**Chapter Outline**

to accompany

*Indigenous Peoples within Canada: A Concise History*, Fifth Edition

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**Chapter 7: The Struggle against British Colonialism**

This chapter highlights the shift in colonial approach and policy as the British became the main European influence in North America with the defeat of France. The success of the British resulted in Indigenous Peoples losing their bargaining position between two rival powers. The new position of the British resulted in the establishment of proclamations and acts that would have lasting impacts to the present day.

With Britain as the sole European influence, First Nations had to adapt and change their political strategies. The British quickly moved to introduce greater measures of economy and they struggled to control the greatly increasing numbers of colonists. Indigenous Peoples thus grew more anxious over the loss of their lands and began to hold regular councils to strategize options. One of the most influential chiefs to challenge the British would be Obwaandi’eyaag (known as Pontiac to the Europeans), the Odaawaa war chief who had fought with the French when Montreal fell. Obwaandi’eyaag appears to have supported the spiritual vision of Neolin, who urged his people to abstain completely from contact with Whites and as a means to end British expansion. The British Governor-General Amherst underestimated the strategic abilities of Obwaandi’eyaag and his followers, believing they could not mount an effective resistance, and soon found the majority of the British forts under siege. In an attempt to deal with the unsuitable relations that had been created, a number of proclamations were passed by the British; these took place in 1761, 1762, and 1763. It would be the 1763 Royal Proclamation that would come to have the greatest influence on British, and eventually Canadian, “Indian policy”. Most importantly, the 1763 Proclamation provided that all surrender of “Indian lands” had to go to the British Crown, who would grant some form of recognition of Aboriginal title to land, tied to the fact that the land had to be surrendered.

The early British treaties were also considered Peace and Friendship Treaties and were more concerned with rights to hunt, fish, and trade, as well as establishing friendly relationships, as their title indicates; although, the British began to insist on European-style written agreements. However, it is not clear what the legal status of these early written treaties was as they were not passed through British Parliament, which was usually the case with international agreements. Land cession treaties did follow, especially after the 1763 Proclamation. Further, although Aboriginal title was a right being admitted to, it was not clear what this meant. One of the most prominent treaties at this time was a surrender of three million acres of land to the Crown for the purpose of providing land to Haudenosaunee loyalists, which added to British North America’s security in relation to the United States. The largest portion of this land went to Joseph Brant and his followers.