

COLONIAL REBELLIONS AND NEW NATION INSURGENCIES:
VIOLENCE, UPRISINGS, AND THE GENESIS OF ANGLO-AMERICAN
MARTIAL IDEOLOGY, 1600-1800

by

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
AddRan College of Liberal Arts
Texas Christian University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Arts

May, 2016

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Introduction

In the waning years of the eighteenth century, civil disobedience in eastern Pennsylvania framed as “Fries’s Rebellion” and looming conflict with France coalesced into a national emergency that provided Hamiltonian Federalists justification for creating the United States’ first standing army.¹ Although Americans had beheld before a professional military force operate within its borders, never had they fully accepted one during peacetime.² When the creation of the Provisional Army is viewed within the limited context of the interval between the end of the Revolution and the end of the century, little seems out of place. During this period Americans fought the British, fought themselves through three insurgencies, and rightfully worried about a second war with a European power.³ Yet the creation of America’s first standing army served as a turning point in the young nation’s development.⁴

For nearly two centuries of colonial and Early National history, Americans held steadfastly to their inherited English martial ideology. That period witnessed conflicts, wars, and insurrections that slaughtered populations, stunted colonial development, and

¹ The *House Tax Act of 1798* levied nearly \$2 million on the American people to create America’s Provisional Army and Department of the Navy. The Provisional Army, under the auspices of General Alexander Hamilton ultimately marched on eastern Pennsylvania to subdue and apprehend “rebels” such as John Fries who participated in the unlawful rescue of Bucks and Northampton County citizens that had failed to submit to the *House Tax*.

² Americans generally accepted the creation of the Continental Army during the American Revolution. Conversely, English soldiers and British Regulars stationed within colonial cities and quartered in private homes caused much consternation among American colonists during both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

³ This specifically refers to conflicts including the American Revolution, Shays’s Rebellion, the Whiskey Rebellion, Fries’s Rebellion, and the French Quasi-War

⁴ The creation of a standing army reversed nearly 200 years of American martial policy and provided the United States government unprecedented centralized power to utilize soldiers against foreign and domestic threats.

sometimes toppled local governments. Still, such effects rarely swayed Anglo-Americans to adopt security measures more significant than their local citizen-soldiers.⁵ While Anglos championed the militia system, they simultaneously vilified, scorned, and rejected professional military forces. Significant to this study is the development and institutionalization of these collective outlooks referred to as anti-standing army ideology in England and its colonies.⁶

Importantly, the Oxford English dictionary defines a standing army as “an army of professional soldiers kept permanently on foot, as distinguished from one raised on a special occasion and again disbanded, as were the English armies before the 17th century.” Historian Bernard Bailyn asserts that American colonists “had a vivid sense of what such armies were: gangs of restless mercenaries, responsible only to the whims of the rulers who paid them, capable of destroying all right, law, and liberty that stood in their way.”⁷ Similarly, in reference to British Regulars deployed to the colonies prior to the Revolution, Gordon S. Wood affirms that “The sending of new troops to America was merely the introduction of despotism’s traditional instrument—the standing army.”⁸ While Anglo anti-standing army ideology serves as an unambiguous theme throughout this study, it is essential to highlight that the power of inherited English martial sentiment proved equally

⁵ Long before New World colonization and in lieu of professional soldiers, the English developed a militia-first mentality that spearheaded both Anglo and Anglo-American martial tradition. This development is further explored in Chapter One.

⁶ This study will examine the development of the martial dogma in England as well as the transmission, proliferation, and expression of anti-standing army ideology in the American colonies.

⁷ Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1967), 62. See Chapter 3 for Bailyn’s discussion on Power and Liberty and the role of the standing army.

⁸ Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), 42.

as strong or stronger than the swords, muskets, and armor with which Anglo-Americans used to wage war against their foreign and domestic enemies. Anti-standing army ideology inarguably possessed power that shaped the lives and experiences of countless English men and women. Its authority persisted beyond the colonial period until the threat of invasion and actuality of rebellion provided the means to a new-ordered end and martial revolution in the nascent United States. Through this lens, the Provisional Army existed as an anomaly.⁹

This study explores the evolution of Anglo-American martial traditions and the often violent results of those developments from the period of earliest English permanent North American settlement until the end of the eighteenth century. It examines the causes and consequences of Anglo-Americans' martial policies born from English martial ideology based on anti-standing army sentiment and doctrinaire reliance on the militia system to construct a tripartite argument. First this work demonstrates that despite the existence of violence as an inescapable part of life for many Anglo-Americans, the martial policies adopted and adhered to amplified the dangers and viciousness of reality. Secondly, it establishes that traditional reliance on the militia created environments with few organized and prepared constabulary forces. Given these conditions, outbreaks of violence and rebellion erupted, threatened local security, and sometimes toppled sanctioned authority. Yet despite persistent warfare and the threat of insurgency, Anglo-Americans strongly adhered to their traditional martial policies. Finally, this work illustrates that in the years leading up to the

⁹ Note that the Provisional Army existed during a time in which the United States had not officially declared war. Many Americans alive at the time of the Provisional Army's creation had experienced the War of Independence and the Continental Army, but that force existed as a wartime army.

American Revolution, violence and rebellion had become mainstays in American society and served as practical outlets of Anglo-American frustration and hostility, first against the British government and then their own administrations during the Early National Period.¹⁰ Alongside the multilateral argument, a secondary goal of this work is to demonstrate that that the long-championed Anglo-American defensive forces—the militia— perpetuated or prolonged violence as frequently as they prevented it.¹¹

This study is divided into three chronological chapters that span from roughly 1600 to 1800 and is necessarily trans-Atlantic in scope. Undoubtedly, actions and ideas in England—and later Britain—reverberated across the ocean and directly affected the lives of their English cousins living in the New World.¹² Mirroring the origins of the American colonies, this history necessarily begins in the Old World. The opening pages of Chapter One, “English Military Tradition, Trans-Atlantic Transmission, and Application in Early American Settlement” establish the formation of English military ideology and policies beginning as early as the medieval reign of Henry II through the early seventeenth century by examining events and actions in the British Isles and continental Europe. Next, the

¹⁰ These three arguments are respectively expounded upon in the three subsequent chapters.

¹¹ The American militia has continued to hold a prestigious position in twentieth and twenty-first century popular culture, a reflection of modern collective thought and values. Movies such as *The Patriot* (2000) and *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992) rank in the International Movie Database’s “100 Best War Films” and other militia-centric films include *All for Liberty* (2009), *April Morning* (1988), and *Drums Along the Mohawk* (1939). The modern U.S. National Guard—today’s “militia”—traces its lineage to and celebrates its founding date as December 13, 1636, and features an unequivocal citizen-soldier on its seal. The contemporary militiaman and woman has been celebrated in music as well. In 2007, the band 3 Doors Down released the single “Citizen Soldier” that cracked the US Billboard Hot 100. The lead singer’s refrain affirms: “Citizen soldiers/ Holding the light for the ones that we guide from the dark of despair/ Standing on guard for the ones that we’ve sheltered/ We’ll always be ready because we will always be there.” This work will demonstrate that the citizen-soldier was neither always ready nor there.

¹² While an array of political, social, and cultural ideas followed Britons to the American colonies, this study will focus on martial concepts.

subsequent transfer, adaptation, and reinforcement of English martial procedures are explored through the earliest English settlements in Virginia and New England. During this period, Anglo colonists essentially established beachheads and frequently came into conflict with local indigenous people as their settlements expanded. This section explores the violence associated with the Anglo-Powhatan Wars and the Pequot War as well as the role of English expressions of explicit militarism and the leadership of experienced professional soldiers to aid the survival of fledgling English settlements.¹³

Chapter One continues to examine challenges to Anglo military traditions during the English Civil War and Protectorate period. To win the conflict against Charles I and his Royalists, Parliament turned to its first true standing force: the New Model Army. Though victorious, Members of Parliament (and the English people) realized the power of a standing army to reduce the state to tyranny as Oliver Cromwell used his soldiers to assert his own authority. While anti-standing army fervor solidified in England, issues arose concerning the militia system's ability to maintain peace in the American colonies. Disruptions in England propelled aftershocks across the Atlantic, and Anglo-American colonists—existing without adequate security forces—experienced insurgencies as early as the 1640s. Violence between colonists and Native Americans persisted as well. This section concludes with an examination of the bloody King Philip's War in New England and the state of martial flux in

¹³ Specifically, this section examines the roles of Thirty Years' War veterans John Smith and Miles Standish in the integration of militarism at Jamestown and fellow veteran. Though Smith was an adventurer and Standish a hireling, both aided in establishing defensive footholds along the North American coast.

which Anglo-Americans found themselves—opposed to standing armies and reliant upon an increasingly neglected and unresponsive militia system.¹⁴

Rising tensions and emerging conditions for rebellions and prolonged violence serve as constant themes of Chapter Two, “Ripening Unrest, American Apathy, and Continental Conflict.” It begins with an examination of Virginia during the last quarter of the seventeenth-century where uprising and colonial aversion to standing forces acted in a self-perpetuating system to spur Bacon’s Rebellion. Though rebel and loyalist militias acted as the conflict’s belligerents, the restored monarch Charles II deemed it necessary to deploy English soldiers to the colony to maintain order. However, the often neglected soldiery proved more burdensome and worrisome than useful to most Virginians. Aside from the most well-known rebellion during the colonial period, the closing quarter of the seventeenth century witnessed additional violence and insurgency in North Carolina and Virginia including Culpeper’s Rebellion and the Tobacco Cutting Riots. Each of these violent episodes flourished in areas with inadequate constabulary forces to prevent or immediately extinguish them.¹⁵

Before turning to the eighteenth century, the chapter also provides insight into the role of England’s Glorious Revolution in the hardening of anti-standing army ideology in Anglo society. Not only did the event result in reaffirmation of traditional English martial

¹⁴ New England’s combined militia proved the most ready and reliable Anglo-Americans to conduct military operations during the late seventeenth century. Though ultimately defeating confederated Native Americans during King Phillips War, nearly 1 in 35 colonists perished during the conflict. Militias in the Chesapeake provided far less security. During the mid-seventeenth century, Marylanders lived virtually defenseless while Virginians witnessed increased violence while militia service became more selective.

