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Peter Way
University of Windsor

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*French and Indian War:
Culture Clashes during Wartime*

Peter Way, University of Windsor

Traditional military history has primarily concerned itself with specific wars and battles, officers and command structure, logistics and strategy. War and Society studies have expanded the focus to the social and economic dimensions, and given more attention to the common soldier. Cultural studies, for the most part, have only begun to make inroads in the field of military history. Yet warfare, a seminal human experience touching all aspects of life, impacts culturally as much as militarily, politically or economically. Military conflict is much more than the melding of muscle and metallurgy in a sublime pursuit of armed superiority. Battle is a crucible of social identity. In the diverse peoples it brings together in coalition or opposition, the ideological justifications it constructs, and the devastation it wrecks, warfare has transformational powers. Established normative views guide the movement to war, and shape the social construction of the army, whilst cultural interaction occurring as a result of military action gives rise to new or altered understandings of other groups. I have titled this lecture The French and Indian War, the name for the conflict more commonly used in America, because it points to the cultural content of the war, the ways in which identities inform human armed conflict.

The North American military struggles of the French and Indian War should be projected onto an Atlantic World of the eighteenth century that was being redrawn in terms of economic systems, labor forms, and constituent peoples. The military, and inevitably its foot soldiers, assisted in the forging of commercial empire, the international

migrations of labor, the expropriation or enslavement of indigenous peoples, and the securing of the imperial state. All these processes were inscribed culturally and are fit subjects for fresh reading. What role then, did class, gender, ethnicity and racial models play in the waging of this war?

Class

For all the attention focused on common soldiers' experience of warfare, the new military history has done little on the subject of soldiers as workers. Yet, Andre Corvisier reminds us that an etymological root of the word soldier (like *soudoyer*, *soudard*, and *soldato*) is one who is paid a wage (or *solde*) to fight. Too often warfare is seen as an autonomous process serving higher purposes. Doubtless, the nature of military conflict is in many ways unique: in its goals, modes of organization, tactics, uses of technology, and legal apparatus. Above all else, warfare's seeming disregard for human life sets it apart. But warfare should not be truncated from the same social and economic processes that transform broader society. The army in the eighteenth century, as well as performing its primary military functions, was also central to Britain's territorial and commercial expansion, to the conversion of masses of labor into wage workers, to the interaction of distinct cultural groups, and to the ethnic migrations of the early modern era. While the new military history is focusing greater attention on these civil/martial interstices, one area that has yet to be examined closely is soldiers as workers.

Yet, soldiers were a unique form of labor, ultimately for the same reason that the army was distinct: their job required them to kill and be prepared to be killed. Such an expectation could be found in no other form of work, no matter how oppressive, geared as it was to production. Still, dying was a last resort, with fighting, winning and, ideally, living to fight another day being the reason they were hired. Soldiers also performed many other mundane duties—digging, hauling, building, crafting goods—in common

with civilian workers. Nevertheless, they were a peculiar type of paid worker subjected to a more restrictive labor contract and discipline, making them less than free. Soldiers' status approximates that of indentured servants, in that they voluntarily yielded up control over their labor power in return for payment, but retained ownership of their persons. Thus, soldiers were a type of unfree labor, often bound for life, housed, provided for, and subjected to often brutal, martial discipline. At the same time, in that soldiering was an exchange of labor for pay, the army must be seen as an employer, its officers as managers, and troops as workers, which opens the door to a labor history of the military. By the mid-eighteenth century, soldiers were drawn from early capitalist societies where paid labor was increasingly common. Their class experience thus began before enlistment, but it is with mobilization that their formation as military labor begins.

