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La Présentation  
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[www.fort1749.org](http://www.fort1749.org)



## **Battle of the Thousand Islands, Capture of the *Outiouaise***

By Dennis & Kathi McCarthy 5/14/2022

*"The General did me the Honor to accept of my offer to attack the French Man with my 5 Gally's: we got to within random Shot of her but falling dark we defer'd the undertaking untill the Grey of next morning the 17th:*

*When we contrived it so well that in 2 hours 1/2 she struck to my red Flag, which I assure Your Lordship gave great satisfaction to us all Comodore Williamson as it was something new to him,*

*The Howitzer did not Fire above twice some Timbers in the Vessell giving way so that I may say only 4 Guns to a Top Sail Vessell of one 8 Pounder, seven 12 Pounders, two 8 pounders, 150 Tons & 100 Men; we were only 25 of the R: Artillery wh: Cap': Strachey. Lieut: Williamson, Standish, Davis & Conner, I count not the Provincials on Board as they only rowed the Gallys,*

*We had Serj: Wilkie killed & 2 Provincials wounded - the French had 3 killed & 12 wounded the Troops had not an oportunity to Fire the 300 Grenadiers Commanded by Coll: Grant were in motion to Board her: As our two Vessells were not come down taking this Prize greatly Facilitated our moving on,*

*And the General as a Compliment to me my endeavours was pleased to Name the Prize the Williamson Frigate 25 Guineas my business was to row from Galley to Galley and direct them how to attack with greater safety."*

The above is a letter written  
August 26, 1760 to Lord Ligonier,  
Master-General of the Ordnance  
British Army from  
Col. George Williamson, commander  
of Royal Artillery for General Amherst

# Prelude to the Battle of the Thousand Islands 1760

By Dennis & Kathi McCarthy 5/14/2022



In August 1760, three British armies under the overall command of Jeffery Amherst converged on Montreal, numbering 18,000 men in all.

The French, in their defense of Quebec and Montreal, were outnumbered and out supplied.

General James Murray's force of 4,000 men set out from Quebec. Two thousand men marched along the banks while the rest were on a fleet of armed vessels and bateaus which contained heavy guns and supplies for an anticipated siege of Montreal

Brigadier General William Haviland's force of 3,500 men left Crown Point and set out along the Richelieu River. Blocking their path was Fort de l'Isle aux Noix on an island in the Richelieu River close to Lake Champlain. After a protracted engagement, the French decided to abandon the fort leaving there for Fort Chambly, the last stronghold on the river. With the fall of Fort Chambly, the French forces found the towns of the Richelieu Valley in British hands just days before the armies planned to converge on Montreal itself.

Amherst, with an army of 11,000, advanced eastward from Lake Ontario along the Saint Lawrence River to cut off any retreat of the French army westward to Detroit. By August 17th, his advanced guard reached the eastern end of the Thousand Islands just above the newly built French Fort Lévis. Fort Lévis was at the top of the rapids at Galette. The buildup and siege of Fort Lévis from August 16 to 24, 1760 is collectively known as the Battle of the Thousand Islands.



## Capture of the Outiouaise

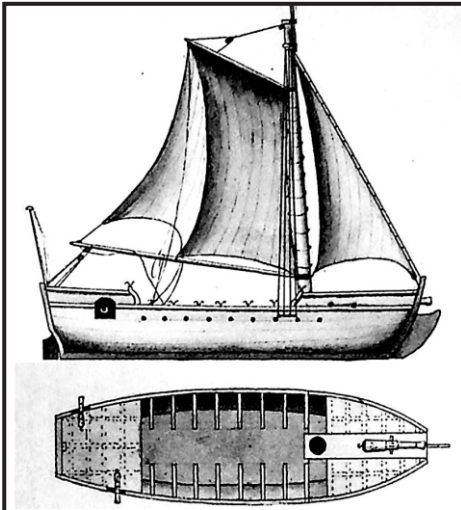
On August 17th, 1760 the naval engagement between Amherst's 5 Row Gallies and the last operational French warship, Outaouaise (oo-ta-way or Ottawa), on Lake Ontario and the Upper St. Lawrence had the potential to upset the entire attack on Montreal.

The British were at most risk when on the water. The original French defense plan against an army coming down St. Lawrence was to catch Amherst's whale boats and bateau in open water above Fort Levis. Loaded with supplies, gun powder, and cannons, these boats would be prime targets.

The French Brig Outaouaise (oo-ta-way or Ottawa) made a valiant attempt to reverse the course of the campaign. Once the wind failed, this French brig, which had fought under great adversity, was lost.

With the capture of the Outaouaise, the British had gained naval control of the Upper St. Lawrence River, and their fleet could maneuver with impunity. Amherst could now move directly upon Fort Levis.

Fort Lévis surrendered after a three-day siege on August 25th. Fort de l'Isle aux Noix was captured two days later. By September, Amherst was at Montreal with all three of his armies. Montreal surrendered on September 8th.



Plan and Elevation of a Galliot to Row with 22 oars, besides Main sail and Fore sail.  
By Thomas Davies



French Brig, Image on a map captured at Niagara, 1759 British Museum ADD15332

## “A View of Fort La Galette”, A Collage of Historical Events

The Battle of the Thousand Islands is well documented in first-hand accounts, and many of the original journals have been published with annotation. The naval battle between the British Row Gallies and the French Brig is unique.

This one-day event was depicted in a painting by Thomas Davies, a British officer who commanded one of these row galleys. Taken as a whole, this painting contains a large amount of documentary information. The painting's name is A View of Fort La Galette, Indian Castle, and Taking a French Ship of War on the River St. Lawrence, by Four Boats of One Gun Each of the Royal Artillery Commanded by Captain Streachy.

It is technically and artistically an impressive painting. Many historians have assumed it is a factual reproduction of the events of August 17, 1760. But closer inspection seems to indicate it is a collage of events, similar to the movie The Patriot's depiction of the American War for Independence (AWI), and as such is more or less accurate.

Robert Andrews, in his book *"The Journals of Jeffery Amherst"* described historical issues with the painting. Davies showed the roofs still on the buildings at Fort La Galette, a few miles down river, often confused with Fort La Présentation. However accounts tell us the roofs were removed. The naval battle pictured happened closer to Pointe au Baril, a few miles up river. The painting signed C L Davies, who was not made captain lieutenant until March 1762, indicates it was completed after that date. The Outaouaise is shown pierced for sixteen guns per side. Colonel Williamson confirmed in his Journal she was pierced for 5 guns per side. The Outaouaise had a sister ship the Iroquoise. Based on what divers found on the Iroquoise wreck in 1995, the stern ornamentation shown is inaccurate.

Now with the age of Google Searches, this painting has become equated to the Battle of the Thousand Islands.

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Montreal Campaign, 1760: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montreal\\_Campaign](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montreal_Campaign)



Link to Interactive  
Image of Davies  
Painting at  
National Gallery  
of Canada, Ottawa

