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War Chiefs and Generals: The Transformation of Warfare in the Eastern Woodlands

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War Chiefs and Generals: 
The Transformation of Warfare in the Eastern Woodlands

by

Robert Dalton Capps

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

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ABSTRACT

ROBERT DALTON CAPP S: War Chiefs and Generals: The Transformation of Warfare in the Eastern Woodlands (Under the direction of Dr. Mikaëla Adams)

In this thesis, I examine how military strategies and tactics of Native Americans and Euro Americans changed over time after they came into contact with each other in the Eastern Woodlands. I accomplish this goal by covering in detail three conflicts: Hernando De Soto’s expedition into the Southeastern United States, King Philip’s War, and the Northwest Indian War. By using these three conflicts, I examine this transformation from both a temporal and spatial perspective. I approach this point of inquiry by using a variety of primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources come from a variety of fields, but mainly history and ethnohistory. I explore the weapons, armor, and leaders in each conflict. I also describe in detail each of the essential campaigns to illustrate a combatants’ strategies and an assortment of battles to illustrate the combatants’ tactics. Each individual conflict serves two purposes. The first is to find any small-scale changes that occurred within the timeline of the conflict itself. The second purpose is to use these wars as measuring sticks for broader changes that happened over several centuries of contact and conflict. In the conclusion I demonstrate common themes of change that can be explained by using these particular conflicts. Each chapter reveals something new and interesting about Native and Euro-American Warfare that relates to the transformation of military thought. In the conclusion, I cover themes I believe exemplify the change and continuity of warfare in the Eastern Woodlands. Some of these themes include usage of firearms, Native fortifications, and use of war animals.
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**Introduction:**  
The Battleground

The history of human kind is filled with violence and warfare. Some wars were fought for land and resources; others were fought because of differences in ideologies and philosophies. Military strategists and tacticians learn from their predecessors so that they do not make the same mistakes. They read the accounts of great commanders in order to follow their lead, hence why military academies study military theory. In this thesis, I examine how the interactions of Native American tribes and Euro-American militaries changed warfare in the Eastern Woodlands of North America over almost three centuries of contact and conflict. I use Hernando De Soto’s expedition, King Philip’s War, and the Northwest Indian War as measurements of this change. I have studied military evolution because I want to add to our understanding of how these conflicts shaped the Eastern Woodlands. The political landscape of the area east of the Mississippi River was directly impacted by the outcomes of these conflicts. By studying the military nature of these conflicts, we can further understand the colonial process in North America.

I argue that these three conflicts were pivotal points in time and space, or as I call them, benchmarks of military evolution. De Soto’s expedition in 1539-1543 was the first prolonged contact between Native groups and European powers in what is now the Eastern United States. King Philip’s War, which started in 1675, serves as a good midway point since Native groups still exerted control over much of the east coast. Although European powers had begun colonizing the region, they had not yet reached the height of their power. The Northwest Indian War serves as a good ending point, because
it was the first prolonged Indian conflict experienced by the newly established United States, although certainly not the last. Each one of these conflicts had lasting effects on the region in which they were fought. The loss of Indian land or the transformation of Indian life ways are just two examples. On the other side of the battleground, Western powers colonized a new land and these frontier experiences helped shaped their developing national identities. By examining these conflicts as benchmarks we can see the status of military tactics and strategy at that time, which allows us to see change over time once we have covered all three conflicts.

As I examine these conflicts in greater detail a wider picture begins to appear. The point of all this is to examine change over time, but this comes in many forms including adaptation, military consistencies, integration of new technologies, and shifts in ideas of warfare. In the body chapters of the thesis, I examine the three conflicts in detail; in the conclusion, I look at several themes and how they changed over time as seen through these conflicts. Some of these themes show no significant change, but that only strengthens the argument here. In order to show change it is necessary to understand what parts stay the same. Through this thesis, I hope to increase our understanding of military transformation in the Eastern Woodlands. The reason why I want to do this is because it has not been given the attention it deserves. Most historians simply state what has transpired without connecting it with the surrounding changes. I want to show the interconnectedness of military history in the Eastern Woodlands, not simply show what transpired.

The larger aim of this thesis is not only to understand military heritage but also to make sense of how Euro-Americans shifted the power balance in their favor in the
Eastern Woodlands. During my research, most of the histories I study focused on the English, French, and American militaries, without giving any credit to how the early Spanish conquistadors affected this same area. The early Spanish conquistadors had an immense impact on the status of the Mississippian chiefdoms. Natives did not have the same concepts of land ownership as westerners, although they had defined territories that they controlled. Differences in ideas about land use impacted how Native people dealt in early treaties with Europeans. Once Natives realized what was happening, military resistance was their only option to defend their remaining lands. I am making this point, because it is a central theme to these conflicts. These conflicts did not take place on some foreign soil, but on Native lands and colonized land. If we can understand the western pursuit of land for exploitation and colonization we can understand why Native people pushed so hard against their incursions.

Historians and ethnohistorians have written at great length about both De Soto’s expedition and the other conflicts we will cover, not to mention the numerous first hand accounts.¹ There has been plenty written about military tactics and strategy, but this often centers on the English and Americans with no regards to Spanish influence.² By including De Soto in this thesis, I hope to further expand our understanding of Native and Western interactions. There are several individuals that include both Native and western tactics in their writings, but even these tend to tell more of the European story. This is not to say that there is not writing about Natives at all, because there are substantial books about Native culture and Native warfare. Yet, once again these books are purposefully

one sided.3 My purpose is to set out a comprehensive side-by-side comparison of both
Native tactics and strategy with Western tactics and strategy.

To illuminate these conflicts, I take a comprehensive and comparative
perspective. Using primary and secondary sources, I give a short, but inclusive look at the
conflicts in question. In each conflict chapter I cover briefly the start of the conflict, its
leaders, the equipment, and then I delve into the campaign strategies and battle tactics.
Each of these sections includes a western and Native perspective. At the end of each
section I attempt to look for any small-scale changes that may have occurred within the
scope of that particular conflict. After covering each of these conflicts in such fashion, I
compare and contrast how each group did or did not change over time and space. Some
of the themes I discuss will apply to both groups, but others will apply to only one,
because it is a component unique to their style of warfare.

To accomplish these goals, I approach these conflicts from an ethnohistorical
standpoint. Ethnohistory is a combination of history, ethnography, archaeological
evidence, Native beliefs, and oral traditions. As many Native groups have no written
records for the time periods I cover, many of the points about Native social structure and
military traditions will come from this discipline. Military history plays an equally
important role. Since this thesis is about examining military change over time, it goes
without saying that much of the content will come from sources that deal specifically

3 John Sugden, Blue Jacket: Warrior of the Shawnees (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000);
Fairfax Downey, Indian Wars of the U.S. Army 1776-1865 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday &
Company, 1963), 50.
with military interactions. I attempt to combine these two areas of thought in order to present a cohesive argument about military change over time.

Each of these conflicts was fought between a different western power and different combinations of Native tribes. In De Soto’s entrada, the combatants were the Spanish against various Mississippian chiefdoms. King Philip’s War involved the English colonies of the Northeast against a loose coalition of Native people under Metacomet. In the Northwest Indian War, the newly established American state went to war against a pan-Indian resistance imbedded in the Ohio Territory. Although these wars were separated by time and place, by examining them together, we see snapshots of the gradual change of warfare over time.

My chapters are ordered chronologically beginning with Hernando De Soto. In this chapter, I review the events that lead to the excursion. After discussing details such as weapons and armor, I begin to look at the De Soto campaign from an overall standpoint. Once this has been accomplished I review particulars in battle tactics by looking at three battles Napituca, Mabila, and Chicaza from both the Native and Spanish perspectives. I then look how the expedition affected the Southeast. Finally I expose changes in minor military reforms.

In the next chapter on King Philip’s War, I begin with some background on the causes of the war. I also provide a brief context about the status of the different tribes and colonists at the time of conflict, including their equipment. Next, I present the overall stratagem used by both sides and examine individual battles. These battles include the Battle of Pease Field, Great Swamp, and Bridgewater. During the examination of these

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battles I examine specific tactics and combat styles. Lastly, I look for any small-scale changes and the after-effects of the war.

The last body chapter consists of an in-depth look at the Northwest Indian War. This war was the longest of all three. I begin by looking at the early raids and escalation of this conflict. As with the other conflicts, I also introduce the weapons, leaders, and other equipment. The Northwest Indian War had extensive campaigns, which I expose and provide the Native responses to said campaigns. The battles I examine in this chapter are Harmar’s Defeat, St. Clair’s Defeat, and Fallen Timbers. I use these battles and the early raids to show how Native in the Ohio Territory and the American State conducted warfare in this region.

In his groundbreaking work *On War*, nineteenth-century military theorist Carl von Clausewitz said that, “War is merely the continuation of policy by other means. The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from their purpose.” It is important to understand the human and political aspect of war, not just the battle strategy. This thesis demonstrates that conflicts do not occur in a vacuum. Rather, they are symptoms of larger issues in the colonial process. In all three cases there were political agendas at work that complicated not only the start of these conflicts, but the continuation and endings as well. In all of the conflicts I examine, Euro-American powers sought to exert control over Native land. When peaceful political negotiations or relations began to deteriorate with Native tribes, conflict often broke out. During De Soto’s expedition however, Mississippian chiefdoms did not have preexisting political relations with the Spanish Empire. Instead, the Spanish

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attempted to find ways of colonizing this area as other conquistadors had done in Central and South America. Native Americans had their own distinct political reasons for fighting these wars. Most of them seemed to be a reaction to European or American encroachment. I explore the specifics of these reasons in the subsequent chapters.

As we take our journey through these conflicts pay close attention to the similarities and differences between how each group utilizes their strengths and weaknesses. Some groups made small adjustments in the wars in which they fought, while others made virtually no changes throughout the conflict. Most of the changes I focus on took place over the broad spectrum of time and will come in the conclusion of this piece. We will start this journey in chronological order beginning with De Soto’s expedition.
Chapter I

Hernando De Soto’s Expedition in the American Southeast: 1539-1542

To be the first Europeans to see the great chiefdoms of the American Southeast must have been quite the experience. Yet, these same Europeans faced a hard military expedition through hostile territory. Some of the chiefdoms and groups they encountered fared better than others against the Spanish. Taking this entrada from the other perspective, the Native groups must have been in awe of what the Spaniards brought with them to the New World. Steel equipment and, most of all, horses made the Spanish a very deadly adversary. Hernando De Soto’s expedition into the American Southeast is the beginning point for my comparison of the transformation of military strategy and tactics between Native groups east of the Mississippi and Western powers. The De Soto entrada was the first prolonged excursion by European powers throughout what would become the Southeastern United States. De Soto’s entrada shows how the first prolonged contact between European and Native American militaries played out by illustrating the earliest tactics and strategies used by both powers.

There are two concepts that need to be laid out before the examination of the expedition can begin: the topography of the American Southeast and the geographic origin of the combatants. As far as the land is concerned, we should not think of the Southeast as we do today. The land that the Spanish traversed looked vastly different
from the land we now inhabit. Certain plants such as kudzu, bluegrass, and honeysuckle were not present in the New World. In the place of these invasive species, there were large and diverse pine and deciduous forests that are absent in many areas today.  

That is not to say that this was virgin forest as the old mantra goes, for that would imply that the Native people had had no effect on the environment. Before the arrival of the Spanish, Native Americans had long practiced the art of forest management. Native groups burned forested areas to create farmland or started brush fires to herd white-tailed deer for hunting.

The men who composed the Spanish force were not as homogenous as one might think, nor did those from Spain consider themselves Spanish. Spain was not even Spain at this point in time, but was ruled by the Kingdoms of Castile and Aragon. Some of the soldiers did not harken from the Iberian Peninsula at all. Nor were all of the voyagers European or men. For example some of the men that went were of African descent. A few wives and other female camp followers joined the expedition as well.

Nevertheless, despite their varying political allegiances and diverse backgrounds, the members of this expedition considered themselves Christian and referred to themselves as Christians. Although the accounts do not agree on the number of men taken on the expedition the average number comes to between 650 and 700, but of course these lists may not include every person who came along such as slaves. Yet, we should not consider this force as a national army or a militia like those we will see later on in this

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7 Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, 92.
8 Ignacio Avellaneda, “Hernando de Soto and His Florida Fantasy”, in *The Hernando De Soto Expedition: History, Historiography, and “Discovery” in the Southeast* ed. Patricia Galloway (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 211.
thesis. Instead it was a pre-modern army in the form of a collective of experienced, semi-professional soldiers under the command of a colonial governor and not a professional general.

Hernando De Soto’s military decisions were shaped by his prior military experiences. De Soto spent most of his life in the New World, arriving at the age of 14. While a page under Pedrarias in Central America, De Soto received combat training, namely fencing, under a fellow Spaniard, which turned De Soto into a formidable swordsman. He came from humble beginnings, and he sought to prove himself like others from the same area, including other conquistadors like Francisco Pizzaro. De Soto’s experiences on expeditions in Central and South America gave him invaluable military experience that he drew on during his venture into La Florida, the Spanish designation for North America at this time. After leaving Central America, De Soto traveled south with the Pizarro brothers where he began to stand out even more in the realms of combat and military leadership. After the death of the Incan leader, Pizarro made De Soto captain general of the Spanish force and De Soto showed great poise and calm during fights with Incan general Quizquiz. The experience that De Soto received while in central and south America was crucial not only to his decision-making in the American Southeast, but also to his ability to lead the expedition at all.

The combatants on the Native American side included the militaries of various groups and chiefdoms such as the Apalachee, Uzachile, Urriparacoxi, Mabila, Alibamo, Chicaza, and Quiqualtam. These were not the only Natives groups that De Soto came into contact with.

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contact with, nor were they the only people with whom De Soto fought, but these are the
ones that I will examine here. Not all of these groups were necessarily truly
Mississippian, as archaeologists define the term. For example, the Safety Harbor people
of Ozita in present-day central Florida that De Soto encountered first existed in a
transitional zone. They had some of the elements of Mississippian society, but did not
display all of its major characteristics.\(^\text{14}\) Due to lack of written evidence, the history of
these people come to us through archaeology and the chronicles from these first
encounters.\(^\text{15}\)

Unlike De Soto, about whom there is much written, the leaders of the Native
Americans are shrouded in mystery. We can only know men like Tazcalusa and the Chief
of Uzachile by their actions and their demeanor according to the Spanish. Yet, Native
leaders like these are no less important than De Soto. The decision of Tazcalusa to fight
the Spanish at Mabila became a turning point for the Spanish expedition. In contrast,
Uzachile’s decision to attempt a surprise ambush at Napituca gave the Spanish an
opportunity to use their full military capabilities against a Native force. It is unfortunate
that the rational of Native decisions can never be known for certain, but there are some
trends that we can analyze for insight into pre-Columbian warfare. For example the
decision of the Chief of Chicaza to fight the Spanish was most likely driven by the

\(^{14}\) Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, 69-70.
\(^{15}\) There are four chronicles written by members of the expedition. They are as follows: Garcilaso Del Inca,
“The History of La Florida” in vol. 2 of *The De Soto Chronicles* ed. Lawrence A. Clayton, Vernon James
Knight Jr., and Edward C. Moore (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993); Gentleman of Elvas,
“True Relation of the Hardships Suffered by Governor Don Hernando De Soto and Certain Portuguese
Gentlemen in the Discovery of the Province of Florida,” in vol. 1 of *The De Soto Chronicles* ed. Lawrence
A. Clayton, Vernon James Knight Jr., and Edward C. Moore (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press,
1993); Rodrigo Rangel, “Account of the Northern Conquest and Discovery of Hernando De Soto,” in vol. 1
of *The De Soto Chronicles* ed. Lawrence A. Clayton, Vernon James Knight Jr., and Edward C.
Moore (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993); Luys De Biedma, “Relation of the Island of Florida”, in
vol. 1 of *The De Soto Chronicles* ed. Lawrence A. Clayton, Vernon James Knight Jr., and Edward C.
actions of the Spanish while in Chicazan territory. The Spanish stole from the food stores of the Chicaza and took captives, while claiming to be friendly. The Chicazans themselves stole hogs from the Spanish, but were punished by having their hands cut off. Given these circumstances, we can surmise that the Chief of Chicaza intended to punish the Spanish for their misbehavior and restore the balance of power between Natives and newcomers.

To make sense of the military encounters between the Mississippians and De Soto’s army, we must also consider their weapons and other items of war. The Spanish brought a multitude of equipment to the Americas. In melee combat the Spanish utilized swords, halberds, axes, and knives. The most important feature of these items is that they were made of steel and not wood. The distinction between wood and steel in the arms is important, but a person’s skill with that any weapon is paramount. A Native warrior with a wooden war club could fight just as effectively as a Spaniard with a steel sword. However, a steel sword fares far better against bare skin than a wooden club does against steel armor. A halberd is a long pole arm, similar to a pike in that it can be used to dismount men from horseback, except that instead of just a spear point it includes an axe-like head. A group of 60 halberdiers guarded De Soto throughout the expedition.

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18 Avellaneda, “Hernando de Soto and His Florida Fantasy”, 214.
Spanish also used steel axes to break through palisades, such as the one at the Battle of Mabila.¹⁹

For long-range weaponry the Spanish used the crossbow and an early firearm known as the arquebus. The arquebus was an early matchlock-style firearm. A matchlock firearm utilizes a lit match to light a priming pad, which then ignites the powder charge to fire a projectile. ²⁰ The arquebus, although a staple of the Spanish conquests, was not always the most successful weapon. Especially in the case of De Soto’s expedition, the mobility of the Native people did not allow for the clean shot needed for the arquebus to be effective. The same could be said of the crossbow. Tactically the arquebus, or any early firearm for that matter, was good against people massed in formations, but against quick moving warriors with no armor to hold them down the arquebus lost its edge. Another issue was the logistics of supplying gunpowder and shot. The Spanish did not have the ability to make gunpowder on the march. The crossbow offered fewer logistical problems because they could refashion bolts. While on the march after the battle with the Chicaza, for instance, the Spanish established a forge where they repaired their arms and armor, presumably also fashioning new bolts. ²¹ Even though the crossbow had its own issues with hitting its targets because of the mobility of the Indian warriors, the crossbows were more accurate and more numerous on the expedition than the arquebus.

Defensively, the Spanish had shields, light armor, and heavy armor, all of which came with their own sets of advantages and disadvantages. The greatest advantage was

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the ability of these armors to either deflect or lessen the penetration of Native arrows. Even the light armor made of layered quilt pads softened the blow of an arrow to the point of not allowing serious injury.\textsuperscript{22} Heavy armor posed some problems. Although it deflected arrows and softened blows from clubs, heavy armor limited a Spanish soldier’s mobility because it was large and covered most of the torso and upper body. The weight could also prove a death trap. On multiple occasions when crossing waterways, men wearing heavy armor drowned because of the weight. Most notably during the battle against the Quiqualtam, a canoe was overturned causing several Spanish in full armor to sink to the bottom of the Mississippi River and drown.\textsuperscript{23}

In addition to steel weaponry, the Spanish also used animals of war. War dogs and seasoned battle horses gave the Spanish an important military advantage. Although the Natives had some small, domesticated dogs, they had nothing like the war mastiffs and greyhounds used by the Spanish.\textsuperscript{24} The Spanish used these dogs to chase down fleeing Indians.\textsuperscript{25} The Spanish brought 243 horses on the voyage, but only about 220 made it to landfall in present-day Florida.\textsuperscript{26} Horses gave De Soto a great military advantage. The Native people in the American Southeast had never seen such an animal before and they had few ways of defending themselves against them. Horses made the Spanish much more mobile and offered the soldiers height, force, and protection as they engaged Native people in combat. Indians, however, quickly learned how to mitigate this advantage, and afterwards targeted horses in their assaults on the Spanish. Another sort of defense

\textsuperscript{22} Hudson, \textit{Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun}, 68.
\textsuperscript{23} Hudson, \textit{Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun}, 392.
\textsuperscript{24} Garcilaso, “La Florida”, 152, 459.
mounted against the horses occurred in present-day Florida. During De Soto’s march out of the swamp of Ocale and into Apalachee territory, the Apalachee Indians set up barriers for the horses by tying poles to trees.\textsuperscript{27} These barriers slowed down the Spanish advance by impeding the horses’ movements, but were not effective in killing or hurting any of the horses.

Native American weapons, on the other hand, were less numerous in type, but no less impressive in design. The two most important Native American weapons were the bow and the war club. The bow, used by essentially every group the Spanish faced, was constructed from a multitude of woods including “hickory, ash, and black locust.”\textsuperscript{28} The chronicles of De Soto are thick with descriptions of the accuracy of the Native American man with a bow. These sixteenth-century bows were different from bows used in later conflicts in that these bows tended to be much larger. The bows were “a moderately long D-bow – with a length of about fifty to sixty inches – and with a pull of weight of about fifty pounds.”\textsuperscript{29} Native American warriors’ ability to use these bows was not to be trifled with. There were several cases throughout the expedition where the accuracy of these bows showed the Native’s ability to use them as well as any Spaniard could use a crossbow. One example comes from the Battle of Mabila: a Native warrior on top of a palisade wall shot Carlos Enríquez, who was on horseback, in the throat, one of the few areas not protected by some kind of armor.\textsuperscript{30}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{27} Hudson, \textit{Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun}, 118-119.
\textsuperscript{28} Hudson, \textit{Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun}, 17.
\textsuperscript{29} Hudson, \textit{Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun}, 18.
\end{flushleft}
A direct comparison of Native bows and Spanish crossbows provides insight into the utility and accuracy of these weapons. During the Battle of the Alibamo Fort there was a one-on-one stand off between the Spanish and the Alibamo Indians. An Indian on the opposite side of the river adjacent to the fort challenged one of the Spanish to a shooting match. After readying their respective weapons the two fired at the same time. The Spaniard hit the Indian square in the chest, most likely killing him instantly, while the Native’s arrow struck the Spaniard in the neck just below the left ear. It may appear in this instance that the Spaniard was more accurate, but that is a misleading assumption. Although we do not know the distance between the two men, it apparently was not a long shot, for the shooters seemed to be within both weapons’ effective ranges. The Indian warrior was given less of a target area than the Spanish soldier, however, since the Spaniard turned his body sideways and wore armor. It appeared that the Spaniard hit the Native in the middle of his chest, and the Native hit the Spaniard in the neck area just below the ear, a place unprotected by armor. Both men made great shots, but for the Native to hit an area so small was an astonishing display of accuracy.

