An Empire at War

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The war that brought Colonel John Forbes to Halifax in mid-1757 was already three years old. It began in the volatile Ohio Country where Virginia land speculators collided with local natives and the French. At issue was ownership of the upper Ohio Valley and, specifically, the Forks of the Ohio. Open warfare there quickly spread to the other contested borderlands between British America and New France: Lake Ontario, the Champlain Valley, and the disputed boundary between Acadia and Nova Scotia. By the end of 1755 both Britain and France had committed their regular armies to America, and France formally declared war the following year. Colonial border disputes led to war wherever the rival empires were close enough to collide: the Mediterranean, West Africa, India, and, finally, in northwest Germany, where France, loosely allied with Austria and Russia, faced off against Prussia, supported by Great Britain. The American "French and Indian War" and the European "Seven Years' War" had, in effect, become one huge conflict.[1]

The results of three years of fighting had been dismal for Britain and her American colonists. Colonel George Washington's humiliating surrender at Fort Necessity in 1754 was followed by the near destruction of General Edward Braddock's army near Fort Duquesne one year later, exposing Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania to devastating raids by Ohio Indians, French irregulars, and their Great Lakes and Canadian Indian allies. An effort to cut

N A N C E

Québec

T.

Trois Rivieres

Restigouche R.

Chaleur Bay

Miramichi R.

Île Madeleine

Gulf of
St. Lawrence

Newfoundland

Île St-Jean

Cape Breton
Island

Louisbourg
Gabarus Bay

FT. GASPAREAU
FT. BEAUSEJOUR
FT. LAWRENCE

MAINE
(Mass.)

Bay of Fundy

Minas
Basin

Annapolis
Royal

Halifax

NOVA SCOTIA
(ACADIA)

CROWN
POINT
ROAD

Connecticut R.

Merrimack R.

FFARD

FT. NO 4

N.H.

ny

Portsmouth

MASS.

Boston

R.I.

CONN.

Newport

ork

ATLANTIC OCEAN

Fig. Intro. 1
New France and the British Mainland Colonies
in the Seven Years' War, 1754–1763

0   MILES   200

0   KILOMETERS   200
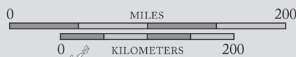
off French western posts by taking Fort Niagara ended instead with the capture of hundreds of British and provincial troops at Fort Oswego. Farther afield, the French took the British garrison on Minorca in 1756, depriving the Royal Navy of a base against southern France and costing Admiral Sir John Byng his life before a firing squad.[2]

Forbes and his 17th Foot were part of a massive buildup of British forces meant to turn the tide in 1757. Instead, British forces faced only further defeat and disgrace. While most of Britain's forces were gathering in Halifax in preparation for an assault on the fortress of Louisbourg, the marquis de Montcalm drove south from Montreal and snapped up over two thousand regular and provincial troops after a brief siege of Fort William Henry at the foot of Lake George. In the meantime, the Louisbourg expedition, meant to pry open the gateway to Canada, was still born; French naval forces reached the fortress ahead of the British army and fleet. Added to the failures in America was the French defeat of a German army led by George II's younger son and commander in chief of the British army, William Augustus, duke of Cumberland, whose job it was to cover the king's Hanoverian territories. Instead he was outmaneuvered and forced to sign a convention at Kloster Zeven: his army would be disbanded and Hanover occupied by French troops. The British army lost its senior and most influential commander, forced to resign in disgrace, while numerous officers such as Forbes lost a powerful patron and advocate. Against such defeats the few victories—at Fort Beausejour in Acadia and Plassy in Bengal, for example—seemed little compensation.[3]

Not long after the Louisbourg campaign fell apart, Forbes was appointed adjutant general to the commander in chief, John Campbell, fourth earl of Loudoun. He was responsible for the day-to-day management of the army as well as a party to discussions of plans and operations. In this way, Forbes was quickly introduced to three central issues surrounding Britain's war effort in America: the state of the army, the testy relationship between the commander in chief and the colonies, and the growing importance of Indian affairs to the success of British operations.[4]

The British regular army in America underwent rapid and unprecedented growth; from five understrength regiments on the continent in 1755, Loudoun commanded twenty-one regiments just two years later. Only once before, in 1711, had Britain sent large numbers of troops to the colonies and then only for a season. This rapid expansion altered the makeup of the army and posed a number of challenges, some unique to war in America. Regiments ordered on active service from Ireland or Britain were normally on a low, peacetime establishment. In order to bring them up to strength

quickly, the army resorted to the time-honored practice of drafting: drawing men from regiments at home to fill those going abroad. At the end of 1757, for example, Forbes was busy preparing a draft for those regiments left to garrison in Nova Scotia. Aside from giving regimental officers an opportunity to discard unwanted men (troublemakers, slackers, or misfits), drafting weakened the bonds of comradeship that came from long service in the same regiment. Indeed, at the very beginning of the war, General Braddock, whose two regiments absorbed hundreds of drafts and colonial recruits, was compelled to alter the tactical organization of his army, "that the Officers and Men might know one another." A year later, Loudoun found the 35th Foot very disappointing, its new men "unruly." He hoped the next campaign would allow him to make better soldiers of the "pressed Men" that filled its ranks. The Highland Regiment (42d Foot), though a good regiment, "have not near two hundred" veterans left out of nearly a thousand rank and file. British troops may have been reasonably well-equipped and disciplined, but they were often strangers to each other; only active campaigning in the face of the enemy would re-create reliable regimental communities. In addition to drafting, the army recruited heavily in Ireland, Britain, and America. The resulting influx of men meant that the army got younger. Veterans—the "old standers" as they were known—were matched and outnumbered by inexperienced recruits whose officers would not have the luxury of peacetime duty during which to turn them into acceptable soldiers.[5]

