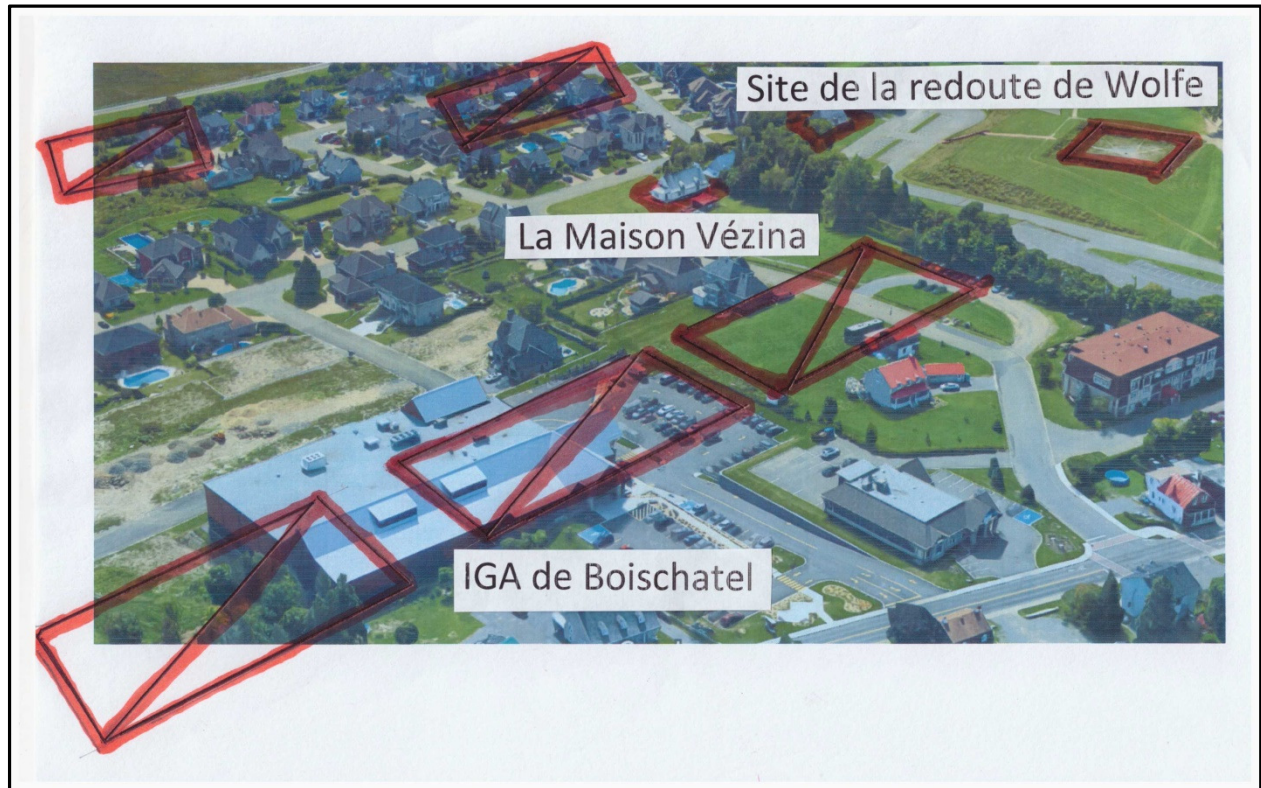


On This Spot 257 Years Ago



As one turns off of Avenue Royale into the parking lot of the beautiful IGA de Boischatel grocery store, one can't help but stop and admire the stunning view looking out over the river and the Île d'Orléans before proceeding inside. The store, with its wood beams and high gabled ceilings, has a produce section chock full of fruits and vegetables grown locally and from around the world. Fresh fish, fresh meat, a bakery and an extensive wine section make filling up ones grocery car a joy. If one has time, one can skip the shopping and sit down at its restaurant, La Charpente, and enjoy a delicious meal while enjoying one of Québec's most beautiful views looking out over the river and the city.

As you leave, however, take a few moments and think about how things have changed on that very spot since 257 years ago. On June 26, 1759, General Wolfe arrived at Île d'Orléans with 22 gunships, 27 frigates, 80 transport ships, 55 smaller ships, 9 000 soldiers, 18 000 sailors, 2 000 cannons, and 40 000 cannonballs. Just imagine how terrifying it must have been for the inhabitants to look out and see them approach like black clouds on the horizon.

