At War Forevermore: British and American Army Officers and Their Perceptions of Native Americans, 1740-1812

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Dedications

I dedicate my thesis to my family and friends, without whom none of this would have been possible. To my loving family and partner, for their steadfast support of my education, and to Bill Monaghan and Heidi Ross for their encouragement of my education, pushing me beyond where I thought possible to go.

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Introduction

From the middle of the eighteenth century, contact and connection between British colonial holdings and Native American communities were nearly ubiquitous throughout the mid-Atlantic region. Beginning with tense and tenuous contact after first landings at sites from Virginia to Massachusetts, British colonists arrived and expanded into the interior, increasing contact with natives. These first relationships were partially defined by a lack of understanding between the colonists and their native American counterparts, often leading to tension, later violence. Colonists explored this unfamiliar and new geographic expanse while Native Americans attempted to better understand this new and rapidly expanding arrival.[1] As the newcomers deepened their roots into the Americas, increasing levels of violence reached a crescendo before settling into an uneasy peace often prone to flare-ups. However, these relationships evolved over time as the colonists and natives begin to have a deeper understanding of the other parties, and the connections proved useful politically, economically, and, to some degree, militarily.

Conflict between colonies and Native American groups was always near the forefront of the minds of colonial and native leadership in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and for good reason. Fighting was often, devastatingly for both combatants, targeted at population centers and was often indiscriminate. Perhaps most frustrating to the British government at Whitehall was that these conflicts never served as a decisive campaign to quell conflict across the frontier. However, as the colonies expanded

[1] This thesis recognizes the varying degrees of terms that may be ascribed to indigenous communities in the Americas. To be expedient but also respectful, this paper will refer to broader indigenous groupings as Native American but will endeavor to utilize the terms that Native American groups ascribed to themselves.

territorially and economically and encountered larger numbers of Native Americans, economic connectivity began to define these relationships more than sporadic conflict did. Industries like logging, fishing, and perhaps most lucratively the fur trade, began to make invisible yet durable connections between the colonies and Native Americans deep into the interior and far past the frontiers. A constant supply of finished goods such as housewares, tools, and perhaps most importantly for intertribal relationships, firearms, deepened these connections with many Native Americans developed sympathetic or even outright helpful and supportive stances towards the colonies in providing them the best economic terms while remaining fiercely independent. This economic engine provided a supercharging of the relationships between Native Americans and colonists allowing for trade to replace turmoil, and pelts coming out of Indian Country rather than soldiers going in.[2]

While economic connectivity reduced the number of conflicts between Native Americans and colonists, it did not remove the threat entirely. Rather, a web of inter-tribal and international relationships developed, that may seem more at home in the pages of a sensationalist thriller, rather than in the historical record of the United States. Native American tribes across the continent began to debate their own involvement with the European powers, particularly which to back. Involvement in conflict could and very often did lead to significant population declines due to the reliance on more lethal and accessible European firearms. Realizing the disparity in numbers and in technology between themselves and the Europeans, Native Americans rather sought to assert their independence and their sovereignty through political channels rather than through more

[2] David J. Silverman, *Thundersticks: Firearms and the Violent Transformation of Native America* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016), 7-9, 11-14.

traditionally understood military channels. This need to change the method of redress between Europeans and Native Americans led to a fundamental shift in indigenous societies. Fiercely defended independence now assumed a posture of trying to ensure that each community had a reliable European connection to provide goods and perhaps more importantly, defensive assistance. These connections could be maintained, improved, deteriorated, or dropped entirely depending on the desires of the indigenous leadership structures at the time.[3]

However, with this connectivity came the risk of involvement in broader European wars. With the expansion of colonial holdings into North America during an age of political and military instability on the European continent, conflict spilled across the Atlantic, making inter-continental war the norm for the Franco-British rivalry. Major conflicts in the Americas like King William's War (1688-1697), Queen Anne's War (1702-1713), and later the French and Indian War (1754-1763) were fundamentally continental extensions of European wars. Each demonstrated the ability for conflict to start anywhere in the colonial systems of the Atlantic and travel quickly to all other connective points. For Native Americans, this was perhaps a truly awe-inspiring concept. Actions taken by individuals thousands of miles brought war to the remote frontiers, involving many unwilling Native American communities in wars that continued their population declines.

While economic connection became the main conduit through which relationships flowed with Native Americans, conflict remained an important and central element of Native American society. Affiliation or alliance with a particular colony or European

[3] Fred Anderson, *The Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 57-65.

nation might radically alter the status of relationships between that tribe and its respective counterparts. But it is worth noting, and in many cases these evolutions came not in the form of true concerted policy, but rather through individual relationships between Native Americans and Europeans. In the rather infamous encounter at Jumonville Glenn, Tanaghrisson, a Seneca leader also known as Half-King, fundamentally altered the state of relationships between his tribe and France through his killing of Ensign Joseph Coulon de Jumonville in a ceremonial fashion. With this action, Tanaghrisson as an individual permanently fixed the course of the Haudenosaunee (or Iroquois) with that of the British. Tanaghrisson ritualistically severed the ties between his people and France through the killing of Jumonville equating him with the Great Father. In uttering "you are not yet dead my father," the murder of an officer took on a military, political, and spiritual aspect at the same time.[4]

Officers like George Washington, who first encountered Native Americans later in life, quickly learned to respect the competencies of Native Americans on the battlefield after his disastrous ambush under the command of Edward Braddock in the conduct of the Seven Years' War. Later, encounters with both loyalists and patriots aligned with Native American groups during the American War of Independence caused further evolution in Washington's thoughts on the peoples. Other officers, like John Burgoyne, never encountered Native Americans before his arrival on the continent as part of the American Revolutionary War. Burgoyne was first perhaps enticed by the notion of a ready-made, experienced, dedicated group of irregulars, but his lack of understanding for the nuances of warfare and the sacredness of violence among Native Americans

[4] Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 46-49, 54-60.

eventually led to his entire distaste for Native Americans underneath command after the disastrous 1777 campaign.

Later, officers like William Hull, spending most of their time on the frontier, were terrified at the prospect of facing off against large numbers of Native Americans at the siege of Detroit during the war of 1812. Indeed, the threat of the use of large numbers of Native Americans was a deciding factor in Hull's decision to surrender the garrison, after hearing of the surrender of Fort Mackinac and the destruction of Fort Dearborn in the preceding weeks. Hull's remark that the loss of western posts would "Open the northern hive of Indians," showed that years of frontier war had made the general wary of battle against the Native Americans.[5]

For Native Americans, their relationships with the Europeans were constantly evolving. Driven by a variety of natural and human factors, relationships between indigenous America and the emerging Euro-Americans ebbed and flowed. The question must be, how did these relationships change during periods of increased conflict between Europeans, Americans, and indigenous Americans? Surely, there must be some way to track the historical arc of the evolution of relationships throughout the later part of the eighteenth century through the early nineteenth. This period of 60 years between 1740 and 1800, represents the watershed moment in relationships between governments in Native American groups on the continent. At this point, Native Americans experienced the twilight of their sovereignty and political power. However, this period was distinct from early periods of evolution. European powers dictated change through multiple

[5] Morris Zaslow and C.P. Stacey, "The Defence of Upper Canada, 1812," in *The Defended Border* (Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada, 1964), 18-19.

engines, including the expansion of and increased settlement on the frontier, increased professional military presences, and stronger trading systems.

One driving force behind each evolution stage can be understood to be in the junior officers who had a significant contact with the Americans and became promoted to senior officers at the time of the next conflict. In looking at how junior and senior officers of the British and later American armies interacted with Native Americans, it is possible to see how Native American relationships with the Euro–American powers developed during this twilight period. Actions taken in the presence, on behalf of, or against these junior officers often precipitated significant changes over time in how these officers and later political figures evolved in their own perceptions of Native Americans.

While not exhaustive, this thesis will examine the relationships between officers of the British and later United States armies and their perceptions of Native Americans at key points in the eighteenth and early nineteenth. Understanding how officers, who later turned to politically minded aristocratic gentlemen, saw their Native counterparts is critical to understanding the role, place, and involvement of Native Americans in British and, later, American North America. This thesis seeks to track shifts, or the lack thereof, in the evolution of Euro-indigenous relationships. Indeed, due to the personal nature of relationships between tribes, officers, and government, it may be impossible to make an exhaustive study of these relationships. The central thread of this thesis will focus on specifically racially motivated perceptions and their evolution between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812. Remaining focused on individual relationships will better promote the autonomy of Native American historical figures and provide them with more historical nuance.