¹⁵ Culpeper’s Rebellion spanned 1677-1678 while plant-cutters destroyed hundreds of plantations’ tobacco crops in 1682.

dogma through legislation (later foundational to the United States' lawmaking), it rekindled fiery anti-army philosophical writings that influenced readers on either side of the Atlantic as well as sparked rebellion in the American plantations. In places such as Boston, New York, and Maryland, handfuls of English regulars provided little resistance to colonists—and often militiamen—determined to overthrow the established authority.¹⁶ Lastly, Chapter Two demonstrates that while imperial conflicts erupted on the American continent beginning in the waning years of the seventeenth century, internal conflicts still proved onerous to Anglo-Americans in North America. Though some colonists volunteered to serve the Crown in various campaigns in Canada and the Caribbean during King William's and Queen Anne's War, others, particularly in the Southern Colonies, found themselves mired in the violence and uncertainty of insurgency and Indian wars.¹⁷

Though the British Empire proved its martial superiority during the Seven Years' War, recurring warfare with imperial opponents had calamitous effects for the victors. The final chapter of this study, "Rebellion as Revolution, A Contentious Army, and New Insurgencies," begins in the twilight of the Seven Years' War and explores the role of the standing army in Britain's imperial crisis. Though immediately more thankful than fearful of British regulars, American colonists returned to their inherited martial ideology as taxes increased and perceptions of liberty decreased. Future Founding Fathers and local pamphleteers alike voiced strong anti-standing army sentiments until the eve of the

¹⁶ In the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution in England, the Boston Bloodless Coup, Leisler's Rebellion, and the Maryland Protestant Rebellion all flared in the colonies.

¹⁷ In addition to the violence Anglo-Americans experienced during the imperial wars, they also struggled through the Cary Rebellion, the Tuscarora, and Yamasee Wars.

American Revolution. Yet despite inherited attitudes, American military leaders understood that colonial militias stood little chance in defeating professional British forces.¹⁸ This realization caused colonial leaders to adopt a regular, wartime army. Here a reminder should be given and a distinction made between supporting an army during peace—a standing army—and during war. Despite the necessity of the Continental Army to wage war against the British, some Americans still decried the professional force, and its rapid demobilization demonstrated that the new nation still feared a large, peacetime army.¹⁹

In a final section, this work explores American martial attitudes during the closing decades of the eighteenth century to show that while the power of inherited Anglo ideas remained intact among American citizens, fears of rebellions and foreign invasion prompted leaders of the new nation to adopt new martial policies. The leading proponent and chief architect behind these “new” military ideas, Alexander Hamilton, campaigned for an American standing army for more than a decade—from his musings as “Publius” in the *Federalist Papers* through the presidency of John Adams. Though rebellions during the colonial era did little to alter the course of American martial development, insurgencies in the early national period threatened the solvency of the new nation and ushered in drastic revisions. In the decade that followed the end of the American Revolution and the scuttling

¹⁸ George Washington wrote to the Continental Congress, “To place any dependence on Militia, is, assuredly resting upon a broken staff. Men just dragged from the tender scenes of domestick life; unaccustomed to the din of Arms; totally unacquainted with every kind of military skill, which being followed by a want of confidence in themselves, when opposed to Troops regularly train'd, disciplined, and appointed, superior in knowledge and superior in Arms, makes them timid, and ready to fly from their own shadows.” His diatribe against the militia continues in John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington from The Original Manuscript Sources* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office: 1932), 6:110-113.

¹⁹ For context, the enlisted forces of the United States in August, 1789 consisted of only 672 men. See Thomas H. S. Hamersly, ed., *Regular Army Register of the United States for one Hundred Years* (Washington DC: T. H. S. Hamersly, 1881), 213.

of the Continental Army, three events, Shays Rebellion, the Whiskey Rebellion, and Fries's Rebellion resulted in the construction of new notions of national defense.²⁰

In western Massachusetts, bands of militiamen, former Continental soldiers, and farmers banded together and rebelled against perceived civil and economic injustices and the state government reacted with an overwhelming Provincial force. Echoing the cries of patriots during the Revolution, citizens in Western Pennsylvania revolted against the federal government after it imposed an excise tax on distilled spirits in an attempt to repay war debts. In response to the Whiskey Rebellion, the federal government created a hugely expensive force as large as the Continental Army, and George Washington initially led columns of soldiers against the American non-taxpayers. Though Provincial and Federal armies violently suppressed both the Shays's and Whiskey Rebellions, Fries's Rebellion—born out of resistance to direct taxation intended to increase the size of the United States' armed forces and likely the least violent of any insurrection in this study—ironically provided the catalyst for the Federalist-controlled central government to create the first standing army in the new nation's history. The legislation that generated the Provisional Army and New Army in the waning moments of the eighteenth century fundamentally altered American martial ideologies and provided a line of demarcation in the trajectory of the nation's future armed forces.²¹

²⁰ In response to the late eighteenth century rebellions, the Federal government gained new, unprecedented martial powers. The timing of Shays's Rebellion allowed military matters to enter debate during the Constitutional Convention and likely influenced Article 1, Section 8 that allowed federal authority to nationalize state militias. The central government executed that power during the Whiskey Rebellion and soon began deliberating the Provisional and New Army Acts that diverged from America's traditional martial system.

²¹ The legislation created America's first standing army—a force subsequently directed to march on American citizens in Pennsylvania to demonstrate federal power.

These successive rebellions in the opening decade of the new nation's history engendered fears of internal domestic collapse and, when combined with anxieties over possible invasion, led to stunning overhauls in American military policies. While these insurgencies against the nascent United States demonstrated that violence and rebellion served, as they had historically, as practical outputs of hostility in environments with few constabulary forces, they also acted as catalysts to reverse nearly two hundred years of dogmatic Anglo-American martial ideology.²²

²² America's militia-first mentality dominated martial policy from the earliest instances of settlement in Virginia and New England through the opening years of the Early National Period. With inherited ideas from England, American colonists opposed professional forces and expressed their disdain first towards English and British troops and later, to a lesser extent, the Continental Army. The creation of a standing army in America at the turn of the nineteenth century served as a watershed moment in the young nation's military history,

Chapter One: English Military Tradition, Trans-Atlantic Transmission, and Application in Early American Settlement

Foundations of English Martial Tradition

Military affairs have plagued rulers desiring to maintain power and order since time immemorial. Though situated with the added protection offered by the sea, that liquid armor never completely shielded England from the need of military forces. With conflict and warfare serving as staples in English history throughout the second millennium, England utilized two conceptual systems of armed forces: the militia and the standing army, two concepts on opposite ends of the military continuum. Importantly, a standing army during peacetime existed as a foreign creature to England until the mid-seventeenth century. With much deeper roots and history of utilization, the militia system existed as a long-standing English tradition with its origins linked in documentation to the reign of Henry II (r. 1154-1189).¹ Additionally, William L. Shea argues that the origins of a distinct “militia” system can be traced even earlier in the historical record of Anglo-Saxon England.² Operating and managed at the local level, soldiers in the militia maintained an impermanence that cast them in stark contrast to standing, professional soldiers.

Though the militia system maintained a central place in English martial practice for several hundred years, the kingship of Charles I (r. 1625-1649) marked a transition in English

¹ Henry II issued the Assize of Arms in 1181. The document established military obligations and equipment requirements for subjects based on social status and income. Likewise, it indicated a timeline for acquiring the required equipment and mandated allegiance to the king when called upon. For the original document, see William Stubbs, *Select Charters and Other Illustrations of English Constitutional History*, ed. H.W.C. Davis, 9th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921), 183-84.

² See William L. Shea, *The Virginia Militia in the Seventeenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 1. Shea describes the Anglo-Saxon “fyrd” as a “collection of every able-bodied freemen in the realm who could be summoned by the king in times of crisis to defend hearth and home against an invader.” The fyrd system was utilized against—and later adopted by—the Norman invaders in 1066.

history as well as in English views towards the military. During his tumultuous reign, war as well as conflict with Parliament were common themes. While a truly recognizable standing army ascended from the English Civil War of mid-century, troops conscripted and assembled for the Thirty Years' War shaped English attitudes and, more importantly, English legislation. Despite resistance from Parliament, the king ordered armies raised to serve in continental Europe. "English armies, under the erratic leadership of Charles I and his royal favorite the Duke of Buckingham," asserts Stephen Stearns, "carried on and lost military campaigns in the Netherlands, Spain, France and Northern Germany/Denmark. The armies that fought those campaigns were entirely conscripted."³ Not always campaigning in continental Europe, troops had to be billeted and funded no matter the armies' geographical location. Housing and financing the king's men fell on the English people.

