

1.2 FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR(S) 1756-1763

“The French and Indian War was actually an extension of the widespread European conflict of the Seven Years’ War. Coming to be known as the first war that involved Europe and America, the Seven Years’ War began in 1756 and involved every major European and colonial power: Great Britain and its allies (including Prussia) fought against France, Austria, Saxony and Sweden. The prize: slices of the New World. When the war concluded, between 900,000 and 1.4 million were dead in Europe alone, and war had moved in deadly earnest to New World soil.”

—David Treuer, Rez Life: An Indian’s Journey Through Reservation Life, Atlantic Monthly Press, 2012, pp. 32-33.

After Pierre Robideau received his bride Julia in the New World, at least the next two descendant generations of the author’s first hearty French ancestors married wives from the Iroquois League. Therefore generations 4,5, and 6 had personal stakes which made choosing sides very difficult during the French and Indian Wars, their mixed blood suddenly represented on both sides of the conflict and their northern New York ties placing them in harm’s way.



Native American stone tomahawk head on left, hide processing tools on right.

La Famille du Robideau II

Immigrants and residents
Wanting the freedom to serve God
Above any other *liberté*,
Seeing a land:
Promising. Available? Forbidding!
Arriving, expecting Him to protect,
Defend, bless.
Are we like them?

The Crushing Contests of Crowns

Allegiances show their colors¹

Yellow, green, orange

Blue, red, gold:

Foiling and pooling until

Black and white words

Turn skin red then blue;

The good and the bad

The wrong and the right

The need and the greed

The yours and the mine,

Conquerors and defenders

Clashing and mingling

Crushing and merging

To gunpowder grey.

¹Colors commemorate the French and Indian War (including the tribal colors of Seneca, Mohawk, Ottawa, Ojibwa, Huron, Delaware, Shawnee, Winnebago, and others) against the colors of the British and Iroquois Confederacy (Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Tuscarora) plus the Spanish and Dutch, over land rights on North American soil.



By the late 17th century, the English Hudson's Bay Company was bartering with French and First Nation traders for furs in exchange for knives, kettles, beads, needles and blankets. This warm blanket style, introduced in 1780, was sought by Indigenous peoples who traded furs for them because wool was easier to stitch into garments. The blanket, brought from Labrador by Great-Uncle David Fortier, represents a sample of the region's tribal colors, and was an acknowledgement of their authority. From family archives.

The Treaty of Paris ended the French and Indian War(s) February 10, 1763. <http://www.datesandevents.org/events-timelines/14-american-history-timeline.html>

As conditions of the treaty, the British asked for designated tribal lands and forbade Anglo-European (white) settlements west of the Appalachian Mountains, but it was unenforceable. The Iroquois League (or 5 Nations, as the British knew them) accepted intermarriage. Descent and inheritance were passed through maternal lines in Native American culture, and children were considered of the mother's clan. It is probable that *famille du Robideau* moved as part of the 1st Nation migration post-war to settle in Black Hawk Territory in Michigan, then into what became Wisconsin Territory.

The British opted for tribal relocation to implement the plan for using a mountain range as a settlement separation line. While no one can say exactly when or why the *la famille du Robideaux* moved so abruptly from their well-established livelihoods in the NY area, the most plausible explanation is the disruption caused by the French and Indian Wars.

“The pain, memory and loss of war’s what’s got us
raw and removed.”

—Aaron Teal, English ancestor of the author and settler
from northern New York, of the very difficult British negotiation
of the Treaty of Paris, as friends and neighbors were assigned to
one side or the other of the mountain. From family archives.

Q: If the inter-married French had been more successful than the English in this war, might Native Americans have been treated more as partners in life and government in what is now the United States of America?

A Native’s Perspective II

“How could we people ever talk together
When we each believed our God
Had told us something different
About the land?
We couldn’t and we never did.
But you were stronger.
There were more of you, so your way won out.
You took the land and you turned it into property.
Now our Mother is silent.

But we still listen for her voice.
And here is what I wonder:
If she sent diseases and harsh winters
When she was angry with us,
And we were good to her,
What will she send when she speaks back to *you*?"

—"Dan", Dakotah elder, Neither Wolf Nor Dog, by Kent Nerburn, p. 51.

"My lands are where
my dead lie buried."

—Crazy Horse. A sentiment
that could be echoed by many chiefs.

From the 1770s until 1791, John Marrant, a free black¹ from New York City, preached to "a great number of Indians and white people." He carried the gospel to the Cherokee, Creek, Catawar, and Housaw tribes. Tribes were glad to receive his message after having been disillusioned by "a chief who spoke but did not walk in the way of the Great Spirit". They returned the favor of Marrant's grace and integrity: Native Americans harbored not a few escaped slaves, passing them to tribes farther afield. —Based on "Black History Month: Christian Missionaries of African Heritage": <https://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/black.htm> ; <http://www.freemaninstitute.com/blackcm.htm>

¹The word "black", referring to African Americans, is not capitalized in this selection. Throughout this book, quotes will contain capitalization as found in the sources.