In any discussion of Native American history, the topic of historiography becomes one that is simultaneously critical to the scholarship, and one that is often one-sided. This is in large part due to a multitude of factors, most naturally occurring in the societies of Native Americans. While this thesis would in no doubt he bolstered by an in-depth discussion of imperialist tendencies and oversights that caused a dearth of Native American-centric source material, that lies outside the scope of this work. However, there is a necessary discussion on the historiography surrounding Native Americans in early American history.

This discussion must begin with the historiography of Native American societies. There are several issues when examining these histories, however. The first and most pressing concern is the lack of written language among Native American societies. This is not to say that there were no written records of sorts. However, these records are more prone to be consisting of memory, rather than historical fact. Additionally, the lack of the ability to accurately date these knowledge sources makes it difficult to place them in a historical narrative that would be considered acceptable by current academic standards. Groups like the Haudenosaunee Confederation, the Cherokee, as well as developing tribes in Central America had pictorially based forms of written language, and the true meaning of many of these pictographs and hieroglyphs are largely lost to modern scholarship. What does exist, however, is a plethora of primary European sources. Journals, letters, and other official documents surviving from notable figures provide a great deal of insight into the thoughts and actions of these individuals. However, it should not be taken as an instance in which a lack of source material makes reasonable inference impossible. Rather, an anthropological understanding must be utilized when examining

source documents. With a closer reading based on knowledge of the context surrounding individuals or events, more educated inferences can be drawn. Some historical actors may not even recognize the significance of the events which they witnessed, but they remain critical to our understanding of Native Americans that they may have observed.

But there is also a strain of imperialism that surrounds Native American historiography. From the 1840s onward, Native Americans were denied as agents in their own historiography. Depicted as "noble savages" or the opposition to progress, Native Americans in scholarship until recent decades very rarely acted, at least according to historians, of their own volition. Rather, they act as pieces on the board of European power politics. Any move or change in their societies traced its roots back to European action, which many historians were happy to see as justification for these changes. Indeed, in the 1840s discussions by American anthropologists implied that Native Americans were on an irreversible decline, and could never regain their prominence. Putting the matter succinctly in 1825, Charles Sprague said that:

> Here and there a stricken few remain; but how unlike their bold untamed, untamable progenitors! His degraded offspring crawl upon the soil to remind us how miserable is man, when the foot of the conqueror is on his neck. As a race, they have withered from the land. They will live only in the songs and chronicles of their exterminators.[6]

While Sprague may have decried the disappearance of Native Americans, indigenous communities very much existed and still exerted some degree of power in 1825, continuing to do so for the remainder of the century. The indigenous population surely declined beginning after first contact, but these populations maintained their

[6] Charles Sprague, *An Oration, Delivered on Monday, Fourth of July, 1825: In Commemoration of American Independence, Before the Supreme Executive of the Commonwealth, and the City Council and Inhabitants of the City of Boston* (Boston: True and Greene, City Printers, 1825) 6-9.

independence and autonomy, much to the ire of their European counterparts. While Europeans likely saw indigenous communities within their orbit as possessions or subject peoples, the opinion of the Haudenosaunee at Onondaga would be directly contradictory to the opinions of the British at Whitehall. Decline did not mean defeat, and the numerous frontier wars and strikes back against colonial incursion (perhaps most significantly Pontiac's War of 1763-1765) demonstrated regularly that Native Americans were not simply the subjects of European monarchs, but rather their own autonomous collections.

More recent historiography presents a more nuanced but complicated history on indigenous America. This is by and large due to more nuance, but less localization in focus, leading to potentially significant micro-events entirely absent for the sake of a more cohesive narrative. Works like Fred Anderson's *Crucible of War* discusses the French and Indian War and the pre-revolutionary period in a singular, definitive work. But what Anderson's work gains in its totality, it loses in any in-depth focus on individual relationships. For example, while Anderson discusses in great detail the disastrous expedition that ended at Fort Necessity, he makes almost no mention of George Washington's first encounter with Native Americans on a surveying expedition in 1748. Other works take the inverse of Anderson's issues, like Collin Calloway's *The American Revolution in Indian Country*. Calloway's work focuses on the war on the frontier, but due to the focus on the frontier, often fails to gauge the back-and-forth of active diplomatic relationships in the Americas. While Calloway's work provides a great deal of agency to Native Americans, neither he nor Anderson can adequately address the

relationships and connections between indigenous communities and American imperial powers.[7]

Other secondary histories do strike a good balance between micro and macro events in the course of their histories. Works like Michael McDonnell's *Masters of Empire* provides an important baseline for nuanced understanding of the political agency of Native Americans, critical for understanding their actions before, during, and after the French and Indian War. McDonnell states effectively in his work that Native American societies maintained a complex web of diplomatic relationships that allowed for their ability to play off the two European powers to maintain their autonomy in the face of Europeans and other Native Americans communities alike. Calloway focuses more narrowly with his work *The Indian World of George Washington* in which he traces the course of Native American history throughout Washington's life to map the intricate connections between the early republic and indigenous communities.[8]

While recent scholarship towards Native Americans is prone to some of the same pitfalls as other disciplines of history, Native history also faces special challenges. In many instances, Native Americans have found themselves on the outside of their own historical arc in favor of European-centric histories of the Americas. In these instances, Native Americans (like those of Sprague's mind) cannot be historical actors on their own, rather they must be acted upon by outside forces. This attitude towards Native Americans as historical non-actors and subject peoples has pervaded scholarship in the decades

[7] Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Anderson, *Crucible of* War.
[8] Michael A. McDonnell, *Masters of Empire* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2017); Colin G. Calloway, *The Indian World of George Washington: The First President, the First Americans, and the Birth of the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

following Sprague's 1825 oration. The notion of Native Americans outside their own historical arc defined historiography until recent decades. Recent scholarship undermines this to a degree, but it is still prevalent enough to encourage an interdisciplinary approach to indigenous historiography. While true in even the most reliable source bases, reading of sources on Native Americans must include a heightened degree of skepticism. In some instances, native accounts of historical events completely contradict the Euro-American historical memory, creating distinct issues when approaching topics like violence. Contradictory accounts encountered in the course of this thesis must be approached with increased skepticism as a result, and deference must be given to documented historical or archaeological records but viewed through the previously mentioned anthropological lens.

This thesis, then, seeks to examine the course of perceptions and relationships between Native Americans and their military counterparts between the French and Indian War and the War of 1812. While a broad expanse, this period is the genesis of many cycles of violence and mistrust that defined relationships throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. The complexities of Native American societies were often indiscernible for Euro-American officers and fostered almost universal distaste for Native Americans, as officers rarely had the same experience or developed the same appreciation for Native culture as did frontier traders. In some instances, these relationships failed to develop beyond the use of Native Americans as ferocious fighters on the frontier, leading officers to simply see them as savage warriors, rather than individuals operating in a web of societal, religious, and cultural practices as complex as their own. In other instances, relationships formed and were soured through conflict.

Officers like Henry Bouquet and Jeffery Amherst campaigned alongside and lead Native American contingents, but events on the battlefield gave them a deep hatred for all indigenous peoples, leading to disastrous results.

Throughout this work, an emphasis will be placed on the individual perceptions between British, later American, officers and the Native American population at large. The emphasis on individual relationships colored by global events sets this paper apart from other works due to the emphasis of only military officers or related officials over the decades between the 1740s and 1810s. This is significant due to the large degree of influence officers serving on the frontier had on politics and policy in the colonies and later the republic. Campaigns on the frontier against the Native Americans were often sensationalized as part of an officer's later career, with slogans like "Tippecanoe and Tyler too," in addition to Andrew Jackson's personal image of a frontiersman sand Indian fighter, engraining him in the minds of the populace, and by extension, the polls. Indeed, the racialization of Native Americans as the boogeymen of the frontier was both critical and long-lasting in the first century of the American republic, carrying on the legacy of the British colonial attitudes towards indigenous communities.

