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Illustrations: University of Western Ontario, Lowensteyn Family Web Site



Samuel Johannes Holland (1729–1801) was appointed Canada’s first British surveyor-general in 1764, having served as a cadet and subaltern in the Dutch artillery from 1745 to 1755 and as an engineer in the British army from 1755 to 1762. Holland’s flair for mathematics and singular aptitude for learning gained him an officer-cadetship in the artillery, and his work in designing fortifications and field defensive works, as well as urban planning, land-surveying and cartography so impressed the British that he was granted commissions as a “foreign Protestant.”

In 1758 Holland was part of the successful expedition against Louisbourg that was commanded by James Wolfe, who wrote of Holland’s bravery and appealed for his acceptance into the Corps of Engineers. Holland’s accurate survey of Louisbourg’s fortifications, town and environs led to his collaboration with James Cook, with whom he charted Chaleur Bay, Gaspé Bay and parts of the Gulf and St. Lawrence River.

Our sketchy knowledge of Holland’s part

in the siege of Quebec is based largely upon his much later recollection. He was promoted to captain on August 24, 1759, accompanied Wolfe on a reconnaissance above the city, built batteries at Point Levis and, while attempting a feint at Sillery, was run down by a schooner and had to escape from the enemy by swimming. After the landing at l’Anse au Foulon and scaling the heights, Holland “laid down a meridian line” on the battlefield “and set up stone monuments on it [the line] . . . ”

Subsequently, he was unable to erect a redoubt on the British left because of the rapidity of the French advance. The nature of a wound he incurred on that day, and which he later failed to mention, is unknown. Evidently as a token of his esteem, Wolfe presented Holland with duelling pistols that are now in the McCord Museum at McGill University in Montréal (a watercolour of the pistols is in the Samuel Holland Collection at Holland College in Charlottetown, P.E.I.).

During the autumn and winter of 1759–60, Holland prepared the outer fortifications of Quebec for an expected spring attack by the Chevalier de Levis. In the ensuing Battle of Ste. Foy (April 20, 1760) Holland was selected to act in Chief Engineer Patrick Mackellar’s stead. After the defeat of the British and their retreat into Quebec, and until the Royal Navy forced Levis to raise the siege, Holland and two lieutenants were charged with defending a city with crumbling fortifications.

After the capitulation of Montréal in September 1760, General James Murray had Holland design a new citadel, which modern historians rate as among the finest

documented proposals for the defence of Québec made under British rule.

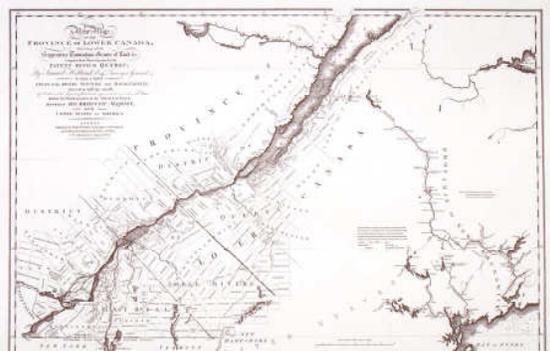
However, neither Holland's citadel nor a fort he designed for Point Deschambeaux was built. The Board of Ordnance was not prepared to recommend the expenditure of funds on constructing works they had not approved, and despite Wolfe's and Murray's high praise and their recommendations that he be accepted in the Royal Engineers, the proposed citadel and fort were Holland's last contributions to fortification design and the engineer corps was closed to him.

Holland continued in surveying and cartography. Extensive parts of the newly acquired territory were to be surveyed and mapped for strategic purposes until the conclusion of a peace treaty. Holland's assignment was the area from Montréal to Ile Ste. Thérèse on the north side of the St. Lawrence; the south side from Longueuil to Bécancour, including parts of the Sorel, Yamaska, St. Francois and Nicolet Rivers; from St. Augustin to Québec; again, on the north side of the St. Lawrence, the Cap Rouge and St. Charles Rivers with the back settlements to the Montmorency River; and the town of Trois-Rivières with the St. Maurice River.

The "Murray Map," a coloured manuscript, measuring 45 by 36 feet, arranged in four divisions and scaled 2000 feet to an inch was finished in the summer of 1762. Although the survey was, in the opinion of a cartographic historian, "one of the biggest and most difficult ever undertaken by British map-makers until then, and a milestone in their rise to primacy in eighteenth century cartography," at least some of the credit must go to the mapping conducted a decade earlier in the Netherlands, where Holland had received his informal training and early experience. The "Foreign Protestant" officers were all naturalized in 1762 by act of

Parliament. This did not lead to an invitation to Holland to join the Royal Engineers. However, it did lead to a career as a British master surveyor and administrator.

He developed a proposal for the massive surveying and mapping of territories expected to be acquired by the British Crown in the peace treaty of 1763 and suitable for exploitation by land-hungry British aristocrats and gentry. With the backing of General Murray in Quebec and the Duke of Richmond in England, he crossed the Atlantic late in 1762 to seek political support for his scheme. Within 18 months, he not only obtained it, but was placed in charge of it. As a result, during the next 30 years, he was instrumental in developing a profession of surveyor and cartographer in British North America.



**Holland's Map of the St. Lawrence
1796-98**

Samuel Holland's successful career bid may be attributed in part to political acumen, but only in part. For had it not been for his upbringing, his training and experience and, above all, his demonstrably superior professional ability, influential patronage would have been in short supply.

**For more information on
Samuel Holland see the
Samuel Holland Research
Paper (Number 1).**