In fewer than three years, impressment resulted in nearly 50,000 new soldiers.⁴ Though conscription raised the ire of some Englishmen, the practice was neither illegal nor unprecedented. Yet the cost and logistical needs of such large forces stood unparalleled in English memory. Without the consent of the legislature, Charles I levied new taxes on all Englishmen and attempted to extract forced loans from the higher classes.⁵ Failure to pay the latter extralegal loans subjected citizens to arrest and imprisonment, sparking resistance to the practice. Besides the costs associated with impressment, equipping, transporting, and paying the soldiers, an added expense derived from billeting. Without adequate barracks or military

³ Stephen Stearns, "Conscription and English Society in the 1620s," *Journal of British Studies* 11, no. 2 (May, 1972), 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 5, specifically mid-1624 to 1627.

⁵ See Lois G. Schworer, "No Standing Armies!" *The Antiarmy ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 19-23. The taxes levied became known as "coat-and-conduct" money intended to help pay for military dress and transportation.

compounds, largely unnecessary due to England's customary localized militia system, officers and soldiers had to be housed in public buildings and private homes. Though citizens obligingly billeted conscripts as long as the government reimbursed them for their troubles, certain inconveniences and altercations seem likely between property holders and their guests, described by one English nobleman as "the mere scumme of our provinces."⁶ Additionally, the close proximity between soldiers and civilians resulted in the application of martial law on both. Despite the maneuvers of Charles I to establish new forms of income and to billet his armies, both the funds derived from and the restraint of the English people evaporated quickly. While the sheer size of the monarch's forces seemed exceptional, the public and legislative retort to the army proved extraordinary.

Though the armies of Charles I during the 1620s consisted of conscripts rather than professional men-at-arms, their loitering about England when not deployed to continental Europe and the extensive financial burden placed on the English certainly gave them the flavor of a standing army. Responding to injustices caused in large part from raising and maintaining such large forces, Parliament issued *The Petition of Right* to the monarch in June 1628. Laying out grievances one by one, many of the objections became foundational to subsequent English statutes as well as resounded in both colonial American and United States documents. Responding to taxes and forced loans collected to help fund the Thirty Years' War, the *Petition* stated that the king had no right to collect taxes without Parliament's assent and "no person shall be compelled to make any loans to the King against his will, because such loans were

⁶ Edward Lord Herbert, *The Expedition to the Isle of Rhe* (London: Whittingham and Wilkins, 1860), 46. The English Baron referred to the soldiers under his command in 1627.

against reason and the franchise of the land”⁷ Despite earlier English declarations stating all Englishmen had the right to due process, legislators affirmed, “your subjects have of late been imprisoned without any cause showed”⁸ The *Petition* likewise addressed the application of martial law and raised an issue of fundamental importance to future anti-standing army ideology: the quartering of soldiers in private homes. Speaking on behalf of all English people, members of Parliament affirmed, “And whereas of late great companies of soldiers and mariners have been dispersed into divers counties of the realm, and the inhabitants against their wills have been compelled to receive them into their houses, and there to suffer them to sojourn, against the laws and customs of this realm, and to the great grievance and vexation of the people.”⁹ As many fought in England for political and legal rights, smaller groups of audacious English battled nature, the elements, and those whose land they invaded in the New World.

Ideological Transmissions and Overt Militarism

Paralleling the anti-standing army ideology born and transplanted to its American colonies, militarism and a strong militia tradition traversed across the Atlantic in the early seventeenth century. Men with military experiences on the European continent and the British Isles readily made the crossing, many as adventurers, to command English colonies. Historian Stephen Saunders Webb affirms that by 1640 English military officers came to command no less than nine palisaded settlements in mainland North America and three more in the West

⁷ To view the entire *Petition*, see Samuel R. Gardiner, ed., *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution, 1625-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906), 66-70.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 68.

Indies.¹⁰ One need look no further than England's first permanent North American settlement, Jamestown, and the fabled Captain John Smith to recognize how deeply militarism and attitudes towards the militia penetrated early-seventeenth century colonies.

Fitting the mold of an English adventurer and military veteran, Smith arrived with the first manifest of Jamestown colonists as a member of the "Councel" and consistently referred to others as fellow "Souldiers." Assuming command of the colony, Smith demonstrated many qualities of an experienced military officer. As recorded in the *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*, "[B]y his owne example, good words, and faire promises, set some [other colonists] to mow, other to binde thatch, some to build houses, other to thatch them, himselfe alwayes bearing the greatest task for his own share, so that in a short time, he provided most of them lodgings, neglecting any for himself."¹¹ His actions demonstrated that he was a creature of his time and exploits, and he focused on the militarization of the nascent and vulnerable plantation. Militancy and mandatory militia service were not simply Smith's prerogatives; the Virginia Company of London expected these measures. For the joint-stock company a settlement in the New World represented a business venture. A private endeavor, the enterprise "did not have the financial resources to establish a mercenary army or any other formal, separate military organization. The Company expected its employees in America to shoulder the burden of their own defense."¹² Despite the expectation that colonists would perform in some military capacity, John Smith observed quite the opposite. He viewed his

¹⁰ Stephen Saunders Webb, "Army and Empire: English Garrison Government in Britain and America, 1569 to 1763," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (Jan., 1977), 1-31. Specifically, Webb identifies Jamestown, Henrico, St. Mary's, Sagadahoc, Saybrook, Plymouth, Piscataqua, Charlestown, and Cambridge in North America and Providence, St. Kitts, and Barbados in the West Indies.

¹¹ Edward Arber, ed., *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith: President of Virginia and admiral of New England, 1580-1631* (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1910), 392.

¹² William L. Shea, *Virginia Militia in the Seventeenth Century*, 6.

compatriots as “being for the most part of such tender educations and small experience in martiall accidents.”¹³ Believing every able-bodied man a capable and duty-bound soldier, traceable to the strong militia tradition of England, the captain prioritized defenses and musters upon receiving the Presidency—essentially command—of Virginia a little more than a year after establishing the colony. Smith ordered repairs to the church and storehouse as well as “the Fort reduced to a five-square form; the order of the Watch renewed; the squadrons (each setting of the Watch) trained; the whole Company every Saturday exercised, in the plaine . . . prepared for that purpose, we called *Smithfield*.”¹⁴ Necessity mandated a reliable group of trained militiamen to combat Jamestown’s isolation, potential conflict with Native Americans, and threat from other European powers.

The proprietors of the Virginia Company understood the dangers inherent in undertaking New World colonization. Seeking to maximize success (and profits), colonists received a list of instructions prior to their voyage that ranged from settlement site selection to serving and fearing God. Multiple directives addressed local threats. Due to French maritime activities and the Spanish presence in Florida, the company directed the establishment of a lookout of ten men that could “Come with Speed and Give You Warning.” Other imperial powers weighed on the minds of leaders such as Smith and one of his successors Sir Thomas Dale. Smith recalled, “Ever since the beginning of these Plantations, it hath beene supposed the King of *Spaine* would invade them, or our English Papists indeavour to dissolve them.”¹⁵ In striking peace with the Chichahamianians, Dale included the proviso that the tribal elders would

¹³ Lyon Gardiner Tyler, ed., *Narratives of Early Virginia, 1606-1625* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1907), 202.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 433-434.

¹⁵ Arber, *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*, 598.

"bee always ready to furnish us [English] with three hundred men, against the Spaniards or any [other]."¹⁶ That same year, "understanding there was a plantation of *Frenchmen* in the north part of *Virginia*," Dale dispatched armed militiamen under the command of Samuel Argall who seized two French vessels and fresh provisions.¹⁷

Tumultuous relationships with neighboring Native Americans likewise provided incentive for military preparedness. The Virginia Company instructed colonists "must in no Case Suffer any of the natural people of the Country to inhabit between You and the Sea Coast for you Cannot Carry Your Selves towards them but they will Grow Discontented with Your Habitation and ready to Guide and assist any Nation that Shall Come to invade You"¹⁸ The Virginia Company desired the local Native Americans to fear the colonists. Never should a "Soldier"¹⁹ allow the "Country people" to carry their weapon, nor should anyone but a marksmen attempt to use their firearms in front of Native Americans as witnessing the inaccuracy of the weapon could embolden them. In an instance of seemingly pre-planned psychological warfare, the company declared, "Do not advertise the killing [death] of any of your men that Country people may know it if they Perceive they are but Common men"²⁰ While shareholders in London desired to protect their investment with a logical set of instructions and the charge for all settlers to act as soldiers when needed, the colonists themselves understood far better the dangers of the isolated Virginia wilderness.

¹⁶ Ibid., 515.

¹⁷ Ibid., 517

¹⁸ See "Instructions from the Virginia Company to the First Settlers, November 1606" in Warren M. Billings, ed., *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century: A Documentary History of Virginia, 1606-1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 22-23.

¹⁹ Here the Virginia Company must be indicating their intent that all colonists perform duties as militiamen when needed. Titles and specialties of colonists are listed on the role of first settlers but not a single person is listed as "soldier." For the complete list, see Arber, *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*, 389-390.

²⁰ Billings, *Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century*, 23-24.

