

FAMOUS LETTERS IN CANADIAN HISTORY



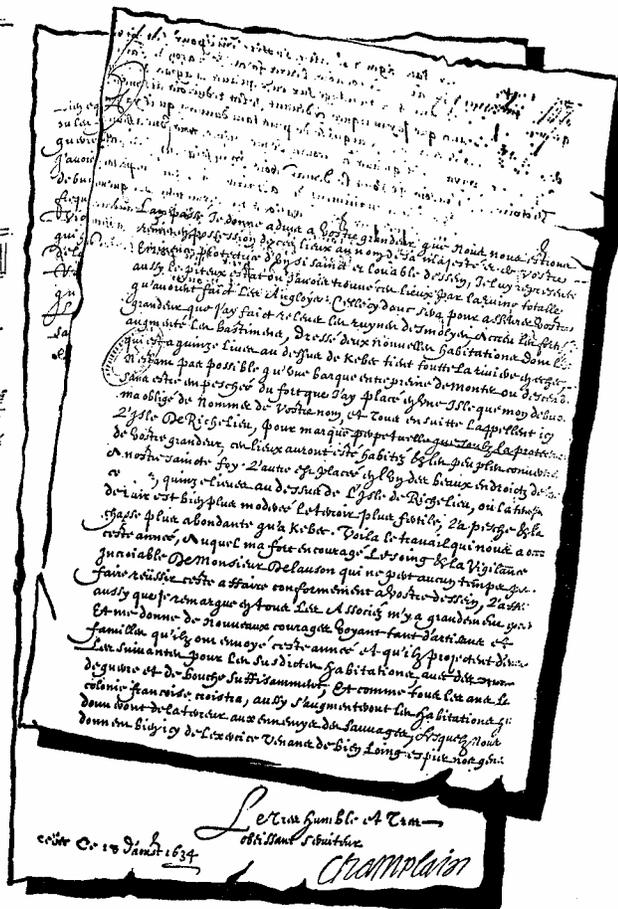
The Founder

Champlain was truly the father of New France.

From that day in 1603 when he first saw the St. Lawrence flowing out of the heart of this continent until Christmas Day in 1635 when he died at Quebec City, New France was all he lived for.

He nurtured the tiny habitation he founded at Quebec in 1608 into a solid community only to be driven out by English adventurers in 1629. Four years later he was to return and begin again to forge a nation.

In this letter, part of which is published here, Champlain appeals to his patron, the great Cardinal Richelieu for support and 120 soldiers to fight the Iroquois who were the implacable enemy of the French settlers and the greatest threat to the young colony.



This letter is one of few existing ones signed by Champlain although he wrote a great deal and the original of it is preserved in the archives of the Department of Foreign Affairs in Paris.

Champlain Asks Richelieu for Aid

From Quebec this 18th of August, 1634.
Monsignor:

Last year I informed your Highness that we had taken possession again of these grounds in the name of His Majesty and of Your Eminence, protector of this so holy and laudable project. I also depicted the shameful state in which I had found these territories, caused by the total ruin left behind by the English.

This letter is to inform your Highness I am having the ruins cleared, the fortifications reinforced, the buildings increased in number and I am having two new "habitations" erected . . . Through the coming years the French colony will grow, so will increase the number of "habitations" frightening away the Iroquois who give us so much to do here, coming

from afar to spy on our people as they work in the fields and killing them treacherously.

In order to defeat them and make them toe the line under His Majesty's law, six companies of 20 men from France, well armed, with the help of the Hurons our allies, will suffice to exterminate them or bring them to reason.

I know their strength and their ways of war which gives me such an advantage over them that with the Grace of God if I receive the assistance I ask for I could easily keep them at bay.

Of your Highness, Monsignor,
the most humble and obedient servant,

CHAMPLAIN.