

INDIANS
and
BRITISH OUTPOSTS
in
EIGHTEENTH-
CENTURY AMERICA



DANIEL INGRAM



Indians and British Outposts in Eighteenth-Century America



UNIVERSITY PRESS OF FLORIDA

Florida A&M University, Tallahassee
Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton
Florida Gulf Coast University, Ft. Myers
Florida International University, Miami
Florida State University, Tallahassee
New College of Florida, Sarasota
University of Central Florida, Orlando
University of Florida, Gainesville
University of North Florida, Jacksonville
University of South Florida, Tampa
University of West Florida, Pensacola

Indians and British Outposts in Eighteenth-Century America

DANIEL INGRAM



University Press of Florida
Gainesville · Tallahassee · Tampa · Boca Raton
Pensacola · Orlando · Miami · Jacksonville · Ft. Myers · Sarasota

Copyright 2012 by Daniel Ingram

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America. This book is printed on Glatfelter Natures Book, a paper certified under the standards of the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC). It is a recycled stock that contains 30 percent post-consumer waste and is acid-free.

17 16 15 14 13 12 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ingram, Daniel Patrick, 1960–

Indians and British outposts in eighteenth-century America / Daniel Ingram.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-8130-3797-4 (alk. paper)

1. Indians of North America—First contact with Europeans. 2. Fortification—United States—History—18th century. 3. Frontier and pioneer life—United States. 4. Great Britain. Army—Military life—History—18th century. 5. United States—Race relations—History—18th century. 6. Great Britain—Colonies—America—Defenses. 7. United States—History—Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775. I. Title.

E98.F39I54 2012

973.2'6—dc23

2011037511

The University Press of Florida is the scholarly publishing agency for the State University System of Florida, comprising Florida A&M University, Florida Atlantic University, Florida Gulf Coast University, Florida International University, Florida State University, New College of Florida, University of Central Florida, University of Florida, University of North Florida, University of South Florida, and University of West Florida.

University Press of Florida
15 Northwest 15th Street
Gainesville, FL 32611-2079
<http://www.upf.com>



For Stacey

Contents

List of Illustrations	ix
Acknowledgments	xi
Introduction: British Forts and Indian Neighbors	1
1. The Key to Carolina: Old Hop, Little Carpenter, and the Making of Fort Loudoun, 1756–1759	27
2. Anxious Hospitality: Loitering at Fort Allen, 1756–1761	59
3. The Greatest Mart of All Trade: Food, Drink, and Interdependence at Michilimackinac, 1761–1796	88
4. A Year at Niagara: Violence, Diplomacy, and Coexistence in the Eastern Great Lakes, 1763–1764	121
5. Like Stars That Fall: Keeping Up Appearances at Fort Chartres, 1765–1772	156
Conclusion: The Mohawks’ New World	193
Notes	203
Bibliography	235
Index	249

Illustrations

Maps

1.1. Fort Loudoun and Cherokee towns, 1756–1761	30
2.1. Blue Mountain region of Pennsylvania, 1755–1761	61
3.1. Forts and towns around the Straits of Mackinac, 1690s–1790s	93
4.1. Niagara River corridor, 1763	125
5.1. Fort Chartres and the western Illinois country, 1765–1771	159

Figures

I.1. Examples of forts	8
I.2. Cantonment of British forces in North America, 1765.	20
1.1. Seven Cherokees in London, 1730	33
1.2. Draught of Cherokee Country, 1762.	42
1.3. Plan and profile of Fort Loudoun, 1757	47
2.1. Map of Fort Allen and Fort Norris region, 1759	67
2.2. Plan of Fort Allen, 1756	68
3.1. Sketch of Michilimackinac, 1765	105
4.1. Plan of Fort Niagara, 1763.	137
4.2. Niagara River and portage, 1764–1765	147
5.1. Mississippi settlements between the Ohio and Kaskaskia Rivers, 1765	165
5.2. Plan of Fort Chartres ruins, 1820.	189

Acknowledgments

Many people and organizations helped me shepherd this book to its final form. Work began at the College of William and Mary, and my friends and colleagues there were invaluable. James Axtell played an especially important role as an editor and friend. James P. Whittenburg, Kris E. Lane, and Michael N. McConnell provided very valuable suggestions. Thanks also to Carol Sheriff, Cindy Hahamovitch, Scott Reynolds Nelson, Kimberley L. Phillips, Dale Hoak, Marley R. Brown III, Philip D. Morgan, Ronald Hoffman, Michael McGiffert, and Roz Stearns for giving me the benefit of their valuable time and tutelage. Philip Levy, John Coombs, David Muraca, David Brown, and Robert Paulett, with whom I shared many summers digging under the unforgiving Virginia sun, have been especially good friends and colleagues. Thanks also to David Preston, Brian Geiger, Steven Feeley, Creston Long, Sharon Sauder Muhlfeld, Emily Blanck, Bill Carrigan, Ericka Thoms, Lily Richards Harwood, Jim Piecuch, Beth English, Joan Campbell, Chesley Flotten, Laurie Bauer-Coleman, Elizabeth Kelly Gray, Catherine Dann-Roeber, and David Corlett for helping to make my years in Williamsburg rewarding and entertaining.

