**Unit 2, Week 1 HW Reading**

**The Causes of Pontiac’s Rebellion**

**Why Native Americans Attacked the British**

Native Americans fought the war known as Pontiac’s Rebellion for their own survival and independence. They fought against British settlement practices; trade, gift, and captive repatriation policies; and growing British influence in North America.

**British Settlement Practices**

At Easton, PA, in 1758, the British, represented by the governors of Pennsylvania and New Jersey, negotiated with Native American tribes to end their alliances with France and stay out of the fighting in the French and Indian War. In return for their neutrality, the Indians wanted the British to end the rum trade, continue giving gifts to tribes, and recognize all lands west of the Allegheny Mountains as Native American land. Indians understandably interpreted the latter to mean that the British would abandon all claims, forts and settlements west of the Alleghenies. The British agreed, and both parties signed the Treaty of Easton on October 26, 1758.

The British, however, did not keep their end of the bargain. In 1761, they began building taverns between Forts Ligonier and Pitt, strengthened fort garrisons on Delaware and Shawnee lands, and granted Seneca lands near Fort Niagara to British officers. Poor squatters and wealthy landowners moved into Ohio Territory, in violation of the Treaty of Easton. The British did not effectively prevent European hunters from poaching on Native hunting grounds, and failed to stop traders from selling rum to natives.[1]

**Repatriation of Captives**

After the French surrendered Canada in 1760, the British began demanding the restoration of all white captives taken since 1755. This policy angered Native Americans because they often adopted or married their captives, who became full and respected members of their communities. Native Americans did not want to see their families torn apart. Some captives even preferred the Native Americans’ way of life to European society, which resulted in some captives being repatriated against their will. A few of these repatriates managed to escape British society and find their way back to their adopted tribes.[2]

**British Gift and Trade Policies**

With the fighting in French and Indian War mostly at an end by February 1761, Lord Jeffery Amherst, the North American commander in chief for the British, was forced to reduce his garrisons in North America and cut expenses. As part of this economizing, Amherst eliminated the traditional practice of giving gifts to Indian leaders. This step alienated and reduced the status of native leaders, who depended on these gifts to maintain their power and influence. Amherst, however, only saw the gift-giving as extravagant bribery.

The commander in chief also sought to reduce the trading of powder and shot with the natives, in the hopes that lack of arms and ammunition would reduce the likelihood of an Indian rebellion. This policy, however, hurt many natives who depended on ammunition for hunting and defense. Many Indians had difficulty feeding their families; some went hungry or starved to death.[3]

To make matters worse, Colonel Henry Bouquet only allowed traders to trade at military posts instead of native villages, which enforced the ban on trading powder and shot to Indians. The British instituted these policies after eastern Indians became dependent on the fur trade for their livelihood. The English refusal to grant these trade goods essential to their livelihood led the natives to believe that the British intended “to make Slaves of them…”[4]

**The Defeat of France**

The peace treaty between France and Britain in February 1763 was the last straw. With France expelled from Canada, the natives feared that no other power in North America could withstand the British. The Indians knew that they had to strike soon to regain their lands and freedom before they lost their chance to do so.[5]

**Native American Battle Tactics**

Native American battle tactics were based on the communal hunt. These tactics were disciplined—recognized leaders gave orders that the warriors followed. The hunters or warriors could form various formations, including half-moons, squares, circles, lines, and columns. These tactics were flexible and maneuverable, allowing warriors to change formation while moving or in rough terrain.

Following demographic necessity, native tactics sought to spare the lives of warriors. Native leaders husbanded the lives of their warriors due to the small population ratio of Indians to Europeans. To reduce casualties, natives used surprise and ambush attacks whenever possible.

Often, they tried to outflank their enemies with a half-moon, or horseshoe, formation. Warriors learned and practiced the half-moon on communal hunts. Attacks were of two types: fire and advance against a determined enemy, or charge against a retreating or shaken enemy.

Warriors retreated when necessary, either by moving while protected by the fire of a fellow warrior or by running for their lives when surprised or disadvantaged. They felt no shame in retreating—only in surrendering.[6]

**Pontiac’s Rebellion, 1762**

Pontiac's Rebellion begins when a confederacy of [Native American](http://www.history.com/topics/native-american-cultures) warriors under Ottawa chief Pontiac attacks the British force at Detroit. After failing to take the fort in their initial assault, Pontiac's forces, made up of Ottawas and reinforced by Wyandots, Ojibwas, and Potawatamis, initiated a siege that would stretch into months.

As the French and Indian Wars came to an end in the early 1760s, [Native Americans](http://www.history.com/topics/native-american-cultures) living in former French territory found the new British authorities to be far less conciliatory than their predecessors. In 1762, Pontiac enlisted support from practically every Indian tribe from Lake Superior to the lower [Mississippi](http://www.history.com/topics/mississippi) for a joint campaign to expel the British from the formerly French lands. According to Pontiac's plan, each tribe would seize the nearest fort and then join forces to wipe out the undefended settlements.

In April, Pontiac convened a war council on the banks of the Ecorse River near Detroit. It was decided that Pontiac and his warriors would gain access to the British fort at Detroit under the pretense of negotiating a peace treaty, giving them an opportunity to seize forcibly the arsenal there. However, British Major Henry Gladwin learned of the plot, and the British were ready when Pontiac arrived in early May, and Pontiac was forced to begin a siege. At the same time, his allies in [Pennsylvania](http://www.history.com/topics/pennsylvania) began a siege of Fort Pitt, while other sympathetic tribes, such as the [Delaware](http://www.history.com/topics/delaware), the Shawnees, and the Seneca, prepared to move against various British forts and outposts in [Michigan](http://www.history.com/topics/michigan), [New York](http://www.history.com/topics/new-york), Pennsylvania, [Maryland](http://www.history.com/topics/maryland), and [Virginia](http://www.history.com/topics/virginia).

