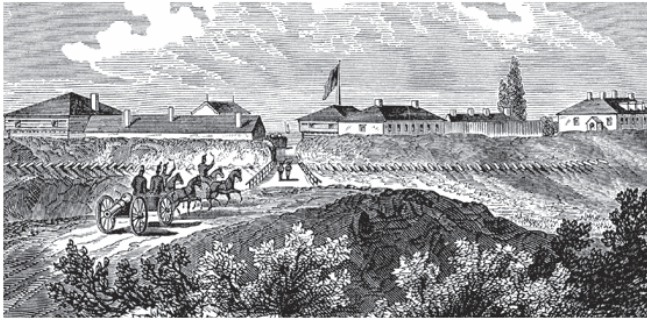


Where  
the past  
is present

# DETROIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## TEACHER RESOURCE LESSON PLAN

### PONTIAC'S REBELLION



#### INTRODUCTION

This lesson helps third grade students understand the life and culture in Detroit during the British occupation between 1760 and 1796. The lesson includes a comprehensive background essay, a list of additional resources, and copies of worksheets and primary sources.

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Who was Chief Pontiac, and how does his rebellion show a change in the relationship between Europeans and Native Americans?

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Consider multiple perspectives in history, particularly the points of view of the French, British and Native Americans.
- Learn about Chief Pontiac and the Native Americans that fought to protect their homelands.

#### MI GLCES – GRADE THREE SOCIAL STUDIES

##### H3 – History of Michigan Through Statehood

- 3-H3.0.5 - Use informational text and visual data to compare how American Indians and settlers in the early history of Michigan adapted to, used, and modified their environment.
- 3-H3.0.6 - Use a variety of sources to describe interactions that occurred between American Indians and the first European explorers and settlers in Michigan.
- 3-H3.0.8 – Use case studies or stories to describe how the ideas or actions of individuals affected the history of Michigan.

#### COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS - ELA

##### Reading

- 1 - Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- 9 - Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

##### Writing

- 1 - Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

# LESSON PLAN: PONTIAC'S REBELLION

## BACKGROUND ESSAY

### Who Owns North America?

As the French fur trade in the Great Lakes region prospered in the middle of the 1700s, other nations entered the area – first the British and then the Americans. These nations fought over control of large parts of the Western Hemisphere. Many battles took place to decide which nation would control the region and the forts, and therefore, the fur trade. The Native Americans had been there the longest, so foreign powers often sought their help in the battles. Almost as often these foreign powers made promises to the Native people that they did not keep.

The flag at the fort in Detroit changed many times between 1760 and 1813.

### The French and Indian War

In the 1740s, the population of European Americans on the east coast was rising. The British colonials looked to lands to the west of the Appalachian Mountains for more space. These lands had traditionally belonged to Native American groups, but the French had also claimed them. Around 1750, the French and the British began to argue over who owned the land in present-day western Pennsylvania and Ohio. In 1753, the French began to settle the Ohio River valley, near present-day Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The British, who felt this land belonged to the colony of Virginia, sent a young officer named George Washington to the French fort with a letter asking them to leave. The attempt was a failure, and the British and French continued to fight over control of the area until war was declared in 1756.

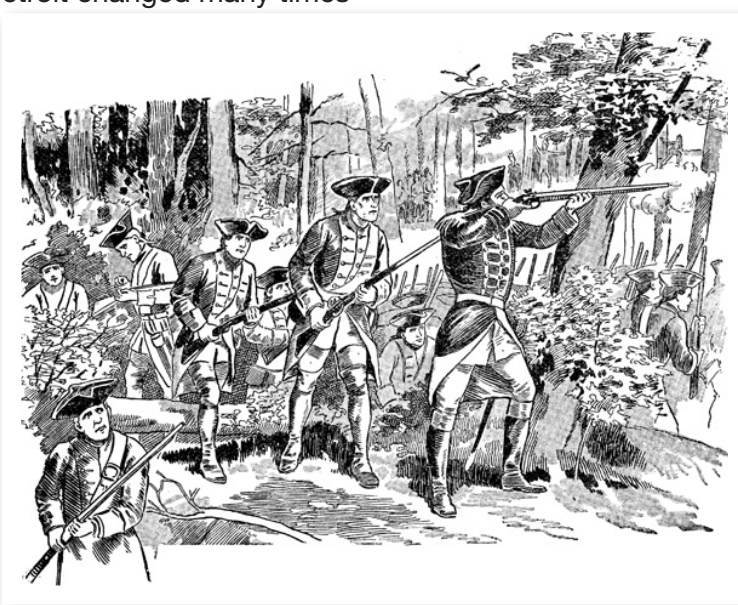
The bulk of the fighting in the French and Indian War took place in the New York colony and Quebec, Canada. In the beginning the French won several key battles, but by 1759 the British had gained most of their New York forts back and had started

to capture forts in Canada. In the summer of 1759, the British laid siege to Quebec, knowing it was a strategic French stronghold in the new world. The fighting lasted almost three months, until the French surrendered in September 1759. At this time the British had control of all of North America except Montreal and Detroit.