The war club was the Southeastern Indian warrior’s weapon of choice at close range. Like the bow these war clubs varied in the type of wood used in their construction, but possibly more important was the diversity of their design. As various as the chiefdoms that used them, the war club could be made into a multitude of designs such as the globe form, sword form, spatulate, staff, and sword with globe head. These weapons were hand-carved and crafted with specific goals in mind. The most common and most sophisticated type of club was the sword club or falchion style. It resembles a curved

sword with a smaller striking area. This design is opposed to a club with a rounded striking area. The Southeastern chiefdoms also had pikes or spears, but initially they did not know how to use them against armored horses.

Native warriors did not have any substantial defensive equipment, at least when compared to Spanish armor. They did have defensive constructs such as palisades, which will be discussed later in the chapter. There is some evidence that they had reed or wicker breastplates along with some sort of bark helmet, but in the Southeast even this was a rarity. They also carried wicker shields. Rangel reports in his account how these wicker shields were so closely packed that a crossbow bolt would not penetrate them. Despite the fact that Southeastern warriors did not have western-style armor that does not mean that they went into battle completely naked. According to Charles Hudson, “a breechcloth and moccasins of brain-tanned deerskin” were the standard clothes worn into battle.

For the purpose of this analysis, the De Soto expedition should be thought of as a one long campaign. As De Soto traversed what is today known as the Southeastern United States (see Figure 1), he came into contact with numerous chiefdoms and indigenous people. It is important to note that the route he took was not straight or preplanned. De Soto followed some preexisting trails, but was also directed by Native interpreters and slaves. There were even some moments when De Soto and his men were left wandering in the wilderness. This examination of the expedition however, ends before De Soto crosses the Mississippi River in order to stay consistent with the rest of this thesis.

37 Rangel, “Account of Northern Conquest”, 300.  
38 Hudson, Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun, 2.
The Spanish embarked on their entrada with a list of specific goals and therefore they made particular strategic, logistical, and tactical decisions to accomplish their aims. The main goal was the search for riches and by extension to explore and establish a
Therefore, the military decisions made by De Soto were in regards to these overarching goals, notwithstanding his goal of conquest. In these military decisions, I include logistical ones such as searching and obtaining food items. The maintenance of an army deep in hostile territory requires a constant supply of food. An army cannot fight while it is hungry. De Soto, knowing this, took from Native corn stores like those at Chicaza or asked for supplies from the local cacique.

It is difficult to determine any overall Native American strategic plan of resistance. One reason for this difficulty is that the Spanish were not privy to any Indian war talks and thus the documents are silent on this topic. However, the documents indicate that there was no unified resistance with all the Native groups banding together. The mixture of chiefdoms and paramount chiefdoms did not allow for a unified Indian resistance under any one man or group since each chiefdom was autonomous and acted independently from other chiefdoms. Moreover, certain chiefdoms were rivals or enemies, which precluded them from joining in an alliance against the Spanish. For the most part, there was no systematic resistance orchestrated on a large scale by multiple groups or even a single group. Each chiefdom acted to protect its own individual interests.

There were, however, regional efforts to resist the Spanish. The Indians in Florida like the Apalachee and Uzachile, for example, constantly harried the Spanish using guerrilla tactics over a long period of time. No other Native group, at least in our area of

examination, harassed the Spanish for as long or as continually as the groups in Florida. However, these Florida Indians most likely were not coordinated, but working independently for the same goal. Native strategies mostly involved pushing the Spanish out of their territory. Once across polity borders, the Spanish became another group’s concern. Native warfare was not necessarily aimed at annihilating one’s enemy, but about maintaining a balance of power and protecting one’s interest within a certain defined territory.

Native tactics fall under two categories: guerilla attacks and formal battles. Guerrilla tactics consisted of coordinated ambushes and small raids. In other words, Native warriors used hit and run tactics. A formal battle for Native warriors resembled a style of warfare that would have been more familiar to the Spanish. During formal battles, Native chiefdoms called up large numbers of men and used them in formation with coordinated movements, similar to a European concept of a standing army. Although both tactics hurt the Spanish greatly in their own right, it would ultimately be the combination of both tactics over time that would cause the Spanish to eventually withdraw to back to Mexico.

Guerrilla tactics can best be examined through case studies. De Soto met resistance from the outset of his expedition in modern-day Florida, which continued through almost the entire journey through the region. The Apalachee put up a particularly sustained resistance. This resistance ended fairly abruptly when De Soto reached present-day Georgia, and apparently moved out of Apalachee territory. While in Florida multiple groups, including Apalachee, Ozita, Ocale, Acuera, and the people subject to chief Uzachile, resisted the Spanish using guerrilla tactics.

42 Hudson, Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun, 21.
Two examples, one with the people of Ocale and the other with the Apalachee, demonstrate this tactic. The swamp of Ocale worked to the advantage of Ocale warriors. The Spanish were unable to utilize the advantage of their horses in the swamp against the Ocale warriors, who managed to kill or wound several Spanish. The swampy conditions were not ideal for cavalry charges. The horses could not maneuver effectively and would have to move slowly through the mud. Specifically with the Ocale, Rangel notes that the Native warriors picked off stragglers, “But they [the Indians] had already wounded some soldiers who strayed and had killed a crossbowman who was named Mendoza.” While in Apalachee territory, the Apalachee like the Ocale used the terrain to their advantage by taking away the mobility of the Spanish horses and making quick strikes against the Spanish. The Spanish horses were not able to maneuver in swamps effectively, because of the marshy conditions.

These attacks did not happen in a vacuum. It is important to understand why these groups attacked the Spanish. Although we can never know the exact motives of the attacks we can look at some common themes. For example, when De Soto reached the first town under the control of the Apalachee they took slaves. This, in conjunction with the taking of corn stores, caused the Apalachee to retaliate. Moreover, the Apalachee had had contact with the Spanish before. When Narvaéz came through Florida several years before De Soto, Narvaéz fought against the Apalachee and the Apalachee undoubtedly learned from that encounter. When the Spanish came to the first town under Apalachee

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43 Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, 103.
45 Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, 118.
influence, the Natives were caught unaware. Soon after, however, Apalachee warriors began a series of guerrilla attacks to resist De Soto’s advance.\textsuperscript{46}

These guerrilla tactics were by far the most successful tactics used against the Spanish. Even though they were never able to inflict heavy losses, the constant harassment exacted its due toll. One casualty here and there may not seem very significant, but when an army has a fixed number of individuals every death matters. Psychologically, the constant harassment worried the Spanish and kept them up at night, like when De Soto first entered Apalachee territory and the Apalachee warriors hollered all night keeping the Spanish on guard.\textsuperscript{47} During the winter of 1539-1540, the Apalachee also continuously brandished their arms to keep the Spanish on guard, and the Spanish could not maintain such a state of vigilance without it having negative effects.\textsuperscript{48} The constant reminders of the presence of the Native warriors kept the Spanish awake to the point that it affected their ability to fight in battle.\textsuperscript{49} The Chicaza would do the same thing about two years later.

Also while De Soto was in Florida, the local Indians of Napituca attacked the Spanish. The exact date of the Battle of Napituca is unknown, but it occurred somewhere on a plain before two lakes between the September 16 and September 22 of 1539.\textsuperscript{50} At the appointed time when De Soto was to meet with the chiefs representing Uzachile, 300-400 warriors poured out from the nearby forest, hoping to surprise the Spanish. However, a Native interpreter had warned De Soto of the plan before the battle commenced, so the Spanish troops were prepared for battle. De Soto immediately released his cavalry against

\textsuperscript{46} Hudson, \textit{Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun}, 117-118.
\textsuperscript{47} Garcilaso, “La Florida”, 192.
\textsuperscript{48} Hudson, \textit{Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun}, 142.
\textsuperscript{49} Garcilaso, “La Florida”, 192.
\textsuperscript{50} Hudson, \textit{Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun}, 109-111.
the Natives, many of whom fled back into the forest, but not before 30 to 40 had been killed.\(^{51}\) As the Native force retreated, some of the warriors took refuge in the two lakes. While in this position the Spanish and Natives exchanged ranged fire, but not to the benefit of either side. The Native warriors under siege in the lake grew tired and slowly began to surrender to De Soto.\(^{52}\)

One reason for the success of the Spanish at Napituca was the advantageous terrain for horses and the ability of the Spanish, with advance warning, to mount a successful counterattack with the full use of their arms and skill. If this battle had taken place in an enclosed area like the swamps the Spanish had been traversing, the Natives may have had better success against the Spanish. The Natives also played into Spanish hands by fighting them in open field combat. The superiority of Spanish armor helped De Soto achieve victory. In this instance, arrows fired from the lakes were not able to penetrate Spanish cuirasses. The Spanish also outnumbered the Natives about two to one. Even if the goal of the Native warriors was not to utterly vanquish the Spanish, but to simply defeat them in battle and force them to move on, the Natives made a serious miscalculation in this endeavor.

After this initial combat at Napituca, the Spanish captured some 300 Native warriors and women. These captives decided that servitude under the Spanish was not an option. Using whatever weapons they could, they attempted to overthrow their Spanish captors, but for most it was a fruitless endeavor.\(^{53}\) The sheer pandemonium that ensued from this attempt at freedom was quite dramatic, with tables turning over, shouting, yelling, and chains clanking. The captive Natives used whatever they could to strike harm

\(^{51}\) Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, 110-112.
\(^{52}\) Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, 112-113.
against the Spanish; they even managed to successfully injure De Soto. Unfortunately for the Natives, the arms they acquired, such as plates, tables, and sticks, were not enough to deal the substantial blows necessary to gain their freedom.\textsuperscript{54} Many of the Natives who rebelled fell under the Spanish sword.

It shows great fortitude and courage on the side of the Natives to make an attempt to overthrow their captors. That being said, not all of the Natives were participants in this fight, for some could not escape their shackles.\textsuperscript{55} As we will see later on, this was not the last time that Native captives or would-be captives refused to be held under the Spanish flag. During the Battle of Mabila, the Native warriors released several of the burden bearers that De Soto had brought with him. Burden bearers were integral to De Soto’s expedition. These captives served several purposes. Some were used in prisoner exchanges, the women were used as sex slaves and camp aids, and all carried Spanish goods and equipment. On multiple occasions, De Soto had several hundred burden bearers with his men. When De Soto left for Cofitachequi, for example the caciques of Ocute and Cofaqui gave the Spanish some 800 burden bearers to carry the Spaniards’ supplies.\textsuperscript{56} Native leaders gave the Spanish these bearers in an effort to build an alliance with De Soto, or, more likely, as appeasement for their demands so that they would leave. These burden bearers given to De Soto were most likely war captives.

Even though there was no active military resistance by the Native people from present-day Georgia to modern-day Alabama, this portion of the expedition reveals much about Spanish logistics. One can see that most of De Soto’s decisions were made with either food or wealth in mind. De Soto was often driven by tales of rich cities. En route

\textsuperscript{54} Garcilaso, “La Florida”, 181-183.
\textsuperscript{55} Hudson, Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun, 115.
\textsuperscript{56} Biedma, “Relation of the Island of Florida”, 229.
through present-day Georgia, De Soto heard stories from local Natives of powerful chiefdoms to the north; he also heard about possible gold. Although we cannot know for sure, it would have been apparent to the Indians that De Soto was looking for something. If they could convince De Soto to go looking for it somewhere else, they did. It is likely that many of these chiefdoms did not want to fight De Soto, but simply wanted him to leave. If they could accomplish this by sending De Soto somewhere else they did so. De Soto also made travel decisions based on food; at times his supplies were low and he needed to resupply.\textsuperscript{57} For example, while stuck in the wilderness of Ocute, an uninhabited region near the Savannah River, De Soto ordered his men to eat as little food as possible, because the land was not inhabited, and the troops moved quickly and covered as much ground as possible.\textsuperscript{58} Since this land was uninhabited there was no corn for the Spanish to appropriate.

What we have in the case of the wilderness of Ocute and other uninhabited zones is a forced march. A forced march, championed by great military commanders such as Alexander the Great, occurs when an army is made to march longer or farther than normal. It can be caused by a lack of supplies or necessities. In the pre-Columbian South buffer zones, according to anthropologist David Dye, were, “large, uninhabited areas between neighboring communities that are maintained through fear of raiding parties.”\textsuperscript{59} They were polity borders that helped to separate chiefdoms from one another. Without Native inhabitants, these buffer zones could not provide De Soto’s army with the supplies and resources they needed for a long stay or leisurely pace. The wilderness of Ocute is one of the larger buffer zones that De Soto encountered. Once exiting the wilderness of

\textsuperscript{57} Hudson, \textit{Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun}, 165.
\textsuperscript{58} Hudson, \textit{Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun}, 167-168.
\textsuperscript{59} Dye, \textit{War Paths, Peace Paths}, 12.
Ocute, De Soto traveled through much of what are today the states of Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama.

Although De Soto’s trek into present-day Alabama did not see direct military action, the army had to remain constantly vigilant due to continual harassment by local Indians. The second direct assault did not occur until they reached the town of Mabila, in present-day central Alabama. The Battle of Mabila was not only one of the most important battles of De Soto’s campaign, but also one of the most important that occurred in the Western hemisphere. Even though it was a pyrrhic victory for the Spanish, it was not the biggest military failure of the expedition from a tactical standpoint. Once under attack, De Soto managed to take the town and set it on fire. Mabila was the first and only hostile meeting with the formidable chief Tazcalusa, but it was also the first large scale fight since the Spanish had left Florida. The Battle at Mabila was the first formal-type battle used against the Spanish east of the Mississippi River. It is difficult to guess as to why Tazcalusa chose a formal battle as opposed to guerrilla tactics, but it is safe to say that Tazcalusa believed his warriors were up to the task of fighting the Spanish. The battle was apparently a pre-planned ambush. However, De Soto had sent scouts ahead to assess the nature of the town, and they relayed to him that the town was filled with armed warriors. De Soto expected trouble, but that did not dissuade him from going.

Mabila was a relatively small, palisaded town. Up to this point the Spanish had seen palisades, but they had not had to siege a town protected by one. A typical Mississippian palisade was formed by placing vertical columns of logs with crosswise split cane bindings covered with a mixture of mud and sod known as daub. Daub was

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also used to cover individuals’ houses. However, palisades were not universal and, according to Timothy Pauketat, the palisades were not only defensive, but offensive as well because it allowed the group to “project a large fighting force into distant lands.” In other words, if a town did not have a palisade the cacique would need to leave warriors at home in case of an attack, whereas walls allowed a cacique to mobilize more warriors.

The Battle of Mabila occurred on October 18, 1540. Although this attack was a planned, the battle began with an altercation between one of De Soto’s lieutenants, Baltasar de Gallegos, and one of Tazcalusa’s principle men. Gallegos, acting as De Soto’s captain of the guard, went to fetch Tazcalusa, but seeing his house full of warriors, left it. It was at this point that Gallegos took hold of a principal Indian and when the Indian made an attempt to pull away Gallegos cut off his arm. After this incident warriors began filing out of houses and firing arrows at the Spanish vanguard who had come into the town. De Soto and his guard and other companions were forced to fight their way out of the town. Once the Spanish were outside the walls, the Mabilans captured the Spanish supplies and freed the burden bears De Soto had with him.

After this initial foray, De Soto’s main body arrived, because De Soto had gone to Mabila ahead of the main body. De Soto then told his heaviest armored men, his lancers, to dismount and form up with four squads of footmen to assault the palisade. His lighter

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63 Timoth Pauketat, Chiefdoms and Other Archaeological Delusions (Plymouth: Altamira Press, 2007), 122.
64 Hudson, Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun, 236.
65 Hudson, Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun, 238.
armored men mounted the horses and surrounded the town to kill any fleeing Natives.\textsuperscript{67} Van Horne notes that in the typical Spanish formation attack the Spanish closed ranks and fought as a unit using their pikes and halberds, keeping and killing the Natives from a distance. The Native could not strike the unit with their war clubs if they could not get past the halberds.\textsuperscript{68} When De Soto formed up his men into squads this was likely the formation these squads took. These four squads attacked the palisade, using their axes to expose the wood of the palisade. They were beaten back and regained the walls again using the same tactics as before. Once inside, the Spanish set fire to the town and spared no one. At this point, at least from the Spanish perspective, the Mabilans had lost. In order to escape capture by the Spanish, the Mabilans either hanged themselves by their bowstrings or ran into houses on fire.\textsuperscript{69}

The Native forces lost between 2,500 and 3,000 men, although most scholars see this as an exaggeration.\textsuperscript{70} The Spanish lost eighteen men and twelve horses, but this does not account for the number of wounds they suffered.\textsuperscript{71} Spanish armor was to thank for the low number of Spanish dead. The biggest blow to the Spanish in this battle was the loss of supplies, including clothes, weapons, armor, food, and other items of a non-military nature, which were lost in the fire that burned the town. After the battle, De Soto and his men spent many days tending their wounds and resupplying as best they could. It took the

\textsuperscript{67} Hudson, \textit{Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun}, 241.
\textsuperscript{68} Van Horne, \textit{The Warclub}, 82.
\textsuperscript{69} Hudson, \textit{Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun}, 242-243.
\textsuperscript{70} Ethridge, Braund, Clayton, Lankford, Murphy, “Comparative Analysis of De Soto Accounts”, 175.
\textsuperscript{71} Kathryn E. Holland Braund, “The Battle of Mabila”, in \textit{The Search for Mabila}, ed. Vernon James Knight Jr. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009), 186. These numbers are based off the account from the Gentleman of Elvas.
Spanish some twenty-seven or twenty-eight days to recuperate from the damage they suffered at Mabila.\textsuperscript{72}

The Natives made two major miscalculations in fighting the Spanish at Mabila that anthropologist Charles Hudson very aptly addresses. Hudson states that the Natives had underestimated the strength of Spanish armor and that the Natives had stripped themselves of their greatest strength, agility, by crowding behind the palisade walls.\textsuperscript{73}

The closeness of combat allowed the Spanish to fight in formation with the full protection of their armor. Not to mention that their armor mostly shielded them from Native arrows. In the town of Mabila, the Native numbers were neutralized and Spanish armor and weaponry allowed them to kill Natives in mass because the Natives were not able to use their mobility to their advantage. As we have already seen, the mobility of Native warriors often allowed them to escape the Spanish in their heavy armor, but it also allowed them to use guerrilla tactics more effectively. This was not the case when they were enclosed behind palisade walls. Another mistake that Tazcalusa made was clearing the houses before the palisades, though we do not know why he did this.\textsuperscript{74} Although Tazcalusa could not have known De Soto’s strategy beforehand, clearing the houses only made it easier for Spanish horses to move about killing fleeing Natives. Tazcalusa had never seen De Soto’s horses, so he may not have understood how they were used in battle. It is impossible to know why Tazcalusa made these decisions, because De Soto was not present at the war talks and there are no Indian records of the deliberations.

The Spanish made effective tactical decisions in this battle, with maybe the exception of going to Mabila and entering with so few men in the first place. Yet, De

\textsuperscript{72} Ethridge, Braund, Clayton, Lankford, Murphy, “Comparative Analysis of De Soto Accounts”, 174.
\textsuperscript{73} Hudson, \textit{Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun}, 244.
\textsuperscript{74} Biedma, “Relation of the Island of Florida”, 233.
Soto could not show weakness in the face of his men therefore he had to enter the town. De Soto’s decision to split his men into four squads and fight in formation played to Spanish strengths, because it allowed them to assault the town on four fronts, which prevented the Natives from concentrating their efforts. Setting fire to the town also played into Spanish hands, because when forced by the fire to leave the palisade the Native warriors met death by lance. Despite all this success, the Spanish received over 600 individual wounds and were seriously demoralized.75

The third battle that I will examine is the battle with Chicaza. After the recovery from the Battle of Mabila, the Spanish moved northwest. By this point in the expedition, De Soto was afraid of dissension in his midst. While at Mabila, De Soto had received word that Spanish ships under Maldonado were on the coast at Ochuse (most likely Pensacola or Mobile Bay) only some six days away.76 De Soto feared many of his men would want to abandon the expedition and return home on these ships. De Soto had experienced dissention in the ranks in Central and South America, and he knew that in order to keep his army together he had to press onward.77 Any rest would give the troops a chance to think about what they were doing and probably begin to question De Soto himself. De Soto kept this information secret and assembled the troops for the march to Chicaza territory.

After wintering in Chicaza territory, Chicaza warriors conducted a surprise attack against the Spanish on March 4, 1541.78 The relationship between De Soto and Chicaza

75 Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, 244.
77 Albornoz, *Hernando De Soto*, 70.
78 Hudson, *Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, 267.
had deteriorated over the course of the winter for several reasons. Both the Chicaza and Spanish were guilty of theft, but also the heavy demands of De Soto and the taking of Native food stores likely brought on this fight.  