The Out-Pension Books for the Royal Chelsea Hospital recorded personal information for all those pensioners billeted outside the hospital, including their former occupations, which permits a reconstruction of their skills.¹ Data (based on the records for all 845 soldiers granted pensions March 1757 through December 1760 whose regiments served in North America) reveals that the trades accounted for 49% of men, while manual labor made for 41.5%. Those involved in agriculture comprised only 7.9% , but this likely undercounted them as many laborers would have been farm laborers and

¹Admission Books, Out-Pension Records, Royal Hospital, Chelsea, Series 116, War Office Papers [WO116]. The Hospital was established in 1681 (completed 1692) as the army's institution for treating soldiers invalidated through injury or 20 years of service. See: G. Hutt, Papers Illustrative of the Origin and Early History of the Royal Hospital at Chelsea. Compiled in the Secretary's Office at that Institution (London: Eyre & Spottiswood, 1872), 53, 64-66, 255; C. G. T. Dean, The Royal Hospital Chelsea (London: Hutchinson, 1950), 22, 70, 186.

some craftsmen would have been part-time farmers. Four occupations preponderated: laborers (37.4%), textile workers (15%), shoemakers (7.2%), and tailors (4.9%).

Enlisting meant joining the ranks of wage laborers. For those that came from the land or the crafts, it was a true experience of losing the means of production; even for those entering from another form of paid labor, it usually meant induction to a more exacting form of work. The British army in the Seven Years' War was made up not primarily of professional soldiers, but by ordinary people drawn from their homes either through dwindling opportunity there or by the lure of the bounty money secured with enlistment. Army recruits brought with them skills and notions of customary obligations imbedded in economic exchange, as well as a tradition of plebeian resistance to perceived incursions on customary rights.

Once on the job as soldiers they encountered a form of wage work that involved its own labor processes and social relations of production. A troop's martial labor comprised training in the skills of soldiering, and applying those skills in defensive and aggressive situations such as digging entrenchments and fighting itself. Warfare's basic objective entailed killing one's opponent. Wounds and death were also the wages of war for soldiers. Alienation in this instance meant not only a metaphorical loss of selfhood, but for many actual physical loss or negation.

Yet, combat was but one aspect of a soldier's working life. More routine were the many "fatigues" required to keep a fighting machine functioning. Troops cleared sites for camps, dug trenches and latrines, laid roads, cut wood for palisades, erected fortifications and barracks and cleaned grounds—the building materials of empire—receiving in return a wage of 8d. per diem, which had been set in 1660 and remained at this level until the late eighteenth century. Soldiers also performed civil labor—cutting wood, hunting for

food, harvesting crops, hauling provisions—warranting extraordinary payments. The army also required many types of skilled work and men from the ranks with past experience as tailors, shoemakers and weavers all found work servicing the army. The pay for both common and skilled labor varied for much of the War, but tended to be 6d. per day for common labor and 1s. for skilled work, more than matching their income as soldiers.

The shared experience of military labor, not to mention the cohesion drummed into a fighting force, produced social integration, making for subaltern garrison communities, both separate from and intertwined with the military power structure. Separated from society into a demimonde of barracks, military camps and garrisons, living and fighting together, dressed in the same clothing and sharing the same food, troops developed their own active social life defined by commonplace transactions of shared toil and after-hours conviviality.

Yet the army constituted a hierarchical power structure that wielded extensive authority over most aspects of its men's lives. Soldiers came from the common people, whereas those commanding hailed from middling people, the gentry and nobles. As orders generally applied to living and working conditions, provision of food and shelter, and actual physical well-being, class conflict naturally fructified. Military discipline also functioned as work discipline, and undisciplined behavior on the part of soldiers embodied resistance to that discipline. While the military's emphasis on obedience reinforced the deference expected of laboring people, soldiering also bred a strong sense of fraternity, a camaraderie forged by the nature of their work and the unequal power relationships structuring it, which the issuing of orders and enforcement of discipline by superiors daily reiterated. Thus, by grappling with their subordination, soldiers

approached a sense of shared identity, an incipient class consciousness. They accommodated themselves to their difficult life by following orders, but also by drinking, carousing, fighting, and thieving. They resisted by shirking their duties, disobeying orders, petitioning against improper treatment, refusing to work, deserting, and mutinying. Insubordination pervaded the eighteenth century army and collective action periodically threatened. This class struggle reached its apogee in the wake of the war when the army's attempt to redefine the terms of the military labor contract resulted in a general mutiny that spanned the British possessions in North America, making for pervasive subaltern resistance in the truest sense of the term.