In the Treaty of Paris in 1760 that ended the war, France ceded all of its land in North America, including Detroit, to the British. In September 1760, British Major Robert Rogers arrived in Detroit and took control of the city from the French.

The British renamed the French Fort Ponchartrain

“Fort Detroit.” In 1778 they razed Fort Ponchartrain and built a new fort on a bluff above the village. They named it Fort Lernoult for Richard Lernoult, the British commander in charge of Detroit at the time. The British controlled Detroit from 1760 until 1796, which was more than 12 years after Detroit and Michigan became part of the United States as a result of the American



Revolutionary War.

### Pontiatic's Rebellion

By 1763, Ottawa Chief Pontiac was unhappy with the British, who had taken much of the Native American lands in Michigan. The French had tried to deal fairly with the Native Americans, but he feared the British wanted all of his people's land and would cheat them out of it.

Pontiac decided that the only way to protect his people was to unite all the Native American groups in Michigan and attack the British. Their goal would be to kick them off their lands and send them back from where they came.

Pontiac held a great council on the Ecorse River. It included members of many Native American tribes, including the Chippewa, Ottawa, Shawnee,

# LESSON PLAN: PONTIAC'S REBELLION

Delaware, Miami, Potawatomi, and Hurons. Together, they planned to attack Fort Detroit. Other Native American groups in Ohio, Illinois and Pennsylvania launched their own attacks on British forts.

Between May and October, eight Great Lakes forts fell. Unable to get Detroit to surrender, Pontiac and his allies held Fort Detroit under siege.

By October, the winter was getting closer and many groups tired of battle and went home. Pontiac then discovered that the British and French had signed a peace treaty, which meant he could no longer count on the support of the French in his attacks. In 1763 Pontiac surrendered his attack on Fort Detroit.

## American Revolution

During the American Revolution Detroit was controlled by the British, but it was not a colony. It was not directly involved in the war for independence, but instead was a strategic stronghold for the British in North America. Detroit

housed several American prisoners of war during the war.

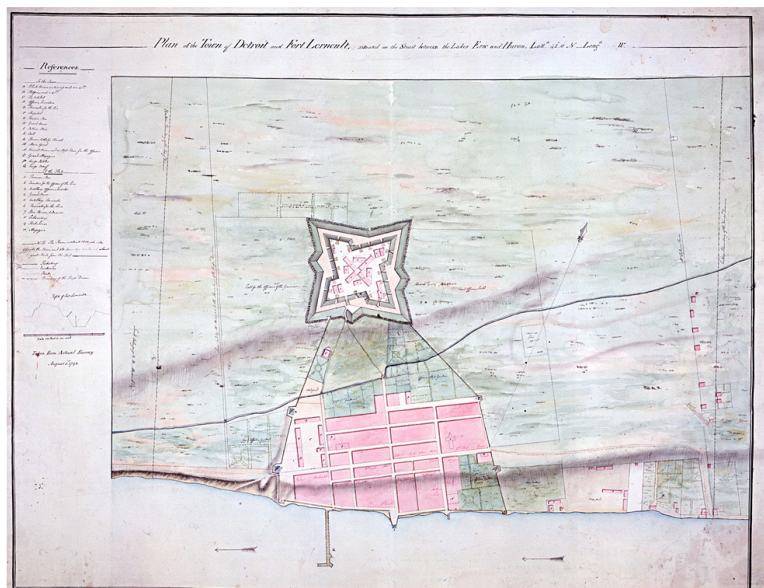
After America won independence from Great Britain in 1783, the new nation fought both the British and Native Americans for control of Great Lakes forts. The British refused to surrender Detroit, and the Americans had a difficult time reaching the fort and village because much of Ohio was controlled by Native American groups that did not want the Americans to take their land.

