

Major wars in North America, 1607-1763

I. The Indian Wars: wars between English settlers and Indians

These were not the only conflicts between white and Indian, but they were the major ones.

Chesapeake area

The First Tidewater War, 1622-1632

- At dawn on Good Friday, March 22, the Powhatan Confederacy, under Opechancanough, launched a surprise attack against the English, killing 25% of Virginia's population.
- The English promptly retaliated, killing even more native Americans and burning their towns and fields.
- The First Tidewater War went on for ten years; by 1632 both sides were exhausted; since neither side had the resources to win a decisive victory, whites and Indians signed a peace in 1632.

The Second Tidewater War, 1644-1646

- Opechancanough directed another surprise attack in 1644, killing 500 whites within the first few hours.
- But English settlement was much more strongly established by 1644, which meant that the Indians had no real chance to destroy the white population.
- By 1646, the war concluded with a decisive defeat that ended all serious Indian resistance to white expansion in the Chesapeake/Tidewater area.

New England

The Pequot War, 1635-1637

- The Pequots were the most powerful tribe in New England in the early 1630s. Conflict grew, with other tribes siding with the English. Eventually, Pequots attacked English settlements.
- A major "battle" (actually more of a slaughter) occurred at a Pequot fort on the Mystic River.
 - A combined force of Massachusetts and Connecticut militia with native allies surrounded and burned down the fort, killing 300 warriors and hunting down and killing those who fled.

- This effectively wiped the tribe out completely.

King Philip's War, aka Metacom's War, 1675-1676

- Metacom, an Indian leader of New England, was called King Philip by Europeans. His father, Massasoit, had signed a peace treaty in 1621 and kept to it. But Metacom became convinced that united action by the tribes was the only way to stop the whites' relentless advance. He built an Indian coalition and attacked white settlers.
 - The Indians managed to burn about a fifth of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and killed 5% of their white populations. But Indian losses were almost 25%.
 - Key to white victory was leadership of Benjamin Church, who commanded both whites and allied Indians and had them use Indian-style (not European) tactics) against Metacom's coalition.
 - Metacom was killed by hired Mohawks..
 - The Great Swamp Fight of December 1675 was like the Pequot "battle" at Mystic—the survivors were reduced to hiding in swamps without food, clothing, or shelter.
 - This war Ended Indian threats in New England.
- After 1689, Indian wars became smaller-scale and mostly stayed that way through the end of American Revolution.
 - But they declined in importance just as the Colonial Wars between Europeans were heating up (see below).

II. The Colonial Wars: wars between English settlers and French/Spanish forces, with frequent Indian involvement on one or both sides

- These wars were the result of the worldwide maritime and colonial rivalry between Great Britain and France and their struggle for predominance on the European and North American continents.
 - Each of the wars fought in North America corresponded more or less to a war fought between the same powers in Europe.
- All of these wars were part of the epic Anglo-French Wars, a string of major continental/maritime struggles for world domination that took place between 1689 and 1815.

King William's War, 1689-1697

- This was first of the four North American colonial wars. It was part of a larger European war fought by the Grand

Alliance against France over the succession to the throne of England. This larger war was the first of the Anglo-French Wars.

- The French and English colonists, aided by indigenous peoples, raided each other's settlements. Following a series of English raids in Canada, the French governor of Canada, Comte de Frontenac, planned counterattacks on New York City and Boston in 1690.
- As initial steps in his campaign, the French and their indigenous allies burned Schenectady, New York, laid waste Salmon Falls, New Hampshire, and destroyed Fort Loyal, Maine, while French privateers based in Nova Scotia harried New England shipping.
- The New England colonists raised an expeditionary force and placed it under the command of the new governor of Massachusetts, Sir William Phips. This force captured Port Royal in Nova Scotia and unsuccessfully attacked Québec.
- For the rest of the war the French and their indigenous allies ravaged the northern frontiers of the English colonies.
- The Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 restored Port Royal to the French but left the colonial problem unresolved. Warfare resumed in 1702 in Queen Anne's War.

Queen Anne's War, 1702-1713

- This was the second of the four North American wars waged by the British and French. Queen Anne's War arose from the issues left unresolved at the end of King William's War (1689-1697).
- The struggle corresponded to the European War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) fought between the allied forces of Great Britain, the Netherlands, and the Holy Roman Empire on one side and France and Spain on the other.
- The principal American events of Queen Anne's War were
 - the capture and burning in 1702 by English colonists of Saint Augustine, Florida, then a Spanish possession
 - the capture and burning of Deerfield, Massachusetts, and the massacre of many of the inhabitants of the town in 1704 by French troops and their Indian allies
 - unsuccessful expeditions in 1704 and 1707 by troops from New England against Port Royal, Acadia (now Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia)
 - the conquest of Acadia in 1710 by colonists supported by a squadron of British ships and commanded by the British colonial administrator Sir Francis Nicholson

- the failure in 1711 of a large British and colonial joint military and naval expedition against Québec and Montréal
- The war was ended in 1713 by the Peace of Utrecht, which also brought to a close the War of the Spanish Succession. By terms of this treaty the French ceded Acadia to the British, as well as Newfoundland and the Hudson Bay territory. The French retained Cape Breton Island.

King George's War, 1744-1748

- This was the third of four North American wars; it corresponded to the European War of the Austrian Succession.
- During the period of peace after Queen Anne's War (1702-13), irreconcilable conflicts arose between the French and British for control of North America. Trouble between England and Spain in the 1730s led to the so-called War of Jenkins's Ear, which merged into the War of the Austrian Succession.
 - In 1744 the French captured and destroyed a British fort at Canso, Nova Scotia, and carried the prisoners to the French fortress of Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island.
 - Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts, fearing French invasion, appealed to the other colonies for aid. A force of about 4000 militiamen was raised and placed under the command of Sir William Pepperell, a Maine merchant. In April 1745, the colonial troops sailed in British ships from Boston against Louisbourg. On June 15, after seven weeks of attack, the colonials captured the supposedly impregnable fortress at Louisbourg.
 - The next year France sent a fleet to retake Louisbourg and attack Boston, but the fleet was scattered by a storm. In 1747 a second fleet sent for the same purpose was intercepted and defeated by a British squadron. At the end of the war in 1748, Louisbourg was returned to the French by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, in return for British control of Madras (now Chennai), India.
 - The settlement disgruntled the colonists, and the British only partly placated the colonists by bearing the entire expense of the Louisbourg expedition.

The French and Indian War, 1754-1763

- This was the last of the four North American wars between the British and the French, though not the last of the Anglo-French Wars, which continued, with American involvement,

until 1815. What follows is only an overview: for more details on this war, consult your class notes.

- The French and Indian War differed from previous confrontations. The earlier wars consisted primarily of skirmishes between small regular units of the European powers aided by local militiamen. The French and Indian War was part of a “great war for empire,” a determined and eventually successful attempt by the British to attain a dominant position in North America, the West Indies, and the subcontinent of India. Although the French and Indian War began in America, it expanded into Europe as the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763).
- The French and Indian War became a classic example of maritime versus continental strategy. It stripped France of its North American empire; it also caused Britain to change its relationship to its colonies, a change that eventually led to the American Revolution.