

Name _____



Settlers at War

In the early years of the American colonies, settlers and Native American groups often clashed over land, resources, and power. While some settlers and Native American tribes traded and cooperated, others fought bloody wars. Two major conflicts—the Pequot War and King Philip’s War—shaped relations between colonists and Native American groups for years to come.

The Pequot War (1636-1638)

The Pequot War took place in New England between the powerful Pequot people and English settlers, mainly from Massachusetts and Connecticut. Colonists wanted more land and saw the Pequot as an obstacle. After conflicts over trade and land turned violent, the English, along with their Native allies, attacked Pequot villages. In 1637, they set fire to a Pequot fort, killing hundreds of men, women, and children. The war ended in total defeat for the Pequot, and survivors were either killed, forced into slavery, or scattered among other tribes.

King Philip’s War (1675-1676)

King Philip’s War was one of the deadliest wars in American history in terms of population loss. It was named after Metacom, the leader of the Wampanoag people, whom the English called "King Philip." Metacom and his allies fought against English settlers in New England to protect their land and way of life. The war began when the settlers executed three Wampanoag men, and soon, villages on both sides were attacked and burned.

The war was brutal, with thousands of Native Americans and colonists dying. Eventually, the English captured and killed Metacom in 1676. Many surviving Native Americans were enslaved or forced to leave their lands.

The Lasting Impact

These wars greatly changed relations between settlers and Native American groups. After King Philip’s War, English settlers took even more land and weakened Native American power in New England. The wars also increased fear and mistrust between both groups, making peaceful relations harder.

Though some Native American groups continued to trade and interact with settlers, these conflicts made it clear that many colonists would use force to expand their settlements. The effects of these wars lasted for generations.

