

Sample Teacher Blog Entries

Entry One: The Albany Plan

First read the document here: <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/documents/1751-1775/albany-plan-for-a-union-1754.php>

A Colonial Flop

Just beyond the Appalachian Mountains, the Ohio River valley is beginning to attract Pennsylvania fur traders and Virginia land companies. As more British colonists arrive in the area, the French fear that they will lose control of the rivers that link their Canadian and Louisiana settlements. I fear that the drive to move westward is going to cause tension between the French and the British. The French have already begun to build forts in their territories, and yet the British insist that the land west of the Appalachians is ours for the taking!

It has been indicated that a young major named George Washington was sent to the west to expel the French from their forts, with force, and to protect the region. Washington neared Fort Duquesne, a French fort at the forks of the Ohio River. He built a small fort called Fort Necessity. He secretly attacked the French and their allies at their fort. After this attack the French retaliated and forced Washington out of the territory. The French and Indian War has begun. Washington was forced to retreat to Virginia.

Many Native American tribes are joining with the French. The Huron sided with the French. As the French continue to strengthen, the colonists are beginning to form their own alliances. The colonists are beginning to meet with leaders of the Iroquois nation, in hopes that they will help defend us against the French.

Recently, Benjamin Franklin wrote a proposal to unite the colonies. It called for each colony to send representatives to a Grand Council. This council would collect taxes, raise armies, and make treaties. However, the colonial legislatures rejected the plan. As you can see, war is among us. Franklin has offered a plan that will give us strength. I think our leaders need to re-think this. I do not see a way for us to win, and continue on if we do not unite and fight under one flag. We must band together. "Unite or Die."

Entry Two: Trial of John Peter Zenger

Of Seditious Libel and Freedom of Press

Recently, John Peter Zenger was arrested for Seditious Libel. I have included the definition below:

Seditious Libel: *Written or spoken words, pictures, signs, or other forms of communication that tend to defame, discredit, criticize, impugn, embarrass, challenge, or question the government, its policies, or its officials; speech that advocates the overthrow of the government by force or violence or that incites people to change the government by unlawful means.*

John Peter Zenger is a German immigrant who publishes a paper called the *New York Weekly Journal*. His recent printings points out the actions of the corrupt royal governor of New York. Quite harshly I might add. Recent articles accuse the government of setting up elections, and allowing our French enemies to explore New York Harbor. Other forms of libel that has been printed do everything but call the governor an idiot. These printings were enough to get Zenger arrested. Zenger was not the author of these articles; he simply kept the real authors anonymous. Yet, he was arrested for printing the articles.

It is no mystery as to why Zenger is the target. He is the only lead authorities have. In fact, Zenger admitted to the crime, and the verdict of Zenger's trial will undoubtedly be no surprise. However, Zenger's wife is continuing to print his paper, speaking out about how all of the jury members in his trial are on the payroll of the very person who arrested him. Her reports reached the people of New York, and the people responded. Her reports resulted in replacing the original jury with a true jury of Zenger's peers.

Who would defend Zenger? Would you? Anyone who defends Zenger is not only speaking out against the royal governor, but the king himself. Anyone who defends Zenger is unquestionably putting his or her own neck on the line. A man of great knowledge, Andrew Hamilton, steps up to confront this issue. Hamilton, the most famous lawyer in Philadelphia, admitted that Zenger printed the charges and demanded the prosecution to prove them false. Hamilton pleads for his client's release. Hamilton states, "it is not the cause of one poor printer," he claimed, "but the cause of liberty." On the other hand, freedom of speech and press does not exist. Simply put, he broke the law! The definition of seditious libel states that anything that supports the overthrow of the government through unlawful means is against the law.

In fifty words or more, write a letter to the *Boston Gazette* editor explaining your beliefs and reasoning.

Entry Three: French and Indian War

What Have We Done?

The English and the French have created rival empires in North America. That competition, between these two powerful entities, has led to war. The French claimed the Ohio River valley, the Mississippi River valley, and the Great Lakes region. The French territory of Louisiana, claimed by La Salle in 1683, stretches from the Ohio River valley to the Rocky Mountains. These lands are called "New France." Most people in these lands are fur traders, and we have competed with the French for these furs.

However, Native American groups are dually competing to supply many Europeans with these furs. This fur trade has created military alliances between the Europeans and their Native American trading partners. These alliances have drug trading partners into each other's wars. This is not the first time France and England has fought. In other parts of the world, France and England are battling it out to reign supreme. Neither side has won a clear victory, or advantage, until now.

A wise man, William Pitt, was bound and determined with the war dominance in the colonies. Pitt sent Britain's greatest generals to America, and borrowed money to pay the troops. These generals led their troops to success by controlling six French forts, including Fort Duquesne which had been previously attacked by George Washington. Pitt decides to attack one last French stronghold, Quebec.

We attacked and lay siege to Quebec, which sits on cliffs about 300 feet above the St. Lawrence River. The army surrounded the city, trapping the French inside. Meanwhile our artillery fired upon the city. Under the cover of darkness General Wolfe commanded his troops to climb the steep cliffs, and when the French awoke, their lie 4,000 soldiers awaiting battle. A fierce battle broke out, and sadly, Wolfe was killed, but we were victorious. The French surrendered Quebec to the British army. This victory should be the turning point of the war. This should give our army the strength needed to kick those French out of the colonies.

Then why do I not cheer with joy? Why do I not feel a sense of warmth inside? Why do I only fear for my safety and your safety? I have recently stumbled upon a letter written to one of our traders Alex Henry. This letter was written by a Native American leader in response to our recent victory.

Minavavana, a Chippewa chief, addressing trader Alexander Henry, as recorded by Henry, 1761

"Englishman, although you have conquered the French, you have not yet conquered us! We are not your slaves. . . .

Englishman, our father, the King of France, employed our young men to make war upon your nation. In this warfare many of them have been killed, and it is our custom to retaliate until such time as the spirits of the slain are satisfied. But the spirits of the slain are to be satisfied in either of two ways; the first is by the spilling of the blood of the nation by which they fell; the other by covering the bodies of the dead, and thus allaying the resentment of their relations. This is done by making presents.

Englishman, your king has never sent us any presents, . . . wherefore he and we are still at war; and until he does these things we must consider that we have no other father, nor friend among the white men than the King of France. . . . You do not come armed with an intention to make war. . . . We shall regard you, therefore, as a brother. . . . As a token of our friendship we present you with this pipe to smoke."

I cannot help but fear for our safety. I feel that this letter is but a warning. Will the fighting with the natives end? Will our once native allies abandon us and fight with their brethren. In fifty words or more, tell me your thoughts to be posted in our online edition of the Boston Gazette.