For Native Americans, their relationships with European powers are fraught with complications and outright dehumanization. European governments often failed to see Native Americans as independent political entities, instead seeing them as unruly subject peoples, under the protection, or dominance, of European capitals. This failure of understanding makes its appearance early in the scholarly work surrounding Native Americans. Works often disregard the ability for Native Americans to make complex decisions about their own autonomy, rather seeing them as simply marching towards

inevitable subjugation. This may be perhaps due to a misunderstanding of the complexities of Native American society, or it may be simply due to the historic dearth of Native American scholars in the historical field.

Chapter 1: Early Encounters: Young Washington on the Frontier

Born in 1732, George Washington lived in a world that contained a dwindling number of Native Americans. Growing up as the scion of a notable Virginia plantation family, young George Washington was no stranger to the tales of the frontier brought back from land speculators and explorers heading into the Appalachian Mountains. While Washington sat on the edge of the complex world of the frontier, where Native Americans and Europeans exchanged cycles of apathy and alliance, he too was involved and an equally complex system of patronage, political machinations, and the complexities present in the British plantation system in the Virginia colony.

The Virginia colony itself was no stranger to contact with Native Americans across its historic past. The first settlements at Jamestown and Roanoke both had significant contact with local Native American tribes in both peaceful and contentious circumstances. As Virginia expanded its colonial holdings, contact and conflict with Native Americans saw a commensurate increase as well. Frequent wars on the frontiers of Virginia slowly pushed Native Americans to the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains and saw the real presence of Native Americans move from commonplace to restricted if not entirely absent. However, this is not to say that Virginia did not have contact with Native American tribes. The Virginia colony had many agreements with Native Americans, perhaps most interesting among them an early eighteenth century treaty in which indigenous war parties were given free passage through the Virginia territory to raid South towards the Cherokee, even stipulating that some concessions to support these war parties should be made on the part of the colony. This is significant because it shows the level to which the colonial assembly of Virginia understood the need

to allow existing systems of intertribal exchange to occur. While this treaty explicitly deals with the violent aspects of Native American systems, other trade treaties and exchanges showed that the British and by extension Virginians understood the need for stable and codified relations with their Native counterparts to ensure a peaceful climate for trade, industry, and slave-based agriculture.[9]

For a young George Washington, his path was perhaps inevitable in its contact with Native Americans. Being a surveyor who focused primarily on the frontier, the Virginian was likely to encounter Native Americans of varying disposition to his presence in their territory. The danger in land surveying traced back to fundamental misunderstandings that Washington and fellow Europeans had about Native Americans. The first was those permissions for surveying specific areas given by the crown allowed for exploration, demarcation, and land speculation without the fear of official backlash. As a surveyor for the crown and other colonial interests, Washington had a key role in the undermining of Native American sovereignty, something indigenous peoples were acutely aware of. Surveyors had to be vigilant of the possibility of being attacked or driven off from their work by Native Americans intent on holding back the tide of expansion. Christopher Gist, a colleague of Washington who was critical to his later experiences during the French and Indian War, wrote of a surveying foray near a Delaware village near the Allegheny River that he "Set my compass privately & took the distance across the river, for I understood that it was dangerous to let a compass be seen among these Indians."[10]

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[9] Anderson, *Crucible of War,* 70-73.

[10] George Washington, "Diary Entry: 23 March 1748," Founders Online, National Archives, accessed May 9, 2022, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/01-01-02-0001-0002-0013 [Original source: *The Diaries of George Washington*, vol. 1, *11 March 1748–13 November 1765*, ed. Donald Jackson.

Land speculation often was the result of particularly litigious colonists who understood Native American power structures, often leading to a circumventing of the more defiant groups in favor of those more open to discussion. A particularly noteworthy example is the "Walking Purchase" of 1737, which was the codification of an earlier purchase from the 1600s, neither completed nor paid. Originally purchased from the Delware people, the Pennsylvania assembly largely ignored the purchase until the 1730s when renewed interest in the territory made the purchase relevant once more. Despite the significant time between the purchase and the later finalization through the Walking Purchase, the Pennsylvania Colony insisted on the ability to claim the deed and utilized the Haudenosaunee as overlords of the Delaware to negate any claims the Delaware had. Utilizing a team of "walkers," who were in fact notable runners, the Pennsylvania commonwealth managed to take over 1,200,000 acres from the Delaware peoples. While the original treaty promised a boundary beginning near Wrightstown, Pennsylvania, and extending "as far as a Man could walk in a day and half." Seeing an opportunity, the Pennsylvania assembly hired three well-known runners to travel along a pre-determined path. Rather than the expected 40 miles of territory ceded, the amount was nearly 70 miles, significantly more than expected. Seeking assistance from this swindling, the Lenape people turned to the Haudenosaunee for help. Seeking to remain allied with the British, they declined, and the purchase was finalized in 1742 with the Treaty of Easton. What had originally been a wary approval of a dubious existing purchase had expanded into a shameful swindle on the part of the Pennsylvanians and a significant loss of

Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976, p. 13.]; George Mercer and Lois Mulkearn, *George Mercer Papers: Relating to the Ohio Company of Virginia* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1954), 9.

territory on the part of the Delaware. Pennsylvania showed a clear understanding that on a continent dominated by political units, utilizing the Native American political system was critical to ensuring quick, easy expansion.[11]

The insult of the purchase was further compounded by the method of marking the purchase. Originally, the land sold was "as far as a man could walk in a day and a half." However, when finally enforced, Pennsylvania "walkers" went nearly twice the distance that the Native Americans had originally anticipated. Utilizing further unscrupulous methods, Pennsylvania was able to claim a great deal more land than originally agreed upon in the original 1681 purchase, using legalistic documents, vague language, and further exploitation of power struggles. To end this episode, the Pennsylvania assembly utilized friendly Haudenosaunee warriors to evict the Delaware, forcing them to move yet again, further away from their ancestral heartland.[12]

If Washington had early connections with Native Americans, this does not make itself known in primary source documentation about his life. Indeed, it is not until he was involved in the surveying of the Virginia frontier that we have documented proof of his first encounter with Native Americans. While his position in Virginia as an aristocratic gentleman coming of age certainly placed him at the crossroads of civil service, plantation life, or military service, Washington would have been at least passingly aware of the status of relations with Native American groups in Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and the now new, tempting lands near the Ohio Country. Perhaps most

[11] "The Walking Purchase," The Walking Purchase | Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, accessed May 9, 2022, http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/documents/1681-1776/walking-purchase.html; Colin G. Calloway, *The Indian World of George Washington: The First President, the First Americans, and the Birth of the Nation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), 5-12; Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 70-72.
[12] "The Walking Purchase."

important to Washington's development as a future frontier officer was his expedition in 1748 with George Fairfax to lands on the edge of the Virginia colony. This expedition appears to be his first contact with Native Americans, which he documented in his diary.[13]

Washington's diary dates the beginning of the 1748 expedition as Friday, March 11. On his first day, Washington traveled more than forty miles to the home of a Mr. Neavels in Prince William County. For the next ten days, Washington's journal seems to be preoccupied with the distance traveled each day, and almost continually comments on the hardships of a frontier expedition. In a rather humorous turn of events, the man who would later be regarded as one of the most stoic presidents to ever occupy the office, remarks with horror on being asked to sleep on a straw tick mattress. Throughout the early expedition, Washington's journal is focused on aspects of his travel, and perhaps in a way that would resonate with many young people going out into the world for the first time, such as the drinks and food he had along the way.

However, Wednesday, March 23, 1748, marked a watershed moment in the life of George Washington. According to his journal at approximately 2:00 in the afternoon Washington and his party encountered nearly 30 Native Americans coming from a raid possessing "only one scalp." Washington and his party gave some of their liquor to the Native Americans, and witnessed the performance of a war dance. Washington describes this occurrence in detail in his journal, stating that:

They clear a Large Circle & make a great Fire in the Middle then seats themselves

[13] "A Journal of My Journey over the Mountains," George Washington's Mount Vernon (The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association), accessed July 29, 2022, https://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/washingtons-youth/surveying/journey-over-the-mountains/#:~:text=of%20March%201748,the%20first%20United%20States%20president.

