

Proclamation of 1763

Introduction

At the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763, France surrendered Canada and much of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys—two-thirds of eastern North America—to England. The Proclamation of 1763 “preserved to the said Indians” the lands west of the Appalachian Mountains and ordered white settlers “there forthwith to remove themselves from such Settlements,” forbade white settlement, and restricted commerce with the American Indians to traders licensed by the British government, requiring settlers to “take out a License for carrying on such Trade from the Governor or Commander in Chief of any of Our Colonies respectively.” Power over westward expansion was in the hands of British officials, outside the colonists' control. By preventing the colonial population from moving inland the British ministry hoped to avoid costly wars, protect the western fur trade, and keep western land speculation under the control of the crown. To enforce the proclamation, the Britain authorized positioning 10,000 troops along the frontier, with the costs of 250,000 pounds sterling per year to be paid by the colonists. The Americans, who looked at the new land as an opportunity for settlement without the interference of the British government, resented the terms of the proclamation.

Excerpt

And We do further strictly enjoin and require all Persons whatever, who have either wilfully or inadvertently seated themselves upon any Lands within the Countries above described, or upon any other Lands, which, not having been ceded to, or purchased by Us, are still reserved to the said *Indians* as aforesaid, forthwith to remove themselves from such Settlements. And whereas great Frauds and Abuses have been committed in the purchasing Lands of the *Indians*, to the great Prejudice of Our Interests, and to the great Dissatisfaction of the said *Indians*; in order therefore to prevent such Irregularities for the future, and to the End that the *Indians* may be convinced of Our Justice, and determined Resolution to remove all reasonable Cause of Discontent, We do, with the Advice of Our Privy Council, strictly enjoin and require, that no private Person do presume to make any Purchase from the said *Indians* of any Lands reserved to the said *Indians*, within those Parts of Our Colonies where We have thought proper to allow Settlement; but that if, at any Time, any of the said *Indians* should be inclined to dispose of the said Lands, the same shall be purchased only for Us, in Our Name, at some Publick Meeting or Assembly of the said *Indians* to be held for that Purpose by the Governor or Commander in Chief of Our Colonies respectively, within which they shall lie; and in case they shall lie within the Limits of any Proprietary Government, they shall be purchased only for the Use and in the Name of such Proprietaries, conformable to such Directions and Instructions as We or they shall think proper to give for that Purpose: And We do, by the Advice of Our Privy Council, declare and enjoin, that the Trade with the said *Indians* shall be free and open to all Our Subjects

Proclamation of 1763

whatever; provided that every Person who may incline to trade with the said *Indians*, do take out a License for carrying on such Trade from the Governor or Commander in Chief of any of Our Colonies respectively, where such Person shall reside; and also give Security to observe such Regulations as We shall at any Time think fit, by Ourselves or by Our Commissaries to be appointed for this Purpose, to direct and appoint for the Benefit of the said Trade; and We do hereby authorize, enjoin, and require the Governors and Commanders in Chief of all Our Colonies respectively, as well Those under Our immediate Government as Those under the Government and Direction of Proprietaries, to grant such Licenses without Fee or Reward, taking especial Care to insert therein a Condition, that such License shall be void, and the Security forfeited, in case the Person, to whom the same is granted, shall refuse or neglect to observe such Regulations as We shall think proper to prescribe as aforesaid.

Questions for Discussion

Read the Introduction as well as the Transcript of the attached original document. It may be helpful to also refer to a map of North America to identify those areas mentioned in the document.

1. Using a map, locate areas identified in this document including: the Appalachian Mountains, Quebec, Florida, the Gulf of Mexico, and Hudson's Bay.
2. Why did many colonists consider the Proclamation to be unfair? Explain why the king and his ministers thought the Proclamation to be a reasonable law.
3. How did the Proclamation of 1763 contribute to a "souring of the relationship" between Great Britain and her subjects in the thirteen colonies?
4. The document appears to show great concern for the welfare of American Indians. To what extent was this document designed with the intention of supporting and protecting the interests of Native Americans?

Proclamation of 1763

Transcript

King George III, A Proclamation, 1763. (The Gilder Lehrman Collection, GLC05214)

By the KING,
A PROCLAMATION.

GEORGE R.

