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Imperial Collisions

War Times and Societies in Colonial America

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INTRODUCTION

When European colonialists invaded the Americas, they encountered lands and peoples vastly different from their own, a new world in their eyes. Try as they might to draw comparisons with what they knew or thought they knew from Europe, Africa, or Asia, the invaders had entered a *terra incognita*. Through their interactions and accompanying exchanges, friendly, exploitative, and warlike, European incursions into the New World generated an extended period of world-historic significance. War affected most, if not all components of social, political, and economic development. Indeed, from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries, the shock, destruction, and creation brought about by war fashioned what Colin Calloway has termed *New Worlds for All*, the "Kaleidoscope" that was early America.[1]

Tackling the theme of war and society in colonial America is a daunting task, especially if one casts off the nationalist blinders of United States history and approaches the hemisphere comprehensively and in much the way the European invaders did – lands and peoples awaiting "discovery," exploration, and exploitation. Being mindful of this qualification, one more is necessary.[2]

While this chapter focuses on the US colonial experience, "American" by way of shorthand, it shifts the initial arc of the story from an east–west axis to a

[1] Colin G. Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, 2013), 1–7, and see especially 92–114 on warfare.

[2] Three useful older historiographic essays are Don Higginbotham, "The Early American Way of War: Reconnaissance and Appraisal," in *War and Society in Revolutionary America* (Columbia, 1988), 260–312; Wayne E. Lee, "Early American Ways of War: A New Reconnaissance, 1600–1815," *Historical Journal* 44, no. 1 (Mar. 2001): 269–289; Eric Hinderaker and Rebecca Horn, "Territorial Crossings: Histories and Historiographies of the Early Americas," *William and Mary Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (July 2010): 395–432.

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south–north approach, away from what historian Felipe Fernández-Armesto has termed the "Andy Griffith version of US history," that marks the origins of the United States with the 1607 establishment of Jamestown. Embedded within this familiar version of history is a triumphalist assumption of inevitability. The colonial American experience, vast and uncertain as it was, was not preordained to lead to the creation of the United States, just as Anglo-America was not inevitable.[3]

When European invaders entered the Americas, they imperfectly perceived the land, people, flora, and fauna through their pasts and found them utterly foreign in so many ways.[4] Yet, had the invaders glimpsed beyond the foreign and often jarring exteriors of Indigenous societies and polities, they might have discerned elements of the familiar. The human environments into which the invaders had stumbled bore some striking structural similarities to the ones from which they had departed, and in which they sought analogies. This was also true for Native Americans who tried to make sense of the invaders.[5]

The societies Europeans encountered – from the Taino and others in the Caribbean, to the Mexica (Aztecs), Tlaxcalans, and more in Mesoamerica, and beyond, along the Gulf coast and northward through the Appalachian mountain chain and up the Atlantic seaboard of what is today the United States, and onward into today's Canada – were closely attuned to their natural and human environments, as were the European invaders. For the newcomers, their means of cultural (in the broadest anthropological sense of the word) adaptation reflected what their natural environments were able to sustain, what they were able to exploit, but also their encounters with other societies in trade, intermarriage, and war. Like European cultures, societies of the Americas had also continuously sought to ensure their survivability and success by increasing their positions of advantage relative to competing or allied peoples. Empire, in its varying permutations, was a shared trait for many.

Empires, by their nature, seek to extend, maintain, and defend their spheres of control and influence. While most early modern empires pursued their

[3] Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Our America: A Hispanic History of the United States* (New York, 2014), 3–4.

[4] J. H. Elliott, *The Old World and the New, 1492–1650* (Cambridge, 1970) is a concise and readable account of the imperial encounters. Bernard Bailyn, *The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America: The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600–1675* (New York, 2012) is a sweeping study of encounters with Native Americans in the earliest years of English colonization. The Indigenous peoples' discovery of Europeans is recounted in Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, MA, 2003).

[5] Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill, 1975); Armstrong Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare, 1675–1815* (London, 1998), 4–12.

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self-interest through marriage and economics, they were predicated upon violence threatened or enacted, and the resulting subordination of peripheral regions and peoples to rulers in the metropolitan center.[6] Hence, Europeans were not alone in making real their imperial dreams in the Americas. So too were the various Indigenous confederacies, empires in act, and empires in all but name. Thus, imperial constructs apply equally to European, as well as Indigenous political, economic, and military entities like the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) or Creek (Muscogee) confederacies or the Comanche or Lakota (Sioux) and their conduct.[7]

Colonialists, Native Americans, metropolitan officials, enslaved Africans, and many of the peoples of Europe, Africa, and Asia who never set foot in or even imagined voyaging to the New World, all experienced, whether they realized it not, the consequences of empire, of war and society in the Americas. War and societal evolution in the New World, indeed war and society in world history, are intimately interconnected; to try to separate and understand one without the other is to ignore the realities, patterns, processes, and nuances of historical development.[8]

Warfare varied according to time, place, people, and the nature and extent of technological, social, economic, and political developments. European invaders interjected themselves into existing patterns of social, economic, and political life, and in doing so irrevocably altered them. In turn, the experience affected European colonial and metropolitan societies, armies, and navies. Despite their more sophisticated weapons, Europeans did not easily triumph

[6] See Lauren Benton, *They Called It Peace: Worlds of Imperial Violence* (Princeton, 2024) for a recent study on the roles, forms, and shapes of violence in empire. On the other hand, J. C. Sharman, *Empires of the Weak: The Real Story of European Expansion and the Creation of the New World Order* (Princeton, 2019) emphasizes European weaknesses, deference, and the exploitation of advantages where they faced no challenges.

[7] Francis Jennings recasts European colonialism as an invasion and focuses on the material and imperial impetuses of Iroquois and English imperial interactions in *The Invasion of America*; *The Ambiguous Iroquois Empire: The Covenant Chain Confederation of Indian Tribes with English Colonies* (New York, 1984); and *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America* (New York, 1988). See also Gail D. MacLeitch, *Imperial Entanglements: Iroquois Change and Persistence on the Frontiers of Empire* (Philadelphia, 2011), who focuses on cultural, economic, and gendered interactions and contexts. Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733–1816* (Cambridge, 1999) devotes his focus to the larger cultural changes wrought in Creek society through its contact with Europeans in the Deep South. Pekka Hämäläinen, *Comanche Empire* (New Haven, 2008) and Hämäläinen, *Lakota America: A New History of Indigenous Power* (New Haven, 2019) recast the Comanches and Lakotas as political, military, and economic actors.

[8] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London, 2006) laid out the foundation of many theoretical constructs still employed by scholars.

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on the battlefield. Indeed, they frequently suffered defeats, and in the larger scope and scale of diplomatic and other relations, they dealt with Indigenous societies from positions of weakness.[9] There were simply too few of them, they were ignorant of the physical and cultural landscapes, and they often struggled to adjust their military practices. Disease, primarily smallpox, helped compensate for the invaders' small numbers, yet that rebalancing of power was frequently transitory as Native societies adjusted.[10] Shifting alliances were also a factor. Warfare quickly expanded to include not only European imperial nations' colonial militias, but eventually regular forces in conflict with one another and their Indigenous allies.

War was one of the central elements in the maturation of colonial societies. Loosely governed, even by the two most centralizing and bureaucratic of states, Spain and France, colonial societies learned, however imperfectly, self-governance through waging war. As war and imperial or colonial societies demanded more of each other, the natures of each evolved. Wars became more expansive and all-encompassing. The more that war demanded of societies, the more they in turn demanded of war and politics. Hence, the nature of a society at war is suggestive of its political order. Even those excluded from or put at the fringes of society, such as women and the enslaved, were, perforce, part of a society at war. Recentering the focus from traditional military history to the broader and more complex panorama of war and society places at center stage the contention that armies and navies fight battles, but societies fight wars.

The history of war and society in early American history is "vast." It requires a "capacious approach." Its chronological, spatial, and demographic scope is, in Karin Wulf's words, "infinitely complex, dynamic, globally connected, and violent." What follows is a highly selective, suggestive, and admittedly incomplete consideration of the imperial collisions that constituted the often-rocky trajectory of war, society, and political maturation in colonial America. It is an origin story of a striving imperial republic, at once militarily and economically hegemonic, self-assured, and yet also a fragile democracy unsure of its own nature and purpose.[11]

[9] Ian K. Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America* (New York, 1994) examines how Native Americans confronted and frequently defeated European invasions and later adopted and exploited European technology.

[10] Pekka Hämäläinen, *Indigenous Continent: The Epic Contest for North America* (New York, 2022) is a wide-ranging and comprehensive survey. Kathleen DuVal, *Native Nations: A Millennium in North America* (New York, 2024) argues for Native societies' military and diplomatic sophistication and adaptability.

[11] Karin Wulf, "Vast Early America: Three Simple Words for a Complex Reality," *Humanities: The Magazine of the National Endowment for the Humanities* 40, no. 1 (Winter 2019), www.neh.gov/article/vast-early-america.

