

September 1992



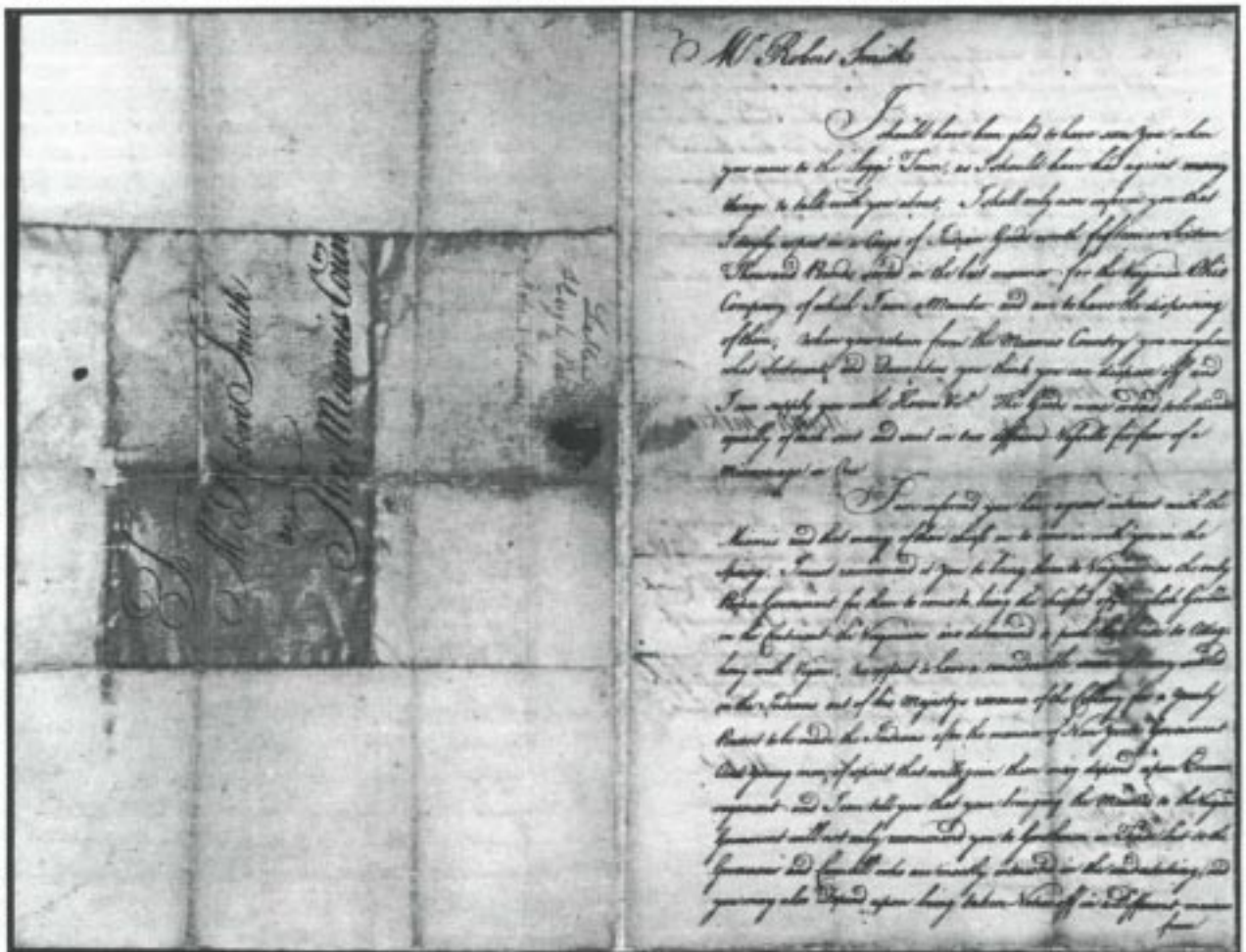
# THE INDIANA JUNIOR HISTORIAN

PUBLISHED BY THE INDIANA HISTORICAL BUREAU, STATE OF INDIANA

## Focus—The Gentle Invasion

The primary source reproduced below is a letter written in Virginia in 1749 by Englishman Hugh Parker to fellow countryman Robert Smith in "The Miamis Country." The photograph shows the letter unfolded with the address on the left. The dark spot in the center is what remains of the wax seal used to fasten the folded page before it was sent. See page 9 for more about this source.

Courtesy: Indiana Historical Society Library, Negative #C5238.



# Focus

At least twenty thousand years ago, people began to migrate from Asia into the New World. Native Americans are descendants of these early immigrants. By 1492 A.D., it is estimated that nearly fifty million people inhabited North America. Archaeological records indicate the area of the present-day Midwest was occupied by various groups (see *The Indiana Junior Historian*, April 1992).

By the sixteenth century, many Native Americans had complex cultures which were based primarily on agriculture. They lived in seasonal villages and had developed internal trade systems.

