

## Abstract

This project employs a mix of archival and digital techniques to evaluate an extensive geographic survey of the St. Lawrence River valley, conducted under auspices of the Quebec Governor James Murray following the 1760 British conquest of Canada. I show how scholars have misread the historical evidence surrounding the production and dissemination of this survey by ignoring the patronage motives of those involved in its production. I also use archival evidence to examine contemporary practices and ideas surrounding maps and accuracy. I discuss how I built a Historical Geographic Information System by manually creating and spatially adjusting vector data from Murray's personal copy of the survey (which was composed of forty-four individual map sheets measuring forty-five by thirty-six feet when fully assembled). This dataset allowed me to establish that the survey demonstrated a high degree of spatial accuracy for the eighteenth century. Here I also discuss methods for retroactively creating administrative boundaries, which were undocumented in the period. This allowed me to create spatial interoperability with other contemporary quantitative records—historical censuses and parish registers, which recorded births, marriages, and deaths—to evaluate the reliability of these various administrative technologies of state during the early modern period. I conclude that while the historical censuses undercounted people, the survey and parish registers support each other's conclusions, which suggest their demographic accuracy. This work serves as a proof of concept for a much larger spatial humanities project that would employ these same techniques to digitally process the series of other geographic surveys conducted throughout British North America between 1765 and 1777 to capture a geographic snapshot of the late colonial period.