In my home state of Michigan I met many friends who have stuck with me through the years in all kinds of weather. Thanks to Timothy Koerner, Sandra Van Burkleo, Joseph P. Ward, Howard and Linda Williams, Steve Simonson and Lisa Coon, Dudley and Gerry Smith, Paul and Deb Smith, Michael Lavoie and Emy Richardson, Matthew and Laura Spittle, and Mark Rabinowitz for much support and friendship along the way, and in the years to come.

Professional organizations and libraries have been invaluable to my work. William and Mary's Lyon G. Tyler Department of History and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences provided funding through their Historical Archaeology Apprenticeship and History Writing Resources

Center. I am proud of my association with the Colonial Williamsburg Department of Archaeological Research, where I worked as a field school instructor for several summers. The General Society for Colonial Wars provided important funding for my research through their George Washington Fellowship, for which I am very grateful. Thanks also to the staffs of the William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan, the Burton Historical Collection at the Detroit Public Library, the American Philosophical Society, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Peterson Center Library in Mackinaw City, Michigan, the Main Library at Michigan State University, the Library of Michigan, the Kresge Library at Wayne State University, the Earl Gregg Swem Library at William and Mary, and the Bracken Library at Ball State University.

At the University Press of Florida, Meredith Babb has been an obliging and understanding editor who understood the rigors involved in finishing a manuscript and starting a new job simultaneously. The UPF editors and staff have been enormously helpful in guiding me through the publication process. Colin G. Calloway and Andrew K. Frank each read the entire manuscript for the press and offered much-appreciated encouragement and suggestions. Also thanks to Jonathan Lawrence, Cynthia Nemser-Hall, and Jacqueline Kinghorn Brown.

A slightly different version of the chapter on Fort Allen appeared in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* in July 2009. Thanks to the journal's director, Tamara Gaskell, her staff, and their anonymous readers for their help in preparing the article and for permitting me to publish a revised version here. Thanks also to Charles Beatty-Medina, Melissa Rinehart, and the anonymous readers of the *Michigan Historical Review* for many helpful comments on other parts of the manuscript.

I have benefited vastly from my associations with two wonderful institutions: the University of South Florida, where I began my career as a history professor, and Ball State University, where I plan to finish it many years hence. During my two years as a visiting professor at USF, Fraser Ottanelli provided me with the freedom to develop new classes and the liberty to revise and refine my manuscript. I will always be grateful to the USF faculty, staff, and students who helped to make my sojourn in Tampa unforgettable. At Ball State I will have a whole career to repay my debts of gratitude. Thanks to Bruce E. Geelhoed, Kevin E. Smith, Abel A. Alves, Nicole Etcheson, Scott M. Stephan, and the rest of the faculty and staff of

the BSU Department of History for bringing me to Muncie and helping me settle in.

Understanding and patient families have provided the bedrock for many book projects, and my experience is no exception. My father, Terry Ingram, taught me to love history at a very early age. My interest in forts and Native Americans began long ago with his stories of Pontiac and Tecumseh. Thomas Ingram, Jennifer Ingram, Cindy Ross, Terry Peters, Beth Long, Stewart Harris, Jeff Harris, Ray and Pat Harris, and their families have always given me the support and encouragement I needed. The Joyrich family represents my experience with extended kinship. Thanks to Myron, Ida, Nomi, Cory, Lynne, Richard, Eden, and Ava for their love and help over the years, which I try my best to reciprocate. Wendy Joyrich convinced me to continue my studies many years ago, and provided me with tremendous levels of support and friendship along the way. She did not live to read this book, but her influence marks every page.

Finally, I extend my deepest gratitude to my wife, Stacey Harris Ingram, who has seen me through this and other trials and tests. Nothing I write can adequately express the extent of her influence on every facet of my life. My personal devotion to her is complete. But she deserves notice here as a professional too. Stacey has worked as a public school teacher for almost three decades. Thousands of students are better readers, writers, and human beings because of her efforts. These efforts are too often unappreciated and overlooked, as are those of her millions of counterparts throughout the world. Stacey, then, provides me with more than encouragement, stability, and love. She is also an exemplar of professionalism that I hope I can emulate successfully in my own classroom efforts. As my wife and partner, she knows she has my thanks. As a dedicated teacher, she deserves everyone's.