The American army was also augmented by new regiments, notably the Royal American Regiment, later the 60th Foot. Huge by army standards, its four battalions, numbering over four thousand men, would be raised largely in the colonies. Its officers included a large number of "foreign Protestants": Swiss, German, and Huguenot professionals whose commissions were a gift of the king, instead of being offered through purchase. These were joined by Scots, English, and provincial officers. The enlisted men were drawn from New England and the mid-Atlantic colonies as well as from Protestant states in northern Germany, and they ran the gamut from native-born colonists to immigrants from all across the British Atlantic. Finally, and with the encouragement of William Pitt (now head of the government), the army began raising new regiments from the Scottish Highlands. In addition to the veteran 42d, the American army would include two new Highland regiments: Lieutenant-Colonel Montgomery's First Highland Battalion (later 77th Foot) and Lieutenant-Colonel Simon Fraser's Second Highland Battalion (later 78th Foot). Although led by cadres of professional soldiers, including men such as Major James Grant of the 77th, who had been serving in the Scottish

regiments of the Dutch army, these new regiments were composed of inexperienced troops who would learn their trade on campaign.[6]

The army's officer corps also posed challenges. British officers were notoriously prone to indiscipline, motivated by class, personal honor, hunger for advancement, and, in the case of Englishmen, a profound dislike of Scottish officers. This last issue involved Forbes directly when Captain Charles Lee of the 44th Foot complained of the large number of Scots, and alleged that Forbes earned his colonelcy by toasting the Pretender. Forbes, as adjutant general, also had to cope with Major-General Lord Charles Hay, whose insubordination led Loudoun to order him home. When Hay refused to leave, Loudoun, through Forbes, placed him under arrest. In the meantime, officers angered at the failure of the Louisbourg expedition blamed Loudoun and openly questioned his fitness for command. Forbes, no stranger to the frictions of high command, became determined that no such behavior would be tolerated in any force under his command.[7]

Overshadowing the challenges of raising and training an army and coping with a fractious officer corps there was a more basic and much greater issue: what modern soldiers would call "logistics." Eighteenth-century armies never used the term and it does not appear in contemporary dictionaries. Nevertheless, the British army needed everything from ammunition to wagons. Without supplies and equipment, training was impossible, morale would suffer, and the army would simply be unable to move. Moreover, the fact that the redcoats were operating on friendly soil in the colonies created as many problems as it solved. Yes, the colonies had an abundance of people, most of them engaged in agriculture. Yes, there were ports such as Boston, New York, and Philadelphia that could be used as bases for operations. And, yes, American settlements, like their counterparts in Britain or Europe, relied on animal power and water transportation, which could be turned to the army's advantage.[8]

On close inspection, these became questionable assets at best. An abundance of people, yes, but spread out through provinces that, taken together, dwarfed Britain in size. Moreover, as one moved west or north (toward the enemy), the population thinned out. Even large towns lacked the capacity to house thousands of soldiers and their dependents, and declining population density created other problems in finding shelter and resources for troops. Although most colonists did make their livings directly or indirectly from the land, not all agricultural assets were useful to the army; slave-based economies of tobacco or rice were less an advantage than general farming or raising livestock. Those settlers who did produce foodstuffs did so with an eye to their family needs and the market but maintained only enough horses,

oxen, and wagons for their present needs; they had little in the way of surplus in any of these precious assets, which the army needed in quantity and was notorious for wantonly destroying.[9]

Port facilities were of little use unless reliable means could be found to transport goods and men to where they were needed. Not only were distances a problem, but the colonies simply lacked the infrastructure that could allow an army of thousands of people to move efficiently any distance at all. The Hudson River–Lake Champlain corridor did offer an advantageous route to the heart of Canada. The passage up the Mohawk River to Lake Ontario and from there to Fort Niagara lay through the lands of the Six Nations: there were no towns to serve as depots and no roads to carry artillery and supply wagons. In the absence of towns the army built forts, along with roads connecting them, and these were tasks that consumed time, money, and manpower. South of New York, any attempt to reach the Ohio Country would run headlong into the Appalachian Mountains—the "endless mountains" of local lore. The navigable rivers ran north–south and not east–west, except for the Mohawk and Potomac. Alternatives consisted of trading paths that were adequate for packhorse trains, but not an army.[10]

The mid-eighteenth-century British army was, in fact, a collection of regiments of several hundred officers and men. Each had a surgeon and a surgeon's mate plus farriers in the cavalry. Other than these specialists the army lacked any sort of institutional "tail" designed to support fighting troops. Support was entirely ad hoc and fell under the control of long-serving bureaucrats, members of the permanent government, whose collective experience allowed them to quickly create the necessary system to maintain an army. These men—commissaries, muster-masters, artillery conductors, and others—were an obscure but vital part of the "sinews of power" that allowed Britain to finance and manage a global war. Parliament, aside from voting the annual army estimates and renewing the Mutiny Act (without which an army could not legally exist), had little to do with these arrangements. In addition, regiments on active service drew upon their own manpower for specialized labor. Soldiers found themselves transporting supplies, as well as building storehouses, barracks, and fortifications. Colonel Henry Bouquet, stationed in South Carolina in 1757, was able to find 149 skilled labors representing fifty different trades in his five companies of the Royal Americans. These men included blacksmiths, wheelwrights, and bakers. Those without skills found themselves cutting timber or mending roads.[11]

