

Pontiac's War and Little Turtle's War

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Synopsis

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When it comes to Pontiac, a few facts are certain. For one thing, he certainly led the first major attack of Pontiac's War in May 1763, when he and 300 of his men attacked Fort Detroit in what is now the city by the same name. Unfortunately for his cause, Pontiac failed to gauge just how strong the British presence there was, and his attack was quickly repelled. On the other hand, he was not a man who gave up easily, so instead of retreating, he and his warriors would lay siege to the British stronghold. In the days that followed, word spread of his efforts, and in short order, nearly 1,000 men from various tribes in the area had joined him. They remained camped around the fort throughout the summer before finally giving up the siege.

While Pontiac and his ever-growing band of men were laying siege to Fort Detroit, other tribes heard of his efforts to keep the fight going and began to attack other settlements and enclaves. Thus, even after he did give up on the fort, Pontiac continued to fight, next attacking area in the Illinois Country, an area that included much of what is now the Midwestern United States. As time went, on his popularity and power increased to the point that the British ultimately sought him out to make peace. That is how, in July 1766, Pontiac came to meet with Sir William Johnson, the British Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the colonies. Together, the two men carved out a peace treaty that held for the remainder of the British presence in the region.

The short war between a confederation of Native American tribes under Little Turtle's leadership has been referred to by many names, including the Northwest Indian War, the Ohio War, and the Miami War, but it is probably best known as Little Turtle's War. Before Little Turtle's War, it was believed that the U.S. did not need a professional army, that ordinary citizens would take up arms in times of threat and serve in militias as they had done in the fight against the British.

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