

Life in the American Colonies

Lesson 4 Rivalry in North America, *Continued*

Rivalry Between the French and the British

In the 1700s, Britain and France were top world powers. They competed for colonies all over the world, including North America.

West of the thirteen English colonies were the Appalachian mountains. Beyond them was the Ohio River valley. This large area had many natural resources. Both the British and French wanted the region. The French were already trading for fur with the Native Americans there. They did not want to share this business with the British.

To protect their claims, the French built a string of forts. The British then started to build a fort of their own. Before it was finished, the French took it over, built their own fort, and called it Fort Duquesne (doo•KAYN).

In the spring of 1754, Virginia colony sent its militia to Fort Duquesne. A militia is a military force made up of everyday citizens. This militia was led by a young Virginian named George Washington. Washington set up his own fort near Fort Duquesne and called it Fort Necessity. The French attacked, helped by Native Americans. Together, they defeated the Virginia militia. Even so, Washington was called a hero. He had struck the first blow against the French.

Now both the French and the British looked to the Native Americans for help. In this, the French had the advantage. The Native Americans trusted them. The French were more interested in fur trading than in land. In contrast, the British had already taken much land from the Native Americans and could not be trusted.

The British tried to make a treaty with the Iroquois Confederacy, the most powerful group of Native Americans in eastern North America. Representatives from seven colonies met with Iroquois leaders at Albany, New York, in June 1754. The Iroquois would not agree to an alliance, or partnership. They only promised to stay neutral—to take no side in the fighting.

While in Albany, the delegates also talked about ways the colonies might work together against the French. They decided to adopt Benjamin Franklin's Albany Plan of Union. It would create a united colonial government. Because no colony wanted to give up any power, the plan failed.

Soon all were involved in the French and Indian War.

Describing

1. What geographical area separated the colonies from the Ohio River valley?

Explaining

2. Why did the French believe the Ohio River valley was their territory?

Reading Check

3. Why did conflict between the French and British increase in the mid-1700s?

Finding Main Ideas

4. What was the main reason Native Americans would not help the British against the French?

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5. Why was William Pitt successful at managing the war for Britain?

 Mark the Text

6. Underline William Pitt's goals in the war with the French.

 Explaining

7. What event marked the turning point in the war?

 Drawing Conclusions

8. How could the Proclamation of 1763 calm the fighting between colonists and Native Americans?

The French and Indian War

Early in the war, the French were winning. They captured several British forts. Their Native American allies were attacking colonists along the frontier, or edges, of the colonies.

In 1757, William Pitt became the leader of the British government. He was a great military planner. He decided to send more trained British soldiers to fight in North America. He also decided that Great Britain would pay the high cost of fighting the war—for now. Higher taxes on the colonies would pay for it later.

In North America, Pitt had two goals. The first was to open the Ohio River valley to the British. The second was to take over French Canada.

The British had a number of victories in 1758. The first was at Fort Louisburg, in present-day Nova Scotia. They also took Fort Frontenac at Lake Ontario and Fort Duquesne. This they renamed Fort Pitt.

In September 1759, the British won a major victory. They captured Quebec—the capital of New France. The following year, the British took Montreal. This ended the war in North America. The war continued in Europe until it finally ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1763.

In the treaty, Great Britain received Canada, Florida, and French lands east of the Mississippi. French lands west of the Mississippi—the Louisiana Territory—went to Spain.

New British Policies

The British now controlled the Ohio River valley. They would not pay for the use of Native American land and raised the price of their trade goods. Worst of all, British settlers began moving west.

In 1763, Pontiac, chief of an Ottawa village near Detroit, decided to fight back. His forces attacked British forts and killed settlers along the Pennsylvania and Virginia frontiers. This was called Pontiac's War.

Then something surprising happened in Britain. King George III ruled that colonists could not settle west of the Appalachian Mountains. This Proclamation of 1763 was useful to the British. It calmed the fighting between colonists and Native Americans. It also stopped colonists from leaving their colonies on the coast, where the important markets and businesses were. Britain sent ten thousand British troops to America to enforce the new rule.