

# D'Anville's Doom

## A Neurological Vignette from Historic Halifax

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**SUMMARY:** *After the capture of Fortress Louisbourg by the New England Irregulars, Louis XV of France commissioned Jean Baptiste Louis Frédéric de la Rochefoucauld, duc d'Anville, to command a massive offensive flotilla to retake Louisbourg, and ravage the eastern seaboard of North America south to Florida.*

*After arriving in Chibouctou (Halifax Harbour) following thirteen weeks at sea,*

**RÉSUMÉ:** *Après la capture de la forteresse de Louisbourg par des Irregulars de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, Louis XV donna à Jean Baptiste Louis Frédéric de la Rochefoucauld, duc d'Anville, le commandement d'une imposante flotte offensive afin qu'il reprenne Louisbourg, et dévast la côte Atlantique de l'Amérique du Nord jusqu'à la Floride.*

*Après son arrivée à Chibouctou (Port d'Halifax), faisant suite à une croisière de treize semaines, le duc d'Anville s'affaissa.*

*duc d'Anville collapsed. His doctor treated him with enemas and emetics, but he suddenly turned blue, convulsed, and died.*

*The report of his autopsy, which included the cranium, (and which is Canada's only Royal autopsy) had been lost for two centuries. It is now analysed, showing that although he had significant intracranial pathology, he died from medical therapy.*

*Son docteur le soigna avec des lavements et des émétiques, mais il devint tout à coup bleu, fut saisi de convulsions et mourut.*

*Le rapport de son autopsie, comportant également celle du crâne, (et étant l'unique autopsie d'une personne royale au Canada) avait été perdu depuis deux siècles. Il fait actuellement l'objet d'une analyse qui indique que, quoique souffrant d'affections intra-crâniennes importantes, le Duc est mort de la thérapie.*

### PROLOGUE

Chibouctou — 0600 — 25 September  
1746

"I was awakened and ran to his cabin when he had been found unconscious. He recognized me as he became conscious. I assured him that this was just an attack similar to those he had had, but that he was paralysed in the shoulder and the foot.

"They gave him emetics which evacuated him to such an extent that the surgeon thought he would be all right. The next day he took a turn for the worse, and in spite of repeated treatments, it became apparent that he was going to die.

"He died at 0300 on the twenty-seventh.

"Our loss was great in le duc's death. His wisdom, candor, politeness, and virtue have made his passing universally lamented.

"They opened him to remove the heart, which it was thought the family might wish, and returned it to France.

"We are leaving to attack the English at Port Royal, and hope the expedition will be successful . . ." (Letter: 14 Oct. 1746).

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 between England and France, gave Newfoundland to England, together with mainland Acadia (Nova Scotia and New Brunswick); and left Cape Breton Island (Ile Royale) and Prince Edward Island (Ile Saint Jean) in French hands. France also retained the Magdalen Islands, St. Pierre et Miquelon (15 miles off Newfoundland's Burin Peninsula), La Belle Province de Québec, and the valley of the St. Lawrence.

The great northwest had been controlled by England and the Hudson's Bay Company since 1640. England

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also controlled the Atlantic seaboard by virtue of the thirteen American colonies.

France controlled the Mississippi valley, and the Spanish city of New Orleans at its mouth. Realizing the significance of her two great North American rivers, France was desirous of a new fortification to control the mouth of the St. Lawrence.

Winter's ice dictated the site of the northern fortress. Louisbourg Harbour (Havre d'Anglois) was ice-free. By 1717 Louisbourg was rising on a rocky, fog-shrouded, wind-whipped peninsula to guard the northern arm of New France. Louisbourg indeed became the "Key to a Continent".

From Louisbourg, France was soon aggressively fishing the Grand Banks, and periodically captured American (New England) ships and cargoes, as well as those of the English.

In the mid-1700's England did little for her North American colonies aside from levying taxes. Thus, in the spring of 1745 the harassment of their shipping led to the New England colonists mounting a force of some four thousand volunteers; and during May and June of 1745 successfully attacked, laid siege to, and captured Louisbourg, placing all of New France in jeopardy. The success of the rag-tag colonial army amazed the major powers. England was delighted, but did not profit from the knowledge of colonial discontent; France was humiliated and secretly planned a counter-offensive.

Early in 1746 Louis XV of France chose Jean Baptiste Louis Frédéric de la Rochefoucauld, duc d'Anville, (Figure 1) a naval officer serving with the army, and made him an admiral of the French Navy, on the advice of Comte de Pontchartrain et de Maurepas, his Minister of the Marine and of the Colonies.