On the morning of March 4, Chicaza warriors in small numbers began moving under cover of darkness towards the town of Chicaza, where the Spanish were camped. After a large force of around 300 warriors gathered, they entered the camp. After which, the remaining Chicazans started shouting and beating drums and rushed into town from four directions in formation and set fire to anything and everything with flaming arrows. According to Biedma, the Chicaza warriors lit their arrows using little jars, so that the fire could be concealed en route. This uproar caught the Spanish by surprise causing many of them to flee. Unfortunately, the Chicazans did not press their advantage. Either by accident or by command, many horses were freed from their restraints. The Chicaza warriors mistook this running amok as Spanish cavalry and fled the camp, but not before inflicting considerable damage.

What can this battle tell us about Chicaza and Native tactics? For one, the use of fire by the Natives was a successful tactical decision because it caused mass confusion, but conversely it also factored in their eventual retreat. The smoke most likely masked the horses, leading to some confusion about a cavalry counterattack. There is no reason to believe that if the Chicaza had known the horses were not mounted that they would not have pressed the attack. This was a formal battle and surrounding the Spanish and attacking with four squads from four directions worked to the Chicazans’ advantage, because they effectively surrounded the Spanish encampment. By surprising the Spanish

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79 Robbie Ethridge, *From Chicaza to Chickasaw* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 42.  
80 Biedma, “Relation of the Island of Florida”, 236  
81 Ethridge, *From Chicaza to Chickasaw*, 43.  
82 Ethridge, *From Chicaza to Chickasaw*, 44.
at night and neutralizing the Spaniards ability to form squads themselves, the Chicaza warriors held the Spanish at a severe disadvantage. Even the Spanish chroniclers admit that if the Chicazans had pressed the attack “not a man of all of us would have escaped.” The Chicazans had even decided to attack again, but a rain prevented them from executing this planned attack.

This refusal to attack a second time can be explained in one of two ways. The least likely and most speculative explanation is that the Chicaza did not attack because the rain would have prevented their use of fire. The second and most likely explanation is that this rain represented a negative omen for the Chicaza warriors. Mississippian warriors were a highly spiritual group that had very particular war rituals. Before going into battle warriors would congregate with the head War Chief and fast for a period of days drinking only potions. Hudson notes in his groundbreaking work The Southeastern Indians several examples of omens, but I will simply use two. One example deals with the consolation of crystals. If the crystal failed to sparkle in the sunlight when a warrior passed that individual was sent home. Another example of ritual that warriors had to follow dealt with movements while on the offensive. Native warriors were not allowed to lean on trees or sit on the ground directly. If a man broke a twig he was required to carry it until nightfall. If warriors failed to follow these rules then that warrior would be sent home or the attack would be called off.

The Battle of Chicaza was more detrimental to the Spanish than the Battle of Mabila due to the loss of horses. As previously stated, the horse provided the Spanish with one of their greatest military advantages, as seen at the battle of Napituca and the

84 Ethridge, From Chicaza to Chickasaw, 55.
field around Mabila. While only twelve horses were lost at Mabila, some fifty horses were lost as a result of the fire that swallowed the town at Chicaza, taking away several of the Spaniards’ greatest military assets.\footnote{Ethridge, \textit{From Chicaza to Chickasaw}, 51, 55.} The course of the battle also shows a breakdown in command. De Soto had warned his troops to be ready for battle, but fatigue and weariness and a growing disdain for their commander kept them from following such an order, which subsequently caused many of the Spanish to flee their encampment unprepared. The Chicaza warriors used darkness to their advantage, implementing a night raid against the Spanish, but also using the Spaniard’s fatigue against them. The Chicaza warriors tried to attack the Spanish again several days later in similar fashion, but this time the Spanish were prepared and routed the Chicazans, who did not attempt another attack.\footnote{Biedma, “The Relation of the Island of Florida”, 237.}

The final battle that I will look at is the battle of the Alibamo fort. After leaving Chicaza, the Spanish headed northwest. De Soto had sent some troops ahead on the previous day to look for supplies. Juan de Añasco discovered a fort across a pathway backed by a stream, supposedly manned by 300 warriors.\footnote{Ethridge, \textit{From Chicaza to Chickasaw}, 56.} Añasco decided that attacking his position with such a small force was a bad idea, so he sent for De Soto and awaited reinforcements. The Spanish, it should be noted, waited in a specific defensive formation to protect the horses in their contingent. The Spanish stood in front of their horses and, using their shields, blocked any arrows from hitting the horses.\footnote{Ethridge, \textit{From Chicaza to Chickasaw}, 57.}

The position and intention of this fort is rather curious. There are no other examples of its kind in the chronicles. Today we know that Mississippian chiefdoms

\footnotesize{86 Ethridge, \textit{From Chicaza to Chickasaw}, 51, 55.  
88 Ethridge, \textit{From Chicaza to Chickasaw}, 56.  
89 Ethridge, \textit{From Chicaza to Chickasaw}, 57.}
would have made such a stand to prove their might against an opponent, but the way in which that was demonstrated here is different. The fort had low doorways that were possibly intentional to prevent the Spanish horses from gaining entrance. Once inside the fort the Spanish realized that there were not only no houses in this fortification, but also no food. This suggests that the Alibamo had built this fort for the sole purpose of challenging the Spanish. Ethnohistorian Robbie Ethridge suggests that the Alibamo knew about the Spanish and may have participated in the battle at Chicaza.\textsuperscript{90} The Battle at the Alibamo Fort occurred on April 28, 1541.\textsuperscript{91} Once De Soto arrived he used the same tactic he employed at Mabila, except instead of four squads he only used three. The difference here of course is that instead of having to fight through one palisade there were two. After the Alibamo had been pushed from the second wall, they escaped across a small footbridge over which the Spanish could not follow because they could not cross it with their horses.\textsuperscript{92}

The Battle of the Alibamo Fort was a strategic mistake for the Spanish, given the loss of life and because the battle could have been avoided altogether. The Alibamo had successfully shown they could challenge the Spanish. The fort was a defensive ploy used to draw the Spanish in. There is no way of knowing exactly what the intentions of the Alibamo Indians were, but what they accomplished is remarkable. Using the advantage of the double walls of the fort they managed to kill more Spanish than the Spanish could afford to lose. De Soto lost about eight men in the initial fighting and another fifteen or so afterwards from wounds.\textsuperscript{93} De Soto made the mistake of engaging this force when it

\textsuperscript{90} Ethridge, \textit{From Chicaza to Chickasaw}, 58-59.
\textsuperscript{91} Hudson, \textit{Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun}, 272.
\textsuperscript{92} Hudson, \textit{Knights of Spain, Warriors of the Sun}, 272-273.
\textsuperscript{93} Ethridge, \textit{From Chicaza to Chickasaw}, 58.
would have been possible to bypass this fortification completely by simply going in a
different direction. However, De Soto would not have his honor in question nor would he
turn down a challenge. These losses were not necessary, and the Spanish gained nothing.
One can only imagine De Soto’s frustration when the Native warriors fled across the
footbridge, leaving the Spanish behind in an empty fort. After leaving Chicaza, the
expedition continued north and eventually crossed the Mississippi river (see Figure 1)
and headed into present day-Arkansas and Texas. As it became apparent that they would
find no riches and as manpower began to dwindle, the expedition turned around towards
the Mississippi River to float down to Mexico.

The aftermath left by De Soto and his troops disrupted much about the
Mississippian world. As Ethridge puts it, “the Soto expedition cut a swath through the
entire Mississippian world, destabilizing many chiefdoms and thus making regional
readjustments and recovery difficult.”

When later Europeans came through the
Southeast in the seventeenth century, nothing came close to the majesty seen by
Hernando De Soto. De Soto’s expedition destabilized the region, and it brought European
diseases into the Southeast. Spanish pigs could have carried a multitude of diseases
including brucellosis, anthrax, and trichinosis. The Spanish eventually made it to
Mexico under the leadership of Moscoso, after De Soto’s death west of the Mississippi
River to sickness, but with only about one-third the original force they started with and
in far worse condition. The Spanish eventually returned and established Catholic
missions in Florida, but the fundamental transformation of Native life in the region

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96 Hudson, *Knight of Spain, Warriors of the Sun*, 409.
occurred when the Dutch, French, and English incorporated indigenous people in the growing global economy through trade of Indian slaves and firearms in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.  

When looking at these battles over the course of the expedition, a few key points emerge. The Spanish maintained the tactics they knew over the course of the expedition, using formations and their horses when they could. The Native groups did the same – they employed indigenous tactics and strategies of warfare to confront the Spanish. Certain Native groups like the Alibamo, however, seemingly modified their tactics after learning about Spanish strategies. By building a decoy fort, they were able to trick the Spanish and inflict heavy casualties. The Natives chose whether to use guerrilla tactics or formal battles for reasons we may never know. Since we only have archaeological evidence of Native American cultures, such as the temple mounds, from the people themselves it is impossible to know for sure what their intentions were in these battles. However, ethnohistory does help shed light on this issue, specifically that Native warriors desired to minimize casualties in war.

Overall the expedition of Hernando De Soto was a failure for the Spanish, because De Soto did not accomplish his goal of finding riches or establishing a permanent colony. Militarily, the expedition had some success, but in many cases these events could have gone either way. There were several pivotal moments when the Spanish had the advantage, but change a few details and the end result could have been different. Conversely, the Native people lost against the Spanish by miscalculations, poor tactical decisions, or simply not having the ability or technology to compete with the Spanish. Ultimately they were successful, however, at driving the Spanish out and

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97 Ethridge, *From Chicaza to Chickasaw*, 89-92.
delaying Spanish colonization of the Southeast for several generations. The next segment in this examination of military history will take us to the American Northeast over a century later where the Wampanoags and their allies fought for their sovereignty against English colonists.
Chapter II

King Philip's War:

1675-1676

The American Northeast did not develop into an English foothold on North America through peaceful action. King Philip’s War, fought from the summer of 1675 until the autumn of 1676, shaped the English colonial experience in the seventeenth century. The combatants in this war consisted of several New England Indian tribes, including the Nipmuc, Narragansett, and Wampanoag on the side of King Philip, and the English settlements of Plymouth Colony, Massachusetts Bay Colony, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. The English also employed the help of Native allies including the Pequot and Mohegan. In terms of the percentage of the population killed, King Philip's War was the bloodiest war ever fought on American soil. For the English some 1,538 men per every 100,000 were killed. The Indians lost 15,000 per every 100,000. Through King Philip’s War we can glean an understanding about the status of military tactics and strategy in this area of the Eastern Woodlands in the late seventeenth century. During the war, the English learned about the effectiveness of Indian warfare the hard way. Despite countless victories in battle, however, the Native Americans who followed Philip ultimately lost the war because the English outlasted their guerrilla tactics and used their

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own Native allies and abundant resources to make up for their lack in successful offensive strategies.

The land on which King Philip's war was fought looks very different today than it did nearly 250 years ago. Much of New England was heavy forest or swamp with only sporadic English settlements apart from the busy centers like Boston or Plymouth. As Edmund Leach puts it, "Here and there the monotonous wilderness was broken by a few acres of cleared land and a small cluster of houses--a village set down in the middle of the forest."99 Unlike campaigns fought in Europe, the battles of King Philip’s War did not take place in open fields, but in swamps, forests, and small portions of cleared land. This terrain helped conceal Indian combatants, much to the English's disappointment since they were not yet accustomed to fighting in such heavy forest. The swampy areas also provided much needed cover from English eyes. The placement of a hill or forest is important to the progression of a fight. The landscape of New England then affected the strategic decisions made by both sides as the conflict progressed.

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The events that led to the outbreak of King Philip's War spanned many years. The death of Philip's father, Massasoit, laid the groundwork for the war. Massasoit died in 1662 after forty-one years of peace with the English. With the death of Massasoit, the leadership fell on his two sons Wamsutta and Metacom, whom Massasoit had given the English names Alexander and Philip respectively. Wamsutta, the oldest son, inherited the sachemship. However, under mysterious circumstances, Wamsutta died that same year after the English summoned him to Plymouth to put to rest rumors that the Wampanoags had made an alliance with the Narragansetts against the English. Wamusutta initially refused the summons, but Majors Josiah Winslow and William Bradford went to obtain
him. After giving the English a "satisfactory" explanation, Wamsutta became very ill while staying with Winslow. Some of the Indians feared he had been poisoned, but the conditions of his death are still up for debate. The rumors that their leader had died at the hands of the English put the Wampanoags on edge. Tensions increased over the next decade after Wamsutta’s brother, Metacom—or, as the English called him, King Philip—assumed the sachemship.

There are two other items that played an important role in the years before the war: land grabbing and advances by other European powers. The English in New England experienced their first population boom in the 1630s and 1640s, which left many people wanting for land over the next twenty years. These settlers were willing to acquire land by almost any means necessary, including finding sachems that were willing to sell land that they technically did not own, because Indian lands were communal. Once the English had “bought” this land they imposed fines on the Indians still living there until they were forced to leave.

Over the next thirteen years, the Wampanoags under Philip were involved in two war scares, both of which put the English on high alert. The first came in 1667 and the second came in 1671. In 1667 a Wampanoag under the direction of Niantic sachem Ninigret spread a message to Plymouth that Philip had been secretly planning a war against the English. The presence of other European powers including the Dutch in New York and French in Canada led to this war scare. The English feared having to

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face not only Native Americans on the frontier, but also the Dutch and the French in the
event that a war between European powers occurred. Fears of attack and uncertainty
about the future put the English colonies on edge. Philip, in this instance, managed to
assure the English that no such plan was being made, through peaceful negotiations. Then
in 1671 the leaders of the Massachusetts and Plymouth colonies were notified by one
Hugh Cole of Swansea that the Narragansett and Wampanoag were readying for war.
This incident led to the signing of the Taunton Agreement, which forced Philip to confess
to planning an attack and to hand over his firearms. Historians Michael Tougias and Eric
Schultz argue that Philip signed this treaty simply to appease the English.\textsuperscript{105}

Of the English involved, there are two individuals I want to introduce: Benjamin
Church and Josiah Winslow. Church wrote a memoir, \textit{Diary of King Philip’s War}, which
chronicled his experiences during the war. Winslow served as a prominent commander
and played an important role during the Narragansett campaign. The most important
Indian leader is, of course, Metacom or King Philip. A Wampanoag from the Mount
Hope Peninsula in Narragansett Bay, Philip orchestrated most of the Native war effort.
Although we know the names of several of his lieutenants including Totoson and
Tuspaquin, the lack of Native written records leaves most of their lives in a historical fog.

Benjamin Church was a frontiersman who was born in Plymouth in 1639 and later
settled in Little Compton in 1674.\textsuperscript{106} Church had been a friend of the Indians, and on
several occasions he attempted to persuade them against fighting the English. Before the
outset of hostilities, Church had even tried to win the loyalty of the female sachem,
Awashonks, of the Sakonnets, and Weetamoo of the Pocassets to keep them from

\textsuperscript{105} Drake, \textit{King Philip’s War}, 24-25.
\textsuperscript{106} Benjamin Church, \textit{Diary of King Philip’s War 1675-76} (Chester, Connecticut: The Pequot Press, 1975),
36-37.
fighting on the side of Philip.\textsuperscript{107} After the war, Church sold land to Indians with the promise that they would not be sold into slavery.\textsuperscript{108} Church played an important role in several campaigns and engagements. He participated in the Mount Hope Campaign, the Narragansett Campaign, the Battle of Almy's Pease Field, and the Great Swamp Fight.

Church's memoir is one of the most important firsthand accounts of the war. Written more than thirty years after the ending of hostilities, Church relayed his memories of the events from his beginning discussions with Awashonks and ending with the capture of Philip's last captain Tuspaquin. The account reveals much about English and Indian tactics. Church focused on the English side of battles, but often gave credit to Indian abilities. Church died on January 17, 1718.\textsuperscript{109} As far as any of the sources tell, Church had no previous military experience before King Philip's battles, but often gave credit to Indian abilities. Church died on January 17, 1718\textsuperscript{110}

Josiah Winslow became one of the most important military commanders of the war. At the outbreak of the conflict, Winslow was the Governor of Plymouth Colony.\textsuperscript{111} As governor, Winslow had been involved in events that led directly to King Philip’s War. In particular, King Philip’s brother, Alexander, had died while under the care of Winslow; the Indians later accused Winslow of murder. During the war, Winslow was the commander of the United Colonies forces at the Narragansett Swamp Fort. His leadership and decision-making in the campaign are important to understanding the English side of the war because of his use of English command chains and tactics. Like many of these English commanders, Winslow had no real combat experience. Most of his

\textsuperscript{107} Church, \textit{Diary of King Philip’s War}, 69-74.
\textsuperscript{108} Church, \textit{Diary of King Philip’s War}, 39.
\textsuperscript{109} Church, \textit{Diary of King Philip’s War}, 41.
\textsuperscript{110} Church, \textit{Diary of King Philip’s War}, 37-39.
\textsuperscript{111} George M. Bodge, \textit{Soldiers in King Philip's War} (Leominster, Massachusetts: Author Print, 1896), 179.
positions had been in the Plymouth colonial government before he became governor. His
governorship is what allowed him to lead men into combat.

There are a few other English names that deserve mention for their contributions
to the war effort. First is Major Samuel Moseley, who was known for his hatred of the
Indians. The feeling appeared mutual, for during the Great Swamp fight the Indians
supposedly fired entirely at Moseley, but missed every shot. Other individuals
important to the war effort included Majors Thomas Savage and Samuel Appleton. Major
Savage fought in various campaigns throughout the war, including the Mount Hope
Campaign and campaigns into the Connecticut River Valley in 1676. Major Samuel
Appleton was placed in charge of troops in Western Massachusetts after Captains
Lathrop and Beers were caught and killed in deadly ambushes. Appleton was also one of
Winslow’s subordinate officers during the Great Swamp fight.

Major Moseley had formal military experience as a seaman. Before 1668,
Moseley had been a privateer in the Caribbean. In the years between 1668 and 1674
Moseley fought against Dutch pirates plaguing the New England coast. Appleton and
Savage did not have any previous fighting experience, but had roles in colonial
leadership. Savage served as captain of the 2nd Boston militia company from 1652 to
1682. Appleton served as deputy to the General court from 1668-1671 and served
under his brother’s leadership. Savage served as captain of the 2 1668 an For the many
men, including Church and Winslow, in New England who had not served in any military
capacity in the mother country, the local muster days required by colonial authority were

113 Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, 96.
115 Bodge, *Soldiers in King Philip’s War*, 87.
116 Bodge, *Soldiers in King Philip’s War*, 142.
the only military experience they had. This meant that while they had some minimum training in traditional English volley firing lines, they had little real combat experience.\footnote{117 Patrick M. Malone, \textit{The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics Among the New England Indians} (Lanham, Maryland: Madison Books, 1991), 54-59.}

Philip, the Wampanoag leader who led the Native forces, had made the best of a terrible situation since the beginning of his sachemship. In the thirteen years leading up to the war, Philip took substantial measures to prevent open conflict by suppressing the war scares that had occurred in 1667 and 1671. Due to mounting English pressures on Wampanoag land and heated young warriors who were eager to fight, however, Philip’s efforts to keep the peace were to no avail. This issue aside, Philip was a great leader when it came to persuading other tribes to join in the fight against the English, though he did not have the controlling power of someone like Winslow or the United Colonies. Philip, although he forged alliances with the Narragansett and Nipmunk Indians, was never in direct control of their forces. Unlike the English, the New England Indians held a decentralized government system. Whereas Josiah Winslow had the opportunity to lead the United Colonies, Philip did not have a similar opportunity. Calling Philip a king is a misnomer. The English equated him to king because of the alliances he was able to build, but Philip had no real control over his allies.

There existed two distinct differences between Indian and English rule and government structure. Although the individual colonies had their own independent institutions and laws much like individual tribes, they respond to the war very differently. When the colonies became unified and elected a central leader, Josiah Winslow, he had absolute control over those underneath him. King Philip could influence tribes near him to join against the English, which he did so successfully, but Philip had no totalitarian
control over his allies including the Nipmucs. This also transitioned into tactical and strategic leadership. Philip and other Indian chiefs encouraged others to fight with them, but if a group wanted to leave or attack a different target they were free to do so.118 English soldiers did not have such a luxury.