Europeans, therefore, who wished to tap the many resources of North America, often encountered sophisticated cultures rather than primitive peoples. The interaction of Native American tribes with the Europeans who claimed the land that is now Indiana is the focus of this and the October and November issues of *The Indiana Junior Historian*.

The gentle invasion of North America was not planned as an attack. French fishermen, coming to Newfoundland on the eastern coast in the mid 1500s,

discovered that trading for furs with the Native Americans was more profitable than fishing. The fur trade in the New World began more by accident than by design, but once it started, it grew rapidly. The fishermen were soon followed by the explorers, and then the French fur traders and missionaries.

Before the traders' arrival, tools used by the Indians were painstakingly chipped from stone. Decorative beads were laboriously drilled from shell, antler, or bone. Hand-made clay pots were easily broken. Clothing was made from animal skins or plant fibers.

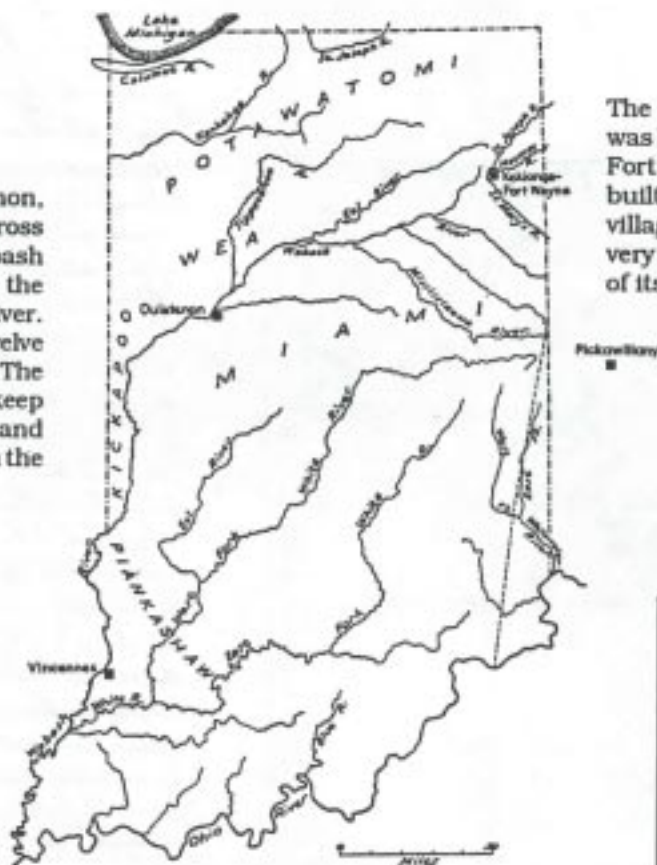
Trading brought many changes to Native American cultures. Many of their traditional possessions were displaced by European manufactured goods. Now they could trade animal skins for metal axes, knives, and copper pots. They could have colorful glass beads, cloth for clothing, and beautiful ribbon to trim it. They could get guns, powder, and shot to replace their bows and arrows.

The gentle invasion had begun. What started as an economic agreement would soon change the cultures of Native Americans.

Sources: Barnhart & Riker, Chapter III; Kehoe, Chapters 1 and 5.

The first French post, Ouatatonon, was established in 1717 across from the Wea village on the Wabash River eighteen miles below the mouth of the Tippecanoe River. Plans called for a captain and twelve men to maintain the post. The men at Ouatatonon were to keep peace with the Illinois Indians and keep the Wea from trading with the British.

A third French post was needed on the lower Wabash and Ohio rivers. Post Vincennes, now the city of Vincennes, was erected in 1732. The French made every effort to maintain the fur trade of the Ohio and Wabash valleys.



The second French post in Indiana was Fort Saint Phillippe des Miamis or Fort Miami, by present day Fort Wayne, built in 1721 across from the Miami village of Kekionga. Fort Miami was very important to the French because of its location on the Wabash River.

The map shows the location of Native American groups and the French trading posts in the early 1700s, in what was to become Indiana. Source: Adapted from William E. Wilson, *Indiana: A History*. (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1966), p. 28.



# The French and Indians in Indiana

1492

1492 Columbus lands in the New World.

Early 1500s

Early 1500s

French fishermen make trips to what is now the coast of Newfoundland and New England.

1534 First expedition by Jacques Cartier up the St. Lawrence River, two more expeditions in 1535 and 1541; area claimed in the name of the King of France.

1607

1607 Jamestown [Virginia] established, first English settlement in North America.

1608

1608

French establish Quebec, Canada as a fur trade base.

1611 French establish Mount Royal [Montreal] settlement.

1620

1620 Pilgrims from England land at Plymouth [Massachusetts].

1679

1679

LaSalle travels through what would become northern Indiana.