Duc d'Anville, 5'-11", age 36 (Born 17 Aug 1709), while suffering from occasional sick headaches, was born to command, loved by his men, and expected to succeed. He was put in command of the largest aggressive fleet ever to leave Europe for America. (Seventy-five ships: ships of the line, fireboats, and transports with eight thousand troops) He was charged with wresting Louisbourg from the Ameri-



Figure 1 — Jean Baptiste Louis Frédéric de la Rochefoucauld, Duc d'Anville. (Facsimile reproduction by Ambrose MacNeil, from an oil portrait c. 1745)

cans, destroying English Nova Scotia, and then to proceed south destroying Boston and the American seaboard south to Florida. It was an ambitious undertaking; but quite feasible. There was no standing colonial army. The volunteers who took Louisbourg were anxious to return to their homes and farms, and the British naval squadron was based in the Caribbean.

D'Anville writes to Louis: (Figure 2)  
"In the Bay of Brest on board the

vessel 'Le Northumberland' (Figure 3) this 16th April 1746.

"I shall do my utmost to carry out faithfully the orders with which I have been honoured; and to follow exactly the instructions concerning the purposes of the task with which I have been entrusted by your majesty . . .

"I beg your majesty to be convinced of my endeavour and of my desire to prove my good will to your majesty. All of the officers who will serve with

me are filled with the one and the other

"I have the honour to account faithfully to your majesty for the campaign operations, and for the behaviour of the officers.

"I am with deepest respect of your majesty, the very humble and very obedient servant and subject."

The flotilla gathered in secret at many ports along the Atlantic coast of France, and finally assembled at Ile Aix.

The original plan was for the flotilla to sail by mid-April at the latest, but because of difficulties with provisioning and supply, the armada did not leave France until the twentieth of June 1746. Buffeted by extremely unusual and severe storms the flotilla found itself still in the Bay of Biscay after one month at sea, and was reduced to two-thirds of its original strength.

The summer of forty-six was severe on the North Atlantic; two further

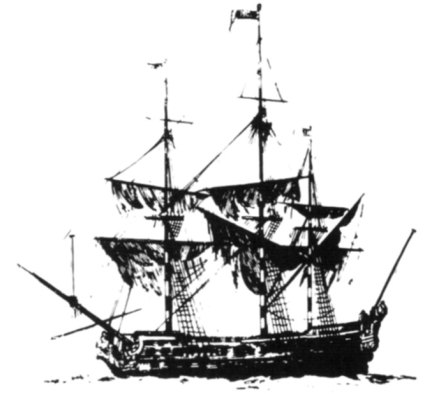


Figure 3 — "Le Northumberland" — May 1745

months passed until the ships floundered on the foggy shifting shoals of Sable Island. Two weeks later only eleven ships gathered in Bedford Basin (Chibouctou), (Figure 4) with some eighteen hundred men ill with scurvy and typhus, and barely one thousand remaining fit.

The French of this period were notoriously poor in ship husbandry; their ships were cramped and low in head room. Duc d'Anville, however, chose the captured English ship 'Le Northumberland' for his flagship. A seventy gun ship of the line, she was laid down in 1719, refitted in 1740, and captured by the French in May 1745. She had a minimum head room of 6'-6" in the commander's quarters, and albeit French provisioned, was superior to the rest of the fleet.

Le duc, healthy and well when the fleet arrived in Chibouctou, died under the circumstances recorded in the letter fragment which opens this paper. He was buried on Ile Raquette (Georges Island) in the mouth of Halifax Harbour, some two miles from Fairview Cove in Bedford Basin where he died.

Half of the remaining ships were hauled on to the shores of Bedford Basin and burned. The few survivors returned to France — thus ending the last major aggressive act of Imperial France in the new world. New England, fearfully awaiting the armada, relaxed. However, England's interest remained remote from America, and with a major affront to her colonies, she traded Louisbourg back to France in 1748, in exchange for the

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monieur de maux par ma envoi la lettre que votre majeste, luy a est remise par un messager  
 Je feray tout mon possible pour bien exccuter les ordres qu'elle me fait l'honneur de  
 me donner, et pour suivre exactement les instructions qui regardent les objets de  
 la commission dont elle a bien voulu me charger.  
 Si le Canada qui fait le premier objet n'a pas besoin de secours, et que les ennemis  
 ayent des forces trop considerables a Louisbourg pour ne pouvoir pas entreprendre le siege  
 Je mettray tout en usage pour procurer a votre majeste, un equivalent, je la  
 supplie d'etre persuadee de mon zele, et de l'envie que j'ay de luy prouver une bonne  
 volonte, tous les officiers destinés a servir avec moy, sont remplis de l'un et de l'autre  
 Je me flatte d'etre bien reconde par vous, mais s'il arrivoit qu'il y en eut qui finissent  
 quelques difficultes sur les operations a faire, je prendrais sur moy, comme vous  
 m'avez este, me l'ordonne pour ne point revenir avant d'avoir tenu tous les moyens  
 pour reunir dans quelque entreprise, j'auray l'honneur de rendre compte exactement  
 a votre majeste d'operations de la campagne et de la conduite des officiers.  
 Je suis avec le plus profond respect

xix

De votre majeste

Le tres humble  
 et tres obeissant serviteur et sujet  
 Le Duc d'Anville.