WHEREAS We have taken into Our Royal Consideration the extensive and valuable Acquisitions in *America*, secured to Our Crown by the late Definitive Treaty of Peace, concluded at *Paris* the Tenth Day of *February* last; and being desirous, that all Our loving Subjects, as well of Our Kingdom as of Our Colonies in *America*, may avail themselves, with all convenient Speed, of the great Benefits and Advantages which must accrue therefrom to their Commerce, Manufactures, and Navigation; We have thought fit, with the Advice of Our Privy Council, to issue this Our Royal Proclamation, hereby to publish and declare to all Our loving Subjects, that We have, with the Advice of Our said Privy Council, granted Our Letters Patent under Our Great Seal of *Great Britain*, to erect within the Countries and Islands ceded and confirmed to Us by the said Treaty, Four distinct and separate Governments, stiled and called by the Names of *Quebec*, *East Florida*, *West Florida*, and *Grenada*, and limited and bounded as follows; viz.

First. The Government of *Quebec*, bounded on the *Labrador* Coast by the River *St. John*, and from thence by a Line drawn from the Head of that River through the Lake *St. John*, to the South End of the Lake nigh *Pissin*; from whence the said Line crossing the River *St. Lawrence* and the Lake *Champlain* in Forty five Degrees of North Latitude, passes along the High Lands which divide the Rivers that empty themselves into the said River *St. Lawrence*, from those which fall into the Sea; and also along the North Coast of the *Baye des Chaleurs*, and the Coast of the Gulph of *St. Lawrence* to Cape *Rosieres*, and from thence crossing the Mouth of the River *St. Lawrence* by the West End of the Island of *Anticosti*, terminates at the aforesaid River of *St. John*.

Secondly, The Government of *East Florida*, bounded to the Westward by the Gulph of *Mexico*, and the *Apalachicola* River; to the Northward, by a Line drawn from that Part of the said River where the *Chatahouchee* and *Flint* Rivers meet, to the Source of *St. Mary's* River, and by the Course of the said River to the *Atlantick* Ocean; and to the Eastward and Southward, by

Proclamation of 1763

the *Atlantick* Ocean, and the Gulph of *Florida*, including all Islands within Six Leagues of the Sea Coast.

Thirdly, The Government of *West Florida*, bounded to the Southward by the Gulph of *Mexico*, including all Islands within Six Leagues of the Coast from the River *Apalachicola* to Lake *Pentchartrain*; to the Westward by the said Lake, the Lake *Mauripas*, and the River *Mississippi* [*sic*]; to the Northward, by a Line drawn due East from that Part of the River *Mississippi* which lies in Thirty one Degrees North Latitude, to the River *Apalachicola* or *Chatahouchee*; and to the Eastward by the said River.

Fourthly, The Government *Grenada*, comprehending the Island of that Name, together with the *Grenadines*, and the Islands of *Dominico*, *St. Vincents*, and *Tobago*.

And, to the End that the open and free Fishery of Our Subjects may be extended to and carried on upon the Coast of *Labrador* and the adjacent Islands, We have thought fit, with the Advice of Our said Privy Council, to put all that Coast, from the River *St. John's* to *Hudson's Streights*, together with the Islands of *Anticosti* and the *Madelaine*, and all other smaller Islands lying upon the said Coast, under the Care and Inspection of Our Governor of *Newfoundland*.

We have also, with the Advice of Our Privy Council, thought fit to annex the Islands of *St. John's*, and *Cape Breton* or *Isle Royal*, with the lesser Islands adjacent thereto, to Our Government of *Nova Scotia*.

We have also, with the Advice of Our Privy Council aforesaid, annexed to Our Province of *Georgia*, all the Lands lying between the Rivers *Altamaha* and *St. Mary's*.

