



Letter from William Browning to Sir William Johnson¹

Niagara

April 30th, 1764

The two Seneca Indians arrivd here the 18th {Instant}² with your {favor}³ of the 4th which has made us Extremely Easy here, Contrary to their Expectations at Detroit, where they made no doubt of this Carrying place⁴ being Invested⁵ by that time, by a Large number (at Least 1000) Indians; Lt. Williams of 17th arriving⁶ the same day in the Schooner⁷ from thence. I had her directly Loaded sent off[f] and make no doubt of her being before this day safely arrivd with a good supply of provisions, to the surprize of the French there, who Little Expected the possibility of Effecting it. in this voyage they have found out a Safer and better passage the north side of the Large Island, near detroit, out of musquet shott, and in a direct navigation of the wind that serves to pass the Lake, shortening the Course Eighty miles. Gladwin has sent two French men prisoners here, for their Security, a Scheme having been Laid to Rescue them, by setting fire to the Fort, and Investing it at the same time. these two know all the Principal promoters of this Indian warr there, and are to be sent up again with the army that go's. the three Indians went in the Canoe brought down by the former Express, they should be there before the Schooner, I however acquainted Gladwin of the purport of your Last Lett'r.

I am Sir, your most faithfull and most {obedient} {Humble}Servant

{William} Browning

¹ British Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northern Department (see glossary)

² Of this month; in this example it means they arrived on April 18.

³ Letter

⁴ A carrying place or portage was the point at which canoes (the major method of good trade and transport in the interior of the continent) had to be taken from the water and carried overland around waterfalls or between two separate waterways. Browning seems to be referring to the portage around Niagara Falls.

⁵ The precise meaning in modern English is ambiguous in this instance. Possible renderings: taken possession of, obstructed, intercepted.

⁶ 17th Regiment of Infantry

⁷ A sail-powered water vessel used often for coastal trading. Because of their (comparatively) quick speed, schooners often carried mail and passengers.



Discussion Questions:

1. **How does William Browning describe the uprising in Detroit in this letter? What motivations does he ascribe to the Indians who were involved in raiding the fort?*
2. *How do the British military and governmental officers understand the causes of Pontiac's War?*
3. **How did Jeffrey Amherst's approach toward Indians differ from that of the French governors in the region?*

**Questions included in the Collection Essay.*