de la rade de Louisbourg le 16 avril 1746

Figure 2 — Letter to Louis XV of France from Duc d'Anville, 16 April 1746. (French naval custom changed "A" to "E" in titles) (Reproduced courtesy of the University of Rochester Library)



Figure 4 — Bedford Basin, Nova Scotia (Chibouctou) Near the d'Anville anchorage

town of Madras in far off India.

In late summer 1749, during the founding of Halifax, Governor Cornwallis "courteously" allowed duc d'Anville's remains to be "pulled by the heels" from his grave on Georges Island, and after being placed on the forecastle of "Le Grand Esprit", was transported to Louisbourg for burial on French soil. On 17 September 1749 he was interred with full honours at the foot of the high altar beneath the floor of the chapel in the King's Bastion Caserne. Five hundred livres of black powder were used for the salutes.

With the establishment of the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Park in 1928 a search for duc d'Anville's remains began. Mayor Huntington of Louisbourg tells of the discovery in his journal entry for 21 June 1932: (Figure 5)

"Workmen while . . . excavating in the ruins of the King's Chapel . . . unearthed what is believed to be the remains of the Duc d'Anville. . . .

"In the afternoon . . . I . . . viewed . . . a complete human skeleton. . . . The bones . . . were of a person of about six feet in height."

Photographs of the burial site were taken by the first permanent caretaker, William MacKinnon, and then the bones were rearranged by the press photographers for publication in the local newspapers. (The Sydney Post — 21 July 1932) The 'trepanned' skull cap (removed at autopsy) was first mistakenly thought to have been broken off by a careless worker's pick, and was so described in 1932 and later in H. B. Jefferson's Atlantic Advocate story in November 1956.

Great controversy raged as to whether these remains were indeed duc d'Anville until his jaw was examined, and it was realized that it still retained the pig's tooth implanted some two hundred years previously. This led to the rogue's jibe:

"He spoke with the tongue of

nobility . . . But he laughed with the smile of a pig"

For thirty years the duc's remains were covered with a concrete slab to prevent looting.

In 1964, prior to the reconstruction of the King's Bastion and the King's Bastion Caserne, the bones were

JUNE, 1932.

Tuesday 21 *Louisbourg N.S.*  
(173-103)

*Clear and moderately warm with light variable wind.*

*Discovery of Remains of Duc d'Anville*  
Workmen while engaged in excavating in the ruins of the King's Chapel at the Louisbourg Historic and National Park, at about 10 am. today, unearthed what is believed to be the remains of the Duc d'Anville, a French Admiral, who in 1746, while in command of a large Armada which was sent out from France for the capture of Louisbourg and the destruction of New England cities, died at Halifax N.S. and whose body in 1749 was removed to Louisbourg and buried at the foot of the high altar in the King's Chapel in the Citadel.

In the afternoon in company with William Lewis Jr. and John Murphy, I motored to the park and viewed the remains which consist of a complete human skeleton, lying about two feet below the surface of the ground, eleven feet from the eastern wall of the Chapel and about twenty feet from the north side, which according to history would be about the spot the burial took place. The bones which had been enclosed in a wooden coffin were intact, while the wood of the coffin had almost all crumbled to dust. The remains lay about east and west with the head to the westward, and were of a person of about six feet in height. The discovery soon attracted a crowd of visitors and while at the scene I met Senator J.S. MacKinnon, Mrs. Katherine MacKinnon, George and the photographer Sydney and representatives of the Sydney Herald, Cape Breton Herald and other papers. I returned from the site at 2:45 p.m. with stone masonry.

Figure 5 — Mayor Huntington's Journal page for 21 June 1932 (Reproduced courtesy of the Cape Breton Regional Library)

removed and examined. The initial examination was carried out by Dr. J. E. Anderson of MacMaster University, who also examined the four other skeletons found buried beneath the floor of the chapel at that time. On the 24 October 1964 the Duc was reinterred in exactly the same place; in the centre line of the chapel, beneath the floor at the foot of the high altar. There he still rests.