> around it the Speaker makes a grand Speech telling them in what Manner they are to Daunce after he has finish'd the best Dauncer Jumps up as one awaked out of a Sleep & Runs & Jumps about the Ring in a most comicle Manner he is followd by the Rest then begins there Musicians to Play the Musick is a Pot half of Water with a Deerskin Streched over it as tight as it can & a goard with some Shott in it to Rattle & a Piece of an horses Tail tied to it to make it look fine the one keeps Rattling and the other Drumming all the While the others is Dauncing.[14]

While Washington may have found the dance in the oration slightly comical in its novelty, this is the first time that Washington saw Native Americans on the frontier engaged in distinctly important rituals and rites. His diary remarks that the Natives were with the British party for at least another day before departing back to their home settlements. It is unlikely that we will know which tribe Washington encountered on this expedition. However, due to the nature of the contact itself, it can be understood that these Natives were at least British sympathizing, if not fully aligned with the crown. The fact that the Native Americans possessed only one scalp among them suggests that either the raiding party was unsuccessful in finding their targets or that they were summarily driven back by their intended victims.[15]

This lack of success for the raiding part is not surprising given the state of Native American tribes by the 1740s on the eastern seaboard. Decades of easy access to steel tools and weapons in addition to more and more effective firearms had democratized violence, spreading it across the frontier. More warfare with better weapons increased existing cycles of violence ingrained in the culture of Native American societies, straining already declining populations. Where once a punitive raid might hope to take some captives, wound many and kill few, increased access to technology and

[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.

democratized violence meant that the uptick in violence came with a steep decline in the populations of Native American communities. Trade guns sent into the frontier had a nasty way of finding their way back to the frontiers being used on mutual allies if not on European frontier settlements themselves.[16]

It is hard to understand the impact that this would have had on a young George Washington. He makes only passing remarks about these Native Americans in the days that followed his original contact of March 11. Perhaps this may be attributed to a near boy-like fascination with seeing the subjects of many stories he likely heard come to life, or that he simply did not have a grasp enough to place significance on what he may have seen beyond its novelty. When Washington returned to Virginia to continue his surveying career, little did he know that the next encounter he had with the Native American war party was to be significantly less friendly.

In the early 1750s both Britain and France were engaged in a cold war over the Ohio River Valley. Both sides saw the strategic advantage in addition to its economic potential, making it the likely flashpoint of the next frontier war to occur between the longtime rivals. This standoff came to a head in 1753 when Governor Robert Dinwiddie received reports of French incursion into the territory claimed by his Virginia colony. Governor Dinwiddie asked and received permission from Whitehall to send an expedition to the disputed lands to force the French to depart under arms if necessary. Through nepotistic means, the now 21-year-old George Washington, despite speaking no relevant

[16] Silverman,*Thundersticks*, 21-22

languages and having no command experience, volunteered for and received permission to lead this expedition into the frontier.[17]

In examining his journals throughout the expedition in the autumn of 1753, it is possible to see that while Washington recognized the differences between himself and the Native Americans in his company, he extended the same courtesies to them that any European officer might expect at the time. Sometime around November 22, Washington invited the sachems to his tent for some time to introduce himself and his mission, while also bestowing a gift of wampum and tobacco to Tanaghrisson as a sign of goodwill. The young major seems to have had a deal of respect for the cunning of his indigenous counterparts as on November 30, after having some wine, Tanaghrisson and some of the men in his party discussed their plan to use the leverage of the English to take the Ohio Country from the French. If Washington was incredulous at this statement, his diary does not betray him. Rather, he discusses the known disposition of French troops in the region, showing that at least to some degree, Washington recognized the feasibility of the plan.[18]

While the 1753 expedition originally started off as cordial between the British and the French, the situation quickly deteriorated in the spring of 1754, teaching the British of important lessons about the connections with their Native allies. The British demand for the French to depart from the Ohio Country was met with polite, but firm, declination. However, musket shot had a way of solving an issue which speaking could not. On the morning of May 28, 1754, the combined party fought briefly with a French party of

[17] "The Allegheny Expedition," George Washington's Mount Vernon (The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association), accessed July 29, 2022, https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/allegheny-expedition/.
[18]Paul Royster, ed., "The Journal of Major George Washington (1754)," *Electronic Texts in American Studies*, 33, accessed July 29, 2022, https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/33/

soldiers led by Joseph Coulon de Villiers, Sieur de Jumonville. During the engagement, Jumonville was ritualistically killed by Tanaghrisson, who split his head with a tomahawk, saying "you are not yet dead, my father" before scalping the man. Washington's brevity in responding to his commanding officer is much different than his own personal letters of the campaign, where he described the sound of whistling bullets as "charming." This is perhaps due to the disconnection between the more formal styles of European warfare, and the more visceral and ritualistic violence of the frontier. In either case, this would not be Washington's last exposure to Native Americans on the battlefield.[19]

Expanding quickly from the original skirmish at Jumonville Glenn, the French and Indian War quickly consumed the continent. Still enlisted in the British military, Washington served under General Edward Braddock, who remained committed to the ways of European war. In his ill-fated campaign west, Braddock's arrogance was on full display. The general insisted on utilizing cumbersome wagons and traveling as if on a traditional campaign, even telling Benjamin Franklin of his disdain for the threat of Native American ambush by saying "These savages may be a formidable enemy to your raw American militia, but upon the king's regular and disciplined troops, sir, it is impossible they would make any impression."[20] It is no surprise then, that Braddock's disdain for the Native American scouts was his undoing. Moving through unfamiliar

[19] Ron Chernow, *Washington: A Life* (London: Allen Lane, 2010), 40-45; George Washington to John Augustine Washington, May 31, 1754, Founders Online, National Archives, accessed July 29, 2022, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/02-01-02-0058. [Original source: *The Papers of George Washington*, Colonial Series, vol. 1, *7 July 1748–14 August 1755*, ed. W. W. Abbot. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983, pp. 118–119.]
[20] Calloway, *The Indian World of George Washington*, 106.

terrain with no regard for attack from the forest, Braddock's divided force was ambushed and wiped out, with few senior officers besides Washington surviving.[21]

This lesson was a hard one for Washington and the British to learn. During the French and Indian War, the notion of European military supremacy on the frontier was shattered, with Native Americans playing a key role as scouts, irregulars, and skirmishers for both the British and the French. Washington's lesson from this was not to blame the rigidity of the royal army, but rather to see the folly in not combining professionalism with personability. Braddock's troops had not been to blame; rather it was the caustic way in which he approached the Native Americans that led to his undoing. Some decades later in the American Revolution, Washington demonstrated his knowledge of this lesson by incorporating allied Haudenosaunee, and Stockbridge-Munsee Natives into his army.

But the French and Indian War also had significant impacts for Washington and the larger British Atlantic. When Tanaghrisson killed Ensign Jumonville, he was doing so in a particular context rife with sacred imagery, cultural connotations, and implications for the larger political and economic connections between his people and the French. While to Washington, Tanaghrisson's phrase "you are not yet dead my father" may have appeared as innocuous or simply words uttered before a *coup de grace*, this could not be further from the truth. Native American society was deeply impacted by long-standing traditions surrounding violence and diplomacy. Acts like treaty making/breaking, the commencement of violence, and the conduct of war all had deeply engrained societal

[21] Chernow, *Washington*, 53-54; Joseph A. Jackson, "March To Disaster: Major General Edward Braddock And The Monongahela Campaign," (Thesis Presented to Defense Technical Information Center, 2008), 41-45, 81, 104-106, accessed July 29, 2022, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA502163.pdf; Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 198-203; Isaac Makos, "Roles of Native Americans during the Revolution," American Battlefield Trust, April 13, 2021. Accessed July 29, 2022. https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/roles-native-americans-during-revolution.

significance. The careful understanding of the context of the ambitions of the Half-King and how they appeared to most of the Haudenosaunee may provide better evidence as to why he was so confident and Washington so shocked. Jumonville Glenn was a rare crossroads of violence, statecraft, and religion. Each alone played important roles in Native American societies, and together they created the groundwork for a significant shift in the indigenous power structure through conflict.