1689 Beginning of French and Indian Wars for control of the fur trade in North America.

Circa 1700s

Circa 1700s

A band of Miami enters what is now Indiana. They settle at the headwaters of the Maumee River [now city of Fort Wayne].

1701 French establish a post at Detroit [Michigan], beginning French control of the Great Lakes region.

1708

1708

A band of Wea settles on the Wabash near present city of Lafayette.

1717

1717 Fort Outatenon [now Lafayette] established on the Wabash River.

1721

1721

Fort Miami established at the present city of Fort Wayne.

1732 Fort Vincennes [now Vincennes] built on the lower Wabash River.

1740s

1740s

French become increasingly alarmed at the British invasion of their fur trade market.

1747

1747

Miami bands divide loyalties between French and British.

1751 Piankashaw turn against French at Vincennes.

1756

1756

Great Britain officially declares war on France.

1760

1760

Montreal falls to the British; hostilities end. British take over French forts in the Great Lakes region.

1763 Treaty of Paris signed. France gives up her claim to land in North America. British control what is now Indiana.



## The Lure of the Pelt

The fur trade in the New World was carried on by exchanging furs for merchandise. Many Native Americans seemed to be fascinated by the luxuries that could be obtained by providing pelts to the traders. Metal pots, glass beads, cloth, mirrors, and brandy were all items that had not been part of the Native American's traditional world. Once introduced to these manufactured goods, Native Americans considered them as status symbols, and may have found that they could not do without them.

The traders saw this effect and tried to keep the Native Americans supplied with trade goods. It soon became profitable for the traders to establish trading posts where Native Americans could bring pelts and trade them for products.

The French *voyageurs* were men who generally contracted with traders to bring trade goods by canoe to the posts and take the furs back to Montreal, Canada. Although their canoes were huge—some 30 feet long—a tall or very large man took up too much room and that meant less room for trade goods. These men, therefore, were required to be under 5 feet 7 inches in height.

In the spring, the *voyageurs* pulled their paddles through the waters of the Great Lakes and down into the rivers of what is now Indiana. What a picture they must have made; their voices raised in song, dressed in their bright clothing, paddling their colorfully painted canoes!

In the fall, the *voyageurs* made the trip back to Montreal with their canoes loaded with bundles of furs, weighing almost 100 pounds each. On the journey, there were places where they had to portage or carry their cargo and canoes. When the rivers did not connect, or there were rapids, or when the water was too low, they placed both goods and canoes on their strong backs and carried them overland.

The *voyageurs* competed with each other to see who could carry the most bundles. Some carried three at a time. That is 300 pounds!

The *coureurs de bois* were independent trad-

ers who went into the forests and dealt directly with the Native Americans. Their name means "runners of the woods" in French. They ignored the strict fur trade regulations established by the French government. Many adopted the Indian ways of life and moved freely through the forests. They brought their pelts to the trading post and received credit for supplies that they needed for the next season.

The fur trade was big business for the French and was worth protecting from the British, unfriendly Indians, and anyone else who might interrupt the trade. The lure of the pelt was strong and the resulting wealth from trade set the stage for conflict.

Sources: Burger, Chapter II; Kozlak.



A portage required men to carry both cargo and canoes overland. Reprinted, by permission, from The Minnesota Historical Society. Kozlak, p.17.



## Primary Source

The document below is a trade contract between two Frenchmen—one a merchant, the other a voyageur. The translation reproduced here is a primary source for information about the fur trade in Indiana. Words in the document are spelled as they appeared in the translation. The original document in French and the later typed translation are in the Indiana Historical Society Library. Courtesy: Northwest Collection, Indiana Historical Society Library.

June 7, 1758

Engagement of Charles Brouiller to Sr. Desauniers

Being present Charles Brouiller, residing at Pointe-aux-Trembles, in this city, being in Montreal today, who has, and does by this agreement, voluntarily hire himself out to Sieur Alexis Desauniers and Company, represented by Sieur Ignace Dufy Desauniers, merchant of this city, here present. He accepts to leave this city as soon as he is requested to do so, in a canoe loaded with goods; to guide and lead it to the Ouyatanons Post, to spend one winter at said place, or within its limits; to return next year, 1759 in the usual way, in a canoe loaded with pelts, taking care, during the trips and while at said place, of the canoes, merchandise and pelts, food supplies and equipment necessary for such a voyage; to go to all trading areas indiciate to him; to hunt, fish and dig, if need be; to obey said Sieurs, or their representative; serve them faithfully, achieve a profit for them. He will avoid damages and notify them if he is aware of any and generally without being allowed to trade for his own benefit, nor to be distracted from said service under the penalties of the ordonnances. This agreement is made in consideration of the sum of 300 livres which said Sr. promises and binds himself to pay and remit to said engage upon his return to this city, as his wages and salary for said voyage, in the currency of this country. It is agreed that said employee will not have to portage either coming or going, except on the hills. THUS, promising & obligating & done & passed at Montreal, in the office of Danre, one of the said notaries, in the year 1758, the 7th of June in the afternoon. Said Sr. has signed. Said engage declared that he does not know how to write or sign this agreement after it was read.