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PRECONTACT AMERICA

Warfare in the precontact Americas ran the gamut from small-scale raids by clan-based bands of agricultural, pastoral, and hunter-gatherer Amerindians against like peoples to imperial conquest by sophisticated, hierarchical societies. The Mexica, for example, a highly organized and complex society, famously waged the Flower Wars against their neighbors. It is not an overstatement to say that without war, the Mexica were not.[12]

Huitzilopochtli, their chief deity, god of war, and an avowed "enemy of peace," inspired the Mexica to undertake the highly ceremonial and symbolic Flower Wars against neighboring polities.[13] Religious beliefs and purposes coursed through all aspects of Mexica life, hence any attempts at separating Aztec spirituality and society from war distorts understanding of the essential unity of religion and society, or indeed war and society. Observers and scholars have assigned various motives for the Flower Wars, including but not limited to satiating Huitzilopochtli, ensuring successful harvests, propitiating the earth to continue births, training in close combat (especially for nobles), and reinforcing Mexica dominance in the valley of Mexico. In these highly ritualized affairs with predetermined results, the defeated enemy soldiers faced sacrifice, followed by flaying and dismemberment. Aztec elites practiced cannibalism, but whether it was for nutritional or symbolic purposes is debated. The Aztecs, of course, also waged wars of conquest and for other imperial purposes more easily recognized by Spanish *conquistadores* (conquerors).[14]

To the north, in what became the United States and Canada, there was a vast cultural and linguistic mosaic with perhaps four hundred different languages.[15] There, too, warfare played a central element in the cultural,

[12] See Ross Hassig, *Aztec Warfare: Imperial Expansion and Political Control* (Norman, 1988).
[13] Quoted in Caroline Dodds Pennock, "A Warlike Culture? Religion and War in the Aztec World," *History and Anthropology* 34, no. 1 (Feb. 2023): 101.
[14] Barry L. Isaac, "The Aztec 'Flowery War': A Geopolitical Explanation," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 39, no. 4 (Winter 1983): 415–432; George Raudzens, "So Why Were the Aztecs Conquered, and What Were the Wider Implications? Testing Military Superiority as a Cause of Europe's Pre-industrial Colonial Conquests," *War in History* 2, no. 1 (Mar. 1995): 87–104; Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (New York, 2003); James B. Wood, "How Spanish Was the Spanish Conquest? Reexamining Spanish Success in the New World," in *Warfare and Culture in World History*, ed. Wayne E. Lee, 2nd ed. (New York, 2020), 101–122; Richard J. Chacon and Rubén G. Mendoza, eds., *Latin American Indigenous Warfare and Ritual Violence* (Tucson, 2007).
[15] Theda Perdue and Michael D. Greene, *North American Indians: A Very Short Introduction* (New York, 2010), 15.

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societal, and political landscape.[16] For young men, developing warriors' skills equated with attaining manhood and their fitness for life and leadership, thus skill at arms and gendered societal notions reinforced one another.[17] Hunting and sports, such as stick, better known as lacrosse, developed basic skills necessary in war even as they entertained observers.[18] Borrowing from psychologist Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, attaining the skills that marked a man as a warrior was a form of "self-actualization," the highest level of psychological and social development in this hierarchy.[19]

Raiding was the prevalent form of warfare in the north. One of the more prevalent types of war was the "Mourning War."[20] In Iroquoia, today's upstate New York, the Haudenosaunee waged Mourning Wars to satisfy grieving families that had suffered the loss of male members in war. Reflecting the matrilineal organization of their societies, women made the decisions for war while men waged it. Captured enemies, turned over to the bereaved families, faced either ritualized torture and death or adoption into the families. Adoption served demographic replenishment, growth, or stabilization.

EUROPEAN INVASIONS

Warfare and American societies shaped one another. The experiences ran the gamut from settler colonialism in which invading Europeans sought to displace and even extirpate Native peoples, through *mestizaje* and the creation of

[16] For anthropological examinations of warfare and violence, see Chacon and Mendoza, *North American Indigenous Warfare and Ritual Violence*.

[17] For sample Eastern Woodland population studies, see George R. Milner and George Chaplin, "Eastern North American Population at ca. AD 1500," *American Antiquity* 75, no. 4 (Oct. 2010): 707–726; Eric Jones, "Population History of the Onondaga and Oneida Iroquois, AD 1500–1700," *American Antiquity* 75, no. 2 (Apr. 2010): 387–407; Jones, "Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Population Trends in Northeastern North America," *Journal of Field Archaeology* 35, no. 1 (Mar. 2010): 5–18.

[18] Jennifer Guiliano and Beth Eby, "American Indian Sport History," in *Routledge Handbook of Sport History*, ed. Murray G. Phillips, Douglas Booth, and Carly Adams (London, 2021), 303–305, 308–309; Zachary M. Bennett, "'Canoes of Great Swiftness': Rivercraft and War in the Northeast," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 21, no. 2 (Spring 2023): 205–232.

[19] Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50, no. 4 (July 1943): 389.

[20] Jon Parmenter, "After the Mourning Wars: The Iroquois as Allies in Colonial North American Campaigns, 1676–1760," *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (Jan. 2007): 39–76.

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mixed-race free and enslaved societies. European invasions introduced steel weapons, firearms, and artillery into an already complex ecosystem of war and society.

European monarchies with transoceanic, even global aspirations – the Spanish Habsburgs and Bourbons; Portuguese Aviz; Bourbons of France; England's Tudors, Stuarts, and Hanoverians; the House of Orange-Nassau in the United Provinces (Netherlands); and Sweden's House of Vasa – invaded and planted colonies. War, the true sport of kings, sorted out the winners and losers in the contest for European dominion, but only insofar as it concerned Europeans. Indigenous nations had to be reckoned with, for they were altogether too powerful for the invaders and colonists to ignore. Hence, alliances were vital elements in Europeans' success or failure in war against one another or against Native enemies.

In North America, Spain, France, and England established themselves as the preeminent European powers, while in the Caribbean, they, along with the Netherlands, invaded and laid claim to the West Indies. For fifty years, from 1614 through 1664, the Netherlands had a presence in the middle Atlantic, centered on New Amsterdam (today's New York City), as did Sweden for an even shorter period (1638–1655). Spain and Portugal claimed South America, while Spain laid sole claim to Central America. Claims were not necessarily realities. European pretensions to empire were just that, pretensions. Indigenous nations and empires contested, limited, and even rolled back European colonization. War thus shaped and determined the course and nature of imperial borders and societies, both before and after European entry into the Americas.[21]

The Canary islands, off the northwest coast of Africa, were the proving grounds for Spain's first overseas forays. Scholars have suggested that the Spanish conquest of the Canaries and the extirpation of the native Guanche people were genocidal and established a pattern of European settler colonialism, in which genocide, expulsion, or enslavement worked hand-in-glove with the arrival of settler populations meant to displace Indigenous peoples.[22] Violence and disease took their course on the Guanche, and by the end of the century-long process in 1496, they no longer existed.[23]

[21] Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (New York, 2001) is a thoroughgoing narrative history.
[22] Lorenzo Veracini considers the theory of settler colonialism in *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York, 2010).
[23] Mohamed Adhikari, "Europe's First Settler Colonial Incursion into Africa: The Genocide of Aboriginal Canary Islanders," *African Historical Review* 49, no. 1 (June 2017):

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Spain's entrance into the New World in 1492 inaugurated the first period of globalism, as Europeans created the Atlantic world.[24] Spanish patterns of conquest in the Caribbean with people like the Taíno were reminiscent of methods used to subdue the Canaries – war, disease, enslavement, and extirpation.[25] Pope Alexander VI soon legitimized Spanish and Portuguese invasion with the 1493 papal bull "Inter Caetera," which established the "Doctrine of Discovery" and granted these realms the rights of conquest, Native American subjugation, and African enslavement. "Inter Caetera" did more than give Iberian expansion the papal imprimatur; it undergirded the later basis for European and then United States territorial expansion and Indigenous dispossession, all of it accomplished through war or the threat of settler or state violence.[26]

The invaders legitimized their claims with various cultural acts. They ranged from Spain's 1510 *Requerimiento* (Requirement), in which conquistadores read aloud an ultimatum, often in Latin and often to empty spaces, to English "improvements" to the land, including erecting housing, fencing, and planting gardens, to the French practice of holding religious services with Indigenous participation to symbolize their acquiescence to French rule. The *Requerimiento* was little more than a declaration of war against peoples who did not understand either Spanish or Latin, while English improvements were physical manifestations of dispossession that imposed European conceptions of property rights on others' lands. On the surface, French politicoreligious theatrics were perhaps the most inclusive, coming as they did

1–26; Igor Pérez Tostado and Ben Kiernan, "The Spanish Destruction of the Canary Islands: A Template for the Caribbean Genocide," in *The Cambridge World History of Genocide, vol. I: Genocide in the Ancient, Medieval and Premodern Worlds*, ed. Ben Kiernan, T. M. Lemos, and Tristan S. Taylor (Cambridge, 2023), 594–621.

[24] Henry Kamen, *Empire: How Spain Became a World Power, 1492–1763* (New York, 2004), 6–9.

[25] See Erin Stone, "War and Rescate: The Sixteenth-Century Circum-Caribbean Indigenous Slave Trade," in *The Spanish Caribbean and the Atlantic World in the Long Sixteenth Century*, ed. Ida Altman and David Wheat (Lincoln, NE, 2019), 47–68; Gabriel de Avilez Rocha, "The Azorean Connection: Trajectories of Slaving, Piracy, and Trade in the Early Atlantic," in Altman and Wheat, *The Spanish Caribbean and the Atlantic World*, 257–278; Ida Altman, *Life and Society in the Early Spanish Caribbean: The Greater Antilles, 1493–1550* (Baton Rouge, 2021); Erin Woodruff Stone, *Captives of Conquest: Slavery in the Early Modern Spanish Caribbean* (Philadelphia, 2021).

[26] "The Doctrine of Discovery, 1493: A Spotlight on a Primary Source by Pope Alexander VI," History Resources, Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/spotlight-primary-source/doctrine-discovery-1493; "AD 1493: The Pope Asserts Rights to Colonize, Convert, and Enslave," Native Voices: Native Peoples' Concepts of Health and Illness, National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, www.nlm.nih.gov/nativevoices/timeline/171.html.

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with some measure of Native acceptance and participation, despite masking the fuller French intentions.[27] In all cases, disease, particularly smallpox, aided in weakening and even destroying Indigenous societies. The degree of virulence, however, has yet to be settled by historians as they untangle racial motivations, immunological factors, and geographic determinism from other considerations.[28]

Believing firmly in the unity of church and state, the Spanish crown, through the offices of the Roman Catholic Church, reshaped society through war against nonbelievers. When Spain first planted its New World colonies, it had already completed the task of converting its Jewish and Muslim populations to Catholicism or expelling them. Nonetheless, Spanish political and religious officialdom eyed the "New Christians" (Jewish *conversos* and Muslim *moriscos*) suspiciously. What war and conquest could not accomplish in the unification of the Spanish realm, the Inquisition could. Established in Spain in 1478, it arrived in New Spain (Mexico) in 1571, where it continued until 1820, the eve of Mexican independence.[29] Thus did war range across the physical and spiritual in the name of the political.[30]

Spanish conquistadores were relentless in their quest for gold, silver, land, and personal glory. Mexican and Peruvian silver enriched the Spanish treasury, but also contributed to the country's economic woes and military overextension. New World silver enabled Spain to embark on costly military ventures in Europe. This influx also allowed it to bypass the most basic elements of industrialization as it built a stifling bureaucratic state, all of which channeled precious bullion into nonproductive sectors and ultimately impoverished the kingdom.[31]

[27] Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World: 1492–1640* (New York, 1995), 17–18, 46–47, 49, 69–72.

