

OLD FORT NIAGARA'S

Flintlocks
COUNCIL FIRES

FORT NIAGARA IN WAR AND PEACE



Welcome to
OLD FORT NIAGARA'S
Flintlocks
COUNCIL FIRES

Flintlocks and Council Fires is an educational program that covers over 80 years of amazing history! This booklet will tell you about historic events that took place right in your backyard, plus there's more to learn. To get the full experience, download the Quick Scan App, or any other QR code scanner onto a cell phone. Once you've done that, start reading. Whenever you see one of these,



scan it with your phone or enter the website address below the code and get transported back in time!

The French P e r i o d

When you come to **Old Fort Niagara**, you will step back into the **18th Century**. This was a time when soldiers were armed with flintlock muskets, and council fires often helped resolve conflicts. Fort Niagara was home to **Native Americans, French, British and American** soldiers and their families. The fort was a very important place because it controlled access to the **Niagara Portage**, a trail where travelers had to carry their cargo around Niagara Falls.

Two hundred and fifty years ago, the best way to travel was by water and the **Great Lakes** offered travelers access to the heartland of North America. When Native Americans and Europeans reached the Niagara River, they had to take the Niagara Portage for about seven miles to avoid Niagara Falls. Once around the Falls, they could continue their journey by water.

During **colonial times**, the **French** and the **British** both sought to **expand** their **control** over North America. Both sides built forts at important locations, mostly on rivers and lakes. Both sides also tried to convince **Native American** nations to side with them.

The **French** were the **first Europeans** to **explore** the **Niagara region**, and they built a **fort** at the mouth of the Niagara River in **1726**. The first building constructed in the fort was the **French Castle**. It was built to house about 40 soldiers. The French designed it to look like a house, but it was really a fort. Its two-foot thick stone walls, heavy window shutters and third floor dormer windows made it defensible against enemies armed with flintlock muskets. The French Castle included guard rooms for soldiers, officers' quar-

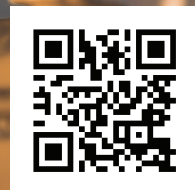
1726
French build Fort Niagara

1754
French and Indian War Begins

1759
British capture Fort Niagara

ters, a chapel, a bakery, a gun powder magazine and store-rooms for supplies. The fort was protected by soldiers of **Les Compagnies Franches de la Marine** (independent companies of the Navy), who can be identified by their **white coats**.

Construction of this fort also meant that **Native Americans** could come to Fort Niagara to **trade** with the **French**. The person in charge of the fur trade at Niagara was called **Le Commis** (The Agent,) and was in charge of trading cloth, guns, and iron tools with the Natives in return for furs like deer or beaver, which were used to make clothes in France.



<https://youtu.be/Gas4-OkFLnY>

1760

French Surrender Canada

1764

Native American Council
at Fort Niagara

1770

Boston Massacre

Building this fort made the **British** very **angry** because the fort limited their access to the upper Great Lakes. The growing tension between the French and British eventually led to the **French and Indian War**. Fort Niagara needed to prepare for this war because of its strategic location. The portage road needed to be improved because of the number of traders and soldiers that travelled that way.



The **British** captured Fort Niagara in **1759** during the **French and Indian War**. The fort was too strong for soldiers to attack directly, so they surrounded the fort and dug trenches toward it, moving cannons closer and closer. The British used these cannons to blast the fort and force the French to surrender. This was called a **siege**.



<https://youtu.be/vGx8IZMvQlc>



A Short Peace

The British held Fort Niagara from 1759 to 1796. In 1763, **Native** people **rebelled** over poor treatment and broken promises by British leaders. This was called **Pontiac's Rebellion**. Many British forts throughout the Great Lakes were attacked and captured by Native warriors. Local Seneca attacked British soldiers south of the Fort at Devil's Hole, but the fort itself was not captured.

In **1764** the fort was the site of a **large conference** that helped restore peace to the frontier. The conference consisted of at least **19 Native nations** and the **British**, who all sent their wisest representatives to speak around the **council fires**. Many of the conference's delegates were from either the upper Great Lakes and Ohio Country or the Six Nations (Haudenosaunee). The British chose to hold the grand council at Fort Niagara because it was a central meeting place between these regions.

Even though peace was restored, the British continued to strengthen Fort Niagara. In 1770 and 1771, they built two stone redoubts, which were strongholds inside the fort with three-story tall decks for cannons to fire over the walls.



<https://youtu.be/x7fuBa9bZaU>



1776

Declaration of Independence

The American Revolution

When the **American Revolution** began in 1775, **Fort Niagara** was in **British** hands. Holding the fort allowed the British to keep control of the Great Lakes, supplying other British forts farther west. The Fort was so important as a supply base, that it had its own **cooper**, a craftsman who made and repaired barrels needed to ship supplies.

British soldiers who guarded the fort during the Revolution were members of the **8th Regiment of Foot**. These men can be recognized by their **red coats**. Like most soldiers of the time, they lived on a steady diet of peas, salt pork and bread. When you visit the fort, you will see the large ovens used to bake hundreds of loaves of bread.