(Signed) Dufy Desauniers  
Danre Deblanzy (notary)  
?[illegible] (royal notary)



Furs pressed into bundles took less space for transport. Reprinted, by permission, from The Minnesota Historical Society. Kozlak, p. 21.

### Activities

- Imagine that you are a *voyageur*. What are some of the dangers you might encounter in your job? Write a letter to your family describing some of the dangers and adventures of your life as a *voyageur*.
- *Singing Indiana History* by Martha Chrisman Riley, Delphi, Ind.: Riverside Productions, 1992, contains several examples of *voyageur* songs. Select some songs and perform them with your class.
- Using an atlas, trace the river routes that *voyageurs* might have used to travel from the Wabash River to Montreal.
- The *voyageur's* contract appears to be complicated. Rewrite this contract in your own words. Include the date, names of merchant and *voyageur*, the responsibilities of the merchant and the *voyageur*, and the length of the contract.



# Across the

I am called Miaqhqua of the Wea tribe. I see the trader's camp across the river. I like the traders. The women of the village like the metal pots and glass beads that the French traders give us when we bring beaver fur to their camp. The women grow food for the camp, and the men work with the traders. Many times they take our young women as wives. The children of these marriages are called *métis* by the French.

The traders do not wear animal skins to cover their bodies, but they do wear our moccasins. They wear comfortable looking clothes and carry guns. I know of these guns. My father says that we can kill our enemies and hunt for animals better than we ever have. I do not have such a gun, but some of my people do. Not all of the elders agree that guns are a good thing.

Their fortified camp is made of wood and will last a long time. They fear the British who also come to trade with our people. There are often soldiers at their camp to keep the British out.

The traders give our people many gifts in addition to the things for which we trade. I like most of the things that we trade for, but I do not like the brandy and rum. It makes some of our people do crazy things.

These French people do not take too much land and do not frighten the animals away. But some of my people are worried. They fear that our old ways will be lost and the land of our ancestors will be destroyed. I do not know what to think.

\* "Across the River" is based on evidence from primary and secondary sources, but is a fictional narrative. Artwork is reprinted, by permission, from The Minnesota Historical Society. Kozlak, p. 20.





# the River\*

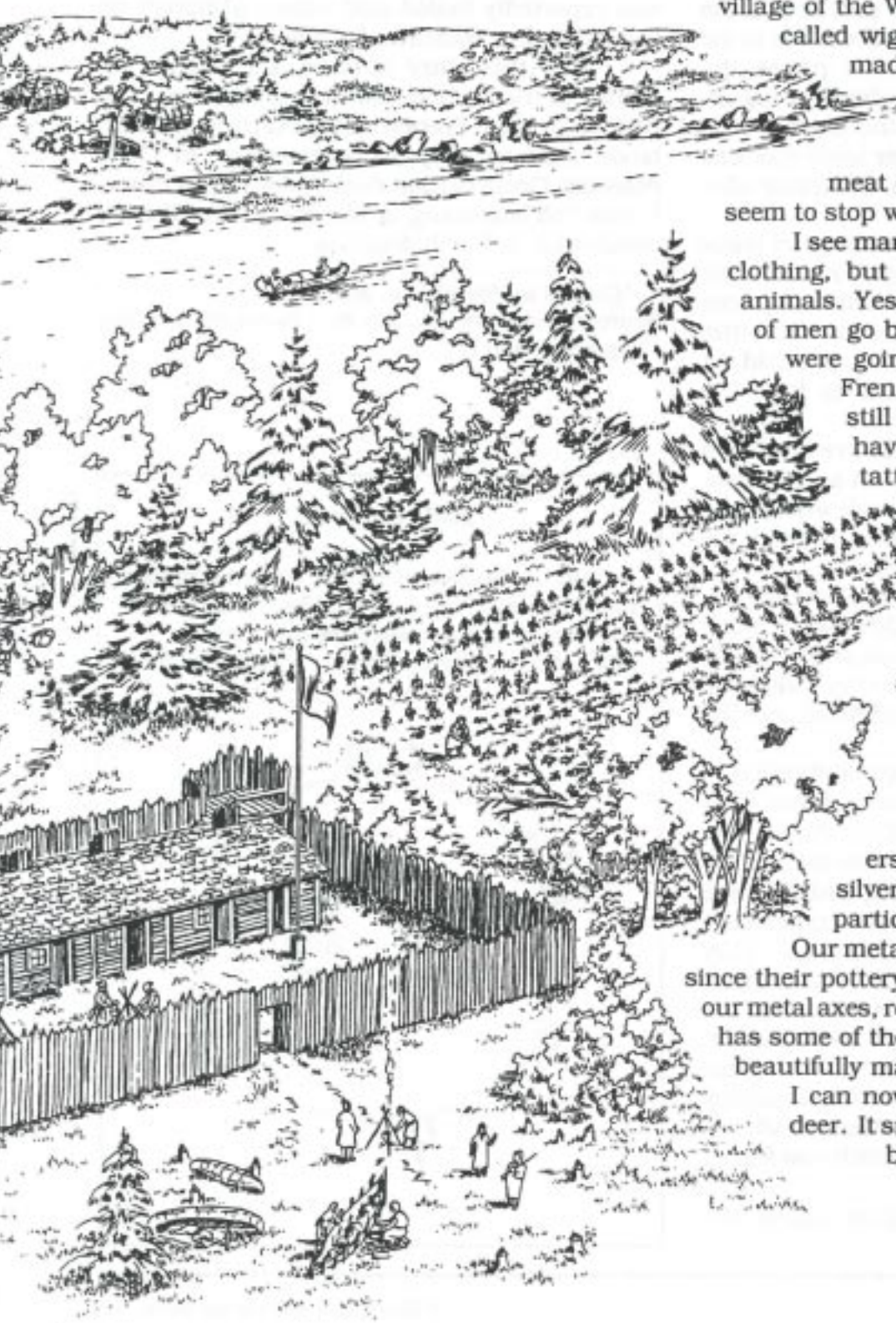
My name is Jean Baptist Girard. I am a French trader and I arrived at this post in the spring. It is now late summer in the year 1720. From the shore, I see the village of the Wea Indians who live in homes called wigwams. These are oval frames made of saplings, then covered by mats. I am told they are made from the stalks of cattails. I can see the women drying meat on a wooden rack. They never seem to stop working.