Conflict served as a mainstay between the English and Indians for nearly the first fifty years of European settlement in the Virginia swamplands. Natives engaged the first English landing party near Jamestown and John Smith reported within a month of its establishment, "400. Indians . . . assaulted the fort, and surprised it . . . most of the Counsel was hurt, a boy slaine . . ." ²¹ While Smith may have overstated the size of the attack to inflate his own bravado, the deadliness of three subsequent Anglo-Powhatan Wars cannot be exaggerated. Touching off in 1609, the English traded lethal blows with Virginia Natives confederated under the leadership of Wahunsenacawh, or Chief Powhatan. During the particularly difficult winter known as the "Starving Time," when famine and violence nearly destroyed the colony, the Reverend William Simmons observed, "as for corne provision and contribution from the Salvages, we had nothing but mortell wounds, with clubs and arrows."²² Though the Powhatans lacked extensive access to firearms and had already begun to feel the effects of depopulation in the wake of European disease, Native warfare proved crippling to the colonists. Historian John Ferling has shown that the First Anglo-Powhatan War resulted in scores of dead Englishmen. In fact, by 1614 warfare and disease resulted in the death of five out of every six colonists who had arrived in Virginia since 1607.²³ Though Smith departed Jamestown in October 1609, it

²¹ Tyler, *Narratives of Early Virginia, 1606-1625*, 27-71. "Four hundred" surprise attackers is likely an embellishment on Smith's part as he relates most colonists' weapons resided in baskets as they planted corn and only a "few ready but certain Gentlemen" stood on watch, 35.

²² The "Starving Time" refers specifically to the winter of 1609-1610. References to cannibalism are often made in reference to this period so I must obligingly follow suit. John Smith must have found the dire situation more amusing fourteen years after the fact when he last edited his work: "And one amongst the rest did kill his wife, powdered [*salted*] her, and had eaten part of her before it was knowne . . . now whether shee was better roasted, boyled or carbonado'd, I know not; but such a dish as powdered wife I never heard of." For quotation of Willaim Simmons, see Arber, *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*, 489.

²³ John Ferling, *Struggle for a Continent: The Wars of Early America*. (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1993), 22-27. Ferling gives a brief summation of all three Anglo-Powhatan Wars.

became apparent that the fledgling colony depended on militarism and the active participation of its settlers in the militia for survival.

The men who followed John Smith in leadership roles at Jamestown, also military officers, collectively established rules and regulations to maintain order in the colony. Known as the *Lawes Divine, Morall and Martiall*, the strict program provided near unconditional power to the colonial governor and subjected colonists to brutal punishments. Edmund S. Morgan briefly summarizes that the *Lawes* “were mostly martial, and they set the colonists to work with military discipline and no pretense of gentle government.”²⁴ Settlers worked to the beatings of drums and more than 50 infractions carried death sentences. In practice, the case of Jeffrey Abbot displayed the extent of martial law and the severity of its breaching. John Smith wrote of his former comrade, “he was a Sergeant of my companie, and I never saw in Virginia a more sufficient Souldier, lesse turbulent, a better wit” Despite the accolades, Governor Sir Thomas Dale ordered his execution for the crime of desertion.²⁵

Above all, the *Lawes* codified the militia-first mentality in Jamestown. While Smith’s referral to a fellow colonists as a “Souldier” in his early writings suggests that part-time soldiering was expected, Stephen Saunders Webb clarifies the intent of his successors: “the military administrators of Virginia made themselves absolute by defining all adult males as soldiers.”²⁶ Article 2.2 of the *Lawes* exemplified that new arrivals to the colony disembarked as more than settlers: “Every Souldier comming into this Colonie, shall willingly take his oath to

²⁴ Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1975), 79-80. To view the complete *Lawes*, see William Strachey, *For the Colony of Virginea Brittania: Lawes, Divine, Morall and Martiall*, ed. David H. Flaherty (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1969).

²⁵ Arber, *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*, 505.

²⁶ Webb, “Army and Empire,” 9.

serve the King and the Colonie, and to bee faithfull, and obedient to such Officers, and Commaunders, as shall be appointed over him, during the time of his aboad therein”²⁷ In this instance, the transcriber of the *Lawes* received a reprieve from writing “upon pain of death,” for failing to meet this standard only resulted in the “paine of being committed to the Gallies.” Military rank inundated martial society. Captains commanded Gentlemen, and “Common Souldiers in their Companies” had to “obey their Sergeants, and Corporals, in their offices”²⁸ Though rank is often associated with privilege, it is also fundamentally correlated to responsibility. The governor charged captains and other officers to maintain order. Duties ranged from ensuring colonists attended prayer twice a day to teaching “every Souldier to handle his peece [firearm], first to present it comely, and souldier like, and then to give it fire”²⁹ The stringent laws remained in effect for nearly a decade until April 1619.

Following the dismissal of the *Lawes*, early Virginians focused on expansion. New settlements peppered the James, York, Rappahannock, and Potomac Rivers and Englishmen and women turned their attention to crop production and commerce. Despite rapid growth, colonial society paid the price of local security for shedding its martial emphasis. Engrossed with their crops and trade, Virginians “neither attended to the movements of the Indians, not suspected their machinations, and though surrounded by a people whom they might have known from experience to be both artful and vindictive, they neglected every precaution for their own safety that was requisite in such a situation.”³⁰ Just as they set aside martial law, the

²⁷ Strachey, *For the Colony of Virginea Brittania*, 20.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁰ William Robertson, *The history of America, books IX. and X. Containing the history of Virginia to the year 1688; and of New England to the year 1652, 1799*. Early American Imprints (EAI), Series 1, no. 36237 (filmed), 92-93.

colonists likewise eschewed portions of the Virginia Company's instructions: "The Indians, whom they commonly employed as hunters, were furnished with fire-arms, and taught to use them with dexterity. They were permitted to frequent the habitations of the English at all hours, and received as innocent visitants whom there was no reason to dread."³¹ With colonists, now more citizens than soldiers, lulled into a false sense of security and focused on crop production and commerce, the pendulum of militarism oscillated to the point that the Virginians rarely used their swords or firearms "except for a Deere or a Fowle."³²

The centrality of martial training and preparedness under the *Lawes* undoubtedly deterred open conflict between the English and Natives in the second decade of the seventeenth century, but the shift away from militarism did not go unnoticed among local Indian leaders. Though it may be speculative to assume some Natives seethed with feelings of vengeance, Powhatans under the leadership of Chief Opechancanough witnessed and exploited English vulnerabilities.³³ The combined intent of hostile Natives and the ill-preparedness of the English defenders coalesced in March 1622, the beginning of the Second Anglo-Powhatan War.

Remembered as the "Massacre of 1622,"³⁴ allied Powhatans entered Jamestown and other English settlements on the morning of March 22, under the guise of friendship and trade. As recalled by colonists, Natives entered "unarmed into our houses, with Deere, Turkies, Fish,

³¹ Ibid.

³² Arber, *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*, 573. Native Americans are described in this section by Smith as pacified, "poore," "weake," and "every way bettered by us."

³³ See Robertson's *The history of America*, 93. The author asserts that "This inconsiderate security enabled the Indians to prepare for the execution of that plan of vengeance . . ."

³⁴ See "The massacre upon the two twentieth of March [1622]" beginning on page 572 of Arber, *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*. Smith had departed Jamestown more than a decade prior to the event, but this is an indicator of the emphasis Smith placed on martial training and spirit within the colony.

Fruits, and other provisions to sell us: yea in some places sat downe at breakfast with our people, whom immediately with their owne tooles they slew most barbarously, not sparing either age or sex, man woman or childe."³⁵ Within homes and without in fields Indians pounced on their unsuspecting victims. John Smith's account provides grisly details of the day's events, but he highlights, tellingly, that Native Americans attacked only those who did not attempt to defend themselves or refused to flee. In all, 374 colonists were killed, but the attackers' violence continued. Facing little resistance, the aggressors "fell again upon the dead bodies, making as well they could a fresh murder, defacing, dragging, and mangling their dead carkases into many peeces, and carrying some parts away in derision, with base and brutish triumph."³⁶ Modern historians have calculated Virginia's total population in 1625 as 1,210 souls.³⁷ Utilizing this figure, the lack of adequate constabulary forces to defend the colony resulted in the loss of significantly more than twenty-five percent of the entire colonial population in a single day.

³⁵ Ibid., 573.

³⁶ Ibid., 574.

³⁷ See Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, Appendix: Population Growth in Seventeenth-Century Virginia beginning on page 395, specifically Table 1 on page 404.



Figure 1: Though this image presents a fictional depiction of the Massacre of 1622, *The Massacre of the Settlers*, an engraving completed in 1634 by Matthäus Merian portrays the slaughter of Anglo colonists at the hands of Native Americans that undoubtedly influenced the historical memory of the event for future colonists.³⁸

³⁸ Matthäus Merian, *The Massacre of the Settlers* (Frankfurt, Germany: de Bry, 1634.)

