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M.A. (HISTORY)

Algonkian Warfare in Canada
and Southern New England
1600-1680

by

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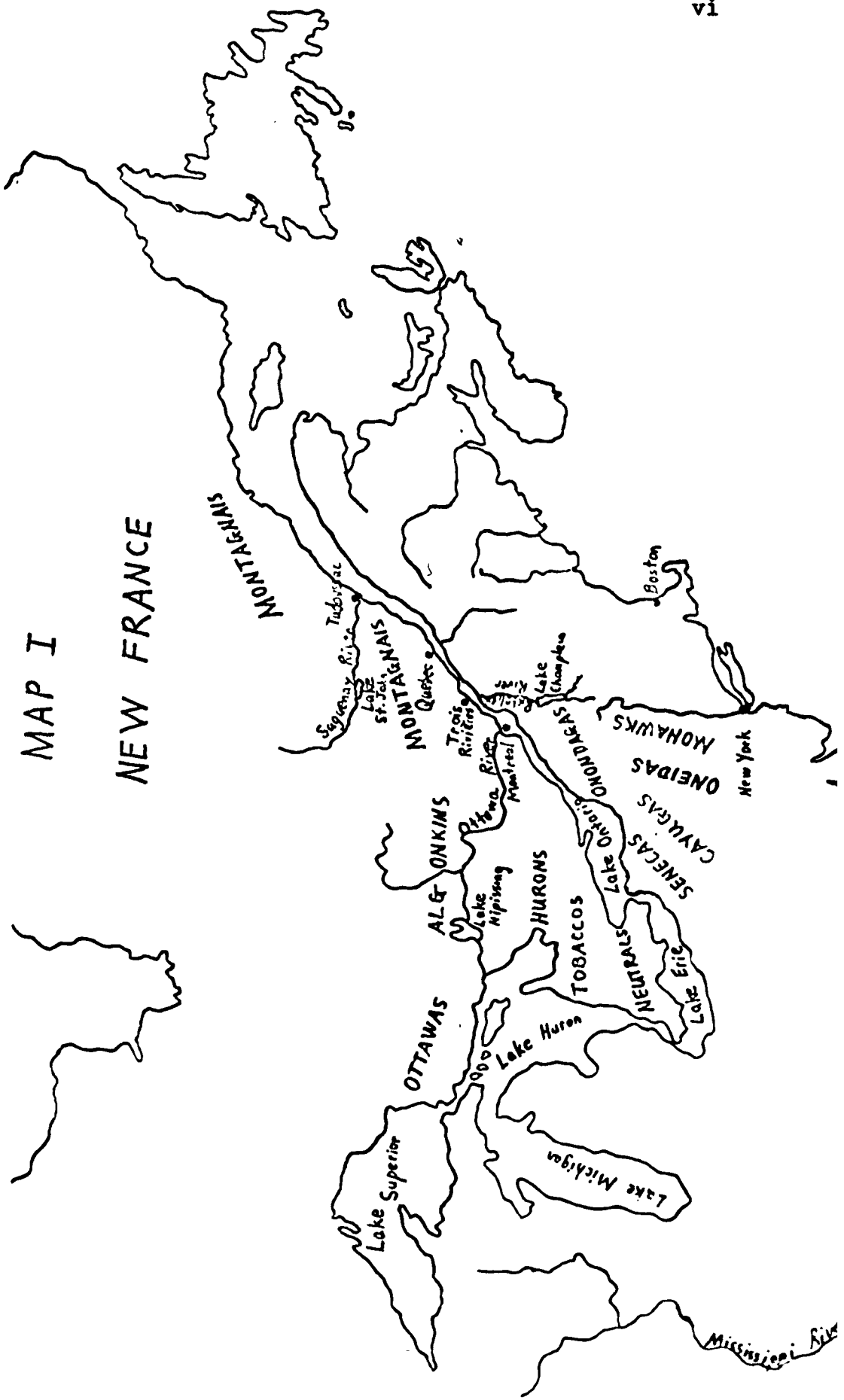
ABBREVIATIONS

- AA.....American Anthropologist, New Series
- JR.....R.G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, 73 Vols., Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1896-1901.
- MG.....Manuscript Group
- MHC.....Massachusetts Historical Society Collections
- PAC.....Public Archives of Canada

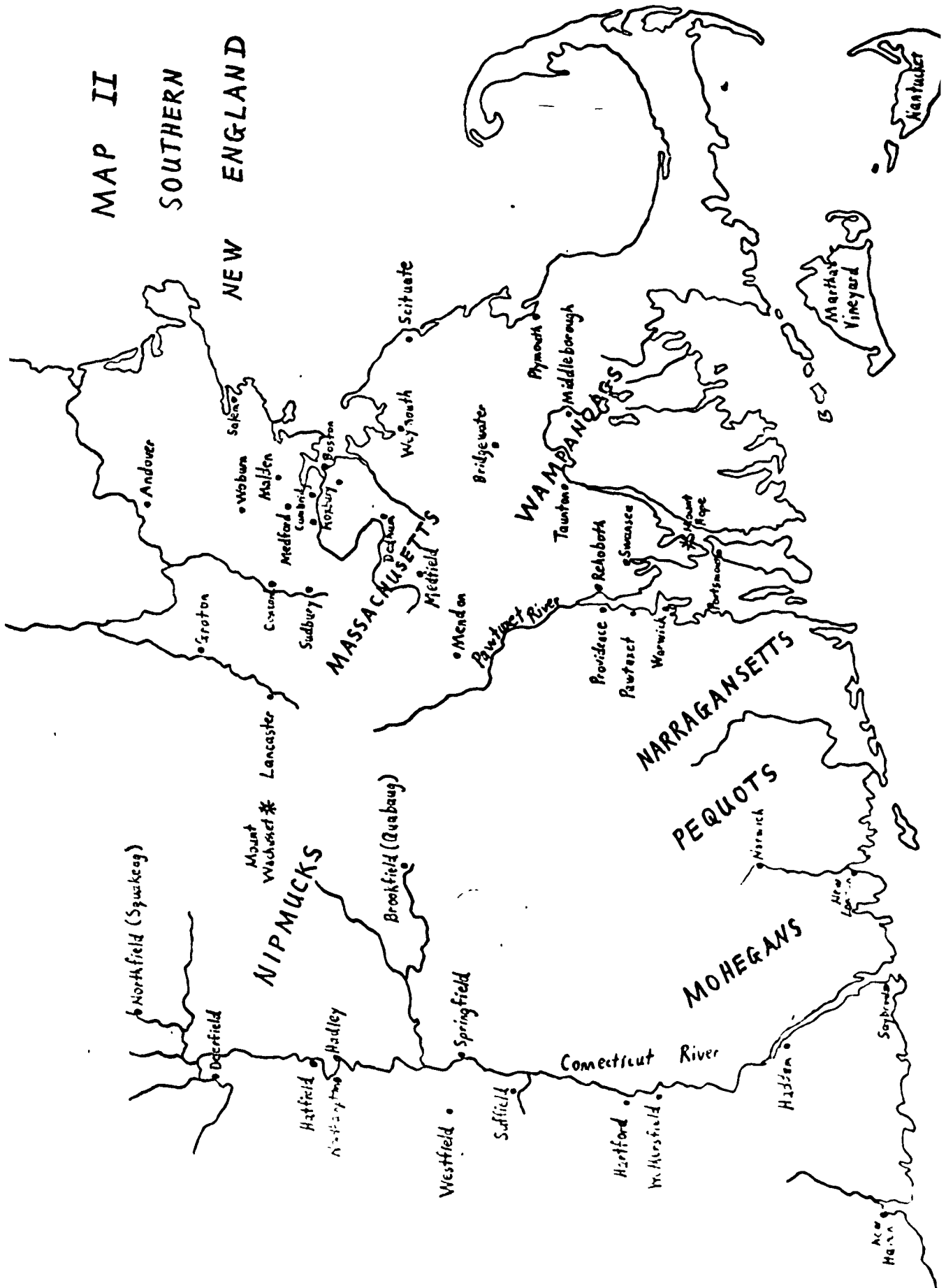
NOTE ON MAPS

The map of New France is valid for approximately the middle of the seventeenth century, that of New England for a period some two decades later except for the Pequots, who are indicated as inhabiting the territory they did by 1637. Unlike many so-called tribal maps, these two do not show clear-cut boundaries between tribes for the simple reason that any territorial limits that did not constantly shift are still too vague to map accurately.

For the data on both maps, I have relied on the work of F.W. Hodge and John R. Swanton. In addition, the studies of Diamond Jenness, George T. Hunt and George Murdock were useful for New France and those of Murdock, Alden T. Vaughan and Douglas Edward Leach for New England.



MAP II
SOUTHERN
NEW ENGLAND



CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM

I

Racial myths fade slowly. They cling tenaciously to the fabric of the collective mind despite the attempts of intellectuals and ordinary thinking men to wash them away. When these myths concern the apparent "losers" of history, those suffering physical or cultural conquest, the task of revision becomes all the more challenging. Until recently, the popular imagination has assumed, or has been led to assume, that native North American society in historical times and indeed by its very nature was prone to extreme cruelty and barbarism in warfare. As Harold Driver has pointed out, "The general view in the United States is still that the Indians committed more inhuman atrocities than did the whites."¹ James W. Walker has reached similar conclusions in his survey of history texts used in Canadian universities.²

¹Harold Driver, Indians of North America (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 520.

²St. John's Evening Telegram, June 3, 1971. This is a summary of an article soon to be published by the Canadian Historical Association.

This is only a more extreme aspect of the general problem which is that outside of professional circles (and in fact not always outside) impressions of the Indian are riddled with outdated clichés and racial stereotypes. Otherwise quiet scholars find themselves cast in the role of iconoclasts when they attempt to make any truthful statement about certain areas of Indian culture.³

It is the purpose of this study to examine in part the extent to which the Indians of North America were cruel and barbarous in their intertribal wars and in their conflicts with the Europeans. The question is obviously an important one, for life and death are important matters. A group's conduct in war colours considerably its image in the minds of others.⁴ It is also a question that can be quite difficult to define. "Cruel", "barbarous", "savage" and "inhuman" are emotion-charged and nebulous terms. Yet the historical

³Wilcomb E. Washburn, "A Moral History of Indian-White Relations: Needs and Opportunities for Study", Ethnohistory, IV (Winter, 1957), 47-61, poses a number of fundamental questions that need to be asked of native cultures.

⁴Donald B. Smith at the University of Toronto is presently examining the image of the North American Indian in Nineteenth Century Ontario and Quebec and its effects on government policy. Hopefully this will be a prototype for similar studies in the earlier period.

sources are relatively clear in emphasizing a number of practices to which Europeans of, for example, the seventeenth century, applied these and similar adjectives. These practices included the use of surprise attacks and ambushes, the killing of women and children, the taking of scalps and similar trophies, the torture of prisoners and the practice of cannibalism. What has to be explored, then, is the degree to which these particular activities existed in Indian warfare at the time of contact and in what ways the arrival of the white man influenced them.

Many Europeans did not forget that their own civilization had its barbarous side. Roger Williams knew enough about the wars of Europe to write in 1660

... how should we expect that the streams of blood should stop among the dregs of mankind when the bloody issues flow so fresh and fearfully among the finest and most refined sons of men and sons of God.⁵

Judicial systems in Europe continued to countenance torture as a method of interrogation throughout the seventeenth century and forms of punishment could often match the most gruesome stories related of Indian atrocities in the New World.⁶

⁵Roger Williams, Complete Writings (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), VI, 307.

⁶Raymond Boyer, Les Crimes et les chatiments au Canada français du XVII^e au XX^e siècle (Montréal: Le Cercle du livre de France, 1966).

Heads and quartered bodies appeared in public places ostensibly to deter crime. Still, Europeans observing native society were shocked, as if they had a mental block where their own society was concerned, or as if they were enraged that the dream of the "noble savage" did not materialize.

To deal with the entire problem in a study of this scope would be foolhardy. The questions already outlined, therefore, have been applied to a relatively small group of Indians, in a restricted geographical area, during a comparatively brief period of time. That is, this examination will focus on certain selected Algonkian tribes in Canada and southern New England from approximately 1600 to approximately 1680.

II

The necessity of studying a carefully specified selection of Indians is evident. In the past, too many writers made the mistake of viewing all Indians as the same. Such writers, not appreciating the tremendous variety of native cultures, applied characteristics to all tribes which may have been true for one tribe. The result was the "typical" Indian, who is only now disappearing from television and the movies.⁷ It is an error

⁷See William T. Hagan, The Indian in American History (New York: Macmillan, 1963), especially pp. 1-2.

that some so-called scholars continue to commit.⁸

In a number of ways, the choice of the Algonkians as a subject for this study is an ideal one. The source material is relatively accessible and compact. Most of what is essential exists in print in such collections as the Jesuit Relations, the writings of Champlain, and the Massachusetts Historical Collections.⁹ As well, the Algonkians form a definable linguistic group represented in both Canada and southern New England, which allows for some comparison. This is not to say that those living in the two regions were of the same culture and race or even spoke exactly identical languages. As Frank G. Speck has been careful to point out, "Let it become clear that we cannot logically speak any more of the Algonkian as an integral unit, referring to language, race and culture."¹⁰

⁸It renders some otherwise quite useful sections of R. Douville and J.D. Casanova, La Vie quotidienne des indiens du Canada à L'époque de la colonisation française (Montréal: Hachette, 1967) entirely valueless.

⁹Material concerning the Iroquois, for example, is widely scattered in several repositories.

¹⁰Frank G. Speck, "Culture Problems in Northeastern North America", American Philosophical Society Proceedings, LXV (1926), 308; see also Diamond Jenness, The Indians of Canada (6th ed., Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1963), 22, and F.W. Hodge, ed., Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1907-10), 1, 40-1.

All that can be claimed is that these Algonkian belonged at one time to a single culture.¹¹ To compare them is somewhat the same as comparing two Romance language European groups; a great deal of care and circumspection is called for. The more important comparison is that of the nature of race relations in the French and English colonies. Finally, the Algonkian peoples were the first Indians north of Mexico to form lasting contacts with European civilization. The early impressions of native North Americans recorded by settlers, soldiers and missionaries were impressions of the Algonkians.¹²

In Canada, the Algonkians which the French encountered earliest were the Montagnais and the Algonkins.¹³ The Montagnais, forming part of what some anthropologists term the "Cree cluster" of the Algonkians,

¹¹Driver, Indians of North America, 49-50.

¹²Hodge, Handbook, I, 39.

¹³For the sake of convenience I am using Marcel Trudel's definition of the geographical limits of Canada, with the addition of the territory occupied by the Ottawas (in reality part of the pays d'en haut) as found in his Initiation à la Nouvelle-France (Montreal and Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), 131-36.

occupied at the time of contact an area from the St. Maurice River almost to the Atlantic Ocean and from the St. Lawrence River to the watershed of Hudson Bay.¹⁴ Despite very early relations with westerners, however, the Montagnais remained quite primitive on the whole until the twentieth century. They lived almost entirely by hunting and trapping, supplemented by some fishing and gathering.¹⁵ This nomadic existence was the main reason that Montagnais society remained unchanged for so long. Although they traded with the French at Tadoussac, they departed quickly after the business was transacted. Their way of life also accounts for a very loose tribal organization. In reality the Montagnais consisted of a collection of small bands sharing little more than a common culture.

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George Peter Murdock, "Algonkian Social Organization", in Melford E. Spiro, ed., Context and Meaning in Cultural Anthropology (New York: Free Press, 1965), 26; Hodge, Handbook, I, 933; JR, XIII, 302; see tribal map.

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Murdock, "Algonkian Social Organization", 26; Driver, Indians of North America, 56; Jenness, Indians of Canada, 270-71.

In time of war there was some formal cooperation among the warriors, but in the heat of battle, each man acted on his own.¹⁶

To the west and south, the Algonkins of the "Ojibwa cluster" held sway. They were bounded on the west and north by the Ojibway and Cree and on the south by the Hurons and their traditional enemies, the Iroquois Confederacy.¹⁷ Speaking a dialect similar to that of the Montagnais, the Algonkins also had a relatively unstructured tribal organization. The Iroquet to the west of Montreal, the Little Nation of the lower Ottawa, the Island Algonkins of Allumette Island and the Nipissing further west each tended to

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Jenness, Indians of Canada, 271; for a fuller description of the Montagnais, consisting of material drawn from the Jesuit Relations, see K.S. Lane, "The Montagnais Indians, 1600-1640," Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers, Number 7 (Fall, 1952), 1-62. This lack of a cohesive tribal structure and the absence of a great deal of property to defend made possible the guerilla warfare characteristic of many aboriginal peoples (R.O. MacFarlane, "Indian Relations in New England, 1620-1760: A Study of a Regulated Frontier" [Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge: Harvard University, 1933], 22-3.)

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Murdock, "Algonkian Social Organization", 25; see tribal map.

go their own way.¹⁸ In some aspects of their culture, the Algonkins bore similarities to such groups as the Ojibwa. On the other hand, some bands close to the Hurons took up agriculture on a very small scale, only to have it evaporate in the constant heat of Iroquois raids in the seventeenth century.¹⁹ However well the Algonkin life-style, like that of the Montagnais, was able to solve the daily problems of survival in a harsh wilderness, it faced the insurmountable obstacle of not being able to organize itself effectively for war.²⁰ Both of these tribes found temporary salvation in an alliance with the French.

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Hodge, Handbook, I, 38; A.G. Bailey, The Conflict of European and Eastern Algonkian Cultures, 1504-1700 (2d. ed., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 2; William N. Fenton, "Problems Arising from the Historic Northeastern Position of the Iroquois," in Essays in Historical Anthropology of North America (Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, C, Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1940), 189-92.

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Jenness, Indians of Canada, 274-76.

20

Harold Driver, along with most other anthropologists, argues that "The largest political entities were in the areas where farming was the principal source of food ..." (Indians of North America, 307).

The Ottawa tribes of the Ojibwa cluster made their home in the early contact period to the west of the Algonkins and just north of the Hurons, on Manitoulin Island and parts of the shoreline surrounding Georgian Bay.²¹ After 1649, when the Iroquois turned from their southern victories to attack the Ottawa, they fled to the islands at the entrance of Green Bay and further towards the southwest. By 1670, the French had persuaded them to return to Manitoulin and the area around the Jesuit mission at Mackinac.²² The meaning of their name, "to trade", reveals much about the importance of their commercial role even in pre-contact times as middlemen between western tribes and those further east.²³

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John R. Swanton, The Indian Tribes of North America (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1953), 244; JR, LI, 20; E.H. Blair, ed., The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and Region of the Great Lakes (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, 1911), I, 281, 281n; Jenness, Indians of Canada, 277.

²²JR, LI, 20; LII, 200; LV, 142; Swanton, Indian Tribes, 245; Blair, Indian Tribes, I, 281, 281n.

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Swanton, Indian Tribes, 244.

Although agriculture provided a small part of their subsistence, the Ottawa were predominantly gatherers, hunters and fishermen, relocating with the changing seasons of the year.²⁴ Soon after European contact, and particularly after the decline of the Hurons, they became significant in the fur trade.²⁵ Like the Algonkins and the Montagnais they formed close ties with the French when the Iroquois threatened to destroy them. In the long run, however, the fur trade which the Europeans introduced did much to change the nature of native warfare in ways to which the Algonkians could not adjust.

More complex was the structure of Algonkian-European relationships in southern New England. Friend and foe became defined as the new circumstances of large-scale English settlement combined with traditional intertribal relations. First to meet the English settlers, the Wampanoag tribe initially was friendly under

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A.L. Kroeber, Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America (Berkeley; University of California Press, 1963), 96; Jenness, Indians of Canada 279; Nicolas Perrot, Mémoire sur les mœurs, coutumes et religion des sauvages de l'Amérique Septentrionale, ed. R.P.J. Tailhan (Leipzig and Paris: A. Franck, 1864), 51-4.

²⁵See below, chapter three, Section IV.

the leadership of Massasoit. Their lands encompassed the peninsula on the east shore of Narragansett Bay, now in Rhode Island, and adjacent territory in Massachusetts.²⁶ Here the Wampanoags were reasonably unified during the time of Massasoit and his successors. More scattered groups lived on Martha's Vineyard and other offshore islands.²⁷ After the death of Massasoit, for reasons to be discussed in detail later, relations between the Wampanoags and the English deteriorated. The last stage in this process was King Philip's War beginning in 1675.

The western neighbours of the Wampanoags, but certainly not always their friends, were the Narragansetts. Apparently this tribe escaped relatively unscathed from the plague of 1616-17 which ravaged most other southern New England Indians; this does much to explain the great power the Narragansetts

²⁶ Hodge, Handbook, II 903.

²⁷ Alden T. Vaughan, New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620-1675 (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1965), 54.

possessed, which they did not hesitate to use in struggles with most of the other Algonkians of the area.²⁸ In spite of the opinions of a number of early Puritan chroniclers that the Narragansetts were singularly unwarlike, this tribe was quite prepared to go to war to further its perceived interests.²⁹ Roger Williams spent a considerable amount of time mediating between them and other Indians or English settlements in order to prevent delicate situations from turning into bloody conflicts. In the end, after keeping the English in suspense for some time, the Narragansetts threw their support behind their traditional enemy, the Wampanoags, in the winter of 1675.

Further west, in the Connecticut River Valley, the Pequots, originally from the upper Hudson, had displaced the indigenous natives by the early 1630's.³⁰

²⁸Hodge, Handbook, II, 29; Vaughan, New England Frontier, 54-5; by the early 1670's, they were the largest single tribe in population (Douglas Edward Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War [New York: Macmillan, 1958], 1).

²⁹See, for example, William Wood, New England's Prospect, Prince Society Publications, III (Boston: Prince Society, 1865), 69-70.

³⁰Vaughan, New England Frontier, 55-6.

As in the case of many tribal names, the Pequots received theirs as an insult from their neighbours. In the Algonkian tongue, Pequot meant "destroyer", and after the experience of the Pequot War in 1637, English colonists could scarcely disagree.³¹

Although just before that war Sassacus of the Pequots had the support of at least twenty-six Pequot sachems, he was unable to maintain complete unity. In 1636, Uncas, who was related to Sassacus by marriage, rebelled and led a band known as the Mohegans into an alliance with the English.³² For this, Uncas was rewarded with continuing assistance from the colonial authorities, even when it may have been unjustified. After the fury of King Philip's War, they were the only important New England tribe south of the Abenaki left intact.

³¹ Williams, Complete Writings, I, 22n; Vaughan, New England Frontier, 56.

³² Hodge, Handbook, I, 926.

III

The experience the French and Algonkians had of each other was therefore quite unlike the experience in southern New England. Because of this difference, a comparison of the two colonies on this basis for the seventeenth century can throw light on the relative abilities of French and English to get along with aborigines. Where two distinct, and even contradictory cultures meet each other, it seems good logic to say that the nature of the contact determines the nature of future relationships. Put more realistically, the purposes the more powerful culture has for moving into the territory of the weaker tend to define the outcome of their relationship. To ask why the French secured the Algonkians as friends while the English failed to do so (except for the Mohegans and, at first, the Wampanoags) is to inquire into the course of settlement and development of each colony.

New France never became primarily a settlement enterprise. Its function during the seventeenth century was that of a supplier to France of furs and a number of other raw materials. The population was confined for the most part to a strip along the St. Lawrence River and did not intrude to any real extent into the hunting territories of the Montagnais, Algonkians

and Ottawa. In fact, by adapting their traditional skills to the demands of the fur trade, these tribes reaped immense material rewards in the form of trade goods. In addition, the French alliance initially enabled them to weaken the power of the Iroquois, their long-standing foes and competitors in the fur trade. The European economy and the economy of the Canadian Algonkians tended to interlock.³³

Settlement, on the other hand, was the prime motive for the existence of the New England colonies. Westward expansion was marked not by the erection of forts and trading posts but by the clearing of all but uninhabitable lands. Rather than commercial allies, the Indians in these circumstances could be little more than obstacles. Missionaries were to convert them to Christianity, of course, but this had to coincide with their settling in specified areas under English supervision.³⁴ The main concern remained that of land, and by

³³See W.J. Eccles, The Canadian Frontier, 1534-1760 (New York, etc.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), 1-11.

³⁴Daniel Gookin, "Historical Collections of the Indians in New England," MHC, 1st ser., I (1792), 141-227, written in 1674, is an excellent summary of this point of view by someone sympathetic to the Indians.

1675, the New England colonists had gained possession of large sections of Indian territories. This could not help but be a source of friction between the races. In the end, New England could only achieve its goals if the Indian way of life were destroyed; by 1676, that had virtually taken place. A comparison of Algonkian warfare in Canada and southern New England, therefore, seems to be a profitable undertaking.

The chronological limits of the study, however, require some explanation. Beginning dates are fairly obvious. Before 1600, the French had little or no knowledge or experience of Algonkian war practices, although they had some indications of how the Laurentian Iroquois conducted themselves. Champlain was the first witness who left behind any record of what he saw of Montagnais and Algonkin warfare. Unfortunately, he was probably not viewing intertribal conflict in its "pure state", for Europeans had traded with these and other tribes throughout the sixteenth century, if not earlier. The introduction of European trade goods, and the resulting desire for more of them instilled in the Indians, must have produced some rather profound shifts in

native society of which we have only a few inklings.³⁵ Champlain, nevertheless, remains our earliest literary source. Much the same difficulty exists for the study of southern New England. The Indians of that region had some experience of transitory white contacts, often unpleasant ones, before the coming of the Pilgrims in 1620. These settlers along with the Puritans, however, are the first Englishmen to provide any solid detail on the culture of the southern New England natives. These two dates, then, 1603 for Canada and 1620 for southern New England, are the closest it is possible to come to periods in which Europeans observed traditional Algonkian warfare.

The closing date of 1680 is somewhat more arbitrary. In New England, 1676 marked the end of effective Indian resistance to English settlement. The colonists destroyed the Wampanoags in that year as they had obliterated the Pequots in 1637. Indeed, the history of Indian-White conflict in southern New England divides logically into several clearly-defined wars or times of friction--the Pequot War, the Mohegan-

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See section IV of this chapter for a discussion of this problem as it relates to sources of information.

Narragansett conflict of the 1640's and King Phillip's War, which had its beginnings in the 1660's. In Canada, the struggle between the Algonkians (including their allies, the Hurons and the French) and the Iroquois continued from some point in the sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth century. By the 1680's, however, two important changes had occurred. The Jesuits no longer were publishing their Relations, and so a vital source of ethnographic data dried up. Second, this decade saw the beginning of a new kind of conflict, an all-out war with the Iroquois that took on intercolonial dimensions as French and English authorities became involved. Here the Algonkians played only a minor role. As far as the primary sources were concerned they virtually had ceased to exist.

IV

Dealing with any aspect of seventeenth-century North America requires on the part of the historian a great deal of care in the use and interpretation of his rather fragmentary sources. This applies even more to the historian looking into native society of that era. The scarcity of primary materials means that there may be gaps in our knowledge impossible to fill. It also means that there is less opportunity to check one source against another to determine the "truth" of the

matter. Having evaluated in general the reliability of a particular witness, the historian may simply have to take his word for it. There is an added complication that is more serious. Egerton Ryerson put his finger on it in 1880 when he wrote that

... no Indian pen has ever traced the history of the aborigines of America, or recorded the deeds of their chieftains, their "prowess and their wrongs"--their enemies and spoilers being their historians;...³⁶

In one way or another these problems have to be faced and resolved.

Even assuming that a given writer is honestly attempting to record the facts of native culture as he sees them in the early seventeenth century, is he really portraying a society untainted by European influences? In other words, can a study which purports to examine Indian warfare beginning with the "pre-contact" period legitimately open in 1603? Bernard Hoffman has stated the interpretative problem quite forcefully:

The magnitude of European-Indian contact before the time of permanent French settlement in Canada, and the influence of the fur trade, have important implications for the ethnology

³⁶Egerton Ryerson, The Loyalists of America and Their Times, 2nd ed. (Toronto: William Briggs et al, 1880), 1, iii.

of the region. Fundamentally, the problem is that our classical sources for the ethnology of the area, the works of Lescarbot, Champlain, Sagard-Theodat, Le Clercq, and the authors of the Jesuit Relations, all derive from a period in which the influence of the fur trade was at least seventy years old. The question thus arises whether the picture obtained from these materials truly reflects the "aboriginal" situation. In particular, do these documents adequately picture the native and pre-white cultural situation on the St. Lawrence River?³⁷

The same question can be asked of William Bradford, Edward Winslow, John Winthrop, Roger Williams and all the other seventeenth century Pilgrim and Puritan chroniclers. It can even be asked of the few earlier traders and explorers who recorded their impressions. To employ pre-seventeenth century sources to answer such questions as the location of tribes and the nature of intertribal relations prior to the coming of the white man requires a monumental task of research and interpretation. To apply these materials to the very specific problem of the nature of Algonkian warfare before 1600 is impossible.

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B.G. Hoffman, Cabot to Cartier: Sources for a Historical Ethnography of Northeastern North America, 1497-1550 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), 202; R.G. Day, "English-Indian Contacts in New England", Ethnohistory, IX (Autumn, 1962), 24-5 and G.T. Hunt, The Wars of the Iroquois: A Study in Intertribal Trade Relations (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940), 19, have emphasized the same point; see also W.S. Hadlock, "War Among the Northeastern Woodland Indians", AA, XLIX (1947), 217.

Where then are we left? Although it is almost impossible to supply an "adequate" description of pre-contact native society, we can assume with some justification that in the case of war practices the kinds of rather fleeting contacts the Indians had with fur traders and fishermen in Canada and southern New England were not sufficient to change to a great degree the way in which they made war. As far as is known, it is only with Champlain and with the first English settlers that European warfare influenced that of the natives.³⁸ This is not to deny that the fur trade in Canada had an effect on the motivation for going to war and on its scale and intensity. Nor does it deny that early contacts rendered the natives of southern New England suspicious of the Pilgrims and Puritans. Keeping all of these factors in mind, however, we can take the sources of the early seventeenth century as describing the practices of war at the time of contact while reminding ourselves that some alterations had probably occurred since the coming of Cabot.³⁹

³⁸"As far as is known" must be emphasized.

³⁹"Contact" does not have to be a direct meeting of peoples. Western goods, such as knives and kettles, probably had a more significant effect on Indian life than did face to face encounters. These articles could very easily reach more distant tribes through the normal course of aboriginal trade.