Introduction

British Forts and Indian Neighbors

As the confused and timid throng left the protecting mounds of the fort, and issued on the open plain, the whole scene was, at once, presented to their eyes. At a little distance on the right, and somewhat in the rear, the French army stood to their arms, Montcalm having collected his parties, so soon as his guards had possession of the works. They were attentive but silent observers of the proceedings of the vanquished, failing in none of the stipulated military honours, and offering no taunt or insult, in their success, to their less fortunate foes. Living masses of the English, to the amount in the whole of near three thousand, were moving slowly across the open plain, towards the common center, and gradually approached each other, as they converged to the point of their march, a vista cut through the lofty trees, where the road to the Hudson entered the forest. Along the sweeping borders of the woods, hung a dark cloud of savages, eyeing the passage of their enemies, and hovering, at a distance, like vultures, who were only kept from swooping on their prey, by the presence and restraint of a superior army. A few had straggled among the conquered columns, where they stalked in sullen discontent; attentive, though, as yet, passive observers of the moving multitude.

James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*

The scene described in this excerpt from Cooper's famous novel is the British retreat from Fort William Henry in August 1757. Orderly English troops march glumly toward a bloody end they cannot foresee. French victors stand by nobly and review the vanquished redcoats as they pass through the gates of their fort for the last time. No mention is made in the passage of the many British-allied Indians accompanying the surrendered British troops, though their presence is noted in other parts of the novel. In this paragraph the author chooses to draw a contrast between

the orderly European soldiers and the “dark cloud” of skulking “savages,” who occupy the “sweeping borders of the woods” as if they were dangerous features of the natural environment. Their violent potential and mastery of nature is effectively demonstrated throughout the book, but here the superior French and English forces keep them in a temporary state of passivity. This oppositional structure of Indians as dark, furtive, and primeval and of Europeans as orderly, thoughtful, and culturally superior is a common feature of the romantic literature of Cooper’s era. Unfortunately for the memory of Indians who actually interacted with British troops, traders, and cultural brokers near backcountry forts, this image of furtive natives waiting in the forest’s shadows, overawed by orderly European personnel and imposing fortress walls, has come to typify fort-based cultural interactions in the American imagination.¹

More than many other fixtures of American popular mythology, frontier forts and the people associated with them have been incorporated into a heroic interpretation of colonial Indian-white relations. This historical model, popularized during the nineteenth-century romantic era by writers such as Cooper and historian Francis Parkman, saw British (and to a lesser degree, French) colonizers as spreaders of advanced European civilization. In short, those who encountered and overcame the challenges of the “savage” American wilderness and its inhabitants deserved the rewards of conquest. Soldiers manning forts were nothing less than the forebears of America’s republican promise. Indians, though admirable for their skills and primitive nobility, were regarded as features of America’s natural world rather than social beings. They were to be subdued by more-civilized conquerors along with the forests and soil. Forts themselves were portrayed as cultural and economic entrepôts and battlegrounds of superior European civilization, overshadowing and overawing the “primitive” natives who visited them. This nineteenth-century heroic view of the frontier and its outposts fits neatly into American nationalist mythology and remained a powerful feature of history textbooks and popular culture well into the twentieth century.²

If this heroic view of forts and garrisons as the forerunners of empire had remained safely ensconced in the nineteenth century, I might never have approached this subject. However, this vision of forts as the intrepid cutting edges of the European imperial saw blade remained surprisingly potent in twentieth-century popular culture. People growing up in the mid-twentieth century should be familiar with this romanticized image

of the relationship between fort personnel and Native Americans, though in the consensus-driven atmosphere of the 1930s–1950s the British soldiers in such forts were often portrayed as villains who sought to subvert Indians for their own imperial (and hence undemocratic) purposes. In fiction such as Walter Edmonds's *Drums along the Mohawk* and Kenneth Roberts's *Northwest Passage*, and the films based on those novels, this heroic vision influenced generations of Americans. *Northwest Passage* became a popular television show in the 1950s, taking its place beside *The Wonderful World of Disney* and *Daniel Boone* (in the 1960s) as purveyors of romantic frontier ideals set in colonial America. Hundreds of movie Westerns reinforced this heroic ideal for the nineteenth-century West as well. Of course, Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans* saw several popular film and television adaptations throughout the twentieth century. As recently as 1992, a new and quite good film version of the story reified a view of forts as places that heralded imperial change, and as places where Indians and Europeans could find nothing but conflict.