The withering of the Virginia Company of London, limping its way to financial insolvency, and emergence of the colony under the direction of a Royal charter resulted in two mainstays of American military tradition: a recognizable local militia and, in what has become a modern-day important topic, the arming of its citizens. Conflict with Native Americans only intensified after the Massacre of 1622. Fear among the colonists and disruption to food supply severely threatened the economic viability of the colony. The Company directed drastic measures against the Natives: "We must advise you to roote out from being any longer a people, so cursed a nation, ungratefull to all benefittes, and uncapable of all goodnesse ... *let them have a perpetuall warre without peace or truce.*"³⁹ Written clearly and concisely from London, the decree could not be executed so easily in Virginia. Levying a militia took men away from their farms, an action that wreaked havoc on colonial means of survival and left homesteads vulnerable to attack. Exempting those who had arrived prior to 1612, the Virginia legislature expected all men to be ready for militia service if called upon. Those who did not receive the call-to-arms were expected to maintain the farms of the citizen-soldiers in their place. William Shea affirms, "Men now had a legal obligation not only to defend themselves and the colony but also to provide for one another in times of crisis."⁴⁰

Arms, armor, and ammunition from Virginia's (as well as England's) armories flooded the colony as martial resolve motivated its militias. The Virginia Company's "perpetuall warre" quickly took the shape of total war: "the English, with perfidious craft, were preparing to imitate savages in their revenge and cruelty. On the approach of harvest, when they knew an hostile attack would be most formidable and fatal, they fell suddenly upon all the Indian

³⁹ Shea, *Virginia Militia in the Seventeenth Century*, 29.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

plantations, murdered every person on whom they could lay hold, and drove the rest to the woods, where so many perished with hunger, that some of the tribes nearest to the English were totally extirpated.”⁴¹ The Second Anglo-Powhatan War persisted in Virginia for nearly a decade and fighting would likely have continued had Indians not been so susceptible to European microbes. Though militiamen had some success in ambushing, raiding, and even poisoning their enemies, disease decimated the Chesapeake Indian population. One estimate suggests that the first three decades of European settlement resulted in the precipitous drop in the region’s Native population from over forty thousand to less than five thousand.⁴²

The experience at Jamestown demonstrates the militarism and authoritarianism that arrived on British vessels in the early seventeenth century. Militarily, much had changed since John Smith “left the Countrey” in 1609 with “about five hundred persons, three hundred Muskets, shot powder and match with armes for more men then we had.”⁴³ Martial law had strengthened the defensive posture of the colony at the expense of extremely punitive discipline. Agricultural success and expansion followed the repeal of the *Lawes* but the relaxation of military discipline resulted in susceptibilities exploited by neighboring Native Americans. Continued conflict led to an increasingly-armed colony and a budding, legal militia system. The Virginia Company of London fell into disarray in 1624 and the king of England placed Virginia under a Royal charter. King James I established a commission to assess the new imperial territory. Commissioners queried the Virginia Assembly, “What hopes may truly and really be conceived of this plantation” and what means would attain those ends? Exasperated

⁴¹ John Lewis Thomson, *History of the Indian Wars and War of the Revolution of the United States* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1873), 31.

⁴² Ferling, 25.

⁴³ Arber, *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*, 613.

by local conflict, the Assembly responded, "The way to attain these hopes is to have a running army continually afoot to keep the Indians from settling on any place that is near us ..."44 The Royal Commission returned to England and recommended the English government send two hundred men to wage total war on the Native Americans for a period of two to three years. Already experiencing the financial burden and negative effects on liberty caused by armies raised for the Thirty Years' War, Parliament rejected the recommendation. The legislature was more apt to produce the *Petition of Right* three years later than to finance and deploy more professional soldiers to pursue Native Americans in the Virginia countryside. The colony, instead, relied on its own militia for survival. The centrality of martial training and zeal ebbed and flowed with low points—such as the Starving Time and Massacre of 1622—that nearly forced colonists to abandon the plantation. Though the colony's early history was singular, violence in Virginia was not an isolated phenomenon. Soon after a tenuous peace ended the Second Anglo-Powhatan War, strained Indian relations touched off bloody conflict in New England.

Puritans arrived in New England armed with the historical memory of their English cousins in Virginia. Though a general policy of mutual accommodation guided the actions of early settlers in and around Massachusetts Bay, colonial leaders recognized the need for a healthy militia system. Just as adventurers and military veterans had arrived on the shores of Virginia, Puritans ensured military men brought their experience to bear in New England. Armed with the lessons learned in earlier plantations, the Pilgrims hired military veteran Myles Standish to head their military affairs and as early as 1622, Plymouth colony established a four-

⁴⁴ Thomas Aspinwall, *Aspinwall Papers*, ed. Thomas Aspinwall, Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1871, 65-66.

company militia as well as constructed a defensive wooden palisade.⁴⁵ The militarization of New England society commenced quickly and by the mid-1630s a total of three regiments consisting of fourteen militia companies operated in Massachusetts Bay.⁴⁶ As New Englanders sprawled further into Indian territory, the fragile policy of accommodation began to bend. Puritan military preparedness, unlike that of their English cousins in Virginia, undoubtedly saved many Anglo-American lives as the Pequot War erupted in 1636.

Though Puritan-Pequot relations precipitously began to sour in 1634 over the suspected murder of a nine-man trading party led by John Stone, conflict boiled over in 1636 over the alleged Indian killing and disfigurement of another English trader, John Oldham. Despite descriptions of the Pequots as a “very warlike and potent people” as well as “a people feared” in southern New England,⁴⁷ Governor John Winthrop deployed a punitive expedition that marked the beginning of sustained armed conflict between the colonists and Natives in the region. Like the early generations of Jamestown, Englishmen in New England displayed overt militarism in their onslaught against the Pequots. While pursuing the suspected murderers, militia captain John Endicott unleashed his men on native settlements. Though the inhabitants fled and refused to fight, the militia destroyed dwellings and food supplies. Endicott’s actions, far from achieving his assignment to capture or kill the suspected murderers, enraged the Pequots and beckoned their retaliation. A second militia captain and contemporary of Endicott,

⁴⁵ Douglas E. Leach, “The Military System of Plymouth Colony,” *The New England Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (September, 1951): 342-64.

⁴⁶ Ferling, 30. Puritan militias consisted of all fit males between sixteen and sixty with the exception of public officials, African Americans, and Native Americans. Ferling states that a company could consist of up to 200 militiamen but “seldom exceeded seventy-five men.” During the early period of settlement approximately two-thirds of militiamen served as musketeers while the remainder carried pikes.

⁴⁷ Daniel Gookin, *Historical collections of the Indians in New England*, 1792. EAI, Ser 1, no. 24362 (filmed), 7.

Roger Clap, recorded in his memoirs: "God permitted *Satan* to stir up the *Pequot Indians* to kill divers *English* men. . . . And when the murderers were demanded, instead of delivering them, they proceeded to destroy more of our *English* about *Connecticut*; which put us to sending out Souldiers once and again."⁴⁸ The Pequots did, in fact, "destroy" some of the English in Connecticut, as they did in other New England colonies as well. Though not as staggering as the losses in Virginia, Anglo-American casualties still reached roughly five percent of the New England population.⁴⁹

The success of the English in New England against the Pequots during the mid-1630s can be linked to the presence of armed and ready constabulary forces. Though the militia under Endicott figuratively stirred the hornets' nest, Puritan leaders organized and deployed a second, larger and more decisive force under the command of Captain John Mason to end the conflict. With more than one hundred militiamen and volunteers along with scores of Mohegan allies, the force known as "Mason's Puritan Army" rampaged the countryside in search of enemy Pequots. Despite colonial zeal for waging war on their Indian neighbors, Mason experienced hardships in finding and "dispensing justice" against the enemy. In his memoirs the commander recorded that not only did the Pequots outnumber the English, but their fleetness of foot and continuous patrols gave them a decisive tactical advantage. Mason also recalled a conversation with a Narragansett sachem who warned that "*he thought our [English] Numbers were too weak to deal with the Enemy, who were (as he said) very great Captains and men skilful in War.*"⁵⁰ Despite these warnings, the English pressed on.

⁴⁸ Roger Clap, *Memoirs of Capt. Roger Clap*, 1731. EAI, Ser 1, no. 3403 (filmed), no page number.

⁴⁹ Ferling, 34.

⁵⁰ John Mason, *A brief history of the Pequot War: especially if the memorable taking of their fort at Mistick in Connecticut in 1637, 1736*. EAI, Ser. 1, no. 4033 (filmed), 2-4. All italicization is original to the document.

While every militiaman had to furnish his own weapon, the fact that some provided body armor speaks to the military readiness of New Englanders during the early period. One citizen-soldier recalled an arrow hit “against my Helmet on the forehead” while a Captain Turner received a “shot upon the breast of his Corslet” and would have died had he not been wearing it.⁵¹ Yet not all militiamen wore advanced protection. The commander of the expedition recalled that two of his men owed their lives to fortuitously placed handkerchief knots and a block of cheese!⁵² Nevertheless, the presence of European arms and armor, still almost completely foreign to New England Indians at the time, afforded a significant advantage to the English. Militia captain John Underhill asserted after the conflict that Natives “seeing us (lying in ambush) gave us leave to pass by them, considering we were too hot for them to meddle with us; our men being compleatly armed with Corslets, Muskets, bandoleers, rests, and swords (as they themselves related afterward) did much daunt them.”⁵³

The significance of brutality—tactics largely imported by Europeans—imposed by English war veterans on New World combatants cannot be overstated. Simply put, Mason’s Army destroyed Pequot willingness to retaliate. English viciousness culminated in March 1637 with the destruction of a Pequot village along the Mystic River. Encircling the fortified village

⁵¹ John Underhill, *Newes from America; Or, A New and Experimentall Discoverie of New England; Containing, A True Relation of Their War-like Proceedings These Two Yeares Last Past, with a Figure of the Indian Fort, or Palizado*, ed. Paul Royster (Lincoln: Electronic Texts in American Studies, Paper 37, 2007), 6. Online: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/37>, 1638

⁵² Mason, *A brief history*, 22.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 15.