Gender

Gender from the beginning of recorded history has dictated what a soldier is, with the very nature of warfare thus resting on assumed sexual differences. Warfare, as a central avenue to economic and political power, has been until very recently designated an exclusively male preserve. Military history subconsciously accepts this gendered logic; i.e., that violent contestation is natural, unavoidable, defining of national character, and laudable when performed by men. As a result, there has been little exploration of the ways in which notions of gender have impacted on warfare itself and molded camp life. Yet, the rhetoric of masculinity has always been marshaled to exhort men to martial endeavor and to decoy them into harm's way. Conversely, notions of femininity have excluded women from warfare as other than victims and camp followers. This neglect is surprising given the fact that, despite the marked variability of both gender conventions and forms of warfare over time and between cultures, a universal gendering of war is apparent: almost without exception men have done the fighting in wars, while women

have been relegated to spectators, victims, or military support roles. The designation of warfare as a masculine pursuit is the constitutive aspect of war's engendering, yet the ways in which this is achieved is particular to the historical period under consideration.

Historians of gender in Britain have identified a great anxiety about the patriarchal order in the late sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, which manifested itself in prescriptive literature on household management and female conduct, and the policing of plebeian female transgressions by witchcraft persecutions, charivaris, and the use of ducking stools.² In Britain during the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries, women were seen as sexual creatures with the potential to unman the male through their insatiable desire. This stereotype began to be replaced after 1660, with new notions of gender relations emphasizing sexual difference: men were associated with reason and culture, and women with nature and "sensibility," a heightened nervous and emotional responsiveness.³

Within the military both models of femininity can be seen at work; the misogynous variant viewed women as threatening to the male war effort, while the cult of sensibility cast women as by nature unsuited to warlike endeavor due to their emotionality and physical inferiority. Gender differentiation served fundamental military needs, mapping out "mutually informing binary oppositions such as war/peace, death/life, strong/weak,

² D. E. Underdown, "The Taming of the Scold: the Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England," in Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson, eds., Order and Disorder in Early Modern England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 116-36; Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus, eds., Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities (London: Longman, 1997); Michael McKeon, "Historicizing Patriarchy: The Emergence of Gender Difference in England, 1660-1760," Eighteenth-Century Studies, 28:3 (1995): 295-322.

³ Anthony Fletcher, Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 5-6, 283-84, 290-92, 296; G. J. Barker-Benfield, The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), xvii-xviii, 26-27, 36; Robert B. Shoemaker, Gender in English Society, 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres? (Harlow, Essex, UK: Longman, 1998), 8-9, 19-20.

military/civilian, defenders/defended, [and] friend/enemy,” with the masculine embodying the first half of the dyads (the warlike) and the feminine the second (the pacific). The military’s unique nature as an apparatus of state-sponsored killing leads to its separation from civilian society. This process of physical and normative severance is informed and validated by gender discourse, in this way naturalizing the violence essential to warfare.⁴ Militaristic misogyny was a necessary complement to martial endeavor. Conceiving of the feminine as corrupting of discipline and parasitical of resources, the army downplayed the existence of women, as their presence in this masculine world did not make sense within contemporary understandings of gender. Acting on this conception, officers sought to eliminate women by strictly limiting the number who could officially attach themselves to the regiments, by policing those women who on their own accord followed the camps, and by minimizing the economic opportunities available to them.