Many frontier settlers who **remained loyal to King George III** fled to Fort Niagara for protection. They were called **Loyalists**. They were joined by many **Native Americans** who supported the British because they feared that the American rebels would take their land. Many Natives also depended on the British for trade goods and for the services of a blacksmith, who made and repaired ironware.



<https://youtu.be/gbIlkMNnbbY>

1781

British Surrender at Yorktown

1796

Americans take control of Fort Niagara

Some of these Loyalists and Natives returned to raid the frontiers of New York and Pennsylvania, while others worked with the fort's carpenters to build shelters, or maintain the portage road. When the rebels raided their lands, the Six Nations were forced to take refuge at Fort Niagara. During the winter of 1779-1780 many starved to death.

The **Americans won** the Revolution and **Fort Niagara** was turned over to the United States in **1796**. With the fort in U.S. hands, American settlers began to move into the Niagara region.



Jakee
91



The War of 1812

In 1812, a new war broke out between the **United States** and **Great Britain**. Soldiers stationed at the fort included the **First United States Regiment of Artillery**. These soldiers can be recognized by their **blue coats** and **tall hats**, called **shakos**.

Fort Niagara was **unprepared** for war. Not only were its defenses crumbling, there were so many rattlesnakes on the parade ground that it was dangerous just to walk from one building to another. The fort also faced a British post, Fort George, located just 1,300 yards away in Canada. During the fall of 1812, the two forts bombarded each other with cannon fire, and it was then that **Betsy Doyle**, the wife of a soldier, became an **American heroine**.

There had been women at Fort Niagara since the French period, but they had jobs doing laundry for the soldiers, or serving as nurses. One woman even worked as a teacher of the fort's children. **Betsy Doyle** became famous by bravely helping soldiers



<https://youtu.be/UTcj8TOaTJ8>

1812 America Declares War on England

1813 British burn Lewiston, NY

1815 War with England ends

carry red hot cannonballs, called **hot shot**, to a cannon on the roof of the French Castle, a job not normally done by women.

In May of 1813, the **Americans captured Fort George**, across the river from Fort Niagara, but they had to retreat back to the American side of the river in December. Before they left, the soldiers **burned** the nearby town, **Newark**, to deny the British shelter. The **British** responded by once again **capturing Fort Niagara**. They attacked just before dawn on December 19, 1813 and surprised the American soldiers in the fort. After the capture, the **British** took **revenge** by **burning** American towns like **Youngstown** and **Lewiston**, all the way to **Buffalo** and **Black Rock**. They held the fort through the end of the war and it was **returned** to the **United States** by treaty, in 1815.

The United States has held the fort ever since. Soldiers served at the fort during the **Civil War**, **World War One** and **World War Two**. By the 1920s, the Old Fort was in bad condition. A citizens' group, called the **Old Fort Niagara Association**, was established in 1927, to **restore** the fort and turn it into an historic site. Today, thanks to their efforts, you can visit the fort and step back in time.



https://youtu.be/Cbrd_acEe1E



Are you ready to visit
OLD FORT NIAGARA?

Read the text on the history and highlights of the Fort and take the quiz to see if you are ready to pass through the Gate of Five Nations to explore Old Fort Niagara.

1. **Why was Fort Niagara important?**
 - a. The Fort guarded the entrance to the Niagara River
 - b. The Fort protected the portage trail around Niagara Falls
 - c. The Fort controlled access to the upper Great Lakes
 - d. All of the above
2. **What is the oldest building at Fort Niagara?**
 - a. The North Redoubt
 - b. The Powder Magazine
 - c. The French Castle
 - d. The Bake House
3. **What did a cooper make?**
 - a. Chicken coops.
 - b. Barrels
 - c. Tools
 - d. Muskets
4. **What is the name of the man in charge of the fur trade at the Fort?**
 - a. Le Commis
 - b. The trader
 - c. The lieutenant
 - d. The furrier
5. **Why did Native people come to the Fort?**
 - a. To play games
 - b. To trade
 - c. To negotiate
 - d. All of the above
6. **What is a siege?**
 - a. A surprise attack
 - b. A battle
 - c. A raid
 - d. Surrounding and bombarding a Fort until the garrison surrenders.
7. **What is the name of a hat worn by the U.S. Artillery in the War of 1812?**
 - a. Tricorne
 - b. Derby
 - c. Shako
 - d. Fedora
8. **What country captured the Fort twice?**
 - a. France
 - b. The United States
 - c. Spain
 - d. Great Britain
9. **What food was NOT on the menu at Fort Niagara?**
 - a. Fried chicken
 - b. Salt Pork
 - c. Pea Soup
 - d. Bread
10. **Who was Fort Niagara's heroine of the War of 1812?**
 - a. Mrs. Roberston
 - b. Molly Pitcher
 - c. Deborah Sampson
 - d. Betsy Doyle

Word Search

B	C	P	Q	A	C	X	K	C	O	L	T	N	I	L	F
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HULL FAMILY HOME AND FARMSTEAD
 LANCASTER, NY

- Redoubt
- Flintlock
- Hot Shot
- Musket
- Council Fire
- Cannon
- Blacksmith
- Portage
- Siege
- Native
- Commis
- Seneca
- French Castle
- Betsy Doyle
- Artillery
- Shako
- Loyalist
- Redcoat

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