Philip was about twenty-three when he became sachem and within thirteen years he became part of one of the deadliest wars to ever touch North American soil. Somewhat ironically Philip was ultimately shot and killed by an Indian ally of the English on his home peninsula.119 The historical depictions of Philip's personality vary. While European contemporaries tended to paint him as a treacherous rabble-rouser, historians see him differently. According to historian George Bodge, Philip maintained the loyalty of his allies through fear instead of love, but Bodge also denotes him as a great leader and alliance-builder. Bodge claimed that he was the ablest at visiting distant tribes and convincing other leaders to his cause.120 Daniel Mandell portrays King Philip in a much more humanistic light. Mandell presents Philip as a leader under pressure. The English were constantly afraid of Indian attacks, which caused them to constantly subvert Native sovereignty. Philip did his best to hold his tribe together and maintain a somewhat neutral relationship with the English. However, faced with mounting accusations by the English, specifically Plymouth Colony, Philip was forced to make the fateful decision to go to war to protect his land.121

With one exception, there is not much known in detail about Philip's lieutenants, other than where they came from, familial relations to Philip if they existed, and where

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118 Malone, The Skulking Way of War, 8.
119 Church, Diary of King Philip's War 1675-76, 153-154.
120 Bodge, Soldiers in King Philip's War, 378.
they might have fought. Some of his more important lieutenants or fellow war chiefs were Muttawmp and Totoson. When the Narragansetts joined the war they were led by the sachem Canonchet. There is ample discussion of Canonchet in the historical record, but most of it deals with his negotiations with the English at the beginning of the Narragansett Campaign and his eventual execution.\textsuperscript{122} The military background of the other commanders varies. The Narragansett Indians had some experience fighting the Mohegans in the 1640s when Mohegan sachem Uncas helped the United Colonies topple a Narragansett sachem for wanting to reject English ways.\textsuperscript{123} For the Wampanoags, Muttawmp and Totoson, their specific military experience is unknown, however it is reasonable to assume that these men were experienced in the tribal warfare. Tribal warfare typically consisted of ambushes and raids, usually in small parties. In indigenous warfare, eliminating the enemy entirely was not the objective. Previous to the large-scale acquisition of firearms by the Indians, Native people engaged in near continuous small-scale warfare with their neighbors. The English complained about this supposedly limitless fighting, in particular because of the so-called “skulking” method of ambush attacks that Indians employed as a way to prevent excessive loss of life.\textsuperscript{124} It was not until the New England tribes encountered the English that they learned the ways of mass killing in warfare.\textsuperscript{125}

The weapons of war played just as important a role in the conflict as the men that fought in it. By the time of King Philip's War, Native tribes had already been trading with Europeans for firearms. The first firearms traded were matchlocks. Yet, according to

\textsuperscript{122} Leach, \textit{Flintlock and Tomahawk}, 115-116; 171-172.
\textsuperscript{124} Malone, \textit{The Skulking Way of War}, 22-23.
\textsuperscript{125} Malone, \textit{The Skulking Way of War}, 78-80.
historian James Drake, the New England Indians continued to use bows and arrows, which were often more accurate than the early matchlock guns.\textsuperscript{126} Indian men were partial to the flintlock musket, which became available from Dutch traders around 1660, although both guns were available for trade.\textsuperscript{127} The flintlock was lighter compared to other firearms at the time, like the matchlock, and thus more suitable for hunting expeditions and raids through the heavily forested landscape of New England. The flintlock used a clasp to hold onto a piece of flint, which struck a metal pad that produced a spark that ignited the charge.\textsuperscript{128} This allowed for a quicker spark and the person firing the gun did not have to worry about a match going out.

At the beginning of the war, the English used the matchlock in combat because it was the regulation weapon at the time. The matchlock rifle is more cumbersome than its flintlock relative. Instead of using a piece of flint, the matchlock rifle uses a lighted fuse or match to ignite the powder.\textsuperscript{129} The matchlock also used a stand in order to stabilize the fire. Soldiers needed this stabilizer to get maximum accuracy, for the typical manner of English warfare was to form battle lines from which to fire back and forth. The matchlock was heavier than the flintlock, so in order to get an accurate line of fire the stand was required. Nimble Indians with flintlocks were much harder targets than English with standing matchlocks, and well before the war’s end, the English were also using flintlocks.\textsuperscript{130}

\textsuperscript{126} Drake, King Philip’s War, 126.
\textsuperscript{127} Bodge, Soldiers in King Philip’s War, 46; M. L. Brown, Firearms in Colonial America (Washington City: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1980), 153.
\textsuperscript{128} Brown, Firearms in Colonial America, 68-69.
\textsuperscript{129} Brown, Firearms in Colonial America, 41-42.
\textsuperscript{130} Bodge, Soldiers in King Philip’s War, 45-46.
Melee weapons also played an important role in the conflict. Native combatants at close range used wooden clubs, wooden cutlasses, and the quintessential tomahawk. Indian clubs or cutlasses were hand-made, and although there was a common style, the maker’s work varied.¹³¹ In close quarter combat these weapons, although not steel, were no less deadly. The English had a slightly less variable array of melee weapons. The English used their own sabers in battle; these swords were much more uniform than an Indian club or cutlass. The other common English melee weapon was the pike. Pikes were long spears or pole-arms used to dismount or discourage cavalry attacks. The pike, however, was abandoned early on in the war due to its uselessness in fighting pedestrian Indians. The mobility of Native warriors and the fact that they did not have cavalry units made the pike a "pointless" addition to the war effort. The English at this point did not use bayonets.¹³²

In 1675 the murder trial of the Christian Indian John Sassamon was the final event that lead directly to the opening of the conflict. Sassamon was a Christian Indian who was found murdered under the ice of Assowamset Swamp.¹³³ Christian Indians were loyal to the English and later became great assets to the English during the war. The expansion of Christianity among Natives was seen as an expansion of colonial power that undermined Native sovereignty.¹³⁴ The English brought three Wampanoag Indians to trial for Sassamonli murder. The men were convicted and sentenced to hang. One, Wampapaquin, survived the hanging when the rope broke, but he was shot within a

¹³¹ Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, 5.
¹³⁴ Mandell, *King Philip’s War*, 42.
month.\textsuperscript{135} Since the Wampanoag were a sovereign nation this trial violated their rights to punish or not punish their own tribal people. The English colonies did not have Philip’s permission to do this. This execution of Wampanoag Indians pushed the warriors over the edge and led to the opening bloodshed. Lastly, there was a series of astronomical events including arrow shaped comets and strange northern lights that some English and Natives believed foretold the coming war.\textsuperscript{136}

The trial of Sassamonl supposed killers was the last straw. The mounting English pressures for assurances of peace since the death of Metacomed brother Wamsutta coupled with their demands for land and the colonies or assurances of peace since the death of ening bloodSassamon trial was taken as a great grievance by the Wampanoag and was an affront to their sovereignty. It also meant that ignoring the English threat to Native sovereignty was no longer an option.\textsuperscript{137} A few days before the attack on Swansea, the deputy governor of Rhode Island John Easton held a rushed meeting with King Philip, in an attempt to dissuade the Wampanoags from attacking the other colonies. Philip addressed his grievances, but it was too little too late. Philip wanted to the English to respect the Indians as his father, Massosoit, had done with the first English settlers, but the English would not.\textsuperscript{138} War had come.

On June 20, 1675, hostilities began when a group of Pokanoket Indians harassed the town of Swansea.\textsuperscript{139} Swansea was an English frontier town at the entrance of Philip’s home, the Mount Hope Peninsula (see Figure 2).\textsuperscript{140} No English were killed in this initial

\textsuperscript{135} Ellis, Morris, \textit{King Philip’s War}, 48-49.
\textsuperscript{136} Ellis, Morris, \textit{King Philip’s War}, 49.
\textsuperscript{137} Yasuhide Kawashima, \textit{Igniting King Philip’s War} (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2001), 125-126.
\textsuperscript{138} Mandell, \textit{King Philip’s War}, 47-48.
\textsuperscript{139} Schultz, Tougas, \textit{King Philip's War: The History of America's Forgotten Conflict}, 39.
\textsuperscript{140} Kawashima, \textit{Igniting King Philip’s War}, 129.
attack, because the Indians believed that the side that spilled first blood would lose. The English spilled the first blood three days later on June 23, 1675, when a young boy shot and mortally wounded a Wampanoag warrior.\textsuperscript{141} The Wampanoags retaliated by killing nine English men the following day.\textsuperscript{142} With this shot all hopes of peace were shattered for both the English and Philip’s supporters. Unfortunately for the New England Indians, the prophesy of first blood did not come true.

The first major English campaign of the war was the Mount Hope campaign in June-August of 1675, just a few days after the attack on Swansea. This was the opening of organized warfare for the United Colonies. Forces were sent by Massachusetts and Plymouth into Swansea piecemeal, but the force that eventually gathered was large consisting of companies under command of Captains Cudworth, Prentice, Savage, Moseley and Church.\textsuperscript{143} This campaign was designed to keep Philip isolated on the Mount Hope Peninsula and end the "Indian uprising" before it started.

Troops from both the Plymouth and Massachusetts colonies planned on sweeping the Mount Hope Peninsula and to kill or capture Philip in the process. By the time the English forces actually managed to approach Philip's village, however, most of the Indians had crossed the bay to the Pocassett Coast. There was only a small skirmish towards the end of this sweep. About twelve Indians or so waited in ambush and fired upon the advancing English.\textsuperscript{144} The English suffered one casualty in this skirmish. The English had expected Philip to stand and fight, but Indian warfare was of a different sort than they knew. The English wanted to engage in open field combat, but Native warriors

\textsuperscript{141} Leach, \textit{Flintlock and Tomahawk}, 42.
\textsuperscript{142} Kawashima, \textit{Igniting King Philip's War}, 129.
\textsuperscript{143} Bodge, \textit{Soldiers in King Philip’s War}, 50-55.
\textsuperscript{144} Church, \textit{Diary of King Philip’s War}, 77-78.
preferred to use guerilla tactics to attack their enemy. Although the English saw Philip’s retreat as cowardly, this retreat followed standard rules of war in Native eyes. Philip was saving manpower to fight another day. After Philip’s retreat from the Mount Hope Peninsula the campaign spread to the Pocasset Swamp, where the English caught the Wampanoags off guard on the first of August. The Wampanoags retreated further into the swamp, and when the English decided to pursue the Indians had already made their escape.  

The Mount Hope Campaign was a failure for one key reason. The English were cautious in their approach to the peninsula, which gave King Philip ample time to retreat across the bay. One potentially beneficial outcome, but ultimately a waste of time, was the building of a fort in the event that Philip would ever return. Philip did return, but not until close to the war season. The English were cautious in their approach to the peninsula, which gave King Philip ample time to retreat across the bay. The strategic benefits of a defensive strategy vary from better positioning to stronger supply lines and hopefully less loss of life. However, in the case of this campaign the English did not reap such benefits. The defensive strategy allowed the Indians to roam about the countryside raiding English villages. Church, after some argument, was given permission to track Indians on the Pocassett coast. As a result Church and his men found themselves involved at the Battle of Almyst Pease Field.  

While the English were busy sweeping the area around Mount Hope and Pocasset Coast, the New England Natives were beginning attacks on English villages. This campaign or series of raids does not have a formal designation, so I will refer to it as the

146 Church, *Diary of King Philip's War*, 80-81.  
147 Church, *Diary of King Philip's War*, 79-80.
First Indian Offensive, which occurred from June until December 1675. This offensive consisted of a series of raids and attacks on frontier settlements. Some of the battles that took place during this phase of the war include Bloody Brook, Beers’ Ambush, and the Attack on Mendon. Attacks during this offensive were led by both Philip’s Wampanoag and his Nipmuc allies.\(^{148}\) Because of the swiftness and surprise of the attacks, many of the places the Natives attacked were relatively undefended. The English, still ignorant to Indian tactics, were caught in unaware, and therefore unable to adequately defend their villages. When they attempted a defense, they were often caught in deadly ambushes.

This offensive is important to note because it exemplifies important aspects to Native warfare. Native American raids and ambushes were integral to warfare. Historian Patrick Malone notes that each served its own purpose and that both required intense preparation and tactical planning. Ambushes and raids both required stealth and concealment to be implemented properly. If warriors were seen before the attack they lost a crucial advantage. Raids were conducted against static targets such as villages. Ambushes were used to catch moving enemies and at times Natives would lead their enemies into preplanned locations.\(^{149}\) The English suffered in attacks such as these several times, including a renewed offensive in the spring of 1676. Still, it took the United Colonies several months before making the appropriate adjustments to this type of warfare.

The Battle of Almy’s Pease Field, witnessed by Captain Benjamin Church, was fought in July of 1675. The major player in this battle was Church who, after the Mount Hope campaign, as we have seen, set out to the Pocasset coast in order to pursue Philip’s

\(^{148}\) Kawashima, *Igniting King Philip’s War*, 133-134.

forces. After Church landed on the Pocasset coast, he advanced forward with Captain Matthew Fuller plus thirty-six men. After spending the night in camp, Church and Fuller split into two teams. Fuller retreated after a brief skirmish with Wampanoag forces, while Church headed south. Church's troops discovered Indian tracks and began to follow. However, rattlesnakes forced them to take a route that led them past Almy's field.

As the men approached Almy's Pease Field they saw two Indians. Church tried to speak with them, but the Indians ran, firing a few parting shots with their flintlocks. An English soldier returned in kind. The Indians fled across the field, with the English following them. When the English reached the far side of the field "they were saluted with a volley of fifty or sixty guns." The Natives had caught the English in an ambush. The English took refuge behind a fence where they stacked stones for extra protection and remained there until ships under the command of Captain Goulding rescued them. Another boat had come before Goulding, but came under such heavy fire from the Indians that it retreated.

From the standpoint of the English, Captain Church did an incredible job keeping his wits about him and his troops. It stands to reason that if Church could have convinced the rest of the English to pursue the Indians that a much larger battle would have taken place. Church was also lucky to have had an English sloop come so close to his location. If the point of the Mount Hope Campaign and by extension this excursion onto the Pocasset coast was to end the war before it started, pursuing the Indians across the water

150 Church, *Diary of King Philip's War*, 81-83.
152 Church, *Diary of King Philip's War*, 82.
153 Church, *Diary of King Philip's War*, 84.
154 Church, *Diary of King Philip's War*, 84-89.
would seem to have been the more potent option as opposed to building a fort. Yet, we should not be surprised by this fact. The English still had it in their minds to defeat Philip in open combat; to this end a fort simply made more sense.

The Native perspective of this fight is relatively unknown. Most likely Almy’s Pease field was a planned ambush as Native forces often used. The two Indians that fled across the field were decoys sent to lure the English into this trap. Although not a single Englishman died during this fight, the Native force managed to force the English into a retreat.\(^{155}\) The few casualties suffered in this battle demonstrate the inaccuracy of early firearms. There are of course several variables, including distance, wind speed, and thickness of cover that could affect a firearm’s performance, but we have no information on the specifics on those variables. One aspect to note was the Indian’s use of terrain. Church noted their use of natural cover: “Indians, who possessed themselves of every rock, stump, tree, or fence that was in sight.”\(^{156}\) The Indian force took every advantage they could from the terrain.

The next organized campaign came in the winter of 1675 into 1676. The Narragansett had made promises to stay on the side of the English during the war. Historically, the Narragansett and Wampanoag were enemies so they had no reason to become allies at the beginning of the conflict. The English and the Narragansett had signed several treaties together, and on October 18, 1675, the Narragansett signed a treaty stating that they would give up any Wampanoag who came to them seeking shelter. This was an extension of a treaty of peace that had been signed in July of the same year. The original treaty signed in July was not done so in complete cooperation. The United

\(^{155}\) Church, *Diary of King Philip’s War*, 89.

\(^{156}\) Church, *Diary of King Philip’s War*, 85.
Colonies sent a small army to show strength and forced several Narragansett chiefs to sign.\textsuperscript{157} The extension came with a clarification of when the Wampanoag captives were to be delivered to Boston: October 28 of the same year.\textsuperscript{158} However, the Narragansett failed to deliver any captives.

When the Commissioners of the United Colonies realized that they were not going to receive the Wampanoag prisoners as promised, they needed to determine their next move. Although we do not know why the Narragansett refused to give up the Wampanoags in their midst, Mandell provides an adequate cultural explanation. Mandell states that, as the United Colonies’ deadline to turn over Wampanoags approached, tribal leaders made it clear that they would not betray their traditional obligations to kinfolk and rules of hospitality.\textsuperscript{159} Presumably, the Narragansetts had adopted some of their Wampanoag captives and now considered them family members protected by the rules of kinship. The English felt that they needed to enforce the stipulations of the treaty, and on November 12, 1675, the English decided to invade Narragansett country and do just that.\textsuperscript{160} The English, despite having had good relationships with the Narragansett Indians, did not trust them altogether. In 1669, for example, the Narragansett sachem Ninigret had prompted a war scare in the colonies by attending an Indian dance with the anti-English Mohegans.\textsuperscript{161} The English now feared a Narrangansett and Wampanoag alliance. The only way for the English to deter such an alliance, they believed, was through a show of force.

\textsuperscript{157} Mandell, \textit{King Philip’s War}, 86.
\textsuperscript{158} Leach, \textit{Flintlock and Tomahawk}, 115.
\textsuperscript{159} Mandell, \textit{King Philip’s War}, 86.
\textsuperscript{160} Leach, \textit{Flintlock and Tomahawk}, 118-119.
\textsuperscript{161} Leach, \textit{Flintlock and Tomahawk}, 25.
Similar to the Mount Hope Campaign, the Narragansett Campaign had a slow start, but not without purpose. Even though this campaign was fought in the winter months, which posed difficulties for the English in maintaining supplies, the initial issues that delayed the campaign were not due to weather. The campaign took over a month to prepare for including gathering supplies, gaining political accommodations from the Rhode Island Colony, and transporting troops from one location to another. The United Colonies of Massachusetts, Plymouth, and Connecticut needed accommodation from Rhode Island, because the Narrangansett lived within the borders of the Rhode Island Colony. Rhode Island agreed to allow the United Colonies access to its land and sent its own troops for support. The campaign officially began on December 8, 1675, when Governor Winslow took command of the army and ordered the advance.

The English first engaged in a few skirmishes with the Narragansett, including several raids. During these raids the English took several captives and sold them into slavery. Even Church, who arrived in Rhode Island before Winslow, partook in these activities. The English justified the taking of slaves for several reasons including those grounded in scripture and international law. The most pressing justification was a monetary one. The selling of slaves gave the colonies much needed revenue for the growing war effort. On December 18, the Connecticut forces finally joined the forces

162 Drake, *King Philip's War*, 35: Rhode Island was not a member of the United Colonies, because it refused to submit to its more powerful neighbors (Massachusetts and Plymouth) in 1644. Therefore, Rhode Island as a non-member of the United Colonies was required by law to give their permission for entry into their colony.

163 Ellis, Morris, *King Philip's War*, 143-144.

164 Church, *Diary of King Philip's War*, 94-95.

in Rhode Island and under the guide of a "friend Indian" named Peter Freeman, the English advanced towards the Narragansett Fort the next day.  

Peter Freeman led the English to the Narraganset Fort on December 19, 1675. Peter Freeman was a Narragansett Indian that had supposedly turned against his people to help the English. The place where he led the English on the fort had a small opening over which a single log lay. The fighting at this opening was very brutal. At first English units under Captains Davenport and Johnson, then units under Moseley and Gardiner, were sent in piecemeal to attack the Narragansett and were repulsed by Indian defenders. Davenport and Johnson were killed and Gardiner was mortally wounded. After these failures the English units under Major Appleton and Captain Oliver made an “impetuous assault” for the breach and broke through defenses into the fort and managed to take one of the flanking houses. Once the English gained entry into the fort, many Indians began firing from their wigwams. After the English took control of the fort they began setting fire to the wigwams, but Winslow ordered a tactical retreat, which left the fort to be retaken by the Narragansett. Since Winslow had ordered the wigwams and the corn stores to be burned, the English could not stay without proper supplies. They returned to their winter camps to wait out the cold weather with new troops and supplies brought in from the coastline.  

This famous fort was built by the Narragansett in a European style, but the date of its construction is unknown. This implies that the Native groups had learned from the English long before the war broke out. More importantly the fort was built in the swamp,  

166 Ellis, Morris, King Philip's War, 145-150.  
167 Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk, 126.  
168 Bodge, Soldiers in King Philip's War, 187.  
169 Bodge, Soldiers in King Philip's War, 187.
in which the English had troubles fighting. The fort had walls of high stakes surrounded by several feet of brush and tree limbs encompassing some five or six acres. The fort also contained blockhouses from which the Narragansett could fire upon the English. Once the English obtained entry and were joined by their full force, the Indians took to their wigwams for protection. Sources state that these wigwams were bulletproof due to a large quantity of grain stored in tubs along the walls. Fighting at this point was step by step, Indians from their wigwams and the English from whatever point of defense they could find. Fortunately for the English, but disastrous for the Narragansett, the Narragansett ran out of powder, which forced them to resort to their bows and arrows towards the end of the battle. Typically speaking this would not have been too much of an issue for the Narragansett since they were skilled bowmen, but by the time the Indians ran out of powder the English had already begun to set fire to the fort and the Narragansett did not have the manpower in the fort to ward off the English.

There are some additional details that need to be addressed. The Great Swamp fight was the largest and bloodiest battle of King Philip's War. General Winslow took a combined force of some 1,000 men deep into Narragansett territory in the winter of 1675. This army was composed of 527 men from Massachusetts, 159 men from Plymouth, and 300 soldiers from Connecticut, plus officers. The last 150 were Mohegan allies accompanying the Connecticut forces. Winslow was the supreme commander-in-chief followed by the commanders of the colonial regiments: Samuel Appleton for Massachusetts, William Bradford for Plymouth, and Robert Treat for Connecticut. Rhode

170 Mandell, King Philip’s War, 85.
171 Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk, 129.
172 Bodge, Soldiers in King Philip’s War, 187.
173 Church, Diary of King Philip’s War, 100.
Island did not have a regimental commander. Each regiment, including Winslow had a support staff. Lastly, each company contained a captain or major, lieutenant, and sergeant or ensign. The preparation for this army took some time, but after about a month the force finally advanced on Narragansett territory. The battle ended in an English victory with the English suffering 210 casualties and the Narragansetts losing between 150 and 300 men. The total number of Narragansetts at the fort is unknown. The Narragansetts also lost a sizable portion of their winter food stores and the English took captive many Native women, children, and old people.