More centrally, understandings of masculinity have reinforced the internal operation of the army in two ways. First, officers appeal to ideals of manliness to enlist men to the military, making soldiers the manliest of men. Conferring hyper-masculinity on soldiers achieves the military objective of preparing them to kill and be killed. Common soldiers were not irredeemably inferior in the way that women were; as men they had the potential for action (when properly officered), often heroic in nature. Military manliness was the psychological wage granted soldiers who in reality were largely denied most other things that defined a man in this period—a certain freedom of sexual expression, family life, economic activity, and spatial mobility. Devalued as immature males and dependent wage laborers, they occupied a demimonde outside civil society where

⁴ Kovitz, “Roots of Military Masculinity,” 6.

military law reigned and the gender norms of mainstream society did not to apply.

Second, hierarchical models of masculine authority inform military discipline, the male-on-male power structure so central to army life. In early modern England patriarchy was not the same thing as manhood, and in fact was designed to subordinate men as well as women. As such, patriarchy constituted “rule by fathers” rather than rule by men.⁵ In the colonies, patriarchal discourse was adapted to strengthen the powers of masters over servants and slaves.⁶ The army provides an appropriate institutional analogy to such subordination and can be seen as an exaggerated manifestation of patriarchy.⁷ The early modern army was a male-dominated sphere that valorized aggression in the cause of patriarchal dominance, the dynastic concerns of the King, the lineage issues of the aristocracy, and the socioeconomic interests of the officer class. Gender notions, in the relationships of father to son, and master to servant, provided a prescriptive language of natural subordination. The patriarchal army articulated the chain of command in terms of

⁵The literature on patriarchy is typically constructed in terms of male oppression of females, based on a binary opposition of male power and female oppression, Alexandra Shepard argues. Alexandra Shepard, The Meaning of Manhood in Early Modern England (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1-5. Anne Lombard makes a similar argument for Puritan New England. Puritans did not think of gender as a dichotomy of male and female, but in hierarchical terms with distinctions drawn as much between adult or manly men and male youths, as they were with women. The authority of the father within the household was paramount in these “patriarchal families,” with both women and male youths situated below male heads of household in the hierarchy. The relationship between father and son constituted the foundational one among males in colonial New England, and it was bound up with issues of labor and property. In New England into the mid eighteenth century where land ownership was pervasive and the labor market stunted, the male head of household’s authority was accentuated as he had an even firmer grip on economic resources than did fathers in England, and male offspring had few alternatives. Age and economic independence, as well as tangled familial issues, acted as dividing lines between men with regard to the exercise of authority. Anne S. Lombard. Making Manhood: Growing Up Male in Colonial New England (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 7, 10-11, chap. 1.

⁶Carole Shammas, “Anglo-American Household Government in Comparative Perspective,” William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Series, 52:1 (January 1995), 117-28; xv; Kathleen Brown, Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), especially introduction.

⁷Kathleen Brown defined patriarchy as: “the historically specific authority of the father over his household, rooted in his control over labor and property, his sexual access to his wife and dependent female laborers, his control over other men’s sexual access to the women of his household, and his right to punish family members and laborers.” Brown, Good Wives, 4-5.

this discourse both to reinforce discipline and to classify soldiers as other than civil beings. It treated soldiers both as perennially young males who had not achieved their majority to legitimate their subordination and to enjoin their labor. By these means, the military denied them certain rights and subjected them to a different legal code, seeking to render them dependent beings stripped of individual will, thus ideal soldiers better prepared to engage in deadly combat.

The military thus does not merely reflect prevailing gender norms to no practical end; nor does it invest in gender distinctions primarily to privilege men over women. The army appropriates sex-based distinctions to facilitate the large-scale violence crucial to national interests. In the Seven Years' War, Britain marshaled gender differentiation—through the separation of masculine martial and feminine civil spheres, and the adaptation of patriarchal models of masculine authority to the chain of command—to the cause of vanquishing the French and establishing a grander territorial empire.