For New France of the seventeenth century, there exist a number of documents that to some extent describe Algonkian warfare from the early years and throughout the century. The first important witness was Samuel de Champlain, who visited Canada on several occasions between 1603 and 1635. Like many explorers of his age, he was not averse to sharing the life of the aborigines.⁴⁰ For all practical purposes, he lived with his Montagnais, Algonkin and Huron allies during their campaigns against the Iroquois, which occurred entirely during the earliest years of his sojourn in the New World. Although he himself never learned an Indian tongue, he sent such young men as Etienne Brulé to friendly tribes to absorb their language and way of life. Of course, he had strong opinions about many aspects of Indian culture and he did not hesitate to condemn the way in which his allies fought the Iroquois, both on the grounds of cruelty and

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Wilcomb E. Washburn, "Relations Between Europeans and Amerindians During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: "The Epistemological Problem" (Unpublished paper presented at International Colloquium on Colonial History, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, November, 1969), 12; Samuel de Champlain, The Works of Samuel de Champlain in Six Volumes, ed. H.P. Biggar (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1922-36), 81ff. describes the winter he spent with the Hurons.

of effectiveness.⁴¹ Champlain was, however, always careful to describe the facts of the case in some detail. He undoubtedly committed errors but they were probably not a result of maliciousness.

Continuing where Champlain left off, the Jesuit missionaries left behind a series of detailed annual reports from 1632 to 1673 along with a large volume of related documents. Because of their overriding concern with the conversion of the Indians and the consequent need to understand fully the objects of their endeavours, the Jesuits produced the most important corpus of ethnographic data for seventeenth century Canada we possess. A glance at the index to the Thwaites edition of the Jesuit Relations can leave no doubts in this regard.⁴² A. Irving Hallowell has commented that both the missionaries and the fur traders hoped to "obtain insight into the character of the Indians in order to devise ways and means for influencing them toward certain ends."⁴³ The detail is impressive. Its interpretation can be complex.

⁴¹There are many instances of this during the 1609 campaign against the Iroquois. See below, chapter two.

⁴²R.G. Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, 73 Vols. (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers, 1896-1901).

⁴³A. Irving Hallowell, "Some Psychological Characteristics of the Northeastern Indians", in A. Irving Hallowell, Culture and Experience (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1955), 127.

In general terms, Europeans of the seventeenth century came to America with certain notions concerning warfare.⁴⁴ The Jesuits shared in these preconceptions. Whatever did not conform to this pattern they quite naturally tended to condemn. Surprise attacks and ambushes, for example smacked more of cowardice than of prudence as Le Jeune revealed in one of his comments:

... la plus part de leurs [Montagnais] guerres se passent dans les surpris, se guettans les uns les autres, comme on feroit un Sanglier.⁴⁵

Only rarely, however, could the missionaries report first-hand on the battlefield activities of the Algonkians. What they usually witnessed were the preparations for battle and the celebrations afterwards which included a display of the head trophies taken. The exhibition of scalps, the torture of prisoners and acts of cannibalism were all recounted with shock and horror in the early period of Jesuit

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Francisco de Vitoria, Lecons sur les Indiens et sur le droit de guerre [De Indis and De Jure Belli], transl. and ed., Maurice Barbier (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1966 [first published in Lyon, 1557]); Hugo Grotius, De Jure Belli ac Pacis Libri Tres, transl. Francis W. Kelsey, 4 Vols. (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1913-25 [first published 1625]).

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JR, IX, 248-50.

activity.⁴⁶ In later years, however, it is interesting to notice certain changes in attitude. Of course the Jesuits did not approve of the war practices of the Algonkian peoples, but their distaste was much less towards these political allies and by then co-religionists in many cases, than it was towards the pagan foe, the Iroquois. In fact if, for example, a native being tormented agreed to become a Christian, his death would represent one more conquest for the heavenly kingdom. The emphasis in this case was on the heroic death of the victim rather than on the cruelty of those killing him.⁴⁷ Still, used carefully, the Jesuit documents are extremely valuable, provided Wilcomb Washburn's dictum is heeded: "... one must rigorously separate the description of an action from the interpretation of that action. Most writers on the Indian fail to keep the two separate."⁴⁸

⁴⁶Torture and cannibalism occasioned the strongest reactions among the missionaries; see below, chapter six; J.H. Kennedy, Jesuit and Savage in New France (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 128.

⁴⁷This is a general impression I have received from a wide reading of the Relations. Cf. C.J. Jaenen, "The Meeting of the French and Amerindians in the Seventeenth Century", (Unpublished paper presented at the University of Western Ontario, London, February 5, 1970), 9. More research, such as Louis Chevrette's proposed doctoral thesis at Laval University, will be needed to illuminate this point.

⁴⁸Washburn, "Relations Between Europeans and Amerindians," 2.

In addition to the problems of interpretation, the Jesuit Relations poses the difficulty of proportion. Compared to the huge quantities of material dealing with the Hurons and Iroquois, that concerned with the Montagnais, Algonkins and Ottawas is rather thin. This difference is largely due to the fact that the Algonkians, being nomadic or semi-nomadic, did not remain in one location long enough for an effective mission in the style of Ste-Marie to be established among them. The Jesuits came to feel that only by settling the Indians in villages near French settlements, by in some way civilizing them, could they begin to be receptive to Christian teaching.⁴⁹ Already the Hurons were sedentary and practiced a primitive kind of agriculture. Therefore, they were, until 1650 at least, the greatest hope of the missionaries.⁵⁰ Attention later turned to the Iroquois,

⁴⁹Jaenen, "Meeting of French and Amerindians," 4; C.J. Jaenen, "The Frenchification and Evangelization Of the Amerindians in Seventeenth Century New France," Canadian Catholic Historical Association: Study Sessions, 1968, 57-61; C.J. Jaenen, "Problems of Assimilation in New France, 1603-1645," French Historical Studies, IV (Spring, 1966), 265-89; Pierre-Francois-Xavier de Charlevoix, History and General Description of New France, transl. John Gilmary Shea (New York: John Gilmary Shea, 1866-70), II, 87; PAC, MG 1, C11A, Vol.3, fol. 209-10; PAC, MG7, IA7, Vol. 483, fol. 581v; JR, VI, 82, 146-48; XXIII, 204-06.

⁵⁰Charlevoix, History, II, 68.

with some success and much heroism. Those Algonkians who did settle at Sillery or around Sault Ste Marie did receive some attention in the missionary reports, but because this radically new environment all too often destroyed them physically and spiritually, they remained a very sorry lot in Jesuit eyes.⁵¹

In contrast, when the English of southern New England spoke of Indians, they usually meant only Algonkians. There were differences in language, subsistence and other cultural attributes, but these were not fundamental. To the advantage of the historian, the early New Englanders wrote long and lovingly of their experience in the New World, of which Indian relations played a prominent part; their aim was to set down for future generations the struggle of good against evil and God's intervention to preserve his chosen people.⁵²

⁵¹The Ottawa missions were almost as crucial as those among the Iroquois. The government of New France in particular wished to establish close ties with these tribes in order to keep control of the fur trade away from the Iroquois (see below, chapter three, section IV).

Other writers did discuss the Algonkians to a degree, the most important being Nicolas Perrot who lived in the Ottawa country for some time.

⁵²Peter Gay, A Loss of Mastery: Puritan Historians in Colonial New England (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), chapter one; R.H. Pearce, The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1965), 22-3.

What place did the Indian have in this vision? On the spiritual level, the native culture was a fallen one, in which pow-wows and moral laxness existed in place of a properly Christian civilization. Such paganism was nothing more than the worship of Satan,⁵³ and so an Indian in reality could only be accepted as a fellow human if he were converted to the true religion. The obverse of this view was that to destroy an unconverted savage was to destroy one of Satan's partisans.⁵⁴ Even Roger Williams, who generally regarded the Indians with a sympathetic eye, told John Winthrop, Jr. towards the end of 1675:

I presume you are satisfied in the necessity of these present hostilities, and that it is not possible at present to keep peace with these barbarous men of blood, who are as justly to be repelled and subdued as wolves that assault the sheep.⁵⁵

It was not difficult to use this argument, as a justification, along with others, for dispossessing the Indians of their lands.

⁵³William Kellaway, The New England Company, 1649-1776: Missionary Society to the American Indians (London: Longman's 1962), 82-3.

⁵⁴Pearce, Savages of America, 22.

⁵⁵Williams, Complete Writings, VI, 377-78.

As with the Jesuit sources, it is possible to extract from this material a considerable amount of factual data. The reliability of this data is another problem, depending on the author's acquaintance with his subjects. Roger Williams and John Eliot undoubtedly were at the head of the list in this regard. Both had dealings with the natives in their locality on a daily basis, and felt it important to have a fundamental understanding of them. Significantly, both had considerable linguistic ability.⁵⁶ William Bradford, Edward Winslow and John Winthrop, while not having the same insights, on the whole kept accurate records of what they witnessed. Accounts of Indian wars tended more towards distortion, usually to the discredit of the natives. First-hand accounts, for example by Lion Gardener and John Mason for the Pequot War and by Benjamin Church for King Philip's War are the most accurate. The correspondence of such figures involved in leadership and negotiations as John Winthrop, his son and Roger Williams, add much. Other chronicles, written by non-participants, among them William Hubbard and Increase Mather, need to be

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Kellaway, New England Company, 81-102; Williams, Complete Writings, I [A Key into the Language of America].

used with more circumspection, although much of the factual material can be checked against other sources.⁵⁷

V

What will emerge from this study of the relevant data is that Europeans, whether traders or settlers, had a profound effect on traditional patterns of Algonkian warfare. The reasons the Indians had for going to war became more crucial than they probably had been before the period of contact. Firearms and metal weapons, supplied by the whites, added to the new viciousness of the conflict, although their impact has been overrated. At the same time, the Algonkian tribes of Canada and New England could not overcome sufficiently the lack of cohesion in their social and political structure in order to defeat their enemies. Even superior battle tactics, admirably suited to local conditions, could not tip the balance in favour of the Algonkians.

As warfare became more intense, such practices as scalping, torture and cannibalism increased accordingly. Whatever their origins, by the time of contact these practices had a certain basis in Algonkian culture and

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For a discussion of the New England sources, see M.M. Wasserman, "The American Indian as Seen by the Seventeenth Century Chroniclers" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Philadelphia; University of Pennsylvania, 1954), esp. 7-18.

were not born simply of sadism. However, they were never as firmly rooted or as frequently practised in southern New England as they were in Canada. Even in the latter colony, with the decay of Algonkian culture, physically and morally, torture especially decreased sharply after the middle of the seventeenth century.

These general conclusions are not revolutionary. G.T. Hunt, A.G. Bailey, Alden T. Vaughan, Douglas Edward Leach and others have hinted at them or at some aspects of them. The purpose of this study is to determine whether they hold up in detail.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BATTLEFIELD: CANADA TO 1632

I

Somewhat arbitrarily, perhaps, this study of Algonkian warfare in seventeenth century Canada and southern New England has been divided into two general areas of discussion. The subject of this chapter and the three following it will be the battlefield, that is, the kinds of actions that took place during the actual course of fighting. A later chapter will explore what treatments awaited prisoners of war after the battle. The distinction is of course not entirely artificial, for warfare seems logically to divide into these two phases. On the other hand there do exist very real connections between these two aspects of the subject. For example, the Algonkins and Hurons gave as their reason for going to war in 1609 the atrocities the Iroquois had committed against those they had captured on previous occasions.¹ The severity of the warfare might also dictate the way in which prisoners are welcomed.

¹ Samuel de Champlain, The Works of Samuel de Champlain in Six Volumes, ed. H.P. Biggar (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1922-36), II, 69. Whether this was the literal truth or merely a rationalization to legitimize the campaign to the French is quite another matter.

In cases of heavy losses, the victorious tribe may more prudently adopt prisoners than kill them. The Iroquois were noted for doing this.² Alternatively, the manner in which an enemy fought may make the handling of those of their warriors captured by the other side all the more fiendish. These kinds of relationships, only rarely mentioned by the sources, have to be kept in mind. A further pragmatic reason for dividing the discussion in the way outlined is that within each area, there is one issue of considerable controversy. In so far as the battlefield is concerned, it is the problem of the nature and extent of scalping and the taking of head trophies. For the treatment of prisoners, it is the question of torture and cannibalism. These practices particularly horrified European observers and so have been most commented upon. Nevertheless, they are only part of a complex of related phenomena.

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G. Snyderman, "Behind the Tree of Peace: A Sociological Analysis of Iroquois Warfare", Pennsylvania Archeologist, XVIII (1948), and G.T. Hunt, The Wars of the Iroquois: A Study of Intertribal Trade Relations (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940) both discuss this issue. William Fenton, in his review of Hunt's book in AA, XLII (1940), 662-64, feels the adoption of prisoners was one of the central reasons for Iroquois success in war.

II

When Samuel de Champlain first arrived in Canada in the spring of 1603, there was a long-standing tradition of hostility between the Algonkians and Hurons on the one hand and the Iroquois on the other. Although this study is principally concerned with the seventeenth century, this period cannot be anything but muddled without some knowledge of the nature of intertribal relationships by the end of the sixteenth century. Much of what follows can be little more than a collection of educated guesses as to what took place during that rather misty era, but at least the minds who have helped to construct the picture can allow us to put the emphasis on "educated".

The two underlying questions that interest us are: 1) Why did the Algonkians (and their Huron allies) and the Iroquois³ become enemies, and 2) What were their relative positions of power by Champlain's time? On the surface, the first question has an easy answer in a story told to Nicolas Perrot and reproduced by such historians as Morgan, Colden and Beauchamp.

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"Iroquois" in this context is meant to include both the so-called Laurentian Iroquois that Cartier encountered at Stadacona and Hochelaga and the more southern Iroquois nations. See Bruce Trigger, "Who were the Laurentian Iroquois?" Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, III (November 1966), 201-13.

It appears that at some point around 1570, the previously amiable relations between the Iroquois⁴ and the Algonkins were disrupted by a hunting incident.⁵ The agricultural Iroquois wished to become expert hunters and after some effort persuaded the Algonkins to teach them. On one occasion a hunting party of Algonkins and Iroquois set out and separated into two groups. After three days, the supposedly expert Algonkins were unsuccessful, while the Iroquois had a very respectable catch. Out of jealousy the Algonkins murdered the Iroquois in their sleep. Their chief later refused to punish the culprits, instead threatening to wipe out the Iroquois, who were now forced to settle in New York. Whether this story is a legend without solid evidence⁶ or a part of the Algonkin "folk knowledge" is difficult to say. Probably the

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Presumably Laurentians as they were the Iroquoians closest to the Algonkins.

⁵Perrot apparently told his story to Claude Charles LeRov Racqueville de la Potherie, who in turn recorded it in his Histoire de l'Amérique septentrionale (Paris, 1722), I, 290-93.

⁶For example see Champlain's comments, Works, I, 110-11. As recent a writer as Robert Goldstein, in French-Iroquois Diplomatic Relations (1609-1701) (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1969), 31, accepts the story at face value.

details are not literally correct, for it is at least a third-hand account related by an Indian to Perrot and passed on in turn to la Potherie.

Even so this tale has an element of fundamental truth in it. So long as the nomadic hunters and the more agricultural⁷ natives did not attempt to compete, but maintained steady trade relations, there was little substantial friction.⁸ But when this balance was upset, the results could be extremely dangerous. It appears in the case related to Perrot that the Iroquois wished to become more self-reliant in an area in which they were already supplied by the Algonkins. This story also reveals that large-scale disputes of long duration can have their beginnings in one or more small incidents that leave deaths to be avenged, and as will be seen, vengeance and the blood feud are powerful forces in aboriginal society.

⁷Any tribe along the St. Lawrence in the sixteenth century would be agricultural only relative to the hunters of the north. Bruce Trigger argues that the Iroquoians of Hochelaga depended for their food supply on planting and harvesting, but that those of Stadacona were not much different from their Algonkian neighbours in this regard (Bruce Trigger, "Trade and Tribal Warfare on the St. Lawrence in the Sixteenth Century", Ethnohistory, IX [1962], 250; Trigger, "Laurentian Iroquois.")

⁸William N. Fenton, "Problems Arising from the Historic North-eastern Position of the Iroquois," in Essays in Historical Anthropology of North America (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1940), 174.

There are other ways of explaining pre-contact intertribal conflict. The Iroquoian and Algonkian cultures of the northeast were of course quite different. The one was partly agricultural and relatively sedentary,⁹ the other was based on hunting and nomadic in character. Along with these basic differences went many distinguishing features in social structure and, above all, in language.¹⁰ Simple xenophobia could, therefore, account for a good deal of the simmering hostility of the sixteenth century.¹¹ (Why the Algonkians and Hurons, an agricultural people, found themselves on the same side is more difficult to explain satisfactorily.) Still another explanation for Algonkian-Iroquoian enmity proceeds from the migration of the Algonkins and Montagnais towards the south. According to Wendell Hadlock, these finally reached the edge of the territory occupied by the Laurentians during the pre-contact period of the

⁹A careful distinction should be made between agricultural and sedentary.

¹⁰See above, chapter one, section II.

¹¹Fenton, "Problems", discusses the Iroquois culture as an "intrusive element" in northeastern Algonkian society.

sixteenth century. Because of the conflicting views these two peoples held of land tenure and use and because of the factors already outlined, friction became endemic.¹²

By the end of the century, contacts with Europeans, however fleeting, added a powerful new motive for the Algonkians and the Iroquois to fight each other. From about the middle of the sixteenth century, it became increasingly fashionable in France to wear beaver hats. European traders were eager to exchange trade goods with the Algonkians and Montagnais for beaver and other pelts.¹³ Before long these articles of trade had wrought quite profound changes on the Indian way of life and became almost indispensable to the natives.¹⁴

¹²Wendell S. Hadlock, "War Among the Northeastern Woodland Indians", AA, XLIX (1947), 216.

¹³H.A. Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada Rev. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 12-13; J.F. Crean, "Hats and the Fur Trade", Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, XXVIII (1962), 373-86.

¹⁴For example the metal kettle meant that cooking, particularly for nomadic peoples, was much easier. Earlier, the only kind of cooking vessel was a wooden, bark or skin container heated by putting hot stones in it.

Another example is the metal knife, which made cutting, skinning and similar tasks less burdensome.

For a general discussion of the effect of trade goods on Indian society, see Innis, Fur Trade, 14-22.

Among the northern Algonkians bringing their furs to Tadoussac, the competition was not bitter, for there was room for all to participate in the trade. The main struggle occurred between the more southerly Algonkian tribes and the Laurentian Iroquois, both of whom sought to control the St. Lawrence River and hence access to the French markets of those Iroquois living south of the river.¹⁵

The scale of conflict was sufficient to alter drastically the position of the St. Lawrence tribes by the early seventeenth century. Gone were the Laurentian Iroquois--either completely destroyed or absorbed by their neighbours. The triumphant Algonkians were now face to face with the southern Iroquois, with Champlain helping to ensure a continued Algonkian presence on the St. Lawrence.¹⁶ With the arrival of Dutch explorers and traders, however, the entire complex trading system (if it can be so called) moved in a new direction.

¹⁵ Trigger, "Trade and Tribal Warfare", 252-53.

¹⁶ Ibid. 251-52.

If the causes of native warfare in northeastern America changed, its actual conduct did as well because of this new motivation. Before the white man, tribal warfare was generally social or religious rather than economic in origin. It took the form of the blood feud, based on the idea that a group of people, usually linked by blood (whether family, clan or band), were responsible for each other. If one member of that group were killed, any other member could seek vengeance on any of the murderer's kinsmen.¹⁷ At the same time, war was one way of releasing excess energy; it was a kind of sporting venture; or, again it was a means of proving one's manhood.¹⁸ However much Indian warfare did change, these motives never entirely disappeared. Champlain wrote of his experiences in 1603

¹⁷Snyderman, "Iroquois Warfare", 30-2, provides a clear explanation of how this operated. See also H.H. Turney-High, Primitive Warfare: Its Practices and Concepts (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1949), 149-51.

¹⁸Hadlock, "War," 219-20; Turney-High, Primitive Warfare, 141-42; E.S. Rogers, "Aboriginal and Post-Contact Traits of the Montagnais-Naskapi Culture" (Unpublished M.A. thesis: Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1953), 58-9.

that "Ils [the Montagnais and their allies] ont une meschanceté en eux, qui est, user de vengeance & estre grands menteurs"¹⁹ In the 1680's Nicolas Perrot related, mainly in reference to the Ottawas, that

La vengeance des sauvages a plustot pour principe l'ambition que le courage; car il n'y a pas de gens au monde plus lasches qu'eux. ... Mais toutes ces bravoures extraordinaires ne sont soustenües que d'une vaine gloire, ou d'une passion de s'attirer des louanges pendant la vie ou après la mort.²⁰

As will become evident, other more powerful forces were at work to make vengeance less important in Indian warfare, and the estimations of Perrot and even Champlain were out of date and oversimplified.

Still, at the time of contact, a fairly limited motivation coincided with native warfare itself being fairly limited. This was especially true for the Algonkians who by the nature of their subsistence culture were not greatly interested in acquiring territory. If animals and fish were generally scarce,

¹⁹
Champlain, Works, I, 110-11.

²⁰
Nicolas Perrot, Mémoire sur les moeurs, coustumes et relligion des sauvages de l'Amérique Septentrionale, ed. R.P.^r. Tailhan (Leipzig and Paris: A. Franck, 1864), 76-7.

the hunter would starve no matter how much land he controlled.²¹ Small raiding parties were usual, the objectives were not great (in most cases the killing of one or two people) and casualties were light.²² Using the definitions of Harold Driver, native conflict before contact with Europeans never reached the level of true war. Quite often it consisted merely of raids or what Driver regards as the most primitive level of warfare, feuds.²³

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Hadlock, "War", 206, 212; Anthony Wallace, "Political Organization and Land Tenure Among the Northeastern Indians, 1600-1830," Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, XIII (1957), 307.

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For some suggestive comments, see Wayne Suttles, "Subhuman and Human Fighting," Anthropologica, NS III (1961), 148-63; see also Turney-High, Primitive Warfare, 186.

23

Harold Driver, Indians of North America (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 310. He defines true war as "conflicts between two factions with true political organization, each of which possesses definite leadership, some kind of military tactics, and at least the hope of being able to weather a series of battles". A raid is a "small military engagement of small duration" and a feud is a "protracted series of reprisals without any mechanism for settling the dispute". H.H. Turney-High's conditions for war amount to about the same thing (Turney-High, Primitive Warfare, 30).

The intrusion of white society or, more correctly, of white trade goods which preceded settlement, altered this state of affairs although it did not remove it completely. Along with the kind of warfare just described, there developed the structure and practices that came into full flower in the seventeenth century. The Iroquois probably refined native warfare to its highest state by the last quarter of the seventeenth century,²⁴ but the Algonkians were not entirely left behind. As Indians travelled more widely in search of furs, there was more opportunity for the diffusion of characteristics and the weakening of formerly stable lives.²⁵ With the passing of time, the war practices of the Algonkians adjusted to those of the Iroquois.

III

For the seventeenth century, the main thrust of native conflict in Canada, in particular that existing between the Iroquois and the Hurons, was the overwhelming influence of the fur trade. G.T. Hunt, although not the first to suggest this factor, has

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Snyderman, "Iroquois Warfare."

²⁵

Alfred G. Bailey, The Conflict of European and Eastern Algonkian Cultures, 1504-1700, 2d. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), 12.

argued for it most convincingly; as yet the thesis has not been seriously challenged in its main outlines. He contends that after white contact, the introduction of the fur trade and competing markets of the French and the Dutch (later supplanted by the English of New York), economic self-interest defined Indian warfare:

Not alone among the Hurons, but among all the tribes participating in the trade, was the basis of intertribal relations an economic one; the middleman status was desperately sought and maintained, each tribe attempting to prevent, by all the means that offered, any commercial intercourse between the peoples on either side of it.²⁶

The significant word is "desperately", for even more than in the sixteenth century, the Indians could not live (or at least thought they could not live) without metal knives, kettles and other such wares. Of course the main struggle took place between the Iroquois and the Huron. Neither were hunting groups, but both were in a position to control or block the flow of pelts and trade goods between the western hunters and the European trading posts in French and Dutch (English) territory. Each attempted to ensure a clear route to its own markets, the French for the Hurons and primarily the Dutch and English for the Iroquois. Inevitably the

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Hunt, Wars, 63; cf. Bailey, Conflict, 97 and Snyderman, "Iroquois Warfare", 7-8, 35.

two trading systems conflicted and by 1649 the Iroquois resorted to destroying the Huron empire. Very soon thereafter, however, the Ottawas managed to reach the French with supplies of beaver and the life and death struggle began once more.

Although they were not at the centre of this competition, the Algonkins and the Montagnais became involved in the wars that arose out of it. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, they were clearly allies of the Hurons. The exact reasons for this combination remain obscure, but in general it may be said that the Hurons and Algonkians were united by their enmity towards the Iroquois. Also, the Algonkins and Montagnais were in a position to block one path of the Iroquois to their markets. This fact gave what could best be called a collective motive for war²⁷ to both the Iroquois and the Algonkians of Canada and introduced a new style of warfare to Indian society.

In order to survive in this new situation, some degree of organization became necessary and explains further why the Hurons, Montagnais and Algonkins combined in a rather primitive alliance. This coalition did not always hold together, as will be seen, but it did function. It had to do so, for the Iroquois

²⁷Collective motive is one of Turney-High's criteria for true war.

possessed a very powerful military organization, the League of Five Nations. Because of the nature of their political structure, which was facilitated largely by their sedentary subsistence culture, the Iroquois were able to organize much more cohesively than their Algonkian foes.²⁸ Although small raids and ambushes were still common, larger operations were occasionally mounted, with varying success. Champlain began his trek to the Iroquois country in 1609 with several hundred warriors, to take one example.²⁹ The Algonkians appeared to take the battles more seriously, as witnessed by the careful organization and planning that Champlain saw, although he noted a certain distressing light-heartedness at times. It seems that in general casualties increased, victories or defeats had more far-ranging consequences and cruelty became more common.

28

Driver, Indians of North America, 320. However, the League was never as united and monolithic as such historians as Lewis Morgan have argued (Hunt, Wars, 6-9).

29

Champlain, Works, II, 64-5; he reached the Iroquois with only sixty, however.

Indicative that warfare was now no longer merely a kind of recreation was an observation Le Jeune made in 1637 regarding a sick Montagnais or Algonkin, newly converted:

... il haissait ses ennemis avec rage & fureur: comme on eut amené un Hiroquois à Kebec, le voyant entrer dans sa cabanne, il se leve tout malade qu'il estoit, se jette sur ce pauvre homme comme un chien enragé sur quelque autre animal, & à belles dents luy arrache l'oreille, s'animant d'une passion si brutale, qu'elle causoit de l'horreur en ceux qui le voioient
³⁰

Such a display of passion, as A.I. Hallowell has shown, was uncommon for North American natives except in special circumstances;³¹ this man at least required little further encouragement to fight. This is important to illuminate one small but significant point. A careful examination of the sources has revealed no evidence of the French in Canada having offered a bounty on enemy scalps or heads during the first three quarters of the seventeenth century. The Algonkins and Montagnais, and later the Ottawas, were willing warriors for they had their own interests to

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 JR, XI, 84-6.

³¹
 A.I. Hallowell, "Some Psychological Characteristics of the Northeastern Indians", in Culture and Experience (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1955), 125-50. See also Le Jeune's comments on Montagnais character (JR, VI, 230-34).

further. It was probably not until about 1690, when the French employed Indians (largely Christian Iroquois) as allies in imperial wars that this practice arose.³²

Nevertheless, the taking of head trophies was an integral part of Algonkian warfare from at least 1600.³³ When Champlain arrived in Canada in the spring of 1603, he became aware very quickly of the atmosphere of war. On landing at St. Mathew's Point, near Tadoussac, on May 27, he was greeted by an Algonkin sagamore and close to one hundred Algonkins, Montagnais and Malecites celebrating a recent victory over the Iroquois. The sagamore was especially delighted at hints of French military aid in their struggle against the Iroquois.³⁴ At one point during the feast, the Indians began to dance in joyous remembrance of the killing of one hundred enemy warriors.

³² E.L. Coleman, New England Captives Carried to Canada Between 1677 and 1760 during the French and Indian Wars (Portland, Maine: Southworth Press, 1925) I, 52; Georg Friederici, "Scalping in America", Smithsonian Institution Annual Report, 1906, 433.

³³ Friederici, "Scalping", 434.

³⁴ Champlain, Works, I, 98-101.

With them they had the scalps of those they had killed in battle.³⁵ In June at Tadoussac, Champlain witnessed the apparent continuation of this victory feast. The Algonkin sagamore was seated between two poles on which were "les testes de leurs ennemis pendues".³⁶ About two months later, Champlain met some Montagnais who were returning from a battle on Lake Champlain. Again they displayed a number of head trophies.³⁷ In his rather matter of fact fashion, Champlain did not record his reaction to this practice

³⁵Champlain, Works, I, 103. Champlain used the word "testes" here, but the translator in the Biggar edition of his works renders it "scalps". The problem arises, then, of what the trophies actually were. It is complicated by the fact that the verb "scalper" and the noun "scalp" did not enter the French vocabulary until the eighteenth century (See Appendix B). Cartier called the trophies Donnacona showed him "peaulx de cinq testes d'hommes" (Jacques Cartier, The Voyages of Jacques Cartier, ed. H.P. Biggar [Canadian Archives Publications, No. 11, Ottawa: F.A. Ackland, 1924]), and the Jesuits resorted to similar construction. Georg Friederici states in his article that at contact, among the Algonkins of the lower St. Lawrence, scalping was fairly common although there was some head-hunting as well. The solution lies in Champlain's account of the 1610 campaign (Works, II, 134):

Ces sauvages escocherent les testes de ceux qui estoient morts, ainsi qu'ils on acoustume de faire pour trophee de leur victoire, & les emportent.

Cf. R.L. Scheele, "The Treatment of Captives Among the North East Indians of North America" (Unpublished M.A. thesis, New York: Columbia University, 1947), 5.

³⁶Champlain, Works, I, 104-08.

³⁷Ibid. I, 178-79.

as it existed in Canada. This is unfortunate as it was Champlain's first contact with Algonkian warfare in the St. Lawrence region. Perhaps his acquaintance with the placing of criminals' heads on public view in Europe and his possible knowledge of Spanish and Indian cruelties in New Spain led him to regard what he witnessed in Canada as nothing particularly novel.³⁸ Certainly later writers often commented on scalping with great distaste, seeing it as a case of simple cruelty or delight in mutilation. Even ignoring the fact that such charges were rather hypocritical in view of the treatment rendered to criminals' corpses in Europe, this explanation of the basis of trophy taking is not the whole truth.

According to a number of anthropologists, one significant idea in North American aboriginal culture, and one found in such societies throughout the world, was the belief that any part of a man's body or even an item of clothing contained his spirit. Even after his death, he continued to live in it. This was especially true for his head, which seemed to have special significance. Those having possession of a man's skull or scalp had control of his soul and could use it for

³⁸Champlain, Works, I, 63-5. Whether Champlain in fact made a voyage to the West Indies is still a matter of controversy.

their own advantage. Or, alternatively, they had to treat their trophy carefully in order to avoid the spirit's wrath.³⁹ Unfortunately for the historian, however, this very logical explanation of the basis of scalping or head-hunting never appeared to have occurred to those writing in the seventeenth century. Almost without exception the sources treat this practice as a means of obtaining war trophies purely and simply.⁴⁰ There could well be a religious motive in addition but the documentary evidence does not allow us to assert this as anything more than a hypothesis.