It is clear from examining the Duc's remains that the skull was opened deliberately during the autopsy. Whether an immediate autopsy report was ever written is unknown. If it was, it would have been filed in Brest in the Naval Archives as part of the log of 'Le Northumberland'. Brest was heavily fire-bombed in 1944 and 1945, and unfortunately the Naval Archives and many of their documents were destroyed, including those relating to the armada, and 'Le Northumberland'. (No copies nor transcripts of them seem to have been made and filed elsewhere).

#### THE AUTOPSY LETTER

However, on 19 December 1746, after his return to France, Surgeon Lieutenant Duval aboard the Northumberland, wrote to Count Maurepas outlining the events which occurred in the previous September. (Figures 6 & 7) This letter, possibly because of its personal flavor, did not become part of the National Archives of France, but remained in the Maurepas family. Eventually, it was found in the E. De Chabannes La Palice collection. With his death in 1948, the letter along with other Maurepas documents remained lost until they appeared for auction in New York in March 1962, when they were purchased by the Cornell University Library. The original hand-written letter is shown in Figure 6. Its transcription into type retaining the eighteenth century text in French is on the left side of Figure 7. Its English translation is on the right side of Figure 7.

#### DISCUSSION

The causes of le duc's death have remained in a state of controversy for two hundred and thirty-three years. His servant or friend called his death apoplexy, as did Dr. Duval. The