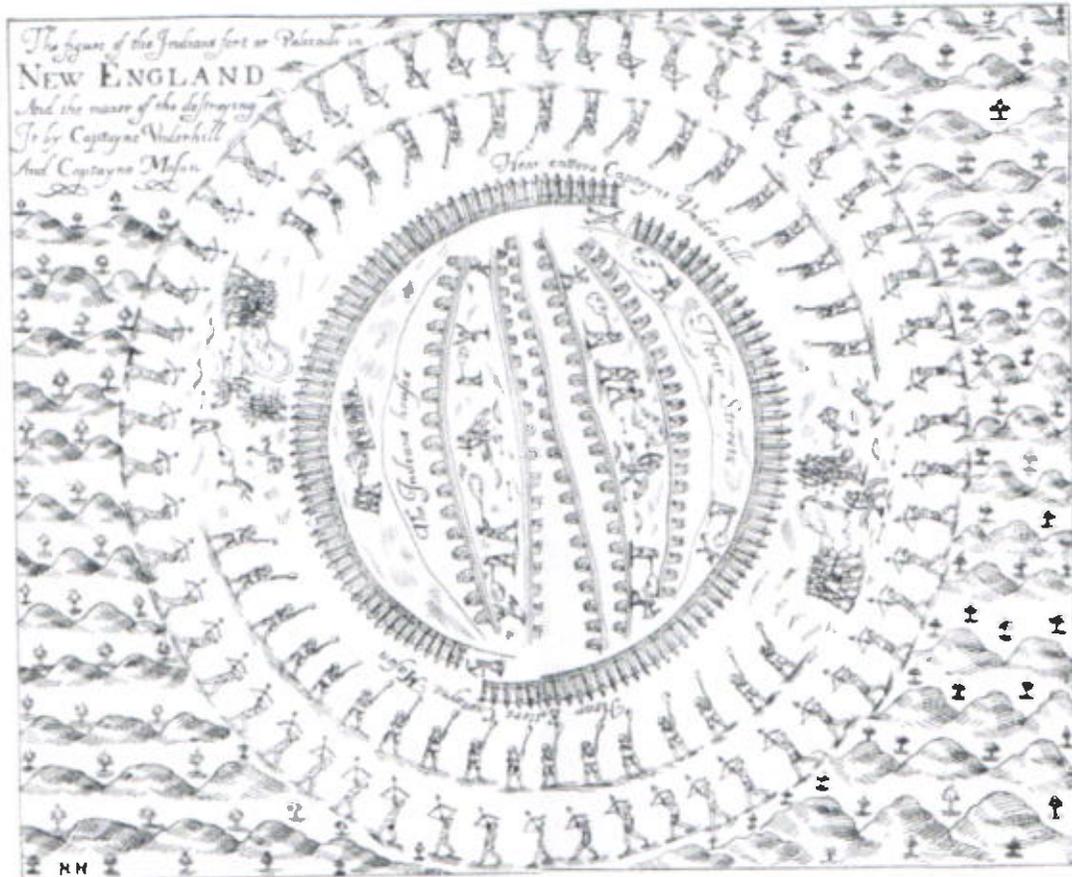


Figure 2: John Underhill's woodcutting depicting the attack at Mystic Fort during the Pequot War. Militiamen under the command of Underhill and John Mason form the inner cordon while Native allies form the outer ring. The actions at Mystic Fort resulted in the death of hundreds of Native Americans inside and the subjugation of countless others.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ See John Underhill, *Newes from America*, 48.

under the cover of darkness, Mason established an inner cordon of militiamen and volunteers as well as an outer cordon of allied Indians to prevent anyone inside from escaping. On Mason's order, the inner cordon fired their weapons and immediately set fire to the doomed encampment. Giving some credence to the Almighty, one militia captain recalled that the soldiers in ring formation gave "a volley of shotte upon the Fort. So remarkable it appeared to us, as wee could not but admire at the providence of God in it, that souldiers so unexpert in the use of their armes, should give so compleat a volley, as though the finger of God had touched both match and flint."⁵⁵ Most villagers perished within the fort while others, perhaps forty in Mason's account, attempted to rush the cordon and escape. In all, between 500 and 600 Pequots were slain while only seven were captured and a like number escaped.⁵⁶ Within weeks of the massacre at Mystic River the Pequots suffered their final defeat at the hands of the English. While some Indians were killed and others simply subjugated, the English captured, enslaved, and transported many more to the Caribbean.

The end of the Pequot War in the latter half of the 1630s created a temporary lull in the Anglo-Native warfare that had gripped New England for several years. Utilizing a combination of imported armor, weaponry, and tactics and locally procured Indian allies, New England colonists gradually imposed their martial will on their inferiorly armed and supplied enemies. Still, Anglo casualties mounted and accounted for a significant portion of New England's total population throughout the slow progression of the war. Though hostilities temporarily ceased in the region and provided the opportunity for colonists to rebuild during the next few decades, violence and warfare engulfed the Anglo-Americans' mother country and greatly contributed to

⁵⁵ Ibid., 32.

⁵⁶ Mason, 10.

future anti-standing army ideology, martial traditions, and insurgency in the North American colonies.

Civil War, Early Insurgencies, Cromwell, and an Absolutist's Army

The period between the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution strengthened anti-standing army ideology in Britain while demonstrating the ineffectiveness of militia to suppress violence and rebellion in the colonies. Schisms grew between Charles I and Parliament during the Thirty Years' War, and for more than a decade the monarch refused to allow the legislature to convene. The virtually non-existent relationship between the king and Parliament reached a point of irreconcilability in early 1642 when the legislature, reconvened in 1640, passed *The Militia Ordinance*.⁵⁷ The legislation allowed Parliament to "call together all the singular His Majesty's subjects" and employ them "for the suppression of all the rebellions, insurrections and invasions that may happen within the several and respective counties and places."⁵⁸ With England no longer militarily involved in the Thirty Years' War⁵⁹ and the massive, conscripted army disbanded, reliance for defense once again fell on the traditional militia system. Yet, in this final split between Charles I and Parliament, the legislature usurped the king's authority and took control of the nation's defenses. Though several years of the ensuing English Civil War matched gentry-led Royalist and Parliamentarian militiamen—as opposed to professional soldiers—the conflict led to the creation of the New Model Army in 1645.

Believing a professional force could defeat Charles I and the Royalists, Parliament introduced an

⁵⁷ This document is also available in Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution*, 245-247.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 246.

⁵⁹ England's involvement in the war spanned 1625-1630 and Scotland supported efforts 1625-1638.

extensive and expensive peacetime force to English history. "There were more men in arms than ever before: about 44,000 soldiers in 1647, about 34,000 in 1652, and about 10,000 in September 1658," asserts Lois Schwoerer. "The cost of the army from 1649 to 1660 has been calculated at from £1,200,000 to £2,000,000 per year."⁶⁰ Within four years of the creation of the New Model Army, the capitulation, ransom, escape, re-capture, and execution of Charles I all occurred.⁶¹

Though not nearly to the extent seen in the mother country, civil war and political turmoil in England had ripple effects in the American colonies as well. Founded only a decade prior to the outbreak of conflict between Royal and Parliamentary forces, Maryland proved to be particularly vulnerable during the period. The colony was so helpless, in fact, that two men brought the colony to the verge of collapse. Colonial geographer Jedidiah Morse affirmed in 1796 that "The restless [William] Cleyborne, joined by Richard Ingle, who had been proclaimed a traitor against his king, in 1643, aided by the turbulent spirit of the times, raised a rebellion in this province, in the beginning of the year 1645 . . ."⁶² The disorder in Maryland has been remembered as Ingle's Rebellion.

Cleyborne was a trader who "in the year 1631, obtained a licence, under the King's sign manual, to trade in those parts of America for which no exclusive patent, for that purpose, had

⁶⁰ Schwoerer, *No Standing Armies*, 52. For each figure listed in pounds sterling, an approximate correlating currency conversion to 2016 American dollars will be provided. Data for currency conversion has been procured through University of Wyoming professor of English Dr. Eric Nye's website "Pounds Sterling to Dollars: Historical Conversion of Currency." Nye provides detailed source information as well as his methodology along with the currency converter. For more information, visit <http://www.uwyo.edu/numimage/currency.htm>. Converting 1,200,000 pounds sterling in 1649 and 2,000,000 pounds sterling in 1660 produces a correlating value that ranges from approximately \$187,320,000 and \$374,740,000.

⁶¹ The full history of the English Civil War is outside the scope of this study. For in-depth analysis of the causes, events, and outcomes of the conflict see Ivan Roots, *The Great Rebellion: 1642-1660* (London: Batsford), 1966.

⁶² Jedidiah Morse, *American Universal Geography*, 1796. EAI, Ser. 1, no. 30824 (filmed) 596-597.

before been granted” and “had begun to plant a Colony on Kent Island” prior to Calvert family claims on the territory.⁶³ For Cleyborne, the disruptions in England called into question the legitimacy of Lord Baltimore’s rights in Maryland and he again claimed the island for himself. The second insurgent, for whom the rebellion is named, capitalized even further on the virtual defenselessness of the colony. Ingle also made his living as a trader along the eastern seaboard and served as the captain on a small ship named *Reformation* in the mid-1640s. A devout Protestant, Ingle sided with Parliament during the English Civil War and determined to attack the Maryland colony in the name of the legislature.⁶⁴ He set sail from England and landed at St. Mary’s where Calvert, “the governor, unsupported by any real power, was constrained to flee into Virginia.”⁶⁵ The rebel rallied other Protestants to his cause and imprisoned Catholic leaders—including two Jesuit priests who were placed in irons and sent back to England—as well as pillaged Catholic residences along the Chesapeake. The estate of Thomas Cornwallis, one of the region’s wealthiest planters, suffered some of the worst damage. In his lawsuit against the insurgents some years later, he bitterly requested restitutions “for a Great Quantity of Tobacco taken . . . together with the plundering of his house and destroying of his Stock” valued “at least two or three thousand pounds Sterling.”⁶⁶ Financial gain for Ingle and his followers served only as an intermediate goal, however.