As will be shown, scalping was a common practice among the seventeenth century Canadian Algonkians. Whether it was native to their culture is problematical. Regina Flannery wrote in 1939 that on the basis of the material she examined, it was impossible to say.⁴¹ Cartier did find the practice among the Laurentian Iroquois of his time, who came into close

³⁹Eg. Martin Gusinde, "Culte du crâne, têtes-trophées et scalps", Revue Ciba, No. 63 (December, 1947), 2258-60, 2281; Turney-High, Primitive Warfare, 196-201; Friederici, "Scalping", 437-38.

⁴⁰JR, IX, 252 and Champlain, Works, II, 106, are two examples of this way of thinking. The Jesuits, perhaps, would be loath to admit a connection between scalping and native religion.

⁴¹Regina Flannery, An Analysis of Coastal Algonkian Culture (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1939), 188-89.

contact with the Algonkians. Scalping apparently was less widespread among the Algonkians of southern New England, who only infrequently interacted with the Iroquois.⁴² With this very thin evidence, there is some basis for hypothesizing that scalping spread to the Algonkians of Canada from the Iroquois.⁴³

If the basis of scalping in Algonkian culture and its origins are difficult to account for accurately, there has been no lack of writers to outline in grim detail the actual process of taking a scalp. Gabriel Nadeau provides the most complete description, although he refrains from citing the sources of his information.⁴⁴

⁴²See below, chapters four and five.

⁴³Gusinde, "Culte," 2272, argues for this connection, but he does not provide any evidence to support his contention. He adds that nomadic hunters did not take scalps because of their abhorrence of human remains. Presumably he is referring to pre-contact times when hunters may not have scalped. Yet even this could be explained by arguing that nomadic hunters tended not to engage in large-scale war with one another. Cf. Hadlock, "War", 216. Friederici, "Scalping", 428, does not discuss the possible diffusion of the practice from the Iroquois to the Algonkins; he does argue that the Iroquois probably learned it through the Cherokee, Tuscarora and Susquehannock.

⁴⁴Gabriel Nadeau, "Indian Scalping: Technique in Different Tribes", Bulletin of the History of Medicine, X (July, 1941), 180-93.

He distinguishes total simple scalping (removal of all of the scalp but nothing more), multiple scalping (the taking of more than one scalp from a single head due to the difficulties of determining who killed the man) and incomplete scalping (lifting the scalp, but leaving it attached to the head, most common in torture), all of which the Algonkians probably performed. The taking of the scalp along with other parts such as ears, which he classes as total compound scalping and the scalping of only a small section around the vertex (partial scalping) he argues were confined to more western tribes. In most cases, the warrior first disabled his victim, placed a foot or knee on his body, seized his hair with one hand and made a cut to the bone with the other. He then pulled on the hair, loosening the skin with his knife and made off with his trophy. Other procedures were called for if the victim had no hair or if the scalper were in a great hurry.⁴⁵ Occasionally, if a man did not die from his battle wounds, he had a reasonably good chance of surviving the loss of his scalp. Depending on the size of the injury to the head, however, complications could set in rather quickly. Heavy bleeding was an obvious threat. Infection could begin and develop into

⁴⁵Ibid., 187-82; Gusinde, "Culte", 2280-81; F.W. Hodge, Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1907-10), II, 482-83.

septicaemia or meningitis. The outer layer of bone, deprived of blood, frequently rotted away and eventually this deterioration, necrosis, could reach the lower levels of the bony structure until the brain itself became exposed.⁴⁶ Obviously the results of scalping could be very gruesome, but they were not always fatal.

This account is, needless to say, something not to be found in the seventeenth century sources. Although Champlain was present on the Indian battlefield, he was mute as to the details of scalping. The Jesuits usually did not witness actual battles and went no further than Le Jeune's succinct statement:

... ils [Montagnais warriors returning from a campaign against the Iroquois in 1636] portoient en forme de Guidons les perruques de ceux qu'il avoient tuez, car c'est leur coustume d'arracher la peau de la teste avec tout le poil de celuy qu'ils massacrent.⁴⁷

Such accounts as this, along with logic, common sense and more recent descriptions are all that are available.

Head trophies were not the sole prizes that the Algonkians and others brought home from war. A man's hand or foot could carry his spirit just as his head could. There were a number of cases recorded in which some bodily part other than the head was preserved.

⁴⁶Nadeau, "Indian Scalping", 186-88.

⁴⁷JR, IX, 252.

To take one example that Le Jeune found particularly shocking, the priest heard that some Indians (not specified) used the hollowed out hands of Iroquois as tobacco pouches.⁴⁸ Again, of course, such barbarity was not confined to aboriginal society.

Scalping was only the first aspect of Algonkian warfare that Champlain noted. From 1603, he was faced with the problem of deciding what kind of relationship he should form with Indian tribes of the St. Lawrence, who appeared to be constantly at war. From all indications there existed among the Algonkians in 1603 an alliance of sorts composed of the Montagnais, Algonkins and Malecites, who were achieving a degree of success against the Iroquois. The Hurons later joined the Algonkians, if they were not already involved in this coalition.⁴⁹ Understandably, the Algonkians and their allies were in search of as much support as they could obtain, especially from the French. In cementing close ties with the Algonkians and Hurons, Champlain in reality had little choice. These tribes dwelt where the French wished to explore, they knew the interior and they could supply the French with furs. The

⁴⁸Ibid., V, 130; see below for more examples.

⁴⁹Champlain, Works, L, 103.

natives were shrewd enough to hold out these advantages as bargaining points.⁵⁰ In addition, the Algonkians at that moment appeared to be stronger than the Iroquois. Marcel Trudel's judgement, therefore, is a just one: "Condition inévitable: dès le début du dix-septième siècle, les Français sont engagés dans un conflit dont Champlain n'est aucunement responsable."⁵¹

All was not so secure as it seemed, however. The Algonkians, by the nature of their tribal organization, found it difficult to keep a large war party in the field.⁵² Both the Montagnais and the Algonkians had a deathly fear of the Iroquois. Those Champlain met at the mouth of the Richelieu River on June 30, 1603 preparing to attack the Iroquois were in a fortress-like structure, ready to flee at a moment's

⁵⁰Ibid., II, 69-71, 118-21; Goldstein, French-Iroquois Relations, 27-8; J.H. Kennedy, Jesuit and Savage in New France (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 22.

⁵¹Marcel Trudel, Histoire de la Nouvelle-France, Vol. I: Les Vaines Tentatives, 1524-1603 (Montreal: Fides, 1963), 268.

⁵²As Champlain discovered in 1609 and 1610; see below. See also Hodge, Handbook, I, 43.

notice.⁵³ At Quebec in 1608 and 1609, Champlain remarked of the Algonkins that

Tout le temps qu'ils furent avec nous, qui estoit le lieu de plus de sureté pour eux, ils ne laissoient d'apprehender tellement leurs ennemis, qu'ils prenoient souvent des alarmes la nuit en songeant, & envoyoient leurs femmes & enfans à nostre fort⁵⁴

This was very close to panic and after repeated pleas from the Algonkians and Hurons, Champlain agreed to accompany them to the Iroquois country in the summer of 1609.⁵⁵

This expedition marked the beginning of Champlain's experience of aboriginal warfare in New France. He participated in two other major campaigns, with the same tribes in June 1610 and with the Hurons in October 1615. His accounts of the battles in 1609 and 1610 along with second-hand relations of other engagements, his descriptions of trophies carried home and the torture meted out to the prisoners and other information supplied by the Recollets constitute the corpus of source material on Algonkian warfare during the first three decades after the founding of Quebec.

⁵³Champlain, Works, I, 141.

⁵⁴Ibid., II, 50.

⁵⁵Champlain, Works, II, 69-71. The alliance was agreed to in June of 1609.

As already hinted, organization and planning were not strong points among the Algonkians. An alliance of Montagnais, Algonkins and Hurons did function during Champlain's time, but not always with great effectiveness. At first, in June of 1609, this problem was not as apparent as it later became. Champlain and a large number of Montagnais set out from Quebec towards the Richelieu River. On the way, they encountered about two to three hundred Hurons and Algonkins who said they were travelling to Quebec to help in exploring and fighting in the Iroquois country. Clearly, then, there was sufficient communication among the allies to put together a substantial force, certainly more than a small raiding party.⁵⁶ Yet by July 2, when the natives and French reached the mouth of the Richelieu, there remained in the party only sixty Indians. Champlain did not explain why such a loss of manpower took place and it is probably pointless to speculate.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, it is evident that ties among the three tribes and internal discipline were not powerful.

⁵⁶Champlain, Works, II, 64-5.

⁵⁷Ibid., II, 83; Marcel Trudel, Histoire de la Nouvelle-France, Vol. II: Le Comptoir, 1604-1627 (Montreal: Fides, 1966), 162.

In the following year, apparently elaborate preparations again took place to attack the Iroquois. Champlain joined a group of Montagnais at Three Rivers who intended to meet about two hundred Algonkins and Hurons at the mouth of the Richelieu. Another two hundred allies were to arrive shortly thereafter under the command of Iroquet, an Algonkin Chief. Again the arrangements failed, for when Champlain and his companions reached the river, they learned that those they were to meet were already fighting the Iroquois. The scene was one of total confusion as the Montagnais leaped into their canoes and set off upriver to aid their comrades.⁵⁸

The last major campaign in which Champlain participated took place five years after. In this instance, the Algonkins and Montagnais did not play a large role, apparently because of a quarrel between them and the Hurons, or because of a simple lack of coordination. In any event, the invasion of the Iroquois country was a disaster.⁵⁹

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Champlain, Works, II, 123-25.

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For a description of this battle, see Ibid., III, 64-79.

What is noteworthy is that the Algonkians and the Hurons were able to combine as well as they did. The traditional pattern of warfare among such nomadic tribes as these did not involve attacking forces at all comparable to those Champlain described. E. Rogers in fact has argued that if there was any leadership among the northeastern Algonkians, it was only at the band level and was by no means coercive.⁶⁰ Only in extreme conditions could such people begin to cooperate on a much larger scale. How the alliance began and how communications took place remain open questions.

After 1615 and until the return of the French after 1632, there is virtually no indication of efforts on the scale of 1609 and 1610 among the Montagnais and Algonkins. Small raiding parties did carry on the fight with the Iroquois but there is no evidence of anything larger taking place. This may only be an indication of the fact that Champlain was no longer in the midst of affairs to report on native war activity. Yet it is doubtful that an expedition of any size would have gone unnoticed.⁶¹

⁶⁰E.S. Rogers, "Leadership Among the Indians of Eastern Subarctic Canada", Anthropologica, NS, VII (1965), 263-84.

⁶¹Cf. Leo-Paul Desrosiers, Iroquoisie ([Montreal:] Les Etudes de l'Institut d'histoire de l'Amérique française, 1947), 47.

That the Algonkians did not practice a refined style of warfare in the early years is borne out even more so in their actions in the heat of battle. From the evidence provided by Champlain, war had for them many of the characteristics of a sport rather than a life and death struggle, largely because for the Algonkians at this time, the outcome was likely to be successful, whether the battle involved a surprise raid or an open engagement. In preparing for battle in 1609, there was little of the meditation, self denial and stoicism of some aboriginal cultures. Instead, the Indians feasted, sang and danced, all of which had some religious significance; but it was done more in a spirit of joyful anticipation than of solemn dedication.⁶² The Montagnais and Algonkins did have a certain tactical framework that they followed on the march, involving a division of the force into scouts, hunters and the main body of braves.⁶³ For all their use of scouts, however, they did not post sentries at night to guard against surprise attack. They only relied on the

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Champlain, Works, I, 178-80; II, 72; K.S. Lane, "The Montagnais Indians, 1600-1640", Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers, No. 7 (Fall, 1952), 21.

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Champlain, Works, II, 85; Marc Lescarbot, The History of New France, transl. and ed. W.L. Grant (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1907-14), III, 305.

information gathered during the daytime by their scouts: "Ils me disent qu'ils ne pouroient veiller, & qu'ils travailloient assez de jour à la chasse."⁶⁴

An extremely poor excuse in Champlain's eyes! When they were within two or three days of the enemy, however, they became more cautious and travelled by night.⁶⁵

Finally on July 29, the allied force met the Iroquois at about ten o'clock in the evening. Both sides sent up shouts, then the Iroquois retired to erect a barricade. Apparently there was no thought of an immediate battle. The two sides even had the nicety to discuss the hour of battle, which was set for dawn! Both the Iroquois and the French allies spent the night dancing and hurling insults at each other. When dawn broke, a very strange, almost European, battle began. The Algonkians and Hurons ran towards the Iroquois, who stood before their fortress to meet them. Suddenly the allied ranks opened and Champlain emerged with his arquebus. What followed has been related often enough not to require repetition. The Iroquois met defeat and

⁶⁴Champlain, Works, II, 84-5; cf. Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix, History and General Description of New France, transl. John Gilmary Shea (New York: John Gilmary Shea, 1866-70), II, 12-13. H.H. Turney-High, Primitive Warfare, 112-17, points out that this was a common characteristic of primitive warfare.

⁶⁵Champlain Works, II, 86; Lescarbot, History, III, 305.

the Algonkians and Hurons managed to kill a number of those attempting to escape. There was, nevertheless, no effort to follow up this victory by penetrating further into Iroquois territory. Aims and objectives remained quite limited in scope. The Indians apparently only wanted a victory, however isolated, a gain to mark up with little thought to its consequences. The fighting itself was not terribly deadly. In some ways it seemed to be conducted according to a ritual, with a few accepted rules of conduct. It had the character of a standard, if rather crude, European seige operation.⁶⁶

If the battle on Lake Champlain in 1609 had a suspiciously European aspect, there is no doubt concerning the 1610 campaign. After the confusing beginnings of the fight, already outlined, Champlain arrived to find his allies shouting at the Iroquois and skirmishing, "en nous attendant". From this point, the attack began in earnest, with arrows flying in all directions. But Champlain carefully directed the actions of his Montagnais and Algonkin companions, ordering them to pull down a barricade that the Iroquois had erected, while the French covered them with their firearms.

⁶⁶
Champlain, Works, II, 94-100.

Again the Algonkians were victorious. Again they did not follow up their victory.⁶⁷ On this occasion, even more than in 1609, their success depended on French direction and French arms.

After 1610, Champlain did not follow (or lead) the Algonkians in their wars and there were few literate witnesses to record their conduct in battle. In 1615, Denis Jamet, a Recollet priest at Tadoussac, mentioned that a party of Montagnais, in a campaign "par surprise" attacked a small group of Iroquois, killing seven and capturing two.⁶⁸ As small a description as this is, it is an indication of classic Indian tactics--the use of small attacking forces relying on ambush.⁶⁹ Some twelve years later, Emery de Caen travelled to Trois Rivières in an attempt to convince the Algonkians not to break the peace that had been so painstakingly established with the Iroquois by the summer of 1624.⁷⁰ Although most of the Indians were agreeable, about ten young

⁶⁷ Champlain, Works, II, 123-34.

⁶⁸ PAC, MG 7, IA7, Vol. 483, fol. 581v.

⁶⁹ Cf. JR, IX, 248-50

⁷⁰ Champlain, Works, V, 72-80, 130-31, 220-21.

hotheads set out for Lake Champlain in support of the Mahicans who had been fighting the Iroquois for three years. Under the pretence of being friends, they approached an Iroquois canoe and captured it. The peace was now ruined.⁷¹ A new tendency became evident two years later in June of 1629. Some Indians from Trois Rivières, probably Montagnais, attacked an Iroquois village and killed seven women and one man.⁷² It was an early recorded case of the Algonkians carrying the war to enemy villages although such actions probably were not uncommon. This style of battle rather than the larger actions of 1609 and 1610 became characteristic of the fighting of the Montagnais and Algonkins for the remainder of the seventeenth century. In reality, guerilla warfare was undoubtedly a more logical outgrowth of the loose organization of Algonkian society in both Canada and southern New England than full-scale field manoeuvres. With little in the way of property to protect as nomadic hunters, it was natural and, in its time and place, extremely effective.⁷³

⁷¹Ibid., V, 221.

⁷²Ibid., VI, 4.

⁷³R.O. MacFarlane, "Indian Relations in New England, 1620-1760: A Study of a Regulated Frontier" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge: Harvard University, 1933), 22-3. It seems obvious that hunting tactics, such as stalking, were adapted to the battlefield.

After battle, the Algonkians took their scalps. In all the engagements and raids of the first three decades of the century, this was inevitable. When Champlain attended the victory feast at St. Mathew's Point in 1603, it appeared that the Indians had scalped all of those Iroquois they had killed, to the number of about one hundred.⁷⁴ At Tadoussac in August of the same year, the Indians again appeared to have removed the scalps of all the dead Iroquois on the battlefield.⁷⁵ As the warriors returned from the Iroquois country in 1609, the women came out to the canoes to receive the scalps tied to the ends of long poles in the bows of the vessels; Champlain gave no indication of the number of the trophies, however.⁷⁶ The Algonkians carried their trophies home in the same manner in 1610; probably they amounted to most of those they had killed.⁷⁷ This practice of scalping all of the fallen enemy continued to be in evidence in the 1615 raid reported by Jamet and in the attack on the

⁷⁴ Champlain, Works, I, 102-08, 178-79.

⁷⁵ Ibid., I, 178.

⁷⁶ Ibid., II, 106.

⁷⁷ Ibid., II, 134.

Iroquois village in 1629.⁷⁸

By the end of Champlain's time in Canada, therefore, characteristics of Algonkian warfare were becoming clear to European observers. In the first place, the Indians on occasion were capable of organizing fairly large war parties. Unfortunately this cohesion could break down all too easily because of the kind of non-coercive leadership traditionally exercised by their leaders. More usual were the small raiding groups formed on the spur of the moment. In spite of many changes brought about by contact with the white man, vestiges of the old cavalier attitude remained in native warfare. But these were in reality only vestiges, for from the sixteenth century, the Algonkians and their allies were involved in a desperate struggle with the Iroquois for control of the fur trade. For the most part this war proceeded by raids, ambushes and skirmishes. The two large-scale battles of 1600 and 1610 were perhaps unusual; yet on the other hand, Champlain was one of the few Frenchmen in the early years to actually participate in Algonkian offensive actions.

⁷⁸PAC, MG 7, IA7, vol. 483, fol. 581^v; Champlain, Works, VI, 4. In the incident of 1627, all the Iroquois were captured except for one who escaped (Champlain, Works, V, 221).

The only trophy other than a head trophy that was reported was a body cut into quarters and brought home after battle in 1610. The Algonkians later ate it (Ibid., II, 134).

To say that the 1609 and 1610 encounters were atypical is to rest one's case on rather thin evidence. Another important point to note in this period is that with French direction and firepower, the Algonkians appeared to hold the advantage over the Iroquois until well into the 1630's.⁷⁹ Finally, scalping was a firm part of Algonkian war practice from the early 1600's. Whether it was as widespread earlier is difficult to say. As wars became more frequent, probably the number of scalps taken increased proportionately. There is also some evidence that the introduction of the steel knife made the scalping process much easier and increased its incidence.⁸⁰ Even so, Champlain expressed no horror at what took place on the battlefield.⁸¹ Indeed, considering the way in which the bodies of criminal and of

⁷⁹ Keith F. Otterbein, "Why the Iroquois Won: An Analysis of Iroquois Military Tactics", Ethnohistory, XI (1964), 56-63. By firepower it is not meant that the Algonkians were supplied with firearms at this time. Although some La Rochelle merchants traded such weapons to the Montagnais in 1620 (Champlain, Works, IV, 3) authorities tend to accept Le Jeune's thesis (JR, VI, 308) that the arms trade began in earnest during the Kirke regime at Quebec. See below, chapter three, section II.

⁸⁰ Friederici, "Scalping", 432.

⁸¹ His reaction to other war practices was much different.

certain classes of war prisoners were treated in France, there is probably little reason for him to have been shocked at the displaying of a piece of skin as a war trophy. In a general sense, Algonkian warfare at this stage was much less destructive than contemporary clashes in Europe.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BATTLEFIELD: CANADA, 1632 TO THE 1680's

I

In the summer of 1629, the first era of the French occupation of Canada came to a close. Quebec fell to Sir David Kirke in July and until the treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye in March of 1632, New France remained in English hands. When Samuel de Champlain returned after his enforced absence, it was as governor in the regime of the Company of One Hundred Associates, a group who had gained control of the colony's affairs in 1627 and who would remain in that position until the establishment of royal government in 1663. It was an effort begun in hope. Perhaps under a new organization, with a degree of government control, the Company would make New France a valuable component of the French Empire.

One aspect of this reorganization was the major religious effort the Jesuit order now mounted among the Indians. The Jesuits, who were the only missionaries Champlain brought with him on his return, would accomplish much more than the Recollets or any other missionary order in the French regime.¹ Their campaign of

¹Jesuits, of course, had been present earlier, but not on nearly so large a scale.

conversion was spelled out, beginning with the first letter of Paul Le Jeune in 1632. This represented a change in the major source of ethnographic data relating to the Algonkians. Champlain had only a few years remaining to him and of necessity his interests no longer centered on exploration and visits with the Indians. The Jesuit Relations recorded the missionaries' experiences with the natives in greater depth and detail than any one man could have done.

The period beginning in 1632 saw important changes taking place among the Indians themselves as well. In terms of population, physical strength, economic power and morale, the Algonkins and Montagnais, along with the Hurons, began to decline rapidly. By 1680, they were only a vague shadow of what they had been when Champlain first saw them. At the same time the Ottawas and other western tribes became more significant as they increasingly became the suppliers of furs to the French in place of the Hurons and more eastern Algonkians. An examination of the official correspondence for the years after the 1660's yields virtually no mention of the Algonkins and Montagnais, but a considerable degree of interest in the Ottawas. Decidedly times had changed.

II

Nevertheless, during the years up to about 1670, the Algonkins and Montagnais continued to be a significant force in the eastern woodlands. Their quarrels with the Iroquois continued to be a major concern of the Europeans, motivated as they were by the desire to obtain European trade goods and hence by the necessity of controlling the supply of furs. The blood feud still could inspire war,² but by the end of Champlain's time, economic considerations were becoming more important. Even with what is fashionably regarded as an extremely powerful motive, however, the overall characteristic of Indian conflict was the employment of ambushes, small-scale raids and "hit and run" attacks. In no way could such warfare be considered as grandiose or awe-inspiring in scale.

Some observers were, however, beginning to be worried by a new development which seemed to promise a more dangerous turn in the situation. Pierre Boucher noted in 1664 that "Ils [Indians in general] sont adroits a manier les armes à feu, tirent fort bien un coup de fusil."³

²Nicolas Perrot, Mémoire sur les moeurs, coustumes et religion des sauvages de l'Amérique Septentrionale, ed. R.P.J. Tailhan (Leipzig and Paris: A. Franck, 1864), 76-7; Pierre Boucher, Histoire véritable et naturelle des moeurs et productions des pays de la Nouvelle-France, vulgairement dite le Canada (Boucherville: Société historique de Boucherville, 1964), 117.

³Boucher, Histoire, 122.

By the time he was writing, firearms were a part of the Indian arsenal, both among the Iroquois and among the French allies. The extent to which the Montagnais and Algonkians possessed such weapons before the 1630's is difficult to say. Champlain was disturbed by the La Rochelle merchants' selling guns to the Indians in 1620.⁴ Paul Le Jeune, however, implied in his letter of 1634 that the gun trade really began during the Kirke period:

... depuis qu'ils [Montagnais] ont traité des armes à feu avec les Anglois, ils sont devenus demy Gibboyeurs, quelques uns d'entr'eux tirent assez bien.⁵

Whether or not this is true, probably the Algonkians had few firearms in the early 1630's and traditional weapons, many now made of iron, formed most of their firepower.⁶ By 1640, nevertheless, guns were common at Quebec and Tadoussac and to all appearances the trade was flourishing.⁷ Three years later, French policy became more cautious. Supplies continued to

⁴Samuel de Champlain, The Works of Samuel de Champlain in Six Volumes, ed. H.P. Biggar (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1922-36), IV, 3.

⁵JR, VI, 308.

⁶Alfred G. Bailey, The Conflict of European and Eastern Algonkian Cultures, 1504-1700, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 51; S.J. Gooding, The Canadian Gunsmiths, 1608-1900 (West Hill, Ont: Museum Restoration Service, 1962), 20-6.

⁷Bailey, Conflict, 51; Gooding, Gunsmiths, 26-7; JR, XVIII, 100-04; XX, 190.

flow to Christian Indians, but pagans often were excluded, either to encourage them to convert or because the French were unwilling to trust non-Christians with guns.⁸ Because of this caution and the high prices charged by the French for the firearms, by 1649, the French allies, including the Algonkins and the Montagnais, were considerably less well-equipped in this regard than were the Iroquois.⁹

It is one thing to discuss how many firearms a particular tribe possessed in relation to another. But it is quite another to assume from this that an advantage in firearms meant an advantage in military power in the seventeenth century. For example, neither the matchlock nor the flintlock could be reloaded rapidly. In a quick raid, the attackers might fire only once, then either drop their muskets or use them as clubs. The weapons themselves were not reliable.¹⁰

⁸ Bailey, Conflict, 51-2; G.M. Hunt, The Wars of the Iroquois: A Study in Intertribal Trade Relations (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940), 173; IR, XXV, 26.

⁹ Hunt, Wars, 174; K.F. Otterbein, "Why the Iroquois Won: An Analysis of Iroquois Military Tactics," Ethnohistory, XI (1964), 58-60. Firearms began to be common among the Ottawas about 1670 (W.V. Kinnietz, The Indians of the Western Great Lakes, 1615-1760 [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1940], 244).

¹⁰ Otterbein, "Why the Iroquois Won", 57-0. argues otherwise.

Misfiring and inaccuracy were all too common. Finally, powder and the guns themselves could deteriorate under the rigours of long marches through the bush. But it should be noted that the Indians were at no particular disadvantage to Europeans because before the end of the eighteenth century, natives used the same guns as the French and English, there being as yet no "trade guns".¹¹ Of course firearms were a help, especially when employed effectively in ambush.¹² They could also do much for the confidence of an Indian possessing them. But they could not ensure military success if organization, tactical skill and courage were lacking.

In fact, by the 1640's, despite the supply of firearms and other supposed benefits of French civilization, the Montagnais and Algonkins were in the course of a ruinous decline. With the Hurons now firmly in the role of middleman in the fur trade and the disappearance of the beaver supply in the lower St. Lawrence, these tribes became increasingly dependant on the French for their survival.¹³ This tendency was reinforced by the

¹¹Carl P. Russell, Guns on the Early Frontiers (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957), 103.

¹²The large bore and heavy ball made for considerable shocking power at close range (Russell, Guns 231-32).

¹³Harold Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada Rev. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), 28.

charity of missionaries and other Europeans.¹⁴ At the same time, the influence of the Christian religion not only eroded the native desire to fight; it also attacked the blood feud and began to dissolve the cement binding Algonkian society.¹⁵ The Montagnais and Algonkins, by settling at Sillery and similar establishments, left their old nomadic way of life. What kind of livelihood could they now have other than one based on handouts? This surely must have worn down their self-confidence in time. Christianity soon destroyed their beliefs, their gods and their shamans.¹⁶ By the 1660's, although Christian Indians still went to war, and indeed some wars became holy "crusades",¹⁷ other practices, such as torture, declined, an indication of a softening tendency.¹⁸

¹⁴ Bailey, Conflict, 35.

¹⁵ Ibid., 08.

¹⁶ André Vachon, "L'Eau-de-vie dans la société indienne", Canadian Historical Association Annual Report, 1960, 28-9.

¹⁷ For example, JR, XXII, 52-4.

¹⁸ See below, chapter six, section II.

Probably the most obvious result of contact with the French was the physical decimation of the Montagnais and Algonkins. Especially in such settlements as Sillery, European diseases, against which Indians had no immunity, began and spread easily. Susceptibility to new diseases increased as the general physical condition of the Indians deteriorated. This came about with the adoption of western clothing, which was ineffective in warding off the cold,¹⁹ and the widespread excessive use of alcohol, which contributed to a poor diet, making the contracting of various ailments more likely.²⁰ Beginning in the 1630's, the Jesuits referred frequently to the presence of serious disease among the Algonkins and Montagnais, whether specified as smallpox or measles in 1635 and 1660-1670, or unspecified in 1633-1634, 1639-40, 1642-1643 and 1648.²¹ The 1630's probably constituted the worst period because disease made its first heavy inroads. As Léo-Paul Desrosiers

¹⁹Vachon, "Eau-de-vie", 27; Vachon feels clothing to be a more important factor than alcohol.

²⁰Léo-Paul Desrosiers, Iroquoisie ([Montréal:] Les Etudes de l'Institut d'histoire de l'Amérique française, 1947), 168-69; PAC, MG 1, C¹¹A, vol. 12, 778-809.

²¹JR, VI, 60; VIII, 86-8; XVIII, 90; XXIV, 270; XXXIII, 19; LIII, 58-80.

has commented:

... les pertes militaires des Algonquins et des Hurons pendant la période 1634-1640, ont été ridiculement basses à côté des pertes par épidémies.²²

To determine exactly how many Indians actually died, or to discover the effects of disease and other factors on the birth and marriage rates, would be asking too much of the sources. The Jesuit missionary Vimot provided a general idea of the situation in his

Relation of 1644:

Tous ces accidens ont tellement esclaircy nos Sauvages, que là ou l'on voyait il y a huict ans, quatre-vingt & cent cabanes, à peine en voit-on maintenant cinq ou six: & tel Capitaine que commandoit pour lors à huict cent guerriers n'en compte plus à present que trente ou quarante, & au lieu des flottes de trois ou quatre cents Canots, nous n'en voyons plus que de vingt ou trente.²³

By the end of the seventeenth century, the Algonkins and Montagnais were almost obliterated²⁴ and had become the province of missionaries rather than of the political and military planners of New France.

²²
Desrosiers, Iroquoisie, 109.

²³
JR, XXV, 108.

²⁴
Bailey, Conflict, 73.

III

Yet these tribes did not cease their wars against the Iroquois. As in the earlier period, there was apparently little in the way of large-scale planning or organization. "Apparently" is the term to employ, because the missionaries who reported on Indian activities usually were not in a position to know what took place at "strategy sessions", if indeed anything did occur. At the most, there seemed to be intermittent agreement among the Algonkins, or Montagnais, or both, as to whether they were at war or at peace with the Iroquois Confederacy or any of its members. Then, however, small raiding parties, ambushes and the like were the order of the day rather than the large expeditions of 1609 and 1610 or those the Iroquois organized in the 1640's. Indeed, small groups of younger, more impulsive warriors often set off on their own, without the sanction of the tribe, to kill a few Iroquois. In many ways, the individual remained his own war chief and in so doing helped to render any peace agreement rather short-lived.

