of a captured fishing boat off Gasp. These prisoners, wrote Wolfe, assured us that there was great scarcity of provisions and great distress at Quebec and that the colony must be ruined, unless very early very powerful assistance arrived from France in 1759. In an undated note, Wolfe suggested that a fleet at the Isle of Bic [in the lower St. Lawrence River] early in the year will probably complete the destruction of Canada.Durells mission was to do just that. Toward the end of March 1759, he began sending out small vessels to survey ice conditions on the first leg of the sea route from Halifax to Quebec. On April 8, his ships were ready for sea. Owing, however, to unfavorable winds and reports of such quantities of ice that ... it is not as yet practicable for ships to pass to the eastward, without running great danger, the squadron did not leave Halifax harbor until May 5.