[28] Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York, 1997); Neal Salisbury, "The Indians' Old World: Native Americans and the Coming of Europeans," *William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 3, special issue on "Indians and Others in Early America" (July 1996): 435–458; James C. Riley, "Smallpox and American Indians Revisited," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 65, no. 4 (Oct. 2010): 445–477; David S. Jones, "Virgin Soils Revisited," *William and Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (Oct. 2020): 703–742.

[29] See Patricia Lopes Don, *Bonfires of Culture: Franciscans, Indigenous Leaders, and Inquisition in Early Mexico, 1524–1540* (Norman, 2010); John F. Chuchiak IV, *The Inquisition in New Spain, 1536–1820: A Documentary History* (Baltimore, 2010).

[30] See Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision*, 4th ed. (New Haven, 2014); Helen Rawlings, *The Spanish Inquisition* (Malden, MA, 2006).

[31] Jon Cowans, *Early Modern Spain* (Philadelphia, 2003); J. H. Elliot, *Spain and its World, 1500–1700* (New Haven, 1989); Stanley J. Stein and Barbara H. Stein, *Silver, Trade, and War: Spain and America in the Making of Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore, 2000).

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Franciscan, Dominican, and Augustinian friars who accompanied or followed in the conquistadores' wakes pursued a harvest of souls from among the Native Americans. Mass baptisms and forced conversions added to the rolls of the church.[32] From their initial foothold in the Bahamas, Spaniards penetrated the Caribbean basin and established themselves throughout the region. Between 1519 and 1521, around three thousand Spanish adventurers led by Hernán Cortés and tens of thousands of allies from neighboring Tlaxcala, Tetzcoco, Totonacapan, and nations opposed to the Mexica had overthrown the Aztec empire.[33]

Central Mexico's large sedentary populations and hierarchical social structures enabled the Spanish to employ a strategy different from that in the Canaries and West Indies. Rather than settler colonialism, the Spanish used sex, religion, and language as means of consolidating their conquest. The children of Spanish, Indigenous, and later African unions created a racial caste system that evolved into a complex mode for organizing society. War and conquest were more than a contest of arms.[34]

Spurred by the desire to emulate Spain's New World success, the Netherlands and France established trading outposts where they exchanged firearms, shot, gunpowder, alcohol, metal, and other finished goods in return for beaver pelts.[35] English colonial ventures ran the gamut from havens for religious separatists (Plymouth) to adventurers seeking easy riches (Virginia). England and France established their first permanent New World colonies in the early seventeenth century. Although England entered the race for empire in the Americas late, this was not the kingdom's first imperial foray. As with the Spanish, closer ventures provided some of the experience necessary before undertaking much larger endeavors – in this case the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland in the twelfth century. Irish resistance led the invaders

[32] See Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *The History of the Conquest of New Spain*, ed. David Carrasco (Albuquerque, 2008).

[33] Ross Hassig, *Mexico and the Spanish Conquest* (New York, 1994); Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (New York, 2003); Miguel León-Portilla, ed., *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico*, exp. ed. (Boston, 1992) are useful introductions. See Laura Matthew and Michel R. Oudijk, eds., *Indian Conquistadors: Indigenous Allies in the Conquest of Mesoamerica* (Norman, 2008) for Native American allies in the conquest.

[34] Hassig, *Mexico and the Spanish Conquest* and Restall, *Seven Myths* address the conquest. See Castillo, *The History of the Conquest of New Spain* for a critical commentary by a conquistador who participated in the conquest of Mexico. For a study of artistic portrayals of the *casta* system, see Ilona Katzew, *Casta Painting: Images of Race in Eighteenth-Century Mexico* (New Haven, 2004).

[35] Wayne E. Lee, "Projecting Power in the Early Modern World: The Spanish Model?" in *Empires and Indigenes: Intercultural Alliance, Imperial Expansion, and Warfare in the Early Modern World*, ed. Wayne E. Lee (New York, 2011), 3–9.

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to deem the Irish savages. Not surprisingly, terror marked the English campaigns to subdue the Irish "rebels." English attitudes toward defiance, honed by savage wars of conquest and resistance, had become ingrained in many who ventured westward to America.[36]

Chartered in 1606 by James I, around 104 unprepared English private venturers of the Virginia Company established Jamestown in 1607. Seeking gold, silver, a path to the Pacific, and the riches of China, they found instead mosquitoes, swamp water, disease, and the powerful Powhatan Confederacy, an Algonquian alliance, which dominated the region. Contributing to their difficulties were extended periods of drought.[37] Disorganized, suffering from weak governance, and under constant threat of attack by the Powhatan Confederacy, Jamestown was consistently but one step away from destruction.

The colonists were fortunate in having a strong-willed and experienced soldier of fortune, John Smith, who led patrols to nearby villages to barter and scour for food.[38] On one venture in December 1607, a large Powhatan hunting party seized him and brought him to the confederacy's principal leader, Wahunsenacawh, better known as Chief Powhatan. Powhatan ceremonially adopted Smith, which in his eyes made Smith his vassal. More colonists and supplies arrived in 1608, but the new invaders were little better than the original ones: they too concentrated on searching for gold. Elected president of the council in September 1609, Smith introduced regulations designed to ensure the settlement's survival, but his tenure was short-lived. Injured in a gunpowder explosion, he returned to England. As he recuperated there, Jamestown's three hundred members experienced the "Starving Time" over the winter of 1609–1610. Desperate colonists were reduced to eating pets, shoe leather, and finally the corpses of interred colonists.[39] More than two-thirds of the colonists perished. Fewer than one hundred survived, and they made plans to depart Virginia.

Not long after setting sail from Virginia in June, the survivors encountered three ships chartered by Thomas West, 3rd Baron De La Warr, who

[36] Wayne E. Lee, *Barbarians and Brothers: Anglo-American Warfare, 1500–1865* (New York, 2011), 13–62; Nicholas Canny and Ben Kiernan, "The English Conquest of Ireland, c.1530–c.1650," in *The Cambridge World History of Genocide, vol. II: Genocide in the Indigenous, Early Modern and Imperial Worlds from c. 1535 to World War One*, ed. Ned Blackhawk, Ben Kiernan, Benjamin Madley, and Rebe Taylor (Cambridge, 2023), 139–162.

[37] Dennis B. Blanton, "Drought as a Factor in the Jamestown Colony, 1607–1612," *Historical Archaeology* 34, no. 4 (Dec. 2000): 74–81.

[38] See James Horn, *A Land as God Made it: Jamestown and the Birth of America* (New York, 2005).

[39] Rachel B. Herrmann, "The 'tragicall historie': Cannibalism and Abundance in Colonial Jamestown," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (Jan. 2011): 47–74.

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had assumed the colony's governorship.[40] De La Warr launched raids against neighboring Indian villages and quickly incited the First Anglo-Powhatan War, 1609–1614. The war was characterized by raids, crop destruction, hostage taking, ransoms, and prisoners' executions. The English succeeded in pushing Powhatan's settlements away from the James River and destroying or dispersing several villages. After about a year of negotiations, the war ended with the marriage of John Rolfe to Pocahontas in April 1614. The Peace of Pocahontas lasted for some eight years, followed by two additional wars that ultimately ended the Powhatan Confederacy in 1649. It collapsed as colonists pushed westward, villages dispersed, and the violence continued.[41]

To the north, New Englanders waged their own wars against the neighboring Pequots, Nipmucs, Wampanoags, Narragansetts, and others in the Pequot War of 1636–1638 and in King Philip's War (Metacom's War) of 1675–1676.[42] The Pequot War, which lasted a little over a year, was bloody – likely two thousand or more perished in raids, battles, and massacres. New Englanders' fury and barbarity in the massacre at the Pequot fort in Mystic, Connecticut, appalled their Narragansett and Mohegan allies.[43] Scholars continue to debate whether the attack was genocidal.[44] The 1638 Treaty of Hartford, which "divided" and sold the Pequots to Mohegan or Narragansett authority, legally eliminated them, declaring that they "shall no more be called Pequots but Narragansetts and Mohegans," and forbade the survivors from ever returning to their former homelands.[45] Several were enslaved and

[40] Alexander Brown, *The First Republic in America: An Account of the Origin of this Nation…* (Boston, 1898), 127–128.

[41] Alfred A. Cave, *Lethal Encounters: Englishmen and Indians in Colonial Virginia* (Santa Barbara, 2011), 133–138.

[42] See Alfred A. Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst, 1996); Laurence M. Hauptman, "The Pequot War and its Legacies," in *The Pequots in Southern New England: The Fall and Rise of an American Indian Nation*, ed. Laurence M. Hauptman and James D. Wherry (Norman, 1990), 69–80; Katherine A. Grandjean, "New World Tempests: Environment, Scarcity, and the Coming of the Pequot War," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (Jan. 2011): 75–100; "Battlefields of the Pequot War, 1636–1637," Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, Google Arts and Culture, https://artsandculture.google.com/story/battlefields-of-the-pequot-war-the-mashantucket-pequot-museum-research-center/DAVhbGLTKXisIA?hl=en.

[43] "Casualties," *Battlefields of the Pequot War: Informing the Public about the Pequot War and the Preservation of Battlefields*, https://pequotwar.org/tag/casualties/.

[44] Shannon E. Duffy, "The Pequot War, 1636–1638," in *Routledge Handbook of American Military and Diplomatic History: The Colonial Period to 1877*, ed. Antonio S. Thompson and Christos G. Frentzos (New York, 2015), 32n23 lays out the major arguments and contenders.