On July 31st, General Wolfe attacked at Beauport, losing 400 of his men, but managed to establish a camp on the east side of Montmorency Falls. Three of his garrisons were positioned right around what is the IGA de Boischatel today at Rue de la Garrison. Just next to it is the "site de la redoute de Wolfe" monument and Maison Vézina that Wolfe commandeered for his quarters. Three more garrisons were along Rue de l'Infanterie and Rue des Grenadiers (named after the Louisbourg Grenadiers). The main artillery defense was on the promontory above Avenue Royale across from the post office.

After having been repulsed by the French, General Wolfe changed his style of action. His troops then proceeded to attack and destroy small French settlements to the east along the St. Lawrence River. An estimated 1 400 stone houses and manors were destroyed. The French colonists who tried to resist were killed.

It was on August 29th that Maison Laberge in L'Ange-Gardien was set on fire. Its owner, 62 year old Jacques Laberge died four months later on December 20th, presumably as a result of the bitter cold and starvation as did many in the surrounding area. His son, Guillaume and wife, Barb Julien, survived.

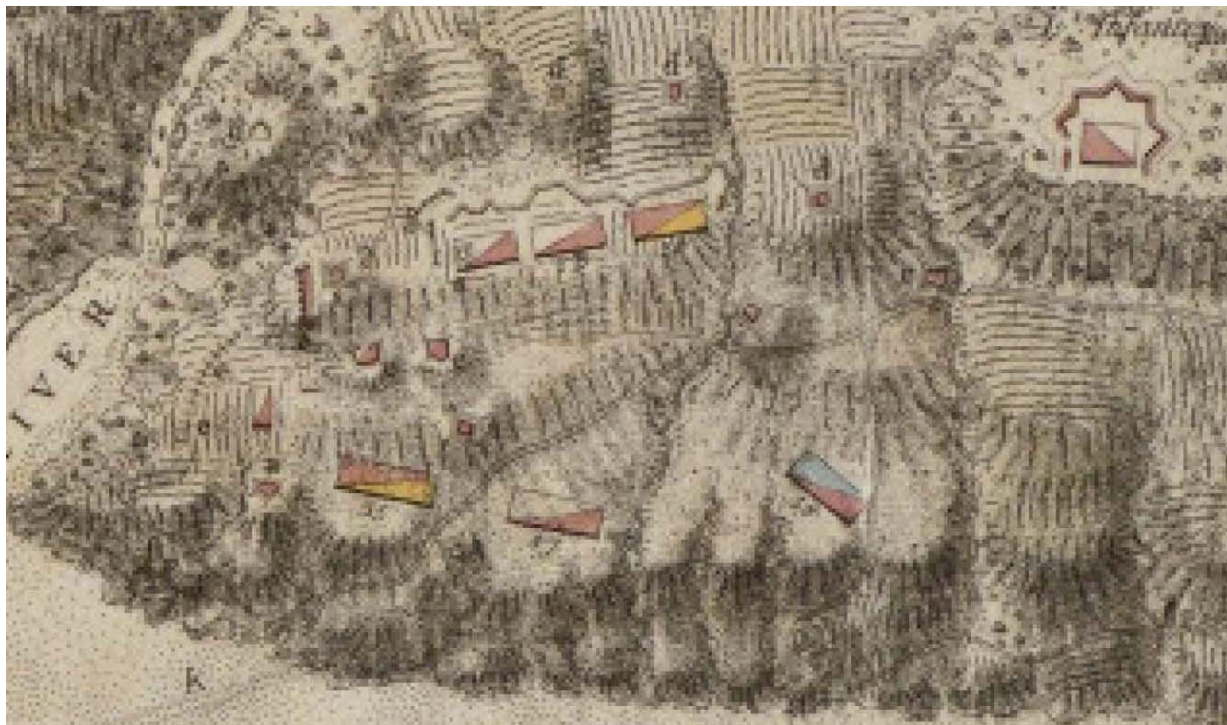
The house, which at that time had two stone chimneys and walls of wood timbers, was later rebuilt after the fire with stone walls. The exact date of reconstruction is unknown but most certainly rebuilt well before Guillaume Laberge past it onto his son Guillaume Laberge and wife Angélique Huot in 1774.

Think about this story next time you check out at the IGA de Boischatel as the young person fills your bags with groceries. Make sure to say "thank you" as you walk out the door, and stop for a moment to remember your ancestors.

Philip LaBerge

Owner of Maison Laberge

Above: A Plan of Quebec and Environs, with its Defences and the occasional Entrenched Camps of the French commanded by Marquis De Montcalm: Showing likewise the principal Works and Operations of the British Forces, under the command of Major General Wolfe, during the Siege of that Place in 1759



Below: An overlay of the encampments on Googlemaps today.