⁶³ John Kilty, *Kilty’s Land-Holder’s Assistant, and Land-Office Guide*, 1808. Archives of Maryland Online, Vol 73, 17.

⁶⁴ *Archives of Maryland*. (biographical Series) Richard Ingle. MSA SC 3520-2168. It is unknown whether Parliament *authorized* Ingle to launch his attack or he acted of his own volition.

⁶⁵ Abiel Holmes, *American annals, or, A chronological history of America: from its discovery in MCCCCXCII to MDCCCV*, 1805. EAI, Ser. 2, no. 22450 (filmed), 277.

⁶⁶ Proceedings of the Council of Maryland, 1636-1667. Archives of Maryland, Vol. 3, 292. Archivists at the Maryland State Archives estimate Cornwallis’s losses at approximately £2623, or roughly \$585,657 in today’s dollars.

With Calvert in flight and no constabularies to offer resistance, Ingle, along with Cleyborne, gained control of the colonial government. The rebels “seized upon the records, and the great Seal, which last was never recovered; [Ingle] assumed with his adherents the administration of Government, and in a word, plunged and kept the Colony in all the horrors of anarchy and intestine war . . . for the space of about two years.”⁶⁷ Intimidation and the threat of property loss undoubtedly drove many colonists from nascent Maryland. Unlike England where armies battled each other for superiority, and the colonies of Virginia and New England where militia units countered threats of violence to varying degrees of success, Maryland had no armed forces to shield it from the effects of Ingle’s Rebellion. As a result, the population of the colony precipitously dropped from more than 500 to fewer than 100 during the two-year insurrection. Historian Lois Green Carr affirms that the insurgency reduced the number of colonial inhabitants to less than had originally arrived on the *Ark* and *Dove* more than a decade prior.⁶⁸ Tellingly, Leonard Calvert returned to Maryland in 1646 with twenty-eight armed men and reasserted his authority. Though colonists lost countless thousands of pounds sterling, Calvert’s recruits cost the proprietor only 1,500 pounds of tobacco and three barrels of corn each.⁶⁹ Perhaps such a trifling investment in a constabulary force of equal size could have altogether prevented the rebellion.

During the short span of Ingle’s insurrection, Oliver Cromwell, initially an inexperienced Member of Parliament and a captain and colonel in the Parliamentary forces, rose to prominence within England’s standing army. Though English fears of tyranny did not manifest

⁶⁷ Kilty, 19.

⁶⁸ Louis Green Carr, “Margaret Brent: A brief History.” Maryland State Archives.

⁶⁹ See Timothy B. Riordan, *The Plundering Time: Maryland in the English Civil War, 1645-1646* (Baltimore: The Maryland Historical Society, 2003) for additional information on Ingle’s Rebellion.

themselves during the Civil War, the absolutism and potential for political corruption inherent in the standing force could be seen as early as 1647 when the New Model Army refused to disband despite Parliament's orders. More telling, the army played a role in forcibly removing Members of Parliament in one instance and physically dissolving two whole sessions of Parliament prior to the time of Cromwell's Protectorate.⁷⁰ After leading the army on campaigns in Ireland and Scotland and being appointed commander of all forces, Cromwell ascended to Lord Protector of the Commonwealth.⁷¹ If the standing army's power for political oppression needed further imbuing in the minds of Englishmen, Cromwell exercised the opportunity on September 12, 1654, at the first meeting of the First Protectorate Parliament. Barring the exits with soldiers, the Lord Protector ensured Members of Parliament swore allegiance to him and the Protectorate government. Throughout its fifteen year life span, the duration of the Interregnum and Commonwealth, the New Model Army operated extra-legally under the orders of the executive and strongly reinvigorated the connection between standing armies and tyranny in the minds of Englishmen. Though Cromwell had once been viewed as a conquering hero, his actions as executive and head of the military earned him a posthumous execution for high treason. The Restoration of Charles II in 1660 reinstated the king as lawful monarch and disbanded the New Model Army. In its place, the king created a much smaller standing force known as the Kings Guards and secured command of the militias.⁷² Though a general peace

⁷⁰ See Schworer, *No Standing Armies*, Chapter IV, especially 53. Pride's Purge, the Rump Parliament, and the Barebone's Parliament all involved the New Model Army.

⁷¹ Audrey Horning asserts that the forces under Cromwell acted with extreme ruthlessness in Ireland. Not only did English forces eliminate military garrisons, they targeted and killed civilians. The brutality of the campaign widened the schism between Irish Catholics and English Protestants. For further analysis, see Audrey Horning, *Ireland in the Virginian Sea: Colonialism in the British Atlantic* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), especially 261-268, and footnote 125 on page 266 for additional sources.

⁷² In 1661, the Kings Guards consisted of approximately 3,200 soldiers and 374 officers.

marked much of the remainder of Charles II's rule at home, conditions in America ripened for unrest.

New England at War and Martial Unpreparedness

Conflict between Native Americans and Anglo-Americans erupted in New England once again in the summer of 1675. However, unlike their forefathers who fought during the Pequot War, the late seventeenth-century Anglos found themselves less prepared for the brutal warfare that quickly spread across New England. Like previous Indian conflicts in the American colonies, King Philip's War—named after the Wampanoag sachem Metacomet, Anglicized as King Philip—began as the English attempted to assert sovereignty over Native peoples and land. Though the European newcomers and Wampanoags initially coexisted in mutually beneficial alliance, English encroachment on native land and authority quickly soured relations. A late eighteenth-century history book designed for children provides a strikingly balanced account and justification of Metacomet's actions: "King Philip . . . observe[ed] the danger his country was in, and that the English no longer treated with that forbearance and kindness they formerly were accustomed to, but, on the contrary, tyrannized over his people . . ." ⁷³

Native discontent mounted over time and finally boiled over into retaliation when three Wampanoag men were executed for the supposed murder of a Christian Indian named John Sassamon. In response, Metacomet "[s]ent messengers to all the tribes of the neighboring Indian nations, strongly stimulating them to take up arms in the defence of their country; which having its designed effect they united and became formidable enemies to the new settlers . . .

⁷³ John Curtis, ed., *The History of America, abridged for the use of children of all denominations. Adorned with cuts*, 1795. EAI, Ser 1, no 28831 (filmed), 28.

.⁷⁴ Localized raids against Anglo settlements commenced almost immediately and successful attacks sparked similar actions throughout the New England colonies. Though Massachusetts Bay, part of the New England Confederation, spearheaded efforts to cobble together more than 300 militiamen to destroy the Native threat, the ineffectiveness of that force led to drastically increased measures. Fearing increased numbers of hostile Indians, the Confederation assembled a large army of militiamen under the command of Josiah Winslow and preemptively turned their eyes—and guns—toward the influential Narraganset tribe. Anglos, “jealous of the *Naragansets*, send thither 1000 *Men*, whereof 527 from Massachusetts, under the Command of Governor Winslow of Plymouth, they were increased to 1500 Men by an Addition of some neighbouring Friend *Indians*.”⁷⁵ Unlike the earlier, smaller militia force that failed to engage the Natives decisively, Winslow’s army participated in pitched battle. Though the English numerically won the battle, the victory could only be considered Pyrrhic.⁷⁶ With the “Loss of about 85 English killed, and 150 wounded,” Winslow’s army suffered higher than twenty percent casualties.⁷⁷

The loss of hundreds of men, women, and children at the hands of English militiamen only seemed to incite further Native resistance and violence. Indian raids continued all along the New England frontier as well as near prominent towns such as Boston and Providence. Not even the brutal seasonal New England weather could dissuade their resolve. One Anglo source

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ William Douglass, *A summary, historical and political, of the first planting, progressive improvements, and present state of the British settlements in North-America*, 1749. EAI, Ser 1, no 6307 (filmed), 197.

⁷⁶ Sources vary greatly on the number of Indian casualties. William Douglass’s *A summary . . . of the first planting* likely exaggerates the effectiveness of New England militiamen and states the army killed nearly 700 Indians besides women and children. John Ferling’s *Struggle for a Continent* indicates that approximately 300 warriors were killed *and* a similar number of women and children. The latter source is likely more accurate but both indicate significantly more casualties inflicted on Natives than English.

⁷⁷ Douglass, 197.

asserts that “the *Indians* had skulking Parties out all Winter, they kept the Field better than the *English*, and harassed our People much.”⁷⁸ The conflict between the forces of King Philip and the New England colonies engulfed the region for more than a year. The New England Confederation eventually fielded multiple colonial militias and turned to Metacomet’s enemies to gain an advantage in the war. Though the sachem died at the hands of militiamen, disease, attrition, and the Massachusetts government must be credited for ending the conflict. Thousands of Indians perished during King Philip’s War, and the death of the Native leader provided the opportunity for the New England governors to offer pardons in order to quell the uprising. As a result “many [Indians] submitted, many withdrew to their respective peculiar Abodes, some travel’d Westward towards *Hudson’s River*”⁷⁹ However, the English “victory” during King Philip’s War should not mask the violence and destruction that befell New England colonists. Though New England militiamen demonstrated some martial prowess when they encountered large numbers of enemies or Native encampments, the unprepared and often patchwork units showed little ability to stop Indian raiding. While more than 500 soldiers died in action, Indians completely destroyed thirteen New England towns and killed one out of every thirty-five of the region’s inhabitants.⁸⁰ Those who survived could be thankful that their militias acted to protect them. As will be shown, English colonists living several hundred miles down the Atlantic coast could not be so grateful.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Ferling, 58.

