

1776: WESTERN INDIANS REINFORCE CARLETON

[Letter from Maj. A. S. De Peyster to Charles Langlade; reprinted from De Peyster, *Miscellanies*, p. lxi.]

To Monsieur Langlade Orders

MONSIEUR—You will take command of the savages of this post that consist of People of several nations and some Canadian volunteers, with these you will undertake your journey in order to join the superintendent of Indian affairs in the neighborhood of Montreal or the officer that commands the troops of the King in that Quarter from whom you will receive your orders.⁷²

⁷²News of the American revolt must have reached Mackinac in 1775, by way of Montreal and Detroit. Henry Hamilton, who came up from Canada in the autumn of 1775, as lieutenant-governor of the latter place, had already seen Montreal in the hands of the American troops, and Sir Guy Carleton, the British governor, escaping to Quebec; see *Mich. Pion. and Hist. Colls.*, x, p. 267. He would seem to have brought orders for Indian auxiliaries to be sent to Carleton in the spring. But by that time, affairs had changed in Canada. Montgomery had fallen before Quebec; Arnold's ineffectual siege had been raised by the coming of a large force of British and Hessian troops; the Americans had been defeated at the Cedars (April 19, 1776), and their army had finally evacuated Montreal and retreated toward Lake Champlain. June 25, Carleton wrote De Peyster, countermanding his order for Indian auxiliaries—see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, xi, p. 174; but it was too late to reverse the order. Before Carleton's note reached Mackinac, Langlade had already (as per this document) received orders to command the reinforcement. A part of the Indians must either have gone in advance, or made a very quick passage, for they were in Montreal by July 19, when they were dismissed with presents and compliments, and orders to be in readiness for the next season's campaign; see *Mich. Pion. and Hist. Colls.*, x, pp. 262, 263.

The superintendent of Indian affairs at that time was Guy Johnson, Sir William's nephew and son-in-law; the former's chief deputy was Daniel Claus, his brother-in-law. They held numerous councils with the tribesmen in 1775 and 1776, and induced many to take the war-path against the Americans.—Ed.