The conflict between Native American groups and the young United States was called the Northwest Indian War. Many Native Americans in the Northwest Territory had sided with the British in the Revolutionary War. When the British ceded this land to the United States after the Revolutionary War, the

Native Americans were angry. The British had not consulted them before they surrendered the land. As a result, many tribes organized into the Western Indian Confederacy and fought against the U.S. forces that were trying to claim their lands. Under the leadership of Blue Jacket of the Shawnees and Little Turtle of the Miamis, the Western Indian Confederacy won several battles against the Americans in 1790 and 1791. They were encouraged and supplied by the British, who had refused to evacuate British fortifications in the region.

In 1791, President George Washington ordered

General “Mad” Anthony Wayne to organize and train a proper fighting force. Wayne took command late in 1793. He led United States forces to a victory at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794, which finally brought the conflict to an end. Indian tribes were forced to cede extensive territory, including much of present-day Ohio, in the Treaty of Greenville in 1795.



In 1796, after Colonel John Francis Hamtramck secured the village for the Americans, the British surrendered Detroit to Captain Moses Porter. Over ten years after Detroit officially became property of the United States, it finally was controlled by American troops.



# LESSON PLAN: PONTIAC'S REBELLION

## MATERIALS USED:

### Data Elements

- *British Perspective*
- *Chief Pontiac's Perspective*
- *Pontiac's Rebellion Overview*

## LESSON SEQUENCE:

1. Explain to the students that after the British took control of North America and Detroit after the French and Indian War, life was very different for the people who had lived in Detroit under the French.
2. The British let the French settlers stay, and allowed them to practice their religion. For the most part, the French settlers who stayed in Detroit didn't mind the British rulers.
3. The Native Americans, on the other hand, did not like the British. They felt that the British treated them poorly. In 1763, Chief Pontiac was frustrated with the British. He organized a meeting of tribal leaders from Michigan, Ohio, Indiana to discuss how what they could do.
4. Explain to the students that they will be learning about Pontiac's rebellion and its impacts by reading sources from both the British and the Indian perspectives.
5. Make a chart on the board, one for each group.
6. As a group, read *British Perspective*. Ask students to list the reasons why the British were in Michigan, and what they were doing there. Ask them also about how they viewed and treated the Indians.
7. As a group, read *Chief Pontiac's Perspective*. Ask students to list the reasons why the Indians decided to attack. Write them on the proper place on the chart.
8. Read *Pontiac's Rebellion Overview* as a class. Lead a discussion about the results of the rebellion. Who won? Why? Do you think the outcome was right, or fair? How do you think it should have ended?

For more information about the **Detroit Historical Society**, or to schedule a field trip to the **Detroit Historical Museum** or **Dossin Great Lakes Museum**, visit [detroithistorical.org](http://detroithistorical.org)



# LESSON PLAN: PONTIAC'S REBELLION

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Anderson, Fred. *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.

Anderson, Fred. *The War That Made America: A Short History of the French and Indian War*. New York: Viking, 2005.

Barry, James P. *Old Forts of the Great Lakes: Sentinels in the Wilderness*. Lansing, Mich: Thunder Bay Press, 1994.

Borneman, Walter R. *The French and Indian War: Deciding the Fate of North America*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006.

Burton, Clarence Monroe, William Stocking, and Gordon K. Miller. *The City of Detroit Michigan 1701-1922*. Volume 1. Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2010.

Eckert, Allan W. *A Sorrow in Our Heart: The Life of Tecumseh*. New York: Bantam Books, 1992.

Emery, Benjamin Franklin. *Sketches of Old Michigan Forts*. Detroit: Old Forts and Historic Memorial Association, 1931.

Dixon, David. *Never Come to Peace Again: Pontiac's Uprising and the Fate of the British Empire in North America*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005.

Dunnigan, Brian Leigh. *Frontier Metropolis: Picturing Early Detroit, 1701-1838*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001.

Grimm, Joe. *Michigan Voices: Our State's History in the Words of the People Who Lived It*. Detroit, Mich: Detroit Free Press, 1987.

Henrickson, Wilma Wood. *Detroit Perspectives: Crossroads and Turning Points*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991.

Hamil, Fred C. *When Beaver Was King*. Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1951.

Johnson, Ida Amanda. *The Michigan Fur Trade*. Lansing: Michigan Historical Commission, 1919.

Mason, Philip P. *Detroit, Fort Lernoult, and the American Revolution*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1964.

Skaggs, David Curtis and Larry L. Nelson, eds. *The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes, 1754-1814*. East Lansing: MSU Press, 2001.

Sword, Wiley. *President Washington's Indian War: The Struggle for the Old Northwest, 1790-1795*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985.

Taylor, Alan. *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006.

