

## Old Fort Niagara Visitor Center

Located in a renovated structure outside the entrance to a national historic site – a group of the oldest buildings on the Great Lakes.

Designed graphics for exhibits that recount the history of the fort from its earliest days as a French outpost in 1679 through its years as the most strategic fortification in North America. Also, selected materials, colors and provided art direction for illustrations.



**Place Possible: Beginnings of Change**

The Niagara monument from 1755 replaced an earlier monument that had been erected in 1753 and was the first building constructed and dedicated to the memory of the British army. The presence of French in the region had led to the construction of this monument and the other of the Great Lakes.

**1755**

**1759**

**Attack on the Fort**

The British captured Fort Niagara in 1759 during the Seven Years' War. The fort was then renamed Fort Mifflin in honor of the British general James Mifflin.

**The Race to Control Niagara**

By establishing outposts along the St. Lawrence River, the French were the first to establish a permanent presence in the Great Lakes region. The British, however, were determined to establish a permanent presence in the Great Lakes region. The British, however, were determined to establish a permanent presence in the Great Lakes region.

**1763**

**The Spring of 1763**

In the spring of 1763, the British evacuated their troops from the Great Lakes. The British evacuated their troops from the Great Lakes. The British evacuated their troops from the Great Lakes.

### One Rebellion, Four Stories

As the headquarters for the British Army on the Great Lakes, Fort Niagara played a significant role in the experiences of four major groups involved in the American Revolution – the British, the Loyalists, the Patriots and the Iroquois.

Lift one of the handsets below to hear a sample of the concerns, opinions or experiences of each.

**Lieutenant Colonel Mason Bolton**  
8th (King's) Regiment  
British, Commandant of Fort Niagara;  
Soldier, Diplomat, Accountant, 1779

Fort Niagara during the American Revolution was not only a British military post, it was also a center for diplomatic meetings with the Iroquois Confederacy, a supply clearing house for the Great Lakes, and a place of refuge for Loyalist and Rebel soldiers alike. Through his role in the major battles, these roles meant great responsibility for the man who commanded the fort. Lieutenant Colonel Mason Bolton, of the 8th (King's) Regiment, commanded the fort from 1777-78, and in the course of these varied responsibilities, Lt. Bolton had to hear his army.

**John Butler**  
Commander of Butler's Rangers,  
American Colonist, Loyal Subject,  
Opponent of Independence, 1778

When rebellion broke out in the colonies, many Americans opposed the break with England. Hundreds of these individuals from New York and Pennsylvania fled to Fort Niagara for British protection, so their homes and property were destroyed or confiscated by the rebellious Patriots. John Butler organized a unit of Rangers among his fellow Loyalists, and launched devastating raids on the rebel forces. Lt. Bolton had to hear of his operations on the delicate alliance between the British and the Iroquois.

**Molly Brant**  
Mohawk Matriarch, Key Figure in  
Frontier Diplomacy, 1781

The sister of the Mohawk leader, Joseph Brant, Molly lived for a time outside Fort Niagara where she played a significant role in the diplomatic events between the British government and the Iroquois Confederacy. As such, she was well-positioned to present the Iroquois American perspective on the rebellion, and the events at Fort Niagara during the Revolution. Lt. Bolton had to hear of some of her opinions on the delicate alliance between the British and the Iroquois.

**The Gilberts**  
An Epic Tale of Captivity  
Gilbert Narrative, 1782

In April 1780, Benjamin Gilbert and his family were captured on their Pennsylvania farm by a Native raiding party from Fort Niagara. They were scattered across counties, eventually split up and taken to several locations. Their story is only one of many relating the fate of Patriot families on the frontier who fell victim to the raiding Loyalist and Native warriors from Fort Niagara. Lt. Bolton had to hear of the events surrounding the release of two members of the Gilbert family, British and the Iroquois.

