Colonial Wars for North America

I. French Canada
   A. France was late in coming to the New World
      1. Much religious conflict between Catholics and Huguenots (Calvinists) in the late-16th century stunted colonial expansion.
      2. Edict of Nantes (1598): Granted limited toleration to French Protestants
         a. Religious wars ceased and France began looking at expanding its influence in the Atlantic trade.
         b. France later became the dominant power in 17th-century Europe led by King Louis XIV.

   B. The French established Quebec in 1608 (a year after England had established the Jamestown colony in Virginia)
      1. Founded by Samuel de Champlain (“Father of New France”)
      2. Entered a friendship with the local Huron, the enemies of the Iroquois Confederation.
         • Significance: Iroquois, in retaliation, later kept the French from expanding into the Ohio Valley, ravaged French settlements, and allied with the British.

   C. Government
      1. Lacked popularly-elected assemblies or trial by jury.
      2. French population in New France grew slowly -- only 6,000 whites by 1750 (compared to about 2 million in the 13 British-American colonies)

   D. New France expands in North America
      1. Of the European powers, the French were the most successful in creating an effective trading relationship with the Amerindians.
         a. British settlers sought to remove or exterminate them.
         b. Spain sought to Christianize and subdue them via the encomienda system (forced labor in towns), and the mission system where forced conversion often occurred.
         c. The French became great gift givers (the key to getting on with Amerindians who based their inter-tribal relationships on gift giving) during last two decades of the 17th century.
         d. French fur traders often married Amerindian women and adopted tribal customs.
      2. The Beaver trade led to the exploration of much of North America:
         a. A heavy demand for fur in Europe meant the fur trade was
b. **Coureurs de bois** (runners of the woods): rough French frontiersmen who were heavily involved in the fur trade.

c. **Voyageurs**: French seamen who recruited Amerindians into the fur trade.

3. **Jesuits**: Catholic Missionaries sought to convert Amerindians and “save” them from the perceived debauched ways of fur trappers; (the missionaries lived among the tribes)

4. France established posts in the Mississippi region (New Orleans was the most important)
   a. Sought to block Spanish expansion into the Gulf of Mexico.
   b. Forts and trading posts in Illinois country were built: Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes.
      - Large amounts of grain was sent down the Mississippi River for shipment to the West Indies and Europe.

II. Clash of Empires: England, France, and Spain

A. Four world wars occurred between 1688 and 1763
   1. King William's War (1689-1697) and Queen Anne's War (1702-1713)
      a. British colonials and their Iroquois allies fought the French *coureurs de bois* and their Amerindian allies.
         - American colonials had penetrated the fur trade in the North American interior at the expense of French fur traders.
         - The Iroquois controlled much of the fur trade in the Great Lakes region and had thus been in conflict with French traders since about 1680.
      b. European weapons deeply intensified Amerindian warfare in the eastern woodlands during last three decades of the 17th century.
         - Resulted in the temporary depopulation of the Ohio Valley as a result the **Beaver Wars** where the Iroquois (allied with the English and Dutch) waged war on the Huron and Algonquin tribes.
      c. During King William’s War, the French armed the Hurons and Algonquins; the Iroquois were forced into neutrality.
         - The Iroquois turned to diplomacy with Europeans after 1700 and an uneasy balance of power emerged.
      d. The Treaty of Utrecht (1713) ended colonial wars for nearly three decades.
         - Britain gained Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and the Hudson Bay territory from France.
      e. In the British American colonies, a generation of peace ensued— “salutary neglect”—without much interference from Great Britain.
2. King George's War (1744-1748) (War of Austrian Succession)
   a. Spain again allied with France against Britain.
   b. New Englanders again invaded New France and took the important city of Louisbourg commanding the entrance to the St. Lawrence River.
   c. Peace Treaty of 1748
      - England gave Louisbourg back to the French in order to help negotiations for a cease-fire in the European war.
      - British colonists were furious; felt vulnerable from potential French threats in the north.

3. French and Indian War (1754-1763) (Seven Years' War):
   most important of the colonial wars.
   a. Cause: conflict over the Ohio Valley
      - British settlers continued to move into the region and were increasingly opposed to French dominance there.
      - The French needed to retain the region so to link Canada with the lower Mississippi Valley and the Caribbean.
      - The French saw Iroquois trading concessions to British merchants in the late-1740s as a threat to French interests in the Ohio Valley.
         o In response, they began to fortify the region with the construction of Ft. Duquesne.
         o The balance of power the Iroquois had tried to retain was now unraveling.
   b. Fort Duquesne, May, 1754
      - Lt. Col. George Washington was sent by the Virginia gov’t to the forks of the Ohio River to prevent the French from building a fort there, hoping instead to build a British fort.
      - Washington was defeated and forced to surrender his entire command but was allowed to leave with his army intact.
      - In effect, Washington triggered a world war.
   c. Britain retaliated by clamping down in Nova Scotia.
      - Relocated 4,000 Nova Scotians throughout the continent, including Louisiana.
      - French-speaking Acadians became the descendants of modern day "Cajuns."
   d. The war widened into hitherto largest world war: 25,000 American colonials fought in the conflict.
   e. Albany Congress (1754)
      - Great Britain’s Board of Trade called leaders from all the colonies to meet in Albany to discuss Amerindian threats and to ask for an alliance with the Iroquois.
      - The Iroquois refused to commit themselves to the British.
      - Long-range purpose: increase colonial unity and organize a strong defense against France.
f. **Albany Plan for Union**
   - Benjamin Franklin proposed a plan for colonial home rule: dealt with defense and Amerindian affairs.
     - Adopted by delegates
     - Individual colonies rejected it: not enough autonomy would be given to colonies
     - Britain rejected it as it might give too much independence to the colonies.