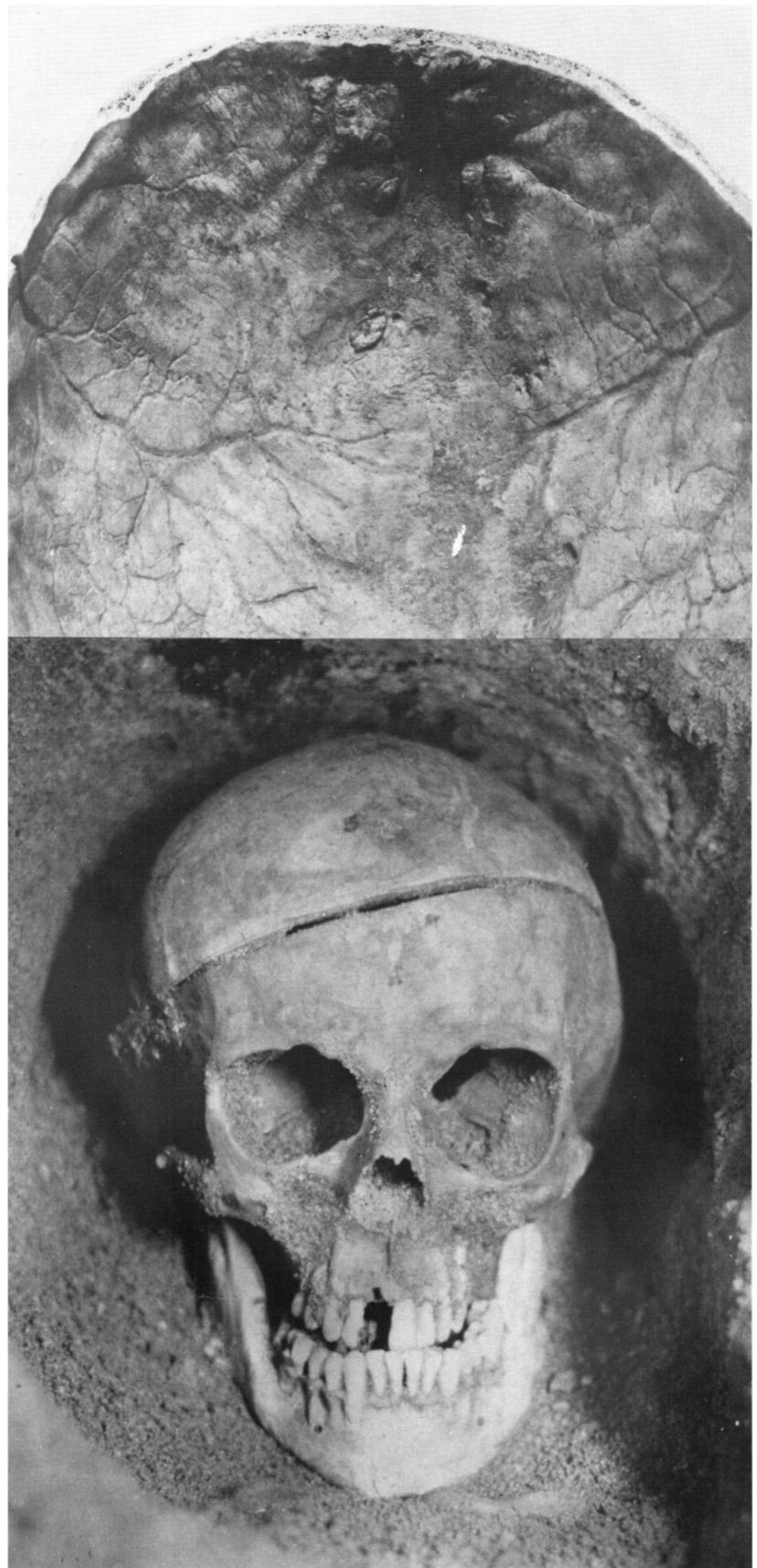


Figure 8 — Upper — Interior of anterior skull cap (Negative X-1940) (Reproduced courtesy of Parks Canada, Fortress Louisbourg National Historic Park)  
Lower — Duc d'Anville's Skull being unearthed

Monseigneur  
 M. de Comte de Maurepas  
 Monsieur le Duc  
 de Bourgogne

L'opinion de Monsieur le Duc d'Orléans m'est  
 extrêmement sensible, les bontés et la protection  
 dont il veut bien m'honorer, aurât été un motif  
 pour moy pour augmenter mes soins, et ma attention  
 dans mon art, pour chercher sa guérison;  
 mais mon respectueux attachement pour Lui est  
 plus que suffisant pour redoubler mes vœux pendant  
 sa maladie;

L'opinion que vous y portez, Monsieur le Duc, me choque  
 que vous croiriez bon que j'aye l'honneur de vous  
 informer des accidents de sa maladie, j'ay crû de  
 vous en faire le détail cy joint;

dans la nuit du vingt-neuf au vingt, deux paresthésies  
 il fut à la queue de la langue, par où en ne peut  
 savoir le moment de son accident, ayant dormi dans  
 dans cet état, et pendant dans sa chambre. Lorsque  
 j'en valis de chambre j'entrai sur les dix à sept heures  
 du matin;

je fis appeler sur le moment de la trouée dans un  
 appartement d'indisposition, dans lequel il se trouva  
 pâle, qu'on le laissa tranquille, on changea l'air  
 d'un bon traict de dortoir et de considérable, tout d'un  
 coup, on le porta dans un appartement de la chambre  
 sur le champ, de le signer du bras, et de lui donner  
 un adoucesant, que je fis signer deux fois de suite  
 qui s'augmente qu'il n'avoit ni fièvre, la nature  
 étoit tellement interuite, et oppressée, que le remède  
 n'eût pas prompt effet, que je prescrivis, il parut  
 cependant rompre à l'indication que j'en pouvois espérer  
 ayant opéré sept à huit fois;

pour ne pas perdre de temps, et saisir le moment qui  
 me paroîtroit favorable. Je le signai du pied de suite  
 de la jugulaire, et luy fist faire usage de sa  
 tisane, la saignée aigüe, joint aux saignées  
 que je continuois et même j'en fis une autre  
 et de terminer les humeurs à couler plus abondamment  
 par les voyes ordinaires, objet qui me parut le  
 plus propre à réussir, et qui étoit le succès que j'en  
 pouvois attendre;

Le vingt-cinq au matin, la nature, n'ayant répondu  
 mes remèdes, et perdus le succès, sa condition en  
 lui devint un peu, il parut et adoucesant  
 diminua, considérablement, ce qui me fit craindre  
 qu'il n'eût été d'un tiers un peu de suite;  
 je fis une saignée plus continue joint aux  
 saignées qui firent l'effet d'opérer une  
 ou deux évacuations;

L'opinion fut de peu de durée, fut les deux heures  
 après midy, la tête s'embarrassa de nouveau, il perdit  
 entièrement l'usage de son entendement, et commença  
 et quelques choses que je pus faire, il ne me fut pas  
 possible de le remettre en état de vivre, j'eus l'opinion  
 avec intermission de temps, la nature n'avoit une  
 mort prochaine, comme les moments de venant;  
 quelques je jugeay qu'il étoit à propos d'appliquer les  
 vésicatoires joints à quelque autres remèdes propres  
 à déterminer le retour du sang, et particulièrement  
 de la lymphe que je prescrivis, et qui parut  
 le plus abondamment; Le tout fut inutile, et fut  
 sans aucune flat, jusqu'à une heure, à pres minuit  
 le vingt sept, qu'il luy survint des convulsions  
 convulsives et mourut sans espérance d'apaiser;