This problem was amply illustrated as early as the summer of 1632, when the French were returning to reoccupy the colony after the English interlude. A number of Montagnais at Tadoussac were torturing some Iroquois prisoners. However, they stopped when a

group of Algonkins told them that they were attempting to make peace with the Confederacy. Just as abruptly, all the fine plans for peace disintegrated when it was learned that one of the Algonkin guards at Quebec who was watching over several Iroquois captives became drunk and had one of them killed.²⁵ The Algonkians returned to the norm of intertribal relations, la petite guerre. When the Algonkians did decide on a concerted war, their unity was no more impressive. The French in 1634 set out a policy of total war against the Iroquois, but the Montagnais and Algonkins did not prove themselves capable of playing an effective role in that campaign. Typical of the effort was a smallish Algonkin party that returned in the fall with a single Mohawk prisoner.²⁶ By 1635, some peace agreements had been arranged, but these did not cover either the Algonkian-Huron combination or the Iroquois Confederacy as a whole. Peace existed only between the Hurons and Senecas on the one hand and between the Algonkins and Oneidas (with the probable addition of the Mohawks) on the other. By May, the Hurons remained at peace with

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IR, V, 26-30; Desrosiers, Iroquoisie, 115-17.

²⁶

Desrosiers, Iroquoisie, 127-37.

the Senecas but were at war with the rest of the Iroquois, while the Algonkins were declared enemies of the entire Confederacy.²⁷ Tribal self-interest was clearly stronger than the ties of alliance.

This kind of intermittent warfare was characteristic of the remainder of the period to the 1660's as far as the Algonkins and Montagnais were concerned. When a tenuous peace did not exist, the Indians pursued a type of warfare which was fierce in its individual encounters, but which lacked sufficient overall organization and cohesion to carry the weight needed to destroy the Iroquois menace. Characteristic was the remark of a Jesuit who witnessed an Algonkin party setting out in July of 1636 for the Richelieu in an attempt to "chercher quelque pauvre miserable Hiroquois".²⁸ Similarly, returning from the Iroquois country later in the summer, a Montagnais group had only two scalps to show for its efforts.²⁹ After a period of little activity, due mainly to the ravages of disease,³⁰ the Algonkins set out again in the winter of 1642-1643.

²⁷ Ibid., 143, 150-52; Hunt, Wars, 35.

²⁸ JR, IX, 248-50.

²⁹ JR, IX, 252.

³⁰ Desrosiers, Iroquoisie, 187.

Before long, the force divided into Christian and pagan groups and each went its own ineffectual way raiding and ambushing.³¹ That spring, another party returned with one scalp,³² followed by similar efforts in April 1644³³ and in May 1645.³⁴ More instances of this low scale guerilla action were recorded for later in 1645, for May and July 1647,³⁵ May 1648³⁶ and November 1652.³⁷ There was little to impress those used to European battlefields.

³¹
JR, XXIV, 202-06.

³²
Ibid., XXIV, 258.

³³
Abbé P.F. Richaudeau, Lettres de la Révérende Mère Marie de l'Incarnation, première supérieure des Ursulines de Québec (Paris: Vve. H. Casterman, 1876), I, 237-38.

³⁴
JR, XXVII, 228-30.

³⁵
Ibid., XXXVI, 20; XXX, 282-86; XXX, 186.

³⁶
François Du Creux, History of Canada, or New France, transl. Percy J. Robinson, ed. J.R. Conacher (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1951-52), II, 487-88.

³⁷
JR, XL, 194-96.

More significantly, the Iroquois were able to accomplish much more in their campaigns against the Hurons and the Algonkians. The fall of Huronia bore ample proof of that. Indeed, the most frightening aspect of that winter for the Hurons was the fact that the Iroquois managed to keep a sizeable force on the march over such a great distance in the winter season and penetrated what the Hurons had regarded as their own fire-proof house. The knowledge that the Iroquois were on their doorstep was enough to demoralize them before the fight even began.³⁸ Such discipline and cohesiveness was outside of their experience and, for that matter, the experience of their allies.

After the defeat of the Hurons, the Iroquois turned on the Algonkins, who now desperately cast about for allies. During the early 1650's, they attempted to construct an alliance with the Montagnais, Micmac and Nipissing. But as Nicolas Perrot sagely remarked:

... le peu d'union qui regnoit entre eux rompit toutes leurs mesures et fit avorter tout ce qu'ils avoient projeté; car, comme je l'ay déjà dit, l'Algonkin n'a jamais voulu souffrir de subordination; ...³⁹

³⁸ Hunt, Wars, 92-4; JR, XXXV, 78-80.

³⁹ Perrot, Mémoire, 109-10.

And so the Algonkins signed a separate treaty with the Iroquois, and were defeated when the agreement fell through.⁴⁰ Through the 1650's, the Iroquois carried the struggle further to Tadoussac and the upper Saguenay,⁴¹ while the Algonkins continued their sporadic raids.⁴² June 1661 saw a new setback for the French allies as Tadoussac went up in flames and the Indians there sought refuge at Quebec. These were joined by the more northern Montagnais, as the Iroquois ravaged the Porcupine and Squirrel nations. Within a few years, much of the northern interior was in a state of utter confusion.⁴³ Desperately, the Algonkins at Sillery attempted to fight back with what they regarded as a holy war. The grandness of their decision was not matched by the actual fight, however. Some forty-two set out and returned with ten scalps, an indication of limited success.⁴⁴ The following autumn, a small group

⁴⁰Ibid., 104-08.

⁴¹Bailey, Conflict, 37.

⁴²For example, in February 1657 (JR, XLIII, 68) and in mid July 1660 (Pierre Esprit Radisson, The Explorations of Pierre Esprit Radisson, ed. Arthur T. Adams [Minneapolis: Ross and Haines, 1961], 100-05).

⁴³Bailey, Conflict, 37, 128.

⁴⁴JR, XLVII, 302; XLVIII, 98-104; PAC, 1G 1, IA10, vol. 842, 40-43.

of Algonkins fell upon an Onondaga party claiming to be peace envoys, thus destroying another chance for peace.⁴⁵ Sporadic violence continued that winter in the region of Lake Piagouagami, with little concrete result.⁴⁶

It was clear by now that the Iroquois menace to the colony was a major one which the Algonkins and Montagnais were incapable of meeting. With the establishment of royal government, therefore, came the Carignan-Salières regiment from France in 1665. Already weakened by disease and by wars with their other foes, the Iroquois sent a delegation of Onondagas and an Oneida to treat for peace. The French were understandably suspicious and little came of the talks.⁴⁷ Instead the Governor, Courcelle, set out with his troops for a winter campaign against the Mohawks. From this point, the Algonkins and Montagnais faded from the military picture quite rapidly. In recent years, they had accomplished little more than a number of relatively insignificant skirmishes and had foiled several attempts at peace. Now the French took the initiative, using their Indian allies mainly as auxiliaries and guides.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Richaudeau, Lettres, II, 275-76; JR, XLIX, 144-46.

⁴⁶ JR, L, 36-40.

⁴⁷ Perrot, Mémoire, 110-11.

By 1671, a missionary in an anonymous memorandum which in part described the Iroquois problem, implied that the friendly Indians were incapable of protecting themselves and that it fell to the French to make the way clear for the fur trade.⁴⁹

If the organization and cohesiveness of the Algonkin and Montagnais military efforts changed little except for the worse from Champlain's time, the actual tactics employed in the field and the extent of scalp-taking remained much the same. In general terms what has been said regarding the earlier period can be repeated here.⁵⁰ Ambushing, raiding on a small scale and other superficial exchanges remained characteristic. The Algonkians did demonstrate some flexibility in two respects, however. They no longer avoided the cold season and went out to fight the Iroquois in the winters of 1642-1643, 1652, 1656 and 1664-1665.⁵¹ Night attack was also coming into vogue, whether in total darkness, as in May 1647,⁵² or shortly before daybreak, when the enemy would be at his most unwary, as in November 1652

⁴⁹PAC, MG 1, C¹¹A, vol. 3, 261-62.

⁵⁰See above, chapter two, section III.

⁵¹See above.

⁵²JR, XXX, 282-86.

or in the winter of 1664-1665.⁵³

Scalping continued to be a common occurrence. On every warring expedition that met with success or even had the opportunity, the Algonkins and Montagnais did not fail to take scalps. When chroniclers gave details, they revealed that the usual procedure was to scalp all dead Iroquois. Due to the extent of fighting, however, the number of trophies taken never amounted to many, just as the force the Algonkians were willing to attack never constituted more than perhaps a dozen. Everything the Algonkins and Montagnais did on the battlefield seemed to be done on a small scale.

IV

As France's native allies in the American interior declined in power, other tribes began to assume more importance. After the defeat of the Hurons in 1649, the fleets of fur-bearing canoes moving down the Ottawa River were increasingly manned by members of the Ottawas and other western tribes. It was clear that the middleman role in the fur trade was passing from the Hurons to these western groups.⁵⁴ According to

⁵³

Ibid., IX, 194-96; L, 36-40. H.H. Turney-High, Primitive Warfare: Its Practices and Concepts (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1949), 128, has remarked on the dawn attack as a common aboriginal practice.

⁵⁴Hunt, Wars, 48-9.

the intendant Duchesneau, by 1681 the Ottawas themselves no longer hunted, but were solely entrepreneurs, obtaining their furs from more distant tribes. Their only wish was to receive proper treatment from the French traders, not to be impeded in their trade routes and to have assured peace.⁵⁵ By the end of the century, this shift had become significant enough for Michilimackinac to have become the western hub of the fur trade, a centre where the French travelled to barter with the Indian dealers.⁵⁶ The result, to no-one's surprise, was to place the Ottawas in direct conflict with the Iroquois.

Rather than producing the relative self-confidence of the halcyon days of the early 1600's, the prospect of the impending trade struggle filled the Ottawas with dread. The defeat of the Hurons could not be forgotten, and so a large number of them fled to live with scattered Hurons around Lake Michigan. Turning to this group after the decimation of the Neutrals, the Iroquois in 1653 sent a contingent of some eight hundred to attack them. Well-meaning efforts at peace failed when a few Ottawas attempted unsuccessfully to poison the Iroquois envoys. Bloodshed did not ensue

⁵⁵PAC, MG 1, C¹¹A, vol. 5, 301-04. Cf. Governor la Barre's comments two years later (Ibid., vol. 6, part 1, 223).

⁵⁶Claude Charles Le Roy Bacqueville de la Potherie, Histoire de l'Amérique septentrionale (Paris, 1722), II, 65.

immediately, but tensions were now extremely high.⁵⁷

During the next several years, the Ottawas became involved in a war with the Sioux and were forced to migrate once more,⁵⁸ while the Iroquois centered their attentions on the Algonkins. Finally, in 1662, the Ottawas went north to trade with the western tribes and the struggle began in earnest. Yet, so it appeared, the conflict was a very one-sided affair. Unlike the Algonkins and Montagnais, the Ottawas had as their central occupation the carrying of furs and trade goods. Constantly on the move, either east or west, they had little time or inclination for occasional forays into enemy territory. They were not sedentary, as the Hurons had been and hence could not build a sufficient organization and supply of food to have sent a large war party hundreds of miles to the southeast simply to have a fight. And so, throughout the 1660's and 1670's, they relied on others, chiefly the French to fight the Iroquois for them.

They would fight back if attacked, of course. In 1665, for example, the Iroquois ambushed a flotilla of Ottawa canoes laden with furs at Calumet rapids.

⁵⁷ Perrot, Mémoire, 80-3.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 83-01.

The Ottawas, in turn, soon reached the Iroquois camp and attacked it until the Iroquois asked for a parley. Having little faith in Iroquois promises, the Ottawas were only persuaded with great difficulty to continue their voyage.⁵⁹ When the Iroquois later made peace with the French, it took all of Nicolas Perrot's eloquence to convince the Ottawas to follow suit. Only after he assured them of French protection did they agree.⁶⁰ By 1670, the Ottawas were firmly attached to the French and in Charlevoix' words, allowed Talon to "establish the rights of the crown in the most remote quarters of Canada".⁶¹ Even so, the Ottawas remained terrified of their enemies. The 1670 fur trade fleet of more than nine hundred canoes was prepared at several points to give up entirely the journey to Montreal.⁶² Even defensive warfare was becoming abhorrent to them.

Three years later, the new governor, Frontenac, became concerned about a rather dangerous development in intertribal relations. The Iroquois were attempting to set up a trading arrangement with the Ottawas, which

⁵⁹ Ibid., 93-4.

⁶⁰ La Potherie, Histoire, II, 123-24.

⁶¹ Pierre-Francois-Xavier de Charlevoix, History and General Description of New France, transl. John Gilmary Shea (New York: John Gilmary Shea, 1866-1870), III, 164-65.

⁶² Perrot, Mémoire, 119-22.

included a rendez-vous on Lake Ontario. It would mean diverting the flow of furs to the English and possibly the ruination of the French-Iroquois peace treaty. To forestall this, Frontenac journeyed to Lake Ontario to treat with the Iroquois and eventually established a French fort there, Fort Frontenac.⁶³

While the Ottawas were practising something akin to treachery in the east, their relations with the Sioux in the west were taking a turn for the worse. The Ottawas had compelled them to settle for peace in the spring of 1674 and a group of Sioux negotiators set out for Sault Ste Marie. But the Cree allies of the Ottawas were not particularly interested in peace and they attempted to murder the ambassadors. In the end, ten Sioux died in their cabin and the Ottawas saw their hopes dashed.⁶⁴ Within several years, their peace with the Iroquois faded as well. The latter, full of new strength, set about establishing their former authority in the Illinois country and in September 1680 scattered the Illinois.⁶⁵ Again war seemed imminent; in August 1682, the Ottawas and their allies travelled to Montreal (on the invitation of the French--

⁶³PAC, MG 1, C¹¹A, vol. 4, 19-77; Gustave Lanctôt, History of Canada, transl. J. Hambleton and M.M. Cameron (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1963-65), II, 64-4.

⁶⁴JR, LVIII, 256-62.

⁶⁵Hunt, Wars, 150-61.

they were otherwise too fearful to make the trip) where they pleaded with Frontenac to send aid.⁶⁶ Peace was going to be difficult on this occasion, no matter how much the French or Ottawas desired it. La Barre saw the situation quite clearly in his report of the following year:

Vous voyez par la Monseigneur [Minister of the Marine], que le sujet de la querelle est de scavoir qui sera maître de la traitte du castor du costé du sud et sud ouest, et que c'est un interest considerable aux Iroquois ... de nous nous despouller de cet avantage en l'appliquant à leur benefice.⁶⁷

The means to this end was to destroy the Ottawas and their allies.⁶⁸ Attempts to make peace, on the part of la Barre and others up to the settlement of 1701, bore out these apprehensions. Conflict appeared inevitable, then, and in 1684, la Barre determined on a full-scale war against the Iroquois in their home territory. After much persuasion, Perrot convinced the Ottawas to join the enterprise, but all came to nothing.⁶⁹ A new era was now under way, an era in which the colonial governors and intendants saw the struggle with the Iroquois and their friends as the most important issue of the day. Unfortunately, the

⁶⁶PAC, MG 1, C¹¹A, vol. 6, part 1, 4-7.

⁶⁷Ibid., vol. 6, part 1, 224.

⁶⁸Ibid., vol. 6, part 1, 223.

⁶⁹Perrot, Mémoire, 132-38.

"friends" of the Iroquois included the English of New York and a whole new set of circumstances entered the picture to change the nature and, to some extent, the stakes of the intertribal conflict.

At least until the 1680's, however, the central concern of the Ottawas remained the actual operation of the fur trade. This was the sphere in which they centered their organizing abilities. Consequently, for this period, there are simply not enough accounts of their warring activities to be able to describe how they behaved on the battlefield. There is evidence that they engaged in wars of sorts with such western tribes as the Sioux, but details go no further.⁷⁰ To conclude that the Ottawas were unwarlike, or that, for example, they did not scalp, would be stretching too far the meagre evidence that exists for this period. The most that can be said is that in the years from 1649 to the early 1680's, the Ottawas were not a tribe in search of war.⁷¹

⁷⁰The Jesuits claimed that the Ottawas were constantly at war (JR, XLIX, 240). Other than the wars with Sioux and the Iroquois, Kinietz, Indians, 261-62, mentions no other major conflicts from 1650 to 1690.

⁷¹Antoine Denis Raudot, in his memoire on the Indians wrote (in letter 52, 1710) that the Ottawas were brave, feared by the Iroquois and could raise a force of five hundred warriors. However, this statement was not based on personal observation (Kinietz, Indians, 335; Camille de Rochemonteix, ed., Relation par lettres de l'Amérique septentrionale Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1904, 131.)

V

From what concrete evidence we possess, therefore, it appears that the period from 1632 to the 1680's was a logical continuation of what took place earlier. Montagnais and Algonkin capabilities to deal effectively with the Iroquois declined at the same time as the power and determination of the latter increased. Disease and lowering of morale as the Algonkians became cut off from their old way of life tipped the balance even more. Tactics and battlefield war practices (such post-battlefield practices as torture were quite another matter) did not change, however. For the Ottawas at this time, evidence is a problem. On the one hand it is clear that they were involved in some wars and that from later accounts they were not a passive people. On the other hand, the documentation available to the historian tells him but little of the nature of that warfare. If the conclusions drawn for this period are nevertheless correct, they demonstrate that the Algonkians had as much to distinguish them as they had in common.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BATTLEFIELD: SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND TO 1637

I

Contacts between Indians and whites in southern New England differed considerably from those in Canada during the same period. Much of the explanation for this lay in the fact that generally speaking, the English colonies had a different reason for existence than did the French. New France in its early years was to be a trading post or a way station on the route to the Orient, what Marcel Trudel has called "le comptoir".¹ Such later administrators as Jean Talon in the colony and Colbert in France, attempted to develop a more balanced economy, with emphasis on manufactures and agricultural settlement. Throughout the seventeenth century, however, the fur trade continued to dominate economic life and, just as importantly, the mentality of the colony's inhabitants. On the other hand, New England was a "plantation", a place for people to settle and literally to create a new England. Certainly Pilgrims and Puritans would dwell on the new aspects of the colony--principally a new religious and moral order, or more correctly a return

¹Marcel Trudel, Histoire de la Nouvelle-France, Vol. II: Le Comptoir, 1604-1627 (Montreal: Fides, 1966).

to the virtues of the early Christian church--but it was also to be England, a place to make a home and not simply one at which to trade.

For New France, one of the consequences of its orientation was to give the Indians an important role in the economy and in fact a certain degree of indispensability. They were the ones to supply the furs, either by hunting or by acquiring the goods as middlemen between more distant tribes and the French market. The aims of the New France economy, as they were practised, never came into fundamental conflict with Indian life. The French, unlike the English, did not seek to inhabit the interior on the European pattern. Rather, there were outposts or points of contact, religious, economic or military. To some extent as a result, Indian and French cultures became complementary. As we have seen, the Canadian Algonkians suffered greatly because of this, but at no time during the seventeenth century did the French profess a desire to annihilate the Indian way of life. Modification in religion and morality, of course, the missionaries sought. But the Indian did not appear to represent a barrier to the objectives of French colonial development.

In southern New England, however, the fur trade, while important in the early years, inevitably declined

as the beaver population fell off.² The main objects of the English in relation to the natives then became to maintain intertribal peace in order to ensure the orderly development of the colonies³ and to convert the heathen to Christianity. Above all the settlers had to acquire land, and this need was the basic difficulty of racial relations. The aims of English settlement and the demands of traditional aboriginal land usages were contradictory. To put it crudely, the Indian had to choose between assimilation and destruction.

II

Conflicts could flare up quite easily and they did in the course of the seventeenth century, notably during the Pequot War and King Philip's War. Since these two incidents involved the participation of large numbers of English, defending their homes or joining the attacking forces, there remain enough first-hand accounts for modern historians to reconstruct events in some detail. For the earlier period, however, documentation is lamentably scanty. There

²See below, discussion of land problem.

³At times, the authorities encouraged intertribal wars in order to keep the natives weak and divided. Roger Williams was one of the few men in power who consistently opposed this policy (R.O. MacFarlane, "Indian Relations in New England, 1620-1760: A Study of a Regulated Frontier [Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge: Harvard University, 1933], 96-104.)

was no equivalent for New England of Jacques Cartier's relations of the Indians of New France in the early sixteenth century, although fur traders and fishermen certainly frequented the southern New England shores at least a century before Gosnold, Pring, Waymouth and the other explorers of the early seventeenth century.⁴ Even from these later fleeting contacts, it is not possible to learn much in detail, although they provide hints as to the motives the Algonkians had for fighting and the nature of their early wars.

The earliest recorded voyage to the area occurred in the spring of 1602 when Bartholomew Gosnold reached the Elizabeth Islands. At first quite timid, the Indians Gosnold found there (possibly the Wampanoags) agreed to trade with the expedition.⁵ Later, however, friction developed when an Indian who spent the night on board one of Gosnold's ships borrowed or stole some pothooks. The English became suspicious in their dealings while the Indians apparently also were wary.

4

Alden T. Vaughan, New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620-1675 (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), 4-5.

5

John Brereton, "Briefe and True Relation of the Discoverie of the North Part of Virginia," in W.S. Burrage, ed., Early English and French Voyages, Chiefly from Hakluyt, 1534-1608 (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1906), 330-36.

On one occasion, they attacked an English hunting party which barely escaped the encounter.⁶

The following spring, Martin Pring met a number of Indians in the neighbourhood of the present Plymouth harbour. Relations again were friendly enough at first, but one day in July, the natives arrived armed with bows and arrows; they proceeded to surround a small house containing four Englishmen. These fired off a gun to alert their fellows in the woods, who came to the rescue. The Indians called it all a joke but the English were not entirely set at ease.⁷ Later the Indians fired the woods and when the English finally were preparing to leave, they approached the ships with about two hundred warriors.⁸ Welcome as visitors, the English received a hostile reception when they appeared to be taking up more permanent residence. At this point, nevertheless, the Indians did not go beyond confronting and testing the English.

6

Gabriel Archer, "The Relation of Captain Gosnold's Voyage to the North Part of Virginia," EMC, 3rd ser., VIII (1843), 80-1.

7

It is worth noting that the gunfire in itself did not frighten off the "attackers". Does this mean that they were already acquainted with firearms?

8

Martin Pring, "A Voyage Set out from the Citie of Bristoll", in Burrage, Voyages, 347-51.

George Waymouth, in the spring of 1605, began a new tradition (as far as we know from documentary evidence) when he kidnapped five natives from the region near the mouth of the Penobscot River. Just as with Cartier, those taken were not afraid, for they received good treatment at the hands of their captors.⁹ But those left behind must have felt some grave mistrust of the English as a result. When George Popham explored the same area in August 1607 with an Indian guide, this feeling was not yet apparent.¹⁰

The English, nevertheless, continued to blunder along in their relations with the New England Indians. In 1608 Captain Henry Harley presented to Fernando Gorges a native of Martha's Vineyard; he had obtained the unfortunate from a London ship which had captured about thirty Indians, not to be taken to England for questioning, but to be sold as slaves.¹¹ As in most of these early expeditions, details are lacking, but abductions on such a scale must have poisoned Indian-white relations for some time in this part of New England.

⁹ James Rosier, "A True Relation of the Voyage of Captaine George Waymouth", in Burrage, Voyages, 377-79; Fernando Gorges, "Briefe Narration of the Originall Undertakings of the Advancement of Plantations into the Parts of America...", Maine Historical Society Collections, 1st ser., II (1847).

¹⁰ Gorges, "Briefe Narration", 21; "A Relation of a Voyage to Sagadahoc", in Burrage, Voyages, 305-410.

¹¹ Gorges, "Briefe Narration", 25.

When Gorges sent back Thomas Hobson with Harley's captive, the Indian managed to escape with the assistance of his friends in a fierce but long-distance battle.¹²

Undoubtedly the most notorious Englishman to visit New England at this time, if only because his exploits were well-recorded, was Thomas Hunt. During his expedition to the Plymouth area in 1614, he made off with about twenty Indians (the exact number depends on the account) and sold them as slaves. The heritage he left was a bitter one. In Increase Mather's eyes, his action marked the beginning of the continuing problems the English colonists were to have with the Indians.¹³

When Samoset greeted the Pilgrims in March 1621, he pointed out that the Indians had become cynical of English intentions since that episode.¹⁴

12

Gorges, "Briefe Narration", 26-8; Fernando Gorges, "Brief Relation of the Discovery and Plantation of New England", MHC, 2nd ser., IX (1823), 6-7. Unfortunately, Gorges tends to confuse his chronology at times and has to be checked.

13

John Smith, Works, 1608-1631, ed. Edward Arben (Birmingham: English Scholar's Library, 1884), 219; Gorges, "Brief Relation", 5-6; Increase Mather, A Relation of the Troubles which have hapned in New-England, by reason of the Indians there, from the year 1614 to the year 1675 (Boston, 1677), 2-3.

14

Gorges, "Brief Relation", 6-7; Mourt's Relation, ed. D.B. Heath (New York: Corinth Books, 1963), 52.

In the same year, 1614, Captain John Smith had some misfortune in his travels among the Massachusetts Indians. They were less receptive than they had been to earlier travellers, but friction had as yet only reached the stage of quarrelling:

We found the people in those parts verie kinde; but in their furie no lesse valiant. For, upon a quarrell we had with one of them, hee onely with three others crossed the harbour of Quonahassit [in the region of Massachusetts Bay] to certaine rocks whereby wee must passe; and there let flie their arrowes for our shot, till we were out of danger.¹⁵

Further south, the English found themselves with a full-fledged battle on their hands, involving some forty to fifty natives. Although this encounter was bloody, the two sides later became friends.¹⁶ About four years later, the most destructive of these early contacts took place when the Indian who had escaped from Hobson's party helped to nearly wipe out the expedition of Thomas Dermer.¹⁷

By the end of the second decade of the seventeenth century, the Indians along the New England coast were learning that English visits did not bring with them unmitigated good. Usually misunderstandings centered on

¹⁵Smith, Works, 205.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Samuel G. Drake, The History and Antiquities of Boston (Boston: Luther Stevens, 1856), 33-45; Letter, Relations, 4.

English abducting of local inhabitants, or the theft of native goods or Indian theft of English possessions. Probably kidnapping was the sorest point among the natives. But for all of this, there appeared to be little of the bitter warfare usually associated in the popular mind with the American Indian. This would come later.

As the Europeans of the 1620's and 1630's came to settle rather than to reap immediate economic advantage from the new land, relations between them and the Indians of the area were on the whole amicable. In theory, the Pilgrims of 1620 could hardly have picked a worse place to land than Plymouth, for it was the scene of Thomas Hunt's misadventures. It must have been clear, however, that the new arrivals were not kidnapers or even interested overly much in trading; the Indians were willing to trust them to some extent. Mistakes the Pilgrims did make nonetheless. In November 1620, an exploring party raided at least one Indian grave and stole some items from an empty wigwam.¹⁸ One morning in December on Cape Cod, the English received their nemesis as a group of twenty faced a surprise attack. Amid the confusion of battle, with

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Nourt's Relation, 10-20; Vaughan, New England Frontier, 66-7, feels the Indians were Nausets.

the frightful cries of the attackers and the flying arrows, the English managed to fire their guns, which as in the battle in Martin Pring's voyage, did not immediately frighten off the Indians.¹⁹ This violent incident, in any event, turned out to be the exception rather than the rule in the early years of the Pilgrim plantation. Relations with the Wampanoags were excellent as witnessed by the formal peace agreement between the English and Massasoit, concluded with the assistance of two other Indians, Squanto and Samoset.²⁰ It remained in force until the time of the famous King Philip.

The state of affairs among the Indian tribes themselves was much gloomier and may have had a great deal to do with Massasoit's desire for peace with the English.²¹ Considerable enmity seems to have existed traditionally between the Wampanoags and the Narragansetts and the latter were understandably anxious at the thought of the English joining the fray. One of Massasoit's rival sachems, Corbitant, was able to persuade the Narragansetts to aid him in an attack on the Wampanoags in August 1621,

¹⁹William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation, ed. S.E. Morison (New York: Knopf, 1952), 69-70; Mourt's Relation, 56-7; Mather, Relation, 5-6.

²⁰Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 80-1; Mourt's Relation, 56-7; Leonard A. Adolph, "Squanto's Role in Pilgrim Diplomacy", Ethnohistory, XI (1964), 247-61.

²¹A reading of the treaty shows it to have been a defensive alliance.

of which there is no detailed record. Squanto learned that more was planned and went to warn the English of a possible Narragansett assault; he was captured on route. The Pilgrims set out to rescue him, prepared to engage in full-scale war if necessary. Apparently Corbitant saw the impossibility of his situation; his warriors were submissive and released Squanto.²² Again early in 1622, the Narragansetts made threatening gestures when Canonicus sent a bundle of arrows wrapped in a snake's skin to the English as a challenge. The governor replied that he was willing to fight and returned the snake's skin filled with powder and shot. Corbitant backed down and declined the "present".²³ Squanto brought another warning that spring when he told of a possible rising of the Narragansetts, Corbitant and, most puzzling of all, Massasoit. It coincided with an English trading mission to the Massachusetts designed to prevent a Massachusett-Narragansett alliance. The rumour came to nothing,

²²Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 88; Mourt's Relation, 73-6; H.M. Sylvester, Indian Wars of New England (Boston: W.B. Clarke Co., 1910), I, 125-29; Adolph, "Squanto's Role", 251-52.

²³Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 96; Edward Winslow, "Good Newes From New England", in Alexander Young, Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers of the Colony of Plymouth, from 1602 to 1625, 2d ed. (Boston: Little and Brown, 1844), 281-84; William Hubbard, "A General History of New England from the Discovery to 1680", MHC, 2d ser., V (1848), 69-70; Sylvester, Indian Wars, I, 142-43.

however, and Squanto's reputation suffered for some time.²⁴ Indeed, this last crisis turned out to be typical of the remaining years before the outbreak of the Pequot War. Tales of conspiracies and plots kept the Pilgrims in a continuing state of anxiety, made all the worse by their own ignorance of the Indians not in their immediate vicinity. In spite of this, there were no major flare-ups.

The Massachusetts Bay colony had similar relatively good fortune in its dealings with the local tribes. Of course the matter was somewhat simplified by the plague of 1616-1617 which decimated the local Massachusetts Indians, leaving a large amount of free land and a weakened population eager for any friends it could find.²⁵ From the first contacts in June 1630, everything was very cordial and any problems were settled without bad blood. Even Canonicus' son paid a friendly visit to the colony, perhaps in the hope of cementing ties with the Massachusetts.²⁶ As in Plymouth, there were fears and rumours of Indian attack, for example in August 1632

²⁴Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 98; Winslow, "Good Newes", 285-90; Adolph, "Squanto's Role", 253-55.

