



Dakota Information Card

The Royal Proclamation (1763) and the Treaty of Fort Niagara (1764)

In 1763, King George III issued the [Royal Proclamation of 1763](#) to establish a basis of government administration for the newly acquired North American territories. He also established new rules and protocols for future relations with First Nations people.

Under the Royal Proclamation, King George III protected all traditional First Nations land east of the Mississippi River and west of the Appalachian Mountains. It reserved the exclusive right of purchase of these lands for the Crown, and set out procedures for the purchase of these lands with the consent of the First Nations. The British authorities considered this important because First Nations were becoming increasingly wary of British incursion and settlement in or near their territory.

In other words, it established the constitutional framework for the negotiation of treaties with the First Nations of Canada, and it is referenced in section 25 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

After the Royal Proclamation became British Law, King George III sent the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Sir William Johnson, to hold council with the First Nations who lived west of the Mississippi. In the summer of 1764, twenty-four nations—including Ojibway, Sauk and Fox, Shawnee, Menominee, Huron, and others—affirmed their alliance with the British with the Twenty-Four Nation Wampum Belt at Fort Niagara. This became known as the Council of Niagara or the Treaty of Niagara, at which the Dakota were represented by their allies, the Sauk.

The Treaty of Fort Niagara was not meant to usurp or supplant the authority and title that First Nations had over their lands. It was a nation-to-nation alliance in which parties agreed that the interests of both sides would be maintained. During the War of 1812, First Nations involved with this treaty allied themselves with the British, as these Nations believed the treaty bound them to the British cause.



Information adapted from:

Borrows, John. "Wampum at Niagara: The Royal Proclamation, Canadian Legal History and Self-Government," *Aboriginal Treaty Rights in Canada*. Michael Asch, ed. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1998.

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