[45] Daragh Grant, "The Treaty of Hartford (1638): Reconsidering Jurisdiction in Southern New England," *William and Mary Quarterly* 72, no. 3 (July 2015): 461–498; Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620–1675*, 3rd ed. (Norman, 1995),

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sold to West Indian planters.[46] The war made plain that the Puritans would wage absolute war upon their enemies.

New Englanders escalated their ruthlessness in King Philip's War, which also highlighted the growing complexity of colonial wars.[47] It took place at the intersection of Indigenous, imperial, and New England politics and fears. It demonstrated Indigenous agency, as the Mohegans and Mohawks charted their own paths and chose to ally with the New Englanders against the Wampanoags, Nipmucs, Narragansetts, Nashaways, and Wabanakis. On a per capita basis, King Philip's War was one of the deadliest and most costly in American history. Historian Robert Cray reckons that Indians destroyed twelve of fifty-two settlements, and that more than 30 percent of the English population perished, in excess of 2,500 people. He suggests that at "least twice as many Native Americans [than colonists] were killed," and that "war, disease, and starvation killed" upwards of half the Indian population.[48]

Puritan sage Increase Mather contended that God had visited the war upon the "English Israel" because of the people's ingratitude, "Apostacy," licentious living, "sinful Conformity to this present evil vain World," and more.[49] Having chastised his chosen people through a bloody war, and their having made amends through yet more war, God gave the New Englanders victory. The war's widespread destruction, followed by another devastating Indian war in Maine in 1688, dislocated northern New England society, and formed the backdrop for the infamous witchcraft scare that beset Salem village in 1692. Surely, such calamities had to have supernatural origins.[50]

340–441; "Articles of Agreement between the English in Connecticutt and the Indian Sachems," *Founding Documents of Connecticut*, Connecticut State Library, https://cslib.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p128501coll11/id/3860/.

[46] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Providence Island, 1630–1641: The Other Puritan Colony* (New York, 1993), 172.

[47] James D. Drake, *King Philip's War: Civil War in New England, 1675–1676* (Amherst, 2000) is a useful overview of the war. Kyle Zelner, *A Rabble in Arms: Massachusetts Towns and Militiamen during King Philip's War* (New York, 2009) is an incisive social history of the Bay Colony's soldiery. For considerations of the gendered aspects, see Ann M. Little, *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia, 2007). For a focused study of one colony, see Jason W. Warren, *Connecticut Unscathed: Victory in the Great Narragansett War, 1675–1676* (Norman, 2014).

[48] Robert E. Cray, Jr., "'Weltering in Their Own Blood': Puritan Casualties in King Philip's War," *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 37, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 107.

[49] Increase Mather, *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians in New-England* (Boston, 1676), 9, 29.

[50] Mary Beth Norton, *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (New York, 2002), 11–12, 83, 86; Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York, 1998) examines the war in American memory and narrative.

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Violence was endemic externally, but also internally. As King Philip's War proceeded, yet another Anglo-Indigenous war broke out in Virginia. It soon morphed into civil war with Bacon's rebellion (1676–1677). After government loyalists quelled the rebellion, regular forces from England arrived. Victory solidified the gentry's hold on Virginia. The rebellion took place as indentured servitude was waning and African slavery was rising, allowing white elites and the lower classes to find racial common cause, a sentiment that lasted well past the colonial era. War racked English America. According to Matthew Kruer, a Susquehannock-led alliance, ranging from the Great Lakes into the Carolinas, flexed its muscle against the colonists. Unbeknownst to the English, the Susquehannocks were playing the game of empire and using war not just as a survival mechanism but also as an element of diplomacy.[51]

Further south, in the proprietary colony of Carolina, empire, trade, profit, and war played oversized roles starting in 1670. Bringing plantation-style agriculture to Carolina, the "Goose Creek Men" upriver of Charles Town began exploiting two of the region's great resources: deerskins and captive, enslaved Native Americans. Carolinians used trade, diplomacy, and violence to incite wars between competing peoples and to obtain enslaved captives for West Indian planters. In neighboring Georgia, Scottish settlers along the Savannah River added a new layer of complexity and violence. Emulating the Carolinians, the Scots sought captives for the slave trade. They allied with the Yamasee, who raided into Spanish Florida in 1683, and incited a cross-border war with the Spanish and their Timucua allies. Spanish and Timucua raiders destroyed the Scots' settlements, much to the pleasure of the Carolinians who viewed them as interlopers. Carolina's frequent wars and the disorder they created led the crown to divide Carolina into North and South in 1712 and declare them royal colonies.[52]

As the plantation economy developed, so too did African slavery. With increasing numbers of enslaved workers came the increasing need for vigilance

[51] James Douglas Rice, "Bacon's Rebellion (1676–1677)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Humanities, https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/bacons-rebellion-1676–1677/. Jason Warren, "The Spirit of '76: King Philip's War and Bacon's Rebellion, 1675–1676," in Thompson and Frentzos, *The Routledge Handbook of American Military and Diplomatic History*, 42, 46–49; Matthew Kruer, *Time of Anarchy: Indigenous Power and the Crisis of Colonialism in Early America* (Cambridge, 2022), 7, 10–12.

[52] Alan Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670–1717* (New Haven, 2002), 40–69, 73–77; Ricardo A. Herrera, "Colonial Wars," in *Encyclopedia of War and American Society, vol. I*, ed. Peter Karsten (Thousand Oaks, 2005), 159–160; Milton Ready, *The Tar Heel State: A New History of North Carolina*, rev. ed. (Columbia, 2020), 21–24.

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against runaways and revolts.[53] A "relentless fear of slave uprisings" permeated white populations in Virginia and South Carolina.[54] Colonial assemblies forbade slaves or indentured servants running away; militias served as police forces guarding against escape or rebellion.[55] These efforts were not always successful. One of the largest uprisings in British North America took place in September 1739, in South Carolina's Stono River rebellion, when a "group of Kongolese slaves broke into a storehouse," seized arms and ammunition, and killed more than twenty white colonists as they recruited fellow slaves and tried to make their way to Spanish Florida and freedom. South Carolina militiamen crushed the rebellion. They "killed over forty people that day, placing their cut-off heads on 'every milepost they came to'," a horrifying reminder of what faced those who sought their freedom.[56]

Northward, New Netherland, present-day New York, was no stranger to war. Founded by the Dutch West India Company, its shareholders intended it as a trading outpost, but it morphed into something more closely resembling a settler colony. Donna Merwick, a historian of the Dutch endeavor, contends the Netherlanders "betrayed themselves – their ideals and values – and the indigenous people." Their imperialism was conflicted, and in Merwick's words full of "shame and sorrow …, convinced of their rights as traders but unconvinced of the sovereignty that circumstances were increasingly requiring of them."[57] New Netherlanders fought a series of wars against their Indigenous neighbors, known as Kieft's War (1643–1645), the Peach War (1655), and the Esopus Wars (1659–1663), or the First, Second, and Third

[53] Herbert S. Klein, *African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean* (New York, 1986), 28–32, 202, 205–208.
[54] Mary Miley Theobald, "Slave Conspiracies in Colonial Virginia," *Colonial Williamsburg Journal* (Winter 2005–2006), https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/Foundation/journal/Winter05–06/conspiracy.cfm; Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion*, rev. and updated ed. (New York, 2024), 219–238.
[55] "An Act for Suppressing Outlying Slaves," in *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All Laws of Virginia, from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619, vol. III*, ed. William Waller Hening (Philadelphia, 1823), 86–88; "An Act for Making More Effectual Provision against Invasions and Insurrections," in *The Statutes at Large, vol. IV*, ed. William Waller Hening (Philadelphia, 1823), 197–204; John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (New York, 1999), 10, 13, 28; Betty L. Wilson, "Under the Brutal Watch: A Historical Examination of Slave Patrols in the United States and Brazil during the 18th and 19th Centuries," *Journal of Black Studies* 53, no. 1 (Jan. 2022): 3–18.
[56] Wood, *Black Majority*, 318; Jack Shuler, *The Stono Slave Rebellion and the Universal Struggle for Human Rights* (Jackson, 2009), 3, 72.
[57] Donna Merwick, *The Shame and the Sorrow: Dutch Amerindian Encounters in New Netherland* (Philadelphia, 2006), 3; see also Mark Meuwese, *Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade: Dutch–Indigenous Alliances in the Atlantic World, 1595–1674* (Leiden, 2011).

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Dutch–Munsee Wars.[58] In a larger sense, the escalating cycles of violence fit a larger pattern in colonial America, especially with the added complexity of European rivalries exported to the Americas such as, in this case, discord between the Netherlands and Sweden.

Throughout these conflicts, Indigenous warfare evolved. In Europeans' quests for pelts, skins, and human chattel, they exchanged trade goods like cooking pots, knives, hatchets, cloth, and firearms with their Indigenous partners. Historians have argued over the transformative effects of matchlocks and muskets, whether they were superior to traditional weapons, whether Indigenous warfare changed because of new technologies, whether the introduction of firearms set off an arms race, or whether culture overrode technological determinism. No matter the result or nature of firearms, they bound Native Americans closer to Europeans because of their need for ammunition, repairs, and more firearms obtained through trade or in wartime raids.[59]

Material goods were not the only European contribution to Indigenous warfare. Westward, in Spanish-claimed lands, the horse fundamentally transformed the peoples of the southern and northern Plains. Employing "purchased and plundered horses from New Mexico," the Comanches created what Pekka Hämäläinen has deemed an empire ruled by a "hegemonic people who grew increasingly powerful and prosperous at the expense of the surrounding societies." Their reach penetrated the northern Plains through trade in horses. Horses converted the Lakota from "pedestrian foragers … [and] sedentary farmers to equestrian hunters … [and] nomadic pastoralists" who spawned an empire.[60]

The wars occasioned by European invasions fundamentally affected Indigenous, imperial, and settler societies. Early contact, accommodation, and conflict presaged future patterns of their relations. While each society adapted to war in its own way, broader unifying patterns are discernible. The patterns revealed themselves in how societies anticipated, reacted, and adapted to war with new foes. War was a central element within these polities as they grappled with fluid economic, demographic, military, and diplomatic

[58] Wim Klooster, *The Dutch Moment: War, Trade, and Settlement in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World* (Ithaca, 2016), 72–73, 97–98.
[59] Patrick M. Malone, *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics among the New England Indians* (Lanham, 1991), 29–31; Brian James Given, *A Most Pernicious Thing: Gun Trading and Native Warfare in the Early Contact Period* (Ottawa, 1994), 4–5; David J. Silverman, *Thundersticks: Firearms and the Violent Transformation of Native America* (Cambridge, 2016), 8; Wayne E. Lee, *The Cutting-Off Way: Indigenous Warfare in Eastern North America, 1500–1800* (Chapel Hill, 2024), 2–3.
[60] Hämäläinen, *Comanche Empire*, 1–2; Hämäläinen, *Lakota America*, 2.