Three government departments were crucial to the creation of a support system for the army. The Board of Admiralty undertook to carry troops overseas, feeding them from their own victualling agency. The Board of

Ordnance controlled ammunition—the Royal Artillery and the engineers, neither of which was part of the army. Overshadowing both the Admiralty and Ordnance was the Treasury, responsible for securing supply and transportation contracts, providing funds through its Paymaster's Office, and issuing bills of exchange that army commanders could use to raise cash for contingencies. The Treasury's agents could be found throughout the army: men to arrange contracts for local materials and labor, commissaries of stores, commissaries of wagons, and mustering agents, the latter responsible for ensuring that the number of troops on the ground corresponded to the monthly returns before pay and allowances were issued to regimental agents. Meanwhile, the War Office continued to cope with the blizzard of paperwork associated with a rapidly growing army. The Secretary at War issued orders from the king or commander in chief, dealt with the various legalities that went with raising new regiments and recruiting those in service, and fielded the seemingly endless requests for commissions and favors. Orders creating hospitals and their personnel were reminders that essential medical services were also created as needed. A Physician-general, Surgeon-general, and Apothecary-general for the American army were appointed by commission from the crown. Additional surgeons, mates, hospital matrons, apothecaries, and nurses were hired, often through patronage networks. The army's general hospital in New York supplied manpower to hospitals with field armies and controlled the flow of medical stores.[12]

Providing the mountains of foodstuffs, forage, wagons, and livestock was the task of civilian contractors. Unlike the Royal Navy, whose yards contained a ready supply of naval stores and whose Victualling Board maintained permanent depots of foodstuffs, the army needed to accumulate supplies when and where needed. Drawing on a century of experience supplying military forces, contractors submitted bids and signed contracts with Treasury agents, based on the projected number of men and horses needed over a specified period of time. Contractors also benefited from the dense network of trade and credit that characterized the British Atlantic world. British contractors, foremost among them the firm of Kilby and Baker, subcontracted with provincial firms and individual merchants such as Plumstead and Franks, DeLancey and Watts, and Adam Hoops, the latter from Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and others located in or near the major distribution points. Other, transatlantic firms such as Greg and Cunningham, took advantage of partnerships rooted in both Britain and America. And in the case of Kilby and Baker, one of the partners (Christopher Kilby) resided in the colonies, working in New York and Philadelphia. Contracting, as well as the presence

of large numbers of soldiers themselves, guaranteed that by 1757 the colonies were awash in specie and bills of exchange, which further stimulated local, frequently cash-poor, economies.[13]

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Managing the flow of material from ports and contractors to troops—linking supply and demand—was the task of the American army's deputy quartermasters general. Officially, their tasks embraced far more than the title would imply. A contemporary definition of the post emphasized that the "duty is to mark the marches, and encampments of the army" and to designate sites for each regimental camp in the field, while coordinating the movement of vital supplies. A quartermaster general was to be a man of "great judgement and experience." In the colonies one such man was Lieutenant-Colonel Sir John St. Clair, who had directed the organization and march of Braddock's army and survived its destruction, though with a serious wound that bothered him for the rest of his life. Loudoun retained him even though St. Clair was often bedridden. As the army grew and its operations expanded, so, too, did the number of deputy quartermasters general. Of these men—including Captain John Bradstreet, Captain Gabriel Christie, and Major James Robertson, along with St. Clair—none was a specialist in what he did. They all, like Forbes or any other staff officer, undertook a job deemed suited to their talents and experience—yet another example of the army's ad hoc arrangements.[14]

The tasks and difficulties these men faced went well beyond the definitions offered by military dictionaries, however. According to Loudoun, St. Clair had "a great deal of Business," more, in fact, "than in any Service I ever was in." St. Clair himself readily admitted that "what was looked on at home as easy" was, in fact, a daunting task. Especially challenging to him and the army was moving through "this vast tract of Mountains." If the army could support itself in America as it could in Europe, "the Thing [Braddock's march] wou'd be easy." Planning marches through such "vast tracts" was only one problem; the need for far-flung garrisons was another. Holding forts that guarded vital waterways or roads while safeguarding frontier towns demanded that St. Clair oversee the building of hospitals, storehouses, and barracks and ensure that garrisons of regulars and provincials were provided with necessary supplies in the face of poor roads and civilians reluctant to rent horses and wagons. America, in other words, was turning into a very different "school of war" from the familiar ones in Flanders and Germany. It was a theater of war unlike any that Forbes, St. Clair, or their comrades had ever before encountered.[15]

