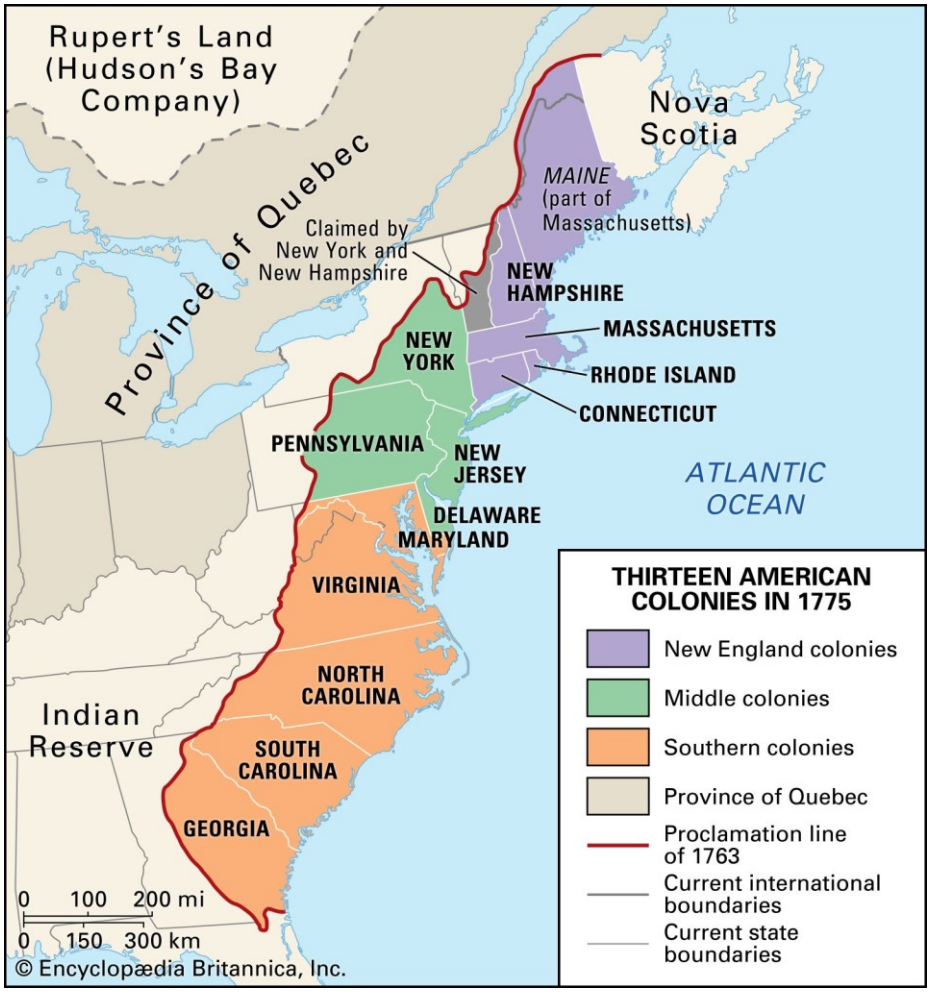


Consequences of the British Conquest of 1760 & the American Revolution

- Remember that from the 16th-18th centuries the British colonies of the New World had been left to their own devices in terms of government. The British were more focused on European affairs.

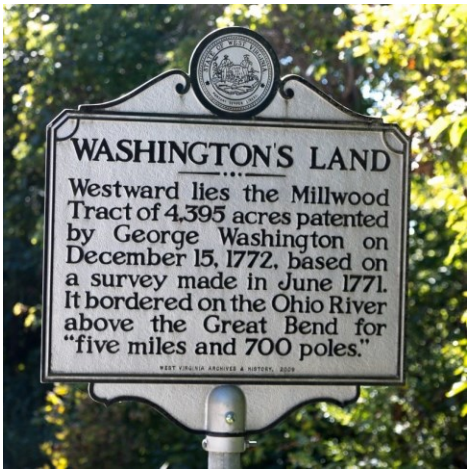
- After the **1760 Articles of Capitulation are signed in Montreal on September 8th**, New France is placed under military rule with General Jeffery Amherst as Governor General. Amherst believes in the superiority of the British military and does not engage with any Indigenous allies of the French (there was no formal end to hostilities between the British Crown and First Nations allied with New France, or within its sphere of influence).

- King George II dies on October 25th, 1760, and is succeeded by his grandson, King George III (reigns 1760-1820).

