

## **A Prelude to the American Revolution**

### **The French and Indian War**

(AKA - The Seven Year's War)

#### **Why fight the war?**

Tensions between France and England had been high since the 1680s. Three wars had been fought prior 1754. In the 1740s and 1750s, there was an increasing territorial dispute between the French and the English in their American colonies that was focused on the Ohio River Valley. The French were using the Ohio River to reach their settlements along Mississippi River from their Northern Territories. They began building forts along the Ohio River. The English settlers wanted the same territory for the fur trade, land speculation (buying property at a low price in hopes that it will be worth more in the future), and farming.

In the English colony of Virginia, Governor Dinwiddie ordered a fort to be built along the Ohio River. The French seized the English fort in 1754. In response to the French actions, Governor Dinwiddie ordered George Washington, an officer in the British Army, to expel the French from the Ohio River Valley. Washington set up Fort Necessity, also along the Ohio River, but was forced to retreat and abandon the fort by the French within a month.

#### **The war begins:**

- 1754 - The Albany Conference - 55 delegates of 7 British Colonies and 150 leaders of the Iroquois Nation (whose territory was between the French and English territories) met to discuss the pending war. It was agreed that the Iroquois would stay neutral in the event of a war with the French. It was also decided that the British Army would have one commanding officer responsible for the troops in all 13 colonies. Ben Franklin's proposal (The Albany Plan of Union) to unite the colonies into one centralized government was rejected.
- 1755 - The French ally themselves with various Native American tribes against the British and defeat the English. When the Delaware peoples see that the English could be defeated, they begin attacking English settlers.
- 1756 - Great Britain formally declares war on France. The French and Indian War reaches Europe, becomes known as the "Seven Years War" and is fought throughout their colonial empires in Asia and Africa as well.
- 1758 - The Iroquois nation (allies of the British) pressures the Delaware nation (allies of the French) and attacks against the British. The French become outnumbered by the British forces and begin to pull out of North America
- 1761 - The Spanish enter the war
- 1761 - The British capture the French city of Quebec. This is the turning point of the war in North America.

#### **The Treaty of Paris - 1763**

The Treaty of Paris ends the war. France's territory in North America is reduced to a few Caribbean Islands and lands west of the Mississippi River. The North and East become entirely part of the British Empire. Spain gains control of New Orleans, but loses Florida in order to retain control of Cuba and the Philippines.

#### **Proclamation Act of 1763**

The British government realized that tensions were high between various Native American tribes and foresaw a new war on the horizon, especially after several groups in the Great Lakes region rebelled against British attempts to control trade in the region. In order to avoid both the cost of a 2<sup>nd</sup> war with the Native Americans and a disruption in trade, the British government issued the



Proclamation Act. The act drew a North-South line along the Appalachian Mountains. British Settlers were forbidden from expanding colonial territory west of this line. The farmers and land speculators in the colonies were upset because the Proclamation Act limited the size of the colonies and denied them access to lands they had fought to obtain.

#### Major Political Figures in English Politics

- a. King George III
- b. William Pitt (Prime Minister of England in 1757)
- c. Lord George Grenville (finance minister turned Prime Minister in 1763) who believed that the colonists should begin to pay for the costs of their own government and defense

1. Why does a rivalry exist between the English and the French in the colonies?

2. What are the different reasons that the English and the French want to control the Ohio River Valley? *Explain.*

3. What sparked the outbreak of the war?

4. How did the colonists prepare for the war? *Give examples.*

5. What do you think pushes the Native Americans to choose sides in the war?

6. Why do you think Spain joins the war with England and France? (hint: who else has colonies in North America)

7. Who was the Victor (winner) and why?

8. Write a one paragraph reflection on the following question: After reviewing the Treaty of Paris of 1763 and the Proclamation Act of 1763, do you think the colonists got what they wanted out of the French and Indian War? Please Explain. What would you do if you were a colonist?