J'ay crû, Monsieur, que l'on doit s'attendre d'un  
 succès de la nature pour mesurer de la faute de  
 sa mort, joint que je suis en ordre de prendre le  
 pour l'abonner le que je fait;

ayant fait aller de la poitrine, j'y est troué  
 environ une bonne pinte d'eau épanchée dans  
 les deux Cavités, lequel me parut fort singulier  
 ne s'étant jamais vu de cette manière, des  
 accidents qu'une hydropisie de poitrine opationne;  
 il étoit sujet à une démangeaison dans les parties  
 inférieures des jambes, joint avec des fluxions  
 et visage plombé, qui s'attribuoit à un Lymph  
 scorboutique, combiné par la longueur de la  
 traversée;

après l'ouverture de la poitrine, je parut en suite  
 la suite de la suite, et je ay voulu en faire une plus  
 particulière et des plus rares; Le premier des  
 de la dure-mère nommé la faulx osifiée,  
 dans les ventricules intérieurs, une plus grande  
 quantité de lympe que l'est ordinaire, que  
 je pus entre la suite de la mort, joint à  
 l'obstruction des artères qui faisoient sentir à l'op  
 dur l'effet du douleur de cette veine et aigüe  
 auxquelles mourut le duc étoit sujet, il en avoit  
 sougé une ataque quinze jours avant sa mort  
 je l'avois signé deux fois, en conséquence, lequel  
 la saignée, le retour du sang dans les sinus  
 Longitudinaux, tout paroîtroit qu'il étoit  
 jointe ne pas peu d'attribuer à son accident;  
 Je suis d'un très profond respect

Monseigneur

abondamment  
 la suite de la suite  
 le 29 Dec 1746  
 votre très humble  
 et très soumis serviteur  
 D. de la Roche, chirurgien  
 ordinaire de la chambre du  
 de la poitrine de la poitrine

Figure 6 — Letter to Comte de Maurepas from Surgeon Lieutenant Duval, 19 December 1746 (Reproduced courtesy of the Cornell University Library)

Monseigneur —

Lef. Duval Chirurgien du  
Northumberland

La perte de Monsieur le Duc d'Enville m'est extrêmement sensible. Les Contés et La protection dont il vouloit bien m'honorer auroit été un motif pour moy pour augmenter mes soins et mes attentions dans mon art pour chercher sa guérison; mais mon Respectueux attachement pour Lui était plus que suffisant pour Redoubler mes veilles pendant sa maladie.

L'interest que vous y prenie Monseigneur me persuade que vous trouveré bon que Jayé l'honneur de vous informer des accidents de sa maladie. Jay celui de vous en faire de detail cy joint;—

Dans la nuit du vingt quatre au vingt cinq Septembre il fut ataqué d'une apoplexie seruse. on ne peut savoir Le moment de son accident L'ayant trouvé dans cet état, et étendu dans sa chambre, lorsque son valet de chambre y entra sur les six a sept heures du matin.

Ji fu appelée sur le moment je le trouvé dans un assoupissement considerable dans lequel il retourbois sitot qu'on le laissoit tranquille; une Lanque epaise d'un bon traiver dedoit et considerablement enasée unpoul petit et dur;

Sur Le champ je seignay du bras et lui donnay un Lavement que Je fis suivre d'une doze d'emetique qui n'aupera quapres Lauoir rafteror; La nature étoit tellement ensevelie et oprimée que Le remede nû pas Le prompt effet que Je souhaitoit; il parut cependant remplir Lindication que J'en pouvoit esperé ayant operé sept a huit fois;

Pour ne pas perdre de temps et saisir Le moment qui me paroissoit pressant. Je le seignay du pied. Ensuite de la Jugulaire; et luy fit faire usage du'une. — tisanne Laxative aiguisée, joint aux Lavements que Je Continuois Le même Jour. pour accellerer et determiner Les humeurs a Couler plus abondamment par Les voye ordinaire. objet qui me parut Le plus propres a saisir; et qui eû Le succès que J'en pouvoit attendre;

Le vingt six au matin La nature parû segonder mes remedis et prendre Le desus; La Connaissance Lui revult un peu; il parla et La soupissement dimnua considerablement; espoir qui me flata et me donnoit lieu d'en tirer un pronostic favorable; satsisanne Laxative fu continuer joint aux Lavements qui fire Leux Effet En procurant une douce Evacuations;