Nor is it enough to document dominant gender ideology and its application by institutions of authority, for the nature of sexuality is inevitably contested. As within civil society, the modeling of sexual difference did not proceed without resistance in the military. Efforts to suppress the female presence in camps never came close to creating the ideal homosocial universe of masculine endeavor. Simply, women have always fulfilled a valuable function in the reproduction of warfare, serving in a variety of support roles, and contributing to a domestic sphere for soldiers.⁸ Likewise, soldiers inveterately contested the meaning of manhood constructed for them by their officer-patriarchs,

⁸ Hacker, "Women and Military Institutions in Early Modern Europe," 643-71.

positing alternative definitions.⁹ They purloined aspects of heroic masculinity—toughness, courage, violence—from the interests of the state and appropriated them to their own soldier society, where physicality among fellow troops became defining features of proletarian manhood that implicitly challenged patriarchal order.

Despite the prescriptive and oppressive qualities of military patriarchalism, soldiers and camp followers in the Seven Years' War contested the gender roles established for them, bringing proletarian values of sexuality, domesticity and male autonomy to bear in ways that not only re-defined the gendered space of the martial sphere. Still, the military remained an unusual institution skewed toward aggression and violence, presumed masculine characteristics that were yoked to the interest of the state. When soldier sexuality conflicted with the masculine command structure it mobilized to re-establish patriarchal control within the camps. And however much control women exerted over the personal, it was outweighed by the public masculine power structure. The army exerted more punishing control than the state did in either Britain or the American colonies in the eighteenth century, and this discipline was applied to matters of gender relations.

Ethnicity

Ethnic, regional or national identities are historically and socially constructed, arising from cultural interaction with other groups. Warfare constitutes a key factor in such differentiation. First, military conflict typically pivots on ethnic frontiers, as material and political interests are defined in ethno-national terms. A state and its “people” need the “other” to wage war with psychological release from the taboo of murder. Regional,

⁹ Shepard reminds us, it is wrong to assume that there was only one standard. Manhood does not equate to patriarchy, and could be asserted in ways that fell outside of and even conflicted with patriarchal norms. Shepard, Meaning of Manhood, 1-6.

cultural, linguistic, and religious particularities—the baggage of ethnicity—have always functioned as means of such differentiation. The French constituted England’s nemesis in the 18th century, their opposition rooted in a long term historical experience of frequent conflict that gave rise to congeries of perceived dissimilarities informing interaction between the two peoples.

Second, in defining the other, however, one necessarily defines oneself. The patriotic idea of the Briton emerged as a concept meant to integrate a heterogeneous citizenry. Linda Colley maintained that the series of wars between Britain and France from 1689 to 1815, and a shared experience of Protestantism most centrally constructed the sense of Britishness.¹⁰ The British defined themselves as a people in relation to an external Other not because of consensus and conformity within Great Britain, which did not blend its constituent peoples, nor, conversely, did an “English ‘core’” force its cultural and political authority on the Welsh and Scots. Colley asserted that all remained distinct peoples within the supra-entity.¹¹ These qualifications aside, Colley does purport that the Briton constituted an overarching identity that knitted these constituent parts together. Colley’s model has been criticized for its exaggeration of the integrating powers of Protestantism, her timing of the real unification of national interests within Great Britain, and, most tellingly, its Anglocentrism.¹²

Third, warfare functions as a determinative process in the construction of ethnic identities, which take shape and form alloys in the heat of battle. New synthetic identities

¹⁰ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1737* (Orig. ed. Yale University Press, 1992; Paperback ed., London: Vintage, 1996), 3-4, 6, 9, 11-19, 56-57.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

¹² See, for example, Murray G. H. Pittock, *Inventing and Resisting Britain: Cultural Identities in Britain and Ireland, 1685-1789* (London: MacMillan, 1997); Colin Kidd, “North Britishness and the Nature of Eighteenth-Century British Patriotisms,” *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 39/no. 2 (June 1996), 361-82.

can be minted to integrate a fighting force and construct *nouveau* imperial identities. The Scottish Highlander embodied one such new identity wrought by war. Deemed warlike by nature and tainted with Jacobitism, their only use to the Empire being cannon fodder, the English allowed soldiers alone to embrace a regional Highland identity symbolized by the wearing of the plaid and the bearing of weapons. Likewise, an American identity was only beginning to crystallize at the time of Seven Years' War, partly in opposition to the Briton. Both the identities of the Highlands and the American had their roots in the needs of the fiscal-military state as it waxed imperial.