Chapter 2: Interbellum and Revolution

With the concluding of the 1763 Treaty of Paris and the end of the French and Indian War, the geopolitical landscape of North America was changed forever. Following the conclusion of the French and Indian War, Britain found itself in possession of even more expansive and sparsely populated colonial holdings, primarily in the territories of the upper Great Lakes and the Mississippi River Valley. Where once Native Americans had the freedom to play two colonial rivals off one another, now only the British remained. Francophile enclaves like Quebec and the *Metis* settlements of the distant frontier held on to distinct cultural aspects of their societies, but policy was dictated across the Atlantic solely by Whitehall.[22] While this shift made significant changes in the landscape of the political situation in North America, perceptions of Native Americans did little more than further entrench in the minds of officers on the continent. Officers and officials now viewed the Native Americans not as allies or partners, but subject peoples. Without the threat of another imperial power to turn to for economic or even political concessions, British officials now turned their focus to bringing the indigenous populations within existing European systems, through diplomacy or domination.

This trend continued through the American Revolutionary War. Perhaps it is no surprise that faced with the prospect of the colonies breaking away from the colonies and having a free hand on the frontier that Native Americans by and large backed the British

[22] In this context, *Metis* references the specific creole culture that formed between predominately French voyageurs and the Native American communities they wintered with. This distinct ethnic and cultural grouping is perhaps best described as not quite Native American, and not quite European by their respective counterparts. Cursory information on the *Metis* can be found here from the University of Saskatchewan's Indigenous Saskatchewan Encyclopedia: https://teaching.usask.ca/indigenoussk/import/metis_culture_and_language.php

cause. While this may have softened the British perception of indigenous groups in the years following the American Revolution, it did nothing to help break the perceptions of American officers. Indeed, the Revolutionary War served as the last high-water mark for Native American hegemony as well as their perception by nascent Americans. The racial perception was solidified and paired with a political memory that placed indigenous groups on the outside of racial, cultural, and political in-groups.

For Native Americans, this calcification of perception started almost immediately following the French and Indian War. With the occupation of the territories formerly in French Louisiana and French Canada, the British stood unopposed as the imperial power of northern North America. Almost immediately, pressures from the populations of the colonies pressed on the eastern border of lands traditionally held by Native American populations. Seeing their own populations reduced in a war over land with the French, British colonists felt a right to this territory and started moving westward, across the Appalachian Mountains and into Indian Country.

This expansion was paired with an increase in economic connection between Native Americans and their European counterparts. By the mid-1760s, a reliable flow of goods out into the frontiers altered Native American life to the point it would have been entirely unrecognizable to groups just a century previous. Neolin, a Delaware prophet, looked at this dependency with anger, railing against what he saw as a continual slide towards dependency on the British and a loss of their traditional ways through vices and the seemingly apathetic attitudes towards westward settlement. This very real fear of the loss of sovereignty through economic subjugation persisted among some Native American leaders, wishing to avoid not only a loss of territory, but the fastening of a

shackle that bound their peoples with the expansionist colonial powers to their east. These fears and pressures were exacerbated by the actions of notable British officers, seeking to bring Native Americans under the imperial thumb and in attempting to wipe out the last vestiges of their independence. In early 1763, these tensions boiled over into what would later be known as Pontiac's War.

Beginning in May 1763, Pontiac's War represented a concerted effort on the part of Native Americans to restore economic, political, and territorial independence. Attacking posts in the Ohio Valley and in the Great Lakes under the Odawa Chief Pontiac, the British were entirely unprepared for what General Jeffery Amherst described as treachery on the part of these supposedly docile and dependent Native Americans. Amherst's response to this conflict was to prosecute a war so devastating that indigenous communities would never consider such an action again.

One of Amherst's most significant subordinates in this ruthless campaign was Henry Bouquet, a Swiss-born officer in the British Army. Like Amherst, Bouquet held a deep-seated hatred for Native Americans, whom he regarded as savages and brutes. Like Amherst, Bouquet's perceptions shifted and entrenched towards this belief during the course of the French and Indian War. By the middle of the conflict, Bouquet's perceptions were at a vitriolic point. In private, Bouquet held nothing back when describing Native Americans on the frontier at this time, saying in a 1759 letter to Anne Willing that:

> you would perhaps judge it cruel and inhuman to reckon among the advantages to be derived from War, the destruction of beings who, by their vices or circumstances, would be a nuisance to Society; I suppose that it was upon that principle that the most shocking scenes of barbarity, including the scalping of your inhabitants…It is true enough that numbers

> of the inhabitants of the frontiers are a worthless breed, and that the public did not suffer a great loss in getting rid of that vermin, which in time would have perverted the few good ones among them.[23]

Clearly, Bouquet viewed the Native Americans as a population unworthy of existence within the bounds of British North America. Bouquet's notion of Native Americans as savage and inferior people was not a unique notion among officers both during and after the French and Indian War. Indeed, Bouquet's superior officer, Jeffery Amherst, encouraged Bouquet's racist tendencies. Growing in hatred of Native Americans after seeing British soldiers killed at Fort William Henry in the French and Indian War, Amherst advocated that Bouquet "try to inoculate the Indians (with smallpox) by means of blankets, as well as to try every other method that can serve to extirpate this execrable race." Bouquet responded to Amherst by stating that he would make the attempt and make every effort to not catch the disease himself. [24]

But Bouquet and Amherst's views on Native Americans was not isolated to commanders in the field. Thomas Gage, the commander of British forces in North America, shared the beliefs of Amherst and Bouquet, wishing as well for the destruction of Native Americans in response to Pontiac's rebellion. In writings, Gage described indigenous groups under arms against the British as "the rascals of the Ohio" adding that his officers must do everything in their power to destroy the Native Americans outright. To this end, Gage approved a plan to be implemented by Bouquet to distribute smallpox-ridden blankets, cloths, and kerchiefs among the Native Americans at Fort Pitt (today Pittsburg) to create an outbreak of smallpox, known to be especially damaging to Native

[23] Bouqet to Willing, September 17, 1759, in Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent, eds., *The Papers of Henry Bouquet* (Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1951).
[24] Philip Ranlet, "The British, the Indians, and Smallpox: What Actually Happened at Fort Pitt in 1763?," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 63, no. 3 (2000): 427-428.

American populations. Bouquet and Gage continued their relentless campaign against Pontiac's confederacy, desiring more to destroy the individual members of the coalition rather than simply ending the war.[25]

As the campaigns raged on, Gage was recalled to Britain as it was understood that his actions, specifically the cessation of official state gifts and his harsh attitudes on Native Americans caused the conflict. However, Bouquet remained and had a favorable ally in Gage. But it was not simply the officers who exacerbated these racially motivated cycles of violence. In response to the brutal murder of a woman and ten children in 1764, the Pennsylvania assembly voted to restore a bounty for scalps taken from Native Americans over the age of ten. The $134 bounty for men and the $50 bounty for women helped to intensify this cycle of violence, despite both belligerents maligning those who killed women and children. Eventually, Bouquet was able to break the Delaware and Shawnee, significantly weakening the resolve of Pontiac to fight. With more and more of his confederacy returning to the British fold, Pontiac himself signed a treaty in 1766. This treaty bore many of the same flaws as previous treaties between the British and the Native Americans, with Pontiac having sole representation for the collection of Native Americans who aligned with him, leading to his murder a short time later.

The peace brokered by Pontiac in 1766 remained tentative at best, and Pontiac was effectively discarded as soon as the ink on the treaty was dried. In the years that followed, violations on both sides occurred, but the hatred remained just beneath the surface. In the winter of 1768, a party of Native Americans approached the cabin of Frederick Stump seeking food and liquor. After getting the Natives drunk, Stump and an

[25] Ibid., 427-431; David Dixon, *Never Come to Peace Again: Pontiac's Uprising and the Fate of the British Empire in North America* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014), 221-225, 268-273.

accomplice murdered the party and hid their bodies in a nearby stream. In further trying to cover up the murders, Stump traveled 14 miles to another cabin where he murdered a Native woman and three children. When the crimes finally came to light, Stump and his accomplice, a man named John Ironcutter, were apprehended and jailed for their murders. In total, ten people were killed by the pair, including children. Awaiting trial for their crimes, they were freed from prison by an armed mob who felt that white settlers had no place in jail for the killing of Native Americans. Incidents like these, while infrequent, show that Bouquet, Gage, and Amherst had in effect given some tacit approval to these killings, leading to continual cycles of killing without the fear of reprisals in the decades to follow.[26]

Gage, Amherst, and Bouquet represent quite pointedly the lack of understanding between British officials and Native American communities on the frontier. Whereas during the French and Indian War a young Washington viewed Native Americans with some confusion but ultimately showed them a degree of deference, entrenched British perceptions at the highest echelons defined official relations between the crown and the many indigenous nations. Encounters on the battlefield by Europeans who remained in the Americas did not impart the lessons of competency and ferocity of indigenous warriors, rather it formed and entrenched notions of native savagery in the British ranks. This fundamental disconnect between the understandings of Native American ways of war and British expectations of dominance on the continent lead to a self-perpetuating cycle of treaty, violation, violence, and lastly back to the signing of a treaty. This cycle, like a great hurricane of political and military activity, spread westward as the colonies

[26] Dixon, *Never Come to Peace Again*, 269-273.

themselves expanded, ever-intensifying and ever-deepening the divide between the former allies.