L'espoir fu de peu de durée, sur Les deux heures apres midy La teste sembarasa de nouveau il perdit entierement Connoissance et quelque chose que Je pû faire il ne me fû pas, pausible de Le reveillie Le poul devain petit Consntrée avec Intermision de temp à autre anonvont une mort prochaine Comme les moments devenoient precieux Je jugay qu'il étoit apropos d'appliquer Les vesicatories. Joint a quelque autres remedes propres adeterminer LeRetour du sang et particulierement de La limphe que Je pençois être Celle qui peihoit Le plus abondamment; Le tout fut inutile. il fut dans amême Etat jusqu'a une heure a pres minuit Le vingt Sept qu'il luy survin des mouvements convulsif et mourû deux heures apres;—

Jay Crû Monseigneur qu'il Etoit Esentiel d'en faire Louverture pour mesurer de Lafausse de sa mort; Joint que Je recu ordre de prendre Le Coeur pour L'embommer Ce que Je fait;

Ayant fait alle De La poitrine J'y est trouee environ une bonne pinte d'eau Epanche dans Les deux Capasité; Cequi ma parû for singulier ne setant jamais plain de cette partie. ny des accidents qu'une hydropsie de poitrine occasionne, il Etoit sujet à une Edemasie dans Les parties inferieures des jambes, joint a une bouffissure et visage plombée. que Jatribuoit a un Levein Scorbutique. Contracté par La longueur de La traversée;

Après Louverture de La poitrine Je passoit ensuite a alle de La teste et Ji ay troué un fait des plus particuliers et des plus rare; Le premier replie de la dure mere nomme La faulx osifiée; dans Les ventricules enterieurs. une plus grande quantité de Limphe que Letat ordinaire que Je jugé estre LaCausse de la mort; Joint à Lossillation des arteres qui frapant Contre a corp dur Exitoit des douleurx de teste vine et aigüe auxquelles monsieur Le duc étoit sujet. il en avoit Esuyé une ataque quinze jour avant sa mort. Je lauois signé deux fois en Consequence Cequi Le soulaga; Le Retour su sang dans Les sinus Longitudinaux tout superieurs quinferieur. Etant tres genée na pas peu Contribué a son accident;

Je suis d'un tres profond Respect

Monseigneur.

abord du northumberland  
En Rode de Lorient  
Ce 19<sup>e</sup> Xbre 1746

Vostre tres humble  
Et tres soumis serviteur  
Duval: chirurgien  
ordinaire de la marine du  
departement de Brest

Monseigneur —

Surgeon Lieutenant Duval  
of the Northumberland

The loss of Monsieur le Duc d'Enville has been very cruel to me. The protection with which he deigned to honour me would have been reason enough for me to increase my care and my attention in my art in order to achieve his healing; but my respectful attachment to him was more than sufficient to redouble my night duties by him during his sickness.

The interest that you take in it, Monseigneur, gives me the assurance that you will find it agreeable that I should inform you of the events in his sickness. I am honoured to report to you hereafter upon this.

During the night of the twenty-fourth to the twenty-fifth of September, he as struck by a fit of serous apoplexy. One cannot know the precise moment of his accident, as he was found in that condition and lying in his room when his servant entered it around six or seven o'clock in the morning.

I was immediately called, and I found him in a state of considerable drowsiness, to which he returned as soon as one would leave him alone. His tongue was the thickness of a good finger, and considerably widened, his pulse was small and hard.

I immediately bled his arm and gave him an enema, followed by and emetic which brought results only when a second dose was administered. The nature was so much buried and oppressed that the remedy had not the quick effect for which I was hoping. It appeared however, to fulfill the indication which could be hoped from it, having been successful seven or eight times previously.

In order not to waste time, and to seize an opportunity which appeared very pressing to me, I bled him in a foot, and then in the jugular; then had him drink a sharpened laxative infusion added to the enemas that continued the same day. This in order to more speedily move the humours through the ordinary outlets, a purpose which appeared to me as the most appropriate, and which had the successful outcome that could be expected from it.

On the twenty-sixth in the morning, nature seemed to help my remedies and to have the upper hand; he recovered a degree of consciousness, he spoke, and his drowsiness decreased considerably, an expectancy rising in me that a favourable prognosis might be given. His laxative infusion was continued, added to the enemas which had their results in a relaxed evacuation.

That hope was of short duration. Towards two o'clock in the afternoon, his head was clogged again, he lost consciousness entirely, and whatever I might do, it was not possible for me to waken him. His pulse became small, concentrated, with a break from time to time, announcing a nearing death. As time was precious short, I deemed it necessary to apply the vesicatories, to which were added a few other remedies apt to bring about the return of the blood, and particularly of the lymph. All to no avail; he was in the same condition until one after midnight on the twenty-seventh when he had convulsive movements and died two hours afterwards.