Although the Great Swamp fight was a success for the English, it could have been a different story. Historians Schultz and Tougias make three astute points, which question Canonchetee tactics and strategy. Their first point is that if the Narragansett had harassed the English army before reaching the fort, the English forces would have been weakened by the time they reached the stronghold. Canonchet, the Indian leader at the fort, could have surprised the English at several points along their march. The second tactical failure was the lack of a flanking maneuver during the battle itself. Canonchet could have used a flanking maneuver from outside the fort to weaken the English position. The last tactical failure of Canonchet comes during the English retreat. Once Winslow and his forces retreated from the fort they were left unmolested until late January, more than a month after the battle. The reasoning behind Canonchet's decision to wait so long to attack confront the English, is unknown, but it is reasonable to suggest that Canonchet needed to resupply and rest his warriors after such a devastating defeat. In late January the

175 Bodge, Soldiers in King Philip's War, 182-184.
176 Bodge, Soldiers in King Philip's War, 266.
177 Bodge, Soldiers in King Philip's War, 264-265.
178 Schultz, Tougias, King Philip's War: The History of America's Forgotten Conflict, 261.
Narragansett decided to begin their reprisal. Winslow wanted to confront them in open combat, but the Narragansett knew the terrain too well, and Native forces engaged only in small skirmishes. Eventually these skirmishes proved to be costly for the English army forcing them to withdraw due to lack of resources.\(^{179}\)

There are two other points that I would like to address regarding Schultz and Tougiasre questions. First, according to historian Armstrong Starkey, Indians knew how to advance in blackbird fashion. A blackbird advance is when one line of men fires and then the next line covers the first line while they recharge their weapons.\(^{180}\) These skills undoubtedly were learned from the English colonists. In the 1650s, local Indians in the Massachusetts Bay Colony had to attend militia-training days due to possible threats from the nearby Dutch.\(^{181}\) Although it is doubtful that Canonchet knew this specific maneuver, if he had it would have been beneficial to utilize a counter-maneuver. Second, as I have already stated, the loss of powder forced the Narragansett to use bows and arrows. It highly plausible that Canonchet and his warriors spent this time to resupply. In the decades preceding the war Natives had learned the art of not only casting bullets, but also repairing their own firearms.\(^{182}\) Yet, they still suffered from a lack of steady supplies.

There are also some questions about what was the true purpose of the unfinished opening that the English used to enter the fort. The Narragansett had ample time to repair the minor opening in the fort. If this was not just a simple structural issue and a planned chokepoint for the English it worked for a time, but when the Narragansett ran out of

\(^{179}\) Mandell, *King Philip’s War*, 89.
powder the English managed to push through the defenders.\(^{183}\) The Indians appear to have either underestimated their enemy or overestimated their own abilities to hold the fort, though I find the later most likely, possibly because of the need to prove themselves against the English. As far as what we know happened, the Indians defended the fort reasonably well by use of the chokepoint and blockhouses. Despite not having the history of large-scale forts like those of Europe, Native Americans adapted well to the defense of European forts in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the use of firearms.\(^{184}\) The Narragansett force is an example of this adaptation. New England Indians knew how to build forts and conduct sieges. Indians were already well versed in creating large-scale palisades, but the introduction of cannons made these obsolete. Fortunately for the Narragansetts the English did not have any artillery in this battle.

After the Great Swamp fight, from an offensive standpoint the campaign was effectively over. For the next month until January 28, 1676, Winslow and his force sat in camp receiving supplies and an influx of reinforcements from the various colonies until the force reach some 1,400 men.\(^{185}\) From here Winslow and his men moved through Narragansett country burning villages and capturing the old and the weak, as well as women and children. This was a part of the English total war strategy. Similar to what the English had done in England’s Irish Wars and those against the Powhatan Confederacy in Virginia, in King Philip’s War it was a fight against the entire population.\(^{186}\) Many of these captives were sold into slavery or pressed into indentured servitude. Once the army reached Marlboro, Massachusetts on February 3, 1676, Winslow disbanded the army


\(^{185}\) Ellis, Morris, *King Philip’s War*, 157-162.

\(^{186}\) Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare*, 81.
allowing most units to go home, except for troops under the command of Captain Wadsworth.\footnote{Ellis, Morris, \emph{King Philip’s War}, 162-163.}

Disbanding the army was a highly questionable move by Winslow. In retrospect it was very difficult to feed and supply an army that large, but the disbandment of the army left large sections of Massachusetts and Plymouth unguarded. Towns such as Lancaster and Sudbury were now open to attack. Winslow’s decision also calls into question the whole point of attacking the Narragansett to begin with. If the point of the invasion was to enforce the treaty signed in October and to maintain peace, the invasion was an utter failure, despite the success at the Narragansett Fort. By preemptively striking into Narragansett territory, the English forced the hand of the Narragansett into joining on the side of Philip. Not only that, but the prisoners they wanted--the Wampanoag refugees--were never obtained. Instead, the English captured hundreds of Narragansett prisoners. Then during the spring of 1676 the Narragansett struck back with a vengeance.

Late winter and spring of 1676 (February to April, roughly) saw a renewed Indian offensive. The Second Indian Offensive, as I will call it, had many similarities with the first. The Second Indian Offensive was writhed with ambushes and raids on English settlements including attacks on Lancaster and Sudbury. Indian leadership shifted during this offensive for two reasons. Canonchet and the Narragansett were now attacking settlements in retaliation for the destruction of the Narragansett Fort. The addition of the Narragansett only contributed to the English woes, who suffered an additional string of defeats at their hands. Philip on the other hand had suffered a major setback in the preceding winter before his return to the war. Philip had traveled north to New York territory in hopes of gathering more allies among the Mahicans. The English however had
a surprise in store for Philip. The United Colonies had reached out to New York Governor Andros to seek assist from the Mohawks. Andros, seeking to strengthen his alliance with the Mohawks, requested that they attack Philip and his men. The Mohawks were historically enemies of the Wampanoag and dealt Philip a serious blow by killing many of his men and hurting his chances at future alliances.  

Philip also suffered a blow to his status and prestige as a war leader. Prestige and personal skills were a major component of Native concepts of war. A warrior’s ability to take captives, kill enemies, and earned them prestige. Prestige helped serve as a means of gathering warriors. Losing the fight against the Mohawk was enough to prevent the Mahicans from joining Philip, but the loss of several of his men only furthered the loss of his status. This loss was a turning point in the war. Philip’s Nipmuc and Narragansett allies were deeply upset by the events in New York. In contrast, the Mohawks now experienced a rise in prestige, not just amongst themselves, but also with the English. The success of their attack against Philip helped convince the English of the utility of Native allies. The Mohawks would soon join the war against Philip and his allies wholeheartedly.

This Second Indian Offensive also saw the beginning of the end for the Native war effort. This occurred for two reasons. The first was the capture and death of Canonchet. Canonchet was captured in early April by a combined force of English and Native allies. He was later executed. Despite continued Indian victories after Canonchet’s death, Indian allegiances soon began to splinter. The Narragansett’s resolve to fight dissipated after their great leader was killed. Coupled with continued attacks from

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188 Kawashima, *Igniting King Philip’s War*, 136-137.
190 Mandell, *King Philip’s War*, 110.
the United Colonies’ Native allies and the English counter offensives in June through August, sachems began questioning whether the war was worth continuing.  

The attack on Lancaster, which occurred on February 10, 1676, was one of the first attacks of the Second Indian Offensive. Lancaster lay west of Mount Wachusett in east-central Massachusetts. The attack on Lancaster is famous because it produced one of the great literary pieces of the day. Mary Rowlandson was captured by the Narragansett sachem Quannopin during the attack and for three months moved about with the Indians. She later penned an account of her captivity. Rowlandson revealed vivid details about the attack: "Their first coming was about sun/rising. Hearing the noise of some guns, we looked out: several houses were burning, and the smoke ascending to heaven...Some in our house were fighting for their lives, others wallowing in their blood, the house on fire over our heads, and the bloodey heathen ready to knock us on the head if we stirred out."  

These village raids, as exemplified at Lancaster, were a quintessential battle tactic of New England Indians. The Indians came in under cover of early darkness or forest, set fire to houses and property, and then left that same day, avoiding large-scale linear fire lines. They fought in such a manner to maintain their element of surprise and minimize losses. This strategy of guerrilla warfare was something with which the English were painfully inexperienced. The English had no answer to these raiding attacks, which proved a major problem. Each town when under attack simply retreated into one of the garrison homes available to them and waited until reinforcements arrived or the Indians

191 Mandell, King Philip's War, 111.  
192 Schultz, Toulias, King Philip's War: The History of America's Forgotten Conflict, 341.  
194 Schultz, Toulias, King Philip's War: The History of America's Forgotten Conflict, 16.
left or they were killed. Though we cannot know for sure, it is possible that the Native forces were attempting to scare the English into capitulation. As Starkey puts it, “The goals of the Indian offensive is unclear, but since the raider did not distinguish between combatant and non-combatant, it was a campaign of terror.”

Other towns such as Medfield, Groton, and Marlborough faced similar fates as Lancaster. The amount of property destroyed by fire during these town raids was immense. Lancaster was almost completely leveled in this attack. Estimates are that the English suffered about 150,000 English pounds in property damage throughout the war. The modern equivalent would be in the millions of dollars. This destruction of property could have been seen as a symbolic destruction of English culture. Indians left a note for the English after the attack on Medfield, Massachusetts. It stated, “The destruction of your fair houses and cattle.” This statement also illustrates cultural differences between the Natives and the English. The Indians pointed out the material concerns of the settlers, concerns which had contributed to the outbreak of war in the first place as the English, sought to increase their territory and wealth at the expense of the region’s indigenous inhabitants. By destroying these towns, Indians left the English disheartened, which they hoped would break their will to fight.

These raids also make a point about the use of fire by the Indians. At both Lancaster and Sudbury the Indians used flaming carts to destroy garrisons and houses. At Lancaster, they loaded up a cart filled with flax and other flammable materials and sent it

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195 Starkey, *European and Native Warfare*, 77.
196 Drake, *King Philip’s War*, 123; Drake clarifies in the endnotes that this letter is found in the accounts of Increase Mather and Daniel Gookin.
197 Drake, *King Philip’s War*, 168.
barreling down a hill towards the Rowlandson garrison.\textsuperscript{199} This tactic was quite effective, since organized fire departments were still a century away. As we saw at the Great Swamp battle, the English also used fire to destroy wigwams in native villages. Fire is an effective tool in warfare. Not only does it destroy property; it also creates confusion and fear.

The Sudbury fight occurred on April 21, 1676. Sudbury lies in the eastern portion of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The previous day colonial authorities had intelligence of a sizable force of Indians near Mount Wachusett and sent Captain Wadsworth with more than fifty men to nearby Marlborough, which had been attacked on the 18th of the same month. However, upon learning that the Indian force was advancing on Sudbury, Wadsworth made a quick about-face towards the town.\textsuperscript{200} While Wadsworth was marching back towards Sudbury, Indian forces attacked the Deacon Hayes garrison in Sudbury and, although the Deacon garrison remained unburnt, they set fire to much of Sudbury.\textsuperscript{201} Upon hearing news of the battle at Sudbury, troops from several nearby towns came to reinforce the troops there, including eleven men from Concord who were ambushed when entering Sudbury from the north and slaughtered to one man.\textsuperscript{202}

Upon reaching Sudbury, Wadsworth pursued a group of retreating Indians, but was ambushed. Wadsworth and his men managed to flee to nearby Green Hill, where they made a stand against their enemy.\textsuperscript{203} Another group from Watertown came to the aid of Wadsworth, but was unable to breach through the enemy lines to the hill. Wadsworth and his men suffered heavy casualties, including Wadsworth himself. While still on the

\textsuperscript{199} Schultz, Tougas, \textit{King Philip's War: The History of America's Forgotten Conflict}, 189.
\textsuperscript{200} Bodge, \textit{Soldiers in King Philip's War}, 222-223.
\textsuperscript{201} Schultz, Tougas, \textit{King Philip's War: The History of America's Forgotten Conflict}, 211.
\textsuperscript{202} Schultz, Tougas, \textit{King Philip's War: The History of America's Forgotten Conflict}, 213.
\textsuperscript{203} Leach, \textit{Flintlock and Tomahawk}, 173.
hill, the remaining men were forced to retreat to a nearby mill after the Indians set fire to the nearby brush.\textsuperscript{204} The Indians then retreated that night. The fact that reinforcements continued to arrive in the town and that part of Sudbury still stood may have softened the victory for the Indians, since they knew that the damage at Sudbury did not crush English zeal.\textsuperscript{205} Mary Rowlandson, who was still in captivity after Sudbury, recounted the scene at the Indian town of Wachusett after the victory: “Yet they came home without that rejoicing and triumphing over their victory which they were wont to show at other times, but rather like dogs (as they say) which have lost their ears. Yet I could not perceive that it was for their own loss of men.”\textsuperscript{206}

Sudbury presents an almost perfect example of a combination between a raid and an ambush. The battle started off as a raid, much like what we had seen at Lancaster, but quickly developed into a much larger affair. Twice Indian warriors ambushed English troops as they came into Sudbury. One group of eleven men from Concord lost all but one man. Yet, Sudbury exhibits some interesting tactical decisions by the Native force. Not only did they not retreat in the face of this influx of men, but they actively shifted their tactics to hold the English in certain locations, effectively cutting groups off from one another. In other words, it was apparently an impromptu divide and conquer tactic. This, as Mandell notes, was uncharacteristic of Native warfare. Instead of retreating in the face of potentially deadly odds, the Native warriors decided to stand and fight, but the exact reason behind this decision is unknown.\textsuperscript{207} That being said, they did not stand and fight in a traditional European sense, instead they used their tried and true ambush

\textsuperscript{204} Leach, \textit{Flintlock and Tomahawk}, 174.
\textsuperscript{205} Schultz, Tougas, \textit{King Philip's War: The History of America's Forgotten Conflict}, 219.
\textsuperscript{206} Rowlandson, \textit{Narrative}, 52.
\textsuperscript{207} Mandell, \textit{King Philip's War}, 107.
guerilla tactics to surprise incoming English men. They then followed up the ambush with continued fire.

The Battle of Sudbury was a nightmare for the English. Even though the English command knew about a sizable Indian force in the Marlborough/Sudbury area, they did not adequately reinforce the town, and had, in fact, sent Wadsworth to Marlborough, not Sudbury. The rest of the English reinforcements did not move out until after news of the battle had spread. Even after word of the attack reached nearby towns there was no coordinated effort to repel the Indians.\(^{208}\) Wadsworth had some success, forming his men into a square and fighting off the Indians for several hours. However, a brush fire forced Wadsworth and his men to withdraw resulting in Wadsworth’s death along with several others.\(^{209}\) This uncoordinated defense aside, I would like to address how the English stationed its men and how they were able to get to Sudbury so quickly.

To explain the quick response of the English reinforcements, it is necessary to understand the English militia system. The English militia system designated that each county had a company of trained men.\(^{210}\) Even if the company was in garrison or otherwise not engaged, it was easy to reinforce another company in a nearby town or county, especially since some towns and counties, like Boston, could field and pay multiple companies. These men could be pressed into the services of other company commanders.\(^{211}\) The duty of these men was the defense of their designated area. In the case of the Battle of Sudbury this system proved effective in allowing reinforcements to

\(^{208}\) Schultz, Tougias, *King Philip's War: The History of America's Forgotten Conflict*, 211; Schultz states that Philip was probably at Sudbury, but his only evidence for this assumption rests on the fact that the force at Sudbury appeared to be Wampanoag.

\(^{209}\) Mandell, *King Philip’s War*, 107.

\(^{210}\) Bodge, *Soldiers in King Philip’s War*, 45.

\(^{211}\) Bodge, *Soldiers in King Philip’s War*, 45.
get to Sudbury. A disadvantage, however, lay in the experience of the men. Many of the men that formed these companies may not have had any military experience at all.

The waning months of the conflict saw two distinct but connected campaigns from the English. In the June campaign of 1676 the English and their Native allies led a series of attacks on Indian food sources. This campaign that took place mainly in the Connecticut River Valley and left Philip and his remaining allies without much needed supplies. This campaign was a two-pronged movement. Major John Talcott of Connecticut went north towards Hadley, Massachusetts, while Major Daniel Henchman traveled west towards the same city. On June 12, 1676, at Hadley, the combined English forces along with their Mohawk and Mohegan allies repelled the last organized attack by an Indian force in the Connecticut River Valley.\textsuperscript{212}

Then, in July and August of 1676, the English turned their attention to capturing Philip and other Native American leaders. The use of Native allies was crucial in tracking Indian leaders. In the first three days of July, with the help of Indian allies, Major Talcott of Connecticut killed or captured over 250 Narragansetts, including Ninigret's sister Quaiapen and Narragansett leader Potuck.\textsuperscript{213} Benjamin Church and a group of Christian Indians, having learned from Indian tactics, then set up the ambush that would kill Philip. The ambush took place on the Mount Hope Peninsula that Philip had called home at the beginning of the war. The trap was sprung early by an Indian presumably out hunting before Philip and his company had time to wake. A lone Indian happened upon Church and his men, setting off a panic.\textsuperscript{214} Because Church had placed men on both sides of the swamp there was no room for Philip to escape. Philip was shot and killed on August 12,

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\textsuperscript{212} Schultz, Toucias, \textit{King Philip's War: The History of America's Forgotten Conflict}, 63.
\textsuperscript{213} Schultz, Toucias, \textit{King Philip's War: The History of America's Forgotten Conflict}, 62.
\textsuperscript{214} Church, \textit{Diary of King Philip's War}, 151-153.
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1676, by an Indian ally of the English in an ambush orchestrated by Captain Benjamin Church.\textsuperscript{215}

The success of these final two English campaigns or counter-offensives relied almost solely on the adoption of Native tactics by the English and the greater use of Indian allies. Despite what might be believed, the English disdain at the beginning of the war for any Indian, Christian or otherwise, prevented their use as scouts or warriors. Massachusetts Bay Colony, for example, did not use Native forces until April of 1676.\textsuperscript{216} The success of the June campaign persuaded the colonies to not only begin recruiting more heavily from their allies, but also from Christian Indians whom they had placed in captivity in a town on Deer Island.

The end of the war came swiftly once the tide of the war changed in English favor. Despite the seemingly constant string of Indian victories during their second spring offensive in 1676, the fourteen-month conflict had heavily weakened the resolve of Philip and his allies.\textsuperscript{217} Because of the events of the June campaign, Natives could no longer mount a successful summer offensive. The English then began to give mercy to Indians who chose to surrender. Once some of Philip’s own forces surrendered following their leader’s death, the effect snowballed.\textsuperscript{218} Truth be told, this so-called “mercy” often ended in execution or slavery, but the English tried to go about it in an official, lawful manner. The Indians were tried in court. Those whom the English felt committed greater crimes were sentenced to death if found guilty. Others were given immunity in exchange for

\begin{footnotes}
\item[215] Church, \textit{Diary of King Philip’s War}, 157.
\item[216] Mandell, \textit{King Philip’s War}, 82.
\item[217] Drake, \textit{King Philip's War}, 147.
\item[218] Drake, \textit{King Philip’s War}, 157.
\end{footnotes}
helping the English.\textsuperscript{219} Not only that, but it became clear that the English would accept nothing less than a complete victory. Philip’s death also played an important role in the quick collapse of organized resistance, but even before Philip died several other Indian leaders had been killed and/or captured. With the orchestrator and leader dead at the hands of the English, there was no one left to hold the Indians together.

After the war the United Colonies began the slow work of rebuilding. In a few short years control over New England was given to the Governor of New York by the Crown and Massachusetts annexed Plymouth colony. Life resumed starting with the rapid increase in population and some return to economic success. Yet, resettlement was slow; in some areas of western Massachusetts resettlement did not take place until the early 1700s.\textsuperscript{220} For the indigenous population there was a much bleaker picture. King Philip’s War effectively killed Native independence and autonomy in the region.\textsuperscript{221} In addition to their political turmoil, the New England Natives lost about half their total population due to combat, disease, hunger, slavery, or migration towards New France.\textsuperscript{222} Specifically the Wampanoag were dispersed and those remaining in the area were closely supervised. Supposedly only a few hundred Narragansetts survived the conflict and their lands were largely taken by the English.\textsuperscript{223}

King Philip’s War is a prime example of warfare in the Eastern Woodlands during the late seventeenth century. As shown in the campaigns and battles of the conflict, Native warriors showed their skill in guerilla warfare by using their raiding strategies against English settlements on the frontier and orchestrating carefully planned ambushes.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[219] Drake, \textit{King Philip's War}, 158.
\item[223] Schultz, Tougias, \textit{King Philip's War: The History of America’s Forgotten Conflict}, 75.
\end{footnotes}
The English, despite suffering severe losses, continued to fight the Indians and would eventually adopt Native fighting styles to help end the conflict. Both Native people and English colonists played to their strengths, but also exploited the other’s weaknesses. Although the Natives themselves did not show any drastic shift in military strategy or tactics, with the exception of the fight at Sudbury, they did show how effectively they could fight what many might consider a superior force with superior ways of war. Sometimes laymen and even historians relate the notion of the Noble Savage fighting in a losing battle. I hope that by showing just how effective these Native strategies and tactics were, that it lessens the stain of this outdated and erroneous idea. The English were not always the superior fighting force as often described. Instead, it was only by adapting to Native tactics and employing Native allies that they were able to succeed in New England. In King Philip’s War, as I have described, the English made many mistakes which cost them hundreds of lives. Yet, the English were determined and would not accept anything less than total victory.
Chapter III

The Battle for the Old Northwest:

1786-1795

The final stage of warfare in the Easter Woodlands that I will analyze occurred in the highly sought after Ohio territory of the late eighteenth century. This theater of war was not only the longest conflict of the three under study, but also the most complex. The present-day states of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Kentucky experienced a series of conflicts that extended back to Lord Dunmore’s War in the 1770s. Tribes such as the Shawnee, Miami, and Delaware made attempts to push back British colonists from settling inside their territory. The Revolutionary War, although changing the name of those people trying to enter the lands from the east, did not eliminate the threat to native lands. Thus the United States of America was faced with its first war as a new nation in the Ohio Territory. A mix of retaliatory raids and pitched battles characterized the Northwest Indian War, which began in 1786. The raids and campaigns of the Northwest Indian War demonstrate significant microevolution within the conflict itself, but also serve as an ending point for our look at broader military shifts. The events of this conflict are important in understanding just how much change had occurred by this point in time.