On July 31, a British relief expedition attacked Pontiac's camp but suffered heavy losses and were repelled in the Battle of Bloody Run. Nevertheless, they had succeeded in providing the fort at Detroit with reinforcements and supplies, which allowed it to hold out against the Indians into the fall. The major forts at Pitt and Niagara likewise held on, but the united tribes captured eight other fortified posts. At these forts, the garrisons were wiped out, relief expeditions were repulsed, and nearby frontier settlements were destroyed.

In the spring of 1764, two British armies were sent out, one into Pennsylvania and [Ohio](http://www.history.com/topics/ohio) under Colonel Bouquet, and the other to the Great Lakes under Colonel John Bradstreet. Bouquet's campaign met with success, and the Delawares and the Shawnees were forced to sue for peace, breaking Pontiac's alliance. Failing to persuade tribes in the West to join his rebellion, and lacking the hoped-for support from the French, Pontiac finally signed a treaty with the British in 1766. In 1769, he was murdered by a Peoria Indian while visiting [Illinois](http://www.history.com/topics/illinois). His death led to bitter warfare among the tribes, and the Peorias were nearly wiped out.

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<http://bushyrunbattlefield.com/history/pontiac-rebellion/>

<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/pontiacs-rebellion-begins>

**Paxton Boys**

The village of Paxton (Paxtang), a few miles east of [Harrisburg](javascript:) in eastern Pennsylvania, became a hotbed of racial and political unrest during [Pontiac`s Rebellion](javascript:). Still part of the frontier in the 1760s, the area was populated by many rough-and-tumble Scots-Irish immigrants who had grown weary of the colonial assembly’s inattention to their vulnerability to attack. Requests for soldiers — or guns, powder and lead at the very least — were ignored by the legislators, many of whom were Quakers with strong [pacifist](javascript:) convictions.

A group of Paxton men took matters into their own hands in December 1763 and raided a small settlement of Conestoga Indians in Lancaster County. The frontiersmen`s fury was misplaced, however, since those natives had long lived in peace with their neighbors and had not participated in any way in the current uprising. Six Indians were killed in the attack and 14 taken captive; all of the prisoners were murdered several weeks later.

News of these events prompted Governor John Penn to issue warrants for the arrest of the perpetrators, but sympathetic frontiersmen refused to assist in bringing the Paxton Boys to justice.

The malcontents next singled out a settlement of Moravian Indians who lived near the town of Bethlehem. Fortunately for these peaceful Christianized natives, they managed to flee from their homes for protection in [Philadelphia](javascript:), which was then capital of Pennsylvania and the headquarters of a contingent of British soldiers. The Paxton Boys were outraged that the government would spend tax monies on protecting Indians, but would provide nothing for the defense of its citizenry. The Moravian Indians remained in protective custody in Philadelphia for more than a year.

In January 1764, a group of Paxton Boys began a march on the capital; the number of participants has been estimated to be between 600 and 1,500. As the mob neared Philadelphia, panic reigned. The strange spectacle of pacifists arming themselves with muskets and rolling cannon into public squares was observed. Church bells tolled the alarm. A possible disaster was averted in early February, when [Benjamin Franklin](javascript:) and other civic leaders ventured out to consult with the mob`s leaders. An accommodation was reached in which the march was disbanded in return for the arrangement of a meeting between Paxton leaders and colonial officials. This airing of grievances occurred, but little was done for the frontiersmen.

Delivered on February 13, 1764, the "Remonstrance of Distressed and Bleeding Frontier Inhabitants," was delivered by Matthew Smith and James Gibson on behalf of the Paxton frontiersmen. In stated, in part:

*“Thirdly. During the late and present Indian War, the Frontiers of this Province have been repeatedly attacked and ravaged by Skulking parties of the Indians, who have with the most Savage Cruelty murdered Men, Women, and Children without distinction, and have reduced near a thousand Families to the most extreme distress. It grieves us to the very heart to see such of our frontier inhabitants as have escaped savage fury with the loss of their parents, their children, their wives or relatives, left destitute by the public, and exposed to the most cruel poverty and wretchedness while upward of 120 of these savages, who are with great reason suspected of being guilty of these horrid barbarities under the mask of friendship, have procured themselves to be taken under the protection of the government, with a view to elude the fury of the brave relatives of the murdered, and are now maintained at the public expense.”*

The adventure of the Paxton Boys was important for two reasons. First, it was a measure of the hostility that had developed between frontiersman and Indian; many white settlers concluded during Pontiac’s Rebellion that the races could not live together. Removal and extinction were the only solutions. Second, the march on Philadelphia was an early example of regional and social tension. Later American history would reflect further cases of the strain between the urban and rural, the haves versus the have-nots and the newcomers against the establishment.

<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/pontiacs-rebellion-begins>

**Guided Questions**

**1. Describe the treaty between the Native Americans and the British.**

2. Explain the conflict over the captives.

**3. Why did Amherst want to reduce UK gifts to the Native Americans?**

4. Describe the Native American battle tactics.

**5. How did Pontiac organize the attack on the British colonists?**

6. What was the impact of the Battle of Bloody Run?

**7. Describe the makeup of the Paxton Boys.**

8. Why was this group upset?

**9. What happened on December 1763?**

10. Who calmed the Paxton Boys in Philadelphia?

**11. Summarize the impact of the Paxton Boys.**