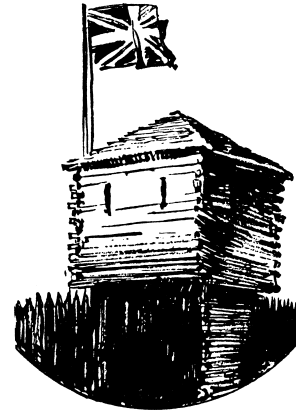


The British-

A NEW FLAG ON THE FRONTIER

Chapter 4 Section 1

War In The Woods: French, British, & Indians



Learn how in the 1750s England and France began to squabble over land in North America. A war started and the British won in 1760 and took control of much land, including Michigan.

New France Meets New England

Over the years New France grew slowly, perhaps too slowly. By the 1750s New France had about 80,000 Europeans while New England had nearly 1,250,000! Why such a difference?

The focus of life in New France was the fur trade. The traders spent their time in the woods and on the rivers collecting furs. They were not really interested in having cities. Cities meant less land for animals.

While the French were roaming all over the Great Lakes region, the British were busy building towns and starting farms. The farms fed the growing population. The British allowed many people to come to America who wanted religious freedom. The French did not.

Even worse, the British were beating the French at fur trading. They offered better goods and at lower prices to the Indians! The British kept moving farther west. A struggle over North America was building.

Spats, Arguments, and Fights

The French put Charles Langlade in charge of protecting their interests. Langlade was born at Michilimackinac. His mother was Ottawa and his father was French. He knew much about the Indians' way of fighting in the woods.

In 1754, leading 250 Ottawa and Ojibwa warriors, Langlade went east to assert French control. The French and British fought at Pittsburgh. A

young George Washington led the British soldiers. But Washington had to surrender and admit he was trespassing. The fireworks of the French and Indian War had begun! The war spread like a fire to all British and French territories around the world. Either side could lose its empire. At first, the French could not be beaten. They won battle after battle. The French woodsmen and Native Americans were a big help.

Everyone Wants the Indians

Both sides were tugging at the different tribes to join them. The French used warriors from western tribes; many of them came from Michigan. The Native Americans were often willing to attack the British because the British were starting farms and towns, and taking away Indian land in the process.

Later, French began to lose the battles. To get more support, Charles Langlade met with a grand council of the Michigan tribes across the river from Detroit. It was March, 1759. A famous chief named Pontiac was at the meeting listening. It was reported that Langlade's speech went something like this:

Listen!

"My Brothers, I will not try to tell you that the French are still winning the war. But do not make the mistake of thinking that because there have been setbacks, the French are lost.

Now I... ask again that you raise up your tomahawks in the French cause, which is and must be your cause as well.... you know in your hearts the French are your friends.... They love the land as you love it and know that it belongs not to individuals, but to all, to share equally. The English may ply you with great gifts.... but the gifts disappear when you have won and your land disappears as well. If you do not fight him with the French, then mark what I say, the time will come when you will have to fight him alone...."

Wilderness Empire by Allan W. Eckert.



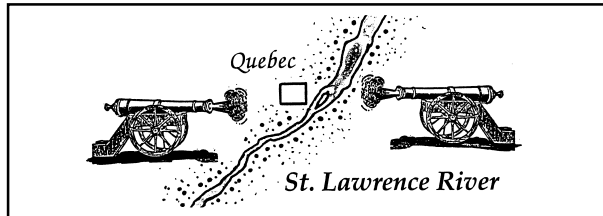
The French and British worked hard to gain the support of the Indians. The Indians fought for both sides during the French and Indian War. (Courtesy Mackinac State Historic Parks)

Trouble On the St. Lawrence

The St. Lawrence River was the supply line into New France. In 1758 the British sailed up the river and took control. The St. Lawrence became the pathway for British victory. Soon the French could not get supplies to trade with the tribes.

In 1759, it came down to a battle outside the gates of Quebec, the capital of New France. The French fort was strong and it sat on a steep hill looking over the river. Charles Langlade, Chief Pontiac, and about 400 Indians from the Michigan area were there.

The two sides had been fighting for 80 days. The French were having problems but it looked as though the British would have to leave soon. Their supplies were very low and the river would freeze soon. The British commander took one last gamble.

**Quebec City- Will They See Us Coming?**

On a rainy and moonless night, British soldiers quietly crossed the St. Lawrence River. The soldiers pulled themselves slowly up the great cliff. During

the night more and more men scrambled to the top. The boats went back and forth across the river all night. It was amazing, but the French did not see them!