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worlds. Approaching these events through war and society narrative and analytical frameworks makes clear the unifying and distinctive elements in early contact imperial societies and their fluid and uncertain natures.

THE FISCAL-MILITARY STATE AND STRUGGLES FOR IMPERIAL DOMINANCE

Colonial empires were the economic engines of European fiscal-military states. As colonial societies matured, they simultaneously became more integrated within the imperial systems even as they developed the underpinnings for their own independence. Luxuries and necessities like sugar, tobacco, pelts, indigo, cochineal, rice, cod, masts, tar, cordage, and more, produced by free and enslaved labor, helped fund and sustain war, much as war helped create boom and bust cycles in the colonies. Thus, making and supporting war were fundamental to the rise of colonial societies, imperial states, bureaucracies, centralization, economies, and financial systems. Profits generated by mercantile economics and the regulations governing trade amplified states' war-making capacities and further integrated colonial societies into the larger web of war.[61]

Metropolitan military involvement in the Americas had been episodic until around 1689, when imperial centers began conceiving of and executing more ambitious and comprehensive strategies, including employing greater

[61] Some of the foundational and ongoing works on the fiscal-military state include John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money, and the English State, 1688–1783* (New York, 1989); Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1992*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, 1992); Stephen Conway, *War, State, and Society in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2006); Rafael Torres Sánchez, *Military Entrepreneurs and the Spanish Contractor State in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2016); Rafael Torres Sánchez, ed., *War, State and Development: Fiscal-Military States in the Eighteenth Century* (Pamplona, 2007); Jan Glete, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe: Spain, the Dutch Republic and Sweden as Fiscal-Military States, 1500–1660* (London, 2002); Stanley J. Stein and Barbara H. Stein Silver, *Trade, and War: Spain and America in the Making of Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore, 2000); David Parrott, *The Business of War: Military Enterprise and Military Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2012); Faculty of History, University of Oxford, The European Fiscal-Military State System, 1530–1870, University of Oxford, https://fiscalmilitary.history.ox.ac.uk. Andrew Phillips and J. C. Sharman, in *Outsourcing Empire: How Company-States Made the Modern World* (Princeton, 2020), trace the rise of empire and the fiscal-military state to hybrid company-states.

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numbers of regular forces and integrating colonial forces into their schemes. With greater metropolitan involvement came a change in the character of colonial war and society. Regular soldiers, often acting as law enforcement, personified the developing gulfs between centers and peripheries and contributed to colonial societies' maturation. Provincial officers' inferior status in relation to regular officers deepened and hardened feelings against assumed metropolitan superiority. In British American seaports, press gangs forced skilled sailors into the Royal Navy, which devastated local economies and broke up families. Maintaining Britain's naval power through violence or the threat of it ashore came at a cost, as press gangs alienated colonials.[62]

Fiscal-military states required sophisticated financial systems to fund war, and included managed national debts, taxation, and the financial and economic systems to purchase or produce war materials. Geography, population, and the expense and complexity of achieving this system militated against most states attaining this hallmark of true great power status. Spain, England, and France led the way, followed by the Netherlands. By the seventeenth century, these four imperial states had the wherewithal to fund armies, navies, and wars in Europe and overseas. Russia, Austria, and Prussia, strictly continental powers, possessed neither overseas empires nor navies capable of mounting campaigns and waging war across the Atlantic Ocean, much less the Pacific.

Among these states, England (Great Britain following the 1707 Act of Union) rose to become first among equals. In historian John Brewer's words, "Britain emerged in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as the military *Wunderkind* of the age."[63] Sugar and enslaved labor fueled Britain's economic engine, which in turn fueled the military machine.[64] The slave trade was so profitable that in negotiating the Treaty of Utrecht, which ended the War of the Spanish Succession, British negotiators pressed for the *asiento de negros*, the right to transport "4,800 enslaved persons from Africa for a period of thirty years" to Spain's New World empire. The South Sea

[62] Denver Brunsman, *The Evil Necessity: British Naval Impressment in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Charlottesville, 2013), 2–3.
[63] Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*, x. Anthony Page, "The Seventy Years War, 1744–1815, and Britain's Fiscal-Naval State," *War and Society* 34, no. 3 (Aug. 2015): 162–186 ties the development of British naval, maritime, and financial power with the development of empire.
[64] Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery and the British Empire: From Africa to America* (New York, 2007), 35; Richard B. Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623–1775* (Baltimore, 1974), 269, 381–384; David Eltis, Frank Lewis, and David Richardson, "Slave Prices, the African Slave Trade, and Productivity in the Caribbean, 1674–1807," *Economic History Review* 58, no. 4 (Oct. 2005): 673–700.

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Company, which received the contract, is estimated to have "forced nearly 42,000" Africans aboard slave ships, and to have delivered some 35,000 to colonial markets. Some 7,000 committed suicide or died and were thrown overboard during the Middle Passage. Plantation economics and the revenue raised underwrote more expansive military strategies and bound colonial peoples more tightly to imperial systems even as they estranged them.[65]

WARS FOR EMPIRE

From 1689 onward, European wars for continental supremacy played out in North America, the Caribbean, and beyond. Europe's wars became America's wars and they introduced new dimensions of violence and complexity into already violent lands. Large numbers of colonists and Native Americans served in King William's War, or the War of the League of Augsburg (1689–1697); Queen Anne's War, better known in Europe as the War of the Spanish Succession (1702–1714); King George's War (1744–1748), which began as the War of Jenkins' Ear (1739–1742) and bled into the War of the Austrian Succession (from 1740 to 1748); and finally, the French and Indian War, in Europe the Seven Years' War (1754–1763). These conflicts integrated peripheries with metropoles to a greater degree than previously. Each succeeding war bound the colonial theaters more closely to European strategies and political goals. In doing so the wars prepared the ground for future American and Mexican independence and France's cession of Canada to Britain.[66]

The recurring seventeenth- and eighteenth-century wars for position in Europe and empire in the Americas and beyond are far too involved and extensive to give them their proper due here. Rather than giving them short shrift, King William's War, the first great war for American empire, suffices

[65] "The South Seas Company and the Slave Trade," *The South Sea Bubble, 1720*, https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/south-sea-bubble/feature/the-south-sea-company-and-the-slave-trade; the "Asiento and Asiento-related slave trading increased central government fiscal surplus by 16%" according to Gregory Price and Warren Whatley, "Did Profitable Slave Trading Enable the Expansion of Empire? The Asiento de Negros, the South Sea Company and the Financial Revolution in Great Britain," *Cliometrica* 15, no. 3 (Nov. 2020): 675–718.

[66] Bruce P. Lenman, "Colonial Wars and Imperial Instability, 1688–1793," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, vol. II: The Eighteenth Century*, ed. P. J. Marshall (New York, 1998), 154; Bruce P. Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688–1783* (Abingdon, UK, 2014) is a concise overview of Britain's wars for empire.

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as an archetype suggestive of the other wars' complexities and extent. It heralded the commencement of more than a century of wars between the United Kingdom and France that lasted until 1815 and the allied victory over France at Waterloo.[67]

King William's War grew out of the Glorious Revolution (1688–1689), in which William of Orange led a Dutch invasion of England and overthrew James II in November 1688.[68] Parliamentary leaders, English nobles, and the army supported the coup. New Englanders greeted the announcement of James's overthrow with cautious optimism when they received the news in 1689. In 1686, Charles II, James's predecessor and elder brother, had initiated the revocation of New England's colonial charters to promote efficiency through centralization by creating the Dominion of New England. Inspired by the Spanish example, Charles, and then James, appointed governors to rule the combined colonies of New England, New York, and East and West Jersey. In April, Massachusetts militiamen arrested Governor Edmund Andros, and the Dominion collapsed. In New York, Jacob Leisler's rebellion overthrew the Dominion government. Nonetheless, royal government remained in Massachusetts.[69]

In addition to reigning as King William III, William of Orange was also *stadtholder*, the senior military figure, of the Netherlands. As king-stadtholder, he drew England and Scotland into a war to curb French aggression toward the Holy Roman empire and the Low Countries. Besides defending the Dutch Republic, William, like many politicians, recognized the Low Countries as England's forward line of defense.[70] As allied armies fought in Europe, French-Canadian and Indigenous forces (which included the Abenaki) raided the frontier in New England and New York, while the French navy struck against New England merchant and fishing vessels. New Englanders under Major Benjamin Church of Plymouth Colony in

[67] Forces from Britain, Prussia, the Netherlands, Hanover, Nassau, and Brunswick comprised the allied army under the overall command of Field Marshal Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington.
[68] Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall, 1477–1806* (New York, 1995), 849–854.
[69] Richard S. Dunn, "The Glorious Revolution and America," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, vol. I: The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Nicholas Canny (New York, 1998), 445–466; see also Stephen Saunders Webb, *Lord Churchill's Coup: The Anglo-American Empire and the Glorious Revolution Reconsidered* (Syracuse, 1998). Brendan Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire* (New York, 2007) is a wide-ranging study of British grand strategy.
[70] Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 841, 858–862.

