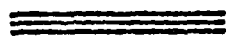
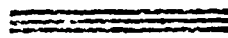


# GRAND PRE TRAGEDY

1745---1755



THE NOBLE MEMORIAL



PRICE 10 CENTS



## Grand Pre, 1745-1755

War, romance and adventure seem far away from the wide marshes, bounded by the swelling tides of Grand Pre, yet here was set the stage of a continent-wide movement—involving the conflict of two great nations, making the decade from 1745 to 1755 memorable in history, in the days when George II was king of Britain and Louis XV king of France. The struggle between them occupied two great zones—East India and North America.

### Canada Becomes a British Possession

Thirty-five years previously General Nicholson with a New England contingent sailed into Annapolis Basin and obtained possession of Port Royal and the cession of Nova Scotia. Otherwise, Acadia, Cape Breton and all Canada were under French rule, which also claimed the vast regions beyond the Alleghanies and Louisiana—while the thirteen colonies on the Atlantic seaboard alone owed allegiance to Britain. France had expended seven millions of dollars in making Louisburg an impregnable fortress. The French also took possession of the Isthmus of Chignecto and fortified it at Beausejour and Gaspereau, to command both bays. Except the hundred or two of the garrison at Annapolis, all Canada and Acadia were occupied by the French. French settlements had grown up about the marshes on the Bay of Fundy—Annapolis, Canard, Piziquid (Windsor), Cobiquick (Truro) and Grand Pre, all on the Basin of Minas. The habitant was a peace-loving, industrious, domestic man, attached to the soil and to his home. Except a paltry quit rent which but few paid, they were subject to no taxes. They had their own chapels and missionaries—the latter being paid for by the French government. No people were more free or exempt from official intrusion or interference, but they steadily refused to take the oath of allegiance to the British Crown. Their number—more than 12,000—gave them a feeling of strength and independence that a heavily garrisoned people would not possess.

### Grand Pre the Centre of the Stage

Grand Pre was the centre of the stage. To the East was Louisburg; to the West Annapolis, 90 miles, and to the North

Beausejour the same distance, while in the South West Boston was nearly 400 miles, and Quebec about the same distance in the North West. This was the stage of action across which a stately pageant progressed without halt or break, casting down, building up and changing the political face of the continent.

In 1744, war was declared between England and France and Annapolis Royal withstood three successive sieges by land forces.

The next year, a New England force of volunteers under Pepperell captured Louisburg.

The following year (1746) D'Anville's mighty expedition of 39 ships and a swarm of transports sailed from France to retake Louisburg and then to conquer New England. It met with an enemy greater than man; the storms of the Atlantic scattered and shattered the fleet; and only a remnant lived to reach France. To co-operate in Acadia with this fleet the French governor at Quebec sent down to Acadia 700 men under De Ramesay.

### **Life and Death Struggle**

News of these movements alarmed the Governors of New England and forces were organized at different points to resist them. Governor Shirley of New England in November, 1746, despatched a force of 470 men to Annapolis Royal to take up a position at Grand Pre to check raids by land on Annapolis Royal. It was not until 12th December before the body of them reached Grand Pre, too late to erect a fortified post, so the men were billeted in some 24 French dwellings scattered along the edge of the upland from Grand Pre to the Gaspereau River, which their owners had temporarily rented to the English, and then retired elsewhere. De Ramsay at Chignecto being advised of the position of Noble's command despatched on January 19th, about 300 Canadian militia, Acadians and Indians to attack them. The year before a road 40 miles long had been cut out by French officers on the route via Bay Verte, Wallace, Tatamagouche, Shubenacadie and Pisiquid, but such were the difficulties met with—snow storms alternating with severe weather—that it took them 22 days to reach Grand Pre. Heavy snow on the ground and a thick snowstorm prevailing favored their attack at three o'clock in the morning of the 11th, 1747. The shooting of the sentinels at the houses awakened the sleeping men; this was

followed by immediate forcing of entrances when the slaughter commenced. It was all over at 11 o'clock a.m. when the New Englanders surrendered. They lost over 70 men killed, including Col. Noble, 60 wounded and 60 prisoners. The others were released and returned to Annapolis Royal.

