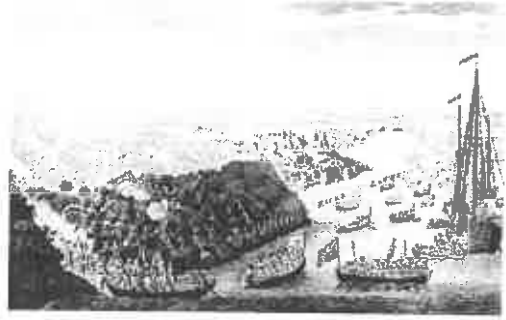


During the 1600s and 1700s, Great Britain, France, and Spain often fought one another to gain lands. They clashed in Europe, Asia, and the Americas.



In North America, Great Britain and France both claimed the Ohio River Valley. British settlers wanted to farm the rich soil there. The French wanted to trap beavers and trade the furs.

In 1754, the contest over the land along the Ohio River began a war that lasted almost 10 years. Thousands of British soldiers, with many colonists, fought against the French. Because many American Indians were allies of the French, the British colonists called the conflict the French and Indian War. Some American Indians, however, did fight alongside the British.

At first, Great Britain lost many battles. The British soldiers' bright red uniforms helped make them easy targets. But things changed in 1759 when British troops captured Quebec City in Canada. By 1760, the French had lost control of Canada. In 1762, they asked for peace. Under the terms of the peace agreement in 1763, France gave up its land claims in present-day Canada to Great Britain. The British also won the land between the Mississippi River and the Appalachian Mountains.

The war gave Great Britain more land. But it also created huge problems. Most important, it left Great Britain with debts, or unpaid bills. The British national debt had almost doubled by the end of the war.

After the French and Indian War, many British settlers moved west. They built homes on the land that Great Britain had won from the French. American Indians feared that this movement of people would destroy their way of life. Some American Indians tried to drive the settlers away by attacking their homes and the British forts. By the time this fighting ended, nearly 2,000 settlers, soldiers, and traders had died.



To stop the attacks and to protect the colonists, Great Britain announced a law called the Proclamation of 1763. This proclamation declared that American Indians could have much of the land west of the Appalachian Mountains. It also said that settlers could not move to these areas.

The colonists disliked this law. They did not like the way in which Great Britain was trying to control the colonies. Many colonists simply ignored the law and moved west.