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turn raided New France.[71] Massachusetts governor, Sir William Phipps, attacked and destroyed Port Royal, capital of Acadia, in May 1690. Phipps and the New Englanders next struck Quebec in October 1690 but failed.[72] The Iroquois suffered from Abenaki and French raids. They had received no assistance from their English allies and in subsequent negotiations declared their neutrality in future wars, adding even more complexity to economic, diplomatic, and military relations.[73]

The war ended with the Treaty of Ryswick, which was little more than a four-year hiatus and return to the status quo antebellum. New England, arguably the most militant of colonial societies, added to its already extensive experience in mobilizing and waging war at great distances. It, along with other affected communities, also continued to bear the costs of war, ranging from deaths, wounds, sickness, widows, orphans, emotional and psychological trauma, to economic booms and busts, and more. Taking in the totality of the war, it presaged greater colonial integration in metropolitan affairs of state. Localized wars against Native Americans or foreign colonies had been common enough, but in the future the people of England's colonies could look forward to war assuming a greater, even central, role in their lives.

BECOMING AMERICANS

The wars waged from 1689 to 1748 had decided little. Aside from the French cessions of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Rupert's Land, and St. Kitts to Britain in 1713 and Spain's renewal of the Asiento in 1748, they had merely primed the pump for the next war. In British North America, colonial demography and land hunger increased tensions. By 1754, Britain's thirteen mainland colonies had grown at an astounding rate. Through natural increase and immigration, the population had exploded from around 275,000 in 1700 to 1,207,000 in 1750, to about 1,610,000 in 1760, an increase of nearly 600 percent. New France

[71] John Grenier, *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607–1814* (New York, 2005), 35–36, 39; Michael G. Laramie, *King William's War: The First Contest for North America, 1689–1697* (Yardley, 2017), 102, 142. Allied forces from the Dutch Republic, England, Scotland, the Holy Roman empire, Spain, and the House of Savoy comprised the League of Augsburg.
[72] Laramie, *King William's War*, 119–134.
[73] Laramie, *King William's War*, 190–194, 196–197, 238.

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by comparison stood at a mere 70,000 in 1763, rising from 15,000 in 1700.[74] Accompanying the population increase was the near-constant land hunger that fueled conflict. Individuals and organizations like the Ohio Company (which counted George Washington as an investor) squatted, or surveyed and laid claim to, lands west of the Appalachians without regard to the Native Americans who lived on them or the French who claimed them. It seemed that only military force could resolve these disputes.[75]

Both Britain and France claimed the land around the headwaters of the Ohio River, at the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers, and the Ohio Country westward. In 1754, Lt. Gov. Robert Dinwiddie dispatched a small body of Virginia militiamen under Lt. Col. George Washington with orders to oust the French garrison at the Forks of the Ohio. En route, Washington stopped at Logstown (present-day Ambridge, Pennsylvania), a Delaware, Shawnee, and Mingo settlement, to arrange for an Indigenous escort. Tanaghrisson, a leader of the settlement, accompanied the Virginians with a party of warriors. On May 27, Washington received word from Christoper Gist, his guide, about a French party approaching. Fearing he might be attacked, Washington decided to attack the French first. The attack was a tactical success, and a strategic error of the first order. The French party was on a diplomatic mission. Tanaghrisson's warriors killed "most of the wounded prisoners." Inexperienced, immature, and arrogant, Washington sparked a fight that bled into a much larger European war, a war waged in Europe, the Mediterranean, North America, the West Indies, Asia, India, and Africa. Retreating to the aptly named Fort Necessity, Washington's first command withstood a brief siege. He surrendered on July 4, and admitted to having assassinated the commander of the French party.[76]

While Washington's debacle developed, Albany, New York, hosted delegates from seven colonies to discuss creating a colonial union to direct matters of war, peace, western expansion, taxation, Indigenous relations, and defense. It was yet another indicator of war as an accelerant of colonial political maturation. The Albany Congress, unbeknownst to the delegates, suggested the future, but in the present, the colonies were loath to surrender

[74] *A Century of Population Growth in the United States, 1790–1900* (Washington, DC, 1909), 9; Samuel Venière and Clayton Ma, "Population Settlement of New France," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/peuplement-de-la-nouvelle-france; Alan Taylor, *Colonial America: A Very Short Introduction* (New York, 2013), 6.

[75] Edward G. Lengel, *First Entrepreneur: How George Washington Built His – and the Nation's – Prosperity* (Boston, 2016), 25.

[76] Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1763* (New York, 2000), 18, 27, 43, 52–65.

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what autonomy they possessed.[77] While the congress met and its delegates declined union, the ministry in London acted. It ordered the capture of several French posts: Fort Beauséjour on the Chignecto isthmus, St. Frédéric on Lake Champlain, and Fort Niagara on Lake Ontario. The only success was the capture of Fort Beauséjour.[78]

French forces responded quickly. They established control of Lake Ontario following their destruction of Britain's Fort Oswego in 1756.[79] Britain's commander in America, the Earl of Loudoun, faced the challenge of dealing with the colonial assemblies over logistical support, troop quartering, and recruiting. Loudoun was a soldier, not a politician. Each assembly was a challenge in its own right. Civil–military relations, especially in New England, were deeply frustrating and vexed the earl to no end. He expected subordination, while the assemblies acted with what he deemed a too-independent spirit.[80]

William Pitt, leader in the House of Commons and secretary of state for the Southern Department, smoothed many of the difficulties in imperial relations with the colonies. He came to power in 1757, and quickly refashioned British strategy. Equally important, he treated the colonial assemblies more like partners than as subordinates. This endeared Pitt, the "Great Commoner," to Americans. Moreover, he oversaw the massive inflow of funds that spurred colonial politicians' efforts to support the war against France. Unknowingly, this contributed to the growing sense of colonial autonomy.[81]

Colonial assemblies raised regiments to serve alongside British regulars and units of batteau men to propel and guide shallow-draft boats carrying supplies, artillery, and soldiers.[82] The war's impact on colonial societies was wide ranging and profound. It touched upon all aspects of life. In Massachusetts, military service drew "a third or more of the colony's service-eligible men into provincial armies and employ[ed] additional thousands in tasks directly related to the military effort." More broadly, the war drove provincial taxes

[77] Timothy J. Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754* (Ithaca, 2000) is an incisive examination.
[78] See David L. Preston, *Braddock's Defeat: The Battle of the Monongahela and the Road to Revolution* (New York, 2015) for the most recent and thoroughgoing study of Braddock and his short tenure of command.
[79] Daniel Baugh, *The Global Seven Years War, 1754–1763: Britain and France in a Great Power Contest*, 2nd ed. (London, 2021), 168, 172–173.
[80] Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 135, 143–149, 166–167.
[81] Baugh, *Global Seven Years War*, 295–297; Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 232–236.
[82] Joseph F. Meany, "Batteaux and 'Battoe Men': And American Colonial Response to the Problems of Logistics in Mountain Warfare," New York State Military Museum, https://museum.dmna.ny.gov/application/files/4716/0581/4518/Batteaux_and_Battoe_Men.pdf.

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to their highest rates in colonial history, created a large public debt, and brought the Massachusetts government to the brink of bankruptcy. The war also brought massive influxes of specie from Britain, expanded credit, and created a wartime economic bubble.[83]

In the backcountry, provincial ranging companies waged an irregular war against French-allied Native Americans, who continued to take captives.[84] British observers commented on the mixed racial composition of some French companies, noting that free and enslaved Black men soldiered alongside whites.[85] Few of the rangers had the highly developed skills of Indigenous warriors, so rather than trying to meet their enemies in combat on their own terms, the British struck at villages and food sources. Their targets included women, children, and the elderly. It was a style of warfare that historian John Grenier has termed "unlimited in its ends and irregular in its means."[86]

In Virginia, officials encountered significant challenges to recruiting. For most British colonists, militia service was a local defensive affair for a limited period. Loudoun, his subordinates, and royal governors, however, wanted a long-service force, soldiers for at least a year, willing to serve a distance from home. Colonists drove hard bargains with recruiters. Extended service and harsh discipline were poor enticements.[87] Virginia's government eventually recruited enough soldiers to flesh out two regiments, one of which was commanded by George Washington. Washington's regiment fought a grueling irregular campaign in the Shenandoah valley for much of the war.[88]

From 1758 through 1760, British arms scored a series of decisive victories that sealed the fate of New France and laid the foundations for future settlement and future wars. In Pennsylvania, Brig. Gen. John Forbes led the expedition against Fort Duquesne. Five thousand colonial troops made up the bulk of forces.[89] His column cut a path through the wilderness, Forbes'

[83] Fred Anderson, *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War* (Chapel Hill, 1984), 3.
[84] Ian K. Steele, *Setting All the Captives Free: Capture, Adjustment, and Recollection in Allegheny Country* (Montreal, 2013) is an incisive study of one Pennsylvania county's experience.
[85] Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755–1763* (New York, 2002), 76.
[86] Grenier, *First Way of War*, 10–12.
[87] James Titus, *The Old Dominion at War: Society, Politics and Warfare in Late Colonial Virginia* (Columbia, 1991), 24–25, 32–33, 37, 43, 47–48.
[88] Matthew C. Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years' War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754–1765* (Pittsburgh, 2003) is a concise study of Washington's and others' operations. Baugh, *Global Seven Years War*, 175–182.
[89] Baugh, *Global Seven Years War*, 297, 306, 307, 313; R. S. Stephenson, "Pennsylvania Provincial Soldiers in the Seven Years' War," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 62, no. 2, special issue "Pennsylvania at War, 1754–1765" (Spring 1995): 196–212.