While Pontiac's War started as a culmination of economic and political factors, the racial aspects of its prosecution cannot be overlooked. In their writings, Gage, Amherst, and Bouquet all show that at their core, they viewed Native Americans as little more than subhuman savages unworthy of the benevolence often present in European warfare. Bouquet and Amherst's original plan was to deal with the members of Pontiac's confederacy at their source. Attacks on villages showed British willingness to reciprocate the tactics they laid at the feet of the Native Americans. While the officers insisted they wanted peace with the natives, Amherst's true feelings were readily found in his private correspondence. He wrote candidly that he wished for "not an Indian settlement within a thousand Miles of them, and when they are properly punished, I care not how soon they move their Habitations, for the Inhabitants of the Woods are the fittest Companions for them, they being more nearly allied to the Brute than to the Human Creation." Native Americans on their part reciprocated this animosity, attacking not only British installations but also civilians where they could, including frontier settlements, caravans on the road, and even some widely sensationalized attacks within the bounds of what was deemed to be secured colonial holdings.[27]

This relatively localized conflict between the French and Indian War and the American War of Independence is an important moment in charting the perceptions of Native Americans held by Euro-Americans. Now confident in their imperial holdings,

[27] Jeffery Amherst to Henry Bouquet, August 7 1763, in Sylvester K. Stevens and Donald H. Kent, eds., *The Papers of Henry Bouquet* (Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1951).

Britain was more than happy to disregard the convenient fictions of sovereignty in parity that they had demonstrated towards Native Americans in the lead up to the 1763 Treaty of Paris. Following this treaty, the British acted less as a benevolent second imperial option, and more as a prime imperial oppressor. The role of race in this shift cannot be overlooked, and while perceptions may not have shifted much between the French and Indian War and Pontiac's War, Pontiac's War and other conflicts deepened the hold that these racist tendencies towards Native Americans held over British officers entering North American service.

To a large degree, the uneasy peace that remained after the 1766 treaty signed on the banks of Lake Ontario between Pontiac and Sir William Johnson remained in place. Some modifications would be made to this treaty, and violations were not exactly uncommon, but the peace held nonetheless. However, as the colonies continued to grow and expand, pressure on the frontier mounted. The treaties of 1763 and 1766 placed clear limits on westward expansion, much to the frustration of colonists and veterans eager to claim the lands recently ceded by the French. These limitations fostered attitudes of discontent, especially towards the Native American populations across the Proclamation Line of 1763. As a result, preexisting attitudes like those of Bouquet and Amherst deepened in large sections of the colonial populace. Cycles of violence continued to occur and perhaps intensify with the increased settlement across the Appalachian Mountains, as the British were largely powerless to stop this activity. However, their insistence on holding to the treaty signed at least on paper, led to one of the main causes of the revolutionary activity that began to occur in the colonies less than a decade after the end of Pontiac's War. The inability of the British to hold their colonists back from

expanding into Native American lands exacerbated existing cycles of conflict, deepening the divide between the British and their indigenous counterparts. Fueled by this notion of a racial other and a lust for land, the American colonists continued to violate the treaty with increasing fervor and intensity, causing many Native American tribes on the frontier or in the near frontier of the British world to begin to align themselves more with the crown than with the colonies themselves, more out of hope that these incursions would be stopped than any real connection. When war revisited the continent in the 1770s, fueled by revolutionary activity, Native Americans would align themselves much more frequently with the British than the nascent colonial rebellion. With the lessons learned from the French and Indian War and the conflicts that followed, it is not hard to see why this would be the case. While the British may have been paternalistic in their tendencies towards Native Americans and may have held significantly racist views amongst their officers and officials, they were content to allow Native Americans to exist by and large on the frontiers, while many colonists simply wished for their removal. Put simply, the attitudes of Gage in Amherst who sought retribution and subjugation were much more in line with the British official stance, while Bouquet's view that Native Americans should be entirely exterminated was perhaps more in line with the colonial stance.

While the peace won through Pontiac's War remained largely in place until the American Revolution, the racial perceptions from colonials to their Native American counterparts continued to deteriorate. The once deferential George Washington conflated British taxation with Native American border skirmishes, saying in a letter to George William Fairfax:

> God only knows what is to become of us, threatned as we are with so many

> hoverg evils as hang over us at present; having a cruel & blood thirsty Enemy upon our Backs, the Indians, between whom & our Frontier Inhabitants many Skirmishes have happend, & with who⟨m⟩ a general war is inevitable whilst those from whom we have a right to Seek protection are endeavouring by every piece of Art & despotism to fix the Shackles of Slavry upon us.[28]

While perhaps a sudden departure from the younger Washington's perception of Native Americans, this shift did not occur in a vacuum. Washington was a significant land speculator, and his desire to profit off the lands west of the Appalachian Mountains, specifically the Ohio Valley, was curtailed by the Proclamation of 1763 and the subsequent banning of westward settlement. Indeed, Washington himself did not view the proclamation line as eternally binding, rather viewing it as a temporary expedient designed to lower tensions between Native Americans and the British in the wake of the French withdrawal from their former holdings. Washington lobbied against parts of this proclamation, getting some of the lands originally promised to veterans of the French and Indian War removed from protections against settlement.

But Washington was not alone amongst his patriot counterparts in viewing the Native Americans through a racially motivated lens. In a scathing satire from 1773, Benjamin Franklin wrote principles as to how a great empire could easily shift itself down to a small empire. While the majority of the piece described things like taxation, the quartering of troops in private homes, and imperial governance without the consent of the colonies, Franklin does take ire at British frontier and Native American policy. He lays at the feet of the British intentionally removing garrisons from the frontiers so that

[28] "From George Washington to George William Fairfax, 10–15 June 1774," Founders Online, National Archives, accessed July 29, 2022, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/02-10-02-0067. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series, vol. 10, 21 March 1774–15 June 1775, ed. W. W. Abbot and Dorothy Twohig. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995, pp. 94–101.]

Native Americans might be "encouraged to attack the Frontiers, and that the Troops may be protected by the Inhabitants." Just a few short months later, Franklin received a petition from the colonial assembly in Georgia that urged him to petition the crown for more troops to "reduce the Savages to a proper sense of their conduct and bring them to Terms of Peace and Justice." While the crown was willing to move westward expansion at a slow and steady pace to keep the peace, the colonials showed an appetite for continual confrontation to bring the Native Americans they saw as inferior subjects, to heel.[29]

As the American War of Independence began in earnest in the spring of 1775, Native Americans once more had to take sides. Violence increased between all parties involved, and, as Colin G. Calloway states, "whites killed Indians, Indians killed whites, Indians killed Indians, and whites killed whites in guerilla warfare that was localized, vicious, and tolerated no neutrals."[30] While this is true of many asymmetric wars throughout history, the ferocity of violence against Native Americans based on their race cannot be overlooked. In reading through letters written by officers like Benedict Arnold before his defection and Washington himself, the choice of language is significant. Whereas a younger George Washington used phrases like "Indian" or ascribed tribal names to indigenous individuals, by the time of the American Revolution, this had gone

[29]"Rules by Which a Great Empire May Be Reduced to a Small One, 11 September 1773," Founders Online, National Archives, accessed July 29, 2022, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-20-02-0213. [Original source: The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, vol. 20, January 1 through December 31, 1773, ed. William B. Willcox. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976, pp. 389–399.];"To Benjamin Franklin from the Georgia Commons House Committee of Correspondence, 14 March 1774," Founders Online, National Archives, accessed July 29, 2022, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-21-02-0061. [Original source: The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, vol. 21, January 1, 1774, through March 22, 1775, ed. William B. Willcox. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978, pp. 142–147.

