

“Fort Lévis (New York)”, in *Colonial Wars of North America 1512-1763: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan Galloway (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996): 380-81.

In the summer of 1759, the French selected Isle Royale (now Chimney Island, just east of Ogdensburg, New York), a small, low-lying island at the head of the Galops Rapids as the best site for a fort to command the upper St. Lawrence River. The French engineer Captain Jean-Nicolas Desandroüins (1729-1792) began Fort Lévis in August 1759. After the following March, the work was continued by Captain Pierre Pouchot (1712-1769) of the Régiment de Béarn. Pouchot’s six Canadian colonial regular officers and eventual garrison of 330 men—Canadian militia and sailors and a few French colonial regulars—improved the timber-faced earthworks and erected a breastwork around the circumference of the island with an abatis of tree branches extending into the water. Sailors commanded by a Canadian naval officer, Captain René-Hypolite Pépin, *dit* Laforce (1728-1802), and colonial regulars manned a dozen 12-pounders and 23 cannon of very small caliber.

An army of 10,000 regulars, provincials, and Indians and 100 siege guns commanded by Lieutenant General Jeffrey Amherst, First Baron Amherst (1717-1797), left Oswego in 900 boats in early August 1760 and cautiously descended the St. Lawrence toward Montreal. The Canadian sloop *Outaouaise*, commanded by a Captain Labroquerie, engaged the British above La Présentation (Ogdensburg) on 17 August, but the lack of wind allowed the British row galleys to pound the helpless vessel into submission in three hours. Fifteen Canadians were killed or wounded and 100 captured. The following day, British troops occupied the mainland around Fort Lévis and landed on two islands between the north shore and Isle Royale.

Amherst deployed 75 guns on the islands and mainland. On 23 August, when the batteries were ready, he ordered his three sloops and artillery to silence Pouchot’s guns, clearing the way for grenadiers and light infantry waiting in the *bateaux* below the closest island to storm the fort. The French, however, disabled all of the attacking vessels, and Amherst called off the assault. The British bombarded Fort Lévis for three days and demolished the fort and outlying bastions, set the debris on fire with red-hot shot and fire bombs, and put 48 men, including all of the officers, out of action. On 25 August, when the Canadian gunners ran out of shot and fires threatened to blow up a principal magazine, Pouchot asked for terms.

The British and Americans lost 21 killed and 43 wounded during the siege, and Amherst was obliged to spend nearly two weeks at Fort Lévis; he could only resume his advance on 31 August, but this did not prevent the fall of Montreal on 8 September.

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References

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See also AMHERST, JEFFREY; FORT LA PRÉSENTATION (NEW YORK); MONTREAL, ATTACK ON; POUCHOT DE MAUPAS, PIERRE.