I see many wearing our French cloth for clothing, but some still wear the skins of animals. Yesterday, I watched a small group of men go by in their canoes. I think they were going hunting because some had French guns and powder. Others still carried bows and arrows. They have muscular bodies covered with tattoos.

My friend Pierre, also a trader, is married to one of the women from the village. She helps keep a garden of corn, beans, and pumpkins for us. Pierre says it will not be long before the Indians come to our post to trade beaver pelts for our goods. He told me they make a grand sight in their clothing decorated with colorful feathers, our French beads, and trade silver [thin silver trinkets], which they particularly like.

Our metal pots, too, are in great demand since their pottery breaks easily. They trade for our metal axes, replacing their stone tools. Pierre has some of their small arrowheads. They are beautifully made!

I can now smell the roasting flesh of a deer. It smells delicious! I hope that I will be invited to eat with them before the summer is over and they leave the village for their family winter camps.





# Divided Loyalties

By the early 1700s, the successful French trade system was being threatened by the British. Having set up their own trade system with Native American tribes on the east coast, the British now wanted to trade with the tribes in the Great Lakes area. This did not please the French. The tribes found themselves in a tug-of-war between the French and the British, who waged a price war, using cheaper trade goods as incentives, each trying to obtain the tribes' allegiance.

French traders were subject to strict trade regulations imposed by the King of France, while British traders were free to set their own prices for goods. Consequently, the Miamis, and other tribes in the area that is now Indiana, could get cheaper goods in greater quantities from the British.

By 1747, the Miami Indians were divided in their loyalties between the French and British. The Miamis still loyal to the French were led by La Pied Froid. The Miamis who favored the British were led by La Demoiselle.

In July 1748, three Miami warriors, believed to be from La Demoiselle's band, along with groups of Delaware, Shawnee, and Iroquois, signed the Treaty of Lancaster so they "might be admitted into the Friendship and Alliance of the King of Great Britain."<sup>1</sup>

La Demoiselle, now totally committed to the British, in 1749 moved his band east into what is now Ohio and the present city of Piqua. He named his village Pickawillany (see map, p. 2), and it quickly became a thriving British trade center. The British, seeing an opportunity, sent traders from Pennsylvania and Virginia. They were hoping to get other tribes to defect to them.

The year 1751 was a difficult one for the French. They lost more of their Indian allies. Attacks against the French occurred with great frequency. There was also a terrible smallpox epidemic, and La Pied Froid, the Miami leader so loyal to the French, died. The French now feared a major Indian uprising.

In a desperate move to regain control, the

French, with Chippewa and Ottawa Indians, attacked Pickawillany in the spring of 1752. Six people were killed, including La Demoiselle, who was reportedly boiled and eaten, although no located source indicates by whom.

After this show of force, the Miamis returned to the French dominated territory. The British threat to French control of these western lands had been stopped temporarily. In 1756, however, Great Britain declared war on France. It was the beginning of the end of the French dominance in North America.