²⁵Vaughan, New England Frontier, 94; Winthrop Papers (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1929-1947), III, 171-72.

²⁶John Winthrop, Winthrop's Journal, 1630-1649, ed. J.K. Hosmer (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1908), I, 50-67, passim.

when Indians of an unspecified tribe were reported to be gathering at Muddy River (Brookline). In the following month, the colonists became worried about a possible Narragansett conspiracy.²⁷ All remained quiet, however.

Obviously, apart from such general indications as the use of surprise attacks and the disinclination to fight a more powerful foe, there is very little information concerning the nature of Algonkian warfare in this period. According to English sources, tribes were organized under the close control of leaders, but the nature of Massasoit's, Corbitant's or Canonicus' leadership was doubtless somewhat different than that seen through European eyes.²⁸ As for scalping or the taking of head trophies, there is nothing in the way of first-hand accounts, although William Wood, speaking of the New England tribes as a whole, stated that the chiefs had spears on which they brought home "heads, hands, and feete...as true tokens of their renowned victorie";²⁹ he cites no evidence for this assertion.

²⁷Captain Underhill set out with twenty men to investigate the report of the meeting at Muddy River, but learned on the way that the gathering had dispersed (Winthrop, Journal, I, 90-1).

²⁸We know this for a later period, that of King Philip. See chapter five, section II.

²⁹William Wood, New England's Prospect, Prince Society Publications, Vol.III (Boston: Prince Society, 1865), 95.

If race relations were relatively satisfactory in Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay, at least two other settlements, Wessagusset and Merrymount, had elements of the bad old days of Thomas Hunt. Wessagusset, which lasted from May 1622 until the spring of 1623, is a prime example of a settlement without sufficient internal controls to prevent individuals from committing dangerous blunders. Composed of Church of England men, its nominal sponsor was Thomas Weston, who unfortunately did not immediately come over with the plantation. The worst problem turned out to be lack of proper provisions, with the result that quite soon the natives complained of the English stealing their crops.³⁰ By February 1623, the Indians were refusing to sell food to the unhappy settlers and there was a very real danger of a Narragansett attack as well. Plymouth colony sent Miles Standish to look into the situation and he destroyed the Indian plotting by killing the leaders involved.³¹ It was clear in this case that Indian hostility grew only out of severe provocation and was probably justified.

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Cotton Mather, Magnalia Christi Americana; or, the Ecclesiastical History of New-England, from its First Planting in the Year 1620 unto the Year of Our Lord, 1698, 1820 ed. (London, 1820), 54; Winslow, "Good Newes", 297-98; Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 116-17.

³¹Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 118; Winslow "Good Newes", 309-10, 327-28, 331-42.

The colony itself was so obviously a failure as to be shortly thereafter abandoned.

More celebrated was Merrymount colony, which was a remnant of Captain Wollaston's settlement in the same area.³² Popular literature has described the immorality of the community at great length and clearly this aspect of Thomas Morton's activities shocked the Pilgrims at Plymouth. Morton denied accusations of having sold liquor to the Indians and thus debauching them,³³ but he remained silent on what the Pilgrims regarded as a more heinous offence, the selling of fire-arms. Bradford was quite eloquent on this issue in 1628:

O, the horribleness of this villany!
How many both Dutch and English have been
lately slain by those Indians thus furnished,
and no remedy provided; nay the evil more in-
creased, and the blood of their bretheren sold
for gain (as is to be feared) and in what
danger³⁴ all these colonies are in is too well
known.

Bradford went on to complain that the English lacked arms and ammunition because many traders preferred to

³² Vaughan, New England Frontier, 88-9; Merrymount as such came into being in 1626.

³³ Thomas Morton, New English Canaan, ed. Charles Francis Adams, Jr., Prince Society Publications, Vol. XIV (Boston: Prince Society, 1883), 21.

³⁴ Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 207-08.

deal with the Indians.³⁵ It was claimed that before he was finally seized and sent off to England, Morton taught the natives to use the guns fairly and to hunt for him. All of this made the settlers of Plymouth even more anxious for their safety.³⁶

The fears thus aroused were sufficient to make the firearms question an important one from this early date. Fur traders and fishermen had exchanged guns for other goods with the Indians for some time, but not on any large scale.³⁷ Now, however, the situation was becoming alarming enough for a Mr. Hopkins to be whipped and branded on one cheek in September 1632 for selling firearms to the natives.³⁸ He was presumably punished under the 1630 "[Royal] Proclamation forbidding the disorderly trading with savages in New England in America, especially in the furnishing the Natives in those and other Partes of America by the English, with Weapons and Habilements of Warre".³⁹ Plymouth specifi-

³⁵Ibid., 207; MacFarlane, "Indian Relations", 42, confirms from manuscript sources available only in New England that the French, Dutch and English traders indeed supplied arms to the Indians of southern New England; see Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 204.

³⁶Mather, Relation, 21.

³⁷Vaughan, New England Frontier, 88.

³⁸Winthrop, Journal, I, 90.

³⁹Ebenezer Hazard, ed., Historical Collections (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries, 1969 [first pub. 1792-94]), I, 311-12.

cally prohibited the gun trade in 1640 and Connecticut in 1642.⁴⁰ Not surprisingly, these regulations did not do what they were meant to; by 1675 large numbers of the southern New England Algonkians had a substantial supply of firearms and knew how to use them.⁴¹

Like the case of Canada, however, firearms were less effective than the sources implied, especially in the early years. Such indigenous weapons as bows and arrows, spears, tomahawks, clubs and shields were really quite lethal;⁴² they were more accurate and capable of more rapid fire than European guns. Only in their penetrating and shocking power were the Indian arms at a disadvantage. Even the English, in an attack, would fire a single volley, then drop their guns and use their swords, knives or hatchets. The Massachusetts Bay settlers brought over as many pikes as muskets due to the former's popularity in England.⁴³ Certainly the matchlocks in use until the Pequot War were extremely

⁴⁰Douglas Edward Leach, The Northern Colonial Frontier, 1607-1763 (New York, etc.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 100.

⁴¹Ibid., 100-01.

⁴²Vaughan, New England Frontier, 38, MacFarlane, "Indian Relations", 22; John K. Mahon, "Anglo-American Methods of Indian Warfare", Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLV (September, 1958), 255-57.

⁴³Harold L. Peterson, "The Military Equipment of the Plymouth and Bay Colonies, 1620-1690", New England Quarterly, XX (1947), 197-200; the pikes proved to be rather useless in New England.

difficult to employ effectively in frontier conditions. The snapchance began to take over in the 1630's until by 1675 flint arms were standard throughout the colonies.⁴⁴ It was only at this time that firearms began to be truly effective weapons in North American conditions. Even so, there was much about them to condemn. Their best function as far as the Indian was concerned probably remained the ambush.

On the Indian side apprehension was growing as well, not so much concerning the gun trade but the future of native lands. During the early years of English-Indian contacts, friction grew from other matters, among them theft and kidnapping. As time went on and whites began to take up permanent residence in southern New England, the original inhabitants found themselves divested of their land or at least without the use of lands they had formerly enjoyed. Settlement, not the fur trade, was to be the central fact of life in the English colonies of this region. With the arrival of the first settlers, the beaver population began to decline and forced the trade further west. If the eastern Indians wished a continuing share in the enterprise, they too had to migrate--to come into contact

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Peterson, "Military Equipment", 201-05; Carl P. Russell, Guns on the Early Frontiers, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957), 9.

with enemies and potential enemies.⁴⁵ Those remaining saw their traditional life threatened at its roots; it was a threat which a number of historians have felt led them to reply with violence.

The "land problem", however, remains a controversy, worth studying in its own right as an issue in historiography. At least three points of view stand out. Some writers argue that the whites as they bought up or otherwise acquired aboriginal lands for settlement, were acting as exploiters in every sense of the term. They used force, threats of force or native ignorance of western legal procedures to seize land illegitimately. Europeans purchased land on European terms, for full and free use; the Indians sold land on their terms, for the whites to share in the use of it but not to appropriate it. It is undeniable that the Puritans did view themselves as having some kind of divine right to New England, which could overrule other claims. John Winthrop seems

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Arthur H. Buffinton, "New England and the Western Fur Trade, 1629-1675", Colonial Society of Massachusetts Publications, XVIII (1917), 162-63; Leach, Northern Colonial Frontier, 90-7. Of course the fur trade did remain an important commercial enterprise, but it was constantly pushed further west into the interior by advancing settlement (MacFarlane, "Indian Relations", 19, 57, 335-37, 345, 354-55).

to reflect this sentiment in a letter he wrote in July 1634:

But for the natives in these parts, Gods hand hath so pursued them, as for 300 miles space, the greatest parte of them are swept awaye by the small poxe, which still continues among them: So as God hath hereby cleared our title to this place, and those who remaine in these parts, being in all not 50, have putt themselves and their interest within certain Limitts.⁴⁶

The rights the English claimed by conquest seemed confirmed by God's visitation upon the Indians. When the natives realized what was happening to them, according to historians taking this line, they had a legitimate basis for going to war.⁴⁷

Although outright exploitation undoubtedly did occur on the fringes of the colonies, far from central control,⁴⁸ this view minimizes too much the brighter side of Puritan policy. Alden T. Vaughan has held

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Winthrop Papers, III, 171-72.

⁴⁷A.M. Josephy, The Patriot Chiefs (New York: The Viking Press, 1961); W.T. Hagan, The Indian in American History (New York: Macmillan, 1963); Wilcomb E. Washburn, "The Moral and Legal Justifications for Dispossessing the Indians", in James Morton Smith, ed., Seventeenth-Century America: Essays in Colonial History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), 15-32.

⁴⁸

MacFarlane, "Indian Relations", 20.

that the English in southern New England were basically fair and just in their dealings with the Indians. For one thing, the authorities were careful to establish legal controls to ensure that the Indians were not cheated by European standards in land sales. For another, Indian conceptions of land-holding were not markedly different from those of the English. In other words, the Indian knew precisely what he was doing when he sold his land.⁴⁹ Therefore, if the Indians found themselves without land, they had only themselves to blame; they had no justifiable ground for fighting the English on this issue.

Vaughan's evidence that the early settlers (especially around Plymouth, for the Indian population was very low around Massachusetts Bay) took care to ensure adequate controls over land sales is convincing. But although English chroniclers could relate with some accuracy descriptions of such factual matters as battles, they and most other settlers had little idea of the fundamental character of Indian culture, one of whose central features was land usage and control. Neither could the natives be expected, at least at first, to

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Vaughan, New England Frontier, 105-09; cf. David Bushnell, "The Treatment of the Indians in Plymouth Colony", New England Quarterly, XXVII (1953), 193-218.

comprehend European practice. Conflict developed, not necessarily out of malice, but out of ignorance and misunderstanding.⁵⁰

III

The first major Indian war of the seventeenth century in southern New England, the Pequot War, arose out of several problems, only one of which was English settlement in the Lower Connecticut Valley. During the 1630's the Pequot tribe migrated from the upper Hudson Valley to the Connecticut.⁵¹ As early as April 1631, one of the sachems representing tribes indigenous to that region travelled to the Massachusetts colony to ask the English to consider settling in his homeland. Through other sources, the authorities learned that in fact the sachem's tribe was at war with the more powerful Pequots and sought the English only as military allies in a losing battle.⁵² When blood later began to flow in earnest, contemporaries placed the blame with the Pequots, whom such writers as William Hubbard regarded as innately aggressive:

⁵⁰Leach, Northern Colonial Frontier, 38-40; MacFarlane, "Indian Relations", 189-236.

⁵¹See chapter one for details.

⁵²Winthrop, Journal, I, 61.

... who... being a more fierce, cruel, and warlike People than the rest of the Indians, came down out of the more inland Parts of the Continent, and by Force seized upon one of the goodliest Places near the Sea and became a Terrour to all their Neighbours, on whom they had exercised several Acts of inhuman Cruelty; insomuch that being flushed with Victories over their Fellow-Indians, they began to thirst after the Blood of any Foreigners, English and Dutch, that accidentally came against them in a way of Trade, or upon other Accounts.⁵³

Taking account of Hubbard generally, this is something of an exaggeration, but the Pequots were in search of new homes and were willing to fight for them. Those tribes already in the Connecticut Valley had sold land to the Dutch and later to the English. As a result a state of intermittant war existed between the Pequots and the Dutch for several years.⁵⁴ When the English began to move into the area about 1633 to settle on what they thought was properly purchased land, the Pequots took this as a grave affront.⁵⁵ By 1636, there were three English towns in Pequot territory and the stage was set for the war to follow.⁵⁶

⁵³William Hubbard, The History of the Indian Wars in New England, from the First Settlement to the Termination of the War with King Philip, in 1677, ed., Samuel G. Drake, 2 Vols. (Roxbury, Mass.: W.E. Woodward, 1865), II, 6-7; cf. Edward Johnson, Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence, ed., J. Franklin Jameson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 147-48.

⁵⁴Sylvester, Indian Wars, I, 186-89.

⁵⁵Ibid., I, 196-97.

⁵⁶Vaughan, New England Frontier, 116-17.

The initial "incident", which occurred in 1634, was more characteristic of earlier Indian encounters with opportunistic traders. This time the central figure was a Captain John Stone, who already had established a poor reputation for himself. While visiting the Dutch plantation (now Manhattan) in 1633, he attempted to seize a Plymouth vessel anchored there. Later, he was brought to trial for adultery, but on this charge, his jury pleaded ignoramus.⁵⁷ In the spring of 1634, his trade carried him towards Virginia, but along the way he made the mistake of abducting two Indians for guides.⁵⁸ At the mouth of the Connecticut River, a three-man hunting party from Stone's ship was cut off while they were ashore; at the same time some Pequots came aboard to do some trading. When the English fell asleep, they killed Stone, then began shooting the others with their own firearms. After a brief interlude, when the Pequots set off some powder by mistake and fled, they returned to kill the rest of the English.⁵⁹ The Pequots, with the Dutch, English and

⁵⁷ Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 268-69; Winthrop, Journal, I, 102-08.

⁵⁸ Winthrop, Journal, I, 139; this is the claim of the Indians.

⁵⁹ Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 269; Winthrop, Journal I, 118; Mather, Relation, 24-5; Vaughan, New England Frontier, 123-25.

Narragansetts as enemies, now began to cast about for some way to extricate themselves from their predicament.⁶⁰ Finally they made peace with Massachusetts Bay on the condition that they would deliver Stone's murderers and that the English would be permitted to settle along the Connecticut River.⁶¹ The first condition the Pequots did not fulfill and the bitterness continued.⁶²

Two years later, in the summer of 1636, John Oldham, another trader who had appeared to be well-received by those Indians he dealt with, was found dead at the mouth of the Connecticut, his head "cleft to the brains" and his hands and feet cut as if his killers were attempting to remove them as trophies.⁶³ At first Canonicus and the Narragansetts fell under suspicion, but they cleared themselves and offered their help in obtaining revenge on the true guilty party, the Indians of Block Island.⁶⁴ The Governor and Council

⁶⁰Winthrop Papers, III, 177.

⁶¹Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 291; Winthrop, Journal, I, 138-39.

⁶²Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 291-92.

⁶³Winthrop, Journal, I, 183-84; Hubbard, "General History", 248-49.

⁶⁴Winthrop, Journal, I, 186. Roger Williams was of great value in the negotiations with the Narragansetts (Ola E. Winslow, Roger Williams: A Biography [New York: Macmillan, 1957], 146-47).

determined to send a force of ninety under John Endicott to kill off all the males of Block Island and to settle affairs with the Pequots, either by negotiations or by force. No Indian settlement remained on the island, however, and after burning a few empty wigwams and exchanging a few shots with several islanders still remaining, Endicott moved on to the more serious business in Connecticut. Only an implied insult awaited the English here. No senior Pequot leaders appeared and those Indians who did meet the English ended by exchanging blows with them.⁶⁵ Both sides now considered themselves at war.

From the beginning, the Pequots faced many of the problems faced by the Algonkians of Canada. While no one among the English was able to view in person the internal organization of the Pequot war effort, it was clear nevertheless, that they were unable to cement any alliances, although they came close to doing so with the Narragansetts.⁶⁶ As a tribe, on the other hand, they demonstrated a considerable degree of cohesiveness. Simply to have followed Sassacus in their trek to the Connecticut and to have destroyed Indian resistance along the way required unity.

⁶⁵Winthrop, Journal, I, 186-89.

⁶⁶Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 294-95.

More detailed conclusions on this question must come from an analysis of the Pequot War itself and more particularly of the ability of the Pequots to formulate an effective campaign. Ambushes and raids, standard aboriginal practices, were the rule, with little in the way of coordinated strategy. This was clear in the skirmishes around Fort Saybrook, an English stronghold commanded by a Lieutenant Gardiner, at the mouth of the Connecticut. The earliest Pequot attacks there occurred in October 1636 when the English went out to harvest their corn crop (having previously stolen a quantity of Indian corn). Three of the party went on a hunting expedition, only to meet death at the hands of a small Pequot force.⁶⁷ Shortly thereafter, some English soldiers setting out to gather hay with an insufficient guard faced another compact band of Pequots rising out of the long grass.⁶⁸ By November, the Indians had ambushes set up along both sides of the river, but apparently they were no more adventurous than that for the time being.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Lion Gardiner, "Leift Lion Gardener His Relation of the Pequot Warres", MHC, 3rd ser., III (1833), 142.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 142-43.

⁶⁹ Winthrop Papers, III, 321.

The following February, Gardiner had a party burn some underbrush in order that logs could be rolled up to the river. Suddenly four Pequots appeared. The English, running after them in hot pursuit, fell into a cleverly set ambush and barely escaped with their lives.⁷⁰ This was still rather a small-scale effort. The Pequots put on their grandest performance in April when some two hundred attacked Wethersfield and killed nine English.⁷¹

After this disaster the colonists along with their Indian allies, took the initiative, and the attention of the sources turned to them, more particularly to the Mohegans. On May 15, 1637, the Pequots had a party of about thirty to forty hidden near Fort Saybrook,⁷² while the Mohegans, under Uncas, had a sizeable force in the same area. The English asked the Mohegans to prove their loyalty by attacking the Pequots. They did so, with

⁷⁰Gardiner, "Relation", 143-44; John Underhill, "Newes from America; or, A New and Experimentall Discoverie of New England", MHC, 3rd ser., VI (1837), 11; Winthrop Papers, III, 381-83; [P. Vincent], "A True Relation of the late Battell fought in New-England, between the English and the Pequot Salvages", MHC, 3rd ser., VI (1837), 35.

⁷¹Winthrop, Journal, I, 213; Johnson, Wonder-Working Providence, 149; John Mason, "A Brief History of the Pequot War...", MHC, 2nd ser., 2nd ed., VII (1826), 131-32; Underhill "Newes", 12; Hubbard, History, II, 12.

⁷²Mason, "Brief History", 133.

marked success.⁷³ At Mystic, a Pequot village of central importance, the climax of the war came some ten days later, with the Mohegans and Narragansetts acting under English direction. The planning for this assault was careful, involving preliminary discussions between Roger Williams and the Narragansetts⁷⁴ and the organization of joint English and Mohegan forces. Apparently the chiefs had no difficulty in maintaining the obedience of their warriors. The attack itself was timed to begin shortly after dawn when sentries would be least alert and the Pequots least prepared. As they reached the village, the English removed the Pequot guards and as those inside began to rouse themselves and spread the alarm the attackers struck. Surprise was nearly complete; when the English set fire to the wigwams, the situation of the Pequots was hopeless. Traditional Indian tactics, combined with a high degree of organization and discipline won the day for the English and their allies.⁷⁵ The final act in the war took place in a swamp near Quinipiag (New Haven) where the enemy sought refuge in mid-July.

⁷³Ibid., Underhill, "Newes", 16; Vaughan, New England Frontier, 141.

⁷⁴Roger Williams, Complete Writings (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), VI, 16-19, 25.

⁷⁵Mason, "Brief History", 138-41; Underhill, "Newes", 23-5; [Vincent], "Relation", 37-8; Johnson, Wonder-Working Providence, 167-70; Winthrop, Journal, I, 220-21; Mather, Relation, 31-4.

After a parley, the English allowed the women to depart then surrounded the swamp and by morning had ended the Pequot resistance.⁷⁶

Tactics and battle practices resembled quite closely those of the Canadian Algonkians. In open battle, there were evidently many elements of the ritual confrontation, the tendency to regard war as much a form of recreation as a serious undertaking. Casualties were light. Captain Underhill's description of a phase of the encounter at Mystic bears this out:

Our end was that we might see the nature of the Indian war; which they granted us and fell out, the Pequeats, Narragansets and Mohigeners changing a few arrows together after such a manner, as I dare boldly affirm, they might fight seven years and not kill seven men. They came not near one another, but shot remote, and not point-blank, as we often do with our bullets, but at rovers, and then they gaze up in the sky to see where the arrow falls, and not until it is fallen do they shoot again. This fight if more for pastime than to conquer and subdue enemies.⁷⁷

Underhill obviously wrote this with some disgust, but it does contain much truth. This kind of open fight, however, was less-favoured than the lightning raid and/or ambush employed by the Pequots at Fort Saybrook and at

⁷⁶Winthrop, Journal, I, 227-28; Hubbard, History, II, 36-7; Winthrop Papers, III, 453-54, 456-57; Mason, "Brief History", 146-48; Mather, Relation, 37-8.

⁷⁷Underhill, "Newes", 26.

Wethersfield. Along with the Mohegans and Narragansetts, the Pequots preferred to attack suddenly, then beat a hasty retreat. Only when victory was assured, as it was for the English allies at Mystic, would the Indians remain to inflict heavy losses on the foe. Small war parties, as in Canada, were characteristic also; only rarely did the Indians attack in a force of more than a dozen. Exceptions occurred at Wethersfield, where some sources record a Pequot army of about two hundred and at Mystic, where the Narragansett and Mohegan force was of comparable size. Attack at night, prevalent in Canada from the early years, was yet another popular tactic; the killing of Captain Stone by the Pequots and the pre-dawn raid on Mystic conform to this pattern. Whether women and children were killed is a difficult point, for casualties often were not categorized in that way. The only recorded instance of such casualties was the attack on Wethersfield, where one woman and one child perished. Roger Williams reported that in his deliberations with the Narragansetts prior to the Mystic campaign, "... it would be pleasing to all natives that women and children be spared, &c."⁷⁸ As things turned out, of course, virtually none of the Pequots escaped

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Williams, Complete Writings, VI, 19.

that slaughter. Later, near New Haven, the English at least allowed the women and children to leave before they dealt with the Pequot men. Whether the Narragansetts and Mohegans approved of this is not clear.

On the whole, then, Algonkian battle tactics did not vary greatly from Canada to southern New England. Where the most noticeable distinction lay was in the taking of head trophies. The earliest record of such a practice occurred in William Wood's New England's Prospect, printed in 1634, where he appears to refer to the taking of heads.⁷⁹ In July 1636, Winthrop reported that one of the Narragansetts in Endicott's Block Island expedition found a Pequot, and "... having flayed off the skin, he sent it to Canonicus, who presently sent it to all the sachems about him..."⁸⁰ Despite this reference, the taking of whole heads seems to have been more common than the taking of scalps. Even at this, there is no mention of the Pequots having taken any trophies and the Mohegans brought home such articles on only one occasion; after the battle at Fort Saybrook on May 15, 1637, they carried off five Pequot heads.⁸¹ The same holds for the Narragansetts who scalped only on the Block Island expedition. In addition, there is some

⁷⁹Wood, New England's Prospect, 95.

⁸⁰Winthrop, Journal, I, 189; Georg Friederici, "Scalping in America", Smithsonian Institution Annual Report, 1906, 433, however, mistakenly argues that there was no scalping this early.

⁸¹Underhill, "Newes," 16.

evidence that the Mohegans and Narragansetts took heads at Mystic, but Edward Johnson alone wrote of it.⁸²

After Mystic and the final battle near New Haven, several chroniclers speak of the Mohegans and Narragansetts having brought Pequot heads to the English. John Winthrop, for example described how "They brought news also of divers other Pequots, which had been slain by other Indians, and their heads brought to the English."⁸³ However, contemporaries did not state explicitly what some modern writers assume from this, that the English paid out head (or scalp) money for the trophies.⁸⁴ The only other logical reason that the Indian allies would have for doing this would be to demonstrate to the English that they were fulfilling their part of the alliance. Probably it would not be going too far to suggest that there was a strong possibility for scalp money at this time but its existence has not been proven as yet.

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Johnson, Wonder-Working Providence, 47-51. None of the eye-witness accounts mentioned this.

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Winthrop, Journal, I, 229-30; Winthrop mentions that the Mohawks took the scalps of Sassacus and some other Pequot sachems; cf. Mather, Relation, 38-9.

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Friederici, "Scalping", 433.

The natives of southern New England took other trophies, but these were even less common than those already discussed. William Wood wrote in 1634 that "Heads, hands, and feete" all fell to Indian Knives.⁸⁵ Those finding John Oldham's body in the summer of 1636 reported that his hands and feet were cut as if the murderers intended to remove them.⁸⁶ In March of the following year, a John Tilley committed the error of disregarding Lion Gardiner's injunction against landing on the banks of the Connecticut between Saybrook and Wethersfield. Within sight of Saybrook he was attacked and had his hands and feet cut off.⁸⁷ About the same time, the Narragansetts, as part of the negotiations for an alliance with the English, sent to them a quantity of wampum and the head of a Pequot.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Wood, New England's Prospect, 95.

⁸⁶ Winthrop, Journal, I, 183-84; Hubbard, "General History," 248-49.

⁸⁷ Winthrop, Journal, I, 194; Underhill, "Newes", 15; Vaughan, New England Frontier, 133.

⁸⁸ Vaughan, New England Frontier, 132.

IV

By the end of 1637, the Pequots as tribal entity had ceased to exist for most practical purposes. There were enough remnants, however, to create a touchy problem. A considerable number at first sought asylum with the Narragansetts, creating friction between them and their English allies; Roger Williams did his utmost to minimize this.⁸⁹ Without going into details (and there are many of them), it suffices to say that the English finally decided on a policy of dispersing the Pequots as thinly as possible among the other tribes.⁹⁰ For the Indians the more fundamental issue became the nature of white warfare, which appeared to have as its objective the annihilation of any native resistance. Mystic made any claims against the Pequots of barbarity and savagery somewhat hypocritical. The lesson of the Pequot War seemed to be that anyone making war against the English had to be prepared to engage in what could only be called total war. This would have grave consequences in later years.

⁸⁹ Williams, Complete Writings, VI, 40-1, 53.

⁹⁰ Ibid., VI, 43.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BATTLEFIELD: SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND, 1638-1676

I

The defeat of the Pequots in 1637 did not mean that New England's Indian difficulties were at an end. Very quickly it became obvious that the next major problem was to be the relations between the Mohegans and the Narragansetts. Both of these tribes had been allied with the English during the Pequot War, but by tradition they were not friends and circumstances increased this enmity. For their part, the English authorities chose to retain the friendship of the Mohegans and regarded the Narragansetts with disinterest and even suspicion. This was at least in part because the Narragansetts had not played as strong a role in the war as the Mohegans had and their agreements with the English had been less binding.¹ The unfortunate result was that an intertribal dispute was transformed into a confrontation between the English and the Narragansetts. Once again, when this issue was settled, a new problem arose, this time involving the Wampanoags. It ended in one of the most destructive Indian wars in American history and one which had profound significance for both the natives of southern New England and for the English settlers.

¹Alden T. Vaughan, New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620-1675 (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1965), 155-57.

How to handle those Pequots who had survived the conflict of 1637 was the immediate problem arising out of that war. The solution most agreeable to the English and their allies was to divide the Pequots among the Mohegans, Narragansetts and other allied tribes. This, however, posed the additional problem of a partition acceptable to all parties. Because captives were one means of increasing tribal strength, the Narragansetts and Mohegans were both after the lion's share. Uncas, the Mohegan sachem, apparently had married into the Pequot tribe and claimed authority over his new-found kinsmen.² By the autumn of 1638, the Mohegans, Narragansetts and Niantics finally agreed on a division of the Pequots and what could have been a serious conflict seemed to be smoothed over.³ Unfortunately for the English settlers, a body of Pequots returned to their lands in defiance of this arrangement and Captain John Mason along with forty men were assigned to remove them. To the horror of the English, among the squatters were a number of Narragansetts. From this

² Roger Williams, Complete Writings (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), VI, 87-8.

³ Mary Jeanne Anderson Jones, Congregational Commonwealth: Connecticut, 1636-1662 (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1968), 68; Vaughan, New England Frontier, 151.

point can be dated the origins of Narragansett bitterness and English suspicions.⁴

This incident and general Indian restlessness produced in the English by 1640 a very real fear of a native war. William Coddington, writing from Aquidneck Island at the end of 1639, expressed his concern to John Winthrop:

Our Indians here are peaceable, though we trust them not. Could be glad to here [sic.] from your worship, if any thinge be attempted against them about two maires & cove we heare they have killed, that we might stand upon our gard.⁵

The following summer, Winthrop heard from William Bradford, who had more solid evidence for worry:

... I am informed by good intelligence that the Narhiggansetts have made a great collection amongst their people; and sent a great presente, both of white & blacke beads to the Mohawkes, to entreate their help against you, & your friends, if they see cause.⁶

Later that same summer, English anxiety, especially in Connecticut, had grown to the extent that war appeared a strong possibility to the settlers.⁷

⁴ John Mason, "A Brief History of the Pequot War...", MHC, 2nd ser., 2nd ed., VIII (1826) 148-51; William Hubbard, "A General History of New England from the Discovery to 1680", MHC, 2d ser., VI (1848), 446; Vaughan, New England Frontier, 151.

⁵ Winthrop Papers (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1929-1947), IV, 161.

⁶ Ibid., IV, 258-59; cf. John Winthrop, Winthrop's Journal, 1630-1649, ed. J.K. Hosmer (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1908), II, 6-7; the Mohawk alliance did not materialize.

⁷ Winthrop Papers, IV, 275.

Miantonomo, a Narragansett sachem, was the focus of these suspicions. Yet when he announced he was prepared to answer any charges against him, the English authorities took him at his word.⁸ For three years, the rocky road of English-Narragansett relations became relatively smooth, only to deteriorate sharply in the summer of 1643. Word reached the English that Sequasson, a kinsman of Miantonomo, was involved in a bitter quarrel with Uncas. Miantonomo rushed to Hartford to complain of the Mohegan attacks on Sequasson, but the English replied that it was none of their business. Taking matters into his own hands, the Narragansett sachem apparently recruited a Pequot to assassinate Uncas. Uncas only sustained a serious wound and Miantonomo had the Pequot killed to avoid witnesses. This was the report the English accepted as the truth; they also believed that Miantonomo was prepared to begin a war.⁹ Nor had they long to wait. Miantonomo managed to field a substantial body of warriors to fight the Mohegans. Late in July, however, they met defeat and Uncas captured the leader of his

⁸ Hubbard, "General History", 447-48.