- The Seven Years War was formally concluded with the **Treaty of Paris (1763)** by European powers – no Indigenous representatives were present.

- King George III issued the **Royal Proclamation of 1763**. This proclamation set out what British rule in North America would look like, including the boundaries of the Thirteen Colonies (blocking further expansion west) and the governmental of the new province of Quebec. The ultimate authority of the province was vested in the governor who represented the King/Crown. "Conquered land" became "Crown Land" – placed under the sovereignty of the British Crown.

    - Why might the Royal Proclamation of 1763 anger British Settlers in North America?



    - Thanks to Indigenous voices, what is an important part of the Royal Proclamation regarding First Nations?

    - Why did former Senator Murray Sinclair remark "I love the Royal Proclamation and I hate the Royal Proclamation"?

- Following the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the British Crown moved to establish a presence in the Great Lakes Region. Following **Pontiac's War**, Sir William Johnson (Superintendent General of Indian Affairs) held a Great Council at Fort Niagara with the Indigenous Nations of the Great Lakes Region during the summer of 1764.

    - Sir William Johnson's partner was **Mohawk Clan Mother Molly Brant**. This has raised questions around who organized what, as well as who in their relationship was the driving force behind such moments as the Council at Niagara - Dr. Amber Meadow Adams.

    - What was **Pontiac's War**?

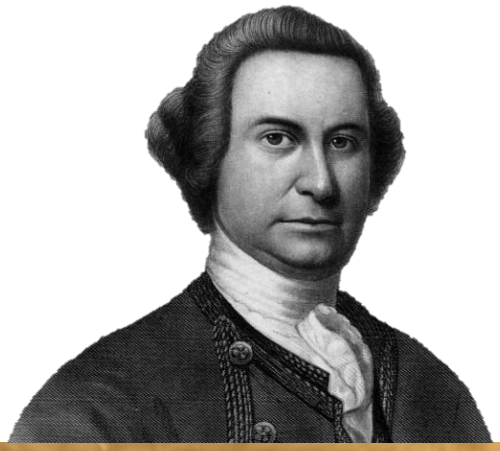
- At the 1764 Council of Niagara a nation-to-nation relationship between the Crown and Indigenous Peoples north and west of Niagara was established as the principles animating the Royal Proclamation of 1763 were ratified using Indigenous protocols. This created a new relationship in the Great Lakes Region. **The Treaty of Niagara (1764) extended what was articulated as the Silver Covenant Chain of Friendship into the Great Lakes Region**.

- After a month of negotiations, Sir William Johnson crossed the Niagara River from Fort Niagara to present the 1764 Covenant Chain Wampum, as well as other belts and diplomatic presents, saying:

  Brothers of the Western Nations, Sachems, Chiefs and Warriors;
  You have now been here for several days, during which time we have frequently met to renew and Strengthen our Engagements and you have made so many Promises of your Friendship and Attachment to the English that there now remains for us only to exchange the great Belt of the Covenant Chain that we may not forget our mutual Engagements.

I now therefore present you the great Belt by which I bind all your Western Nations together with the English, and I desire that you will take fast hold of the same, and never let it slip, to which end I desire that after you have shewn this Belt to all Nations you will fix one end of it with the Chipeweighs at St. Marys [Michilimackinac] whilst the other end remains at my house, and moreover I desire that you will never listen to any news which comes to any other Quarter.

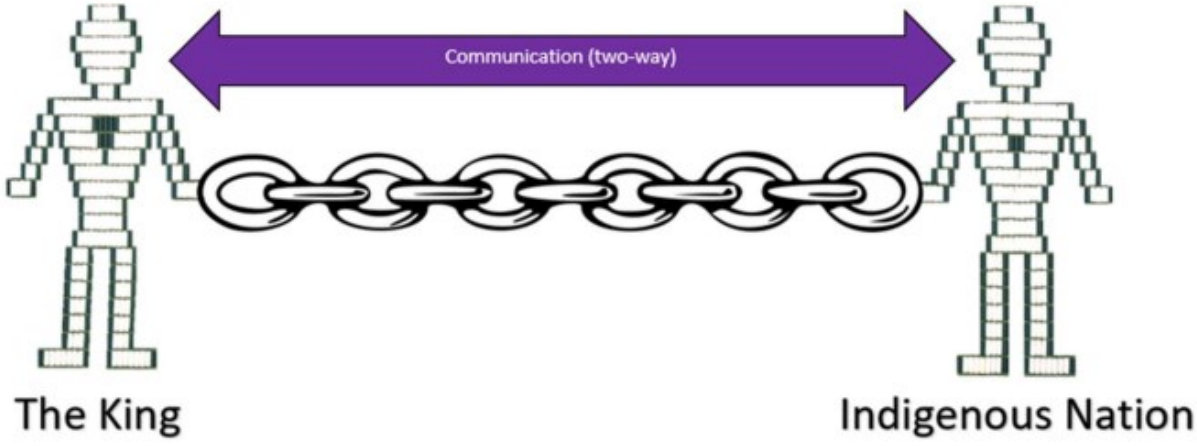
If you do it, it may shake the Belt.[1]