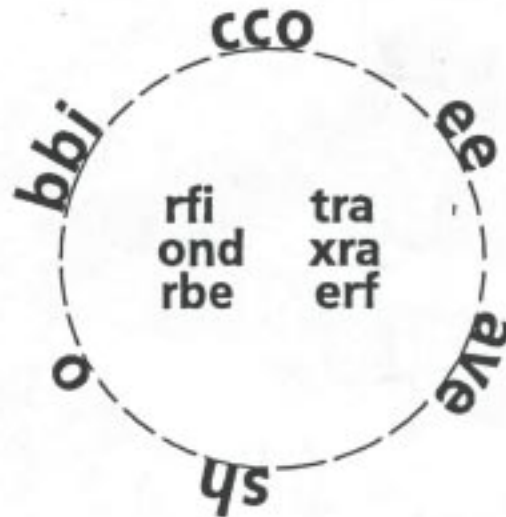
<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Voegelin, p. 30.

Sources: Voegelin, pp. 29-38; Barnhart & Riker, Chapters III and IV.

## Hidden Furs

To find the names of six fur trade animals, write the letter groups **inside** the circle in the correct spaces **outside** the circle.

Adapted from: *Ranger Rick*, July, 1985, p. 24.



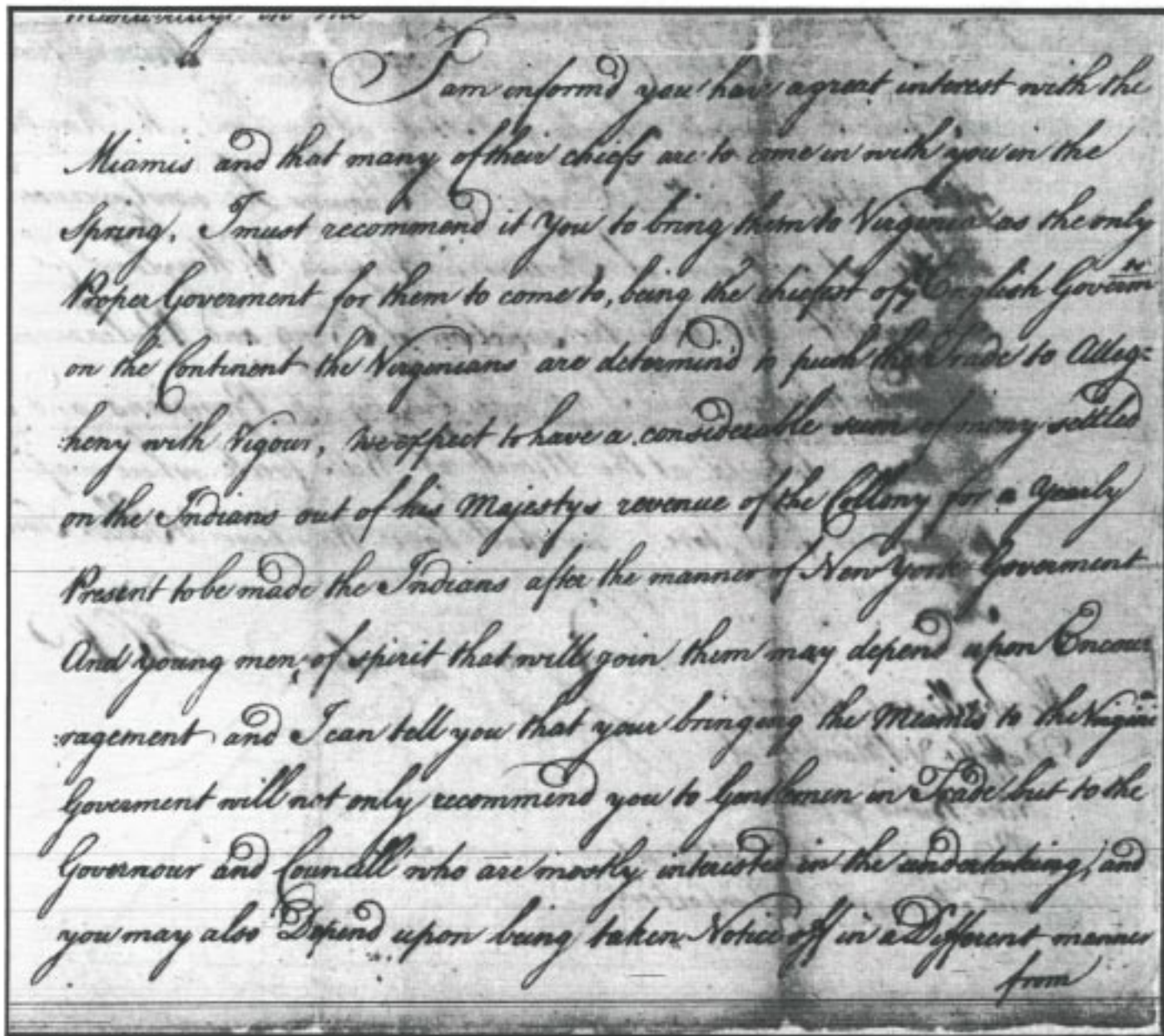


## Primary Source

This letter was written in 1749 by Hugh Parker who indicates he is with the Ohio Company, a Virginia organization for trade in the Ohio country. It is written to Robert Smith, a trader in the Miamis Country, another name for the Ohio-Indiana area at that time. This passage from the letter illustrates Great Britain's attempts to lure the Miami trade from the French. Courtesy: Northwest Collection, Indiana Historical Society Library. Negative #C5235.