[30] Calloway, *American Revolution in Indian* Country, 26-27.

entirely. Washington and his counterparts used phrases like “savages” or ‘brutes” to describe Native Americans, showing that in their private thoughts and correspondence, the entrenchment of indigenous peoples as the other was nearly irreversible.

But this was not unique to the American side of the conflict. Of note is the 1777 campaign that climaxed with the twin battles of Saratoga in 1777. In this instance, a newcomer to the American Theater of Operations, General John Burgoyne, was dispatched from Europe to take command of operations in the Hudson Valley. Arriving, Burgoyne seemed to have some notion of what to expect from Native Americans. In June 1779, an examination of the Earl of Harrington, Burgoyne’s aide de camp, demonstrates the early views of how Burgoyne interacted with the Native Americans that fell under his command. In his early dealings, Burgoyne forbade any form of scalping except for dead prisoners, and offered bounties for live prisoners brought back to him in a council of war given near Lake Champlain before the campaign truly got underway. Later, the work discusses details of Burgoyne’s response to the murder of Jane McCrea, perhaps the single most significant result of the campaign for Native Americans.

In late July of 1777, an incident occurred outside Fort Edward, New York, that complicated the Hudson Valley campaign, and irrevocably altered the relationship between Burgoyne and the colonials. As Native American forces were searching homes near Fort Edward, they happened on Jane McCrea and a number of other civilians between the two armies. The party immediately secured their prisoners and moved towards the British lines. At this point, fact fades to speculation. Somewhere along the transit between where McCrea’s party was captured and the British lines, a scuffle ensued. While the circumstances surrounding the event itself are unclear, what is clear is

that a Native American warrior under Burgoyne's command arrived back at British headquarters with a blonde scalp and no Jane McCrea. The fallout from this death was immediate and long-lasting, with American propaganda seizing the moment to highlight the brutality of the British and their Native American allies. Washington was made aware of the incident almost immediately through a letter penned by Philip Schuyler, who described the event among other atrocities committed, heightening the outrage in the American camp.[31]

The British had to respond quickly to this incident lest they lose more ideological ground against the Americans. Burgoyne immediately wanted to put the warriors involved to death stating that the only reason these warriors were pardoned was due to the impacts the loss of their involvement might have on the army. Burgoyne stated to a Mr. St. Luc that he would rather "lose every Indian, than connive at their enormities." In response to the murder and in following his convictions, Burgoyne called another war council at Fort Edward. He admonished them again to act with humanity and offered bounties for live prisoners. The next morning, many warriors departed the camp for their homes without leave. This opened the floodgates and large numbers of Native Americans left the army in a near constant stream throughout the campaign.[32]

This experience fundamentally altered Burgoyne throughout his campaign in the Hudson Valley. In the years following the failure of the 1777 campaign, he was vehement in attempting to restore his reputation as a competent commander. His testimonies,

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[31] Eric Schnitzer and Don Troiani, *Don Troiani's Campaign to Saratoga* (Guilford, CT.: Stackpole Books, 2019), Amazon Kindle e-book locations 1617-1681; Kevin John Weddle, *The Compleat Victory: The Battle of Saratoga and the American Revolution* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2021), 172-174.
[32] John Burgoyne, *A State of the Expedition from Canada, as Laid before the House of Commons* (London: Printed for J. Almon, 1780), 48-51, 56.

compiled and published after the war in a work entitled *A State of the Expedition from Canada - As laid before the House of commons*, represents a concerted effort on Burgoyne's part to explain his own actions throughout the campaign. This same work made a case to explain his actions following the murder of Jane McCrea. Despite his actions to urge orderly conduct by the Native Americans, the damage was done. Despite any faults that may have existed in the historical Jane McCrea, she was now, in the words of Christopher Ward in *The War of the Revolution*, "a martyred saint in the patriotic hierarchy."[33] Between this impugning of his character and his visceral reaction to the murder, Burgoyne was the face of her death in the eyes of the British and Americans. Burgoyne is honest about this shift in perception on Native Americans after the incident with McCrea. He states that:

> I had been taught to look upon the remote tribes who joined me at (Skenesborough), as more warlike, but a very little time proved that, with equal depravity in general principle, their only preeminence consisted in ferocity. The hopes I had placed in their wild honour, and in the control of their conductors, which, as I have stated before, at first had been promising, were soon at an end; and their ill-humour and mutinous disposition were manifest shortly after my arrival at Fort Edward…Rapacity, self-interest, and presumption are the characteristics of these men, with some few exceptions.[34]

Where Burgoyne had been optimistically wary of the use of Native Americans before the 1777 campaign, his opinions and attitude solidified into much the same as many of his contemporaries. The notion of frontier warfare as a violent and bloody cycle continued to evade European officers who were, in their own rights, happy to utilize Native Americans as irregulars but failed to consider the cultural significance of battlefield practices, and perhaps more importantly, overlooked the nearly two centuries of malice between the

[33] Christopher Ward, *The War of the Revolution* (New York, NY: Skyhorse Pub., 2011), 495-499.
[34] Burgyone, *State of the Expedition,* 98-100.

colonists and Native Americans. Burgoyne and his counterparts failed to recognize that it was impossible to utilize Native American forces without the battlefield practices that so abhorred the Europeans. The conflict on the frontiers quickly devolved from the rational set piece battles and skirmishes of a European war to the rapid and bloody cycles of frontier war.

Chapter 3: Post Revolution and Early America: War Everafter

After the American War of Independence, the British found themselves in a similar position to the French a few decades before. As part of the 1783 Treaty of Paris, the now independent United States exerted nominal control over the former 13 colonies and shortly after, the Great Lakes. Most problematic for the Native Americans of these now American regions was that the United States was far from being in a position to exert any form of realistic control over westward expansion. Once the ineffectual British protections on westward expansion were lifted, a flood of settlers crossed the boundary line of 1763. Attitudes of dislike found among British officers in the 1750s transitioned into active attempts at outright destruction by later Americans. A departure from earlier economic subjugation, the diplomatic climate of indigenous-American relations actively declined to the point that prolonged peaceful contact became the exception, not the rule.

But the settlers brought more with them than the items they carried. They brought with them the entrenched legacy of hatred towards Native Americans. Populations that had remained entirely outside concerted commitments to any party in the last century now found themselves the central focus of aggression from American settlers. To the east, Washington's personal transformation on Native Americans was complete, with the author of the early deferential diary entry giving way entirely to Washington, the Town Destroyer. However, the racially motivated negative perceptions of Native Americans were assisted by the inability of the United States to effectively restrain violence on the frontier.

When the United States claimed the Upper Great Lakes in the 1783 Treaty of Paris, the government was not in a position to effectively govern the territory itself.