The 1764 Covenant Chain Wampum presented by Sir William Johnson to the assembled Indigenous dignitaries at Niagara on July 31st, 1764. Its creation was likely guided by Mohawk Clan Mother Molly Brant (Sir William was her partner). There are layers of stories and teachings embedded in this wampum that go far beyond the labels shown above.

[1] C. Flick, ed. The Papers of William Johnson, vol. 4 (Albany, NY: The University of the State of New York, 1925), 309-310.

This image depicts how the Treaty of Niagara (1764) extended the Silver Covenant Chain originally established with the Haudenosaunee Confederacy into the Great Lakes Region.



A visualization of the relationship established by the Covenant Chain.

- It is important to emphasize that the 1764 Covenant Chain Wampum was commissioned by Sir William Johnson as the King's Representative, an example of colonial officials employing Indigenous diplomacy and protocols including wampum.

Other impacts of the Seven Years War:

- Various territories in Europe shifted from control of one country to another. In Canada, the French king renounced "all pretensions which he had [formed] to Nova Scotia or Acadia in all its parts." As well, the French king ceded to the English Crown " . . . in full right, Canada, with all its dependencies, as well as the island of Cape Breton, and all the other islands and coasts in the gulph and river of St. Lawrence."

- Only a small piece of New France remains in North America: **Saint Pierre and Miquelon.**

- New France became the British colony of Quebec. Military rule ended in 1764, and James Murray became governor of the colony (we will find out what happened to Amherst later).

- The transition from the French Crown to the British Crown was largely seamless for the settlers.

- Quebec was to be ruled as a **British Crown Colony** (directly by the British Crown) unlike the Thirteen Colonies to the south who had, in absence of any direction from Britain, developed their own quasi-elected assemblies.

- Why was Quebec's direct Crown rule a threat to the Thirteen Colonies?

- Quebec's Governor James Murray recognized that the relatively small British army was surrounded by 70,000 French-speaking, Roman Catholic *Canadiens* who had a strong culture and identity. The French outnumbered the British 25:1 in the new colony. Sympathetic to the French, as well as aware of the precariousness of British rule in the region, Murray upset the local English population and was recalled to England in 1766.

- Most of the Catholic clergy preached submission to British rule – knowing full well that they could be removed from their posts if the British wanted.

- Land speculators west of the thirteen colonies (including George Washington and Benjamin Franklin) pushed further and further into Indigenous lands. European populations continued to swell.

- The events happening in Quebec worried the Thirteen Colonies. By passing legislation such as the **Quebec Act of 1774**, Britain reminded people in the older, established North American colonies that their elected assemblies where a privilege, not a right. Britain's attention was returning turning to North America – they were ready to take control of the area.

- The Quebec Act of 1774:

  Why?

  - What did it do?

  - The province's territory was expanded to take over part of the Indian Reserve, including much of what is now southern Ontario, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, and parts of Minnesota.

  - Reference to the Protestant faith was removed from the oath of allegiance.

  - It guaranteed free practice of the Catholic faith.

  - It restored the use of the French civil law for matters of private law, except that in accordance with the English common law, it granted unlimited freedom of testation. It maintained English common law for matters of public law, including administrative appeals, court procedure, and criminal prosecution.

  - It restored the Catholic Church's right to impose tithes.

  - Anger arose out of a series of taxes that the British imposed on the Thirteen Colonies to try and help pay for the Seven Years' War.

- In 1775 the newly formed American Continental Congress declared that the Quebec Act demonstrated "… a despotism dangerous to our very existence."

- The Thirteen Colonies of America declared themselves independent from the British Crown July 4th, 1776. This began the American Revolution (1776-1783).