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Road, which is today beneath the Pennsylvania Turnpike. Every forty or so miles, soldiers established forts to secure the route and supply the column. Many of them later became settlements for Pennsylvania's western expansion. Historian Daniel Baugh assessed the "expedition … [as] perhaps the most remarkable and certainly most distinctive campaign of the Seven Years' War in North America as it involved no water carriage. The supply line was extremely long, and the army was, in the context of wilderness warfare, quite large. Extensive and complex logistical measures had to be improvised."[90] Colonial troops also participated in the campaigns against the French fortress at Louisbourg, which opened the path to victory at Quebec in 1760.[91]

Victories aside, the war went on too long for the new king. George III, who had ascended the throne in 1760, wanted his ministers to find a way to end the war, but Spain's entrance threatened to extend the fighting.[92] In a remarkable demonstration of speed, Britain assembled two expeditions aimed at seizing Havana (this expedition including provincial soldiers) and Manila, Spain's most important ports in the Atlantic and Pacific. In a few months, Britain had deprived Spain of its chief Atlantic and Pacific entrepôts.

The 1763 Peace of Paris ended the war. Victory in war caused Americans to celebrate their Britishness as never before. Neither peace nor patriotism lasted long. In North America, France, Spain, and Britain exchanged territories and claims to lands. France ceded Canada and Acadia to Britain and surrendered its claims to the Ohio Country as well. It also ceded Louisiana to Spain, which exchanged Florida in return for Cuba. Nowhere did they consult or even regard their Indigenous allies, much less the neutral nations.[93] British Americans, their land hunger never sated, saw the newly acquired lands as theirs to claim and settle. Hoping to regulate trade with the western Indigenous peoples and prevent tensions from colonial expansion, in 1763 the Board of Trade drew an imaginary line, the Proclamation Line, along the crest of the Appalachians and forbade settlement beyond

[90] Baugh, *Global Seven Years War*, 326. See also Michael McConnell, *To Risk It All: General Forbes, the Capture of Fort Duquesne, and the Course of Empire in the Ohio Country* (Pittsburgh, 2020), 293–294.
[91] Baugh, *Global Seven Years War*, 351–366, 425; Matthew C. Ward, *The Battle for Quebec, 1759* (Cheltenham, UK, 2009), and D. Peter MacLeod, *Northern Armageddon: The Battle of the Plains of Abraham and the Making of the American Revolution* (New York, 2008) are authoritative studies.
[92] Patrick J. Speelman, "Strategic Illusions and the Iberian War of 1762," in *The Seven Years' War: Global Views*, ed. Mark H. Danley and Patrick J. Speelman (Leiden, 2012), 429–459 addresses the complexities of Spanish decision-making.
[93] Baugh, *Global Seven Years War*, 546–547.

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the mountains.[94] Colonists interpreted this action as Britain denying them their just rewards for having helped defeat France.

IMPERIAL ZENITH, IMPERIAL NADIR

Colonial participation had proved vital to British victory in North America. Pitt had infused energy and focus and tapped into the potential of colonial strength in a war for empire. By treating the assemblies and the people they represented as partners in the imperial enterprise, Pitt had reinvigorated colonial and imperial spirits alike. The empire stood at its zenith. Britain had acquired claim to all of Canada and lands along the east bank of the Mississippi River. British Americans eagerly anticipated acquiring western lands, which, of course, meant dispossession and depopulation.

Britain stood at the height of its eighteenth-century power, but it stood alone, "hubristic …, deeply naval, colonial and isolationist," in Brendan Simms's words.[95] Furthermore, its debt was staggeringly high. It had risen from £72 million in 1756 to £134 million in 1765. Looking for ways to reduce the debt, the ministry hit upon two ideas: first, reduce spending; second, increase revenue though the enforcement or rationalization of taxes, particularly in the American colonies. Gen. Jeffrey Amherst, commander-in-chief of the army in North America, decided to reduce spending by cutting back or eliminating gifts to Indigenous leaders. This suggested at worst contempt for Native Americans, at best diplomatic ignorance. Gift giving was a tangible manifestation of respect and status. Indigenous leaders maintained or enhanced their authority by distributing those gifts. Amherst ordered that gift giving be severely cut.[96] He also insisted on the return of captives, many of whom had fully acculturated with their adoptive peoples. Amherst's lack of

[94] Gregory Evans Dowd, *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, and the British Empire* (Baltimore, 2002), 177–179; Jennifer Monroe McCutchen, "Proclamation Line of 1763," in *The Digital Encyclopedia of George Washington*, ed. Anne Fertig and Alexandra Montgomery, Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, 2012, www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/proclamation-line-of-1763.

[95] Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, 514–515.

[96] Richard Middleton, *Pontiac's War: Its Causes, Course and Consequences* (New York, 2007), 17–22; Georgia Carley, "Cost, Commodity, and Gift: The Board of Trade's Conceptualization of British–Native American Gift Giving during Pontiac's War," *Early American Studies* 14, no. 2 (Spring 2016): 204.

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empathy coupled with colonists' acquisitiveness was the match that ignited a powder train.[97]

Among the western Native peoples, a Delaware prophet, Neolin, preached for a revival of traditional ways and voiced his preference for the French over the British. His spirituality mixed both traditional beliefs and elements of Christianity.[98] Neolin's teachings aligned with a powerful message voiced by an Ottawa leader, Pontiac, for Indian unity in the face of settlers and imperialists.[99] In 1763, a coalition of "Ottawa, Delaware, Potawatomie, Shawnee, Mingo (Seneca), Wyandot, Ojibwe, Huron, Choctaw, Piankashaw, Kickapoo, Tunica, Peoria, and Mascouten – challenged the attempts by the British Empire to impose its will and abrogate Native sovereignty."[100] The resulting war spread throughout the Great Lakes region, from Michilimackinac to Detroit and Fort Pitt.[101] Peace came about with Britain's promise to limit its military presence in the Illinois Country and a commitment to stop settler encroachments. Needless to say, Britain was unable to check the rush of settlers and speculators.

Violence was not confined to Britain's newly claimed lands. In Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, near Lancaster, the Paxton Boys murdered six Conestoga Indians and "burned their [peaceable] settlement to the ground." Kevin Kenny argues that while the "brutality was anomalous" in 1763, it was "commonplace" by the time of the American Revolution. Peter Silver argues for Europeans' feelings of dread and victimization by Native Americans, and that they killed Indigenous people because of their anxieties over "Indian terror."[102] Fear, hunger for land, and a disregard, contempt, or hatred of Native Americans possessing coveted lands were powerful drivers of war elsewhere. With American independence in the offing, something unknown and unanticipated by all, these old patterns continued in the new American republic.[103]

[97] Middleton, *Pontiac's War*, 22–31.
[98] Dowd, *War under Heaven*, 94–100.
[99] Middleton, *Pontiac's War*, 87.
[100] Bryan Rindfleisch, "Pontiac's Rebellion," in *The Digital Encyclopedia of George Washington*, ed. Fertig and Montgomery, www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/pontiacs-rebellion.
[101] Michael A. McDonnell, "Maintaining a Balance of Power: Michilimackinac, the Anishinaabe Odawas, and the Anglo-Indian War of 1763," *Early American Studies* 13, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 38–79.
[102] Kevin Kenny, *Peaceable Kingdom Lost: The Paxton Boys and the Destruction of William Penn's Holy Experiment* (New York, 2009), 1, 3; Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York, 2007), 41. See also *Digital Paxton: Digital Collection, Critical Edition, and Teaching Platform*, http://digitalpaxton.org/works/digital-paxton/index.
[103] James Corbett David, *Dunmore's New World: The Extraordinary Life of a Royal Governor in Revolutionary America – with Jacobites, Counterfeiters, Land Schemes, Shipwrecks, Scalping,*

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CONCLUSION

While the arc and the patterns of colonial development and maturation were different in the Spanish, French, and British empires, war was a significant element throughout. New Spain's military capabilities reflected its social and political order: rigid, distrusting, and obsessed with race and caste. It was not until the humiliation brought about by the capture of Havana and Manila in 1762 by British forces that officialdom considered arming colonial populations.[104] These defeats drove a reevaluation and reform in imperial governance, economics, and the armed forces.

Tightened colonial administration and limited free trade within the empire followed the war. Allan J. Kuethe notes that "Charles III resolved to place his American empire on a competitive military footing" by expanding regular garrisons and introducing a "disciplined militia system" similar to that existing in Spain.[105] The new militia system, however, opened opportunities to *criollo* (creole) officers who gained valuable leadership experience and whose social status rose. It entailed arming segments of the population and training them.[106] Military reform watered the seeds for independence. Concerns over race, identity, and loyalty continued into and beyond the Mexican War for Independence in 1810–1821.

Canada was a different matter. France ceded its North American empire to Britain and Spain in 1763. It kept its more valuable West Indian sugar colonies, retained the islands of St.-Pierre and Miquelon, some 185 miles northeast of Louisbourg, and maintained fishing rights. Britain returned the slaving port of Gorée, off the coast of Senegal.[107] As with Britain, sugar and slaves fed the French treasury. Canada's integration into the British empire was, in the words of Donal Fyson, a process of "mutual adaptation." Defeat and annexation were no doubt traumatic for the Canadians, but the new regime,

Indian Politics, Runaway Slaves, and Two Illegal Royal Weddings (Charlottesville, 2013), 57, 76, 89–90; Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745–1815* (Baltimore, 1992), 42–43; Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York, 2006), 40–45.

[104] Christon I. Archer, *The Army in Bourbon Mexico, 1760–1810* (Albuquerque, 1977), 9–10.

[105] Alan J. Kuethe, *Cuba, 1753–1815: Crown, Military, and Society* (Knoxville, 1986), x–xi, 24–49.

[106] Alan J. Kuethe and Kenneth J. Andrien, *The Spanish Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century: War and the Bourbon Reforms, 1713–1796* (Cambridge, 2014), 3–12.

[107] William R. Nester, *The French and Indian War and the Conquest of New France* (Norman, 2014), 401–402

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practicing what today might be deemed strategic empathy, adjusted to its own newfound circumstances as the rulers of a one-time foe who still possessed a dangerous military potential if aroused. Compromise was the key.[108] British governors relaxed religious adherence to allow Roman Catholics to staff government offices, and they retained the French mode of governance.[109] If the limited desire of Canadians to join the American rebellion as a fourteenth colony in 1775 and 1776 is any indication, then mutual adaptation succeeded.