⁹ Hubbard, "General History", 448-50; William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation, ed., S.E. Morison (New York: Knopf, 1952), 330-31; Winthrop, Journal, II, 131-32; Edward Johnson, Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence, ed. J. Franklin Jameson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 220-21.

enemy; on English advice, he had him killed without ceremony.¹⁰ Clearly this action could do nothing whatever to relieve the Narragansett menace; it only brought them much closer a full-scale war of revenge. Of this the English became more than aware.¹¹

Anxiety persisted into the new year, particularly because of a possible alliance between the Narragansetts and the Mohawks.¹² In May, there was definite word that Pesecus and Canonicus, two Narragansett sachems, were preparing to avenge Miantonomo's death by launching a series of raids and ambushes against Uncas.¹³ The struggle began the following month as Massachusetts Bay learned with apprehension of the deaths of six of Uncas' warriors and of five Mohegan women.¹⁴ To advance from this rather low-key guerrilla warfare to a larger effort, however, proved more than the Narragansetts

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Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 330-31; Winthrop, Journal, II, 134-36; Hubbard, "General History", 450-51; Johnson, Wonder-Working Providence, 220-22; Hutchinson Papers, Prince Society Publications, vol. I (Boston: Prince Society, 1865), I, 155-64.

¹¹ Hubbard, "General History", 452-43; Winthrop Papers, IV, 418-19.

¹² Winthrop Papers, IV, 441-42.

¹³ Winthrop, Journal, II, 168-69.

¹⁴ Ibid., II, 172.

could manage. They were unable to enlist any allies sufficient to prosecute a war against the English as well. With the Europeans prepared to go into the field in support of their allies, the Narragansetts prudently called an end to the fight and agreed to peace at Hartford in July.¹⁵

The fundamental issues remained unsettled, nevertheless, and when the snows melted the next spring, the war began anew. With a force estimated at some one thousand, the Narragansetts fell on Uncas' main stronghold, drew out the Mohegans and inflicted heavy losses on them in an ambush.¹⁶ Now the Narragansetts were in no mood to bargain and refused to appear before the Commissioners of the United Colonies to answer for their actions. Again the English made it abundantly clear that they intended to stand by the Mohegans. The Commissioners went so far as to return a present the Narragansetts originally had sent to the Governor of Massachusetts. This threat was enough to make the Indians relent. They went to Boston to sign a treaty of peace on August 27. Among other conditions, it stated that the Narragansetts were to maintain a firm

¹⁵ Ibid., II, 204; Hubbard, "General History", 452-53.

¹⁶ Winthrop Papers, V, 19; Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 339.

peace with the English and their Indian allies and that they were to hand over to the English any Pequot fugitives guilty of having killed white men.¹⁷

Although there were no further disturbances involving the Narragansetts before King Philip's War, this did not mean that English settlers could begin to sleep easily again. The Narragansetts only agreed to the peace because they had to; circumstances could alter that situation. It has been suggested with some justification that the killing of Miantonomo in 1643 and the death of Canonicus two years later, besides creating great bitterness, removed many restraints on the younger warriors that had existed under the old leadership; besides, there was the life of a sachem to avenge.¹⁸ In 1647, rumours began to circulate of a new Narragansett conspiracy against the English.¹⁹ The Commissioners of the United Colonies heard in August 1648 that Sequasson was planning to attack Hartford

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Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 339-41; the text of this agreement can be found in Ibid., 437-40.

¹⁸Ola E. Winslow, Master Roger Williams: A Biography (New York: Macmillan, 1957), 215.

¹⁹Increase Mather, A Relation of the Troubles which have hapned in New-England, by reason of the Indians there, from the year 1614 to the year 1675 (Boston, 1677), 63-5.

and they had Uncas bring him in. With insufficient evidence, the English in the end set him free. But Sequasson's people were understandably furious and threatened war with the apparent encouragement of the Narragansetts. Only with some difficulty was violence averted.²⁰ Further times of crisis did occur, such as in the 1650s when the Dutch were accused of supplying arms to the Narragansetts, but until the autumn of 1675, a tenuous peace reigned between the whites and the Narragansetts.²¹

The sources provide only some indication of the methods of Narragansett warfare during this disturbed period. Although they were able to organize quite large forces on occasion (as in the summer of 1643 and May 1645) alliances did not take shape, a factor which ultimately rendered them powerless. On the level of tactics, the ambush was clearly a favourite ploy, as in the attack on Uncas in 1645. The only other printed evidence of how the Narragansetts fought at this time comes from the general comments of Roger Williams made

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Winthrop, Journal, II, 348-49.

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Ebenezer Hazard, ed., Historical Collections (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries, 1969 [first pub. 1792-94] O, II, 205-12; Vaughan, New England Frontier, 173-74; Arthur H. Buffinton, "The Puritan View of War", Colonial Society of Massachusetts Publications, XXVIII (1935), 82-3.

in his Key into the Language of America:

Their Warres are farre less bloody, and devouring than the cruell Warres of Europe; and seldome twenty slaine in a pitcht field; partly because when they fight in a wood every Tree is a Buckler.

When they fight in a plaine, they fight with leaping and dancing, that seldome an Arrow hits, and when a man is wounded, they soone retire and save the wounded; and yet having no Swords nor Guns, all that are slaine are commonly slain with great Valour and Courage: for the Conqueror ventures into the thickest, and brings away the Head of his Enemy.²²

Earlier in the same work, Williams referred once again to the taking of war trophies when he wrote, "They are much delighted after battell to hang up the hands and heads of their enemies: ..." ²³ That there appears to have been only one occasion in the "inter-war" period on which the Narragansetts took trophies, in June, 1644, when they sent two hands and a foot to secure Pumham, a sachem near Providence, as an ally, does not necessarily invalidate Williams' statements. ²⁴ It simply means that the Narragansetts were involved in a few outright wars at this time.

For despite the tensions and occasional bloody outbreaks, the 1640's and 1650's were largely years of peace. The English had their fears, and with good reason the colonies (except for Rhode Island) united in 1643. Much more serious changes would occur in the traditionally

²²Williams, Complete Writings, I, 204.

²³Ibid., 80.

²⁴Winthrop, Journal, II, 172.

friendly relationship between the English and the Wampanoags in the following years; the Narragansetts would have a role to play here as well.

II

By the early 1660's it was all too evident that severe strains were being put on the usually cordial ties between Massasoit's people and the English. The Wampanoags had a number of complaints (as did the Narragansetts),²⁵ but the most important was the problem of the fate of their lands. White settlement was coming ever closer to Indian homes along with such attendant nuisances as the destruction of Indian crops by the settlers' cattle and pigs.²⁶ More significantly, the Wampanoags, like many Indians in contact with white culture, soon found European technology attractive and so became dependent upon the trade goods the English had to offer. The main item they had to give in return, however, was the land that the colonists so eagerly sought.²⁷

²⁵For example the medicine men were extremely hostile to the activities of the Christian missionaries (R.O. MacFarlane, "Indian Relations in New England, 1620-1760: A Study of a Regulated Frontier" [Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge: Harvard University, 1933] 452-53.

²⁶George D. Langdon, Jr., Pilgrim Colony: A History of New Plymouth, 1620-1691 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 157-58.

²⁷David Bushnell, "The Treatment of the Indians in Plymouth Colony," New England Quarterly, XXVII (1953), 193-218.

To summarize a rather complex story, it may be said without too much fear of contradiction that by the first years of the 1670's, the Wampanoags had sold much of their ancestral lands to the English. In all fairness, the settlers did not set out to destroy the Indian way of life in purchasing Indian land, but this was the inevitable result. The Wampanoags could not help but be bitter in light of some of the abuses that did take place. As Samuel Gorton wrote in 1675,

[The land issue] is a great and universall grudge among the Indians at this day, while men take up lands and plant upon them as their owne without any retribution, at least not to the chiefe Sachems, if any small thing at all to some base inferiour fellow; which makes the Sachims afraid, least by this meanes in short time they shall be spued out of the country, for want of land to reside upon; and for ought that I have learned, this was the proper cause of that barbarous slaughter made of our friends²⁸ and neighbours at the Dutch plantation then was.

Nevertheless, until the death of the benign Massasoit in 1661, the Wampanoags remained good friends of the English. One symbol of this friendship was the sachem's providing of English names to his two eldest sons; Wamsutta, the eldest, became Alexander, while Metacom became Philip.²⁹ Alexander had a short-lived career as

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"Winthrop Papers", MHC, 4th ser., VII (1865), 631.

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A.M. Josephy, The Patriot Chiefs (New York: The Viking Press, 1961), 41; George Howe, "The Tragedy of King Philip", American Heritage, X, No. 1 (December, 1958), 68.

Massasoit's successor. Summoned to Plymouth to assure the English of his loyalty, he contracted a fever and perished on his return home. Indian suspicions over this affair never disappeared.³⁰ The famous and storied King Philip now came to be sachem of the Wampanoags. From a distance of three centuries, through the heated verbiage of generations of historians and polemicists, Philip's true character is nearly impossible to define. Certain it is that many Englishmen of the 1670's felt they saw him for what he was. In various parts of his history of the Indian wars, William Hubbard described the sachem as "this bloody wretch", "like a Salvage and wild Beast" and "this savage Miscreant".³¹ Increase Mather delighted in the final demise of "the perfidious and bloody Author of the War and wofull miserys that have thence ensued".³² Daniel Gookin, on the other hand, could write of Philip in 1674 that "himself is a person of good understanding and knowledge in the best things".³³ Before Philip

³⁰Josephy, Patriot Chiefs, 42-3.

³¹William Hubbard, The History of the Indian Wars in New England, from the First Settlement to the Termination of the War with King Philip, in 1677, ed. Samuel G. Drake (Roxbury, Mass.: W.E. Woodward, 1865), I, 263, 265, 53.

³²Increase Mather, A Brief History of the War with the Indians in New England (Boston, 1676), 46.

³³Daniel Gookin, "Historical Collections of the Indians in New England", MHC, 1st ser., I (1792), 200.

showed what Hubbard and Mather regarded as his true colours, however, he visited Plymouth to renew the Wampanoag agreements with the English. For some time he seemed to act as a good ally. In 1666 he warned the English that Ninigret and the Niantics were attempting to exercise sovereignty over the Indians on Long Island. When confronted with English charges that he was conspiring with the Dutch, Philip maintained his innocence but paid a fine nevertheless.³⁴

Sometime in 1671, the relationship turned sour. Reports circulated that some Narragansetts were at Mount Hope, Philip's main village, repairing muskets and making other weapons. More alarming was the news that the Wampanoags themselves seemed to be arming. Philip received a curt summons to account for himself at Taunton, where he maintained his innocence and surrendered the arms of his followers. This gave rise to more bitterness, for Philip apparently thought he was only to give up the weapons of his delegation to Taunton, whereas the English intended the order to include those of all the Wampanoag warriors. When this did not occur, Plymouth sent an expedition to Mount Hope to enforce the promise. Philip shrewdly hurried off to Boston to complain of unfair treatment. The Plymouth expedition was finally halted

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Hubbard, History, I, 52; Douglas Edward Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War (New York: Macmillan, 1958), 24-5.

and Philip signed a new agreement submitting to English authority.³⁵

Understandably the English were not entirely reassured, but their nagging fears tended not to come to the surface as often after some months had passed.³⁶ Suddenly, towards the end of 1674, a Christian Indian, John Sausaman, told the Governor of Plymouth that Philip was planning a surprise attack on the English. Philip and his warriors again faced an interrogation and probably guessed the identity of the informer. Sausaman's body was discovered in January under the ice of a pond, to all appearances the victim of drowning. But on closer examination, the English authorities concluded that there was foul play involved. After an investigation, the appearance of a witness and a trial, three Wampanoags met their deaths in Plymouth the following June.³⁷

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Hubbard, History, I, 53-4; Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk, 26-9; Josephy, Patriot Chiefs, 44-5.

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See, however, Increase Mather's sermon, The Day of Trouble is Near (Cambridge, Mass., 1674), preached in the fall of 1674.

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Hubbard, History, I, 60-3; Mather, Brief History, 2; John Easton, "A Relation of the Indian Warre", in Charles H. Lincoln, ed., Narratives of the Indian Wars, 1675-1699 (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1913), 7-8; [Nathaniel Saltonstall], "The Present State of New England", in Ibid., 24-5; H.M. Sylvester, Indian Wars of New England (Boston: W.B. Clarke Co., 1910), II, 228-34.

Philip and his tribesmen were enraged and now very little stood between peace and war, although the colonists did not realize the full extent of their perilous position.³⁸ Indeed an "old Indian hand", Colonel Benjamin Church, was somewhat taken aback when during a visit to Awashonks, the squaw-sachem of the Seconets, a tribe linked with the Wampanoags, he encountered some of Philip's men in war paint and learned that open conflict was imminent. Eventually Awashonks joined with the English, but the danger from Philip was now clear.³⁹ Not entirely giving up, however, the Governor and Council of Massachusetts having already mediated in 1671, sent a team of negotiators to Mount Hope. On the way, they found the badly mutilated corpses of two Englishmen, victims of an attack on Swansea. All doubts now vanished.

War had begun, but in some ways Philip was as unprepared as were the English. Contemporary and modern opinion tend to agree that although Philip had been considering armed action for some years, he was unable to move quickly enough to put together the kind of alliance system he wanted when he required it. Awashonks did not

³⁸ Hubbard, History, I, 63-5.

³⁹ Thomas Church, The History of the Great Indian War of 1675 and 1676, ed. Samuel G. Drake (Hartford: Silas Andrews & Son, 1852), 22-7; Hazard, Historical Collections, II, 533-4; Sylvester, Indian Wars, II, 236-39; Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk, 34-5.

join him, the Nipmucks did not become allies until July and the Narragansetts not until the winter.⁴⁰ It seems that Philip was pushed into war too swiftly by his younger warriors along with the pressure of the circumstances already described.⁴¹ Fairly soon, nevertheless, it was apparent that the Nipmucks were turning towards Philip. Massachusetts had had some success in their negotiations with the tribe, but the Nipmucks were divided and by July, those in favour of war won out. On July 14, they attacked Mendon, in Massachusetts.⁴² Until the winter, the Nipmucks remained the only major ally of the Wampanoags, although it is not easy to discover what kind of real coordination existed between the two tribes.

From the early attacks on Swansea, in June, 1675, it is clear that the Wampanoags, not totally prepared as they were, were well enough organized to inflict considerable injury on that frontier settlement. At first the Indians terrorized the colonists by insulting them in

⁴⁰Hubbard, History, I, 98-9, 136; Sylvester, Indian Wars, II, 263-65; Josephy, Patriot Chiefs, 54; Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk, 77-80.

⁴¹John Callender, "An Historical Discourse, on the Civil and Religious Affairs of the Colony of Rhode Island, Rhode Island Historical Society Collections, III (1838), 127-28; Mary Rowlandson, "Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson", in Lincoln, Narratives, 136n; Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk, 36, 241-43.

⁴²Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk, 71-80; Josephy, Patriot Chiefs, 50-1.

various ways; this included killing their livestock and damaging their houses. One white man, provoked by the damage, shot and wounded one of the attackers. This was sufficient to bring back the Wampanoags in full fury.⁴³ On June 24, about a dozen set up an ambush for the militia and also killed several other citizens in similar actions.⁴⁴ Another ambush greeted twelve soldiers as they were crossing a bridge in the area four days later.⁴⁵ The following day, some ten Wampanoags appeared and fled, followed closely by the English; these were met by gunfire from the bushes.⁴⁶ As yet the Wampanoags had not managed much more than sniping parties, but the element of surprise had made these quite deadly. Refining the same tactics as employed on June 29, the Wampanoags fielded at least forty warriors in July to ambush Benjamin Church in the area of Punkates Neck.⁴⁷

⁴³ Hubbard, History, I, 64-5.

⁴⁴ Ibid.; Church, History, 31-2; Sylvester, Indian Wars, II, 244-47.

⁴⁵ Hubbard, History, I, 69; Church, History, 33-4.

⁴⁶ Hubbard, History, I, 70.

⁴⁷ Church, History, 40-2; Sylvester, Indian Wars, II, 250-51; no one was hit, however.

Church's position became even more desperate shortly after when, near Fogland, several hundred Indians hemmed him in by the shore until rescue finally appeared.⁴⁸ By the middle of the month, Philip's warriors were evidently mounting raids and ambushes of sufficient scale to keep the English on the defensive. Taunton, Middlebury and Dartmouth all suffered sizeable raids.⁴⁹ At last a combined force of Plymouth and Massachusetts men moved into the area and managed to corner the enemy in Squannakonk Swamp, between Rehoboth and Taunton. What could have been the end for Philip and his company turned out to be the beginning as they took advantage of the underbrush to escape, inflicting several casualties on the English as they departed.⁵⁰

As the Wampanoags headed towards Nipmuck country, the nature of the war changed. Philip was now freer to roam throughout New England and early in August, the alliance with the Nipmucks was sealed. The first result of this combination appeared near Brookfield on August 2 as Captains Wheeler and Hutchinson, hoping to negotiate, instead faced an attack of two hundred to three hundred Nipmucks, causing eleven deaths.⁵¹ Next the

⁴⁸ Church, History, 42-7; Sylvester, Indian Wars, II, 252-55.

⁴⁹ Mather, Brief History, 4.

⁵⁰ Hubbard, History, I, 84-5.

⁵¹ Hubbard, History, I, 98-9.

Nipmucks fell on Brookfield itself and killed six whites before relief came on the evening of August 4.⁵² "Many hundreds" ambushed a Captain Beers and his men near Squakeag on August 20 and some twenty whites met their deaths.⁵³ About this time the sources become somewhat confused as to who was doing what and from other evidence (for example an attack on Springfield in October) it may be that the Wampanoags and Nipmucks were beginning to engage in combined actions. This may have been the case in the assault on Deerfield in early September, in which one Englishman died and in the raid on Captain Lothrop, who was guarding the baggage of Captain Mosley's company in the now otherwise deserted town on September 18. The later attack was especially disastrous for as many as seventy-five men fell.⁵⁴ William Leete in Hartford was certainly unnerved by the power displayed in a

⁵²
Ibid., I, 100-01.

⁵³
Ibid., I, 110-11.

⁵⁴
Mather, Brief History, 78,12; Hubbard, History, I, 112-13; Douglas Edward Leach, "Benjamin Batten and the London Gazette Report on King Philip's War", New England Quarterly, XXXVI (1963), 515-16; Sylvester, Indian Wars, II, 263.

raid so close to home:

... they [the Indians] being severall hundreds, as is said, & very likely so, when as they were able to swallow up about 80 men suddenly, with Capt. Lothrop, & are so cunning at scouting & ambuscados in their knowne advantages above ours.⁵⁵

Springfield suffered next as in mid-October the local Nipmucks spirited about three hundred Wampanoags into their village. The English sent out to investigate met with gunfire, followed by an all-out attack on the town. Only outside reinforcements saved the town's inhabitants from annihilation.⁵⁶ Even more carefully staged was an ambush near Hartford on October 19, in which the Indians set fires to draw out the English, then shot the small party sent out to look into matters. A larger English force of about sixty went to aid their fellows and were set upon by several hundred warriors; the result was twelve white and about one hundred Indian deaths.⁵⁷

The greatest problem on the English side, which worked to the advantage of the Indians in the early stages, was the fact that they were unable to fight the natives on their terms.⁵⁸ Only with much effort did they

⁵⁵ "Winthrop Papers", MHC, 4th ser., VII, 577.

⁵⁶ Formerly the Springfield Indians, as they were called, professed friendship for the English; Hubbard, History, I, 120-23; Mather, Brief History, 17.

⁵⁷ [Saltonstall], "Present State", 48-9.

⁵⁸ Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk, 93.

change to Indian-style tactics and make full use of their superior manpower and potential for organization.⁵⁹ At the same time, the Wampanoags were attempting to build up their strength by obtaining the support of their long-time foes, the Narragansetts. Very quickly the skirmishes and raids were turning into total war.

In the early stages of the war, the Narragansetts remained aloof to Wampanoag efforts to win them over. They even signed a treaty with the English colonies in July 1675, which provided for rewards to be paid for Wampanoag prisoners or heads.⁶⁰ This provision proved to be a stumbling-block, for few Wampanoags, dead or alive, appeared. It seemed also that the Narragansetts were as much divided on the question of war as the Nipmucks had been. Ninigret felt that Philip was doomed and he remained loyal to the English, but many others were hesitant.⁶¹ As winter approached, the Narragansett position became clearer. It was learned that Weetamoo, the squaw-sachem of the Pocassets and now a close ally of Philip's, sought and found refuge with the Narragansetts. When the English set a final

⁵⁹ See below, discussion of tactics.

⁶⁰ Hubbard, History, I, 74-6; Easton, "Relacion", 14; Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk, 56-60.

⁶¹ Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk, 112-13.

date of October for the Narragansetts to turn in more prisoners, there was no response. Still hopeful, the Commissioners of the United Colonies ordered an army into Narragansett territory to persuade the Indians to fulfill their part of the treaty. However, if this proved impossible, the troops were to destroy the tribe.⁶² The inevitable result, the Great Swamp Fight of December 19, came close to accomplishing just that. Despite rather elaborate defensive works in the Great Swamp beside the Chippuxet River, the Narragansetts could not withstand the English onslaught although they inflicted some two hundred casualties on the attackers.⁶³

Now the Narragansetts were firmly tied to Philip, and during the winter of 1675-1676, they joined the Nipmucks and Wampanoags who were gathering in the area bounded by Squakeag, Mount Wachusett, Quabaug and the Connecticut River. At some point in February the Indian forces apparently divided into two arms, one largely made up of Nipmucks and one containing Narragansetts and Wampanoags.⁶⁴ There was evidently a substantial amount

⁶²Hubbard, History, I, 136.

⁶³Ibid., I, 143-53; Hubbard calculated the Indian dead at seven hundred; the true figure is probably impossible to determine; cf. [Nathaniel Saltonstall], "A Continuation of the State of New England", in Lincoln, Narratives, 60.

⁶⁴Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk, 155-57, 164-65.

of combined planning here, especially in the case of the combined Narragansett-Wampanoag striking force; cooperation in this force was particularly noteworthy since the Narragansetts and Wampanoags had been traditional enemies. Until the late spring, the alliance waged a war whose effectiveness was unmatched in the earlier history of New England or among the Algonkian nations of seventeenth century Canada.⁶⁵

The results of the winter of planning began to be apparent on February 10, as a large body of Indians fell on Lancaster in the early morning. There were sufficient attackers to have a number of snipers on the barn roofs while the rest surrounded the settlement.⁶⁶ Eleven days later, eighteen to twenty whites in Medfield fell to another force of substantial size and half of the town went up in flames.⁶⁷ Weymouth, dangerously close to Boston, felt only a slightly milder blow as a lightning raid destroyed seven barns and houses.⁶⁸ Towards the northwest again, on March 13, about four hundred Indians

⁶⁵Because of the nature of the alliance and the consequent inability of most of the sources to distinguish among its three main members, the remainder of this section will speak only of the "Indian alliance".

⁶⁶Rowlandson, "Narrative", 118-21; Hubbard, History, I, 165-66.

⁶⁷Hubbard, History, I, 167-68; Mather, Brief History, 22-3.

⁶⁸Mather, Brief History, 23.

were involved in an assault on Groton by first luring the militia into an ambush and then attacking the town,⁶⁹ "A multitude" attacked Northampton further west on the Connecticut the following day, breaking through the walls and only being thrown back with great difficulty.⁷⁰ South along the Connecticut on March 26, as the townsfolk of Springfield were going to church, some of the stragglers were shot down by Indians hiding in bushes along the road.⁷¹ On the same day at the other end of New England, Marlborough faced an open assault which levelled a large part of the town.⁷² Further east again, on March 26, a small group of Indians feigning lameness led some fifty English and twenty Indian allies from Scituate into an ambush, which came close to wiping out the victims.⁷³ Three days later Providence fell before the Indian alliance, with only one man killed, but with much of the town destroyed by fire.⁷⁴ Sudbury

⁶⁹Ibid., 24; Hubbard, History, I, 196-200.

⁷⁰Mather, Brief History, 23.

⁷¹Hubbard, History, I, 205-07.

⁷²Mather Brief History, 24-5; Hubbard, History, I, 208; [Nathaniel Saltonstall], "A New and Further Narrative of the State of New England", in Lincoln, Narratives, 84-5.

⁷³There were fifty-eight casualties. Mather, Brief History, 25; Sylvester, Indian Wars, II, 313-14.

⁷⁴[Saltonstall], "New and Further Narratives", 86-7.

came under attack on April 21 and survived only after a desperate fight; two of its rescuing parties fell prey to ambushes.⁷⁵ June 12 saw Hadley, on the Connecticut, in another struggle. A small Indian raiding party chased some of the townspeople into the town. After a short interval, a large force of English and Indians went out to meet the enemy, but somehow the main body of attackers got around them to assault the town. Finally they were chased off.⁷⁶ Although not all of the raids, ambushes and other encounters have been mentioned, it is clear that for a few months the Wampanoag-Nipmuck-Narragansett alliance mounted a devastating campaign. By June, however, food was becoming scarce and the alliance was developing severe cracks, while the English began to recover their bearings and organize an effective counter-attack. Moving to a defensive stance, Philip and his remaining followers returned to Mount Hope where the nominal leader of the Indian resistance met his death on August 12.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Hubbard, History, I, 210-13; Mather, Brief History, 26.

⁷⁶ Mather, Brief History, 33-4.

⁷⁷ Hubbard, History, I, 213 ff., 265-67; Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk, 199-241.

Relatively sophisticated organization among the three tribes was accompanied by a variety of tactics, all common to aboriginal warfare. "Hit and run" raids appeared most often in attacks on towns, for example on Swansea, Deerfield, Lancaster and Weymouth. Especially popular was the ambush, which the English were all too prone to fall into.⁷⁸ Simple ambushes from hiding places occurred at Swansea (June, 1675), the Punkates Neck area (July, 1675), near Fogland (July 1675), the Squankeag area (August, 1675), Brookfield (August 1675) and Springfield (March 1676). A variation on this involved the Indians' showing themselves in a small number to entice the English to chase them. At the appropriate moment, a much larger Indian force would fall on the attackers. Such was the course of events at Swansea (June 1675), the Hatfield area (October, 1675), Groton (March 1675), near Scituate (March 1676), Sudbury (April 1676) and Hadley (June 1676). Night attacks did take place, but they were not frequent. When Benjamin Church became involved in the contest near Fogland in July 1675, the Wampanoag offensive continued well into the evening. Lancaster (February 10, 1676) and Medfield (February 21, 1675) were two examples of early morning raids.

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It was in the ambush that the white man's flintlock proved most useful to the Indian.

Probably the most effective characteristic of Indian tactics was their flexibility. Ambushes, for example, although following general patterns, always varied to suit the circumstances. Perhaps one of the most daring Indian manoeuvres occurred at Springfield in October 1675 when the local Nipmucks brought in the order of three hundred Wampanoags into their village.

Unfortunately for the English, they did not adapt to wilderness warfare at all quickly. This rigidity seems amazing on the surface, but it is worth remembering that Europeans did not regard this style of fighting as befitting civilized man. William Hubbard's attitude was typical of many:

... the Indians, notwithstanding their Subtily and Cruelty, durst not look an Englishman in the Face in the open Field, nor even yet were known to kill any Man with their Guns, unless they could lie in wait for him in an ambush, or behind some Shelter, taking aim undiscovered; ...⁷⁹

By November 1675, however, a growing realization of the necessities of the situation was evident in the commission to Josiah Winslow from the Commissioners of the United Colonies. It stated, in part:

... we also advise and order, that you be very careful in your marches in or near the enemy's country, by keeping out scouts and forlorns before the army, to prevent and avoid

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Hubbard, History, I, 144-15. But contrast Benjamin Church's career (Church, History). Cf. MacFarlane, "Indian Relations," 28-9.

the ambuscadoes of the enemy; that sentinels be at all times careful of their duty, and all soldiers be made constantly to keep their arms very fix and clean fit for service.

And that you endeavour as silently and suddenly to surprise the enemy as you can, and if possible draw or force them to engagement.⁸⁰

That the Commissioners felt the necessity to be so explicit reveals the amount of accepted opinion they felt they had to overcome.

The taking of head trophies began with the opening phases of King Philip's War. At Swansea in June 1675, eight English heads were cut off and placed on poles.⁸¹ Increase Mather reported that scalping took place the following month in the course of attacks on Taunton and on other towns in the area.⁸² At Squakeag in August the Indians cut off the heads of some of those they killed and again put them on poles near the highway.⁸³ The same occurred to one dead man's head at Groton the following March⁸⁴ and at Swansea in June 1676 one head was cut off

⁸⁰"Hutchinson Papers", MHC, 3rd ser., I (1825), 67-8; Mac Farlane, "Indian Relations", 23, summarizes the problem.

⁸¹Church, History, 31-2; Leach, "Batten", 508.

⁸²Mather, Brief History, 4. This is a very early use of the term "scalp" in the modern sense of the word: "Such also is their inhumanity that they flay off the skin from their faces and heads of those they get into their hands, and go away with the hairy scalp of their enemies."

⁸³Hubbard, History, I, 110-11.

⁸⁴Ibid., I, 196-200.

and carried away.⁸⁵ What is immediately striking of course is that to place heads on poles was an English practice employed for criminals. Since the heads were not taken away in those cases, they were not war trophies in the true sense of the term. Perhaps the Indians learned something from their enemy! In general, it appears that although not as frequent as in Canada, the taking of scalps and heads did most certainly occur among the Indian alliance.

As at the end of the Pequot War, the English used bounties to encourage head-hunting among their allies. There was no formal agreement with the Mohegans, but in July 1675, one of the articles of the treaty between the English and Narragansetts provided payments for prisoners or heads.⁸⁶ As already pointed out, the results of this were disappointing to the English, but it did demonstrate that they could countenance such practices if they were performed by their friends.

⁸⁵
Ibid., I, 240-41.

⁸⁶
It was article VI of the agreement; see Hubbard, History, I, 78. [Saltonstall], "Present State", 34, says that the rewards were given for "head-skins". Cf. also MacFarlane, "Indian Relations" 75-6, 82-3; he has consulted manuscript sources and provides further examples of bounties.

III

King Philip's War ended in much the same way as the Pequot War, with a crushing defeat for the Indians. On August 12, Philip and his followers were surrounded near Mount Hope and Philip died at the hands of a Wampanoag deserter. As at Mystic in 1637, the English victory was a savage one:

This seasonable Prey [the dead Philip] was soon divided, they cut off his Head and Hands, and conveyed them to Rhode-Island, and quartered his Body, and hung it upon four Trees.⁸⁷

The struggle continued for some time in the northern reaches of the English colonies but for southern New England it was finished.