Voorhis, Ernest. *Historic Forts and Trading Posts of the French Regime and of the English Trading Companies*. Ottawa: Dept. of the Interior, 1930.

Woodford, Arthur M. *This Is Detroit, 1701-2001*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2001.

## LINKS

History.com, French and Indian War: <http://www.history.com/topics/french-and-indian-war>

Library of Congress, Northwest Ordinance: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/northwest.html>

NC Department of Cultural resources, French and Indian War Interactive: [http://www.ncdcr.gov/interactive/french\\_indian\\_war/index.html](http://www.ncdcr.gov/interactive/french_indian_war/index.html)

NPS, Military Architecture on the American Frontier: [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/gero/papers/1983-1984/sec5.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/gero/papers/1983-1984/sec5.htm)

Ohio History Central, American Revolution: [http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/topic.php?nm=american\\_revolution&rec=3](http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/topic.php?nm=american_revolution&rec=3)

Ohio History Central, French and Indian War: <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=498>

Ohio History Central, Pontiac's Rebellion: <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=539>

## BRITISH PERSPECTIVE

### EXCERPTS OF A LETTER FROM SIR WILLIAM JOHNSON, BRITISH SUPERINTENDENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS TO THE LORDS OF TRADE

July 1, 1763.

My Lords

...

Your Lordships may please to observe by my letter before mentioned that I therein, represented the jealousy which the Indians in general entertained of the increasing power of the English, thro' the insinuations of French Missionaries & others who had persuaded them that we proposed their entire Extirpation, to which they in a great measure give credit from our occupying some old posts & erecting new ones thro' out their Country.

In 1761, I had in a great measure removed these prejudices at the Conference which I then held with the Ottawa Confederacy at the Detroit and delivered them a handsome present (which is the surest method of proving the reality of Words to Indians) but as the Nations are Warlike, numerous and accustomed to receive considerable gifts & good treatment from the French for permitting them to occupy several posts, to the Northward & Westward of the Detroit, which custom I was in no wise enabled to continue to them, they began to look on our friendship as not very interesting, & indeed in general they have but an imperfect idea of friendship, unless they reap some considerable advantages from it, - The too general opinion which has lately prevailed, that they were an Enemy of very little power, or consequence & not worth our attention occasioned their being treated throughout the Country with a neglect, which never fails being resented by them.

Of this their discontent I have been advertised from their own mouths as well as from the accounts transmitted me by my Deputys and others. To prevent the evil consequences of which I took every possible measure to remove their inquietude by representing that their suspicions of us were without the least grounds, but notwithstanding all my endeavors, the Misisaga's and Chipeweghs (who I am well informed have been greatly encouraged thereto by some Officers sent amongst them from the Gov. of New Orleans) have lately endeavored to surprise the Detroit, and now closely blockade the same, they have likewise totally defeated a Detachment of 100 men who were on their way from Niagara for that place with a large quantity of provisions which has fallen into their hands. The Fort at Sandusky on Lake Erie has likewise been taken & destroyed and 'tis apprehended all the other outposts together with their garrisons have shared the same fate. Whilst in the mean time some Delawares on the Ohio have infested the communication to Fort Pitt &c. destroyed several settlements, murdered many Traders and others, spreading an universal panic throughout the Frontiers.

...

I cannot help requesting the honour of your Lordships sentiments and instructions relative thereto, and at the same time must beg leave to represent that as I am of opinion all these evils have arisen from our considering the Indians as incapable of doing us much damage which was the cause of our treating them with indifference and neglect, so, to remove the prejudices they have entertained and secure their Confidence and esteem, no method will prove effectual, unless that of rewarding those who shall remain our friends with some marks of Favor by occasionally supplying their wants as they shall appear to deserve it, this will excite an emulation in those who are still wavering, and satisfy the doubts of those who suspect the reality of our inclination towards them, without which, meer words have in general not much weight with a People who judge by our actions and not our language to them.

....

I have the Honour to be with the most profound respect My Lords

Your Lordship most obedient and most humble servant,

WM. JOHNSON

## CHIEF PONTIAC'S PERSPECTIVE

### CHIEF PONTIAC'S SPEECH

It is important for us, my brothers, that we exterminate from our lands this nation which seeks only to destroy us. You see as well as I do that we can no longer supply our needs, as we have done from our brothers, the French. The English sell us goods twice as dear as the French do, and their goods do not last. Scarcely have we bought a blanket or something else to cover ourselves with before we must think of getting another; and when we wish to set out for our winter camp they do not want to give us any credit as our brothers the French do.