Heroism was fine for descendants of the victors in the cultural contests of the American colonial period, but not for descendants of the first Americans, whose ancestors bore the brunt of the European invasion. Twentieth-century Native Americans knew well that their ancestors participated fully in the continent's colonial-era struggles and grated at their continued relegation as secondary, romanticized figures in early American history. In the 1960s and 1970s, encouraged in part by the American civil rights movement and increased Native American activism, some historians began looking for new historical models that would amplify native agency in colonial affairs and correct some of the nationalistic, heroic depictions of white colonizers. Some historians argued for models of analysis using anthropological and archaeological methods to free the researcher from the colonialist cultural baggage that permeates much literature. Using these methods, historians could view colonial intercultural meetings as diffusions of traits rather than impositions of dominant or superior cultures over lesser ones. Global social and economic models also offered paths to locating Indians as significant actors within the North American story. In these studies Indians were shown as participants in a larger Atlantic exchange economy, either to cast them as victims of a coercive global trade system or to include them as socioeconomic actors alongside colonists and slaves. But some have criticized both anthropological “cultural invasion” models and deterministic economic frameworks for a basic

teleological flaw: they often look at Native Americans' stories through the lens of their eventual loss. Still, this new emphasis on historical studies using ethnographies, anthropological and cultural theories, and archaeology alongside traditional documentary history has informed a whole generation of scholars and students. These studies, taken along with two generations of Native American activism, have led to a more powerful and nuanced view of the roles Indians played in American history. The impact of this scholarship is felt in popular history, too, as a comparison of the 1936 and 1992 film versions of *Last of the Mohicans* shows very clearly.³

My particular frustration with depictions of colonial fort life in both popular culture and much recent scholarship is the persistent habit of seeking ways to include Indians into nationalistic or imperial frameworks. Either as consumers, connected to and exploited by a global economic system, or as representatives of a larger indigenous nation, language group, or culture, Indians are often studied as players in a wide-ranging game. This, one supposes, is the price of inclusion in history: individuals become subsumed within larger narratives. This is especially troubling for studying backcountry fort life, because existence in such outposts was influenced as much or more by local concerns as by larger global or imperial initiatives and contingencies. A more fruitful method for analyzing the kinds of interactions that took place near military posts is to highlight Europeans' and Indians' experiences in more localized geographic or conceptual contexts. This does less well at explaining native and settler participation in global systems, but comes closer to capturing Indian-European cultural interplay as it happened at the local level. Indians did not usually consider themselves part of a global system or an extended multicultural American colonial regime. Soldiers and others in backcountry outposts understood their roles in imperial regimes, but they also adapted to the demands of the local economy, which was usually dominated by native concerns, not imperial objectives. Indians and Europeans were not simply their national imperatives writ small. In close company and at the mercy of a frequently unsympathetic natural environment, they often found cultural common ground in spite of their larger purposes and prejudices.

Some recent scholarship has embraced this local perspective on intercultural backcountry encounters, though usually with a glance toward a wider interpretive significance. For example, Richard White's *The Middle Ground*, a study that has bestrode ethnohistory like a colossus since its publication in 1991, emphasizes the local cultural accommodations that

took place wherever Indians met Europeans in the Great Lakes region, redefining the entire notion of Indian-European diplomacy. However, White's subtitle, *Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815*, reveals the framework of a larger global narrative. Still, his structuralist interpretation of cultural exchange has become invaluable to studying local encounters. Also helpful in seeing forts as local worlds rather than peripheral imperial outposts are recent works on the importance of cultural brokers, negotiators and translators who moved easily between cultural worlds, helping to bridge the differences between Indians and Europeans at the local level in pursuit of larger colonial goals. But backcountry localism has also been studied on its own merits. Andrew R. L. Cayton and Fredrika J. Teute's 1998 collection *Contact Points* presents essays that study backcountry sites in order to redefine the concept of frontiers at the local level, identifying several physical and conceptual arenas of cultural change with diverse, permeable meanings. These studies suggest an early American world where no outcomes seemed inevitable to the participants. They reveal frontiers in persistent states of negotiation, using strategies informed both by local priorities and outside imperatives. Most importantly, they move closer to interpreting Indian-white interactions from a native, rather than a Eurocentric, vantage. This moves closer to interpreting the little worlds of forts and garrisons in ways unencumbered by popular cultural perceptions or historiographical demands for larger significances. Viewing forts and their locales from the perspectives of the Indians and garrisons that occupied and visited them emphasizes the efforts and importance of individual contact in the backcountry, the fluidity of cultural exchange and influence, the difficulties and promises fostered by mutual misunderstandings, and the degree to which backcountry contingencies could often squelch larger political, military, and economic purposes.⁴

This study examines five British forts in colonial America to emphasize the interweaving of local and general sociocultural imperatives at backcountry contact points. The question posed in each case is the following: To what degree were the activities, imperatives, and identities of these posts influenced by Native American culture instead of, or in addition to, European imperial or colonial culture? In each case, native traditions and cultural imperatives mixed with colonial military missions and everyday challenges of life in and near outposts. Imperial objectives and pan-Indian concerns run through each of these case studies. But this book moves