## Activities

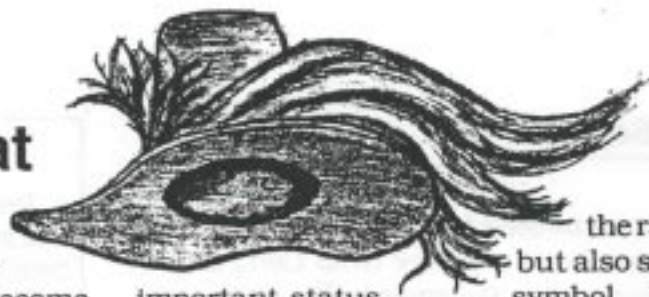
- Read the document reproduced below. Summarize its contents. What is Mr. Parker saying to Mr. Smith?
- The article on page 8 is called "Divided Loyalties." Which country is Hugh Parker loyal to? How do you know?
- Can you determine where Robert Smith's loyalties lie?
- This letter was written in 1749. Was Virginia a state or a colony in 1749?



I am inform'd you have a great interest with the Miamis and that many of their chiefs are to come in with you in the Spring. I must recommend it you to bring them to Virginia as the only Proper Government for them to come to, being the chiefest of English Govern<sup>ts</sup> on the Continent the Virginians are determin'd to push the Trade to Alleg<sup>h</sup>eny with Vigour, we expect to have a considerable sum of money settled on the Indians out of his Majesty's revenue of the Colony for a yearly Present to be made the Indians after the manner of New York Government And young men of spirit that will goin' them may depend upon Encour<sup>ag</sup>ement and I can tell you that your bringing the Miamis to the Virginia Government will not only recommend you to your own in Trade but to the Governour and Council who are mostly interest'd in the undertaking, and you may also Depend upon being taken Notice of in a different manner from



# That Fashionable Hat



Beaver fur was so valued in Europe during the Middle Ages (circa 1000 to circa 1400 A.D.) that the animal had become scarce. A new source of the fur had been located in North America to supply the growing European demand. The heavy beaver fur was used for fur coats but was most popular when used to make men's hats.

Surprisingly, the hat made from beaver fur was not furry. The hat was made from a material called felt. Felt was not a woven material like other cloth but was made by a process of rolling and pressing the fibers which were moistened and then heated. Animal fur has coarse, long guard hair and soft underhair. "To make felt, the guard hair is trimmed off and the soft underhair is made into a smooth, tough material by being matted under heat and pressure. It can be molded into any desired shape. Beaver pelts make the best felt, because the underhairs are covered with tiny barbs; which make them mat, or cling closely together, when pressed."<sup>1</sup>

The hat not only protected your head from

the rain and sun but also served as an important status symbol. If you were important or wanted people to think that you were important, then you needed a beaver hat! The beaver fur kept your head warm and dry. The demand for beaver hats was great and a trader who could supply beaver pelts to meet this demand could become very rich.

<sup>1</sup>Burger, p. 26.

Source: Burger, pp. 26-27.

Artwork on this page, including the eighteenth century French beaver hat above, is by Paula A. Bongen.

### Activities

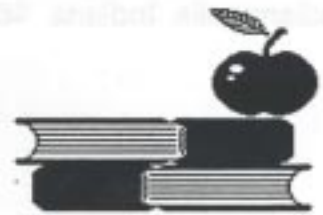
- Locate other types of beaver hats and clothing worn before 1900. Write an advertisement for this type of clothing.
- People still wear the fur of animals today. Some people agree, while others disagree with this practice. What is your opinion? Write an essay expressing your feelings about this subject.

## Help the Beaver Reach Her Young!





# An Apple for Everyone



## Selected Sources

- Barnhart, John D., and Dorothy L. Riker. *Indiana to 1816: The Colonial Period*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau and Indiana Historical Society, 1971.

This book is a standard source to use for Indiana history in this period. For secondary students and adult readers.

- Burger, Carl. *Beaver Skins and Mountain Men*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1968.

An excellent source for students in intermediate grades, includes chapters on the fur trade in the Great Lakes region and the West.

- *Cobblestone*. Volume 3, Number 6, June 1982.

This entire issue is entitled "The North American Beaver Trade" and is very readable for intermediate students.

- Gilman, Carolyn. *Where Two Worlds Meet: The Great Lakes Fur Trade*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1982.

Wonderful photographs and drawings are included in this informative work suitable for upper elementary, secondary, and adult readers.