### **French Account of the Battle**

"The French account of the expedition states that M. de Ramesay being disabled entrusted the command to M. de Coulon, which started on 17th, arriving at Piziquid on 9th February, passing the night with the inhabitants. The next day they halted after making two leagues, to make a surprise attack at night. M. de Coulon divided the corps into ten detachments. He took with him M. de Beaujeu, Majors Delignous, Lemercier, Lery, four cadets and 75 men, and gave to each officer 28 men to attack 10 houses. They did not have enough men to attack 24 houses. They arrived at 9 o'clock at the River Gaspereaux. After 11 o'clock they resumed the march with guides to conduct each party to the house assigned to them. They arrived at Grand Pre at 3.30, the snow and cold proving very troublesome. The houses were well guarded, but the sentinels did not discover them until within gun range. They made a lively attack and forced the houses with axes and in a very little time made themselves masters of them as well as of a boat and a sloop of 80 tons that had transported their effects. The enemy lost 140 men, amongst them Col. Noble, his brother, and three officers, 28 wounded and 54 prisoners. The enemy made a sortie to recapture the stone house that had been occupied by Col. Noble, but failed. The second in command came with a flag of truce to where I was to ask for a suspension of arms till 9 the next morning, M. de Coulon being wounded and three quarters of a mile away at Gaspereaux. This was granted."

### **Terms of Capitulation**

The articles agreed upon were:

- "1st. That the British were to leave in 48 hours for Annapolis with the honors of war.
- 2nd. That English prisoners in French houses remain as prisoners of war.
- 3rd. That the boat and sloop be not given up.
- 4th. That the pillage of the savages be not given up.

5th. That the sick and wounded would have leave to remain at Canard river, until they could be moved.

6th. That the troops engaged should not carry arms (in the Valley) for six months.

On 13th, the weather being extremely unpleasant, I gave them till next day to inter the dead—a guard of 2 sergeants and 12 men.

On 14th, the corps being ready to go, I ordered 6 officers and 60 men upon the field. They formed in two files, between which they passed in twos to the number of 330. We counted 14 Officers, a Commissary, a Secretary, a Doctor and another Surgeon. I gave them provisions and 20 Acadians to accompany them to the first houses at Port Royal.” (The report was signed the Chevalier de La Corne.)

### **The Curtain Rung Down on a Stage of Tragedy**

The destruction of the Noble command produced consternation in New England. The colonial governments and people realized that they held Acadia by a slender thread that might at any moment snap. In 1748, peace was signed and by its terms Louisburg was restored to France. This act was the first fracture of a split that thirty years later rent apart Britain and the thirteen colonies. The next year Cornwallis with 1,200 settlers founded Halifax and transferred there the government from Annapolis Royal.

In 1748, Britain captured Louisburg.

In 1750, the French on the rivers east of the Missiquash burnt their homes and retired to Beausejour where they were organized into companies. A force from Halifax established a fort at Beaubassin (Fort Lawrence).

To meet the intense anxiety of the people of Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia, fearing for their existence with the union of French and Indian tribes working from Louisiana to Quebec, Britain undertook four expeditions, as follows:

- (1) Du Quesne—where Pittsburg now stands on the Ohio.
- (2) Beausejour, to destroy French power in Acadia.
- (3) Crown Point on Lake Champlain, commanding the Southern highway to Lake Ontario.
- (4) Niagara, cutting off connection between Canada proper and the Great Lakes.

Of these four, Beausejour alone was successful. Braddock was defeated. The battle of Lake George was won by Sir William Johnston without gaining Crown Point. Shirley's expedition to Niagara was abandoned.