The American commander in chief, Loudoun, arrived in the colonies to face and sort out a ramshackle operation that had produced little beyond waste, fraud, and defeat. Arriving in July, 1756, Loudoun immediately superseded William Shirley, governor of Massachusetts and acting commander in chief since Braddock's death. There was no overarching plan for war in America and little in the way of capable staff. Melding provincial and regular war efforts was a challenge in itself, particularly since the king ordered that "all General and Field Officers" commissioned by colonial governors "shall take Rank as Eldest Captains" when serving with regular forces; a decision, first made in 1755, that rankled status-conscious provincials such as George Washington and only added to already tense military relations. That, and ongoing issues of supply, organization, and training consumed much of Loudoun's energy until he was relieved by Pitt at the end of 1757. Yet, Loudoun did succeed in creating the administrative structure that allowed British and provincial troops to campaign successfully in the years ahead. Even so, Loudoun found himself locked in a war of words with colonial politicians and soldiers, whose ideas of war and, especially, empire, were at odds with everything that Loudoun and his fellow Britons held to be true and correct; conflicts that hinted at the cross-currents and latent tensions that defined relations between Britain and her mainland American colonies.[16]

Loudoun found himself frustrated at every turn. His officers enlisted indentured servants and immediately found themselves detained for theft of property by local magistrates. Demands that colonies provide quarters for troops or build barracks for them were met with foot-dragging and arguments about the rights of Englishmen, local usage, and precedent. In one incident, Bouquet was refused quarters for troops by Philadelphia magistrates; the sheriff likewise refused to enforce the colonel's orders. Only an appeal to the governor William Denny and the threat of quartering additional troops in the city broke the impasse. After only three months in America, Loudoun was driven to complain that "the backwardness of the People of this Country . . . is incredible." Others—such as Admiral Sir Charles Hardy, now governor of New York—chimed in. Hardy referred to "unhappy divided America" and was particularly frustrated by the jealousy that prevented individual colonies from raising their quotas of men until they knew that their neighbors were likewise raising troops. If these were British dominions, they seemed to behave in decidedly un-British ways and were as wary of imperial authorities as they were of the French.[17]

Hardy's comments suggest what may have been the greatest obstacle to cooperation between colonists and the army: a deepening sense of "otherness." Metropolitan and provincial Britons were not alienated from each

other, but were nevertheless inclined to emphasize differences as much, or more than, similarities. Many Britons on both sides of the Atlantic found provincials to be "mysterious and paradoxical people." And, within the growing armies taking shape in America, with regulars and provincials living and working cheek-to-jowl, familiarity could easily breed contempt. The first hints of this surfaced with the arrival of Braddock's troops in 1755. Reporting to Braddock in early February, St. Clair not only reminded him that colonists were "totally ignorant of Military Affairs," but "Their Sloth &Ignorance is not to be described." He suggested that treating the Germans among them like the peasants of Europe might have a positive effect. Three years later, at Louisbourg, General James Wolfe made similar observations, accusing provincials of being "in general the most contemptible cowardly dogs" he could imagine. On the other hand, some officers, including Bouquet and Colonel Thomas Gage, were willing to see past colonial faults, at least far enough to seek their fortunes through landed estates or advantageous marriages. Meanwhile, civilian visitors, such as the Reverend Andrew Burnaby, avoided scathing remarks only to use condescension instead. While in Philadelphia, Burnaby found the women "exceedingly handsome and polite," but he quickly added that, "since their intercourse with the English officers, they are greatly improved" and would "not make bad figures even in the first assemblies in Europe."[18]

Colonists then were lazy, slovenly—and selfish. British officers were angered at the openness with which colonial merchants engaged in smuggling with the Spanish and French, especially when they used "flag of truce" vessels, designed to repatriate prisoners of war, as an excuse to trade in enemy ports in the Caribbean. Others, including Forbes, were equally upset at the price-gouging of farmers and tradesmen who held back needed wagons and supplies until prices went up. And, of course, there was the king's directive regarding commissions—another hint, perhaps, that Britons found the colonists somehow unequal and unworthy.[19]

Some colonists met these attitudes with bemusement. Writing to inform a friend of military affairs in America in 1755, Marylander Daniel Dulany made a point of suggesting that, perhaps in another hundred years, Britons would finally learn that "we live in houses, speak English, wear clothes, and have some faint notions of Christianity," while laughing at questions from newcomers such as "have you any cows, or horses in Maryland?" Things would change, Delany concluded, "as our importance begins to be understood" thanks to the war.[20]

For provincial soldiers swept into the war and into British-led armies, though, "otherness" was no laughing matter. For them, encounters with red-

coats and their officers raised the specter of draconian discipline and order largely unknown in the colonies outside of slave-based plantations. Close observation convinced many that British troops were "but little better than slaves to their Officers." One provincial soldier who witnessed his first military execution described it in great detail in his diary, as something hideously outlandish. Colonists used to local self-rule and personal autonomy found courts-martial and the humiliating sentences they handed down a shock, disturbing proof of the gap between provincial notions of English "liberties" and those expressed by the king's troops. Many colonial officers seem to have agreed; when presenting men to a court-martial, they often deliberately reduced the charges just to avoid the capital punishments common among the regulars. Yet, over time, others such as George Washington of Virginia and Joseph Shippen of Pennsylvania, for example, came to embrace the regular army's professionalism and codes of conduct, even to handing out severe punishments to their own men. These conflicted views of Britons and colonists, however, reflected the complex state of the empire they were trying to defend.[21]