At once supra-national, national, regional, and even local, soldiers' self-identification with and sense of belonging to a "place" presents itself more complexly than Colley and others would have it. Focusing singularly on the cultural thematic of the Briton obscures the messiness of identity formation in nascent imperial settings. Mobilizing the army to fight the Seven Years' War entailed drawing people together from different countries or regions with varying social and religious norms into a polyglot, culturally heterogeneous whole. These people both adopted and contested the mantle of Britishness to suit their own needs. The War also marked a "turning point" in the sociocultural construction of the Empire, in that the vast territories acquired meant that Britain had to deal with the ethnic, religious and cultural particularities of vastly expanded territories.¹³

However powerful as an abstract identity, the idea of *Britons* purported an internal integrity to the Empire that did not in fact exist. Hierarchies of ethnic types facilitate the assertion of dominance over dependent peoples so necessary in the imperial setting. England needed subordinate national identities, both to include in the imperial project undeniably distinct peoples wedded to the English state, but also to remind these

¹³ Pittock, *Inventing and Resisting Britain*, 145.

colonized peoples that they remained apart from the English, who incorporated them into the Empire and remained their cultural as well as political superiors.

From the global pretensions of the English at mid century and the concomitant expansion of the fiscal-military state beyond the British Isles, there developed new identity politics involving subject peoples and enemies alike. The army wielded ethnic identification as a dual-edged weapon within the larger struggle to create a territorial empire, both striking at the enemy and holding it over the heads of British subjects, old and new. The army, as the most palpable manifestation of central power within the Empire and arguably the most successful integrating institution in 18th century Britain, helped create and contain these multiple identities, allowing for differing forms of self-identification and allegiance to the imperial project.¹⁴

Soldiers felt both edges of the conflict, enforcing ethnic distinction through warfare and having their identities carved out for them by a greater England. More than this, they actively engaged in the formation of ethnic identities that did not always align with the models prescribed by the imperial state, and formed alliances across national boundaries that belied their essential difference and blurred the legitimating discourses of military conflict and imperial authority.

Race

Imperial expansion inevitably brought the British army into contact with aboriginal peoples. As war yield to victory in North America, protean racial concepts directly influenced British policy toward Native Americans, much to their detriment. Freed by the

¹⁴ Steve Murdoch and A. Mackillop, eds., Fighting for Identity: Scottish Military Experience c. 1550-1900 (Publishing?, date) xlii-xliii.

defeat of the French from the need to treat Indians relatively equitably as allies or potential allies, commanding officers allowed their latent contempt for these peoples to harden into a model of difference more fixed in its view of their natural subordinate status. Imperial policy sought to concrete this status, yet provoked violent backlash from many indigenous groups.

In the past twenty years, the writing of “New Indian History” has effloresced. The literature, for the most part, argues for a dialectical exchange of native and European forces across what could be a permeable frontier, stressing mutual dependence, complex economic and social interaction, the achievement of a balance of power between Native Americans and Europeans in what Richard White terms “the middle ground.”

Accommodation took place because whites for a long time could neither force Indians to do their will nor ignore them. But accommodation eventually broke down as whites gained the upper hand and proceeded again to define natives as “the other,” making it easier to dispossess them.¹⁵ New Indian histories are acutely tuned to the rhythms of native village and domestic life, but the desire to demonstrate Indians’ partial control over the course of imperial and national expansion, postponing decline to the post-