At six in the morning the French general got on his horse and rode outside the fort where he saw about 4,000 British soldiers lined up. He gasped, "This is serious!" The British had done what seemed impossible.

The alarm was given and thousands of French troops ran out of the fort. An intense battle began. The generals from both sides were killed and the French lost the battle. Once the British controlled Quebec, they controlled the St. Lawrence River. No supplies could reach French soldiers in the west- including Michigan.

An Empire Dies!

That night Charles Langlade met with Pontiac and then the Indians headed back to the Great Lakes country. By 1760 all of New France had been surrendered to the British.

What Are the Facts?

1. Why was New France weaker than New England at the time of the French and Indian War?
2. What was the French and Indian War about?
3. What argument did Charles Langlade use to convince Indians from the Michigan area to fight against the British?

4. Why was the St. Lawrence River important in the French and Indian War?

Express yourself:

If the British had lost the French and Indian War, give your opinion about how Michigan would be different today.

Chapter 4 Section 2

Chief Pontiac Rebels

The British made mistakes in dealing with the tribes. The Indians became quite upset. Chief Pontiac finally attacked and tried to drive the British out.

The British Take Over Michigan

The British came to Detroit to take charge of Fort Pontchartrain. Its new name would be Fort Detroit. Though the French soldiers left, many of the fur traders and those with small farms stayed behind. The French continued to be the largest non-Indian group in Michigan for another 60 years! Even though the French seemed friendly, some of them hoped their soldiers would come back some day. They told this to the Native Americans too.



What one artist thought Pontiac looked like. (Art by Dirk Gringhuis)

Bad Policies

The British government was not wise in dealing with the tribes. There were new orders not to give them presents or to trade any gunpowder to them. By now the tribes were used to using guns, and they needed gunpowder for hunting. Also the British demanded more furs for everything the tribes needed. Some traders cheated the Indians too. Meanwhile, the British wanted land for farms and settlers.



Major Gladwin, British commander at Detroit in 1763. (Courtesy Michigan State Archives)

The tribes were growing restless. They knew the French and British were still at war in Europe. There were rumors the French army would return. At Detroit, Major Gladwin was given command and he was not friendly to the Indians. The Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Huron all had villages near Detroit. Chief Pontiac lived in the Ottawa village where Windsor, Canada is today.

Trouble Is Brewing

On April 27, 1763 Pontiac invited many tribes to come to a meeting along the Ecorse River. He talked about a way to get rid of the British. He would ask to meet with Major Gladwin in the fort. Pontiac would bring many warriors in with him. Each man would be wearing a large blanket.

Over the next few days Indians began to show up at the French blacksmith asking for metal files. Did he ask why they wanted so many files? Did he provide the files with a curious look or just a little smile? Pontiac's warriors were cutting the barrels of their muskets short with the files! The guns would be under their blankets when they walked into the fort!

Mid-morning on May 7, 1763, 11 chiefs and 60 warriors solemnly walked into the fort— their fingers close to gun triggers. But they soon realized something was wrong. The soldiers were not going about business as usual. They were armed and ready. Every move of the Indians was tensely watched by the Englishmen. How did they know? There are many stories explaining how the British learned about Pontiac's plan. One says a young French woman heard about the plan and wanted to warn her boyfriend who was a British trader.

A grim Pontiac told Major Gladwin this was not the way to hold a council and he left. The next day Pontiac asked if all of his warriors could come and smoke a pipe of peace with the British. Gladwin told him only chiefs could come.

The next day all the Ottawa came to the fort anyway. They were not allowed to go in. Pontiac was furious that his plans had not worked. The 120 or so British soldiers knew they were in real danger because Pontiac had about 800 warriors.



Pontiac's men leave the fort after Major Gladwin discovered their plan to attack the British at Detroit. (Frederic Remington, Harper's Magazine April, 1897)

Pontiac Attacks Detroit

Suddenly yells and war cries came from the woods. The British soldiers tensed. They were far from any help. Warriors rushed up to the fort and furiously tried to hack a hole in the wooden wall with their *tomahawks*. *Tomahawks are small metal hatchets used in fighting.* After many warriors were killed, the Native Americans became convinced they could not cut their way into the fort.

That night the Indians started fires against the wooden walls. British soldiers raced back and forth with buckets of water to stop the flames. Officers expected the Indians would try to do the same thing the next night so they took precautions. A hole was cut through the wall from the inside and a cannon placed to fire on anyone coming close to the wall! In the darkness that night many more Indians died.