The end of the war in effect meant the decay of Indian culture as tribes were broken up and land fell to the settlers. In Massachusetts all Indians except for servants were obliged to live in four settlements under close observation. Plymouth permitted no arms or ammunition to be sold to the natives, while in Rhode Island, besides restrictions on firearms, no large gatherings of Indians were allowed. Even those who had remained faithful to the Europeans suffered. Uncas virtually surrendered his lands in Connecticut, to mention

⁸⁷ [Richard Hutchinson], "The Warr in New-England Visibly Ended", in Lincoln, Narratives, 105; cf. Church, History, 120-26.

the most outstanding example.⁸⁸ The so-called "Praying Indians", those converted to Christianity, probably received the most shameful treatment, being treated little better than as prisoners of war.⁸⁹ In the end Indian warfare and indeed Indian culture on the whole lacked the organization, power and simple numerical strength to defeat the English. Such a problem as food supplies proved to be a major crack in their armour. Victory went to God's heaviest battalions.

On the other hand, the English were now rapidly becoming hardened wilderness fighters. In the words of John Eliot:

In our first war with the Indians, God pleased to shew us the vanity of our military skill, in managing our arms, after the European mode. Now we are glad to learn the skulking way of war.⁹⁰

They brought their own savagery to the Indians' wars--scalping bounties, selling natives into slavery and, as in the case of the death of Miantonomo, encouraging intertribal divisions to their advantage. William Hagan

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Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk, 245-46.

⁸⁹Daniel Gookin, "An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England in the Years 1675, 1676, 1677, American Antiquarian Society Transactions and Collections, II (1836), 423-534; MacFarlane, "Indian Relations", 51; Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk, 145-54.

⁹⁰"Letters from Rev. John Eliot of Roxbury, to Hon. Robert Boyle," MHC, 1st ser., III (1794), 178.

had described King Philip's War as "a last convulsive effort to stop the advance of the frontiersman".⁹¹ Whether this assessment is exactly true is open to argument but it is surely fair to say that the war was more a reaction to problems created by white society than it was a blind attack on that society. Violence to the Indian way of life begat violence on the battlefield.

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William T. Hagan, The Indian in American History (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 5.

CHAPTER SIX
THE FATE OF CAPTIVES

The preceding chapters have examined in some detail how the Algonkians of Canada and southern New England conducted themselves in battle. Europeans tended to react to this aspect of Indian warfare with varying degrees of disdain, disgust, fear or, occasionally admiration, depending on circumstances. As to the fate of prisoners taken alive and dealt with after battle, however, white feeling could only be one of sheer horror in the face of the torture and cannibalism that often took place. The relatively infrequent cases of adoption of prisoners by the Algonkians did little to mitigate this shock.

I

In particular torture revolted French and English observers. François Du Creux, drawing on others' accounts, wrote that "The cruelty they [the Iroquoian and Algonkian peoples] show to captives is almost incredible".¹ In 1637, Paul Le Jeune commented with considerable emotion:

Le Pere Buteux ma escrit toute cette histoire tragique [the torture of an Iroquois at Three Rivers], me descriptant la barbarie de ces tigres, leur fureur ma semblé si horrible que ie ne lay peu coucher sur le papier;...²

¹François Du Creux, History of Canada, or New France, transl. Percy J. Robinson, ed. James B. Conacher (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1951-52), I, 104.

²JR, XII, 182.

From New England, William Hubbard voiced a fairly typical view in writing of the Pequots, that "... those who fell into their Hands were cruelly tortured after a most Barbarous Manner".³

Clearly to the Europeans of the seventeenth century, there was nothing more to be dreaded than a slow, painful death. Yet torture was not foreign either to France or to England. It formed an integral part of judicial procedure, both in theory and in practice.⁴ On the other hand, Du Creux', Le Jeune's and Hubbard's horror cannot be dismissed as mere hypocrisy, for there were very real differences between the practice in Europe and among Indian societies. For one thing, in Europe torture was employed mainly against criminals who already had a substantial weight of evidence against them. It was employed for a specific practical purpose--to extract a confession or information concerning accomplices. In no way was it sanctioned as a war practice, although it undoubtedly did occur.⁵ More generally, by the middle of the seventeenth

³William Hubbard, The History of the Indian Wars in New England, from the First Settlement to the Termination of the War with King Philip, in 1677, ed. Samuel G. Drake (Roxbury, Mass.: W.E. Woodward, 1865), II, 12.

⁴See Raymond Boyer, Les Crimes et les châtements au Canada français du XVII^e au XX^e siècle (Montreal: Le Cercle du livre de France, 1966), James Heath, Eighteenth Century Penal Theory (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).

⁵Rebellions and insurrections, whose participants were regarded as criminals rather than soldiers, is the major exception to this general statement.

century, partly in reaction to the bitter years of the Thirty Years War, Europeans were becoming increasingly interested in the formulation of international rules of warfare. During that conflict, lasting from 1618 to 1648, the general population, particularly in Germany, suffered untold misery through the burning of crops, looting and violence of all kinds. More importantly, contemporaries themselves saw the war as a major catastrophe which should not be repeated.⁶ Francisco de Vitoria, a Spanish Catholic writing in the sixteenth century already had considerable influence on the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on war.⁷ Almost a century later, Hugo Grotius, a Dutch Calvinist, had a similar effect on his world.⁸ Both argued for a relatively gentle treatment of prisoners of war.⁹

⁶C.V. Wedgwood, The Thirty Years War (London: Jonathan Cape, 1964), 510-26.

⁷Vitoria's De Jure Belli (1557) has been translated most recently into French with an excellent introduction by Maurice Barbien in Leçons sur les Indiens et sur le droit de guerre [De Indiis and De Jure Belli] (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1966).

⁸Hugo Grotius, De Jure Belli ac Pacis Libri Tres, transl. Francis W. Kelsey, 4 Vols. (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1913-25 [first published 1625]).

⁹Vitoria, Leçons, 148; Grotius, De Jure Belli, IV, 690-91, 737. Edwin Meyer Loeb, "Cannibalism" (Unpublished M.A. thesis, New Haven: Yale University, 1921), 128, argues that formerly such practices as cannibalism and torture were universal; that is, in this regard, Europeans are part of cultural continuum that includes prehistoric man.

Anyone steeped in these principles and not capable of understanding the nature of fundamentally different cultures could not help but be shocked by Indian treatment of war captives. Probably the Iroquois tribes were more violent in this regard, but the Algonkians of Canada and southern New England participated in many of the same war complexes, torture being one of them. Their violation of European conceptions of "civilized" warfare, their evident relish in tormenting their victims and the participation of women and children in the ceremony all were frightfully novel to the whites. The fact that even non-combatants could suffer a death usually reserved only for traitors and other criminals in Europe, made frontier warfare a horrendous experience.

To add yet another psychologically unnerving aspect to Algonkian (and Iroquois) warfare, war captives might be adopted into the tribe as an alternative to torture.¹⁰ The prisoner, in other words, had forfeited his life upon capture and for the present he had no control over his future.¹¹ Among the Iroquois, adoption was a common

¹⁰Wilcomb E. Washburn, "Relations Between Europeans and Amerindians during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: The Epistemological Problem", (Unpublished paper presented at International Colloquium on Colonial History, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, November, 1969), 9-10.

¹¹F.W. Hodge, ed., Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1907-10), I, 204.

means of increasing manpower and hence military strength. The newly adopted member of the tribe was expected to take on the identity of one of the dead warriors of his Iroquois family. However, the practice occurred less frequently in Algonkian tribes; when it did, the process of assimilation was less thorough than in the case of the Iroquois, probably because of the differing cohesiveness of the two kinds of societies.¹²

If the captive was not adopted, then, the alternative was a slow death by torture. On the basis of the understanding furnished by the anthropological sciences, it is now possible to see more clearly than did the writers of the seventeenth century the place of this practice in the Algonkian cultures of Canada and of southern New England. There were several motives behind

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Nicholas Perrot, Mémoire sur les moeurs, coustumes et religion des sauvages de l'Amérique Septentrionale, ed. R.P.J. Tailhan (Leipzig and Paris: A. Franck, 1864), 130: "... l'Iroquois devint fort de plus en plus par la quantité de prisonniers qu'il continuoit de faire sur ses ennemies."; G. Snyderman, "Behind the Tree of Peace: A Sociological Analysis of Iroquois Warfare," Pennsylvania Archeologist, XVIII (1948), 14; Nathaniel Knowles, "The Torture of Captives by the Indians of Eastern North America", American Philosophical Society Proceedings, LXXXII (March, 1940), 213; Frederick Drimmer, ed., Scalps and Tomahawks: Narratives of Indian Captivity (New York: Coward-McCann, 1961), 10-12; Regina Flannery, An Analysis of Coastal Algonkian Culture (Washington: Catholic University of America Anthropology Series, No. 7, 1939), 180. For a discussion of the problem of cultural cohesiveness, see above, chapter one, passim.

the torture of war captives. Probably the most prevalent one among the Algonkians was that of retribution, about which Wilcomb Washburn has made the most enlightening comment: "In most Indian cultures, retribution was an act of inspired virtue, the highest expression of morality."¹³ This possibly explains much of the origin of the torture complex among the Canadian Algonkians-- as revenge for similar treatment from the Iroquois. Retribution had another dimension in Algonkian Culture when it merged with the notion of collective accountability. Just as any Indian was responsible for the actions of his kinsmen, so anyone could be made to suffer for them. There could be no "innocents".

A motivation that cannot be disconnected, although contemporaries were mistaken when they assumed it was the sole basis for torture, was sadistic pleasure.¹⁴ Understandably this was tied very closely to retribution and makes comprehensible the especial ferocity of Indian women participating in torture. They were driven by the knowledge that their husbands, brothers and other warriors received a similar reception from the enemy.

¹³Washburn, "Relations", 9; cf. Drimmer, Scalps and Tomahawks, 18-19.

¹⁴Knowles, "Torture", 151-52; Douglas Edward Leach, The Northern Colonial Frontier (New York, etc.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 13; R.L. Scheele, "The Treatment of Captives among the North East Indians of North America" (Unpublished M.A. thesis, New York: Columbia University, 1947), 47-8.

For the warrior himself, torture was a part of his career, something to expect and something to train for. Scenes such as the following, from a relation covering the years 1661-1665 sent to the Jesuits in France, were not uncommon:

Deux petite sauvages Algonquins ayants un jour pris un tison de fer ardant se l'appliquèrent sur le bras tout nud, le disans, l'un à l'autre chante, celui là aura plus de coeur qui endurera plus longtemps le feu; et par Emulation se regardaient brusler l'un l'autre pour ne point parestre lasche; et Ils ont porté fort longtemps les marques du feu comme des Trophées de leur grand courage qui n'est après tout qu'une pure folie.¹⁵

This culmination of a life of glory was the final test of the worth of a warrior, an exercise in pride and valour. Not to have cried out in agony was to have achieved the highest victory and it was something that those performing the torture regarded as an evil omen.¹⁶ All observers were impressed by the ability of the Indians to stand up to such treatment:

The endurance of the savages is wonderful and they can bear the sharpest pain. ... such is their natural strength of mind, that in the midst of the horrible tortures... they will sing and dance at the command of their enemies ...¹⁷

¹⁵PAC, MG 7, IA10, vol. 842, p.5.

¹⁶Implied in JR, XVII, 64. See also Leach, Northern Colonial Frontier, 13; C. de Rochemonteix, Les Jésuites en la Nouvelle-France au XVII^e siècle (Paris: Letourzey & Ane, 1895-86), 1, 120.

¹⁷Du Creux, History, I, 103; the same point of view is found throughout the Jesuit Relations, from which Du Creux drew his account.

A brave warrior was an example to young people and one who died well was especially so. Just as public capital punishment, with its final confession and moral admonitions, had a social function in Europe, the strength of an Indian captive in his tortures was a lesson to those who might well come to the same end.¹⁸ His heart or his blood might be consumed by the children in the hopes that they would thereby gain something of his virtue.¹⁹

Finally, the torture ceremony had as part of its function a religious observance. Especially for the Iroquois, it signified a sacrifice to the war god. In the case of the Algonkian tribes, this idea had some penetration, but it was not a major aspect of the torture complex, possibly another indication that the practice came to the Algonkians from the Iroquois and was imperfectly assimilated into their culture.²⁰

¹⁸ H.H. Turney-High, Primitive Warfare: Its Practices and Concepts (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1949), 191; A.M. Josephy, The Patriot Chiefs (New York: The Viking Press, 1961), 4-5.

¹⁹ See section IV, discussion of cannibalism.

²⁰ E.M. Loeb, The Blood Sacrifice Complex (American Anthropological Association Memoire No. 30, 1923), 8; Knowles, "Torture", 219. See Harold Driver, Indians of North America (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 487-89 and Loeb, "Cannibalism", 119-20 for treatment of this aspect of torture as it was fully developed in Aztec culture.

Much of the evidence for what has been said applies to both southern New England and Canada, but there were very real differences in practice between the two regions that probably coincided with differences in belief. All that can be safely said is that the social and religious functions of torture did exist among the Canadian Algonkians but may have been only a minor part of the war pattern in southern New England. The sources are helpful in relating what occurred, but the "whys" of the case are more difficult to determine.

II

In seventeenth century Canada, the greatest unsolved problem in regard to torture, as with the question of scalping, is that of origins. Champlain witnessed torture among the Montagnais and Algonkins as early as 1609, but of course he did not relate whether it was an indigenous practice or whether the natives learned it from others. Anthropologists agree only that these tribes may have appropriated the practice from the Iroquois,²¹ and there is some evidence that indirectly supports this thesis. For example, the incidence of torture was not nearly so high among the Algonkians as it was among the Iroquois, the ceremony itself was much less elaborate

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Knowles, "Torture", 190-219; Flannery, Analysis, 180.

and the form of the ceremony could vary a good deal.²² As already pointed out, one part of the complex, adoption, was not so effective or common in Algonkian society. Nevertheless, this issue remains unsettled.

Of his first impressions of torture, as with scalping, Champlain left behind a detailed record. After the battle at Lake Champlain in July 1609, he witnessed the slow death of an Iroquois at the hands of the Montagnais. Although the arrangement of the torture ceremony did change, its basic elements remained for the most part constant during the seventeenth century; thus Champlain's observations are worth citing in full:

... les nostres allumerent un feu, & comme il fut bien embrasé ils prendrent chacun un tison, & faisoit brusler ce pauvre miserable peu à peu pour luy faire souffrir plus de tourmens. Ils le laissoient quelques fois, luy arracherét les ongles, et luy mirent du feu sur les extremittez des doights & de son membre. Après ils luy escorcherent le haut de la teste, et luy firent degoutter dessous certaine gomme toute chaude; puis luy percerét les bras pres des poignets, & avec des bastons tiroyent les nerfs & les arrachoyent à force: & cōme ils voioyent qu'ils ne les pouvoient avoir, ils les couppoyent. Ce pauvre miserable iettoit des cris estranges, & me faisoit pitié de le voir traiter de la façon, toutesfois avec une telle constance, qu'on eust dit quelquefois qu'il ne sentoit presque point de mal.²³

²²See below for details. Scheele, "Treatment of Captives", 49-51, takes exactly the opposite point of view.

²³Samuel de Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain in Six Volumes*, ed. H.P. Biggar (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1922-36), II, 101-04; cf. Marc Lescarbot, *The History of New France*, transl. and ed., W.L. Grant (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1907-14), III, 308.

Finally Champlain was able to persuade the Montagnais to allow him to shoot the captive. There are several points to note about this episode in relation to later instances of torture in Canada. In the first place, the kinds of torture changed little although the order in which they were performed did. For example, beating and ripping out of fingernails usually preceded everything else. Second, fire was universal, and methods of torture were usually confined to the use of fire or to beating and cutting. Third, the "cris estranges" mentioned by Champlain were not cries of agony, which would have been inconsistent in the light of Champlain's remarking of the victim's stoicism. Undoubtedly the Iroquois prisoner was singing his death song. Fourth, the procedure was relatively straightforward, involving one series of events, whereas the Iroquois (and Hurons) usually performed their tortures in two stages, first in the long houses and then in the open on a platform arrangement.²⁴

The years from 1609 to the 1640's constituted the period of the most extensive use of torture by the Algonkins and Montagnais. In virtually every battle in which prisoners were taken, torture followed. Although

²⁴ Knowles, "Torture", 190.

what Champlain witnessed in 1609 was the usual pattern, there was sufficient variation in each of the instances to throw more light on this practice.

Before 1640, there were at least ten occasions, fully documented, on which the Algonkins and Montagnais tortured Iroquois prisoners.²⁵ The first, in July 1609, has already been described. The following June, at the mouth of the Richelieu River, more Iroquois faced the fires. In contrast to the usual Iroquois practice of allowing some free movement on the part of the prisoners, these captives were secured firmly to stakes. The actual torture, in which the women, to the horror of the French, participated with relish, continued until the Iroquois died.²⁶ Apparently this was not universal, for often the Algonkians preferred to use some other means of killing the victim, such as stabbing or clubbing.²⁷ In May 1615 one of the first sights to greet four Recollets arriving from France was the painful death of an Iroquois in the Montagnais fires at Tadoussac. On this occasion the order of events was somewhat different from that in 1609, with the biting of fingers coming first. Rather

²⁵Based on a reading of Champlain, the Jesuit Relations and various series in the Public Archives of Canada.

²⁶Champlain, Works, II, 136-37; cf. Lescarbot, History, III, 311-12.

²⁷Cf. JR, XIII, 78.

than dying in his tortures, the captive met his end by being stoned. Significantly, there was another prisoner of about twelve years of age whom the Montagnais adopted, marking the first time such an action was recorded.²⁸ Some years later, in August of 1627, the Algonkins at Quebec killed a young Iroquois held as a hostage during peace negotiations, because of the death of their ambassadors. Again, he did not die from torture, but rather by the knife.²⁹

During the 1630's instances of torture became especially frequent. Nine Iroquois died at Tadoussac on one occasion in the summer of 1632, dancing at first then suffering until they died; the dancing and their death by torture were not common occurrences.³⁰ At Quebec in the same summer, on the other hand, the Montagnais apparently did not have their Iroquois victims dance, but bound them securely to stakes. As at Tadoussac, they died in their tortures.³¹ Members of

28

PAC, MG 7, IA7, vol. 483, fol. 581^v; O.M. Jouve, Les Franciscains et le Canada (Quebec: Imprimerie Franciscaine Missionnaire, 1915), 43.

²⁹Champlain, Works, V, 231-32; Jouve, Franciscains, 397.

³⁰JR, V, 26-30.

³¹Ibid., V, 50-54.

the Montagnais-Algonkin coalition introduced more apparently Iroquoian elements in October 1635 at Trois Rivières when they began by first torturing their victim in their cabins and making him dance. As they wished to negotiate for peace, however, they did nothing worse than to pull out his fingernails and beat him.³² The Algonkins reverted to tying their prisoner firmly rather than allowing him to dance freely when they tortured another Iroquois in August of the following year.³³ In the same month, the Montagnais tortured yet another prisoner at Trois Rivières, this time allowing him to dance in the Iroquois manner and to die in his tortures.³⁴ Probably the largest-scale execution took place in June 1637 when the Iroquets tortured some thirteen prisoners, whose deaths were not recorded in detail.³⁵

Clearly then, although torture was a part of Algonkian war practices in seventeenth century Canada,

³² Ibid., VIII, 22-4.

³³ Ibid., IX, 64-6.

³⁴ Ibid., IX, 256-58.

³⁵ Ibid., XII, 180-82.

the Montagnais and Algonkians were not consistent as to how it was to be administered. It is evident that adoption was not an alternative usually employed.³⁶ The only explicit case occurred in May 1615, but the sources are all too often vague as to whether all prisoners taken in battle were tortured. In the heat of battle, the Algonkians may have been filled with such fear and hatred for the Iroquois that adoption was inconceivable.

Beginning in the 1640's, a profound change took place in this aspect of Algonkian warfare. Largely because of the influence of Christianity, the incidence of torture declined rather dramatically.³⁷ Between 1640 and 1680, on less than a half-dozen occasions is there any indication that drawn-out torture was practised. The tendency was either to eliminate torture entirely or at least to kill the victim more quickly than formerly. Torture began, but the prisoner did not die at Trois Rivières in October 1642³⁸ and near the same town in July 1644.³⁹ The Montagnais and Algonkians set their

³⁶Le Jeune mentions, however, that the Montagnais were in the habit of adopting and marrying female prisoners (JR, IX, 252).

³⁷Cf. A.G. Bailey, The Conflict of European and Eastern Algonkian Cultures, 1504-1700, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 98.

³⁸JR, XXIV, 192; XXV, 52.

³⁹Du Creux, History, I, 396-97.

victims free with little or no harm in April 1644,⁴⁰ May 1645,⁴¹ November 1652,⁴² June 1653⁴³ and the spring of 1666.⁴⁴ Prisoners died quickly with little torture in the fall of 1647,⁴⁵ in early May 1652⁴⁶ and in the spring of 1663.⁴⁷

Of course this does not mean that torture ceased entirely. In 1655, some Iroquois were burned, although the Jesuit account gives no further details.⁴⁸ The Hurons and Ottawas burned three Iroquois on Manitoulin

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Abbe P.F. Richaudeau, Lettres de la Révérende Mère Marie de l'Incarnation, première supérieure des Ursulines de Québec (Paris: Vve. H. Casterman, 1876), I, 238-58.

41

JR, XXVII, 232-44; XXVI, 20; Du Creux, History, II, 405-06.

42

JR, XXXVII, 118; XL, 194-98.

43

Ibid., XLI, 78.

44

Perrot, Mémoire, 112.

45

Du Creux, History, II, 462-64; JR, XXXII, 20-26.

46

JR, XXXVI, 122.

47

Ibid., XLVIII, 106-10.

48

Ibid., XLIII, 250.

Island in the summer of 1658⁴⁹ and more Iroquois met violent deaths from the Algonkian tribes in 1660⁵⁰ and 1662.⁵¹ In part the apparent decline in torture may reflect a desire among the Jesuit chroniclers not to mention such practices among supposedly converted or friendly tribes. It also undoubtedly indicates a degeneration in the military power of the Algonkins and Montagnais rather than any moral or spiritual reformation.

III

In New England, there can be no doubt that torture was much less common than it was in Canada. Regina Flannery was unable to find many references to the practice in her study of the coastal tribes.⁵² Nathaniel Knowles mistakenly argued that it did not exist at all.⁵³ This makes any exploration of the

49

Pierre Esprit Radisson, The Explorations of Pierre Esprit Radisson, ed. Arthur T. Adams (Minneapolis: Ross and Haines, 1961), 88.

⁵⁰JR, XLV, 150-52; XLVI, 84-6.

⁵¹Asseline Ronual, "Voyage de Canadas en La Nouvelle-France, par Asseline Ronual, 1662", Canadian Archives Report, 1928, 28-9.

⁵²

Flannery, Analysis, 125-27.

⁵³

Knowles, "Torture", 190.

origins of the practice in southern New England extremely difficult. Both Flannery and Knowles, with varying degrees of certainty, attributed the torture complex to the Iroquois;⁵⁴ presumably it diffused from the Algonkians of northern New England, who were in frequent contact with the Five Nations to those tribes in Massachusetts, Plymouth Colony, Connecticut and Rhode Island. But at the present state of knowledge, this is little more than speculation.

Earliest descriptions of torture in southern New England begin only in the 1630's during the period leading to the Pequot War. Even so, "descriptions" would be an exaggeration, for nowhere is there a detailed eye-witness account of torture, mainly because those tribes who were involved in this practice were enemies of the English. The testimony of enemy prisoners and the evidence of corpses were virtually the only indications that the English had to rely on. Only occasionally is there reference to allied Indians indulging in torture.

The first incidents of this nature during the Pequot War took place near Fort Saybrook, when on

⁵⁴ Flannery, Analysis, 180; Knowles, "Torture", 213-15, 190-91.

several occasions in 1636, English prisoners fell into Pequot hands. But there is no more detail than that they were roasted alive.⁵⁵ There are two versions of what befell a John Tilley in the same area in the spring of 1637 when he set foot in unguarded territory along the Connecticut River; he either had his hands and feet cut off or his captors flayed his skin and placed hot embers under it before they dispatched him.⁵⁶ Later, in May, when the English ordered their Mohegan allies to chase some Pequots near Fort Saybrook, the Mohegans tore apart one of the prisoners with ropes.⁵⁷ Yet these were the only occasions of torture recorded for what was a

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Increase Mather, A Relation of the Troubles which have hapned in New-England, by reason of the Indians there, from the year 1614 to the year 1675 (Boston, 1677), 25, 45; Lion Gardiner, "Leift Lion Gardener His Relation of the Pequot Warres", MHC, 3rd ser., III (1833), 142-43; Hubbard, History, II, 12-13.

56

John Winthrop, Winthrop's Journal, 1630-1639, ed. J.K. Hosmer (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1908), I, 194; John Underhill, "Newes from America; or, A New and Experimentall Discoverie of New England", MHC, 3rd ser., VI (1837), 15; H.M. Sylvester, Indian Wars of New England (Boston: W.B. Clarke Co., 1910), I, 242-43.

57

[P. Vincent], "A True Relation of the late Battell fought in New-England, between the English and the Pequot Salvages", MHC, 3rd ser., VI (1837), 36.

short but violent war. There were other cases in which prisoners were taken, but not tortured, for example at Hartford when Pequots captured two women, apparently to learn how to make gunpowder, but did them no harm.⁵⁸

Adoption also seems to have been infrequent during the Pequot War, but soon after the battle at Fort Mystic, the question of the fate of the Pequots became one of which tribe was to assimilate them.⁵⁹ The objective was to increase manpower, as it was among Indians in Canada, but exactly how the Pequots were to be absorbed is not clear. It may not even be possible to use the term "adoption" here; rather one should speak in terms of rule over a conquered race.

From the end of the Pequot War until the beginning of Philip's War, the tensions of intertribal relations produced few cases of torture. The well-documented death of Miantonomo was quick and relatively painless.⁶⁰ In 1648, near Stratford Ferry, the Wampanoags captured a Mohawk and left him tied to a tree for the mosquitoes to

58

Edward Johnson, Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence, ed. J. Franklin Jameson (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1910), 149.

⁵⁹See above, chapter four, section IV.

⁶⁰William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation, ed. S.E. Morison (New York: Knopf, 1952), 330-31; Johnson, Wonder-Working Providence, 220-22.

devour, an uncommon kind of punishment.⁶¹ John Josselyn, at some point in the 1670's, witnessed some "eastern Indians" bind two Mohawks to a tree, cut off their fingers, toes and pieces of flesh, apply hot embers to their skin and scalp, apply more embers and rip out their hearts.⁶² With the outbreak of King Philip's War in the summer of 1675, this kind of action occurred more frequently but it never attained the levels reached in Canada. As early as the attack on Swansea, two English corpses were discovered with their fingers and feet cut off and their scalps removed, but this may not have been a case of torture.⁶³ In August, the Wampanoags captured a young boy and were about to roast him until a sympathetic Indian secretly released him.⁶⁴ In fact the first solid cases of torture on the part of the Wampanoag-Nipmuck-Narragansett alliance do not seem to have occurred until the assault

⁶¹ Sylvester, Indian Wars, I, 444-45.

⁶² John Josselyn, "An Account of Two Voyages to New England", MHC, 3rd ser., III (1833), 310.

⁶³ [Nathaniel Saltonstall], "The Present State of New England", in Charles H. Lincoln, ed., Narratives of the Indian Wars, 1675-1699 (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1913), 28-9.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 39-40.

on Lancaster in February 1676. Even these accounts do not agree as to what took place. William Hubbard related that no-one among the captives was tortured.⁶⁵ Mary Rowlandson agreed from what she witnessed and pointed out that her own treatment was reasonably fair.⁶⁶ Only Nathaniel Saltonstall described how the Indians cut open one pregnant captive, burned her unborn baby and then killed her.⁶⁷ At Springfield in the following month the attackers dashed some children against rocks, but however horrendous, this could not be called true torture.⁶⁸ For their part, the Mohegans (under English pressure) refrained from torturing an enemy captive before they dispatched him.⁶⁹ The first

⁶⁵
Hubbard, History, I, 166-67.

⁶⁶
Mary Rowlandson, "Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson", in Lincoln, Narratives, 123-46.

⁶⁷
[Nathaniel Saltonstall], "A New and Further Narrative of the State of New England", in Lincoln, Narratives, 83.

⁶⁸
Ibid., 85-6.

⁶⁹
Thomas Church, The History of the Great Indian War of 1675 and 1676, ed. Samuel G. Drake (Hartford: Silas Andrews & Sons, 1852) 65-7.

indication of anything approaching northern Algonkian or Iroquoian practice was near Providence on March 26 when two Englishmen were whipped, slashed and had embers applied to their wounds before they were killed.⁷⁰ Saltonstall related an incident occurring towards the end of the month similar to what he reported at Lancaster; in the burning of Providence a man was cut open and a Bible placed in his stomach.⁷¹ In April five or six men captured near Sudbury went through a gauntlet, were whipped and fire applied to their wounds.⁷² Near Mount Hope in July, the Mohegans cut the fingers of a Narragansett, broke them along with his toes and legs and dashed in his brains.⁷³ Apparently the last instance of torture in King Philip's War in southern New England occurred near Deerfield in August when four or five English received a reception

70

Douglas Edward Leach, ed., A Rhode Islander Reports on King Philip's War: The Second William Harris Letter of August, 1676 (Providence: Rhode Island Historical Society, 1963), 42.

71

[Saltonstall], "New and Further Narrative", 86.

72

Increase Mather, A Brief History of the War with the Indians in New-England (Boston, 1676), 26; Hubbard, History, I, 212-13.

73

Hubbard, History, I, 62-4.

like the one met by those near Providence on March 26.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, King Philip's War ended without the kind of continuous excesses against prisoners so characteristic in Canada.

Torture, then, was much less an integral part of Algonkian warfare in southern New England than it was in Canada. What did occur appears to have had little ceremony about it and was rarely of long duration. Adoption also was not often reported, but the persistent attempts of the Mohegans and Narragansetts to gain control over the Pequots after 1637 indicates that some form of assimilation must have existed sufficiently for Indians to realize its value. For the most part, Indian treatment of prisoners was probably not much worse than that meted out by the English. John Easton, in his "Relacion" graphically demonstrated this:

... it is true the indians generally ar very barbarous peopell but in this war I have not herd of ther tormenting ani but that the English army Cote an old indian and tormented him, he was well knone to have bine a long time a veri decreped and haremless indian of the queens [Weetamoo].⁷⁵

74

Leach, Rhode Islander, 78-80.

75

John Easton, "A Relacion of the Indian Warre", in Lincoln, Narratives, 13-14.