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The British Atlantic was less an empire in the traditional sense than it was a vast collection of territories and peoples stretching from slaving stations in West Africa through Caribbean islands to lumbering and fishing settlements in Maine and Newfoundland. From the viewpoint of any traditional imperialist, it would have seemed a ramshackle assortment at best. Colonies and trading stations arose from the initiative of private individuals, companies, and corporations; the result was that, over a century and a half, the British Atlantic consisted of a patchwork of places each with its own history, legal foundation, and social character. Two things bound these places together. One was a common allegiance to the monarchy that had given its approval to the founding ventures; what has been called "reciprocal sovereignty." The other was the growing network of trade, the transatlantic flow of people, goods, cash, and credit.[22]

Soldiers such as Loudoun looked to Parliament for the legal underpinning of their profession, but it played a limited role in defining how colonies viewed themselves as part of a larger British world. Indeed, the mainland colonies, many of which played only a small role in Britain's global economy, enjoyed considerable self-government and only limited interference from abroad, largely through the Navigation Acts, which merchants found ways of avoiding, including smuggling.[23]

When war broke out, the American colonies continued to reflect the rapid territorial and population growth that sustained regional diversity and localism. Colonists were busy moving into the piedmont borderlands of Virginia, Pennsylvania, the Carolinas, and Georgia. The latter, founded in 1733, was barely two decades old when Virginians and Canadians began killing each other in the Ohio Country. Much of this growth was fueled by a white population that quickly reproduced itself thanks to abundant resources. Added to this was continued migration. The war in America erupted in the middle of a wave of migration that saw thousands of Germans and Ulster Scots arrive in the colonies during the middle decades of the century. Moreover, the use of slave labor, especially in the staple economies of Virginia and South Carolina, steadily increased throughout the eighteenth century. Altogether, the mainland colonies that played host to Loudoun's army held over one and a half million people, one-third of them African or African American.[24]

New England, with its largely native-born population of English ancestry, most reflected England ethnically and culturally. The so-called middle colonies—New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania—were far more diverse. New York City, the American army's headquarters, was home to English, Scots, Dutch, Africans, and French, as well as colonial creoles. Reporting to his superiors, one early governor found the city and colony a bewildering mix of Quakers, Catholics, Baptists, Huguenots, Dutch Reformed, Anglicans, and Presbyterians. As the list implies, this colony, as well as neighboring New Jersey and Pennsylvania, perhaps came closest to our modern concept of an American "melting pot." "Fruit salad" might be a better term for colonies that contained large numbers of self-consciously Welsh, Ulster Scots, Dutch, Germans, Africans, as well as English. Here, ethnicity and religious persuasion often went together: Scottish and Irish Presbyterians, Welsh Quakers, and German Lutherans, Moravians, Baptists, and Mennonites. These people tended to cluster near others of the same background and persuasion and created a landscape punctuated with names like New Rochelle, Bryn Mawr, Ephrata, Donegal, and Strasburg as well as Lancaster, York, and Reading.[25]

Farther south, in Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas, the cultural landscape's most noticeable characteristic would be the stark contrast between Europeans (mostly free landowners and renters) and the large population of African slaves and their American descendants that characterized plantation economies. By 1755, in fact, slaves were a numerical majority in much of Tidewater Virginia and coastal South Carolina. In addition, the Chesapeake colonies absorbed many of the British convicts who arrived in America.

Numbering some fifty thousand from 1717 to the eve of the Revolution, these men and women were sent to the colonies as bound laborers as an alternative of capital punishment in Britain.[26]

Finally, native peoples continued to live within many of the mainland colonies, either as individuals trying to earn a living on the margins of society, or as communities with at least a tenuous hold on land and collective identities. "River Indians" along the Hudson River, Stockbridge Indians living in the town of that name, Munsees holding on in the upper Delaware Valley, Delawares at Shamokin on the edge of Pennsylvania, Conestogas living outside Lancaster, Pennsylvania, as well as remnants of Powhatans, living in Virginia on America's oldest reservations, all stood as reminders of the human cost associated with the rapid expansion of British America. With all of this wild variation, coupled with widely varying military traditions (from well-established militias in New England, to no military at all in Pennsylvania), to newcomers such as Loudoun or Forbes, "British" America was a very strange world indeed.[27]

These polyglot provinces thrived on equally varied economies. Geography, climate, resources, and the conscious choices of the founding generation of settlers guaranteed that the colonists would find a wide array of solutions to the challenges of making a living and making money in their new worlds. From the cod fisheries of the north Atlantic to the rice plantations of the South Carolina lowlands, no two colonies developed in quite the same manner. While several provinces depended on the production and sale of staple commodities: such as rice, tobacco, fish, or furs, others relied on more mixed economies based on subsistence agriculture and resource extraction. Virginia, with its slave-based tobacco production, for example, differed considerably from Pennsylvania's mixed farming, iron production, and deer-hide trading. The colonies also supported a handful of cities and dozens of small towns serving regional and local markets. And, by the 1750s, the growth of "backcountry" regions like Virginia's Shenandoah Valley or the Cumberland Valley of Pennsylvania with their subsistence farms and desire for access to eastern markets and political power, added to the complexity of what Governor Hardy characterized, with an ironic hint of truth, as "divided America."[28]