And whereas it will greatly contribute to the speedy settling Our said new Governments, that Our loving Subjects should be informed of Our Paternal Care for the Security of the Liberties and Properties of those who are and shall become Inhabitants thereof; We have thought fit to publish and declare, by this Our Proclamation, that We have, in the Letters Patent under Our Great Seal of *Great Britain*, by which the said Governments are constituted, given express Power and Direction to Our Governors of Our said Colonies respectively, that so soon as the State and Circumstances of the said Colonies will admit thereof, they shall, with the Advice and Consent of the Members of Our Council, summon and call General Assemblies within the said Governments respectively, in such Manner and Form as is used and directed in those Colonies

Proclamation of 1763

and Provinces in *America*, which are under Our immediate Government; and We have also given Power to the said Governors, with the Consent of Our said Councils, and the Representatives of the People, so to be summoned as aforesaid, to make, constitute, and ordain Laws, Statutes, and Ordinances for the Publick Peace, Welfare, and Good Government of Our said Colonies, and of the People and Inhabitants thereof, as near as may be agreeable to the Laws of *England*, and under such Regulations and Restrictions as are used in other Colonies: And in the mean Time, and until such Assemblies can be called as aforesaid, all Persons inhabiting in, or resorting to Our said Colonies, may confide in Our Royal Protection for the Enjoyment of the Benefit of the Laws of Our Realm of *England*; for which Purpose, We have given Power under Our Great Seal to the Governors of Our said Colonies respectively, to erect and constitute, with the Advice of Our said Councils respectively, Courts of Judicature and Publick Justice, within Our said Colonies, for the hearing and determining all Causes, as well Criminal, as Civil, according to Law and Equity, and as near as may be agreeable to the Laws of *England*, with Liberty to all Persons who may think themselves aggrieved by the Sentences of such Courts, in all Civil Cases, to appeal, under the usual Limitations and Restrictions, to Us in Our Privy Council.

We have also thought fit, with the Advice of Our Privy Council as aforesaid, to give unto the Governors and Councils of Our said Three New Colonies upon the Continent, full Power and Authority to settle and agree with the Inhabitants of Our said New Colonies, or with any other Persons who shall resort thereto, for such Lands, Tenements, and Hereditaments, as are now, or hereafter shall be in Our Power to dispose of, and them to grant to any such Person or Persons, upon such Terms, and under such moderate Quit-Rents, Services, and Acknowledgments as have been appointed and settled in Our other Colonies, and under such other Conditions as shall appear to Us to be necessary and expedient for the Advantage of the Grantees, and the Improvement and Settlement of Our said Colonies.

And whereas We are desirous, upon all Occasions, to testify Our Royal Sense and Approbation of the Conduct and Bravery of the Officers and Soldiers of Our Armies, and to reward the same, We do hereby command and empower Our Governors of Our said Three New Colonies, and all other Our Governors of Our several Provinces on the Continent of *North America*, to grant, without Fee or Reward, to such Reduced Officers as have served in *North America* during the late War, and to such Private Soldiers as have been or shall be disbanded in

Proclamation of 1763

America, and are actually residing there, and shall personally apply for the same, the following Quantities of Lands, subject at the Expiration of Ten Years, to the same Quit-Rents as other Lands are subject to in the Province within which they are granted, as also subject to the same Conditions of Cultivation and Improvement; *viz.*

To every Person having the Rank of a Field Officer, Five thousand Acres.—To every Captain, Three thousand Acres[.—]To every Subaltern or [Staff] Officer, Two thousand Acres.—To every Non-Commission Officer, Two hundred A[cres]—To every Private Man, Fifty Acres.

We do like[wise] authorize and require the Governors and Commanders in Chief of all Our said Colonies upon the Continent of *North America*, to grant the like Quantities of Land, and upon the same Conditions, to such Reduced Officers of Our Navy, of like Rank, as served on Board Our Ships of War in *North America* at the Times of the Reduction of *Louisbourg* and *Quebec* in the late War, and who shall personally apply to Our respective Governors for such Grants.

And whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to Our Interest and the Security of Our Colonies, that the several Nations or Tribes of *Indians*, with whom We are connected, and who live under Our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions and Territories as, not having been ceded to, or purchased by Us, are reserved to them, or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds; We do therefore, with the Advice of Our Privy Council, declare it to be our Royal Will and Pleasure, that no Governor or Commander in Chief in any of Our Colonies of *Quebec*, *East Florida*, or *West Florida*, do presume, upon any Pretence whatever, to grant Warrants of Survey, or pass any Patents for Lands beyond the Bounds of their respective Governments, as described in their Commissions; as also, that no Governor or Commander in Chief in any of Our other Colonies or Plantations in *America*, do presume, for the present, and until Our further Pleasure be known, to grant Warrants of Survey, or pass Patents for any Lands beyond the Heads or Sources of any of the Rivers which fall into the *Atlantick* Ocean from the West and North West, or upon any Lands whatever, which, not having been ceded to, or purchased by Us as aforesaid, are preserved to the said *Indians*, or any

Proclamation of 1763

of them.

And We do further declare it to be Our Royal Will and Pleasure, for the present as aforesaid, to reserve under Our Sovereignty, Protection, and Dominion, for the Use of the said *Indians*, all the Lands and Territories not included within the Limits of Our said Three New Governments, or within the Limits of the Territory granted to the *Hudson's Bay* Company, as also, all the Lands and Territories lying to the Westward of the Sources of the Rivers which fall into the Sea from the West and North West, as aforesaid; and We do hereby strictly forbid, on Pain of Our Displeasure, all Our loving Subjects from making any Purchases or Settlements whatever, or taking Possession of any of the Lands above reserved, without Our especial Leave and License for that Purpose first obtained.

And We do further strictly enjoin and require all Persons whatever, who have either wilfully or inadvertently seated themselves upon any Lands within the Countries above described, or upon any other Lands, which, not having been ceded to, or purchased by Us, are still reserved to the said *Indians* as aforesaid, forthwith to remove themselves from such Settlements.

And whereas great Frauds and Abuses have been committed in the purchasing Lands of the *Indians*, to the great Prejudice of Our Interests, and to the great Dissatisfaction of the said *Indians*; in order therefore to prevent such Irregularities for the future, and to the End that the *Indians* may be convinced of Our Justice, and determined Resolution to remove all reasonable Cause of Discontent, We do, with the Advice of Our Privy Council, strictly enjoin and require, that no private Person do presume to make any Purchase from the said *Indians* of any Lands reserved to the said *Indians*, within those Parts of Our Colonies where We have thought proper to allow Settlement; but that if, at any Time, any of the said *Indians* should be inclined to dispose of the said Lands, the same shall be purchased only for Us, in Our Name, at some Publick Meeting or Assembly of the said *Indians* to be held for that Purpose by the Governor or Commander in Chief of Our Colonies respectively, within which they shall lie; and in case they shall lie within the Limits of any Proprietary Government, they shall be purchased only for the Use and in the Name of such Proprietaries, conformable to such Directions and Instructions as We or they shall think proper to give for that Purpose: And We do, by the Advice of Our Privy Council, declare and enjoin, that the Trade with the said *Indians* shall be free and open to all Our

Proclamation of 1763

Subjects whatever; provided that every Person who may incline to trade with the said *Indians*, do take out a License for carrying on such Trade from the Governor or Commander in Chief of any of Our Colonies respectively, where such Person shall reside; and also give Security to observe such Regulations as We shall at any Time think fit, by Ourselves or by Our Commissaries to be appointed for this Purpose, to direct and appoint for the Benefit of the said Trade; and We do hereby authorize, enjoin, and require the Governors and Commanders in Chief of all Our Colonies respectively, as well Those under Our immediate Government as Those under the Government and Direction of Proprietaries, to grant such Licenses without Fee or Reward, taking especial Care to insert therein a Condition, that such License shall be void, and the Security forfeited, in case the Person, to whom the same is granted, shall refuse or neglect to observe such Regulations as We shall think proper to prescribe as aforesaid.

And We do further expressly enjoin and require all Officers whatever, as well Military as Those employed in the Management and Direction of *Indian* Affairs within the Territories reserved as aforesaid for the Use of the said *Indians*, to seize and apprehend all Persons whatever, who, standing charged with Treasons, Misprisions of Treason, Murders, or other Felonies or Misdemeanors, shall fly from Justice, and take Refuge in the said Territory, and to send them under a proper Guard to the Colony where the Crime was committed of which they stand accused, in order to take their Tryal for the same.

Given at Our Court at *St. James's*, the Seventh Day of *October*, One thousand seven hundred and sixty three, in the Third Year of Our Reign.

GOD save the KING.

LONDON:

Printed by *Mark Baskett*, Printer to the King's most Excellent Majesty; and by the Assigns of *Robert Baskett*. 1763.