To understand the conflicts in this area, we first need to look at why this territory was so important to both groups and what it looked like. The land between the Mississippi River and the Pennsylvania state line and above the Ohio River was very
fertile and contained important waterways. To the north lay the Great Lakes and Canada. Important trading posts and forts were sprinkled throughout the territory. In the early seventeenth century, French traders were already forming relationships with people who had been pushed into this region by the Iroquois during the Beaver Wars.\footnote{Elizabeth A. Fenn, \textit{Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82} (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 200.} For the Americans, it was a frontier for settlement and farming. It was land for buying or taking. For the Native tribes in the region it was home and they vowed to defend it.

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Tribal nations in this area included the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Miami, Mingo, Wea, Wyandot, Kickapoo, Delaware, Sac, Chippewa, and Ottawa. These people were widely dispersed, each living near well-known rivers or the great lakes. Some people, like the Shawnee, were small and had split into several groups and often settled with other Indians in the region. The Miami tribe had given many Shawnee groups refuge from the Iroquois. The Miami had been living in the area for generations. Of those who ultimately were drawn into conflict with the British and then the Americans, some like the Potawatomi lived further west on the edge of the Great Lakes area, but were convinced by great leaders of the importance of this fight. Each of these tribes played a significant role. The Miami, Shawnee, and Three Fires (Potawatomi, Chippewa, and Ottawa) played a more central role in organizing Indian resistance, while the Mingo and Wyandot, although present in council fires, seemingly provided more warriors than tactical plans. The Shawnee, for example, were central in organizing tribal councils and maintaining tribal connections even though they were numerically small.

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In this chapter I evaluate both Indian and American raids from an overall strategic standpoint, using specific examples when applicable. I analyze the three major campaigns in depth and the Native responses to these campaigns. In tandem with these campaigns, I examine three battles in depth: Harmar’s Retreat, St. Clair’s Defeat, and the Battle of Fallen Timbers. There were other battles, a few of which I mention, but these three were the pivotal moments and provide ample opportunity to examine Indian and American battle tactics.

The Northwest Indian War lasted from 1786 to 1795. The conflict began with two raids by George Roger Clark and Benjamin Logan in response to Indian raids in the
Kentucky Territory earlier in 1786. The exact reason for these early Indian raids seems to escape history. That being said, historian John Sugden makes the case that the Shawnee war chiefs felt that the civil chiefs had ceded too much Indian land to the Americans. When these civil chiefs began to lose sway with the tribe, other Shawnees began preparing for war.227 Another possibility is that the raids were retaliatory attacks against colonial affronts, which only precipitated more raids and attacks.

From the winter of 1786 to 1788 there was a lull in raiding during which the United States and the Native tribes, led by Joseph Brant, a Mohawk chief who worked as a British Indian mediator, discussed the issue of the Ohio Territory and purchasing land. These negotiations did little other than stall the coming conflict. The U.S. government gave the first governor of the Northwest Territory, Arthur St. Clair, $26,000 to confirm disputed treaties and obtain more land. To the dismay of the Natives, St. Clair did not have permission to budge on land demands or recant previous treaties, which led to the Natives decision to fight the Americans.228 The hardened position of St. Clair, and his refusal to renegotiate unfair treaties heightened the war fervor that came after the raids of 1786. Minor hostilities resumed during late spring of 1788, however, and led to the first U.S. expedition into Indian land, led by Josiah Harmar in 1790. In 1791 there was a second expedition led by Arthur St. Clair, which ended in St. Clair’s disastrous defeat. Fighting continued in 1792 and 1793, but General Anthony Wayne’s campaign in 1794 ended with the Indian confederation defeat at Fallen Timbers. The Treaty of Greenville in 1795 officially ended the conflict and resulted in the cession of nearly all the remaining Indian lands in the Ohio Territory to the United States.

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227 Sugden, Blue Jacket, 71-75.
228 Sugden, Blue Jacket, 79.
The weapons used by these groups are far removed in some ways from the ones discussed in previous chapters, but still operated on similar principles. Firearms were the weapons of choice for both forces, but they were not the only weapons used in combat. Each side also possessed their own unique arms. Artillery, in the form of cannons, also played a role in this conflict. Although this is not the first time we have seen artillery, it is the first time it was used on a large scale in pitched battles. St. Clair had eight pieces of artillery, a majority of which were six-pound brass cannons. Some of the eight were three-pound brass cannons. The Natives forces secured some of these and hid them to use later in the war, but were not able to recover them before General Wayne’s men discovered the cannons while building Fort Defiance.

The weapons used by the Americans, or the Natives for that matter, had not undergone any major changes since the American Revolution. The infantry used two different kinds of musket: the 1763 and 1777 Model Charleville smooth bore muskets. Both of these muskets were French models left over from the American Revolution. The rifleman in each sub-legion used Lancaster County rifles. These were used by Wayne’s army, but it is likely that Harmar’s and St. Clair’s army used the same firearms. Although they were flintlock muskets, they were much improved from the basic flintlocks used in King Philip’s War. The flintlock in this period had improved firing mechanisms and was more diverse in design. Rifles made their first appearance at this time. Rifling itself dates back to the sixteenth century, but due to the preciseness of the process of creating them,

229 Sugden, Blue Jacket, 121.
233 Sword, President Washington’s Indian War, 234.
rifles were not widely available until much later. Rifles were preferred over muskets for their greater accuracy. The difference between muskets and rifles is simple. A rifle had spiraling grooves cut inside the barrel to cause the projectile to spin allowing for greater range and greater accuracy. 234 The army also used various designs of pistols. In addition, General Wayne made adjustments to his troops’ rifles and muskets. In order to have a more sure priming and longer sight picture for targeting enemies, Wayne filled in the old touchhole and drilled a new one at an oblique angle. This lessened the chance of light troops losing portions of their powder. 235

The firearms used by Native forces were primarily obtained through trade with British companies. The two principle British companies that provided Native Americans with guns at this time were the Hudson Bay Company and the Northwest Company, which traded firearms for pelts, skins, and hides. 236 The guns they provided, known as Northwest fusils, were available to most of the Native groups in the Ohio Territory. Fusil is a French term for gun that dates back to the mid-1600s. 237 Following the American Revolution, the British also provided the Natives with weapons in hopes of using Native allies as a stable buffer zone between Canada and the United States. The Natives also used rifles that American’s dropped fleeing from Indian ambushes. 238 When shot, powder, or firearms were scarce Native forces resorted to using their bows. Before St. Clair’s Defeat, for example, many warriors had used up their shot hunting and many did not even have muskets. 239 Clearly, Indian warriors still knew how to use their Native

234 Brown, Firearms in Colonial America, 28-29.
236 Brown, Firearms in Colonial America, 367.
237 Brown, Firearms in Colonial America, 123.
238 Sword, President Washington’s Indian War, 112.
239 Sugden, Blue Jacket, 117.
arms. This illustrates that although Native people were becoming increasingly dependent on European manufactured goods, they maintained some technological independence.

Wars are often personified by their great leaders; this series of conflict is no exception. General Anthony Wayne, Blue Jacket, Little Turtle, Arthur St. Clair, and Josiah Harmar were among the many leaders responsible for the great battles and great failures in the Northwest Indian War. In order to understand the decisions made in these conflicts it is important to understand the leaders’ military backgrounds. We carry our experiences with us, so the conflicts that these men did or did not experience impacted how they made decisions later on.

I wish first to look at Blue Jacket of the Shawnee. Blue Jacket was born a Pekowi. The Pekowi was one of the divisions in Shawnee culture that was responsible for leadership during periods of warfare. The Mekoche division provided the civil chiefs. Blue Jacket grew up in a great period of conflict for the Shawnee with the French and Indian War raging between the British and the French, but Blue Jacket himself did not join the raids till 1763. Blue Jacket also participated in Lord Dunmore’s War between the Shawnee and Virginia colonists in 1774, which consisted of several raids and even a pitched ambush. In the conflict, Blue Jacket participated under Cornstalk in the Battle at Point Pleasant, which can be seen as a model for the tactics at St. Clair’s Defeat, which I discuss in detail later. Blue Jacket also fought in a conflict that occurred during the late 1770s until about 1783. This time instead of fighting against Virginia British colonists, the Shawnee targeted American Kentucky settlers who infringed on their hunting

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240 Sugden, Blue Jacket, 27.
241 Sugden, Blue Jacket, 29-30.
242 Sugden, Blue Jacket, 41.
grounds. These experiences undoubtedly helped shape Blue Jacket into a formidable commander during the Northwest Indian War.

Little Turtle was a Miami Indian, born in the 1750s in a village near the Eel River in current day Indiana. Unfortunately the specifics of Little Turtle’s early life are not as well known as Blue Jacket’s, though it is assumed that Little Turtle had much the same military experience as his contemporaries. Although early twentieth century historian Calvin Young has many ethnocentric and racist tendencies in his writings, he portrays Little Turtle as more than just a mere “savage” general. In his biography of the Miami leader, Young portrays Little Turtle as both a great traveler and politician. Young asserts that Little Turtle was known in many places including Louisiana, Washington D.C., Detroit, and several places in Canada. Towards the end of the Northwest Indian War, Little Turtle began to waiver in his resolve against the American government, but he remained an avid supporter of the Indian cause and was well respected in his dealings at the Treaty of Greenville.

On the American side, Josiah Harmar and Arthur St. Clair shared some similarities in terms of their military experience and failures in the field. Both Harmar and St. Clair were veterans of the American Revolution and both underestimated their Native adversaries. Harmar had been appointed lieutenant colonel of the First American Regiment in 1784. Despite his appointment there was no reason to think that Harmar would have made a good Indian fighter. Growing up in Philadelphia, he was very

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244 Young, Little Turtle, 136.
245 Young, Little Turtle, 140-141.
246 Young, Little Turtle, 143-144.
247 Sword, President’s Washington’s Indian War, 89.
urbanized and knew city life, not the frontier. Before receiving his appointment as governor of the Northwest Territory, St. Clair had an abundance of military experience in both the French and Indian War as a British citizen, and during the American Revolution he manned Fort Ticonderoga and came out of the war a major general in the United States Army. St. Clair had one major disadvantage: illness. St. Clair suffered from “bilious colic, rheumatic asthma, and gout” which often compromised his leadership abilities.

General Anthony Wayne was a different storm altogether. Wayne was a perfectionist, but had a reputation for being reckless. Historian Richard Knopf describes Wayne as, “devoted to the military life, his sense of honor, and his gallantry were unassailed.” During the Revolutionary War, Wayne served as a commander of the Pennsylvania Infantry and had even served under Arthur St. Clair. Wayne’s most courageous action during the Revolution came after a mistake. Wayne was surprised by a British bayonet charge at night at a place called Paoli, but Wayne regained his honor by using the same tactic to take Stony Point later in the war. After the American Revolution, Wayne had a checkered career in politics, which never really agreed with him. Wayne also had the nickname “Mad” Anthony, bestowed on him when he refused to help a deserter, who grew up in the same area of Pennsylvania as Wayne. The deserter called him “mad” and the name stuck.

248 Sword, President Washington’s Indian War, 89.
249 Sword, President Washington's Indian War, 53.
250 Sugden, Blue Jacket, 115.
252 Knopf, Anthony Wayne, 7.
253 Downey, Indian Wars of the U.S. Army, 61.
254 Sword, President Washington's Indian War, 206-207.
The United States army before the Northwest Indian war was miniscule. Due to economic constraints, the United States Congress had to discharge most of its army shortly after the end of the American Revolution. By mid-1784 there were less than one hundred regulars in the United States army, consisting only of one artillery unit at West Point and twenty-nine regulars at Fort Pitt. In 1789, five years later the standing United States Army had grown, but still only consisted of about 672 men. It was not until the promotion of Anthony Wayne to Major General that the United States military underwent the necessary changes to transform it into a professional army.

General Anthony Wayne headed probably one of the best-trained, yet short-lived armies in the history of the United States: The Legion. Wayne accomplished this, not by using newly improved methods of training, but simply by taking the time to instill discipline and train by standard methods. For example, Wayne trained his men to shoot at specific targets as well as to take their time to aim instead of relying on volume with volley fire. The Legion was the largest of the three armies that advanced into Indian territory, numbering some 1,200 regulars and about 1,400 mounted riflemen or militia. The Legion also had a much more complex infrastructure consisting of four sub-legions that were further subdivided. Each of the sub-legions consisted of two regiments of infantry, one regiment of artillery, one regiment of dragoons, and one regiment of rifleman. Each sub-legion also had its own independent command structure that answered only to General Wayne who was in charge of the combined force. This new

255 Downey, Indian Wars of the U.S. Army, 50.
256 Starkey, European and Native American Warfare, 141.
257 Downey, Indian Wars of the U.S. Army, 63.
258 Sword, President Washington's Indian War, 232
259 Downey, Indian Wars of the U.S. Army, 65.
260 Starkey, European and Native American Warfare, 150.
style of command structure allowed each sub-legion to operate on its own if need be. If
the Legion had ever been fully recruited it would have numbered 4,272 enlisted men plus
an additional 291 officers.\textsuperscript{261} These reforms were based on the ideas of French military
theorists Maurice de Saxe and Turpin de Crissé earlier in the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{262}

Prior to Wayne’s reforms, the first two armies under Harmar and St. Clair had
large contingents of militia. Harmar’s army had just over 1,100 militia with only 320
regulars. Harmar’s army also contained mounted riflemen, who were in the same vein as
militia and three light brass cannons.\textsuperscript{263} St. Clair’s army was slightly more diverse
containing 600 regulars, 800 levies, and 600 militia by the time of his defeat.\textsuperscript{264} At the
beginning of his campaign St. Clair had almost 2,000 six-month levies, which were
subject to some federal standards and military training.\textsuperscript{265} Levies were men who were
conscripted by the army or raised locally, but differed from militia in that they did meet
basic standards of military training. This put them at only a slight advantage over militia.
Harmar attempted to improve his forces by adding more regular troops and levies, with
mixed results.

With the exception of the actions of some of the mounted militia in raids, the
performance of militia or the levies was very poor in combat. These men were relatively
untrained and undisciplined. When combat became heavy they retreated, because they
lacked the stomach to continue fighting and they were unwilling to risk their lives. This
often caused problems in a battle situation. For example, during St. Clair’s Defeat, the
Native resistance attacked a forward group of about 300 militia and within just a few

\textsuperscript{261} Knopf, \textit{Anthony Wayne}, 14.
\textsuperscript{262} Starkey, \textit{European and Native American Warfare}, 150.
\textsuperscript{263} Downey, \textit{Indian Wars of the U.S. Army}, 53.
\textsuperscript{264} Grenier, \textit{The First Way of War}, 198.
\textsuperscript{265} Sugden, \textit{Blue Jacket}, 115.
minutes sent them running across the St. Mary’s River to the main camp, causing confusion. 266 It was moments like this that both confirmed and perpetuated the militia’s reputation for being unreliable.

The makeup of the Native armies is difficult to unravel because of the lack of a centralized command structure, as well as fluidity in numbers. The number of warriors changed based on the personal preference of the warriors themselves. If they felt a fight was unwinnable they might not entertain the idea of battle, and warriors were not outright punished for leaving. Unlike western military structures that relied on strict lines of command, Native warriors prized individualism. Native warriors took pride in their own fighting prowess and their ability to take scalps and other spoils of war. 267 These prizes advanced a warrior’s prestige and gave him credibility, status, and influence. This is especially important in the case of war chiefs, who needed the ability to convince warriors to join in fighting. However, war chiefs did not have total coercive control over their warriors, but persuaded and commanded through prestige and consensus. It is also impossible to know the entire tribal composition of the armies that faced the Americans. For example, at the battle of Fort Recovery, Ottawa and Ojibwe warriors rushed the fort after a successful ambush on a supply train, costing the Native force fifteen additional lives. Although some tribes, like the Delaware, Shawnee, and Miami were probably present at all engagements, the remaining components are still subject to debate. 268 Simply put we do not know the full diversity of tribes that participated in all battles.

We will begin our examination with a look at Clark and Logan’s raids from Kentucky. Most of the raids conducted by Americans came from either frontiersmen, also

266 Sword, President Washington’s Indian War, 178-179.
267 Sugden, Blue Jacket, 19-20.
268 Sugden, Blue Jacket, 166.
known as mounted riflemen, or rangers. Even though most of these men were not battle-hardened veterans of the Revolutionary War, it was not uncommon for the leader of the expedition to be a veteran. George Roger Clark was a leader in the western frontier during the American Revolution.\textsuperscript{269} It was this experience that led him to be chosen to lead a raid in 1786. In 1786 the District of Kentucky authorized attacks on the Wabash areas as retribution for raids that had occurred earlier in 1786 and even before.\textsuperscript{270} Clark’s raid was the larger of the two consisting of some 1,200 men\textsuperscript{271} while Logan’s force consisted of fewer than 800.\textsuperscript{272} Logan and Clark each had specific areas they were supposed to raid. Within these areas, they were supposed to destroy villages and food stores and kill warriors where they could. Clark was to head to a French settlement and then go up the Wabash River through Wea and Miami territory,\textsuperscript{273} while Logan was to raid Shawnee villages on the Great Miami River.\textsuperscript{274} They were not necessarily to be involved in pitched battles nor were they meant to conquer. The Americans wanted to dissuade the Natives from perpetuating a frontier war. They hoped that by destroying food stores, attacking innocents, and burning towns the Indians would concede to peaceful negotiations.

Clark’s raid was not successful. He ran into supply troubles. Most of his supplies were sent by boat to Vincennes, but were delayed and spoiled. By the time they marched out, dissent had set in and 300 men deserted, which led Clark to abandon his raid before

\textsuperscript{269} Sword, President Washington’s Indian War, 11.
\textsuperscript{270} Sword, President Washington’s Indian War, 33.
\textsuperscript{271} Sword, President Washington’s Indian War, 35.
\textsuperscript{272} Sword, President Washington’s Indian War, 37.
\textsuperscript{273} Sword, President Washington’s Indian War, 33-35.
\textsuperscript{274} Armstrong Starkey, European and Native American Warfare 1675-1815 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 139.
it began. On the other hand, Logan’s raid was more successful, but the raid fell on peaceful Indians. Despite the fact that one of Logan’s recruits deserted to warn the Natives of his advance, Logan caught the village of Mackachack completely off guard. Many warriors fled, those who stayed put up a “futile resistance.” The Americans destroyed the villages and 15,000 bushels of corn, took twenty-six women and two children prisoner, and took eleven scalps and killed ten chiefs, including Moluntha, an important Shawnee civil chief who was friendly to the Americans. According to Historian Wiley Sword, the raiders apparently killed Moluntha because when they asked Moluntha about his involvement in the Kentuckian defeat at Blue Licks during the Revolution, Moluntha not knowing English well answered yes. Logan’s Raid accomplished its mission of spreading fear, but only for a moment. It also cost the United States peaceful Native allies, and resulted in an escalation of Indian raids.

From 1786-1790 raiding continued, resulting in a few small skirmishes. By 1790, hostilities had escalated to the point where the United States Congress increased their standing army. In 1787 a war party of Shawnees lead by Chiksika (the brother of Shawnee leader, Tecumseh, who would lead a Pan-Indian alliance in the early nineteenth century) raided in southern Kentucky. Earlier in 1786 and then again in 1788 Shawnees under Blue Jacket struck out against the Kentuckians. Blue Jacket was captured in 1788, but escaped captivity within a few days. According to historian Fairfax Downey, some

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275 Sword, President Washington’s Indian War, 36-37.
276 Sword, President Washington’s Indian War, 37-38.
277 Sword, President Washington’s Indian War, 39.
279 Sugden, Blue Jacket, 76, 81-82.
1,000 Kentuckians had been killed in raids by 1790.\textsuperscript{280} These raids were conducted in retaliation to the events that occurred during the Logan and Clark raids of 1786. Though these raids were committed on the idea of blood revenge, at this point in time the Native were directly acting against American expansion and making attempts to dissuade them from further military actions against their people.

The U.S retaliated in kind with the aim of punishing Indians and instilling fear among the Ohio Territory’s Native populations. They wanted to avenge the deaths of those who had died during previous raids, but Sugden makes a point that it was more than just revenge. Sugden quotes William North, who said, “‘We . . . are taking their land from them.’”\textsuperscript{281} Sugden continues that hatred had been bred between the Kentuckians and the Northwest Indians, namely the Shawnee, and how no matter what the circumstances savagery broke out when the two groups met. \textsuperscript{282} After decades of constant raiding and retaliation the two groups had grown a deep resentment for the other resulting in brutality and death on both sides.

Some historians consider Clark’s and Logan’s raid a campaign based on its size and complexity,\textsuperscript{283} but I believe that its designation as a raid is appropriate. The purpose of a raid is not to subdue an enemy or to conquer, but to cause terror and disrupt everyday life. Harmar’s Campaign has some of these qualities, because the point of his campaign was to punish or chastise the Native populace.\textsuperscript{284} The difference between the two comes from two points, the mode in which they were conducted and their duration. A raid is

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{280} Fairfax Downey, \textit{Indian Wars of the U.S. Army 1776-1865} (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1963), 52.
\item \textsuperscript{281} Sugden, \textit{Blue Jacket}, 75.
\item \textsuperscript{282} Sugden, \textit{Blue Jacket}, 75.
\item \textsuperscript{283} Sword, \textit{President Washington's Indian War}, 36.
\item \textsuperscript{284} Starkey, \textit{European and Native Warfare}, 141.
\end{itemize}
indicative of a single action and typically lasts a short period of time. It is possible that multiple raids could occur over a prolonged period of time, but these could be separated into individual raids. A campaign is typically slower in action and lasts longer. In other words the quick attack versus the long march. The two can be combined. It is possible that raids can accompany a campaign. In this case there are typically smaller mobile divisions, which make fast strikes against enemy homesteads, while a main body completes other tasks such as constructing forts or preparing for a larger confrontation.

One of the most important details of the Northwest Indian War was the ability of the Natives to form a multi-tribe defense against the United States. As previously mentioned, the Shawnee were instrumental in organizing the Indian councils that led to this pan-Indian resistance, but it is important to understand the broader aspects of this confederation. First and foremost, we should not think of this as unique, but not altogether common. As Sugden points out, pan-Indian confederacies were often established to confront major pressures, but they were very difficult to organize and maintain.285 The expansion of American interests into the Ohio Territory by way of settlers and land speculation, however, encouraged tribes to join forces in the 1780s and 1790s. All of these tribes had been affected by the colonialism and expansion of European power to some degree, but the influx of Shawnee and Delaware refugees spread terrible stories of the Americans.286 News that Americans were massing across the Ohio River in 1790 to punish the Indians was all the war chiefs needed to hear to finalize the confederacy.

285 Sugden, Blue Jacket, 28-29.
286 Sugden, Blue Jacket, 92-93.
From a strategic standpoint Josiah Harmar’s campaign in 1790 was very simple and, in his mind, successful, but it did not end in the manner that Harmar or anyone back east would have wanted. The purpose of Harmar’s Campaign was to chastise Indians for the raiding that had occurred since the American raids of 1786. This chastisement was accomplished by disrupting the daily life of Native people in the form of destroying homes and food stores. Over the course of his campaign Harmar claimed responsibility for destroying 300 buildings and burning some 20,000 bushels of corn.\(^{287}\) Harmar sent teams of 50 regulars augments by hundreds of militia on seek and destroy missions.\(^{288}\) From a strategic standpoint Harmar’s campaign was a success, because he accomplished the goals he set out with. However, Harmar’s campaign ended in a defeat at the hands of Little Turtle. One of the key components of Harmar’s Campaign was a secondary force under Major John Hamtramck of 100 regulars and 400 militia that was charged with attacking villages on the Wabash River, away from Harmar’s advance.\(^{289}\) However, one questionable decision had been made during the inception of this campaign. Secretary of War Henry Knox told Governor St. Clair to warn the British at Fort Miami and friendly Indians of Harmar’s campaign, making secrecy impossible.\(^{290}\) According to Wiley Sword, “the army’s march thus seemed to resemble a herd of elephants trampling through the underbrush.”\(^{291}\)

What was the Native response to Harmar’s campaign? Although we cannot know their specific intentions, it seems that Native forces wanted to trick Harmar into a false sense of security. Little Turtle and Blue Jacket appear to have let Harmar burn the

\(^{287}\) Grenier, *The First Way of War*, 196.
\(^{289}\) Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare*, 141.
\(^{290}\) Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare*, 142.
\(^{291}\) Sword, *President Washington’s Indian War*, 96.
villages and food stores in order to make Harmar believe he had caught them unaware.\textsuperscript{292} Native warriors never strayed far away from Harmar’s force, however, and kept a close eye on his movements.\textsuperscript{293} Rather than confront Harmar’s forces in the open, the Native warriors evacuated their communities and waited for the perfect moment to strike.

Harmar’s Defeat occurred over the course of four days from October 19 to 22. On October 19 a group of 150 militia and 30 regulars under Colonel John Hardin, while trying to find the Indians positions, ran into about 150 warriors under Miami war chief Little Turtle. Hardin ordered a pursuit of two Indians who they surprised in an old Indian campsite. These two Indians led Hardin into an ambush. After some distance Indians under Little Turtle fired from the right first, which turned the militia into another firing line on the left.\textsuperscript{294} The militia broke quickly. Even though the regulars made an attempt to stand and fight they could not withstand the charge of the Native forces. Fortunately, in the retreat the Americans ran into one of their own detachments and the warriors did not pursue into this second line.\textsuperscript{295} On October 20 and 21 Harmar’s forces went about raiding and burning villages, but no large scale fighting took place.\textsuperscript{296}

The events of October 22 were similar to those of October 19, but on a larger scale. Harmar ordered a group of 400 men to find and attack the Miami village of Kekionga. The acting commander of this force was Major John Palsgrave Wylys. Wylys’ plan was to launch a surprise attack on the village from three directions.\textsuperscript{297} Wylys’ plan however did not go as expected. Wyly’s column of 60 regulars and 40-

\textsuperscript{292} Downey, \textit{Indian Wars of the U.S. Army}, 53.
\textsuperscript{293} Sugden, \textit{Blue Jacket}, 101.
\textsuperscript{294} Sword, \textit{President Washington’s Indian War}, 106-107.
\textsuperscript{295} Sword, \textit{President Washington’s Indian War}, 107-108.
\textsuperscript{296} Sword, \textit{President Washington’s Indian War}, 109-111.
\textsuperscript{297} Sword, \textit{President Washington’s Indian War}, 110-111.
mounted militia were en route to their position when they were ambushed in a defile next to the Maumee River. With most of the cavalry and some of the regulars in the open, Native warriors fired from both sides of the defile. Fortunately for Wylly, one of the other wings of the army under Major James McMillan, numbering 150 men, heard the fire and cut back towards Wyllys’ position. After taking some fire from the newly arrived Americans, the Native force retreated past the ruins of Kekionga into an open cornfield with Wyllys and McMillan in pursuit. However, Little Turtle had an ambush waiting. The Indians began firing at the Americans, killing many of them outright. The Americans continued to skirmish, fight, retreat, and push forward. Eventually the Native warriors vanished into the underbrush after they began to suffer their own losses. All in all Harmar lost some 183 men killed and 31 men wounded over the course of his campaign.

The failures of Harmar’s campaign are manifested in his defeat in two areas: military training and leadership decisions. The militia in Harmar’s case was exceptionally bad. When the militia arrived in September of 1790 some of the Pennsylvania militia did not even have guns. They were not the seasoned frontiersmen Harmar expected, nor had they any military experience. The other faults lie in Harmar’s decision making. Harmar wanted to fight the Northwest Indians in open field combat, but they would not give him such a luxury since Native warriors preferred skirmishes in wooded areas where they would withstand fewer casualties. Harmar also

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298 Sword, *President Washington’s Indian War*, 112.
299 Sword, *President Washington’s Indian War*, 113-115.
300 Downey, *Indian Wars of the U.S. Army*, 53.
301 Starky, *European and Native American Warfare*, 141-142.
spread his forces thin, which left not only his supply line vulnerable and his main force prone to attack.302

The Native American warriors played to their strength in this struggle by using their tried and true ambush tactics. Indian forces used ambush tactics by waiting till the Americans were in a vulnerable position and then surprised them. They used the knowledge of the terrain to their advantage and moved unseen by the Americans. When the Native warriors had the American army in their sites they sprung their trap and inflicted heavy casualties. It also helped that the Americans often underestimated the Natives’ ability to fight, despite the effectiveness of their tactics. Native forces successfully caught the Americans off guard on October 19. The effective scouting by Native warriors and the lack of American awareness were instrumental to the Native success. The fight at Kekionga on October 22 was a tactical concerted effort on the other hand. Little Turtle had deliberately used the original ambush force that attacked Wyllys to pull the rest of the American forces into a greater ambush.303 Native losses are subject to scrutiny. Sword gives some credit to St. Clair’s report of almost 200 Indian dead, but mentions that other reports come at 40 or just over 100.304 St. Clair may have inflated the numbers to make the campaign seem more successful. William Heath on the other hand completely disregards St. Clair’s report. Heath states that, “casualties did not exceed fifty.”305

We can see a glimpse here into one problem in the Indian command structure. If Little Turtle had better control over his forces, he could have prevented unnecessary loss

303 Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare*, 143.
304 Sword, *President Washington’s Indian War*, 115.
of life. Based on the openness of the cornfield where the fight took place, the Indians getting caught in Saint Mary’s River and Saint Joseph’s River between two Kentucky forces seems preventable. A group of Natives were caught between the remnants of McMillan’s force and the newly arrived third wave under Horatio Hall in the midst of these two rivers, where they were cut down. Indian leadership also placed a heavy importance on supernatural omens as a way of planning war strategies. The Indian force had planned on attacking Harmar again with some newly arrived 700 Ottawa warriors, but a lunar eclipse, which the Ottawa read as a bad omen, caused them to abandon the endeavor, so they left Little Turtle.

Arthur St. Clair’s campaign in 1791 shared some similarities in purpose with that of Harmar’s 1790 campaign, including a series of augmenting raids by Charles Scott and James Wilkinson. This set of raids actually preceded St. Clair’s campaign, but were an integral part of the overall strategy. One exception was that while Harmar was not permitted to build forts in Indian country, St. Clair had the responsibility of establishing a string of forts in the Northwest Territory. After the events of Harmar’s campaign, the United States realized that they would need forts, especially in the Indian heartland, to control the area. St. Clair’s campaign was meant to bring the Indians to terms for land, but also to restore American prestige. The United States was a fledgling nation and needed to show the world that it could hold its own. If the United States could not defeat these perceived “savages” then how could they compete against other powers like Great Britain? Despite the United States’ lofty ambitions, however, St. Clair’s campaign was a

306 Sword, President Washington’s Indian War, 114.
307 Heath, William Wells, 124.
308 Grenier, The First Way of War, 197.
309 Starkey, European and Native American Warfare, 144.
310 Grenier, The First Way of War, 198.
failure. Not only did St. Clair fail to force the Indians into negotiations, but he also suffered one of the greatest defeats at the hands of an indigenous force ever in American military history.

The most curious problem that St. Clair had was shortage of tools, which prolonged his building of necessary forts. The campaign also suffered from a lack of normal supplies: clothes, food, and tents. One key consequence of this problem was the threat of desertion. St. Clair made part of the First Regiment in charge of protecting his supply lines from his own men, which took the regiment out of the decisive battle of his campaign. This was a serious mistake. In addition, St. Clair suffered from a lack of information. He had no idea what the Natives were planning nor where they were or how many they were.311

The pan-Indian resistance responded to St. Clair’s campaign in much the way that they had with Harmar. Native warriors refrained from getting involved in pitched combat with this large American force until the right moment. One reason for this was that the raids of Scott and Wilkinson, while not bringing the Natives to their knees, did make the Natives think for just a moment that the United States might return to a state of constant militia and ranger raiding. This raiding, when done properly, threatened the lives of entire villages including women and children, not to mention the loss of food they would suffer. One important difference here from Harmar’s campaign is that the Natives did a better job of consolidating their forces to fight against St. Clair. The force of Native warriors that assembled for St. Clair’s defeat was the largest of the three, numbering at about

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311 Starkey, European and Native American Warfare, 145-146.
1,100 men.\textsuperscript{312} With this force now assembled the warriors slowly advanced from their camp less than half a mile from St. Clair’s position.\textsuperscript{313}

St. Clair’s Defeat occurred on November 4, 1791.\textsuperscript{314} Often referred to as the “frontier Cannae,”\textsuperscript{315} it was the worst defeat the United States suffered at the hands of Native people until the Battle of Little Bighorn in the late nineteenth century. St. Clair had divided his force by putting a small contingent of militia, numbering 320 men, on the north side of the Wabash River and the main camp to the south. The main camp was not in a particularly defensible position.\textsuperscript{316} Early in the morning a group of warriors surprised the militia on the north side of the river. It is likely that the militia only fired one shot before retreating across the river. This retreat caused confusion in the main camp where the men had been recently released from parade. One of the lines of infantry, under Richard Butler, managed to reform causing the Natives to falter, but this was not enough to keep the warriors from encircling the camp where they began to pick off artillerymen and officers.\textsuperscript{317}

The course of the battle quickly deteriorated for the Americans. The Americans could not find their targets. The surrounding Indians used the brush and trees as cover so the Americans had problems hitting their enemies. The Americans tried to push back on all sides, but to no avail. In one particular instance men under lieutenant colonel Darke fastened bayonets and charged towards Indians in the rear. The Indians fled, but Darke and his men charged too far forward only to be enveloped by Wyandot.\textsuperscript{318} There were

\textsuperscript{312} Downey, \textit{Indian Wars of the U.S. Army}, 55.
\textsuperscript{313} Sugden, \textit{Blue Jacket}, 122.
\textsuperscript{314} Sword, \textit{President Washington's Indian War}, 176.
\textsuperscript{315} Grenier, \textit{The First Way of War}, 198.
\textsuperscript{316} Sugden, \textit{Blue Jacket}, 121.
\textsuperscript{317} Sugden, \textit{Blue Jacket}, 123-124.
\textsuperscript{318} Sword, \textit{President Washington's Indian War}, 181-182.
other such sorties, but they met similar fates. As the American’s were forced into the center of the camp they knew their situation was dire. After pushing a group of Wyandot and Mingo warriors back from the center of camp, St. Clair decided to cut a path to the trail on which the American force had traveled to this location. The fighting in this instance was intense. The intensity of this fight may be attributed to the fact that the Wyandot and Mingo had begun killing civilians--mostly women--who had accompanied the camp. Some 200 men massed a charge against the rear of their position and ran headlong back to American Fort Jefferson. The losses were significant.

In this battle, Blue Jacket and Little Turtle had devised a masterful plan of attack against St. Clair’s unfortified positions. They had divided their warriors into three sides. The frontal assault was manned by the Miami, Delaware, and Shawnee, on the left flank were placed the Ottawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi, and on the right flank were the Wyandot and Mingo. Aided by St. Clair’s lack of information, the Natives attack went perfectly as planned. Their only negative moment was when the Wyandot and Mingo were pushed back after breaking into the center of the American camp. When the Americans managed to push through the rear, the natives gave a short chase of only about four or five miles, but the battle had already been won.

The loss for the Americans was especially humiliating, given their superior numbers. In 1786 after the raids of Logan and Clark, over 1,400 warriors were in the Wabash Valley, including forces from five tribes. When this number is combined with the number of Native troops from the other primary engagements the number arises to approximately 5,640 warriors. This number includes the warriors present for the

319 Sugden, Blue Jacket, 124-126.
320 Downey, Indian Wars of the U.S. Army, 58.
American campaigns, but these numbers are harder to track. In many cases the sources go off approximations from participants, which may have been exaggerated or not altogether grounded in evidence. Three times the United States Congress and Secretary of War Henry Knox sent armies into the Old Northwest Territory. Each of these armies numbered more than a thousand men. The combined force of the armies under Harmar, St. Clair, and Wayne numbered 7,720 men.\textsuperscript{322} This number included regulars, militia, and some of the mounted volunteer regiments where numbers are available. If we include the forces under Roger Clark and Benjamin Logan the number rises to 9,710.

The estimated number of American casualties at St. Clair’s defeat comes to 630 men killed and 282 wounded.\textsuperscript{323} The Indians suffered 21 dead and 40 wounded.\textsuperscript{324} In this battle the Americans lost almost half their force and inflicted minimal on the other side, but this did not dissuade the Americans from making another campaign. After all, they had the manpower. The population of the United States in 1790 was 3,929,214 with an estimated fighting-age population of 982,304, so men could be called up as necessary.\textsuperscript{325} Granted the United States ability to call up this many individuals is questionable at the least, but it does bring home the point of population differences. This is contrary to the warrior population of the Miami, which numbered maybe 1290.\textsuperscript{326} Understand that this is only one tribe. The population of the combined tribes in the Northwest Territory was much larger, but any one tribe did not have sufficient numbers to resist American aggressions. Not only this, but loss of life affected Native groups to a higher degree. Even

\textsuperscript{322} This number is an addition of averages from a various sources. This number is also a low approximation.
\textsuperscript{323} Downey, \textit{Indian Wars of the U.S. Army}, 59.
\textsuperscript{324} Starky, \textit{European and Native American Warfare}, 147.
\textsuperscript{325} Barbara Alice Mann, “Fractal Massacres in the Old Northwest: the example of the Miamis”, \textit{Journal of Genocide Research} 15, no. 2, (2013), 175.
\textsuperscript{326} Mann, “Fractal Massacres”, 175.
if a smaller tribe lost only 15 men, this represented a greater percentage of the population. One of the reasons for this disparity is disease. Smallpox was highly detrimental to Native people, because they had no acquired immunity to the disease. During the Revolutionary War a great smallpox epidemic covered much of North America, including the Old Northwest. This led to a dramatic reduction of the Indian population in the region just prior to the Northwest Indian War.

Following the debacle of St. Clair’s campaign the U.S. renewed its efforts, although General Anthony Wayne’s campaign would not begin until the spring of 1793. Wayne had taken all the necessary measures to train and prepare his army during 1792 and early 1793 to ensure that the mistakes of the previous two campaigns would not be repeated. The overall war strategy set out by Secretary of War Henry Knox included another series of raids in late 1792 and early 1793, known as the desultory war. These raids led to a series of small American defeats. Coupled with these operations, Knox made political overtures to the Six Nations in hopes of keeping them out of the war. To this end he convinced various chiefs of the Six Nations and Mohawk chief Joseph Brant of their sincerity of American peace talks, and with some monetary incentive towards Brant, the United States managed to dissuade them from joining the Indian resistance in the Northwest. Knox also commanded Wayne to establish more forts, including one on the site of St. Clair’s defeat, which became known as Fort Recovery. One major difference in Wayne’s campaign from the previous campaigns was that he had an ample number of scouts and rangers at his disposal. Wayne entered the Maumee Valley in July 1794 and went on a campaign of destroying Indian villages. Wayne even built a new fort

327 Fenn, Pox Americana, 3.
328 Sword, President Washington’s Indian War, 208-210.
329 Starkey, European and Native American Warfare, 151.
named Fort Defiance on the confluence of the Saint Joseph, Auglaize, and Maumee Rivers. The destruction stopped only when the Natives decided to fight at Fallen Timbers.

By 1793 the Shawnee had successfully brought warriors to their cause and assembled a force of some 2,000 men. The Native resistance had a more cohesive strategy, which included attacking Wayne’s supply lines and communications cutting him off from necessary resources. This plan may not have been formulated until late June of 1794, but the attacks had been occurring long before then. One such example is when Little Otter, an Ottawa chief, successfully ambushed a party of some 120 Americans with only forty warriors on October 17, 1793. The most important of this strategy, however, occurred on June 30, 1794, when a group of 1,100 warriors ambushed a convoy outside Fort Recovery. Unfortunately during the attack on the convoy, Chippewa and Ottawa warriors attacked the fort itself. With a clear field of fire the American garrison picked off warriors who pressed the attack for several hours, which caused unwanted losses for the Native force. This attack shows one weakness of Native American warfare at this time: the inability to take forts.

Although the inability of Natives to take forts played a much bigger role in the War of 1812, the incident at Fort Recovery sheds some important light on a few details. First and foremost Natives did not have any form of artillery, and small arms fire was ineffective against a fort. In previous chapters the Natives built and used defensive positions and there is even evidence that they knew siege techniques, but that experience

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330 Sugden, Blue Jacket, 141-143.
331 Sugden, Blue Jacket, 164.
332 Sword, President Washington’s Indian War, 251.
333 Starkey, European and Native American Warfare, 152-153.
was against other Native forts and not those of European style. Native forts were more likened to palisaded towns, whereas European fortifications were engineered with much more intricate defense capabilities. Not only that, but by the eighteenth century many Native groups had abandoned wooden stockades in the old Northwest. On many occasions Native forces could have very easily outnumbered the men inside a fort and stormed it, but the number of men who might die in the process proved too much to make the endeavor worthwhile. Instead, warriors often surprised American soldiers outside their fortifications using their ambush tactics.

The Battle of Fallen Timbers took place on August 20, 1794. The Indians had positioned themselves in an area of trees that had been blown over by a recent tornado, hence the name Fallen Timbers. Fallen Timbers was somewhat of an anticlimactic ending for such a colorful conflict. Throughout the course of the war, Native forces had used ambush tactics, surprise, and capitalized on mistakes made by the American generals to their advantage, but here they decided to make a stand. The Indian resistance assumed that Wayne would advance up the Maumee River, and they were confident that they could hold Wayne at bay from this natural fortification. Unfortunately for the Native resistance, they made a mistake in timing. Many of the warriors had fasted for two days before battle in order to purify themselves, body and soul, and not half of the Indians had returned to their position for they were out hunting and gathering food. Even though the scales looked greatly in their favor in the beginning, the loss of manpower was costly. The fasting would not have been a problem, except for the fact that Wayne’s approach

334 Starkey, European and Native American Warfare, 131.
335 Starkey, European and Native American Warfare, 132.
336 Sword, President Washington’s Indian War, 300.
337 Downey, Indian Wars of the U.S. Army, 66.
338 Starkey, European and Native American Warfare, 154.
took longer than the Natives had anticipated, causing warriors to be gone in search of food when Wayne finally reached the field of battle.

There is an important shift in strategy here. The decision to stand and fight at Fallen Timbers, although understandable given their initial numbers, proved folly. With the exception of the events following the unplanned attack on Fort Recovery, the Native strategy of attacking Wayne’s supply lines was successful. Yet, the events at Fort Recovery caused certain tribes and leaders to second-guess themselves. Little Turtle, one of the masterminds behind the early victories, began to petition the British for more direct involvement, which cost him some of his prestige. His allies saw that he was losing hope in the confederacy. More importantly however, General Wayne’s campaign improvements did not allow for successful use of Native tactics. Wayne used Chickasaw and Choctaw warriors as scouts on the march up the Maumee River, which prevented the pan-Indian resistance from using their greatest asset, surprise.  