In 1755 the deportation of the Acadians took place, they having refused to take the oath of Allegiance. The attitude of the Acadians to British rule is seen in a letter from Messieurs De Beauharnois and Hocquart to Count De Maulepas dated at Quebec, 12th September, 1745. It states respecting the people of Acadia: "As regards the disposition of the inhabitants towards us, all, with the exception of a very small portion are desirous of returning under French dominion. Sieur Marin and the officers of his detachment, as well as the Missionaries, have assured us of this. They will not hesitate to take up arms as soon as they are at liberty to do so; that is, as soon as we shall become masters of Port Royal or they have powder and other munitions of war and will be backed by some sedentary troops for their protection against the resentment of the English." (This letter is quoted in the N. S. Archives, page 157.)

In 1759, Britain captured Quebec.

Thus was the curtain rung down on a long continued struggle between Britain and France for the possession of the continent of America.

### **Col. Noble's Military Services**

Arthur Noble and his brothers, Francis and James, arrived in Boston (1720) on one of Captain Robert Temple's vessels. James became a successful business man. He married Jane Vaughan, a sister of Col. Wm. Vaughan. He lived on Friend Street and is buried in the King's Chapel graveyard. Arthur Noble afterwards became a resident of Maine. He obtained land at the mouth of the Kennebec where he had a palisaded fort to protect himself from Indian raids. He farmed, had a tannery and traded in furs. He was a Presbyterian and was prominent in local and Church affairs.

He was commissioned, Feb. 5, 1744, Lieut. Col. of the 2nd Mass. Regiment, and Captain of the 2nd Company, for Louisburg. He was conspicuously active at the siege of Louisburg. He was one of 20 officers at a Council of War on 5th of

April, 1745, and at other meetings. On 26th May he took 160 men to Davison's farm at Mira to destroy the French there and rescue prisoners. Gen. Waldo reported that Messrs. Rhodes, Noble and Gorham on 21st of May inspected the Lighthouse and reported 10 guns there. The same day he sent Col. Noble with 165 men to cut off the retreat of the French.

Little is known respecting the places of his residence in North America except that in Nov., 1746, he was of Georgetown, York Co., Me. On the 22nd of Nov., 1746, "being bound on an expedition against the enemies of the King of Great Britain" he made his will, proved March or May 12, 1747. In it he names his brothers, Francis and James, his daughter, Sarah Lithgow, and his son Arthur. He left for the times a large estate, his personal property having been valued at about 8,000 pounds.

### **The Noble Family**

He married in Boston, Dec. 14, 1725, Sarah Macklin, who was living Jan. 9, 1740. His children were:

- I. Sarah, reputed very beautiful, born about 1726, married to Col. William Lithgow, of Fort Halifax, and left descendants.
- II. James, born about 1728, died Sept. 26, 1746, "in his 18th year". He was a young officer and died at Louisburg, Sept. 26, 1746, of fever.
- III. Arthur, born about 1737, married Mary Goffe and left descendants.
- IV. Francis Noble, killed with his brother Arthur at Grand Pre, Jan. 31, 1747: His home at the time of his death was Sheffield, Mass. He married and left a son Robert.
- V. James Noble, Esq., of Boston, died about 1772. Williamson in his History of Maine, vol. 2, p. 250, inserts the following statement made by E. Rollins: "The town of Nobleborough, in the County of Lincoln, was so named in compliment to Col. Arthur Noble or his family. His brother, James Noble, Esq., was claimant of a large tract in that town; made conveyances and surveys, and after the war his nephew, Arthur Noble, lived on the plantation and gave the town its name. James Noble married the widow, (sister) of William



Vaughan, who after the celebrated seige of Louisburg died in England." James Noble seems to have resided in Boston, Mass., for he there made his will, Dec. 13, 1769, proved August 14, 1772. In it he names his wife Rachel, Col. Wm. Lithgow and Sarah his wife and her heirs, Arthur Noble, son of his brother Arthur; James Noble Shannon, and Wm. and George Vaughan, sons of Eliot Vaughan. As he names no children, he probably had none who lived. He was a Conveyancer. He married (1) Jane Vaughan; (2) Rachel Savage.