For days the battle continued. The British were becoming desperate. They had only three bullets left for each soldier and very little food. Major Gladwin clung to the hope that supplies and reinforcements would come by the end of the month...just a few more days. On May 30, the soldiers could see the supply canoes in the distance on the river. As the boats came closer,

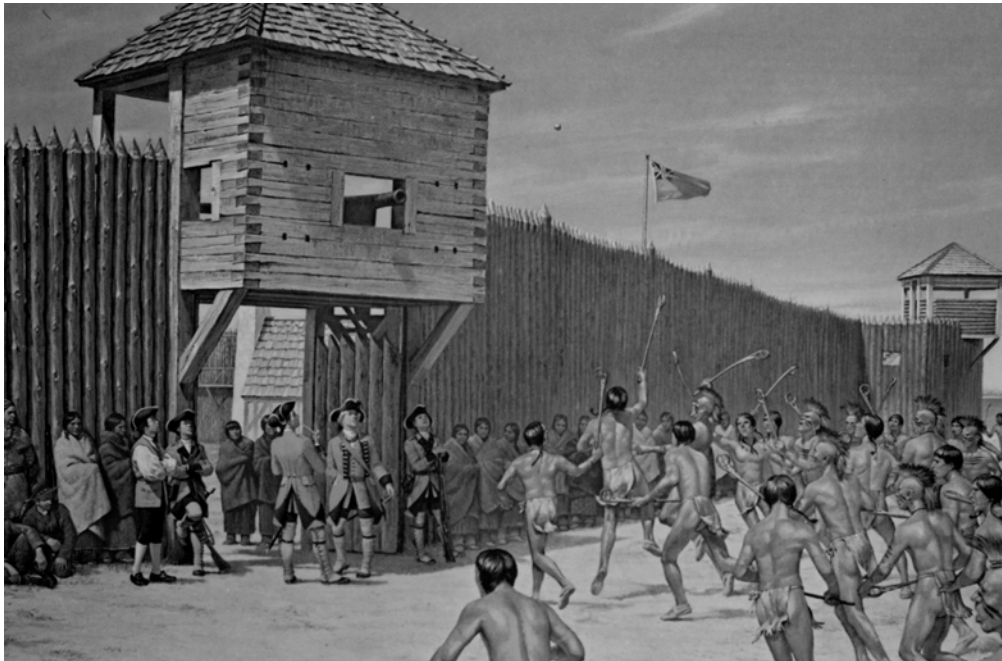
those in the fort were horrified as they realized the canoes had Indians in them. Pontiac and his men had already captured the food and ammunition. The fight went on. All of June and most of July passed with the British closed up in Fort Detroit. Finally the British reached Detroit by water with another 280 men and supplies.

Time Runs Out

The tribal warriors did not give up. They were sure the soldiers would run low on ammunition again. But time was also going against them. It was fall and they needed to hunt and gather food for the winter. Warriors, with their families, began to drift away. Some of the Indian groups made peace. Near the end of October, Pontiac received a letter from the French telling him France and England had finally made peace. The French would not send soldiers to help them, so Pontiac decided to stop the attack. The Indian siege of 153 days was the longest in American history and showed Pontiac's skill as an organizer and warrior.

Secret Plans For Michilimackinac

Detroit was not the only British fort the Native Americans attacked. At Fort Michilimackinac, the Chief of the Ojibwa tribe had become friends



Fort Michilimackinac was attacked by the Ojibwa during a lacrosse game. Many British soldiers were killed. (Courtesy Michigan Bell an Ameritech Company)

with the British commander. The chief suggested the Ojibwa and Sauk tribes play a game of baggataway or *lacrosse* in honor of the British king's birthday. The commander agreed it was a fine idea. The Indians could play just outside the fort. *Lacrosse is an Indian game with two teams having many players. The players have small rackets and try to move a ball across the other team's goal.*

Alexander Henry was one of the British fur traders at the Fort. He was adopted as a brother by Wawatam, another Ojibwa chief. It was Chief Wawatam who invited Henry to come on a hunt with him and his wife. Wawatam said he was “worried by the noise of evil birds.” That was a tribal expression meaning there might be trouble. Since Henry was waiting for his canoes of supplies, he turned the chief down. He was touched when Wawatam and his wife left with tears in their eyes. That same day many Indians came into the fort to trade. Henry was puzzled when the only goods they bought were tomahawks!



The Lacrosse Game

Many of the soldiers came out to watch the game. It was a great sight! The British commander made a large bet on the Ojibwa side. Even though it was a warm day, Native American women wrapped in blankets sat near the gate. Suddenly the ball went over the wall and into the fort. The players rushed inside after it. As they ran they snatched weapons from under the women's blankets. One officer held off several Indians with his sword until he was killed, but few of the soldiers had time to defend themselves.