While the territory was ceded in 1783, the republic could not gain control of the territory in a real sense. British garrisons remained in the region, undermining the economic development of the region. This status had to be rectified through the 1796 Jay's Treaty, which set a concrete date for all British garrisons to evacuate the region, setting the final date for British occupation of the Great Lakes on June 1, 1796. Starting that summer, the Native Americans would be on their own, isolated against American expansion and efforts of subjugation.[35]

If the pre-revolution British frontier was an unsafe place for Native Americans, it was downright dangerous on the American fringe. Violence steadily increased with westward expansion, with Indian Wars along the entirety of the western frontier in the decade that followed the peace at Yorktown. The attitudes of Bouquet and Amherst found their ideological descendants in American politicians, notable among them Thomas Jefferson. In dealings with the Native Americans on the frontier, Jefferson advocated an approach of economic subjugation to strip lands without the need for bloodshed. In a letter to future president William Henry Harrison in 1803, Jefferson stated that the aim of his administration would be to "push our trading uses, and be glad to see the good and influential individuals among them run in debt, because we observe that when these debts get beyond what the individuals can pay, they become willing to lop them off by a cession of lands."[36] While initially out of the pattern of violence depicted earlier in this thesis, with Jeffersonian changes to the army, namely in reducing its size and disposition,

[35] "The Jay Treaty; November 19, 1794," Avalon Project - British-American diplomacy, accessed August 9, 2022, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/jay.asp.
[36] S. Mintz and S. McNeil, "President Thomas Jefferson to William Henry Harrison, Governor of the Indiana Territory, 1803," Digital history, accessed July 29, 2022, http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/indian_removal/jefferson_to_harrison.cfm.

the economic emphasis fit more neatly into the pattern of subjugation in favor for expansion.[37]

The entrenching of attitudes towards Native Americans that occurred between the French and Indian War and the administration of James Madison reared its head during the War of 1812. Caused in part due to Native American economic interchange with the British for weapons, the United States had a great deal of anxiety about the growing unity of the indigenous peoples against their expansion. When the war truly commenced, Native Americans played a critical role in the frontier theaters of the war, including the Great Lakes Theater. Commanders like William Hull held deep-seated resentments towards Native Americans, and were not shy about these perceptions. Hull gave a proclamation in July 1812 after moving his forces across the river from Detroit into Canada. In this proclamation, Hull shows the duplicity of American rhetoric on Native Americans, saying:

> The first stroke of the Tomahawk, the first attempt with the scalping knife, will be the signal for one indiscriminate scene of desolation. No white man found fighting by the side of an Indian, will be taken prisoner. Instant destruction will be his lot. If the dictates of reason, duty, justice and humanity cannot prevent the employment of a force which respects no rights, & knows no wrong, it will be prevented by a severe and relentless system of retaliation.[38]

Hull indicated his intention to wage war against the Canadians and their Native American allies while showing his willingness to engage in a war of outright destruction against them. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this proclamation that was planned to help bring neutral and sympathetic Canadians over to his side was largely unsuccessful. When the garrisons

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[37] "Early American Stances on the Size and Role of the Military and Its Effects on the War of 1812," American Battlefield Trust, March 25, 2021. Accessed July 30, 2022, https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/early-american-stances-size-and-role-military-and-its-effects-war-1812.

[38] Zaslow and Stacey, "Defence of Upper Canada, 1812," 18-19.

at Fort Mackinac and Fort Dearborn fell in July to forces largely comprised of Native Americans, Hull's tone dramatically shifted. Writing later that summer, Hull remarked that the loss of these frontier garrisons had "Open(ed) the northern hive of Indians," which now encircled Fort Detroit. Hull surrendered the fort after Governor General Isaak Brock, commander of the British forces laying siege to Detroit stated, "it is far from my inclination to join in a war of extermination; but you must be aware, that the numerous body of Indians who have attached themselves to my troops, will be beyond my control the moment the contest commences."[39] This had the desired effect, and Hull shortly after surrendered the last American post in the Upper Great Lakes. Native Americans played a significant role in the Great Lakes for the duration of the war, including battles like the Second Battle of Mackinac Island and the Battle of Fort Meigs.

But just as these perceptions from the most senior commanders were not unique in the wake of the French and Indian War, so too did these notions pervade American ranks. Andrew Jackson, commanding in the Southern Theater, wrote, "'Brave Tennesseans! Your frontier is threatened with invasion by a savage foe! Already do they advance towards your frontier, with their scalping knives unsheathed, to butcher your wives, your children, and your helpless babes."[40] Jackson carried this energy against the Red Stick Creek people and their allies, ruthlessly taking the war to their heartland. Jackson's most notable victory was at Horsehoe Bend, where he and his men encircled

[39] Ferdinand Brock Tupper, ed., "The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, K.B.," Project Gutenberg, accessed August 9, 2022, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/14428/14428-h/14428-h.htm.
[40] Mary-Ellen Cummings and Caroline Gebhard, "Treaties and Memorials: Interpreting Horseshoe Bend National Military Park," *The Public Historian* 18, no. 4 (1996): pp. 19-36, https://doi.org/10.2307/3379785. Pgs. 23-25.

and destroyed a fortified position with more than 1,000 native warriors, continuing the massacre into the night.[41]

Jackson and his like carried notions of Native American inferiority long after the campaigns. After the War of 1812 ended, Native Americans were left in an awkward diplomatic position. The British and Americans had made peace with the Treaty of Ghent in 1814, but the Native American issue was not sufficiently answered. In the wake of the conflict, Native Americans were sold out by their supposed imperial allies again, while the British and Americans licked their wounds and shifted their gaze westward. Over the next several decades, Native Americans would be forced off their lands through peaceable and violent means. The modified American approach of subjugation primarily through economic and legal reasonings utilized these attitudes to once again ramp up cycles of conflict. Jackson even remarked later in his political career that removal of Native Americans was the "benevolent policy of the Government, steadily pursued for nearly thirty years, in relation to the removal of the Indians beyond the white settlements." Jackson's attitude of removal of Native Americans from white society to lands beyond the frontier did little more than kick the can down the road, leading to increased conflict later in the century on the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains, in many instances due to the artificial influx of tens of thousands of displaced Natives. While Jackson and Hull cannot be said to have added anything new to the mixture of American attitudes towards Native Americans, they did show the final stage of entrenchment of these ideals. Now, violence was an option of last resort, with the

[41] "The Frontier General (1812–1814)," The Historic New Orleans Collection, accessed August 9, 2022, https://www.hnoc.org/virtual/andrew-jackson/frontier-general-1812%E2%80%931814.

Americans instead preferring to use economic reliance and legal means to force those they deemed lesser beings off their lands.[42]

[42] "President Thomas Jefferson to William Henry Harrison, Governor of the Indiana Territory, 1803."

Conclusion

Relations with Native Americans proved a complex issue for Euro-American powers, even in the best of times. Diplomacy between the colonies and Native communities never formed in the distinct way the British and later Americans desired. The relationships between Whitehall and Native leaders could only be understood as tenuously stable, rather than anything stable in a long-term sense. Economic, geographic, and political pressures continued to destabilize relationships between the colonies and their indigenous neighbors to a point of near continuous warfare.

While relationships between the Euro-American powers continued to develop and evolve throughout the political generations, relationships between indigenous and Euro-Americans on the continent were defined more by stagnation and entrenchment than evolution. Attitudes of dislike found among British officers in the 1750s transitioned into active attempts at outright destruction by later Americans. Trade agreements that had been at least partially equitable were now also new avenues of attack on Native Americans. Debt and predatory behaviors weakened native communities and forced them to sell their lands as repayment. With the British withdraw from the Northwest Territory, there was no opposing power to bulwark against these practices. With these injustices, violence was a necessary gamble for indigenous leaders to make, for even the chance at continued autonomy and defense from encroachment. From economic subjugation to the outright military destruction of Native Americans, the diplomatic climate of indigenous-American relations actively declined to the point that prolonged peaceful contact became the exception, not the rule.

At the core, these negative relationships were defined by the failure of the British and later Americans to truly understand their Native counterparts. While perfectly happy to utilize the Native Americans to play off imperial rivals or to stock armies, British officials operated under the impression that Native societies would play by British rules. Battlefield practices, well documented on the frontier and a central part of warring societies were written off as barbarities that could be civilized out of warriors, if General Burgoyne was to be believed. The inability for British officers to force the abandonment of these practices under their command and through fighting against antagonistic nations led to hardened racial prejudices forming against Native Americans. Where unpleasant notions of barbarity once resided, a documented political strategy of dominance or destruction soon replaced it, leading to near genocidal wars against Native Americans, even going so far as to deliberately employ biological warfare.

This failure to understand Native Americans on a societal level had long-reaching consequences. In the years following the War of 1812, American expansion was defined by its frequent and bloody Indian Wars. From the Ohio to the Pacific, the powder and shot of war won out over pen and paper of treaties. But so too did the inability of Americans to really understand the societies they encountered. Moving into each new contact was the legacy of the previous contacts, which guided and oftentimes preordained the outcome of each encounter. This then added to the legacy of contact and restarted the cycle as the republic moved ever westward. Understanding how these early perceptions formed and developed is critical to understanding the actions of later relationships between indigenous Americans and the United States. This self-perpetuating cycle helped

to ensure that violence started in the early eighteenth century continued and intensified to the end of the nineteenth.

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