

Geography and History Activity

The logo for 'networks' features the word in a bold, lowercase sans-serif font. A stylized graphic of intersecting lines forms a starburst or network pattern behind the letter 'o'.

Life in the American Colonies

Lesson 4 Rivalry in North America

Understanding Movement: Westward Movement and the Proclamation of 1763

By September of 1760, the fighting in the French and Indian War had ended. In February of 1763, the Treaty of Paris was signed. Great Britain now controlled Canada and all the land from the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River. This area included the Ohio River Valley.

Conflicting claims to the Ohio River Valley had sparked the French and Indian War. French claims to this land also had prevented colonists from moving west. That barrier was now removed. Settlers began moving out of the colonies and into the fertile river valley. Native Americans in the region resented this takeover of their land. In 1763, an Ottawa chief named Pontiac organized a rebellion and captured several English forts in the Great Lakes region.

The westward movement of colonists created a new set of problems for Great Britain's King George III: the movement of colonists away from the colonies and the possibility of war with the Native Americans. In an attempt to solve these problems, the king issued the Proclamation of 1763.

Geography

The Appalachian Mountains lay west of the thirteen colonies. It formed a natural barrier between the colonies and all land to the west. Beginning in Newfoundland, Canada, the barrier extended about 1,500 miles south into present-day Alabama.

The Proclamation of 1763 prohibited the colonists from settling west of the Appalachian Mountains. Any settlers living west of the mountains had to give up their land and move back East. The proclamation also set aside all English territory between the Appalachians and the Mississippi River for the Native American tribes who lived there.

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Life in the American Colonies



Geography and Economics

The colonies were a vital part of Great Britain’s economy. The British system of mercantilism depended upon their continued prosperity. One goal of the Proclamation of 1763 was to keep colonists from leaving settlements along the coast. From these busy American ports, ships left with colonial exports of raw materials for Britain and arrived with imports of British manufactured goods.

Another goal of the proclamation was to prevent another costly war. Land west of the Appalachians was the homeland and hunting ground of many native tribes. Chief Pontiac’s organized rebellion was a reaction to losing this land to settlers. By stopping colonial expansion west into their territory, the king hoped to calm Native American fears and restore peace.

Unexpected Consequences

The Proclamation of 1763 was not meant to punish anyone. The king hoped to solve several problems while controlling trade and ensuring

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prosperity. However, many colonists ignored the proclamation. When conflicts broke out between English settlers and Native Americans, the Crown was placed in a difficult position. Should it defend its subjects or the Native Americans?

In addition, it seemed to the colonists that the king had taken away the land that they had won in the recent war and given it to the Native Americans. Also, their freedom of movement was restricted. These beliefs added to the growing distrust of Americans for their government.

Understanding the Concept

Directions: Answer the following questions.

1. Identifying What regions did Great Britain receive in the Treaty of Paris?

2. Specifying What land feature stood as a barrier between the thirteen colonies and the Ohio River Valley?

3. Explaining According to the Proclamation of 1763, where were colonists encouraged to move.

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Life in the American Colonies

Applying the Concept

4. Analyzing Why did the Proclamation of 1763 fail to stop colonists from moving into or remaining in Native American territory?

5. Inferring How was the Proclamation of 1763 influenced by the goal of mercantilism?

6. Synthesizing The war with France had been expensive and was not yet paid for. How was the proclamation a tool to help pay for the war?