Not everyone enjoyed the benefits from the continued growth of British America. Slaves remained below the bottom rung of colonial society generally, producing wealth but never permitted to share it. As the colonies became more tightly enmeshed in an Atlantic—indeed, global—economy, they were more affected by cycles of economic boom and bust often triggered by the numerous wars of the long eighteenth century. Port towns were

especially vulnerable in this regard: economic dislocation hit them hardest and lasted longer than elsewhere. Moreover, seamen and those dependent on the shipping trades faced seasonal, as well as war-related shortages of work. And in port towns, as points of entry, immigrants, including servants and unskilled laborers, competed for what jobs were available. In the countryside, especially in New England, population pressure meant that land was becoming scarce and with it the economic and political independence that were the goals of sons and grandsons of farmers less able to transfer working farms to the next generation. Those unable to learn a skilled trade or find steady work became the pool from which both British and provincial officers found recruits after1755. At the same time, the Great Awakening and a spreading consumer culture were challenging traditional ideas of authority and place, producing dissention within churches and further underscoring divisions of wealth and power. These were societies that, in complex ways, were becoming both more British-like and more distinctively American at the same time; societies born of tensions between Old World traditions and New World possibilities. Colonies were home to more and more American-born people, who were nevertheless tied to a global economy driven from London, an economy that at once both encouraged emulation of British ways and widened gaps between rich and poor.[29]

These were, then, societies in a state of flux, and never more so than in the middle decades of the eighteenth century. As Loudoun, Forbes, and other Britons soon discovered, the colonies were not only home to complex, sometimes very un-British, social landscapes, these provinces also had their own methods of raising troops and dealing with the demands of the commander in chief. Simply put, Loudoun found himself in a British Atlantic world largely shaped by processes of negotiation between center and peripheries, where colonists enjoyed considerable self-government and economic independence. Unable to impose their will on distant and poorly understood subjects, metropolitan officials had been content to tolerate a good measure of local autonomy in return for colonial acceptance of London, king, and Parliament as legitimate sources of power and patronage within the empire. Under such circumstances, jealous localism, resistance to outsiders' demands, and the "divided" character of the colonies were, in fact, the norm. Where Hardy expected to find a uniform system of law and governance akin to that of British shires, he found instead hallowed traditions of local rule based on elective legislatures—even in those "royal" colonies, like New York, where governors were appointed by the king.[30]

From an American perspective, the empire resembled a loose coalition of coequal parts whose interests sometimes coincided and sometimes clashed.

The colonies could not even agree on any form of common defense; the famous Albany Plan of Union, promoted by Benjamin Franklin, was dead on arrival before the provincial assemblies. Consequently, British commanders, their agents, and their superiors at home, found themselves negotiating colonial participation in a war that, ostensibly, was being waged for the colonists' benefit. Everything from recruiting servants to quartering regulars and raising provincials had to meet with the approval of not only the army, but also local custom, legislatures, and political interests, the latter including many of the same men who sought and signed supply contracts with the army. As early as Loudoun's arrival in 1756, it was clear that the war in America would be a cooperative effort among equals. Validation of this came in 1758 with a decision by George II to allow provincial officers to hold rank equally with regulars in the same grade, subject only to seniority and the decision by Parliament to reimburse colonial governments for the costs of raising and supporting their troops.[31]

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Although the war in America was waged on the margins of the British colonies, it was often fought in the heart of Indian country. In 1755 most of North America was still occupied and controlled by numerous peoples whose lives were no more simple or static than those of their colonial neighbors. In fact, the middle decades of the eighteenth century found native peoples wrestling with an array of issues that now included the ever more disruptive and deadly struggles between Britain and France. Iroquois, Delawares, and Cherokees, among many others, were no more likely to be coerced by imperial powers than colonists. Indeed, natives were only too adept at using geographic position, economic influence, and military clout when it came to dealing with imperious colonists and imperial government. If authorities in London and America ever hoped to promote a "British and Indian war" against the French, they would have to do so through careful negotiation and coalition building. This would not be an easy task: long histories and long memories left natives either leery of dealing with colonies or outright hostile. By late 1755 both Pennsylvania and Virginia were embroiled in a bloody border war with Ohio Indians that paralleled, but was not part of, the wider Anglo-French conflict; it was a war the colonists were losing, and one with no end in sight when Forbes assumed his new command in 1758.

The eighteenth-century Indian world beyond the Appalachian Mountains was shaped by events stretching back to the initial contact between natives and newcomers nearly two centuries earlier. In one sense, Iroquois, Cherokees, Creeks, and Shawnees were among the beneficiaries of the disas-

ters that swept over coastal people from Florida to Nova Scotia. Living farther inland they had time to learn about and adjust to the French, Spanish, Dutch, and English who began to populate the margins of Indian country. This does not suggest that inland peoples somehow escaped the epidemics, population collapse, and other disruptions that followed encounters with the Europeans. The Iroquois, for example, were swept into a destructive cycle of warfare for much of the seventeenth century, triggered by population loss that led to the resulting grief and anger being projected outward against others who could be classed as alien and enemy: the so-called mourning war. At the same time, Cherokees moved into the mountains and river valleys of western North Carolina and east Tennessee, filling the void left by the collapse of the mound-building chiefdoms that had dominated much of the Southeast, a collapse triggered in part by the arrival of Europeans, with their goods and diseases.[32]

Warfare was not new to Indian America, although encounters with Europeans spawned more widespread and destructive conflicts. Mourning wars as well as struggles to control resources and trade routes reflected the growing importance of European technology—metals, cloth, firearms, for example—in native lives. Other wars grew out of the need for slaves; English settlers in South Carolina after 1670 were eager to acquire native captives for use at home and as commodities to be traded to the West Indies.[33]