Wayne marched up the Maumee River in full force. His vanguard came upon the position and received a tremendous volley. Only some 500 warriors manned the position including 70 Canadian militiamen, but they were determined to hold it. Wayne ordered his mounted militia to attack the Indians’ position on its flanks, but the Indians were sheltered by the thick forest and their fortified position. In the end it was a simple bayonets charge that finished the Indians. The charge began with a premature charge by Captain Robert Campbell supported by Brigadier General Wilkinson and ended with pursuit by American Dragoons after the bayonet chased the Natives from their position. General Wayne pressed the attack from all directions with all of his sub-legions. Native

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warriors’ greatly feared American bayonets and cavalry. \textsuperscript{342} At Fallen Timbers there was nowhere to run inside the fallen trees, so when Wayne’s forces pressed the attack the Native warriors were trapped in their lines. The Natives had faced an uphill battle from the beginning; with so few men against a force so large it is doubtful that the Native force could have fought against Wayne for long. The Battle of Fallen Timbers ended with Wayne’s army suffering some 44 men killed and 100 men wounded, while the Natives lost around 40 men. \textsuperscript{343}

One reason for Wayne’s success may have come from the small shift in linear firing tactics. Despite their prevalence in military thought throughout most of the gunpowder age, linear firing tactics have played little obvious role in the previous two chapters, but have been alluded to several times here, though they were undoubtedly used in King Philip’s War. In the Northwest Indian War, as I noted in the beginning, General Wayne made reforms which including picking targets. It is true that these men still fired in linear formations, but instead of blindly firing in lines they picked their targets. Here will be a good time to juxtapose the tactics of St. Clair with the reforms of General Wayne. If you recall from St. Clair’s Defeat, the militia and regulars filed into lines and fired into the brush to no success, for the brush and trees shielded Native warriors from the firing line. The reforms of Wayne are important to note, but hard to track. Although it is likely that the preciseness of this new style of linear tactics would have increased the Native loss of life, the fallen trees likely lessened this advantage. However, the loss of so many principal men may be evidence of these tactics. Wayne’s men could have picked men they saw as leaders to fire at resulting in this loss discrepancy.

\textsuperscript{342} Sword, \textit{President Washington's Indian War}, 303-305.
\textsuperscript{343} Heath, \textit{William Wells}, 213. I am using these numbers, because these are some of the most recent and likely reliable estimates. Earlier writings and the personal accounts vary.
Despite the relatively light casualties, the Battle of Fallen Timbers was a disaster for the pan-Indian resistance. Even though the Natives had only lost some 40 men, they had lost many important war chiefs including the principal chief of the Sandusky Wyandot. More important was the British refusal of help at Fort Miami. After the battle was over the Indians fled towards the fort, but the gates were shut. The British were not ready to make such an action against the United States. The British did not have the manpower or the equipment to start a frontier war with the United States nor did the British government wish to fight so soon after the American Revolution. Without this direct military help the pan-Indian resistance began to fall to pieces.

In the wake of Fallen Timbers Anthony Wayne’s Legion were sent to destroy Indian villages in the Maumee and Auglaize River Valleys. It was soon after that that peace talks began. The war chiefs had lost their power and now the civil chiefs who advocated for accommodation led the push in the negotiations with the American government. After almost a year, the Native tribes ceded southern and eastern Ohio, parts of southern Indiana, and sixteen other concessions, along with confirming land cessions from previous treaties. The Northwest Indian War ended with the Treaty of Greenville, which was signed on August 3, 1795, giving the Americans several land concessions and removing the British from Fort Miami. Yet, that was not the end of conflict in this region. A decade later Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa revitalized Indian religion and resistance.

Sugden, Blue Jacket, 180.
Grenier, The First Way of War, 201.
Starkey, European and Native American Warfare, 155.
Sugden, Blue Jacket, 206.
The Northwest Indian War provides a clear example of the state of warfare in the Eastern Woodlands in the late eighteenth century. The mistakes and failures of Harmar and St. Clair forced the American military system to evolve in order to face its enemy. These changes culminated in the success of Wayne’s final campaign into Indian territory. For the Native Americans there was almost a reversal in strategy and tactics. Throughout the course of the war, whether in pitched battles or small skirmishes, the ambush tactic or strategy worked remarkably well for several reasons. If you look at the first two campaigns and battles the Natives used the American’s lack of intelligence and poor leadership to their advantage. The Americans also underestimated their Native adversary. The decision to change that tactic and confront an American army from an under-manned fortified position seems suspect, because the Battle of Fallen Timbers tactically did not play to traditional Native advantages in war, especially after the success of attacking Wayne’s supply lines. The abandonment of a Native ambush strategy did not pan out in their favor at Fallen Timbers. Yet, throughout the majority of the conflict we see how remarkable Native forces are at fighting numerical larger forces with more resources.
Conclusion:
The Echoes of War

The conflicts discussed in this thesis were benchmarks in North America’s military history. In order to understand the broader changes in military strategy and tactics that took place over three centuries of contact and combat, it is important to understand the small changes in individual conflicts. The body chapters discussed the microevolutions that occurred during De Soto’s invasion, King Philip’s War, and the Northwest Indian War. With these changes in mind, we can now turn to the large scale transformation in military strategy and tactics. Men carry the experiences of their predecessors. Maybe General Anthony Wayne did not read the Chronicles of Hernando De Soto’s expedition, but the actions of people like Benjamin Church helped those after him to become better fighters against Native people. Likewise, Native people learned from the fighting experience of those war chiefs who led them in combat. Those war chiefs had similarly learned from their elders who passed down a wealth of strategic knowledge acquired over generations of military encounters. The purpose of this thesis is to examine how three key conflicts show how military thought and action changed or did not change over three centuries, from De Soto to Wayne and from Tascalusa to Blue Jacket.

From the European perspective I will discuss this transformation in terms of the use of Native allies, traditional line tactics, firearms, raiding, use of war animals, and the prolonged underestimation of Native enemies. On the Native side of the conflicts, I will discuss the use of omens, Native alliances ambush tactics, fortifications, the different
goals of war, raiding, and firearms. These themes are important because they are a major contribution to the war effort at large or a particular strategy or tactic. However, some of these themes may exhibit continuity, but consistency is important because it helps track what conditions change. More importantly is the fact that all themes have ample information in order to exhibit an equal presentation of change or consistency and to not make one side seem more important than the other.

Before I delve into these themes of warfare, I will briefly recap the important in-conflict adaptations that were exposed in the previous chapters. De Soto’s expedition and King Philip’s War share a common theme in that there either is not enough evidence to make sound statements about military evolution or there was very limited change on either side. De Soto maintained the same combat patterns throughout his expedition. The Natives, although using a diversity of tactics, were not united across the Southeast to present a unified pan-Indian resistance against the Spanish. King Philip’s War shows much the same picture, in part due to the short duration of the conflict. However, the English made two important changes over the course of King Philip’s War in moving to better weapons and using Native allies. In contrast to the first two conflicts, the Northwest Indian War showed quite a bit of change. The micro changes that happened in this conflict were various, but came mainly from the Americans. These changes came in the form of establishing forts, proper training, and firing tactics. The Natives also showed some changes, but not all of them were beneficial. In particular at Fallen Timbers, the Native resistance decided to make a stand and fight from the tree line, which proved to be a disastrous change in strategy.
The first theme I will discuss is the change in firearm technologies and their use. Although the wars discussed were not directly responsible for the changes in firearms technology, how the groups made use of guns demonstrates considerable change over time. As we transition from conflict to conflict the Native people increasingly saw the utility of guns, sometimes better than the Europeans from whom they obtained these weapons. By the time of the Northwest Indian War, firearms had become a staple in Native life. The gun had in many ways become to Native people what the bow and arrow had been. It was tool for hunting and a weapon of war. This adoption of the firearm as tool translated to their effectiveness in using it as a weapon.

Europeans, on the other hand, seem to take a more reactionary approach to firearm usage. Instead of making adjustments proactively to the conflict, western leaders only made changes after seeing Natives use the same technology better or after suffering great losses. The best example of this comes from King Philip’s War. The English started the conflict using less effective matchlocks, before switching to more accurate flintlock. The training under General Wayne towards the end of the Northwest Indian War to pick targets instead of regular line fire shows a second reaction. A second point to make here relates to western ethnocentrism. While western powers typically underestimated their enemies they also overestimated their own capabilities. This overestimation can be linked with firearm usage and other technologies such as forts and cannons. Western military leaders not only viewed their own strategies and tactics as superior, but also their technology, even when the enemy had something that was extremely similar.

It is evident that the gun trade profoundly impacted the results of these conflicts. Not only does the range difference matter, but so does the power difference. Firearms,
particularly rifles, have a longer range than bows, and being struck by a bullet is far more powerful than being struck by an arrow. In addition, whereas guns become more accurate and powerful over time, bows tended to stay the same. Though Native warriors could fashion their bows from various types of wood, the design was fairly similar across native cultures. This variation in wood did not always translate into higher accuracy or power. The one downside to firearms at this time, especially for Native people, would have been logistical issues. The availability of shot and ball would have plagued both sides of the conflict, but Native people who relied on European trade were at a particular disadvantage. Whereas they had the ability to produce their own bows and projectile points, they were dependent on Europeans and later Americans for access to gunpowder, bullets, and gun repairs.

Raiding was also an important strategy for both Euro-Americans and Indians. Each group, however, had its own agenda and purpose for using this tactic. Natives, I argue, conducted these raids because it was an integral component of Native warfare. Natives prized life and desired to minimize casualties. This is not to say that Europeans did not value life, but culturally Native groups wanted to replenish men lost in battle since they viewed loss of life as a spiritual and cosmological loss to the community as well as a physical loss of hunters, warriors, and providers. Western powers, on the other hand, were somewhat of a paradox. Raiding was not entirely unknown to European warfare, but in the frontier it was not revered highly and at times it could be considered a violation of European rules of war. The disdain held by Western powers against Native raiding tactics on both a military and philosophical level did not deter their use. Indeed, Europeans justified violating their own rules of war when they fought against Indians.
because they did not consider those rules as applicable to supposedly “savage” and “heathen” adversaries.

Native American raiding is probably the most significant part of Native war strategies for both its consistent usage and effectiveness. Throughout every conflict, whether it was attacking camps under De Soto or settlements during King Philip’s War and the Northwest Indian War, Native warriors used raids to hurt moral and disrupt daily activities. Yet, the motives for using this strategy did change over time. During the first two wars, raids served reprisals for Native deaths and, specifically during De Soto’s expedition, Natives used raids to persuade De Soto to leave their territory. As time moved on, raids were used specifically to dissuade Americans from adventuring into Native territory during the Northwest Indian War. These activities were so effective that western military leaders began to adopt the same tactics in cases where they were not already being used.

Raiding was not unknown to European powers. By the time of establishment of the United States, western powers were well familiar with Native raids and were also well versed in using raids themselves. Throughout the first-hand accounts of these conflicts, we can see that the writers speak of these tactics with frustration and disdain. They also used this same language when referring to Native ambush tactics. Despite this hatred for raids, their qualms did not stop western powers from adopting this strategy against Native peoples. This adoption of raiding is a crucial component for the development of frontier warfare. When western military powers adopted Native raiding tactics, Native people feared their implementation as much as the European powers had.
The first European theme and maybe the most important that we will discuss is the use of Native forces. This use of Native forces by Euro-Americans comes in various forms, from allies to servants, to slaves. The second two wars demonstrate how effective Indian allies could be. English and Euro-American leaders in both King Philip’s War and the Northwest Indian War used Native allies as scouts to help gather military intelligence. In what Wayne E. Lee refers to as strategic reach and strategic mobility, he describes how Native forces benefitted western armies in two very important fashions. The first or strategic mobility is the ability of a force to go undetected with the help of scouts. The second is strategic reach, which means a force can go farther for longer without fear of running into unseen enemy forces. De Soto, on the other hand, relied on much harsher methods in regards to Native individuals in his army. Instead of using them as counterinsurgents he used them as burden bearers and the occasional guide, but obtained these individuals through strong-arming the local cacique.

Euro-America forces consistently underestimated Native forces, for over three centuries. The idea of western superiority based on ideas of religion, race, and technology had lasting effects on Indian-European relationships throughout the history of the colonization of North America. This underestimation of Native abilities in warfare led directly to both substantial loss of life on the European/Euro-American side and the prolonging of conflicts. If western military leaders had given Native tactics the respect they deserved, disasters such as Bloody Brook and St. Clair’s Defeat may not have happened. Of course there are other elements that led to these defeats, such as the lack of military intelligence, but my statement holds. De Soto’s expedition I believe is

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marginally different. De Soto’s expedition was less about the Spanish underestimating their enemy, but more so about the Spanish overestimating their own capabilities. De Soto no doubt thought of his opponents as less than himself, but De Soto’s decisions were also based on his arrogance.

In somewhat of an ironic turn of events, this underestimation of Native tactics, although leading to major defeats, did not have enough of an impact to affect the outcome of these conflicts. In both King Philip’s War and the Northwest Indian War, the Native tribes handed the English and Americans numerous defeats directly related to the arrogance of western leaders. Yet, the advantage in manpower and logistic capabilities allowed the western commanders to make these mistakes and still win out in the end. Once again De Soto’s expedition does not follow this pattern as closely. De Soto did not have the manpower or logistics to outlast the loss of life his army suffered. Although Spanish forces eventually made it out of the American Southeast, they suffered heavy losses along the way and were not able to establish a permanent colony in the region.

I would like to make a quick note here about English linear tactics that have been alluded to and described in multiple locations in the previous chapters. Linear tactics played a key role in western battle tactics in King Philip’s War and the Northwest Indian War. However, the sources are scant in a few places to describe when and where exactly these lines stood during individual battles, especially in King Philip’s War. It is almost as if it is assumed that we know how the English fought without any context, which is doubtful. The Northwest Indian War did show a small shift in linear tactics. The picking of individual targets, although new, did not outright eliminate linear firing as an effective method. The carnage of the American Civil War is evident of this fact.
War animals were also an important aspect of Euro-American warfare. De Soto used both cavalry and war dogs throughout his encounters to great effect. Native peoples had never encountered these beasts before, and they induced panic that gave the Spanish an advantage. In contrast, war animals were almost absent in King Philip’s War. The English did have and use horses for movement, but they were not used in a traditional European cavalry sense. The dense forest of the Northeast did not make it conducive to cavalry engagements. By the time of the Northwest Indian War, it was well established that Indians did not do well in combat against cavalry; therefore American forces utilized cavalry. Despite the fact that the terrain was not conducive to cavalry engagements, the inability of Native forces, even en mass, to fight cavalry regiments out weighed the terrain disadvantages.

Native people adopted horses very quickly after their introduction by the Spanish in the sixteenth century. Plains Indians are famous for their use of horses in hunting bison and cavalry engagements with the United States in the nineteenth century, but horses were prevalent all across North America. The issue in question here is whether or not the Indians in any of the conflicts in question used horses in some form of combat role. The simple answer for De Soto is no. Natives had not yet acquired the horse in that capacity. The next two conflicts present a much more complicated picture. The sources are largely silent to the Native use of horses, except when they were stealing them. There is no explicit mention of Native usage of horses in a cavalry capacity in open combat. However, it is likely that Northwest and possibly Northeast Natives used horses to travel and to perpetuate their raids against frontier settlements.

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Let us now turn to Native warfare beginning with the theme of Native fortifications. If you recall from De Soto’s expedition and King Philip’s War, there were Native-made fortifications, but none in the Northwest Indian War. The fortifications that existed in the time of King Philip’s War were similar to those of the Mississippian Southeast. In both periods fortifications existed in the form of palisaded towns. However in one particular instance we can see a change in Native palisades during King Philip’s War. In the case of the Great Swamp Fight, we see a fort that has been influenced by the English colonists. This suggests that Native people had learned from and adopted some of the fortification strategies of Europeans. However, this seems to be an anomaly, because of the lack of evidence of other forts existing with a similar style. By the time of the Northwest Indian War there were no longer any large Native fortifications.

Native people were not alien to siege warfare, but the arrival of European technology drastically changed their approach. The arrival of cannons and firearms made it more difficult for Natives to take forts, but also to defend their own forts. While it is true the Native acquisition of firearms leveled the playing field somewhat, items like cannons rendered Native fortifications almost futile. The Northwest Indian War is the only conflict in which Native warriors directly faced western cannons in this thesis. The important point here is that western weapons technology made maintaining and holding fortifications difficult for Native people. The Natives learned their lesson, however, and abandoned fortifications by the time of the Northwest Indian War, because of their ineffectiveness against English and American armies, but there may have been other reasons for their abandonment not accounted for in this thesis.
Omens also figured prominently in Indian warfare. There has been at least one instance in each conflict where I have described how an omen affected a Native decision in warfare. Omens show a moment of continuity in Native warfare. This is important to note because even after several hundred years of contact, Native people still relied on their belief systems. In the De Soto expedition we see one example with the rains at Chicaza. Tribes in both of the later conflicts relied on their spiritual interpretations when deciding to go into battle. The initiation of King Philip’s War was based on astronomical event perceived as an omen of war. In the Northwest Indian War, Native spiritual beliefs were used to determine attacks and troop deployments. This continued use of omens and the prevalence of spiritual interpretations display the enduring nature of Native beliefs systems in conflicts.

Intra-Indian alliances were important and took many forms throughout these conflicts. In all three conflicts there was some assemblage of Native peoples working together against western powers. In both De Soto’s expedition and King Philip’s War there were Indian alliances. Most likely there were alliances already in place before the conflicts. The Mississippian chiefdoms and Wampanoags utilized these preexisting systems to help garner allies to fight against the Spanish and the English. Specifically King Philip utilized alliances that had been built by ancestors in the form of tributaries of military allies. In the Northwest Indian War, the pan-Indian alliance was primarily based upon common goals and perceptions of American expansion. The constant pressure early on from the British and ultimately the Americans forced the Natives in the Ohio Territory to make the decision to defend the land by any means necessary.
In terms of tactics, Indian ambush tactics were probably the most important theme for Native people. This theme is relatively continuous throughout the conflicts. Whether used on a small scale by a minimal number of men, like with the Apalachee during De Soto’s expedition, or on a large scale like St. Clair’s Defeat, the effectiveness of the ambush cannot be understated. We have covered several examples of Native forces using the terrain to their advantage, and coupled with western arrogance these forces, obtained admirable victories. Each one of these encounters exhibits the same features. Native forces waited at certain locations or formed up around an already established camp and surprised their enemy. These attacks came under cover of darkness or early in the morning before their enemy was completely ready. If the Natives began to lose their advantage, they retreated back into the cover of the forest and escaped death or capture in some cases.

The effectiveness of Native ambushes although consistent over time was often lessened over the course of a particular war. For example, when Western armies, such as The Legion under Anthony Wayne, finally learned from their mistakes and began to use Native allies the effectiveness of Native ambushes was lessened. Native ambushes could also be averted by properly setting up in defensible positions as was presented in the Northwest Indian War when Harmar properly fortified a position after his defeat. When General Wayne began to use Choctaw scouts his main force was protected, but his forces without scouts remained in danger. Once the ability of Native forces to perform ambushes was taken away, it stifled the Indian strategic repertoire. We can see this in the two later wars when the Natives chose to take alternative measures or simply could not find an appropriate replacement. For example, in both King Philip’s and the Northwest
Indian War, when the English and American forces began using Native allies the conflicts came to a quick close. In King Philip’s War, the pursuit of Philip was enabled through the use of Native allies, while General Wayne used allied Natives to screen for his main army against enemy attacks eventually leading to the Battle of Fallen Timbers.

Typically speaking, Native goals in warfare were to avenge death and obtain captives, not to unconditionally defeat an enemy or to win by any cost, but over time these motivations began to change. During De Soto’s expedition Native fought against him because he was taking Native food stores and slaves. Even during the large battles such as Mabila and Chicaza, Native forces were fighting to prove themselves against the Spanish and to force the foreigners to move on. Despite the Native forces losing the fight in Spanish eyes, it may have well been a victory from the Native perspective. By the time of King Philip’s War, they were fighting to defend their sovereignty and their territory. The English’s continual pushes onto Native land and the many affronts to Native sovereignty caused the Wampanoag and their allies to strike against the English. In the Northwest Indian War the pan-Indian alliance was deliberately fighting the Americans to prevent them from taking their land. Even though the old ideas of Native warfare such as blood revenge may have played a part in particular attacks, the larger scope of the conflicts became much more complicated.

I chose these themes for one reason. First they show how Native people adapted to European styles of warfare, but maintained uniquely Native styles of war. This is somewhat similar to what I stated in regards to European adaptations. The difference here is that Native Americans never truly adopted any western tactics, but simply adapted to their new military situation. Unfortunately, Native capabilities in war did not hold up
against the wave of European and American insurgents. Dwindling Native populations from disease and different goals in warfare made it difficult for Natives to compete militarily over time. Even though Native strategies were successful in particular situations they were not successful in winning the conflicts, as evident by the results. Western ideologies and manpower ultimately overwhelmed Native abilities to resist militarily. That being said, Native forces held their own in many circumstances as I hope I have shown here. I am challenging the idea that Native resistance was futile. Native warriors and war chiefs had many successes and dealt explorers and colonists deadly blows, but in the end the Natives would lose.

It is hard to imagine what it would have been like to fight as anyone I have covered in this thesis. One of my personal goals in this thesis was to convey a forgotten part of the American identity, the identity of the frontier fighter. Frontier warfare was part of a larger colonial process and become integral to American expansion and imperialism almost into the twentieth century. All three conflicts I discuss played key roles in shaping political structures, military structures, and personal identities. In the end I believe I have completed all the goals I set for myself. Warfare may be integral to mankind’s history, but it changes in the same way as other portions of society. American history is writhe with other conflicts that play an important role in shaping the country we know today as United States of America, but in regards to the Eastern Woodlands, these conflicts, I believe, deserve a position at towards the top when it comes to their importance in shaping that particular area.
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