¹⁵ “The Middle Ground is the place in between: in between cultures, peoples, and in between empires and the nonstate world of villages,” according to Richard White. See The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), x. Dissolution of the middle ground begins in the Revolution for White, but does not fully unwind until the War of 1812. Other new Indian historians differ over the timing of the breakdown, but the Revolutionary period stands out as a watershed era. See also: James Merrell, Indians' New World: Catawbas and their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal (Norton); Daniel H. Usner, Jr., Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Daniel K. Richter, The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Gregory Dowd, A Spirited Resistance: North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815 (Johns Hopkins); Michael McConnell, A Country Between: the Upper Ohio Valley and its Peoples, 1724-1774 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1992); Colin Calloway, The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities (Cambridge); James Merrell, Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Colonial Pennsylvania Frontier (Norton).

revolutionary era, underestimates the extent to which eastern Indians had already been absorbed into or reduced to de facto clients of the Empire by mid-eighteenth century. And only within the last few years has the idea of race been revived as a salient concept for analyzing this loss of power by Indian east of the Mississippi.¹⁶

The Seven Years' War constituted an important event in this process, involving, as it did, a struggle over who would control eastern North America. Indians were intimately involved in the conflict, fighting for their own interests while being allied to one or the other of the European powers, or remaining neutral. Their war was not about empire-building but was fought to, at the least, maintain the status quo ante, a delicate balance of British, French, Euro-American and Amerindian interests, from which the later derived significant benefit. Until the French were vanquished, Indians could not be ignored or pushed aside by either Europeans or their colonists. They were essential commercial and martial partners, who must be courted and given all due consideration.

At root economic, political and personal, Native interaction with the military took place on a number of planes. With interests at root opposed to each other's, it is no wonder that misunderstanding, miscommunication, and conflict frequently emerged between the British military and Indian tribes, friendly or otherwise. On an institutional level, the army, as the main broker of state policy, sought to maintain formal relations with the natives. This involved establishing political/military alliances and trade connections that were inevitably infused by cultural stereotyping. The military shifted from one stereotype of natives to another as need dictated, the "Indian" being made to play the savage, the cunning and potentially treacherous ally, the inscrutable neutral, and

¹⁶ Nancy Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness: Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth-Century North America* (Oxford, 2004); Daniel Richter, *Facing East From Indian Country*.

the highly skilled woodsman, all with an eye to squeeze the most benefit possible out of these peoples. Similarly, Native Americans played on the paternalistic mind sets of Europeans to extract the trade goods and military support they desired, while enticing the British to partake of native forms of social practice, from lessons in wilderness living to symbolic exchange such as the smoking of the peace pipe and ritualistic torture and cannibalism.

The defeat of the French and Spanish robbed Natives of alternative European allies, upsetting the diplomatic fulcrum upon which the middle ground acquired leverage, and allowing the British to impose upon them a less favorable client-patron relationship, one informed by racialist thinking. British leaders enjoined indigenous peoples, as dependents of the empire, not to disturb the peace, to engage in the production of staple commodities and participate in the commercial exchange on the same market terms as other people. General Jeffrey Amherst, Commander in Chief of British forces in North America, never at ease with the native combatants, attempted to restrict trade with Indians to army forts, to terminate the trade in firearms and ammunition, and to do away with the practice of gift giving, instead seeking to impose upon them a more commercial model of economic exchange. Amherst, allegedly, also intentionally infected the Delaware Indians with smallpox during Pontiac's Rebellion.¹⁷ The emergence of racialist models for dealing with Indians in the last years of the war sought to fix natives in a subordinate position within the imperial ambit of power.

¹⁷ Francis Parkman and Howard Peckham both alleged that blankets from the smallpox hospital at Fort Pitt were given to Delawares in 1764 so as to cause an epidemic and undercut the Indian uprising. Bernhard Knollenberg disagreed, but acknowledged that Amherst certainly was not averse to such a tactic; Francis Jennings, however, accepts the account. Bernhard Knollenberg, "General Amherst and Germ Warfare," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, vol. 41 (June 1954-March 1955), 489-94; Francis Jennings, Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years' War in America (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988), 447-48.