English cruelty could match that of the Indians.⁷⁶

IV

As an occasional adjunct to these scenes of torture, cannibalism was for European observers a final climax in a litany of horrors. It should be made clear at the outset that it is only in the restricted sense of a war practice that cannibalism among the Algonkians will be discussed here. The eating of human flesh due to starvation, or within the complex of the Windigo psychosis,⁷⁷ or as a purely religious act, is not a part of this study. Fortunately, it is usually clear in the sources on which occasions cannibalism occurred as a part of the practices surrounding the treatment of prisoners.

76

See R.O. MacFarlane, "Indian Relations in New England, 1620-1760: A Study of a Regulated Frontier" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge: Harvard University, 1933), 31-4, for a number of examples of English atrocities.

77

There is a considerable body of literature concerning the Windigo question. See, for example, M.I. Teicher, Windigo Psychosis: A Study of a Relationship between Belief and Behaviour among the Indians of Northeastern Canada (Seattle: American Ethnological Society, 1960) and R.D. Fogelson, "Psychological Theories of Windigo 'Psychosis' and a Preliminary Application of a Models Approach", in Melford E. Spiro, ed., Context and Meaning in Cultural Anthropology (New York: Free Press, 1965), 74-99.

In both New England and Canada and indeed throughout aboriginal societies, the most obvious basis of this kind of cannibalism was that of revenge, as a final rage-filled act in the torture ceremony.⁷⁸ Yet this was only the surface of an important set of beliefs based on the idea that all things in the universe contained spirits and that any part of a man held his soul. If he demonstrated outstanding courage in his tortures, then, his body and especially his heart was eaten in the belief that, in E.E. Muntz's words, "bravery and other desirable parts of an enemy would pass through actual ingestion of a part of his body into that of the consumer".⁷⁹ Strangely enough it did not appear to occur to the Europeans, particularly to the Catholic French, that Indian beliefs bore striking similarities to the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on transubstantiation.⁸⁰

78

Loeb, Blood Sacrifice Complex, 11; Loeb, "Cannibalism", 56-7. Champlain, Works, II, 134, referring to an incident in June 1610, talks of his Indian allies eating an enemy "par vengeance".

79

E.E. Muntz, Race Contact: A Study of the Social and Economic Consequences of the Contacts Between Civilized and Uncivilized Races (New York: Century Co., 1927), 72; cf. Hodge, Handbook, I, 201, and Loeb, "Cannibalism," 88-96.

80

Loeb, "Cannibalism", 103; C.J. Jaenen, "The Meeting of the French and Amerindians in the Seventeenth Century" (Unpublished Paper presented at the University of Western Ontario, London, February 5, 1970), 10.

Most frequently among the Iroquois but also among the Algonkians, the children were given the heart of a brave man to eat.⁸¹ Pierre Boucher was careful to distinguish these two motivations of revenge and the obtaining of someone else's virtues in his comments on cannibalism:

En suite s'il reste de la vie au patient, ils luy coupent le col avec un cousteau, luy fendent la poitrine, & luy en tirent le coeur; & si ç'a esté un homme courageux, qui n'ait fait aucun cry pendant qu'on l'a tourmenté, il y en a qui boivent de son sang, pour s'incorporer son courage.

En suite on le coupe par quartiers, & on le jette à la voirie; ou quelques fois ils le font cuire, & le mangent par rage.⁸²

In southern New England in the summer of 1675, Nathaniel Saltonstall apparently witnessed a clear case of the belief in the positive benefits of cannibalism. An Indian was being hanged for some crime:

... then came an Indian, a Friend of his, and with his Knife made a Hole in his Breast to his Heart, and sucked out his Heart-Blood; Being asked his Reason therefore, his Answer, Umn, Umn, nu, Me stronger as I was before, me be so strong as me and he too, he be ver strong Man fore he die.⁸³

81

For example, JR, V, 50-4; X, 226.

82 Pierre Boucher, Histoire veritable et naturelle des moeurs et productions du pays de la Nouvelle-France, vulgairement dit le Canada (Boucherville: Société historique de Boucherville, 1964), 132.

83 [Saltonstall], "Present State", 41.

The fact that cannibalism appeared to have a strong basis in a fundamental complex of beliefs may mean that it was indigenous. E.M. Loeb in fact has gone so far as to suggest that cannibalism is characteristic of all societies and only becomes refined into such ideas as transubstantiation as a culture advances from its primitive phases.⁸⁴ Certainly any process of diffusion is difficult to trace and to prove, although Regina Flannery postulates an Iroquois origin for the practice in Canada and southern New England.⁸⁵ Possibly the strongest evidence favouring this hypothesis is that cannibalism as a war practice was much more common among the Iroquois than among the Algonkians.

From 1600 to 1680 in Canada, the records indicate not much more than a dozen instances of cannibalism among the Algonkins, Montagnais and Ottawas.⁸⁶ There were at least seven cases between 1600 and 1632, the

84

Loeb, "Cannibalism", 56a.

85

Flannery, Analysis, 180.

86

I have found nine examples. E.S. Rogers, "Aboriginal and Post-Contact Traits of the Montagnais-Naskapi Culture" (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1953), 58, found only one for the Montagnais.

period when the French allies waged their most effective wars. At the mouth of the Richelieu in June 1610,⁸⁷ at Tadoussac in May⁸⁸ and in July 1615,⁸⁹ at Quebec in August 1627⁹⁰ and at Tadoussac in June or July 1632,⁹¹ the Montagnais and Algonkins ate their Iroquois prisoners; however, the sources do not provide any more detail than the bare statement of the fact. In July 1609 at Lake Champlain, the heart of a dead Iroquois was presented to other captives, possibly as a mockery of Iroquois practice.⁹² The Montagnais at Quebec in the summer of 1632 gave the heart of an Iroquois sagamore to their children to eat, while the other braves consumed

87

Lescarbot, History, III, 311-12; Champlain Works, II, 134.

88

Jouve, Franciscains, 43.

89

PAC, MG 7, IA7, vol. 483, fol. 581^v.

90

Champlain, Works, V, 231-32.

91

JR, V, 26-30.

92

Champlain, Works, II, 101-04.

the remainder of his body.⁹³ After the early 1630's, the incidence of cannibalism dropped sharply; and examination of the most relevant documents yields only two cases. At Three Rivers in August 1636, the Montagnais ate pieces of flesh from their prisoner during the actual torture ceremony⁹⁴ and on Manitoulin Island in the summer of 1658, the Ottawas in company with the Hurons apparently ate eight Iroquois, some killed in battle and some tortured.⁹⁵ In parallel with torture, cannibalism declined as a result of the influence of Christianity and the loss of military vigour among the French allies.⁹⁶ They increasingly submitted to French demands not to deal with their prisoners in the old way.⁹⁷

⁹³
JR, V, 50-54.

⁹⁴
JR, IX, 256-58.

⁹⁵
Radisson, Explorations, 88.

⁹⁶
Again the decline may have been only apparent. Perhaps there was a reluctance to admit that recent Indian converts to the Christian faith might be reverting to pagan customs.

⁹⁷
As in August 1647 (Du Creux, History, II, 462-64.

The evidence for the practice of cannibalism in southern New England is considerably less than in Canada. In May 1637, the Mohegans roasted and ate a Pequot;⁹⁸ in September 1643, Uncas (according to some accounts) ate part of the shoulder of the dead Miantonomo;⁹⁹ at some point in 1675, members of an Algonkian tribe gave the heart of a Mohawk to their squaws to eat¹⁰⁰ and in the summer of the same year, the incident reported by Saltonstall took place.¹⁰¹ As with torture, cannibalism did not appear to have a firm place in the war practices of the southern New England Algonkians.

V

By about 1680, then, in both Canada and southern New England, two of the war practices that most horrified European observers of the Algonkians, torture and cannibalism, were no longer frequent. Apparently these

98

Alden T. Vaughan, New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians, 1620-1675 (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), 141; Mather, Relation, 46.

99

Sylvester, Indian Wars, I, 412-13; Sylvester doubts the authenticity of this story.

100

Josselyn, "Account", 310.

101

[Saltonstall], "Present State", 41.

practices never did have a strong footing in southern New England. Adoption, the third war practice associated with the treatment of prisoners, saw some use, but it never became a highly-developed custom as it had among the Iroquois tribes. Some authorities would contend that torture, cannibalism and adoption were incorporated into Algonkian society only as a result of contact with the Iroquoians. The fact that they were less common, less elaborate and fairly readily discarded seems to support this. Yet the same evidence can illuminate something of more fundamental importance about Algonkian society in the seventeenth century. It was less cohesive than Iroquois society and thus less able to sustain certain cultural characteristics which were under attack from the outside. It was a war-like society in so far as war was a part of daily life, but it was not a militaristic society. In the end, the second half of the century witnessed the destruction, culturally and physically of the Algonkians by the Europeans. Along with them died the war customs that so shocked white men.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

It is always difficult to put succinctly the results of a relatively large research project, especially when those conclusions are not as clear or as definitely resolved as one would wish. The aim of this study has been to explore in some detail the nature of Algonkian warfare, not so much to prove or disprove any widely-held theory as to provide a reasonably balanced and truthful description of the European experience of this aspect of Indian life. Along the way, a number of conclusions, not revolutionary, but worth stating nevertheless, have emerged. In many cases they do not fit together into a coherent pattern.

Before European contact, the Algonkians did engage in warfare. Let us disabuse ourselves of the notion of the noble savage who lived in perfect harmony with his neighbours in some serene paradise. Even if there were enough food and space for everyone, the native aborigines of the eastern woodlands had ample motives for taking to the warpath. Indeed, in pre-contact times, there is every indication that economics had very little to do with the Algonkians' desire to fight each other or other tribes. The search for glory or the simple release of excess energy, as in modern sports or bar

room brawls, could be sufficient to light the spark. Modern anthropologists have found the same to be true for the societies they study today. Probably the most powerful motive, however, was the necessity felt to avenge wrongs done to one's kinsmen. The blood feud was perhaps the highest expression of morality to be found in native society before the period of contact and never completely faded during the seventeenth century in both Canada and southern New England.

Because any of these reasons for going to war could be satisfied by one or two deaths, the fighting was always on a small scale. And with little property, either landed or moveable, to defend, the Algonkian way of life was admirably suited to a mobile guerilla-style warfare which could attain these objectives without great difficulty. Fighting was a sport, with great potential for the individual to stand out and demonstrate his cunning. It was more to be anticipated than to be dreaded.

All this changed as a result of white contact, but the impact of the Europeans was much different in Canada than it was in southern New England. In Canada, the fur trade and the goods the Indians received for their furs, soon became essential to the survival of the natives. Competition for the role of middleman--to supply the

white men with the furs harvested by the western tribes--brought the Hurons into ever fiercer conflict with the tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy. The Algonkians were drawn into this struggle as well, since they were already long-standing enemies of the Iroquois for several reasons. The aims of the Hurons became their own. Further south, in New England, the fur trade played a less important role. Those tribes who became enemies of the English were embittered by other problems of white contact. Unlike New France, the English colonies had as their main goal settlement and hence the clearing and cultivation of land. Although significant efforts were made to deal fairly with the Indians on European terms, the two cultures had very different notions of what it meant to use the land; too often they did not understand what each other was up to. Already the Algonkians of southern New England had some basis for fearing the Europeans. Such early explorers as Thomas Hunt had set a bad precedent by kidnapping natives and these incidents were not easily forgotten. These bitter memories and the steady transfer of land from the Indians to the new settlements and all that this entailed go far towards explaining such outbreaks as the Pequot War and King Philip's War.

If the nature of contact was different in Canada and southern New England, the impact on native warfare

itself was quite similar in the two colonies. The Canadian Algonkians, fighting for their existence, joined with the Hurons and the French in a long-lasting albeit at times shaky alliance. Often the size of the forces they were able to field was amazing by aboriginal standards. The campaigns of 1609 and 1610 were the most outstanding examples of this. Yet the tradition of individual prowess was too great for such coalitions to function in the same way as they did in Europe. Throughout the seventeenth century, peace agreements or coordinated plans of attack were ruined by a few independent minds. The traditional pattern of raids and skirmishes persisted in strategic thinking and tactical fighting. The raid, the ambush or the sabotage, effective in killing a few, never could reach a sufficient scale to counteract the impressive manoeuvres of the Iroquois which reached a height in the assault on Huronia. Similarly, in southern New England, most attempts at organized alliances met with relative failure. The Pequots virtually fought alone in 1637. Philip was pushed into war in 1675 before he felt even his own tribe was prepared to fight. His planned alliance system did not take shape until some seven months after the war began. Although it functioned sufficiently well for a time to throw the English into near panic, this coalition was unable to exploit its manpower resources to

the best advantage to sustain a conflict of long duration. Philip and his followers were vulnerable to the problem of so many armies, that of supplies, and in the end met failure. While the alliance flourished, however, there were occasions on which the forces thrown into the fray were impressive. The raids and ambushes often were extremely effective. What they lacked was staying power.

It might be expected that the white contact had a profound effect on the nature of Indian warfare in the area of weapons. Both the French and English at one time or another feared the results of giving or selling firearms to the natives. Yet there is considerable evidence for saying that the European musket, whether matchlock or flintlock, could only be useful in ambush situations. The bow and arrow was more accurate, capable of more rapid fire and easier to keep in repair than European firearms of the seventeenth century. In giving confidence and in increasing firepower in some circumstances, guns did add something to the Indian arsenal. But they probably were much less important than metal knives and arrowheads in making the Indian a more efficient warrior.

Many of these features of Indian organization and tactics did not impress European observers who were used to the ordered ranks of their own battlefields. But it soon became clear to them that native methods were better

suited to frontier conditions. Both French and English learned this eventually and by the time of the major imperial wars, the colonials of both regions were hardened bush fighters, often to the disgust of regular troops from the homeland. What they never really understood, in the seventeenth century at least, was the place of certain war practices in the native tradition. Scalping, torture and cannibalism were all practised from time to time in Canada and southern New England, usually to the shock of white observers. Scalping and the taking of other war trophies can be explained on religious or "philosophical" grounds by reference to a commonly held aboriginal belief that a man's soul permeated his entire body and everything that belonged to him. By capturing his head, therefore, one obtained control over his spirit, perhaps to the captor's own advantage. Even without this relatively sophisticated line of thought, the desire to take trophies could be based on the simple desire to prove one's skill in killing the enemy. In practice, scalping was much more commonly seen in Canada than it was in southern New England. This may give some support to the theory that trophy-taking originated with the Iroquois and diffused directly to the Canadian Algonkians and indirectly to those of New England. But the evidence is too thin to raise this as anything

more than a hypothesis. It may even be that in a few cases, the Indians borrowed from the European tradition of displaying criminals' heads in public.

Torture of war prisoners, which horrified the whites even more, had its own counterpart in European life, although the basis was somewhat different. For the Indian, the idea of collective responsibility carried with it the consequence that there were no "innocents" in warfare. Anyone who was captured was considered to have forfeited his life and could be either adopted or tortured. Usually the latter was preferred in the early years. For both the Iroquois and the Canadian Algonkians this was to some degree accepted as a part of the warrior's life. On the part of the captive, the torture ceremony provided an opportunity to demonstrate valour and steadfastness. Those inflicting the torture (who often included women and children) might regard a particularly brave victim as an example for their warriors and children to emulate. Sadism and a religious motive also may have figured in the torture complex. Whether or not torture was indigenous to Algonkian culture in Canada and southern New England is open to question. It took place relatively frequently in Canada but less so in southern New England. In both regions, however, the actual ceremony was not ritualized to the same extent

as it was among the Iroquois. The way in which a prisoner was treated could vary considerably from one occasion to another, although most of the elements of the actual torture were present. Perhaps this is an indication that the practice came to the Algonkians from the Iroquois, but no one can be certain of this as yet. Adoption of prisoners who did not die, another Iroquois practice that the Confederacy used to great effect in increasing manpower, was only employed sporadically by the Algonkians. There are relatively few cases of this having taken place among the Canadian Algonkians and perhaps this is only to be expected. These tribes were largely nomadic in character, with little in the way of large scale cultural cohesiveness. There was little of the political and cultural organization commonly regarded as necessary for assimilation of outsiders. Much the same held true for the tribes of southern New England, although after the Pequot War, there was some competition to see who would gain jurisdiction over the defeated Pequots.

Cannibalism, another example in European eyes of Indian barbarity, had much the same reason for existence in Algonkian culture as transubstantiation had in Roman Catholic tradition. If one ate of a brave warrior, one would gain something of his virtues. The difference

between this and European practice may have been one only of refinement. As in the case of torture, nevertheless, cannibalism as a war practice seems to have had a firmer place among the Canadian Algonkians than among those of the English colonies. Both groups of tribes probably practised it less than did the Iroquois.

The European impact on the general tenor of Algonkian warfare was to render it more intense. Yet its overall effect on Indian culture was to cause its decline. In Canada, the Algonkians fell before the onslaught of new diseases and the results of a profound change in their way of life occasioned by missionary efforts to convert them and have them settle in white patterns. As their traditional existence declined, so too did the frequency of some war practices such as torture and cannibalism along with their general effectiveness in battle. This process began in the 1630's and had wrought its consequences by 1680. Now the Algonkins and Montagnais were shadows of what they had been, and the only Algonkian group capable of holding its own was the Ottawa tribe. Taking over the trading role of the defeated Hurons, it was left to face the Iroquois. It proved unable to do so without French assistance. In southern New England the result of English contact was more brutal. After King Philip's War, virtually the only tribe left intact

was the Mohegans and even it lived under close supervision. Whether as allies or as enemies of European civilization, the Algonkians were unable to withstand the momentous effects of contact.

Were the Algonkians an unusually aggressive or violent people? Such modern anthropologists as A. Irving Hallowell agree with Paul Le Jeune that at least some Algonkians contained their emotions to a very high degree. In the context of aboriginal society as a whole, they appeared to be less warlike than the Iroquois, but this hypothesis has to be tested in more detail. Their own judges, however, the white men, destroyed the very people they regarded as depraved and in so doing revealed their own weaknesses. The Algonkians were as much sinned against as sinning.

APPENDIX A
CROSS-CULTURAL EXAMINATION

I have examined the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF) at Carleton University in Ottawa for all North American cultures currently coded to determine the distribution of the taking of trophies, torture and cannibalism.¹ Although these files are an invaluable source of anthropological data, they have certain limitations which render this particular study more interesting than useful. In the first place, only a small number of cultures have been examined by the HRAF researchers, twenty-eight in all. The New England Algonkians, the Montagnais, the Algonkins and the Hurons are not represented. More seriously, the sources used are for the most part not historical apart from those cases in which Europeans made contact with an indigenous culture in the nineteenth century. For example, the HRAF analysts have not used the Jesuit Relations. Finally, the general reliability and accuracy of the information obtained is difficult to ascertain from the rather rapid run-through that the scope of this appendix dictates.

¹See HRAF Research Guide (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, n.d.), G.P. Murdock et al, Outline of Cultural Materials, 4th ed. (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1967) and G.P. Murdock, Outline of World Cultures, 3rd ed. (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1969).

The results, such as they are, appear below in tabular form. HRAF codes 266, 304, 721, 726 and 727 have been employed to obtain the data. Where applicable, the HRAF information has been compared with that found in Robert Textor's massive computerized Cross-Cultural Summary.²

2

Robert B. Textor, A Cross-Cultural Summary, New Haven: Human Relations Area Files, 1967. I assume that he includes scalping and the taking of other trophies under "mutilating".

1
HRAF DATA

Culture	Characteristics		
	Trophies	Torture	Cannibalism
Aleut	NS, late 19th S, 20th, heads	NS, 19th; SN 20th; S, 19th	SN, 20th NS, 19th
Tlingit	S, 19th, scalps & heads +	S, 19th +	S, 19th, to give courage
Copper Eskimo	NS, 19th, (T)	NS, 19th, (T)	NS, 19th
Nahane	S, 20th, scalps	NS, 20th	S, 20th
Bellacoola	S, 19th, scalps & heads	S, 19th, rare	SN, 20th
Nootka	NS, mid 18th S, 18th, heads, hands + S, 19th, heads	NS, mid 18th	S, mid 18th
Ojibwa	S, 19th, heads, hands, genitals + (T)	S, 19th, vague (T-stronger)	NS, 19th, but much discussion of Windigo

¹Abbreviations and Symbols:
 S.....exists)
 SN.....existence denied) followed by approximate period of earliest source, e.g.
 NS.....existence not mentioned) "19th"--nineteenth century.
 +.....several sources agree on previous information
 (T)....Textor, Cross-Cultural Summary, agrees
 (TN)...Textor disagrees

Culture	Characteristics		
	Trophies	Torture	Cannibalism
Ojibwa (2)	S, late 18th, scalps, (T)	S, late 18th, (T)	S, late 18th, drink blood
Micmac	S, 17th, scalps, +	S, 17th	S, 17th, children drink blood
Delaware	S, 17th, scalps & heads	S, 17th	S, late 18th SN, 17th
Iroquois	S, mid 17th, scalps	S, mid 17th	S, mid 17th
Creek	S, 19th, scalps, (T)	S, 19th, vague, (T-stronger)	NS, 19th
Crow	S, 19th, scalps, (T)	S, 19th, (T)	NS, 19th
Dhegila	S, 19th, scalps heads) rare arms) legs)	S, 19th, implied	S, 19th
Gros Ventre	S, 19th, scalps	NS, 19th	S, 19th, vague
Mandan	S, 19th, scalps, +	SN, 19th NS, 20th	NS, 19th
Pawnee	S, 19th, scalps, +	S, 19th, by women	NS, 19th
Pomo	S, 19th, heads? + SN, 19th	NS, 19th	NS, 19th

Culture	Characteristics		
	Trophies	Torture	Cannibalism
Yokuts	S, 19th, rare	NS, 19th	NS, 19th
Yoruk	SN, 19th	NS, 19th	NS, 19th
Plateau Yumans	S, 19th, scalps	NS, 19th	S, 19th
Tewa	S, 19th scalps, +	NS, 19th	NS, 19th
Zuni	S, 19th; scalps, (T)	S, 19th, vague (T-stronger)	NS, 19th
Aztec	S, 16th, scalps, (T)	S, 16th, (T)	S, 16th, +, (T)
Papago	S, 19th, scalps, (TN)	NS, 19th, (T)	NS, 19th
Tarahumara	NS, 19th	NS, 19th	NS, 19th
Tarasco	NS, 20th	NS, 20th	NS, 20th
Tepetzlan	NS, 20th	NS, 20th	NS, 20th

APPENDIX B
SCALP, LE SCALP, SCALPER

The vocabulary Europeans employed to describe the taking of scalps is an interesting albeit a minor issue in this study. At times, a certain amount of reading between the lines is required to ascertain whether a source refers to scalping or to the taking of heads in the early period,¹ for our modern terms did not come into general use until the last quarter of the seventeenth century in English and until the eighteenth century in French.

Used in its third meaning as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary ("The scalp with the hair belonging to it cut or torn from a man's head; prized by American Indians as a battle trophy"),² the noun apparently made its first appearance in the English language in Philemon Holland's 1601 translation of Pliny's Natural History. Holland rendered Pliny's

¹
See chapter two, section III.

²
Oxford English Dictionary, Corrected ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933); see the entry "Scalp" for full etymological data.

description of a race of Scythians as follows:

The former Anthropophagi or eaters of mans flesh... use to drink out of the skulls of mens heads, and to weare the scalpes haire & al, in stead of mandellions or stomachers before their breasts ...³

Even so, the term is "scalpes haire" or hair of the scalp, and not scalp by itself. It seems that the significant shift took place at about the time of King Philip's War. In 1674, Daniel Gookin recorded that on one occasion prior to the war, "... the scalp was flayed off", a usage fairly close to the strict meaning.⁴ Nathaniel Saltonstall, in his "Present State of New England" of 1675, described the "Head-Skin" as an Indian war trophy.⁵ In the same year, John Josselyn employed a term similar to Holland's: "...; that side that gets the victory exoriats the hair-scalp of the principal slain Enemies ..."⁶

³ Plinius Secundus, The Historie of the World, transl. Philemon Holland (London, 1601). The Oxford English Dictionary supplied the original references.

⁴ Daniel Gookin, "Historical Collections of the Indians in New England", MHC, 1st ser., I (1806), 163.

⁵ [Nathaniel Saltonstall], "The Present State of New England", in Charles H. Lincoln, ed. Narratives of the Indian Wars, 1675-1699 (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1913), 34.

⁶ John Josselyn, "An Account of Two Voyages to New England", MHC, 3rd ser., III (1833), 310; Georg Friederici, "Scalping in America", Smithsonian Institution Annual Report, 1906, 423.

By the summer of 1676, William Harris was writing from Rhode Island:

Some of y^e men of Swansy wear kild, And theyr heads (to Say) y^e Sculpes (y^t is) y^e skin & hayre of y^e top or crowne of y^e head flead of . . . (. . . they sent to y^e narragansets as afore sd).⁷

William Hubbard used the noun in its modern form and meaning in his history published in 1677:

. . . two or three Miles further they came up with some Heads, Scalps, and Hands cut off⁸ from the Bodies of some of the English . . .

While the noun became incorporated into the language, the verb began to be used as well. Nathaniel Saltonstall described in his "New and Further Narrative" of 1675 how "they [the Wampanoags] flead (or skulp'd) his Head of Skin and Hair".⁹

Until these new words became common, some other means of describing their idea had to be found. It may be that a number of the references before the 1670's to head-hunting were in fact references to scalping.

⁷ Douglas Edward Leach, A Rhode Islander Reports on King Philip's War: The Second William Harris Letter of August, 1676 (Providence: Rhode Island Historical Society, 1963), 28.

⁸ William Hubbard, The History of the Indian Wars in New England, from the First Settlement to the Termination of the War with King Philip, in 1677, ed Samuel G. Drake (Roxbury, Mass.: W.E. Woodward, 1865), I, 71.

⁹ Nathaniel Saltonstall, "A New and Further Narrative of the State of New England", in Charles H. Lincoln, ed., Narratives of the Indian Wars, 1675-1699 (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1913), 99.

As early as 1636, nevertheless, Winthrop used the expression "flayed off the skin of the head"¹⁰ to give the meaning of the verb and this along with something similar to "head-skins" as the noun, seems to have been the common expedient. The French had the same difficulty for the whole of their stay in Canada.¹¹ Cartier wrote of "les peaulx de cinq testes d'hommes"¹² and Champlain and the Jesuits described the war practice in similar terms.¹³

10

John Winthrop, Winthrop's Journal, 1630-1649, ed. J.K. Hosmer (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1908, I, 189.

11

"Le scalp", "scalper" or similar terms do not appear in the following dictionaries: La Curne de Sainte-Palaye, Dictionnaire historique de l'ancien langage françois, 10 vols. (Niort: L. Favre; Paris: H. Champion, 1875-82); Edmond Huguet, Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle, 7 vols. (Paris: Didier, 1925-34); G. Cayrou, Le Français classique (Paris: Didier, 1948); Jean Dubois and R. Lagane, Dictionnaire de la langue française classique (Paris: Librairie classique Belin, 1960); Antoine Furetiere, Dictionnaire universel..., 2 vols. (La Haye and Rotterdam, 1691); Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française, 2 vols. (Paris, 1694); Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, 17 vols. (Paris, 1751-65); Pierre Richelet, Dictionnaire de la langue française, ancienne et moderne ..., 3 vols. (Lyon, 1759).

12

Jacques Cartier, The Voyages of Jacques Cartier, ed. H.P. Biggar, Canadian Archives Publications, No. 11 (Ottawa: F.A. Ackland, 1924), 177.

13

See chapter two, section III.

At what point "le scalp" and "scalper" appeared in French sources is not easy to say with great certainty. Several modern dictionaries claim the verb was first employed in 1769, but this has proved impossible to verify.¹⁴ Apparently Chateaubriand was the first writer to use the noun, in 1827.¹⁵ By 1835 the terms were admitted by the Académie française.¹⁶ Whether they were in use before this period remains unclear, but they were certainly not common enough to appear in the published sources of the seventeenth century, in contrast to the case of the English language.

14

Oscar Bloch and W. von Wartburg, Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1964); Albert Dauzat, Jean Dubois and Henri Mitterand, Nouveau dictionnaire étymologique et historique (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1964); Paul Robert, Dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue française, 6 vols. (Paris: Société du Nouveau Littré, 1951-52).

15

François Auguste René, Vicomte de Chateaubriand, Voyage en Amérique, ed. Richard Switzer (Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1964), II, 332; Dauzat et al, Nouveau dictionnaire.

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RESUME

The aim of this study has been to explore in some detail the nature of Algonkian warfare in Canada and southern New England during the seventeenth century, not so much to prove or disprove any widely-held theory as to provide a reasonably balanced and truthful description of the European experience of this aspect of Indian life. Unfortunately the balance and the truth are limited by the documents to which the historian must resort. The story is, therefore, largely a white man's story and the insights of the anthropological sciences along with a good deal of common sense can only alleviate the problem to some degree. Nevertheless, several important conclusions stand out.

In the first place, the Algonkians did engage in inter-tribal warfare before European contact. Fighting was a feature of daily life, whether motivated by the need for material resources, by the desire for glory, by the impulse to release excess energy or, most important of all, by the necessity felt to seek vengeance against tribal enemies. Such objectives were limited and as a result the scale of fighting was not great.

With the arrival of the white man, this situation changed, but the effect of the European was much different in Canada than it was in southern New England. In the French colony, the fur trade made the Algonkian tribes of the St. Lawrence valley (and the Hurons) allies of the French. The economics of contact also increased the animosity between the Algonkians and their allies on the one hand and the Iroquois tribes on the other. As the whites became more

closely involved in this struggle, the wars became even fiercer, but the Algonkians could never match the superior strategy and tactics of the Iroquois. Battles took a heavy toll. More significant, however, were the losses the natives suffered from the various European maladies to which they had no resistance. By 1680, they were a faint shadow of their former selves. The tenor of Algonkian-white relations in southern New England, on the other hand, was one primarily of conflict based on opposing notions of land ownership. After the Pequot War of 1637 and King Philip's War of 1675-1676, the issue there was resolved in favour of the English who overcame their initial ignorance of Indian-style fighting by adaptation and by sheer staying power.

In the course of the century, nothing shocked observers of Algonkian culture so much as three war practices—the taking of scalps, the torture of prisoners and the eating of enemy dead. Yet none of these was based on pure sadism; each could be explained by reference to native religion and world views. All three were more common and more tenacious in Canada than in southern New England. In both colonies torture and cannibalism declined under the impact of the white contact. Scalping, which could serve the interests of English and French, conversely, was actively encouraged with scalp bounties in later years.

The European impact on the general tenor of Algonkian warfare was to render it more intense. Its overall influence on Indian culture was to cause its decay. Whether as allies or as enemies of European civilization, the Algonkians were unable to withstand the momentous effects of contact.