British victory proved a loss for the Eastern Woodland Indians. In historian Daniel Richter's words, "with a few strokes of the pen, the ability of Native North Americans to play one imperial power off against another" had disappeared.[110] With France out of the picture, they had lost a trading partner and diplomatic counterweight to Britain. A new power dynamic emerged as the old, "mutually comprehensible, jointly invented world" died and a new, disconcerting one emerged.[111] Even in Spain's newly acquired "territories north of New Orleans [trade] remained tenuous for many years, and those Native people fortunate enough to border the Mississippi had few opportunities to seek alternative markets and alliances."[112]

It was not so much the war as it was the peace that affected Native Americans in the lower Mississippi River valley and along the Gulf coast. The changes, however, as Daniel H. Usner notes, were "more transitional than transformative." Old patterns of commercial relations remained, albeit under new regimes.[113] Still, the shock was real. As Colin Calloway writes, "Choctaws who had become accustomed to being courted by French, British, and Spanish emissaries during the war now had to adjust their tactics to deal with a single European power." Britons too were forced to adjust when dealing with powerful nations like the Choctaw. Generous gift giving had to continue. There would be no skimping as happened in the north.[114]

Britain's thirteen North American colonies had come of political age with the French and Indian War. Despite declining Benjamin Franklin's invitation

[108] Donald Fyson, "The Conquered and the Conqueror: The Mutual Adaptation of the *Canadiens* and the British in Quebec, 1759–1775," in *Revisiting 1759: The Conquest of Canada in Historical Perspective*, ed. Phillip Buckner and John G. Reid (Toronto, 2012), 190, 192.
[109] Fyson, "The Conquered and the Conqueror," 195–196, 199–200.
[110] Daniel K. Richter, *Before the Revolution: America's Ancient Pasts* (Cambridge, 2011), 406.
[111] Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge, 1991), 323.
[112] Richter, *Before the Revolution*, 406.
[113] Daniel H. Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill, 1992), 105, 106.
[114] Colin G. Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (Oxford, 2006), 136–137.

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to "Join or Die" at the Albany Congress, the colonies had muddled through, and some had even risen to great heights in their ability to mobilize people and resources for war. Massachusetts had soared to "pre-eminence among the American colonies in fighting" Britain's colonial wars, particularly in the final contest against France. Having shouldered much of the effort against France, political leaders in Massachusetts and elsewhere questioned why the colonies should help Britain sort out its postwar finances.

Parliament passed a series of acts to address the postwar fiscal crisis and fund other government activities in America. The acts, meant to rationalize governance, instead inflamed colonial opposition.[115] At the heart of the matter, Britain's thirteen North American colonies had outgrown their subordinate status. They had reached political maturity, in large part through war. Mobilizing, organizing, sustaining, and waging war had driven the processes of political maturation. The thirteen colonies had all but attained their independence: they had but to make it real, while Britain had but to peacefully recognize it. It was not to be, however. That issue would be addressed through war.[116]

War's imprint on European and Indigenous societies presaged future patterns of contact, conflict, warfare, and societal development. War and society influenced one another, mutually driving the other's evolution. The impacts were widespread, and touched upon economics, religion, politics, tactics, strategies, gender norms and relations, race, settlement patterns, and weaponry, to name but a few affected areas. While imprecise and not determinative, the broad patterns established during this moment of imperial collisions portended that which followed, from the era of the American Revolution through the United States' most recent conflicts, and forward into the country's unknowable future. Tactical adaptation, wars of annihilation, and territorial expansion followed. If recent declarations by President Donald J. Trump about the United States' "manifest destiny" in space, on annexing Greenland and Canada, seizing the Panama Canal, and acquiring the Gaza Strip are to be taken seriously, it would appear that a new age of

[115] Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763–1789*, rev. exp. ed. (New York, 2005), 39–47. Edmund S. Morgan and Helen M. Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution* (Chapel Hill, 1953) remains an authoritative study. See also Julian Gwynn, "British Government Spending and the North American Colonies, 1740–1775," in *The British Atlantic Empire before the American Revolution*, ed. Peter Marshall and Glyn Williams (London, 1980), 74–84.

[116] John Shy, "The American Colonies in War and Revolution, 1748–1783," 307–308, and Bruce P. Lenman, "Colonial Wars and Imperial Instability, 1688–1793," 164, both in *The Oxford History of the British Empire, vol II: The Eighteenth Century*, ed. Marshall.

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imperial collisions is afoot.[117] Moreover, that such rhetoric would be considered presidential or even acceptable to broad segments of the population suggests the degree to which war is inextricably woven into American societal fabric and what deeper studies of war and society might offer to the electorate and broader public.

War and society are symbiotic. The relationship is complex, dynamic, and ever evolving, and much like the imperial collisions that created colonial America, that relationship is worthy of deeper and more serious consideration. Much as religion, economics, the natural environment, and myriad other factors have influenced societies and they in turn have been influenced by societies, so too is the case for war and society in early America. War and society is a distinct field of study, yet the precise prescription for what exactly its study entails is amorphous – so much so, that to pursue a definitive explanation is a fool's errand, and an unnecessary one at that. War and society studies are expansive and subject to scholars' determinations. Most scholars would probably agree, however, much as Supreme Court Associate Justice Potter Stewart opined about obscenity, they "know it when … [they] see it."[118]

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY

The scholarship informing "Imperial Collisions: War Times and Societies in Colonial America" speaks to the relevance and value of war and society as an analytical framework for early American history. Selecting "essential" works sharpens one's focus, much as it pains one to exclude other contributions. What follows is anything but comprehensive, but the works cited should guide scholars toward deeper and broader explorations through their sources, approaches, and perspectives.

Colin G. Calloway in *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America* (Baltimore, 2013), Pekka Hämäläinen in *Indigenous Continent: The Epic Contest for North America* (New York, 2022), and Kathleen DuVal in *Native Nations: A Millennium in North America* (New York, 2024) offer superb narrative histories of Indigenous America. Insightful and accessible,

[117] Matt Spetalnick, "Trump Vows to Take Back Panama Canal, Talks of 'Manifest Destiny' in Space," *Reuters*, Jan. 20, 2025, www.reuters.com/world/americas/trump-says-us-will-take-back-panama-canal-2025-01-20/.
[118] *Jacobellis* v. *Ohio*, 378 US 184 (1964).

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they recenter American history on the Indigenous experience. Daniel K. Richter recounts how Native Americans discovered Europeans in *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, MA, 2003).

Warfare and its place in Indigenous societies is the focus of Richard J. Chacon and Rubén G. Mendoza in their multidisciplinary anthology, *Latin American Indigenous Warfare and Ritual Violence* (Tucson, 2007), while Caroline Dodds Pennock focuses on the centrality of warfare and religion in Mexica life in "A Warlike Culture? Religion and War in the Aztec World," *History and Anthropology* 34, no. 1 (Feb. 2023): 99–122. For more technical, strategic, and tactical studies, see Zachary M. Bennett, "'Canoes of Great Swiftness': Rivercraft and War in the Northeast," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 21, no. 2 (Spring 2023): 205–232, and Wayne E. Lee, *The Cutting-Off Way: Indigenous Warfare in Eastern North America, 1500–1800* (Chapel Hill, 2024).

Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Our America: A Hispanic History of the United States* (New York, 2014) flips the east-to-west narrative of European invasion and expansion to a north-to-south axis, while Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (New York, 2001) weaves a story of European empire in North America. Two works on the contingent and violent nature of European empires are J. C. Sharman, *Empires of the Weak: The Real Story of European Expansion and the Creation of the New World Order* (Princeton, 2019) and Lauren Benton, *They Called It Peace: Worlds of Imperial Violence* (Princeton, 2024).

Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (New York, 2010) addresses some theoretical underpinnings of empire. Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (New York, 2003) takes on staid tropes of the Spanish conquest, while Erin Woodruff Stone's *Captives of Conquest: Slavery in the Early Modern Spanish Caribbean* (Philadelphia, 2021) examines war, enslavement, society, and early imperial economics. Wayne E. Lee's *Barbarians and Brothers: Anglo-American Warfare, 1500–1865* (New York, 2011) examines the cultural baggage English invaders carried to America. An insightful history of the New England experience is Ann M. Little, *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia, 2007).

European colonization wrought profound effects in Indigenous America. David J. Silverman explores the introduction and effects of firearms in *Thundersticks: Firearms and the Violent Transformation of Native America* (Cambridge, MA, 2016). Imperial politics in America also became more complex. In *Imperial Entanglements: Iroquois Change and Persistence on the Frontiers of Empire* (Philadelphia, 2011), Gail D. MacLeitch addresses the

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eighteenth-century Haudenosaunee experience. Colonization was globalization, and that entailed the introduction of slavery as the economic engine of European empire. With more slaves and greater profits came greater threats of insurrection and greater fears, all examined in Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York, 2024).

Imperial and domestic economic growth contributed to the growth of the fiscal-military state. Charles Tilly argues for the symbiotic relationship between making war and the transformation of the European state in *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1992* (Cambridge, MA, 1992). Rafael Torres Sánchez's anthology *War, State and Development: Fiscal-Military States in the Eighteenth Century* (Pamplona, 2007) takes a more expansive approach, incorporating empire.

Five European wars between 1689 and 1763 brought colonial societies more fully into the metropolitan orbits and colonies became battlegrounds and prizes for the victors. Bruce P. Lenman's *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688–1783* (Abingdon, UK, 2014) delivers a succinct look at the wars from a British perspective, while John Grenier, in *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607–1814* (New York, 2005), examines the evolution of colonial societies' war fighting.

Fred Anderson's *Crucible of Empire: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1763* (New York, 2000) is an authoritative account of the last European war for empire in North America. British victory did not lead to peace. Gregory Evans Dowd, in *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, and the British Empire* (Baltimore, 2002) covers Indigenous resistance to colonial land hunger following the end of the French and Indian War.

Much as war made the state in early modern Europe, so too was the case in colonial America. Robert Middlekauff's *Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763–1789* (New York, 2005) is a wide-ranging history of the final years of the first British empire and the road to American independence. Through war, colonial societies matured. War was central to their maturation and confidence to become an independent people.

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