When I go to see the English commander and say to him that some of our comrades are dead, instead of bewailing their death, as our French brothers do, he laughs at me and at you. If I ask for anything for our sick, he refuses with the reply that he has no use for us. From all this you can well see that they are seeking our ruin. Therefore, my brothers, we must all swear their destruction and wait no longer. Nothing prevents us: They are few in numbers, and we can accomplish it.

All the nations who are our brothers attack them – why should we not strike too? Are we not men like them? Have I now shown you the wampum belts [beaded belts symbolizing an agreement or treaty] which I received from our great father, the Frenchman [King Louis XV]? He tells us to strike them. Why do we not listen to his words? What do we fear? It is time.

*Chief Pontiac of the Ottawa tribe addressing a gathering of Ottawa, Huron, and Potawatomie Indians, May 5, 1763*



## PONTIAC'S REBELLION OVERVIEW (PAGE 1)

The French defeat in the French and Indian War surprised and angered the Native American groups of the Ohio River Valley. The French treated the native groups fairly and respected their culture. When they learned that the British had taken over their lands, they were outraged.

The Native Americans were upset with the British for several reasons. First, the Natives resented the attitudes the British held about them. While the French had respected Native cultures and often married native women, most of the British felt that the Indians were savages with primitive customs. Second, British traders were not as fair as the French had been. The Indians had become dependent on European goods, and now had to trade with untrustworthy English traders. Third, the Native American groups were alarmed at how the British claimed their lands for their own. With more and more settlers moving into the Northwest Territory, the Indians feared they would lose control of all their land and be forced to move.

In early 1763 Sir Jeffrey Amherst, the new North American governor-general, upset the natives even more when he announced that he would not present annual gifts to the tribes, something the French had always done as a sign of respect. The Indians were insulted and angry.

Several Indian leaders, including a visionary known as the Delaware Prophet, began to preach for a return to traditional ways and for the rejection of contact with the British. Pontiac, a fairly unknown Ottawa chieftain, adopted this idea and held a great council on the Ecorse River in April 1763. It included members of many Native American tribes, including the Chippewa, Ottawa, Shawnee, Delaware, Miami, Potawatomi, and Hurons. Together, they planned to attack the fort at Detroit.

On May 1, Pontiac and fifty Ottawa visited Fort Detroit to evaluate the military presence



and its ability to ward off an attack. Several days later, on May 7, Pontiac and around 300 men entered Fort Detroit with plans to attack using concealed weapons. The British had been told of Pontiac's plan and were armed and ready to fight. Without the element of surprise, Pontiac withdrew without a fight. Two days later he and his men attacked the fort from the outside, killing all of the British soldiers and settlers they could find outside of the fort. They did not attack the French settlers, who they left alone. Eventually more than 900 warriors from a half-dozen tribes joined the siege. When the British received additional troops at Fort Detroit, they tried to attack Pontiac's encampment. Pontiac was ready and waiting, and defeated them at the Battle of Bloody Run on July 31, 1763.

After several months of battle, no clear winner had emerged. Pontiac's followers began to tire of battle and left for home. Some made peace with the British before they left. On October 31, 1763, Pontiac stopped the siege and left for Ohio where he continued to push for resistance against the British.

It is unclear whether or not Pontiac was



## PONTIAC'S REBELLION OVERVIEW (PAGE 2)

involved in the attacks on other British forts in the region. Some historians claim that he had made plans to attack all the British forts at the same time. Other historians believe that native groups learned of Pontiac's siege and attacked their local British forts on their own. Nonetheless, Native Americans captured eight British forts in a series of attacks between May and June 1763. These forts included: Fort Sandusky on the shore of Lake Erie; Fort St. Joseph on the site of present-day



Niles, Michigan; Fort Ouiatenon about 5 miles southwest of present Lafayette, Indiana; Fort Michilimackinac at present Mackinaw City, Michigan; Fort Venango near present Franklin, Pennsylvania; Fort Le Boeuf on the site of Waterford, Pennsylvania; and Fort Presque Isle at present-day Erie, Pennsylvania. An attack on Fort Pitt in present-day Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in late June 1763 failed.

After 1764, Pontiac's influence among the native tribes dropped. He took trips into the South and West in an attempt to gather supporters, but few tribes were interested. He lived quietly for several more years before being killed by a fellow Indian.

One of the key results of Pontiac's Rebellion was the British decision to issue the Proclamation of 1763. Its purpose was to stop white settlement of the West until better agreements could be reached with the Native Americans. This angered the colonists who lived in the east, who were also upset that the British were trying to make them pay for debts from the French and Indian War.