  g. Nearly all Amerindian tribes in the Ohio Valley (except the Iroquois) allied with the French against the British.
   - Viewed Washington’s defeat at Ft. Duquesne as a sign of British weakness.
   - In a decisive 1755 battle, British General Braddock was defeated a few miles from Fort Duquesne by smaller French and Indian forces.

  h. Britain failed in a full-scale invasion of Canada in 1756.

  i. **William Pitt** (The “Great Commoner”) – became leader of British gov’t and changed Britain’s strategy in the war.
   - Focused on defeating France in North America in order to win the war instead of remaining bogged down in Europe.
   - Pitt was very popular among the British people; his success in the war led to Ft. Duquesne being renamed Pittsburgh.

  j. Tensions emerged between British authorities and American colonists.
   - Some colonists were impressed into service without their consent.
   - Supplies and equipment for the military were confiscated from farmers and tradesmen.
   - British troops were quartered by colonists, without compensation.
   - These injustices were reversed by Pitt in 1758 who ordered colonists be compensated for property and that soldiers be enlisted by the colonies themselves.

  k. **Battle of Quebec** (1759)
   - Pitt appointed General James Wolfe to take Quebec
   - The city fell in 1759, effectively ending the war in North America (although both Wolfe and the French commander Montcalm were killed during the battle).
   - Represented one of most significant battles in British and American history.

  l. **Treaty of Paris (1763):** in effect, France was removed from North America completely.
   - Technically, lands west of Mississippi River were still French but not yet settled, but France gave it to Spain as compensation for their support in the war.
4. Significance of Britain’s victory over France in North America
   a. Great Britain emerged as the dominant power in North America and as the leading naval power in the world.
   b. Permanently altered the balance of power in North America between Britain, France, and the Amerindians
      • Amerindians were now increasingly at the mercy of British American settlers who moved westward without fearing French reprisals.
      • By 1800, many of the eastern woodlands Indians were removed or killed by American encroachment.
   c. The enormous war debt resulted in new imperial tax policies that eventually led to the American Revolution.

III. Friction between the colonies and Britain during and after French and Indian War.
   A. The colonies emerged from war with increased confidence in their military strength
      1. Colonial military leaders were angry that few Americans were promoted in the British army and that American officers were treated poorly.
      2. Yet, British leaders believed Americans had often performed poorly in the war and did not deserve the respect they desired.

   B. British authorities were upset that American shippers traded with Spain and the French West Indies during the war.
      1. Enemy Amerindians were aided by increased foodstuffs.
      2. Britain thus forbade the export of all supplies from the New England and Middle colonies during last year of the war.
      3. Some colonies refused to supply troops: saw economic gain as more important than loyalty to Britain.
         • Only later agreed to commit troops when Pitt offered to substantially reimburse the colonies.

   C. The legitimacy of British rule in local colonial affairs came into question.
      1. Pitt’s reversal of harsh British policies toward the colonies beginning in 1858 convinced many colonists that the British should have little to no role in local matters.
      2. The colonies expected the autonomy they had enjoyed during the era of “salutary neglect.”

   D. American westward colonial expansion increased significantly after the war.
      1. The French barrier west of the Appalachians was removed.
      2. Spanish and Indian threats were removed in many areas.
3. Settlers were no longer as dependent on British protection in the frontier.

E. Pontiac’s Rebellion (1763)
1. Amerindians in the Ohio Valley region were angered at British treatment during the last years of the French and Indian War.
2. Chief Pontiac, an Ottowa chief, refused to surrender his lands to the British although France (their ally in the war) had lost and were now gone.
3. Chief Pontiac led an Amerindian alliance against whites in the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes region in 1763.
   a. 9 of 11 British forts were taken and several were wiped out.
   b. Perhaps 2,000 lives were lost during first 6 months of the conflict, and many more colonists were driven from their homes on the frontier back to more settled areas.
   c. It took Britain 18 months to bring the rebellion under control.
      • Britain retaliated with germ warfare: blankets infected with smallpox were distributed among the Amerindians who thus died in droves.

F. Proclamation of 1763
1. In response to Pontiac’s Rebellion, King George III signed an edict creating royal colonies in all newly acquired lands in the Treaty of Paris.
2. Prohibited colonials from moving west of the Appalachians
   a. The line drawn from Canada to Florida along the crest of the Appalachians was only intended to be temporary.
   b. British aim: settle land disputes with Amerindians fairly to prevent more uprisings like Pontiac's and organize the eventual settlement and defense of the frontier.
3. Colonials were infuriated; saw the edict as being permanent.
   a. Many veterans had fought in the war and felt betrayed.
   b. Land speculators argued that the land was a birthright of British citizens.
4. Colonials generally ignored the Proclamation and continued to stream westward.
Terms to Know

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Essay Questions

Note: This sub-unit is a medium probability area for the AP exam. In the past 10 years, 2 questions have come wholly or in part from the material in this chapter. Below are some questions that will help you study the topics that have appeared on previous exams.

1. How did the colonial wars of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries alter the relationship between Amerindians and the French and British Empires?

2. How did the outcome of the French and Indian War alter the balance of power in North America?

3. How did the French and Indian War alter the relationship between the British Empire and her American colonies?
Bibliography: