Forty-five Degrees of Separation: Imperial and Indigenous Geographical Knowledge and the Bordering of Quebec in the 1760s

Michael Gunther
Georgia Gwinnett College

Introduction

"Nothing is less evident than the boundaries of these governments . . ."[1]
- Dr. Thomas Young, 1764

In October 1758, at the end of an overland journey from Boston to the New York frontier to consult with other officers about the possibility of an autumn advance against French forts on Lake Champlain, British General Jeffery Amherst paused to take stock of his location. At the Halfway Brook between the Hudson River and Lake George (known by the French name of Lac du St. Sacrèment before 1755), Amherst observed "a Rock that the French call the bounds between the English Country & Canada." Here, the rivers and lakes start flowing north. For decades, French colonial officials had claimed the Lake Champlain watershed because it was a tributary of the St. Lawrence River (moreover, it was named for the founder of New France, Samuel de Champlain). The waters of Lake George and Lake Champlain empty into the Richelieu River, which unites its waters with the St. Lawrence northeast of Montreal. Unsurprisingly, Amherst was more concerned with practical military matters than with the accuracy or efficacy of this boundary claim. In reality, the Halfway Brook was not a geographical border; it was instead an entryway into a vast borderland claimed and contested by rival empires and, to borrow the terminology of scholars Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson, "a zone of interpenetration between . . . previously distinct societies."[2]

Oral history, documentary evidence and linguistic analysis confirm the historical identification of several Native American tribes with Lake Champlain and its surrounding lands. These include the Haudenosaunee (or Six Nations Iroquois) Mohawks, the Kahnawake Mohawks (émigrés from Iroquoia who moved to Sault St. Louis, a mission community outside

---

[1] Thomas Young, *Some Reflections on the Dispute Between New-York, New-Hampshire, and Col. John Henry Lydius of Albany* . . . (New Haven, 1764), 8. A preliminary version of this paper was presented at the "Canada before Confederation: Early Exploration and Mapping" conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia in November 2017, organized by Lauren Beck and Chet Van Duzer.

[2] J. Clarence Webster, ed., *Journal of Jeffery Amherst* (Toronto, 1931), 92; Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson, eds., *The Frontier in History: North America and South Africa Compared* (New Haven, 1981), 7. For an introduction to the range of recent scholarly uses of the term "borderlands" (including its applicability in regions outside of what is now the U.S. Southwest), see the authors' preface in Pekka Hamalainen and Benjamin H. Johnson, *Major Problems in the History of North American Borderlands: Documents and Essays* (Boston, 2012), xv-xix.

of Montreal, in the 1670s), and the Missisquois, Pennacooks, and Sokokis (and others) recognized collectively as Western Abenakis. This last group—like the Kahnawakes, relatively recent Catholic converts and semi-autonomous allies of New France—is most often associated in British colonial sources with the mission community of St. Francis (Odanak), situated well north of the forty-fifth parallel. However, Western Abenakis regard Lake Champlain as central to their cosmology and origins as a people. One of its village sites, Missisquoi, overlooks the waters of a bay that forms the northeastern extension of Lake Champlain just south of the current international boundary line. Before the establishment of Kahnawake, the Haudenosaunee and Western Abenakis fought against each other in several wars; after its establishment, Kahnawake and Abenaki men were called to join New France in attacking Haudenosaunee villages. The lake was a borderland between the Haudenosaunee to the west and the Western Abenakis to its east, and also, on the west side of the lake, between the Haudenosaunee to the south and Kahnawake to the north. The Treaty of Montreal (1701) helped usher in a period of peace between Native American tribes in the region.[3]

In the first half of the eighteenth century, Haudenosaunee, Kahnawake, and Western Abenaki men and women regularly utilized the lakes and neighboring lands and tributaries to hunt, fish, trade, and engage in war and diplomacy. Abenakis and Kahnawakes frequented Fort St. Fréderic (Crown Point) during their travels to and from Albany and Onondaga; men and women were married by the fort's chaplain, and children were baptized there. Kahnawake men sold furs in Albany and negotiated with the Albany Commissioners of Indian Affairs. The corridor was one of the symbolic "roads" by which intercultural diplomats maintained "Covenant Chain" protocols and rituals with New York, as well as diplomacy with New France; three decades of relative peace in the region gave rise to an uneasy mutual custodianship over the watershed and its surrounding hunting grounds. In 1739, the governor-general of New France bestowed on the "Mohawks and his own Indians" all of the land between Crown Point and the Halfway Brook "as a deed of Gift to make use of it for a hunting place for them and their Posterity and at the same time assured them that no French should settle there" (formerly, New France had attempted to establish seigneurial grants south of Crown Point, so this diplomatic move did more than merely signal French imperial acceptance of a preexisting reality; it was rather a substantive change in frontier policy). British officials did not recognize this arrangement, or "deed." Colonists of British New York, however—including many who were descended from settlers of the former Dutch colony of New Netherland—abided by and profited from Native American control of the corridor until the renewal of imperial conflict and

[3] Gordon Day, "The Eastern Boundary of Iroquoia: Abenaki Evidence," and "Abenaki Place-Names in the Champlain Valley," in Michael K. Foster and William Cowan, eds., *In Search of New England's Native Past: Selected Essays by Gordon Day* (Amherst, 1998), 116-122, 229-262. Indeed, Day uses toponymy and cosmology to argue that this border may substantially predate the late seventeenth century. On the wars of the late 1600s and the Treaty of Montreal, see, for example, Daniel Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 40, 4 (Oct., 1983), 528-559; Gilles Havard, *The Great Peace of Montreal of 1701: French-Native Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century* (Montreal, 2001). Concurrently, pro-English Haudenosaunee diplomats negotiated a treaty in Albany with the governor of New York. The effect of these two near-simultaneous events was to secure for the Haudenosaunee the ability to remain neutrality in the event of renewal of war between England and France in Europe.

war in the 1740s and 1750s.[4]

At the end of the Seven Years' War, the Treaty of Paris of 1763 included the cession of all of New France to Britain. Later that year, King George III's royal proclamation introduced the forty-five degree north latitude line as the boundary between New York and the new British colony of Quebec. In 1766, Governor Henry Moore of New York and Lieutenant Governor Guy Carleton of Quebec met at Isle la Motte on Lake Champlain to witness and sanction the survey of a portion of the line. The story of postwar boundary-making appears simple and undeniable at first glance, and if true, it would extinguish the borderland. Based on the conceptual framework of "borderlands to borders," the collapse of French power in the region augured ill because it deprived Native Americans of economic and diplomatic options in their dealings with British officials and colonists, and allowed the bordering process to begin. However, as Robin Fisher writes, "The international boundary line is . . . an artifact of the colonial polities, and it is important to remember that it bears no relationship to the boundary lines between the traditional Native cultures of North America." While my research may suffer from an imbalance—tilting toward a preponderance of imperial sources at the expense of indigenous voices—it does recognize the significance of indigenous knowledge and experience of place in the unfolding of its history. After the Seven Years' War, the Lake Champlain watershed became a different type of borderland, a contested region with porous boundaries between multiple colonies (New York, Quebec and New Hampshire) of the same empire. This was due to multiple factors, including incongruities between imperial acquisition of geographical knowledge of the region and actions based on this information, as well as Native Americans' capacity to preserve and communicate its place-knowledge.[5]

Sir William Johnson played a crucial role in these developments. The letters and diplomatic records of Johnson and his subordinates are indispensable primary sources for scholars of this time and place. Born in Ireland, Johnson emigrated to the Mohawk Valley of western New York in the late 1730s, settling on land owned by his uncle, a British admiral. Johnson's business acumen, charisma, and cultural malleability (for example, having both a European wife and a Haudenosaunee Mohawk common-law consort) brought him financial success and increasing influence in frontier New York and Iroquois villages. From the mid-1740s through the mid-1750s, Johnson wrested control of the "Covenant Chain"—the ritualized

---

[4] The "deed of gift" quote is from a primary source that is admittedly difficult to fully trust. Paraphrased reports of Governor-General Beauharnois's promise "to our Mohawks and his own Indians" is transcribed and published in E.B. O'Callaghan, ed., *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of New York* . . . (Albany, 1853-1887), VI, 152. It was communicated at two removes: from "four" Haudenosaunee Mohawks reporting back to the Commissioners of Indian Affairs, and then from the commissioners reporting to New York Lieutenant Governor George Clarke in a letter written on November 3, 1739. For evidence of both Iroquois and Abenaki men hunting around Lake George and Whitehall (the "Little Fall" on Wood Creek, which empties northward into Lake Champlain) in 1730 —before the "deed of gift"—see Beauharnois to Maurepas, October 10, 1730, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of New York*, IX, 1018-1019.

[5] Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History," *The American Historical Review* 104, 3 (June, 1999), 814-841. Robin Fisher, "The Border and First Nations History: A Canadian View," in Michael D. Behiels and Reginald C. Stuart, eds., *Transnationalism: Canada-United States History into the Twenty-First Century* (Montreal, 2010), 32.

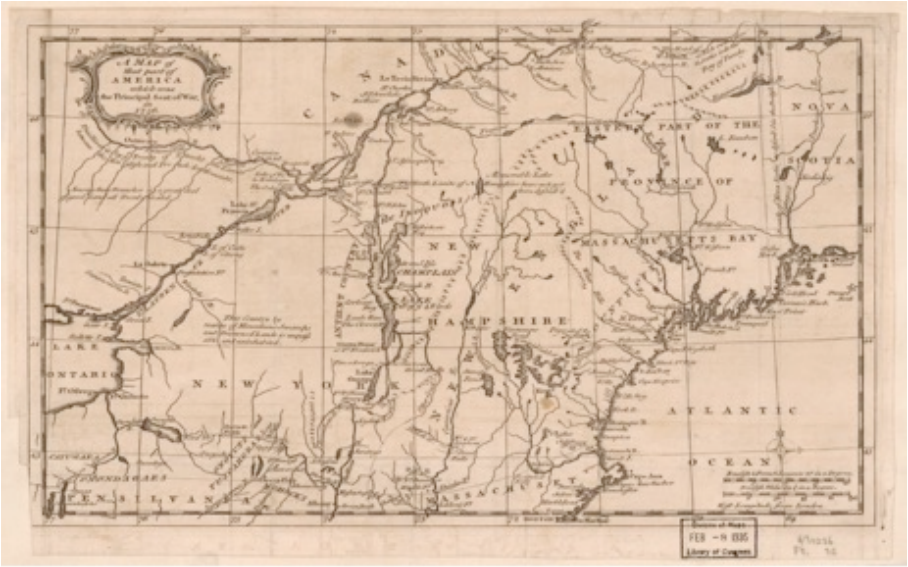

Figure 1. A Map of that part of America which was the principal seat of war in 1756 [London?: s.n., 1757?]. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Geography and Maps Division.

system of diplomatic interactions between Haudenosaunee headmen and the royal governor of New York—from the Albany Commissioners of Indian Affairs. In 1755, British General Edward Braddock commissioned Johnson to be Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northern Department, a position he retained until his death in 1774.[6]

In the mid-1700s, then, Johnson was brilliantly effective in fulfilling the types of roles typifying a borderland diplomat and cultural broker.[7] It was through Johnson's persuasive abilities that Haudenosaunee Mohawk warriors violated the Iroquois Confederacy's principle of neutrality to participate in raids on New France during King George's War (1744-1748) and in the first British victory in the Seven Years' War, the Battle of Lake George (1755). Victory at Lake George resulted in a baronetcy for Johnson, who commanded the joint force of New England and New York militia and Haudenosaunee Mohawk warriors. However, the initial phase of the battle pitted Haudenosaunee Mohawks against French-allied Kahnawake Mohawks, a result Johnson tried to avoid in later campaigns. Johnson later led over four hundred Haudenosaunee warriors northward down Lake George in 1758 to join British General James Abercromby's attack on Fort Carillon (Ticonderoga). Doomed to failure by poor

[6] James Sullivan, Alexander C. Flick, Milton W. Hamilton, and Albert Corey, eds., *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, in fourteen volumes (Albany, 1921-1965), hereafter *W.J.P*. One of the more fascinating recent biographies of William Johnson is Fintan O'Toole, *White Savage: William Johnson and the Inventing of America* (New York, 2005). Also see Timothy Shannon, "Dressing for Success on the Mohawk Frontier: Hendrick, William Johnson, and the Indian Fashion," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 53, 1 (Jan., 1996), 13-42.

[7] See, for example, James Merrell, "'The Cast of His Countenance': Reading Andrew Montour," in Hoffman, Sobel, and Teute, eds., *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America* (Chapel Hill, 1997), 13-39; and Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York, 1999); Nancy Hagedorn, "'A Friend to Go Between Them': The Interpreter as Cultural Broker during Anglo-Iroquois Councils, 1740-1770," *Ethnohistory* 35 (1988), 60-80.

scouting and impatiently plotted frontal assaults, hundreds of redcoats, many of them Highland Scots, fell at the Battle of Ticonderoga. Johnson's warriors waited and watched from high atop Mount Rattlesnake, having no clear role in Abercromby's battle plan. Despite defeat and retreat in the Lake Champlain watershed, the tide of war shifted in Britain's favor in 1758. The conquest of Louisbourg made General Jeffery Amherst a hero and brought him to the North American mainland to replace Abercromby as commander-in-chief. The Treaty of Easton, the fall of Fort Duquesne (renamed Fort Pitt), and John Bradstreet's sacking of Fort Frontenac on Lake Ontario all led to a loosening or sundering of ties between New France and many of its Amerindian allies in the pays d'en haut.[8]

In this context of fading French fortunes and scarcities of food and trade goods in New France, Johnson began to use his mastery of Covenant Chain diplomatic protocols to strengthen and embolden pro-British factions among the Haudenosaunee. He also initiated diplomatic outreach to the "Seven Nations" domiciliés: French-allied Abenakis, Algonquins, Hurons, Mohawks, and Nipissings who inhabited mission reserve villages from Akwesasne (or St. Regis), located near the forty-fifth parallel, through Kanesetake (or Lake of Two Mountains, or Oka), Kahnawake (or Sault St. Louis), Odanak (or St. Francis), Pointe-du-Lac, and Wolinak (or Becancour), northeastward to Wendake (or Jeune-Lorette), near the city of Quebec. Formidable mountains (what are now called the Adirondacks), religious differences, and memories of past battles divided the First Nations of the New York-New France borderland, but Johnson promised a restoration of peace, intercultural exchange, and Amerindian autonomy. They later described themselves as the "Confederation of Canada" in a diplomatic entreaty to tribes further west who fought in "Pontiac's War" in 1763. Johnson also described them as the "Confederate nations" of Canada in 1763. Within a short span of time, Kahnawake would serve as the "site of the general council fire," and as first among equal nations in diplomatic dealings with Johnson, which makes sense, given Johnson's intimate familiarity with Haudenosaunee Mohawk culture.[9]

Meanwhile, Amherst marshaled the skills of a small but capable cadre of engineers, draftsmen, scouts and quartermaster officers to supply thousands of British regular and provincial soldiers in three separate armies in forbidding environments. They collectively began

---

[8] Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York, 2001), 219-296; William Nester, The Epic Battles for Ticonderoga, 1758 (Albany, 2008).

[9] Jean-Francois Lozier, "History, Historiography, and the Courts: The St Lawrence Mission Villages and the Fall of New France," in Phillip Buckner and John G. Reid, *Remembering 1759: The Conquest of Canada in Historical Memory* (Toronto, 2012), 110-135, qtd. on 117. Johnson's subordinate, Daniel Claus, reported that Kahnawake Mohawks first used this term to identify themselves to Haudenosaunee Mohawks on the morning of the Battle of Lake George in 1755 ("We are the 7 confederate Indian Nations of Canada"), quoted in D. Peter MacLeod, *The Canadian Iroquois and the Seven Years' War* (Toronto, 2012), xi. MacLeod includes the Catholic Onondagas of the recently established village of Oswegatchie (or La Presentation, a mission established by a French Jesuit, Abbé Piquet, in 1749), southwest of Akwesasne, in the Seven Nations. Indeed, important negotiations between Johnson and the Seven Nations during the 1760 campaign occurred there. In *La Fédération des Sept Feux de la Vallée du Saint-Laurent* (Sillery, 1998), Jean-Pierre Sawaya excludes Oswegatchie in favor of including the Algonquins of Pointe-du-Lac as a separate confederate fire, or nation. There is also historiographical disagreement over how far back the collective will that would be described as the "Seven Nations" (as of 1760) should be traced. As Lozier explains, Sawaya originally argued for late seventeenth-century roots, but later acknowledged the significance of the outcome of the French and Indian War to the formation of a collective voice and will.

to change the land through road, fort, and garden construction, and, in the process gained important new knowledge—new, that is, from the British perspective—of the Lake Champlain watershed. Messengers sent to communicate directives from Amherst to General Thomas Gage's army on Lake Ontario explored part of the Adirondacks. A provincial regiment blazed a new road from Crown Point through part of the Green Mountains to Fort Number Four, on the Connecticut River. Adolphus Benzell, Dietrich Brehm, and William Brasier mapped portions of the landscape and charted the shores and depths of Lake Champlain. Thomas Davies, an artillery officer, painted remarkable watercolors of Otter Creek, Ticonderoga and Crown Point, as well as Halifax, Louisbourg, Niagara Falls, Montreal, and Quebec. As John Crowley argues, "Artistically inclined imperial agents represented the new British province as a place of natural beauty with a picturesque indigenous culture . . . the sublime aspects of Canada's scenery confirmed the grandeur of the imperial project against New France . . . ." The military landscape was undeniably difficult to master. Amherst's quartermasters had to manage a supply chain requiring several carries around waterfalls on the upper Hudson River north of Albany, portage to Lake George, boat construction for supply on both lakes, and makeshift naval ship construction to wrest control of the waters of Lake Champlain from France. Believing in eighteenth-century ideas about the medical effects of malodorous swamps and uncultivated forested land, Amherst and his subordinates set out to clear ground, which had the additional benefit of safeguarding against ambushes and providing materials for fort and blockhouse construction. They harvested spruce trees to manufacture spruce beer, and began outlining spaces for livestock pens and gardens to promote health by supplying soldiers with more fresh beef and vegetables. Whereas many officers and soldiers previously saw only a dangerous, insalubrious, even haunted landscape—the setting for dismal defeats earlier in the war—many began to covet watershed lands and to see their future destinies tied to continued landscape modification after the war.[10]

General Amherst also promoted land grants to officers and veterans in both the upper Hudson valley as well as the Lake Champlain watershed during the victorious campaigns of 1759 and 1760. British officer Philip Skene, for example, began to establish tenant families at the falls of Wood Creek—south of its outlet into Lake Champlain—in the summer of 1761. Skene, as yet, possessed no official title to this land, but in the atmosphere of wartime conquest and diplomatic waiting, Amherst's patronage sufficed to commence settlement.[11] Amherst's vision of the political landscape of the Hudson-Champlain Corridor was never comprehensively stated, but it can be inferred from his correspondence and directives. Amherst embraced the idea of veterans' settlements to reward military service and bolster security in a region that might still constitute a border between New York and New France, pending the outcome of

---

[10] John Crowley, "'Taken on the Spot': The Visual Appropriation of New France for the Global British Landscape," *Canadian Historical Review* (March, 2005), 91-107. I expand on these points in "'Crumbling to Dust': British Military Engineering Efforts in the Hudson-Champlain Corridor in the Seven Years' War and its Aftermath," in Luengo-Gutiérrez and Smith, eds., *From Colonies to Countries in the North Caribbean: Military Engineers in the Development of Cities and Territories* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2016), 1-22.
[11] Doris Begor Morton, *Philip Skene of Skenesborough* (Granville, N.Y., 1959). For a summary of developments outside of North America after 1760, see Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York, 2001), 476-487.

peace negotiations in Europe. Amherst did not share his views as to how, specifically, the land should be allocated and organized, but his support of the land claims of diverse subordinates indicates that he was amenable to manorial grants dominated by one individual (such as Skene) as well as more democratically organized townships (peopled by soldiers from Connecticut, for example). Amherst's political landscape, at its basic level, necessitated active military organization, obedience to the King, and a recognition of the right of veterans to land in new communities.[12]

The campaigns of 1759 and 1760, combined with William Johnson's patient diplomacy, put Amherst in the enviable position of negotiating with Governor-General Vaudreuil for the formal and complete surrender of New France in September 1760. There were many important provisions that are beyond the scope of this piece. The fortieth article of the terms of surrender stipulated that "The Savages or Indian allies of his most Christian Majesty, shall be maintained in the Lands they inhabit; if they chuse to remain there; they shall not be molested on any pretence whatsoever, for having carried arms . . . ." The key word was "inhabit." In the 1760s, the government of the British province of Quebec would strive to protect Kahnawake rights to its own village site, on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River near Montreal. British authorities were not as helpful in recognizing claims to the hunting grounds of the Kahnawakes and Western Abenakis in the Lake Champlain watershed.[13]

A week after the surrender of New France, William Johnson met with delegates from Kahnawake—representing the Seven Nations—and the Haudenosaunee. A Kahnawake speaker thanked Johnson for "renewing and strengthning the old Covenant Chain" and "for opening the Road from this to your Country," and commended the Haudenosaunee for accompanying

---

[12] The views of Amherst's associates help to clarify his notion of the political landscape. Colonel Skene, who purchased slaves and recruited settlers from his native Ireland during the war, sought to establish a large plantation or manor. With a mixture of slaves and dependents, Skene would engage in land clearance, mining, timber processing and agriculture for local subsistence and export. As a militia officer, he would command the obedience and respect of other male inhabitants in the region, most of whom, ideally, would be former soldiers and officers who held lower rank during the war. Phineas Lyman, on the other hand, contemplated applying for a township for his Connecticut regiment along the Crown Point Road in what is now Vermont. Lyman would likely have been seen as a leader if he had followed through in utilizing Amherst's patronage. However, the town meeting afforded individual landholders a voice in making decisions on the disposition, use, and development of the land. This would seem, at first glance, to completely contradict Skene's manorial aims. Skene and Lyman can be reconciled by looking at Thomas Pownall's "Considerations on ye Means, Method & Nature of Settling a Colony on ye Lands South of Lake Erie [1754] To John Pownall," (LO 716, Loudoun Papers, Huntington Library). It is not known whether or not Amherst perused the "Considerations," but their eventual location makes it evident that his predecessor as commander-in-chief, the Earl of Loudoun, did. Pownall recognized that New Englanders, because of population increase in their home colonies, must be part of any consideration for planned colonization. Though it was known that they favored the township system, Pownall argued that they were also accustomed to the physical labor of transforming wilderness land. If led forth onto their lands by regular troops, then "a Comittee of Gentlemen of this Country who understand [military matters]" could establish a functional militia system for security. Whether organized aristocratically (manors) or democratically (townships), a combination of private and public property and military assistance would "make a Free Monarchical Form of government go on regularly quietly & naturaly."

[13] "Articles of Capitulation, Montreal," in Adam Shortt and Arthur Doughty, eds., *Canadian Archives: Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada, 1759-1791* (Ottawa, 1907), 7-37. The terms were actually drawn up by New France's Governor-General, Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, and then altered in negotiation with Amherst.

Johnson to Montreal. He promised to "burry the french hatchet . . . in the bottomless Pit," and asked for new trade regulations and the maintenance of blacksmiths and priests in his community (Amherst's terms with Vaudreuil included freedom of religion for French habitants who chose to remain in Canada, but refused the right to name missionaries and other church officials "till the King's pleasure be known"). In announcing that "our Young Men are soon going upon the hunt," a Kahnawake speaker pleaded for good treatment from British soldiers at local forts (specifically asking that liquor not be sold to them). Ad'yadarony, another Kahnawake speaker, then requested Johnson to "allow us the peaceable Possession of y^{e}. Spot of Ground we live now upon, and in case we should remove from it, to reserve to us as our own." Unfortunately, Daniel Claus, Johnson's subordinate, did not record Johnson's response (or it does not survive). A strict interpretation of the speech would, at the least, constitute affirmation of Kahnawake land rights to their village site. The previous invocation of young men hunting, combined with the later opening up of the possibility of village relocation (a historically documented practice among the Kahnawakes, as well as among the Abenakis), seems to open up broader claims. The Seven Nations never surrendered to Britain—they came independently to terms with Johnson and Amherst—so it seems reasonable to conclude that, for them, the peace of 1760 recognized their claims to both village sites and larger hunting grounds utilized before the war. The Haudenosaunee—especially Six Nations Mohawks, who had fought alongside Johnson since the Battle of Lake George—also maintained similar rights to the lands in question (west of the upper Hudson River, Lake George and southern Lake Champlain, and north of the Mohawk River). Western Abenakis, meanwhile, claimed the village site of Missisquoi as well as hunting and fishing rights on the eastern shore of Lake Champlain, though there is no record of negotiation on this point in the terms of surrender of New France, nor in the Treaty of Kahnawake.[14]

In the short period of waiting for the official end of the war in Europe—and resolution of the status of Canada—British officials checked the power of New York politicians to grant lands that were Haudenosaunee hunting grounds. Springing from his knowledge of the land gained through several campaigns at the head of Rogers' Rangers, Robert Rogers of New Hampshire petitioned for rights to an expansive tract of land west of Lake George. Rogers bypassed General Amherst and Superintendent Johnson to work directly with the New York government on this scheme. He even invited high-ranking New York officials to join as shadow investors "paying third part of all expenses and charges, and assisting all in their power, on

[14] "Articles of Capitulation, Montreal," in Adam Shortt and Arthur Doughty, eds., *Canadian Archives: Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada, 1759-1791* (Ottawa, 1907), 7-37. The terms were actually drawn up by New France's Governor-General, Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, and then negotiated with Amherst. Also see *W.J.P.*, IX: 68; O'Toole, *White Savage*, 201-205, 210-213; Anderson, *Crucible of War,* 406-409. Johnson's deputy, Daniel Claus, later referred to "our promise in 1760 of letting them keep their Lands unmolested," in reference to both the Kahnawakes and Abenakis. Colin Calloway, *Western Abenakis of Vermont* (Norman, Okla., 1990), Claus quotation, 196. The notes of the "Indian Conference" at Kahnawake on September 16, 1760, are recorded in Claus's hand in the Jelles Fonda Journal in the New-York Historical Society, and reprinted in *W.J.P.,* XIII, 163-166.

obtaining patents for said Land."[15] After Lieutenant Governor Cadwallader Colden granted Rogers a preliminary purchasing license, the Haudenosaunee called on Johnson to use his influence with imperial officials to stop the patenting process. In June, Johnson informed Colden that the Mohawks "will dispose of none of their lands at this time," and each made their case in letters to the Board of Trade. In November 1761, King George III sided with Johnson, giving "immediate Orders for putting a stop to all Settlements upon the Mohawk River and about Lake George" until at least the close of the war. Worse for Colden, the king castigated "the conduct of those who have in former times been intrusted with the Administration of the Government of New York . . . in reference to granting of Lands . . . ." British officials rightly feared that abusing Haudenosaunee trust while crucial matters of war and peace still hung in the balance could lead to a new, costly frontier war. In this context, it remains curious that New York would soon be rewarded by having their northern frontier extended to the forty-fifth parallel.[16]

Further north, there were also emerging tensions between the British Army, the office of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and the Seven Nations. William Johnson assigned subordinate Daniel Claus, who had participated in the previous year's treaty council at Kahnawake in September 1760, to remain in Montreal to act as his deputy. In February 1761, Claus explained to Johnson that the military governor of Montreal, General Thomas Gage, was "an entire stranger to the Transactions and Engagements the Ind^{n}. of Canada have entered into with you last Fall, and I think if he had a Copy shewd him he might perhaps be not so strict with them . . . ." Kahnawake men on hunting trips exchanged fresh meat, such as venison, for salted provisions and dry goods, but were at times subject to verbal and physical abuse, particularly from soldiers of the 44th Regiment, as well as corruption and theft of wampum and other items used in diplomacy. In one of his replies, Johnson apprised Claus of General Amherst's resolution to eliminate extraneous spending on gifts associated with diplomatic meetings. Johnson correctly understood this as a troubling development for his newly expanded

---

[15] Franklin B. Hough, ed., *Journals of Major Robert Rogers* (Albany, 1883), 268-269; Indenture, May 27, 1761, Goldsbrow Banyar, Land Papers (hereafter Banyar Land Papers), Box 6, Folder 3, New-York Historical Society. On the general point of Iroquois disquiet at New York land frauds before the French and Indian War as a contributing factor in Johnson's rise to the Indian superintendency, see Timothy Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754* (Ithaca, 2000), 41-51, 161-166.

[16] Johnson to Colden, June 18, 1761, in *Sir William Johnson Papers*, Vol. III, 408-411. Johnson wrote, "I am verry apprehensive that pressing the Indians so much to dispose of their Lands & that in such great Quantitys contrary to their Inclinations at present, will give them great umbrage and alarm all the Nations, and probably produce consequences wch. May be verry prejudicial to his Majestys Interest, and stop the settling of the Country . . ."; Order of the King in Council on a Report of the Lords of Trade, November 23, 1761, *N.Y.C.D.*, VII: 472-476. The preliminary Privy Council report noted the prewar Iroquois complaints against New York, the "primary cause" of which was "the cruelty and injustice with which they had been treated with respect to their hunting grounds, in open violation of those solemn compacts by which they had yielded to us the dominion but not the property of their lands," Privy Council Report on Cadwallader Colden's . . . Conduct in Office, Nov. 11, 1761, *The Aspinwall Papers*, Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, 4th ser., vol. IX (1871), 443.

department and for his goal of maintaining peaceful relations with Native Americans who had previously allied with France.[17]

In the terms for the surrender of New France in 1760, General Amherst also guaranteed the property rights of French landholders. Further, he insisted that all "Registers, and other papers" of the "Royal Jurisdictions of Trois Rivieres and of Montreal" and "the Seignorial Jurisdictions of the colony . . ." would be kept for the use of the occupation government to help the British "prove," or confirm estates. Since the surrender terms determined neither the outlines of a permanent colonial government for occupied Canada, nor its boundaries, it was not yet clear whether this would have an impact on French seigneurs who possessed title to large tracts of land on Lake Champlain (or on individuals who purchased such titles from French colonists who decided to leave the country after the fall of Montreal).[18]

In the three years of military and diplomatic uncertainty in Europe after 1760, General Amherst and his subordinate officers administered the Lake Champlain watershed separately from both Canada and New York. He divided New France into three districts—Montreal, Trois Rivieres, and Quebec—and put high-ranking subordinate generals in temporary command of each district as military governors. All were required to quickly and comprehensively gather information on the internal history and geography of their district. Working with records left him by the last governor-general of New France, the Marquis de Vaudreuil, Gage acknowledged in his lengthy report that his district—Montreal—was "bounded to the South by Crown Point on Lake Champlain." In the same document, he also made reference to Halfway Brook, even further south, as a boundary marker (as Amherst himself had noted in his first direct observations of the region in late 1758). Gage also pointed out that he knew of "no Authority, for the Above Boundaries, but Claims, & Supporting those Claims, by force of Arms." Therefore, he quickly added, "the boundaries have not been absolutely fixed . . . since the surrender of Canada, Crown Point & all South of it, . . . have been put by the Commander in Chief [Amherst], under officers independent of the Government of Montreal." This is a confusing but arresting detail, providing evidence that Amherst envisioned creating a new colony—explicitly for veterans' settlements—in between New York and Quebec. To a different correspondent, Amherst indeed acknowledged that "all parts of Lake Champlain, are . . . become the King's property, and are not included in the limits I have fixed to the Government of Montreal."[19] Amazingly, none of these documents referred to the forty-five degree north latitude line as having any meaning, which functions as evidence to support the arbitrary nature of that later decision.

While administering martial law in the region between 1760 and 1763, Amherst gave encouragement to people seeking land grants and ordered subordinates to monitor the

---

[17] *W.J.P.* Vol. 3, 348; Daniel Claus and Family Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, C-1478 (several letters exchanged between Claus and Johnson, 1760-1763), digitized at hereitage.canadiana.ca, accessed November 2, 2017.

[18] "Articles of Capitulation, Montreal," in Adam Shortt and Arthur Doughty, eds., Canadian Archives: Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada, 1759-1791 (Ottawa, 1907), 7-37.

[19] "Heads of enquiry relative to the State of Canada, answered," in Sir Frederick Haldimand, Unpublished Papers and Correspondence, 1758-1784, David Library of the American Revolution, Reel 4; Amherst to Haviland, October 24, 1760, and Haviland to Amherst, June 15, 1761, Amherst Papers, WO 34/51, Reel 42.

movement of goods and persons between Albany and Montreal (e.g., through the administration of passes). One merchant was permitted "to settle on the Isle aux Noix for the conveniency of all Passengers," which would "be a publick benefit." That same month, Ticonderoga commandant John Wrightson informed Amherst that thirty Indians of unspecified affiliation came to the fort carrying passes from General Gage at Montreal. Wrightson also sent "an account of a quantity of rum I have seized as the person it belong'd to had not a proper pass for it, and by the number of kegs of different sizes . . . seem'd to be intended for some clandestine trade." Amherst was also adamant in refusing to "suffer a Frenchman to go between New York and Canada," citing continuing military necessity.[20] For a brief time, then—from late 1760 through early 1763—the British Army under Amherst maintained a new borderland around Lake Champlain: defined borders were not yet established, but while officers waited upon the terms of treaty negotiations in Europe, they did monitor and restrict the movement of people and goods.

Perhaps distracted by his many other duties as commander-in-chief, Amherst did not, however, employ British or provincial soldiers to warn off squatters and other settlers who had not obtained his patronage to claim lands. Provincial officer Phineas Lyman warned Amherst that settlers from New England were beginning to mark out lands in the corridor armed with deeds from discredited diplomat John Lydius or from New Hampshire township proprietors. This problem, Lyman figured, could "soon be settled . . . if a government was formed here." The tone of the letter suggests that the two had discussed the matter previously; Lyman appealed to Amherst's sense of "the future safety of his majestys dominions" to encourage resolution. Amherst had formulated strong ideas about the efficacy of promoting frontier settlement by veterans, but he seems to have been more committed to fulfilling his military duties and bringing the war to a successful close than in participating in a true and lasting postwar settlement involving fraught issues of jurisdiction, land tenure, and land use.[21]

The "Amherst Problem," as I am calling it, is a trenchant theme among historians of "Pontiac's War." He and William Johnson clearly began to diverge in their positions on such issues as gift-giving during diplomatic conferences. Amherst sought to slash expenditures, in part because he was ordered to by his own superiors but also because he did not deem Native Americans to be worthy allies. He frequently used derogatory language toward Native

---

[20] Wrightson to Amherst, June 23, 1761, Amherst Papers, WO 34/50, Reel 41; Amherst to Gage, June 13 and June 16, 1761, Amherst Papers, Clements Library, Vol. 5.

[21] Such correspondence indicates that Amherst had effectively given up an active and visionary leadership role in shaping the politics of land in the Lake Champlain watershed. To Lieutenant Colonel Robert Elliot, in command at Crown Point, Amherst wrote in March 1763, "there is no Doubt but orders will soon Arrive concerning the many Unsettled Tracts of Land in this Country; but 'till then I cannot take upon me to grant any Licences . . ." Four months later, Amherst reiterated to General Gage his belief that "the officers & men who have served their King & Country here during this war, will be thought more deserving of grants of Land, than any other set of People." But in reference to squatters and rival claimants, he could only "hope" that "a Stop will be put to that in England," and he encouraged Gage to include his information regarding unapproved civilian surveyors in the Missisquoi area in his report to the Board of Trade. John Wrightson to Amherst, June 23, 1761; Amherst, memorandum, November 28, 1762; both in Amherst Papers, WO 34/50, Reel 41. Lyman to Amherst, October 6, 1761, Amherst Papers, WO 34/43, Reel 35; Amherst to Eliot, March 14, 1763, Amherst Papers, DLAR, Film 421, Reel 37; Amherst to Gage, July 18, 1763, Amherst Papers, Clements Library, Vol. 6.

Americans in his correspondence with subordinate officers, even to the point of suggesting the efficacy of using what we may call germ warfare (smallpox-contaminated blankets) against Native Americans besieging Fort Pitt during the early stages of Pontiac's War. In the eyes of the Board of Trade in London, Amherst's policies contributed to "the causes of this unhappy defection of the Indians." However, Amherst also began to beseech correspondents in England to lobby for his reassignment, demonstrating that he no longer identified with Lake Champlain or other newly acquired lands. Though arguable, it does seem useful for an imperial official attempting to establish a new, coherent and stable bordering and settlement policy to actually care about the land in question, and its peoples. By 1763, he did not.[22]

As the Seven Years' War officially ended in 1763, British leaders finally made and communicated decisions on the destiny of peripheral regions such as the Lake Champlain watershed. The Treaty of Paris—negotiated in 1762—went into effect on February 10, 1763. After debate in London over the wisdom of retaining Canada (as opposed to Guadeloupe and Martinique, in the Caribbean), the treaty confirmed the transfer of "Canada, with all its dependencies," to Great Britain. Unlike the 1760 surrender terms, the treaty did not include or mention France's First Nations allies. Amid early reports of Pontiac's War, the Board of Trade and the office of the Secretary of State for the Southern Department collaborated (in unusually brisk fashion) on a major reorganization of North American colonial affairs focused on creating new governments for conquered territories and reforming Indian relations. The result was King George III's Royal Proclamation of 1763, issued on October 7, which created and defined the boundaries of four new governments: East Florida, West Florida, Grenada, and Quebec. The Proclamation named the forty-fifth parallel as part of Quebec's southern border, creating what evolved into an enduring international boundary line that still stands today. This line ignores the northward flow of water from Lakes George and Champlain into the St. Lawrence River in Canada. In a Board of Trade memorandum, Secretary John Pownall argued that this line would constitute a check on the expansionism of New England and New York, but in that case, more local knowledge and careful analysis would have lent support to the Halfway Creek line much further south. This question is further complicated by other provisions in the royal proclamation that directly cited watershed lines. The sentence in which the forty-fifth parallel was written continues the southern boundary of Quebec eastward, where it "passes along the

[22] See, for example, Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 616-637; Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen*, 67-91; William Nester, *"Haughty Conquerors": Amherst and the Great Indian Uprising of 1763* (Westport, Conn., 2000); Elizabeth Fenn, "Biological Warfare in Eighteenth-Century North America: Beyond Jeffery Amherst," *The Journal of American History* 86, 4 (Mar., 2000), 1552-1580.

High Lands which divide the Rivers that empty themselves into the said River St. Lawrence from those which fall into the Sea."[23]

In a separate provision, the Royal Proclamation forbade governors of Quebec or "any of our other Colonies . . . 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 Atlantic 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 reserved to the said Indians . . . ." Following this term of the proclamation, most textbooks place the Lake Champlain watershed in the lands protected and reserved to First Nations: not part of Quebec, but also not functionally part of New York or New Hampshire. In London, however, Gentleman's Magazine published a map, "The British Governments in North America Laid down agreeable to the Proclamation of Oct^{r}. 7, 1763," which depicted New York as extending northward to the forty-fifth parallel on the west side of Lake Champlain, and New Hampshire extending likewise to the forty-fifth parallel on the east side of Lake Champlain. The entire watershed was therefore not part of the "Lands Reserved for the Indians." In response to a jurisdictional dispute between New York and New Hampshire, King George III then awarded the entire watershed to New York in 1764 (with, now, the Connecticut River as the boundary

[23] The best book-length treatment of the remarkable confluence of transformative events in 1763 is Colin Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (New York, 2006). As Calloway puts it, "Britain's gains were enormous: Canada 'in its utmost extent,' all French territory east of the Mississippi, Grenada, Saint Vincent, Dominica and Tobago, Senegal in West Africa, Minorca restored" (quotation, 9). Of course, the nature of relationships between British colonial officials, French-speaking colonists, and Native American communities in Canada would be negotiated over time. The text of the Proclamation of 1763 is printed in Adam Shortt and Arthur Doughty, eds., *Canadian Archives: Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada, 1759-1791*, 163-168. Also see Colin Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen*, and, for more on Pontiac's War, Richard White, *The Middle Ground* (Cambridge, 1991), 269-314. On the importance of the Proclamation in Virginia's pre-revolutionary politics, see Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill, 1999), 6-38. Major changes were afoot in England. A new monarch, King George III, had taken power in 1760, and William Pitt was dislodged from his place at the head of military and foreign affairs. Peace negotiations took place under the volatile ministry of Lord Bute, but George Grenville assumed power after Bute's resignation in April, 1763. The treaty and the proclamation appeared after an extended public debate in London on whether to retain Canada or the French sugar islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique. On the debate in London over the Proclamation, and Board of Trade President Lord Shelburne's role therein, see R.A. Humphreys, "Lord Shelburne and the Proclamation of 1763," *English Historical Review* 49 (April, 1934), 241-264. For the murky genesis of the 45th parallel boundary line, see John Pownall's memorandum written for the Board of Trade in early 1763, reprinted in full in Humphreys, "Lord Shelburne and the Proclamation of 1763," 258-264. Pownall stated that "the claims and pretensions of ... New York and the New England colonies ... in respect to the extension of their northern and western limits on the side of Canada," were once necessary but now not based in "sound policy." The line from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the 45th parallel appeared to be "the true boundary pointed out both by nature and reason." Pownall seems to be saying that watershed boundaries were natural and rational, and indeed, the other important line created in the Proclamation—separating Indian country from the seaboard colonies—was based on a watershed line. However, Lake Champlain and Lake George, as part of the St. Lawrence watershed, should not have been included within New York based on this reasoning.

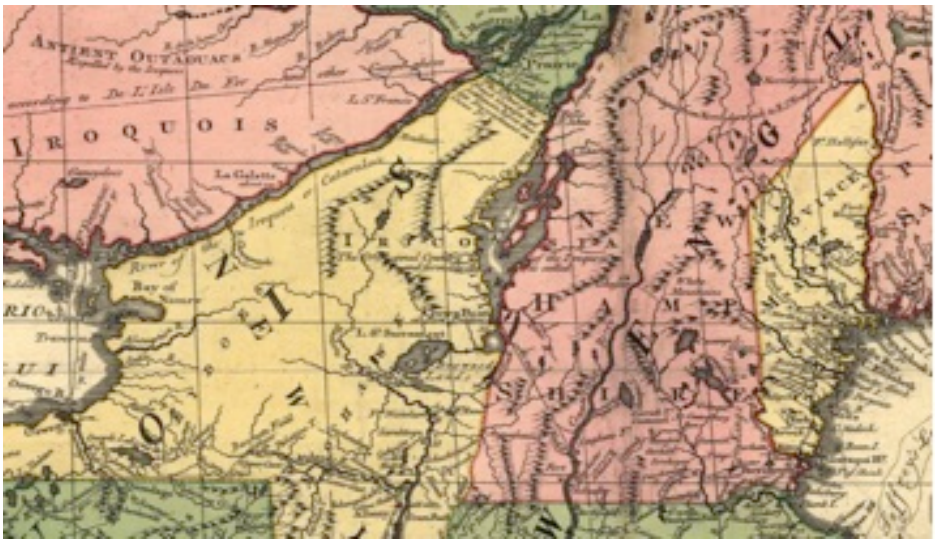

Figure 2. The forty-five degree north line of latitude is shown in John Mitchell's famous map, and it signified no real or claimed colonial boundary. Detail from John Mitchell, A Map of the British and French Dominions in North America (1755). Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Geography and Maps Division.

between New York and New Hampshire, and the forty-fifth parallel as the northern boundary of both colonies).[24]

Historically, there were alternatives to the forty-fifth parallel for the presumed northern boundary of New York. The most common projected prewar boundary was the St. Lawrence River itself. Maps such as John Mitchell's, below, acknowledged the prewar legitimacy of French settlements west of the Richelieu River and south of the St. Lawrence, at least up to Montreal. Above Montreal, Mitchell portrayed vast territories as being under British sovereignty, taking advantage of past Iroquois military victories over other First Nations, an Iroquois deed to British authorities signed in 1701, and a clause in the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht. Other eighteenth-century British maps—including productions by Herman Moll and Henry Popple, extended the entire northern boundary of New York and New England to the St. Lawrence River, making an argument for the invalid nature of any French claims or settlements on the Richelieu River. The major original source for the forty-fifth parallel boundary came from the period of Dutch colonization. In 1614, the Netherlands recognized discoveries made "between New France and

[24] Ibid. Calloway offers a map of the treaty settlement in *The Scratch of a Pen*, on p. 166. Also see H. George Stoll's 1967 map for Hammond, at http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/united_states/us_terr_1775.jpg. The first major map published in London drew the Proclamation line west of Lake Champlain (thus excluding it from the prohibition on land-granting), and included the lands east of Lake Champlain as part of New Hampshire: John Gibson, "The British Governments in Nth America laid down agreeable to the Proclamation of Oct^{r}. 1763. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Digital Collections, https://digital.library.illinois.edu/items/a7f2e980-994e-0134-2096-0050569601ca-d#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&r=0&xywh=2039%2C787%2C2460%2C1138, accessed December 20, 2017.

Virginia, the Seacoasts whereof between forty and forty-five degrees of Latitude" as the basis for the founding of New Netherland. The forty-five degree line does not appear in the 1664 charter to the Duke of York, or in other early English-era New York documents. Its resurrection in 1763 remains something of a mystery, especially given that there were other options, including the division between the watersheds of the Hudson and St. Lawrence Rivers asserted by France, or even Amherst's ephemeral idea of a separate buffer colony of veterans' settlements between New York and Canada.[25]

To summarize, Britain's new frontier policy contained ominous contradictions. In the Proclamation of 1763, King George III simultaneously stimulated and restricted settlement in North America. In terms of land grants, the proclamation mandated a sliding scale granting up to fifty acres to privates, 200 acres to non-commissioned officers, 3,000 acres to captains, and 5,000 acres to field officers, with the added incentive of exemption from the usual provincial documentation fees (and from royal quitrents for ten years). It included an order to individuals who had already settled on lands west of the Appalachian watershed "forthwith to remove themselves from such Settlements." However, other than the separate decision to retain roughly ten thousand regular soldiers in North America, the proclamation included no specific provision enabling the Army to enforce this restriction. Lastly, even while chastising New York for its past misdeeds in land negotiations with Indians, the king implicitly ceded to it an enormous swath of land in the Lake Champlain watershed and, with it, the responsibility to satisfy the demand of war veterans for bounty lands.

A significant cause of the instability of the political landscape in the years after 1763 was Parliament's decision to reduce the size of the military establishment in North America to roughly ten thousand men. As Fred Anderson explains, King George III was determined not to draw down British forces in North America too swiftly in 1763, partly to preempt potential unrest in occupied Canada and partly for fear of offending too many worthy noble officers who would be reduced (meaning forced into semi-retirement on half-pay). Troop levels did come down, however, from a wartime high of roughly 100,000 soldiers in the entire British Army, with 15,000-30,000 in North America, to a revised establishment of around 50,000, with 10,000 men in twenty regiments now spread out over Canada, New York, the frontier, the Floridas, and the Caribbean.[26]

The swift deterioration and evacuation of British forts in northeastern New York, one important consequence of military cuts, decreased the symbolic presence of imperial power in the region. In May 1764, General Thomas Gage, judging "that the Service would receive no

---

[25] John Short, *Representing the Republic: Mapping the United States, 1600-1900* (London, 2001), 30-36.

[26] Much has been written on British wartime finances as a factor in postwar politics both at home and in the colonies. Stephen Hornsby estimates that British debt skyrocketed to £146 million, necessitating interest charges that consumed half of the government's income in 1762. Hornsby, *British Atlantic, American Frontier* (Hanover, N.H., 2005), 228. Fred Anderson adds: "Army and navy expenditures in the colonies from 1756 through 1762 amounted to over six million pounds sterling, in addition to parliamentary reimbursements in excess of a million pounds paid directly to the colonial governments." Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 563. See also P.D.G. Thomas, "The Cost of the British Army in North America, 1763-1775," *WMQ,* 3d ser. 45, 3 (1988), 510-516. Thomas argues that Britain's postwar overseas military establishment (not counting Ireland) was intended to be twenty battalions, or ten thousand officers and men, but that North America, alone, counted those numbers in 1764, and it wasn't until 1765 that further cuts were made under Gage, to a level of roughly 6,200 men in 1773.

Detriment," abandoned the small outposts at Stillwater and Saratoga. In 1768, he contemplated removing all military and artillery stores from Crown Point (while leaving a threadbare garrison) because it was "built of perishable Materials, never completed, and already decaying. Every Spring some part tumbles or gives way. It would require . . . a regular Expence every year to repair what falls to Ruin." In 1772, Gage ordered one company (roughly a hundred men) of the 26th Regiment to garrison both Ticonderoga and Crown Point. Fort George (at the head of Lake George) was manned by twenty soldiers; in January 1764, commanding officer Thomas Swords reported that there was "not a Batteau on this lake fitt to swim . . . ." Given that the Army had been the sole facilitator of lake travel for soldiers, sutlers, and settlers since 1758, this rapid neglect was striking. Where once there were hundreds of vessels waving the Union Jack, carrying ten thousand men and more to glory, now a British officer could not find one working vessel to ply the waters of Lake George.[27]

Though many observed the decline of the forts, few criticized General Thomas Gage's directive to slash military expenses in the region. One notable but cautious dissenter was Lieutenant Governor Guy Carleton of Quebec, whose 1767 letter to Gage foreshadowed a key strategic imperative of the coming Revolutionary War:

> "[T]he forts of Crown Point, Ticonderoga, and Fort George are in a very declining condition . . . Should you approve of keeping up the posts it will be best to repair them as soon as possible . . . I must freely say, that the more I consider the state of affairs on this continent, . . . I am the more convinced it is not only expedient, but indispensably necessary for the interest of Great Britain and his majesty's service . . . to keep them in good repair."

---

[27] Military observer Francis Grant remarked that the old fort at Saratoga was in "ruins," and Crown Point was "going fast to decay, and it is said will be abandoned." Grant, "Journal from New York to Canada, 1767," *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association* 30 (1932), 321-322. Thomas Gage, "Distribution of the Troops in North America, . . . 31st Octr 1772, in CO 5, The American Revolution, Reel 1. Lord Adam Gordon looked on Amherst's Crown Point works with some admiration, but noticed that "the Wood Work is beginning to give, if it is not taken in time, it will in a year or two more, be in as bad a State, as the other American Forts I have seen." Gordon estimated that proper repairs for Crown Point "would not take less than 20,000£ Sterling . . ." in Gordon, "Journal of an Officer who Travelled in America . . . in 1764 and 1765," in Newton Mereness, ed., *Travels in the American Colonies* (New York, 1916), 443-444. For the Commander-in-Chief's opinions, see Gage to Lord Halifax, May 12, 1764, and Gage to Lord Hillsborough, June 16, 1768, both in Clarence Carter, ed., *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State . . .* (New Haven, 1931-1933), I, 27, 179. Secretary at War Lord Barrington encouraged Gage to cut costs entirely at Crown Point, saying that, though it "was a post of consequence while Canada belong'd to the French [,] it seems useless now." Barrington to Gage, October 10, 1765, Peckham, ed., *Sources of American Independence* I: 9; Thomas Swords to Gage, January 4, 1764, Volume 12, Thomas Gage Papers, American Series, Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Mich. (hereafter Gage Papers). William Gilliland utilized the *Snow Shoe*, a provision vessel built under Amherst's direction for the 1759 campaign, to transport cattle and colonists northward over Lake George to his infant settlement on Lake Champlain in 1765. Winslow C. Watson, *Pioneer History of the Champlain Valley* (Albany, 1863), 94-95. It is not known why the *Snow Shoe* was not available to Swords a year earlier, though in all likelihood, it was at Ticonderoga, at the other end of the lake.

The forts constituted a line of "communication [to] give security to the King's Magazines" in Quebec and New York City; further, if the colonial resistance movement should intensify, then the repaired forts "will separate the Northern from the Southern Colonies . . . and may prevent the greatest of all inconveniences, delay and loss of time at the beginning of a war." Because of the concert between the Commander-in-Chief and successive ministries in London over cost-cutting measures in America, Britain would not be prepared to defend this territory at the start of the Revolutionary War. It was not fully appreciated how important the territories between New York City and Montreal would be in a future war.[28]

In addition to the deterioration of fortifications and other infrastructure, British officers were increasingly unwilling to use force to intervene in land-based conflicts in the region. As early as January, 1764, just weeks after assuming overall command of British forces in all of North America, General Gage ordered the commandant of Crown Point to:

> ". . . pull down the Proclamation I sent you from Montreal, forbidding any Persons from Settling on the Lands on Lake Champlain. I hope Lands are so far ascertained, as not to belong to any of the Governments of Canada; you will therefore give no Hindrance or Molestation to any Persons whatever who chuse to Settle there. If there are Disputes let the Law Settle them . . . ."

This order reveals that Gage, in contrast to his predecessor, believed that military force should be separate and fully distinct from the new legal framework established by New York's provincial government in this territory. It remained to be determined whether "the Law" would actual meliorate emerging conflicts between rival land claimants.[29]

More broadly, British military officers gradually withdrew from Amherst's previous assertion of the right of the military to regulate land use. One example involved the production and distribution of alcohol. Under Amherst, garrison commanders were ordered to prevent frontier settlers and traders from selling alcohol to soldiers and Native Americans. Fort Ticonderoga commandant Charles Osborne complained to Gage "that the Indians on account of Liquors that they buy from Some of the people . . . are Excessively insolent." He had intelligence of "a still in the woods about Eight miles from Fort Edward, which furnishes the Inhabitants of South Bay with rum." Awaiting further orders from Gage, and not wishing to feed and care for prisoners at crown expense, Osborne warned a local trader to return to his habitations with "positive orders to Richard Maddern not to Distill a Drop more of Liquor." Gage replied that it was correct to "Spill the Liquor & demolish the Stills" if he could locate Maddern's hideaway. However, if such "transgressions" took place ". . . in the Inhabited Country, they should be given up to the Civil Magistrate." Gage's conclusion suggests a level of weariness

[28] Extract of a Letter from Lieutenant Governor Carl[e]ton to General Gage, Dated Quebec, 15 February 1767 (Plant. General, T. 40), in *Aspinwall Papers*, 594-595.
[29] Gage to Beckwith, January 31, 1764, Volume 13, Thomas Gage Papers, Clements Library.

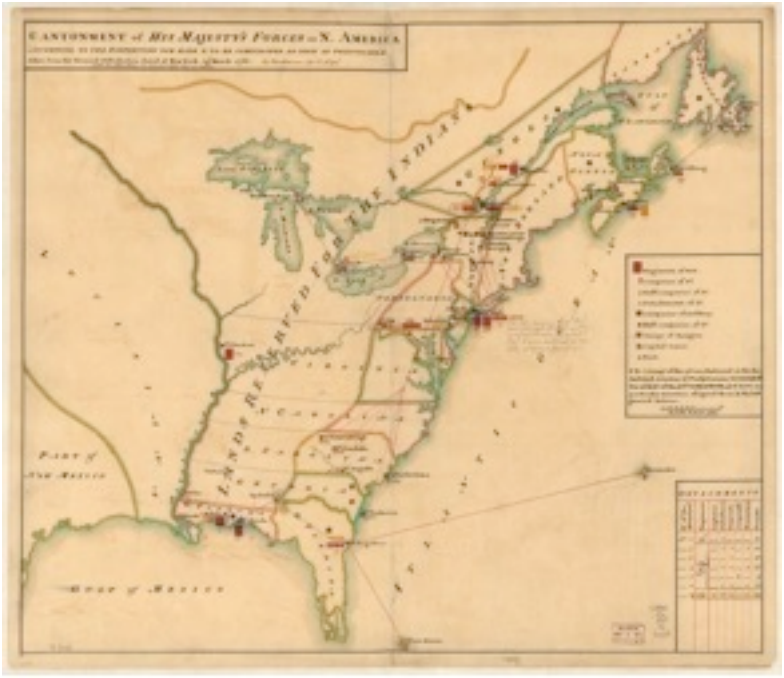

Figure 3. Paterson, Daniel. Cantonment of His Majesty's Forces in N. America According to the Disposition Now Made & To Be Completed As Soon As Practicable taken from the general distribution dated at New York 29th. March 1766 [1767]. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Geography and Maps Division, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3301r.ar011800/ (accessed December 4, 2017).

with the fatigues of policing a rapidly settling frontier region, and an intent to withdraw military personnel and imperial power into the immediate orbits of the respective forts.[30]

Despite his gradual abdication of responsibility for maintaining order in the Lake Champlain watershed, Gage collaborated with Sir William Johnson in using Haudenosaunee influence to isolate and suppress Pontiac's Revolt in the mid-1760s. Moving toward the landmark Treaty of Fort Stanwix of 1768, Johnson maintained the preeminent position of his neighbors and oldest allies in deciding, through negotiations, the fate of western lands south of New York and beyond the original proclamation line of 1763. Gifts and purchase money would help the Haudenosaunee adjust to changing times. In New York, Johnson and Haudenosaunee representatives agreed that there would remain a line—with slight readjustments from the 1763 line—separating Anglo-American settlement from Haudenosaunee homelands and hunting

[30] Charles Osborne to Thomas Gage, Ticonderoga, January 12, 1764; Gage to Osborne, January 31, 1764; Osborne to Gage, February 16, 1764, Vols. 12, 13, 14, Gage Papers, Clements Library. At this point in time, because the corridor was included in vast Albany County, the nearest courts were located in Albany, roughly seventy miles south of South Bay.

grounds. The Iroquois did not claim lands east of Lake Champlain or east of the Hudson River. Continuing litigation over the decades-old Kayaderosseras Patent (on traditional Haudenosaunee hunting grounds) delayed finalization of the new boundary line north of the Mohawk River and west of Lake George and Lake Champlain. By 1771, survey and settlement on the Kayaderosseras Patent proceeded briskly. That same year, Johnson's nephew and son-in-law, Guy Johnson, published a map of New York showing Haudenosaunee towns, roads, and the boundary line negotiated at Fort Stanwix. North of Fort Stanwix, Johnson wrote, "This Country belongs to the Oneidas." And north of the Kayaderosseras Patent and Sacandaga River, Johnson wrote, "The Boundary of New York not being Closed this part of the Country still belongs to the Mohawks." The statements belie closure. However, both Johnsons knew that the northern boundary of Haudenosaunee Mohawk hunting grounds ended at Rock Rogeo on Lake Champlain.[31] Johnson asserted an important distinction favoring Haudenosaunee claims in the region and undermining Kahnawake and Abenaki claims. To General Gage, Johnson wrote that the "Caghnawagas Abenaquis &ca were only invited to Canada to serve I apprehend as a Barrier to the French Settlements, and a Nursery of Warriors for distressing our Frontiers, & consequently had no claim in that Country." To Johnson, this meant that "there is no necessity for an Indian Deed to the Subject." By implication, then, New York officials would have Johnson's blessing in patenting lands west of Lake Champlain that were north of Rock Rogeo, and in patenting all lands east of Lake Champlain.[32]

As it became clearer that veterans and other claimants could safely work with the New York government to patent lands in the Lake Champlain watershed, the new royal governor of the province, Sir Henry Moore, sought to have the forty-fifth parallel drawn and surveyed to assure orderly settlement. To that end, Moore waited for Guy Carleton, now lieutenant governor (and acting governor) of Quebec to return to America in 1766, at which time they traveled up the Hudson River to Isle la Motte, a Lake Champlain island, in October. He predicted that bordering would be an easy task, projecting an assumption that the Lake Champlain watershed comprised empty, wilderness lands, ready to be molded by elite officials and planters. Since "the lands thereabout are intirely uncultivated," he informed the Board of Trade, "I shall have no disputes to encounter with, by the claims of persons, pretending to be proprietors of the soil, and a matter of this kind is of course much more easily settled than in a cultivated country." Mathematical measurements of the forty-fifth parallel and other important points on Lake Champlain would be observed "in the presence of several Gentlemen of Fortune in this Province" to lend further legitimacy to the process. With Moore traveled Robert Harpur, a King's College mathematics professor; William Gilliland, an Irish-born New York City merchant who had just initiated a settlement north of Crown Point on the western shores of

[31] Guy Johnson, "To His Excellency William Tryon Esq[r]. Captain General & Governor in Chief of the Province of New-York && This Map of the Country of the VI. Nations Proper . . . Guy Johnson 1771," New York State Library, http://nysl.cloudapp.net/awweb/guest.jsp?smd=1&cl=all_lib&lb_document_id=3511, accessed December 7, 2017.
[32] Johnson to Gage, January 27, 1764, Gage Papers, Vol. 13, Clements Library.

Lake Champlain; and Philip Schuyler, whose family connections and expansive plantation at Saratoga made him a respected, rising politician in the upper Hudson valley.[33]
Unfortunately for New York, Governor Moore's six-week journey into the corridor uncovered nettlesome problems. Because the 1760 Articles of Capitulation included specific protections for the properties of French colonists in Canada, Michel de Lotbiniere (holder of French titles to two seigneuries on Lake Champlain) decided to test its applicability in the Lake Champlain watershed. In 1764, the Board of Trade had ordered Moore's predecessor, Cadwallader Colden, to refrain from granting any of Lotbiniere's lands while they studied his memorial.[34] At the Isle la Motte Conference in 1766, "several French Gentlemen" approached Moore "to request . . . the confirmation of their Rights to those Seigneiories." Moore and Carleton cooperated with the Board's request for additional materials (such as maps and certified copies), but a final decision was not rendered until 1776, by which time the Revolutionary War was already underway. Because it eventually settled on a denial that France had ever justly possessed Lake Champlain as their chief argument against Lotbiniere, the British government could conceivably have rendered such a decision a decade earlier with the information then available, thus providing security to those veterans who had claimed or settled on Lotbiniere's lands under the Proclamation of 1763. After all, Britain had denied France's claims to the corridor for decades, a statement of geographical imperialism that was communicated publicly through maps such as John Mitchell's A Map of the British and French Dominions in North America (1755). As in many other issues relating to the colonies in the late 1760s, imperial officials suffered from a want of promptitude, clarity and consistency.[35]

Another problem encountered by Governor Moore in his journey to Lake Champlain in 1766 involved the land claims of the Kahnawake and Western Abenaki Indians who, as shown earlier, continued to inhabit the corridor for purposes of hunting, fishing, trade, and diplomacy. Around Missisquoi Bay, where the northeastern arm of Lake Champlain straddles the forty-fifth parallel, a community of western Abenakis occupied a permanent village site

---

[33] *Report of the Regents of the University on the Boundaries of the State of New York, Vol. II: Being a Continuation of Senate Document No. 108 of 1873 and Senate Document No. 61 of 1877* (Albany, 1884) (hereafter *Report of the Regents*); Manuscript Maps Relating to North America and the West Indies: Part 1, the Revolutionary Era (1760-1783), Reel 1, David Library of the American Revolution. The surveyors in question were John Collins, Deputy Surveyor General of Quebec, and Joseph Smith, Thomas Valentine, and Charles Sauthier, Surveyors of New York. As shown here, surveyors from the two neighboring colonies continued to cooperate on the drawing of the 45th parallel border right up to the Revolution. Governor Moore to the Lords of Trade, August 12, 1766, *N.Y.C.D.*, VII: 849-851. It is useful to consider that Moore was contemporaneously responding to the Dutchess County riots of 1766, as well as the aftermath of the anti-Stamp Act violence in New York City. Gilliland and Schuyler will merit further mention in the third section of this chapter. Schuyler was the nephew of the Philip Schuyler who had died defending his family's Saraghtoga lands during King George's War. He had served as a captain of a New York militia company, and then as assistant to Deputy Quartermaster General John Bradstreet during the French and Indian War. His pre-Revolutionary War life and career are best covered in Don Gerlach, *Philip Schuyler and the American Revolution in New York, 1733-1777* (Lincoln, Neb., 1964).
[34] Board of Trade to Lt. Gov. Colden, July 13, 1764, *D.H.N.Y.*, I, 537.
[35] The documentary evidence consulted for this paragraph, stretching from the 1740s through the 1770s, is found in *D.H.N.Y.*, I: 536-586; Former British officer Robert Stobo complained separately to Secretary of State Hillsborough regarding a seigneury he had purchased after 1760. Stobo's memorial to Hillsborough, dated 1769, is located in Robert Stobo Fonds, MG 23, GIII2, National Archives of Canada.

predating the Seven Years' War. They asserted this claim to Governor Moore at Isle la Motte. Though the records of the meetings are not as complete as one might wish, it is evident that an agreement was reached. In his own words, Moore gave "presents of considerable value" to the Kahnawakes, who had assumed leadership of the Seven Nations of Quebec. Moore also confirmed the right of individuals from any of the Seven Nations to travel through and hunt in the Lake Champlain watershed. However, the threat of land grants to individuals, who may or may not in the future prove friendly to these acknowledgments of indigenous land access for travel, hunting, and fishing, persisted.[36]

Moore's bordering journey of 1766 signified both the zenith of imperial and provincial collaboration in overseeing the development of the Lake Champlain watershed, and an early sign of disjuncture. He died in office still trying to win reimbursement for the expenses of his trip, diplomatic gifts, and the costs of hiring surveyors. John Collins, representing Quebec, and Thomas Vallentine and Claude Sauthier, representing New York, surveyed the line to the west and east of Lake Champlain in the early 1770s, but the start of the American Revolution prevented completion. The French seigneurial claims lingered, clouding the legitimacy of titles awarded to reduced officers and Seven Years' War veterans. Worse, New Hampshire claimants did not give up their presumed right to occupy, organize, and improve township claims previously authorized by their governor, even though King George III forced the New Hampshire government to recognize New York's jurisdiction east of Lake Champlain. The rise of the Green Mountain Boys, led by Ethan and Ira Allen, created another emerging center of political and intercultural influence in the Lake Champlain watershed between the Seven Years' War and the American Revolution. Veterans who did settle on their claims, such as Philip Skene, represented another node of influence. William Gilliland, who established claims on the western shore of Lake Champlain after having purchased titles from anxious veterans, was yet another. New York grandees with claims in the region, such as Philip Schuyler, also continued to play important roles in pre-revolutionary politics and diplomacy in the region.

In other words, the region remained a borderland, but of a different sort than what had prevailed prior to the onset of war in 1754 and the fall of France's North American empire. What did not change was the continuing identification of Haudenosaunee, Kahnawake, and Abenaki cultural and material interests with this critical part of their historic homelands, hunting grounds, and diplomatic paths and protocols. Abenaki oral history, later written down

---

[36] In practice, a group of Western Abenakis continued to inhabit the village site at Missisquoi, even going so far as to lease lands to a Canadian merchant, James Robertson, while protesting the competing land grants of both New York and New Hampshire. On this complicated issue, and on the importance of the Isle la Motte Conference for Indian relations, see Colin Calloway, *Western Abenakis of Vermont* (Norman, Okla., 1990), 194-196; Calloway, ed., *Dawnland Encounters: Indians and Europeans in Northern New England* (Hanover, N.H., 1991), 127-128 (for the Abenaki speech to Moore and Carleton), and 206-207 (for the Abenakis' lease to Robertson); Michael K. Foster and William Cowan, eds., *In Search of New England's Native Past: Selected Essays by Gordon M. Day* (Amherst, Mass., 1998), 118-119. The Abenaki speech at Isle la Motte is important evidence in their continuing claims to much of northern and western Vermont, as part of their traditional homeland: "We the Misiskoui Indians of the St. Francis or Abenaki Tribe have inhabited that part of Lake Champlain known by the name of Misiskoui [since] time unknown to any of us here present, without being molested or any one's claiming right to it . . . ." Governor Moore's account is in his letter to Secretary of State Shelburne, December 7, 1767, in *Report of the Regents*, 5.

and published many years after the period in question, conveyed language and with it, the articulation of place names, which is akin to "producing maps of Wabanaki space for communal use," as Lisa Brooks argues. Pioneering ethnohistorian Gordon Day compared Mohawk and Abenaki myths and stories, as well as language words for place names, to establish Abenaki prehistoric attachment to Lake Champlain. "Oral tradition at Saint Francis knows of no earlier home than Lake Champlain," Day wrote. Tribal spokesman at the Isle la Motte conference in 1766 said that they had occupied Missisquoi since "Time unknown to any of us here present." Their "transformer" (origin) myths focus on the figure of Odzihozo, who reshaped the earth and turned himself into a rock: Rock Dunder, in Burlington Bay, Vermont. Abenaki territorial identification and place-knowledge stretched east to the Connecticut River and north to Odanak (St. Francis), in Quebec.[37]

The forty-fifth parallel is just a line projection. It marks the modern boundary between the United States and Canada in this region, but this fact is more a matter of accident and contingency playing itself out through two transformative wars, the Seven Years' War and the American Revolution. It was not predestined, even after the Seven Years' War and the King's Royal Proclamation of 1763. It was a political and diplomatic reality that First Nations people had to deal with and adapt to, but it was not their boundary. In October 1772, New York surveyor Thomas Vallentine reported to Lieutenant Governor Colden that:
"The Abenaku [sic] Savages are much displeased with the course of the Line, say their Hunting Grounds are encroached on, and pull'd down a Post that we erected on the East Bank of Lake Mamraabagak [Memphremagog], the offenders remain undiscover'd or I would have them Punished."

Such was the unresolved and contingent state of affairs in this dynamic borderland region on the eve of the American Revolution.[38]

---

[37] Lisa Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (Minneapolis, 2008), 251; Day, "The Eastern Boundary of Iroquoia: Abenaki Evidence," in Michael K. Foster and William Cowan, eds., *In Search of New England's Native Past: Selected Essays by Gordon Day* (Amherst, Mass., 1998), 116-122.
[38] *Report of the Regents*, 22.