

THE BRIGHTON AREA AND THE SESQUICENTENNIAL OF MICHIGAN (Cont.)

Following the signing of the Treaty of Paris, 1763, and Chief Pontiac's realization that he could now no longer depend on his French allies, a relative peace settled in the midwest. During the next 30 years the British and Indians developed a cooperative relationship which stood the British in good stead, especially during the Revolutionary War and the years immediately following that conflict.

Using Detroit as a base of operations, Indian raids (encouraged by the British) were made into Kentucky and the area we now know as Indiana, Illinois and Ohio. These raids had a devastating emotional effect on the Continental soldier whose family was located in the territory and made it difficult for General George Washington to be able to depend on having sufficient troops when necessary. The raids continued until the consummation of the peacetreaty, signed in Paris in 1783, which signaled the end of the Revolutionary War.

Though Michigan was part of the territory ceded the U.S. in that treaty, the next 13 years were marked by British refusal to give up the still lucrative fur trade centered in this area. The infant U.S. government found it difficult to combat the British considering the great distances and the poor condition of the nation's treasury. It was 1794 before "Mad" Anthony Wayne, in the successful outcome of the Battle of Fallen Timers, finally convinced the British that Detroit could now be occupied by the Americans.

Not until the signing of the Jay Treaty of 1796 was the Union Jack replaced with the flag of the U.S. at Forts Detroit and Michilimackinac on Mackinac Island (built by the British in 1779-81). Michigan is finally, truly a part of the U.S.

During these 13 years, 1783/1796, the American Continental Congress was not idle. Two ordnances, passed in 1785 and 1787, significantly affected the future settlement and government of our Michigan. The first (Land Ordinance 1785) had to do with the division into township six miles square of western land (all lands west of the Ohio River were 'western'). The policy of surveying the land before sale and settlement is evident today in the orderly division of lands into neat rectangles throughout Michigan and states west; one township in 16 set aside for maintenance of public schools.

The second, that of 1787 (the North West Ordinance) determined how territories could become a state, and assured Americans from the north east states they would not have to surrender their rights as citizens of the U.S. by emigrating to the lands beyond the Ohio River.

First labeled the North West Territory, then Indiana Territory when Ohio became a state, 1803, it was Michigan Territory in 1805 when General Wm. Hull came into Detroit, as Territorial Governor, in early July shortly after the great fire which devastated the town. (To be continued. Condensed and edited from: "A Scrapbook of Michigan Memorabilia" by Wm. Pless, "A Short History of Michigan" by John Kern and "War 1812" by George S. May.)

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