- Hicks, Ronald, ed. *Native American Cultures in Indiana: Proceedings of the First Minnetrista Council for Great Lakes Native American Studies*. Muncie: Minnetrista Cultural Center and Ball State University, 1992.

A series of articles cover the archaeology of early Indiana residents to European contact. This is an excellent and scholarly source recommended for adult readers.

- Kehoe, Alice B. *North American Indians*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1981.

Excellent adult source on Native American cultures.

- Kozlak, Chet. *A Great Lakes Fur Trade Coloring Book*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1981.

Do not be misled by coloring book in the title. This book offers wonderful and accurate drawings of the period with brief text. It is available from the Minnesota Historical Society and other sources.

- Ritzenthaler, Robert, and Pat Ritzenthaler. *The Woodland Indians of the Western Great Lakes*. Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1983.

An excellent source of information on the Woodland culture for secondary and adult readers.

- Tanner, Helen Hornbeck, ed. *The Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987.

A definitive work on the subject of Great Lakes Indians for adult readers.

- Voegelin, Ermine Wheeler, et al. "An Anthropological Report on the History of the Miamis . . ." Bloomington: Indiana

University, 1957-58.

This report was presented before the U.S. Indian Claims Commission, prepared by the Great Lakes-Ohio Valley Research Project of Indiana University at the request of the U. S. Department of Justice in October 1957. This typescript was published in 1974 under the same title by Garland Publishing Co., New York.

## Of Special Interest

- The Trail of Courage, September 19-20; 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. features pre-1840 living history encampments. Fulton County Historical Society, Rochester. Call 219-233-4436.

- Eiteljorg Museum of American Indian and Western Art, Indianapolis, has a large collection including Woodland Indian artifacts. Call 317-636-9378.

- Minnetrista Cultural Center, Muncie, has Woodland Indian artifacts. Call 317-282-4848.

- Feast of the Hunter's Moon, September 26-27, has early Indiana living history re-enactments at Fort Ouiatenon, West Lafayette. Call 317-743-3921.

- Miami County Museum, Peru has artifacts from the French trade period. Call 317-473-9183.



Indiana Historical Bureau  
140 North Senate Avenue  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Nonprofit Org.  
U. S. Postage  
PAID  
Indianapolis, IN  
Permit No. 4956



**The Indiana Historical Bureau** was created in 1915 to celebrate the centennial of statehood. It is the duty of the Historical Bureau to edit and publish documentary and other material relating to the history of the state of Indiana, to promote the study of Indiana history, and to work with others engaged in such pursuits. The Historical Bureau provides books, educational resources, and programs for students and teachers. Several are listed below. The Bureau also directs the Historical Marker Program and the care of the Governors' Portraits Collection.

• **BROADSIDES** produces supplemental educational materials based on primary sources for teaching Indiana history. Student packets encourage active participation and skills development with possible integration in various grades and subjects. An extensive teacher guide provides ready information and teaching resources.

• **Indiana Close Up** is a high school local government program affiliated with the national Close Up Foundation. This participatory annual event encourages study and discussion through the Jefferson Meeting on the Indiana Constitution.

• **Indiana History Day** encourages students grades 4 - 12 to research and prepare papers, exhibits, performances and media presentations on an annual historical theme. An emphasis on original research and interpretation allows students to experience the excitement of discovering or developing skills and interests that enrich their education and their lives. It is part of the National History Day network.

• **REACH**—Resources Educating in the Arts, Culture, and History—is a dynamic program that utilizes art and objects to stimulate dialogue and provide hands-on experiences, exploring not only the arts but also the culture and history of Indiana. Its arts-in-education basis encourages on-going planning for involving community resources in the school.

**The Indiana Junior Historical Society** is a network of history clubs for students in grades 4 - 12. Locally sponsored clubs initiate and participate in activities which encourage the study of Indiana history, often outside the classroom. The Indiana Junior Historical Society program is administered by the Indiana Historical Society, 315 West Ohio Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202; 317-232-1882.

*The Indiana Junior Historian* is published nine times each school year by the Indiana Historical Bureau, State of Indiana. It is distributed to members and sponsors of the affiliated clubs of the Indiana Junior Historical Society of which the Indiana Historical Bureau is a co-sponsor.

This publication is copyrighted, and no part of it may be reproduced in any way for profit without express permission of the Indiana Historical Bureau. Reproduction of activity pages and other materials by teachers for in-class use is permitted.

The publication is provided free to school media centers and public libraries throughout the state. Individual subscriptions are available for \$7.50 per year.

Single copies are available for 85¢ each plus shipping and handling. Classroom sets (a minimum of 20 copies of an issue) of back issues beginning with the September 1991 issue are available for 20¢ per copy plus shipping and handling. Prices valid through December 31, 1992.

Magazine Editor

**Virginia L. Terpening**

Contributing Editors

**Janine Beckley, Paula Bongen,  
Alan Conant, Dani Pfaff**