

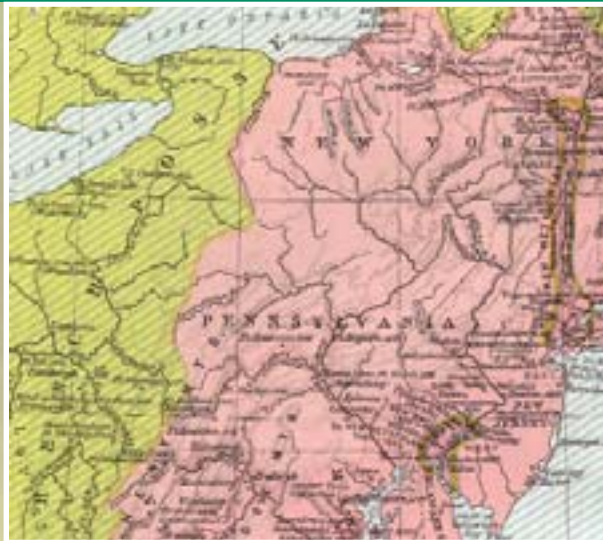
BAUSCH & LOMB RIVERSIDE PARK



Empires in North America



After Christopher Columbus "discovered" America in 1492, European invaders claimed it for themselves. By the middle of the eighteenth century, France, England, and Spain claimed possession of most of the North American continent as shown in the map. France and England were particularly bitter rivals for the fertile heart of the continent. The map shows North America in 1713, when France controlled the St. Lawrence River, the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi River, while England held the Atlantic seaboard north of Florida and Hudson's Bay in Canada.

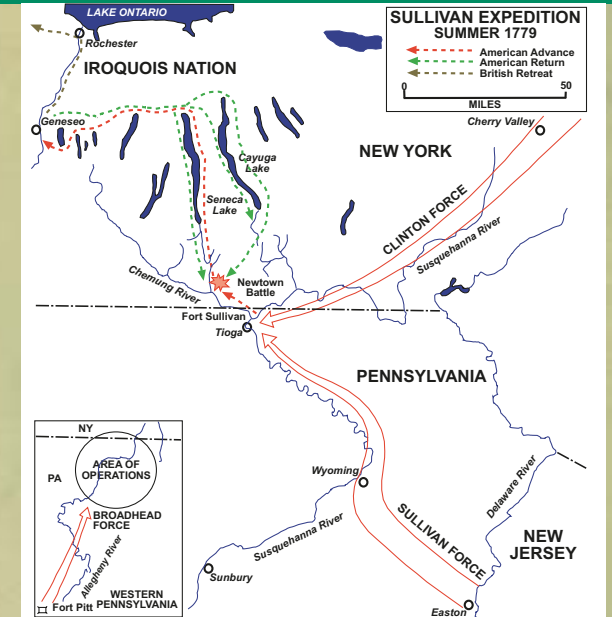


Although French and English soldiers, traders, and settlers occupied only a small number of settlements in what is now Western New York, for some period around 1750 the Genesee River was considered the boundary between the French Empire and the British Empire. You are currently standing on the British side of the Genesee and looking at New France on the far side. The French left North America in 1763 after losing the French and Indian War.

Securing Western New York



War broke out between the Americans and British at Lexington and Concord, Mass., in April 1775. Most battles were fought near the Atlantic coast and major rivers, where troops and supplies could be delivered by ship. In Western New York, the British and their Iroquois allies attacked rebel settlements along the frontier. One British Army unit, Butler's Rangers, led by Colonel John Butler, earned a particularly bad reputation for brutality by burning American frontier settlements and killing women and children.



After the Continental Army defeated the British at Saratoga in 1777, General George Washington ordered an expedition into the Genesee Valley to neutralize British military units, punish their Iroquois allies, and establish an American claim to Western New York that would be valuable when negotiating a peace treaty with the British. The American expedition under General John Sullivan defeated Butler's Rangers, who fled to the safety of Fort Niagara using the old Indian trail that crossed the Genesee near here. Before crossing they buried a cache of ammunition in a tree stump that was discovered in 1816 on what is now River Campus.

Elmwood Avenue Bridge



This early photograph shows the first Elmwood Avenue Bridge over the Genesee River, which was built in 1888.



This 1909 photo shows crowds on the bridge during the city's annual Water Carnival.



The original bridge is shown in this 1908 postcard. The bridge was raised four feet in 1918 to accommodate boat traffic to the new barge terminal in downtown Rochester.



An Army Air Corps student took this 1918 aerial photo in a class taught by Eastman Kodak. The structure next to the bridge is a temporary dam to allow the river channel to be deepened for large barges to reach the downtown canal terminal.



This 1935 aerial photo shows the new bridge under construction next to the old bridge.



This late-1930s aerial view shows the new bridge and the University of Rochester Campus for Men, now River Campus.