The military's model of racial difference that came to be applied to Native Americans was contested on two fronts. First, soldiers encountered Indians as allies and enemies, and this led to both social intermingling and brutal bloodletting. In the process of carrying out the wishes of their leaders and in acting out their own drives, these people came into very close contact. There is no doubting the feeling of difference that each felt for the other, but nonetheless communication between soldiers and Indians took place—conveyed through microbes, drink, sex, kinship, and hunting—and it is clear that each group learnt from the other. Due to the nature of their congress, this being a time of warfare, they exchanged military tactics and cultural practices associated with warfare, often cruelly violent, yet elemental human language ripe with promise of commonality and cooperation that threatened the command structure of the army and the class system that was embedded in British imperialism. The emergence of racialist models for dealing with Indians in the last years of the war in part acted to head off this convergence of the dispossessed by erecting figurative barriers between “whites” and “reds,” separating them as a means of ensuring stability on the imperial frontiers.

Second, and more to the point, the British frontal assault on the fundamentals of both diplomatic and economic relations in the middle ground after the war provoked pervasive dissatisfaction from native peoples. Allies felt betrayed while former enemies resented the assumption that defeat of France somehow gave Britain the right to dictate terms to its former allies. In the spring of 1763, the so-called Pontiac's rebellion erupted, signifying both the native people's recognition of this transformation and their overt resistance to diminishing status, but as well an emergent world view that tentatively set Indian and white people as separate in nature, what could be perceived as proto-racialist

thinking.¹⁸ Tribal groups throughout the Ohio Valley attacked and in most cases captured British posts. The outcome of the Indian War had been all but decided by the end of 1763, as natives suffered from a lack of firearms and ammunition, but fighting dragged on into 1765, an indication of their profound discontent for the new order of things.¹⁹ Pontiac's War can be conceived of as a colonialist struggle. Having lost their long term ally France as a result of the Treaty of Paris, these independent indigenous peoples were confronted by another European power, Britain, which claimed sovereignty over and stationed military garrisons in their lands, and imposed strict new trade relations upon them, all to be mediated through the army. Indians thus rose up against British claims of both territorial and commercial empire in the North American interior, claims informed by racialist thought, and the vassal status this meant to them. The changing definition of empire was no abstraction to these people, but a threatening new political economy manifested in military posts. Ripping these tendrils of empire out could not uproot British *imperium*, however, or unearth the insidious seeds of racial conflict.

Conclusion

The Seven Years' War constituted at root an economic and political conflict. The military functioned as a central component of the merchant-capitalist state, with warfare a form of economic accumulation, which in this instance connected the merchants of Britain to the Euro-American producers of the North American colonies, as well as their servants and

¹⁸ Gregory Dowd, War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, and the British Empire (Johns Hopkins, 2002); William Nester, Haughty Conquerors: Amherst and the Great Indian Uprising of 1763 (Praeger 2000).

¹⁹ Daniel K. Richter, "Native Peoples of North America and the Eighteenth-Century British Empire," in P. J. Marshall, ed., The Oxford History of the British Empire, vol. II, The Eighteenth Century (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 364.

slaves, and, beyond, to Native American peoples, with soldiers providing the key links in this marketplace of trade, theft, conflict, and social exchange within the Atlantic World. Inevitably, a social context existed to this armed conflict. The European powers, their colonial appendages and the various aboriginal groups operated within a transoceanic system cultural in nature as well as economic and political. Gendered, ethnic, and racial identities proved central to the formation of the Empire in its many phases: the mobilization of the male population; the exercise of command within the military; the conceptualization of the self and enemy other; the creation of subject identities in the imperial hierarchy; and the solidification of racial categories for various indigenous peoples subsumed or alienated by the Empire. As such, within the context of military history these categories of analysis must be synthesized with the “real” politics of state conflict. To treat the cultural and the military separately provides interesting and informative vignettes of the culture of warfare; to coalesce into a whole and integrate into an analysis of specific historical conflicts provides a powerful model explaining warfare in its many uniforms. Utilizing the fruits of culture war, the historian can pry open the broader interests contained within the history of the military, a core social organization, and warfare, a seminal human experience.