I believed, Monseigneur, that it was of the utmost importance to effect an opening in order to assure myself of the cause of his death. Moreover, I received an order to take out the heart to embalm it, which I did.

Having opened the chest I found there approximately a good quart of water diffused in the two cavities, which seemed to me very odd, as he had never complained about that part of the body, nor about the accidents that a chest hydropsy brings. He was subject to edema in the lower parts of the legs, and had a lead-coloured hue of his face, which I deemed to be caused by a scurvy leaven, due to the long duration of the sea voyage.

After opening the chest, I went on to open the head and found a more particular and most rare fact; the first fold of the dura mater was an ossified scythe. In the fore ventricles was a greater quantity of lymph, which I judged to have been the cause of the death. This together with the oscillation of the arteries, which striking against the hard body, provoked the sharp headaches by which Monsieur le Duc was visited. He had experienced one such fit fifteen days before his death. I had looked after him twice as a consequence, which relieved him. The return of the blood in the longitudinal sinuses, upper and lower, being very much hindered contributed in no little manner to his accident.

I am with very deep respect

Monseigneur.

On board the Northumberland  
in the Bay of Lorient  
This 19<sup>th</sup> December 1746

Your very humble  
and very obedient servant  
Duval: Ordinary surgeon  
of the Navy of the  
Department of Brest

Figure 7 — Left — Duval letter transcribed into type in French

Right — Duval letter translated into English

British Admiralty, after capturing the 14 October 1746 letter, suggested that he took poison, and this was reiterated by Senator J.S. McLennan in 1918. Dr. Duval also suggests that he had scurvy.

He was found unconscious. His servant tells us that "this was just an attack which was similar to the one which he had had, but that he was paralysed", and Dr. Duval tells that his therapy "had been successful on seven or eight times" previously, indicating a recurrent problem. He suffered from sharp headaches ("One such fit fifteen days before his death"), but no documents have been found indicating that he had true seizures. One can postulate that his unconsciousness was due to a seizure, was due to apoplexy or a brain hemorrhage, or was the result of edema surrounding a tumor.

He was paralysed on one side, but soon was able to speak, and to recognize his servant or friend, suggesting that his paralysis was left-sided, and his intra-cranial lesion right-sided. His paralysis was described as "in the shoulder and the foot" suggesting as well that the lesion was superior.

When Dr. Duval opened le duc's skull there was no hemorrhage. Its absence tends to rule out a subarachnoid hemorrhage, a bleeding arterio-venous malformation, and cerebral hemorrhage from other causes. The brain was not obviously soft at removal suggesting as well that it was not ischemic.

Just prior to the fleet's leaving France, le duc's wife (his cousin) gave birth to their third child, a healthy daughter. This indirectly reduces the possibility of syphilis being a cause of his intra-cranial disease.

When le duc's heart was removed, it was not noted to be enlarged, nor indeed abnormal in any way, thus indirectly suggesting that he did not suffer from long standing hypertension.

Dr. Duval describes "the first fold of the dura mater . . . (as) . . . an ossified scythe". The base of this structure is seen in the upper half of Figure 8, and is reasonably the base of a parasagittal

meningioma. The bottom half of Figure 8 shows a triangular light area in the right frontal area near the midline, which conforms exactly to the bony excrescences seen in the upper part of the figure.

#### POSTULATION

I suggest that the headache which he suffered for some years was related to his meningioma; and that the hemiparesis which he developed at the time of his terminal illness was left-sided, and this enabled him to communicate with his servants, and Dr. Duval on September 25.

It is probable that his initial hemiparesis and loss of consciousness was due to increased intra-cranial pressure, as evidenced by "the small hard pulse"; and that with his enemas and emetics he was relatively dehydrated; thus improving his intracranial dynamics, and allowing his transient recovery.

There is no evidence that le duc had scurvy. He was well at the time of his arrival in Chibouctou, and Dr. Duval does not mention the blue discoloration of his face until late in his terminal illness.

With the sudden downward turn of events about midnight on September 26, we are told that he had a convulsion prior to his death, at a time when Dr. Duval is repeating his emetics. It is not unreasonable to assume that he aspirated some vomitus, and had his seizure secondary to the resultant hypoxia, and that this caused the discoloration of his face. Aspiration of vomitus also provides an explanation for the increased fluid found unexpectedly in his chest.

#### EPILOGUE

This is the end of the saga of le duc d'Anville; a young man who at the pinnacle of his career held the fate of the New World in his hands. When he died in Halifax from the aspiration of vomitus following the administration of emetics given to treat his benign brain tumor and its resultant cerebral edema, he received the only autopsy done on a royal personage in Canada.

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