The Frenchman Charles Langlade and his family were watching the fighting from their house. Alexander Henry ran up to the Langlades and begged them to help him. Langlade said,

“What do you expect me to do?”

Amazingly, a Native American woman who worked in their house took Henry up the back stairs and hid him in the attic.

War Spreads Far and Wide

During that long summer of 1763 the British soldiers learned of other disasters. Many tribes all along the western frontier had risen up to throw out the British. By July, nine of the 12 forts west of the Ohio River had been captured. Only Fort Detroit, Fort Niagara on the Niagara River, and Fort Pitt at Pittsburgh held out against the tribes. It was part of the greatest Native American *uprising* against the Europeans in American history and became known as Pontiac's War or Pontiac's *Rebellion*. *A rebellion is an armed attack against those in control. It could be an attack against a king, a government, or the military.* Pontiac was a courageous leader who was trying to keep his people's land the best way he knew.

Pontiac's Rebellion greatly upset the British. They certainly did not want this sort of trouble to happen again so they decided to stop any more settlers from moving west onto tribal land. Maybe this would keep the tribes from attacking the forts. The British made the Proclamation of 1763 which said it was illegal for any settler to go west of the Appalachian Mountains.

It is always hard to please two groups at the same time. Settlers in the American colonies had long counted on the right to be able to move west and start farms and villages in "new" areas. The Proclamation of 1763 was a real aggravation to them. It became one of many problems between American colonists and the British government which finally led to the War for Independence.

Pontiac's Rebellion, which started to push the British out of the tribal lands, did succeed in a way. The British were pushed out after the War for Independence, but this did not help Pontiac and his people. The American colonists started the United States and more settlers swarmed west than ever before!

The African American Trader

In the mid-1760s Jean de Sable (JHAN duh SAW bul) came to Michigan. De Sable, born on the island of Haiti, was an African American with a French background .

It is said de Sable became good friends with Chief Pontiac and lived near his camp, trading with the tribes. This African American moved west when Pontiac left Michigan. In 1779 he became the first non-Native American to have a permanent settlement at the portage of Chicago.

De Sable was well-educated and spoke English, French and several tribal languages. He had a good reputation among both the English and Native Americans. Jean de Sable was a unique person and one of the first African Americans in the land of Michigan.



by
Aaron
Zenz

What Are the Facts?

1. Which things made the tribes angry once the British took over Michigan?
2. Who made the plan to take over the fort at Detroit in 1763? Did the French encourage or help with this plan?
3. How did the tribes plan to surprise the British soldiers at Fort Michilimackinac?
4. Chief Wawatam acted as an individual and had different feelings from those who attacked Fort Michilimackinac. What did Chief Wawatam do? Give an example to show his feelings were different.
5. How did Pontiac's Rebellion help lead to the American War for Independence from the British?

Chapter  **Review****Consider the Big Picture**

The French lost control of the St. Lawrence River- their way into the Great Lakes- and thus they lost their empire of New France.

The British did not control Michigan for a long time- less than 40 years, but many things changed during this time.

The rules the British finally used when trading with the tribes upset them very much and caused a war led by Chief Pontiac.

Many Michigan area tribes switched from fighting against the British to fighting with them.

During the Revolutionary War, Detroit was a British base for raids to other parts of the country.

Building Your Michigan Word Power

Write each of these six words in a column. (lacrosse, massacre, rebellion, scalp, siege, tomahawk) Next to each one write the best definition from those below. There are extra definitions.

something from the top of a person's head; a large and heavy ax;
an uprising against those in control; a short fight; a complete victory with the loss of most of the enemy; a very long attack against a fort or city; the French name for a Native American game; a small metal hatchet

Talking About It

Get together in a small group and talk about-

What does the discovery of a path up a steep hill in Quebec city have to do with the French leaving Michigan which is over 600 miles away?

In 1760 most tribes in the Michigan area were for the French, but by the time of the Revolutionary War they were fighting with the British. What happened? Why did they change sides? What was the goal of the tribes?

Pontiac's plans to force the British out of the Great Lakes was quite amazing. Can you think of any other time in history where native people have attacked so many forts with such success? What was the reason behind this success?

Put It To Use

Imagine you are a newspaper reporter based in Detroit for the *Michigan Frontier Gazette*. By writing four short articles, report the events of the Revolutionary War from the viewpoint of a person in Detroit.

Most of Michigan history to this point is about Native Americans, the French and the British– but the book also mentions three people from other places. Who are they and where were they from? Write a biography of each person.