### **The Noble Monument in Nobleboro, Maine**

In 1913 a monument was erected to the memory of Colonel Noble at Nobleborough by the Maine Historical Society. It is an obelisk of Maine granite—28 feet high. The cost, \$2,000.00, was defrayed by the Sowden bequest. Mr. Sowden, a member of many learned societies, was governor-general of the Society of Colonial Wars. He was also a descendant of Col. Arthur Noble. The ceremonies at the dedication of the monument were of a most impressive character. The address was delivered by Hon. James P. Baxter, President of the Society, Judge Clarence Vale spoke of the public service of Colonel Noble. Mrs. Richard Webb, President of the Maine Society, of Colonial Dames, unveiled it.

### **Plans for a Suitable Memorial**

The Grand Pre Literary and Historical Society adopted resolutions to erect a monument to honor the memory of Colonel Arthur Noble and his men, who met death in the performance of their duty and in defence of their country in 1747. Citizens outside Grand Pre interested themselves in the project and in the autumn of 1928 it was decided to erect a granite monument on the battlefield of Grand Pre to the memory of Col. Noble and those who with him fell.

Subsidiary to this proposition, it is resolved to create an historical museum. The oldest wooden house in the county, if not the Province, erected by one of the first settlers from New England—Perry Borden—has been secured for the purpose, through the generosity of Sir Robert L. Borden, G.C.M.G., former Prime Minister of Canada.

A site for the monument on the height overlooking Evangeline Memorial Park and the historic area, which constituted the centre of the stage of the North American Continent from 1745 to 1755, was donated by Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Crane, of Grand Pre, Nova Scotia.

A committee was organized to carry these projects into execution—the cost of which it is estimated will be \$10,000, for which subscriptions are solicited. Such committee consists of Col. J. H. MacDonald, D.D., C.B.E., President; Dr. W. C. Milner, Secretary; Ralph Creighton, Manager of Royal Bank of Canada, Treasurer; L. E. Shaw, Esq.; Major-General G. LaF. Foster, C.B.; Col. A. H. Borden, D.S.O.; Miss Annie Stuart, Lady Borden, Miss Julia Borden, B. O. Davidson, Geo. W. Nowlan, M.L.A.; A. E. H. Chesley; R. V. Harris, K.C., D.C.L., Prothonotary of Halifax; Mrs. A. H. Patterson, Miss Lalia Chase, M.D.C.M., Mrs. Faye Stuart.

The following are honorary members of the committee,—Rt. Hon. Sir Robert L. Borden, G.C.M.G., Ottawa; Hon. Frank G. Allen, Governor Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Boston; Hon. Clarence Vale, Federal Court Judge, President Maine Historical Society, Portland; Governor Society of Colonial Wars, Boston; Col. the Hon. J. L. Ralston, C.M.G., Minister National Defence, Ottawa; Canon F. W. Vroom, D.D., President Historical Society of Nova Scotia, Halifax; Dr. W. W. Chipman, McGill University, Montreal; Dr. Henry T. Ross, Secretary Bankers Association, Toronto; Mr. M. H. MacLean, Vice-Pres. Harris Trust and Savings Bank, Chicago; Rev. Dr. Inglis C. Morse, Cambridge, Mass.; Dr. Benjamin Rand, Harvard University, Cambridge; Dr. J. Alfred Faulkner, Drew Seminary, New Jersey; Dr. George Barton Cutten, President Colgate University, Hamilton, N. Y.; Rev. Dr. Arthur Wentworth Eaton, Boston; Mr. John F. Masters, President Canadian Club, Boston; Dr. R. L. DeV. Chipman, Saint John, N. B.; Dr. Henry T. Munro, Superintendent Education, Halifax; Mr. James R. MacGregor, Gen. Manager Chronicle, Halifax; Mr. W. H. Dennis, Gen. Manager, Herald, Halifax; Dr. F. W. Patterson, Acadia University, Wolfville; Mr. George E. Graham, Vice-President and General Manager, Dominion Atlantic Railway, Kentville; Dr. D. G. Davis, Principal Normal College, Truro; Mr. J. L. Ilsley, M.P., Hants-Kings, Kentville; Col. B. W. Roscoe, D.S.O., President Kings Canadian Legion, Kentville; Mr. R. W. Tufts, Wolfville.