Wars, whether for captives, goods, or slaves, proved a constructive as well as a destructive force in native societies. New peoples emerged in the late seventeenth century from refugees and the descendants of once powerful chiefdoms in the Southeast. Such peoples emerged as the "Creeks" and "Catawbas" who began to enter British colonial records in the early eighteenth century. Meanwhile, Jesuit missionaries and continued unrest at home prompted some Iroquois, especially Mohawks, to relocate to the Saint Lawrence Valley close to French settlements. These Christian Iroquois, or Kanawakes, joined other refugees, such as the western Abenakis who founded the town of Odanak in order to escape the expansion of New England settlements. Finally, land fraud and dispossession, rather than warfare, compelled natives from the Delaware Valley to turn their backs on William Penn's colony and head west. There, in the 1720s, they pioneered the empty upper Ohio Valley. Joined by others from Iroquoia and the Great Lakes, these people forged a distinct identity as "Ohio Indians." They would play a central role in Forbes's effort to drive the French from Fort Duquesne.[34]

By the middle of the eighteenth century evolving native societies confronted an enlarged colonial world. In some respects, colonies and Indian country reflected similarities. Both were dynamic places and participants in

an "empire of goods," the London-based Atlantic system of trade and credit. New peoples—either American-born British colonists and slaves or Catawbas and Ohio Indians—characterized both worlds. And, if British Americans had reason to cast a wary eye toward Spanish settlements in Florida or French towns and forts to their north and west, so, too, did natives worry about increased colonial expansion. For natives, the problem was literally all around them. By the 1740s and 1750s Indian country east of the Mississippi River occupied the center of a ring of colonial claims and settlements from Pensacola and New Orleans, north to the Illinois Valley and Great Lakes, and to the British colonies to the east.[35]

Rather than surrender the initiative to the Europeans, however, native peoples persisted in defending their identities, sovereignties, and frontiers. They did so by engaging in what one colonist called "modern Indian politics": playing off rival colonies and empires to native advantage. This strategy was a risky one: Indians could seldom know or influence policies crafted at the heart of European empires. Nevertheless, such a strategy, in its many manifestations, worked for two generations after 1700 because both natives and colonists could benefit. Natives could keep settlers at bay while maintaining access to valued markets—and political influence. Colonies gained valuable commodities and might gain allies or neutralize potential enemies in the event of renewed imperial conflict.[36]

The best-known example of this play-off strategy was the elaborate diplomatic arrangement created by the Iroquois Confederacy, known as the Covenant Chain. Originally a pact between New York and the Mohawks in the 1670s, the Covenant Chain continued to grow into the next century. It worked because colonists—New York, then Massachusetts, Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania—could turn to their allies within the Confederacy to help keep the peace on western borders, and the Confederacy increasingly assumed the role of favored ally. Moreover, standing between the British and French, the Iroquois asserted official neutrality while permitting constituent villages to pursue relations as best suited them, thus helping to keep the peace at home. By mid-century, however, the Covenant Chain had also become a tool for British expansion. Pennsylvania, for example, used their alliance with the Iroquois to coerce and dispossess natives in the Delaware Valley. Iroquois headmen who made bold claims to having "conquered" other natives found colonial officials more than willing to agree, especially when the Six Nations cooperated in removing the "conquered" from lands coveted by settlers and the Penn family. This led to enhanced influence for the Six Nations while allowing them to protect their own territory. It was the Covenant Chain and fraudulent treaties like the now infamous Walking Purchase

that compelled Pennsylvania natives to look to the Ohio Valley for security and autonomy. They would not welcome attempts to extend the Chain westward in the 1750s and, indeed, began to shape their own version of "modern Indian politics."[37]

To the south, Cherokees and their neighbors pursued similar strategies in their efforts to manage the French, British, and Spanish, and to jockey for advantage against each other. Even small nations could parley reputation and location to advantage. The Catawbas in the foothills of the western Carolinas turned their reputation for aggression and their deft understanding of British legalities into a secure homeland, complete with deed and colonial neighbors who could be counted on to help the Catawbas deal with their inveterate northern enemies, the Iroquois. This new Indian politics was an inherently unstable arrangement, based as it was on networks of agreements between numerous autonomous native societies and diverse, independent colonies. If natives like the Delawares suffered dispossession at the hands of self-interested Iroquois and Pennsylvania leaders, so, too, did individual colonies run the risk of seeing vulnerable borderlands caught in the crossfire between rival natives. Moreover, subtle and not so subtle shifts in imperial power could compel Indian people to reassess their alliances and trading partnerships with nearby colonies.[38]

The moment of reckoning came when the governor of New France decided to occupy the upper Ohio Valley in the face of both Pennsylvania's traders and Virginia speculators calling themselves the Ohio Company. An anemic British response, coupled with the alienation of the Mohawk Iroquois that jeopardized the Covenant Chain, threatened to unravel alliances at a time when French moves were threatening to reignite imperial warfare. In a striking example of how, by 1755, Indian affairs and Indian power had become critical to the British in America, the home government moved to take Indian affairs away from individual colonies. In what proved to be a first, controversial, step in crown efforts to reign in colonial independence, William Johnson of New York, land baron and adoptive Mohawk, and Edmond Atkin, successful South Carolina Indian trader and negotiator, became superintendents for Indian affairs in 1756: Johnson responsible for the colonies north of Virginia, and Atkin, for Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia.[39]

War with France was now a reality, and Johnson and Atkin were expected to deliver Indian allies both to defend colonial borders and to carry the war to the enemy in the fashion of the Canadian French and their native allies. This would be a difficult challenge. In the first place, the superintendents represented merely another level in the already complex and contradictory system of Indian affairs in British America. Colonies were as reluctant to

surrender local control over their relations with natives as they were to cede control of their defense to British military commanders. Especially in Pennsylvania, local politics and Indian affairs merged in ways that guaranteed continued provincial involvement in efforts to end the war with the Ohio Indians.

In the second place, success in recruiting native allies had to face the daunting obstacles of both colonial history and the present war. To gain allies, colonists and Britons would have to set aside long-standing assumptions about Indian "savagery" and the compelling urge to reduce natives to the status of subordinates within an imperial system. Even those who maintained close, amicable relations with particular Indian people—such as William Johnson, Conrad Weiser, Christian Frederick Post—never seriously imagined a world in which natives and colonists shared the continent as equals and where Iroquois or Cherokees could remain politically and culturally sovereign. Yet native societies living west of the Appalachians were determined to remain independent and would accept nothing less. The gulf between peoples was a wide one even before the war began; mistakes in negotiations could prove costly. In 1755, Ohio Indian leaders, hoping to help General Braddock drive the French from their land, made a point of asking that the British also leave when the campaign was over. Braddock's equivocal replies cost the British valuable assistance and cost the general his life.[40]

Open warfare only complicated British efforts to rally natives. Aside from the "massacres" of British troops at Forts Oswego and William Henry, the war unleashed a devastating wave of frontier attacks, most coming from the Ohio Valley. During the first three years of the war Penn's "peaceable kingdom" was especially hard hit, as well as settlements living in the exposed western counties of Virginia. Attacks were not as random as they appeared, and more colonists were taken captive than killed, but the wide-ranging attacks spread panic and a rising tide of Indian-hating as border settlers refused to distinguish between enemies, friends, and those natives who were simply caught in the war's crossfire. One ominous reflection of changing colonial attitudes was the scalp bounty.[41]

Cash bounties for the scalps of Indian enemies were nothing new, of course. Massachusetts had offered bounties during Metacom's War (King Philip's War) in 1675–1676. Taking a page from this colonial history, in 1755 Braddock also offered a cash bounty for enemy scalps. In the wake of his defeat, however, the practice quickly spread. By 1756 even Pennsylvania was offering bonuses for the scalps of enemy men, women, and children. Although meant to further stimulate reluctant colonists to become soldiers, the bounties only fueled Indian-hating and indiscriminate violence. By 1758

some provincials were enlisting just for the bounties and were not at all particular as to where they took the trophies. Moreover, colonial attitudes toward Indians sooner or later spread to British professional soldiers who augmented bayonets with tomahawks and scalping knives. Britain's Indian allies soon found that they needed passes and agreed-upon peace signals if they hoped to avoid falling victim to scalp hunters while attempting to meet colonial officials or work with the army. And, perhaps predictably, the indiscriminate, hate-driven response to border raids produced an equal reaction among native enemies. The time when intercultural relations were shaped by actions and a willingness or ability to conform to others' expectations was passing. Now, negotiable frontiers gave way to hard racial categories, "red" and "white"—where Delawares, Mohawks, or Cherokees became the feared and hated "other."[42]

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Colonel John Forbes's arrival coincided with a massive increase in the British war effort in America. Something close to seventeen thousand regulars were now in the colonies; with provincial troops, the numbers were approaching forty thousand. The challenges involved in managing such an army were immense. The colonies presented British professionals with a theater of war unlike any they had previously encountered. There were settlements without the centuries of infrastructure and experience with warfare common in the Low Countries or Germany; armed forces separated from London by an ocean, not the English Channel; geography that more often hindered than helped advancing armies. Complicating the purely military issues of organization, supply, and movement was the character of British America. Colonies with their own particular histories, customs, and interests insisted on being treated as cobelligerents, not subordinate parts of an empire. Those colonies also guaranteed that any quest for a "British and Indian War" would be complicated. Native peoples living on the margins of British America would view any offers of alliance through the lens of a century or more of often testy, sometimes violent, relations with colonies, even as the sources of conflict began to include not just the age-old arguments over land and trade, but new, race-based hatreds and identities.

Any British commander leading provincial or regular troops, or any British general eager to attract native allies would necessarily find himself engaging in what amounted to coalition warfare. Coalition armies were certainly not new to British soldiers; virtually every war they had fought since 1689 saw redcoats fighting alongside Hanoverians, Hessians, Dutch, and Austrian soldiers. But the wars fought by Marlborough, or more recently by Forbes

and Loudoun, engaged professional armies provided through treaty with sovereign governments and embracing the same set of military standards and ethics. Even then, misunderstandings, confusion, and mistakes were common. Coalition warfare in America was of another kind, involving jealously independent colonies and wary Indians, as well as regular forces frequently composed of untried soldiers. Any campaign into the Ohio Country, moreover, would be complicated by intercolonial squabbles, as well as political battles within provinces, intertribal hostilities, and two separate wars, one involving the French and their Great Lakes native allies and the other pitting Ohio Indians against colonists. An army commander facing these realities would find himself coping with multiple "frictions" of war: the enemy, to be sure, but also the land, weather, colonial subjects, alien peoples with their own agendas, and the character of his own army. It would not be easy; certainly not like contemporary war in Europe.