Conclusion

Colonial leaders found themselves in a state of martial flux near the end of the seventeenth century. Longstanding reliance on the militia system and distrust of standing armies stood as hallmarks of English military ideology and those traditions traveled across the Atlantic in ships with the earliest Anglo settlers to America. Those same vessels brought men like John Smith and Myles Standish, professional soldiers, who reinforced martial training and readiness necessary for survival as the English established beachheads in America. However, the militaristic emphasis exuded in the earliest years of colonization waned as economic interests and populations expanded. Conflicts erupted between colonists and Native Americans to the detriment of both populations. Without adequate or responsive defensive forces to protect English settlement, significant numbers of colonial men, women, and children, fell victim to local Indians. Simultaneously, many warriors succumbed to European muskets and microorganisms. The lack of constabulary forces also allowed belligerent and dissatisfied colonists to rebel against established authority.

Chapter Two: Ripening Unrest, American Apathy, and Continental Conflict

Rising Tensions and Bacon's Rebellion

The martial quandary that arose in the first half of the seventeenth century persisted in the American colonies throughout the remainder of the 1700s. Along with the external threats posed from a series of Anglo-Dutch wars that stirred the British Navy into action off the American coast, internal struggles proved just as dangerous. In Virginia, the Navigation Acts and reliance on the cash crop tobacco frequently led to economic despair for many. Concurrently, Virginia society stratified. While the planter elite occupied the top tier, the bottom swelled with increasing numbers of servants-turned-freemen at the end of their obligations and a preponderance of slaves. Though class division and anxiety grew, peace-keeping measures did not. Historian Edmund S. Morgan asserts, "There was no trained constabulary. The county commissioners, who annually chose the constable in each county, usually rotated the job among men of small means, who could not afford the fines for refusing to take it." Furthermore, "[t]here was no army except the militia, composed of men who would be as unlikely as the constables to make effective instruments for suppressing the insubordination of their own kind."¹ Problems with Native Americans, social polarization, and the militia coalesced into the largest colonial rebellion in the seventeenth century.

Conflict with the Susquehannahs, spurred by the actions of the Westmoreland County, Virginia militia, in 1676 led Governor William Berkeley to call upon the legislature to

¹ Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 247-248.

build a series of frontier forts manned with a standing army of 500 men. Just as Englishmen on the opposite side of the Atlantic decried the cost of levying soldiers, many Virginians followed suit. Nathaniel Bacon, a newcomer to the colony and appointee to the governor's council, quickly stirred more trouble for the governor and legislature than would any new taxes. Bacon gained much popular support, particularly among young disgruntled freemen, and turned their discontent towards the Native Americans. He placed himself in command of a volunteer force of men-at-arms determined to eliminate local indigenous people. Yet fearing Native reprisal and confederation against the colony, the governor refused to grant Bacon a commission to conduct offensive operations. Determined on his course, Bacon led his volunteers against both friendly and hostile Indians. His insubordination towards Berkeley eventually led to his denouncement, and the governor branded Bacon and his followers rebels in May 1676. In rapid succession, the leader of the rebellion was elected to the Virginia assembly, captured and pardoned by Berkeley, and returned to his original position on the governor's council.²

Bacon's tranquility lasted mere weeks before he again rallied freemen to the cause of Native removal. With a force of 500 men, he appeared in Jamestown in June 1676 and demanded a commission at gunpoint. Though Bacon received the authorization he desired, he turned his militia on wealthy estates in order to appropriate supplies. Having overstepped the limits of his commission, Berkeley again labeled Bacon a rebel. Embracing his status, the ringleader declared, "If virtue be a sin, if piety be guilt, all the principles of morality, goodness and justice be perverted, we must confess that those who are now

² See Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 260-262.

called rebels may be in danger of those high imputations.”³ In this public manifesto, Bacon also roused the growing class antagonism in Virginia and called for the end of rule by elite “parasites whose tottering fortunes have been repaired and supported at the public charge.”⁴ Bacon’s force grew and his followers burned Jamestown to the ground in September 1676. The violence then centered on rebel militia looting wealthy allies of Berkeley, but may have spiraled into conflict against the militia still loyal to Berkeley had Bacon not succumbed to sickness and death. The leader’s passing signaled the end of rebellion in Virginia.

The damage had been done: the militia had shown themselves to be more of a problem than a solution. The English king—without knowledge of Bacon’s death—determined to end the rebellion and deployed a fleet of three warships, eight hired merchantmen, more than 1,100 English soldiers, and a commission of inquiry to Virginia.⁵ Though the soldiers never participated in armed conflict, England showed its ability and resolve to employ force as a means of conflict resolution. While the warships patrolled the water outside the remnants of Jamestown in the early months of 1677, the people of war-torn Virginia begrudgingly “provided for the soldiers, a difficult matter as the country was desolate and ruined, the ground in February covered with snow, and the people of the colony wholly averse to any system of quartering.”⁶ The Commissioners noted from the

³ Merrill Jensen, ed., *English Historical Documents: American Colonial Documents to 1776* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), 581-585.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Charles M. Andrews, ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections: 1675-1690* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1915), 102. Additionally, the arrival of English troops created a ratio of 1 soldier to every 35 Virginia colonists. See Douglas E. Leach, *Roots of Conflict: British Armed Forces and Colonial Americans, 1677-1763* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 103.

moment of their arrival that “The small number of soldiers already arrived quite destitute of quarters; no place fit to receive them, much less the number that are coming after”⁷ A year after the arrival of the Redcoats only approximately one in five soldiers still remained in service in Virginia.

Neither English nor Virginian leaders took measures to adequately provide for the 200-man garrison that remained behind in the aftermath of Bacon’s Rebellion. The issue of quartering caused many colonists to hold soldiers in contempt and the Crown seemingly forgot the garrison existed during its four-year tour of duty in the Chesapeake. Without adequate pay or resupply, the armed forces literally rotted away. The commander of the neglected unit declared, “the soldiers and officers are now farr in arreare and the soldiers clothing of all sorts quite worne out, soe that if they be not provided for against winter they will inevitably perish.”⁸ Likewise, another officer from the Company of Virginia assessed that his men lived “in a very unquiet and unsettled condition by reason of their extreme poverty.”⁹

Bacon’s Rebellion seriously challenged the viability of Virginia’s militia system as well as demonstrated early Americans’ resistance to standing military forces. Militiamen who volunteered to exterminate local Indians under the command of Nathaniel Bacon did not

⁷ From Sir John Berry and Colonel Francis Moryson to Secretary Sir Joseph Williamson, 7 February 1677, “America and West Indies” in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, eds. W. Noel Sainsbury and J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1896.), 10:32. These papers are part of a digital collection provided by *British History Online*, available at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/search/series/cal-state-papers--colonial--america-west-indies>

⁸ See Leach, 12.

⁹ William G. Stanard, ed., “Virginia in 1681 (Continued),” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 25, no. 4 (October 1917): 370.

throw down their arms when their leader directed them to attack the upper echelons of Virginia society. Instead, soldiers loyal to the rebel leader and those loyal to the Governor prepared for what could only be described as civil war. Though plundering and pillaging accounted for most of the violence in the Virginia countryside, Bacon professed his willingness to go to extreme measures before falling to the execrable *bloody flux*. His men swore loyalty oaths to the rebel who vowed to “oppose what Forces shall be sent out of England by his Majesty against mee, till such tyme as I have acquainted the King with the state of this Country, and have had an Answer.”¹⁰ Only the rebel leader’s death prevented further violence and stopped the marauding militiamen. Despite the bellicose actions of the citizen-soldiers, standing forces proved just as disagreeable to Virginians. Governor Berkeley’s requests for funding a short-term standing Virginian force and chain of frontier forts were as poorly received as the English regiments that arrived to a smoldering Jamestown in the wake of the attempted revolution. Colonists unwillingly quartered soldiers in their homes and outbuildings until barracks could be built but refused to provide any type of salary or supplies for the decaying, ill-provisioned troops.

At least one colonial leader recognized the value of the Virginia garrison. Thomas Culpeper, proprietor of the Northern Neck and governor of the colony after Berkeley’s recall, associated defenselessness with physical and economic peril in the American colonies. In correspondence with the Lords of Trade and Plantations, Culpeper adroitly and predictively presented several reasons for maintaining two companies of English troops in

¹⁰ John Berry and Francis Moryson, “Narrative of Bacon’s Rebellion,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 4, no. 2 (October 1896): 135. This article can be found conveniently at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4241946>.

Virginia. The governor affirmed “the small force that the King has in Virginia should not be retrenched. There is a vast difference between Virginia and the Island Colonies by its situation on the *terra firma*. The Islands have little to fear while England is master of the sea; they have no native enemies nor ill neighbours, and there is no shelter nor hope for rebels to escape unpunished.”¹¹ Culpeper forwarded his request to maintain English soldiers in Virginia in the autumn of 1681 and identified several threats in his argument. Fear of “invasion” from “well armed, valiant, cunning and numerous” Indians acted as a primary justification to retain troops. Unrest in neighboring colonies served as another. The proprietor noted that “the north part of Carolina [is] always dangerous to Virginia, being the resort of the scum and refuse of America and as yet almost, without the face of Government” He likewise identified “the unsettled condition of Maryland, any disturbance there affecting Virginia as much as if in Virginia itself, there being only a river between them” Poor economic conditions, the cost of suppressing the “late Rebellion,” and undependability of colonial militias augmented his argument as well.¹²

Seventeenth-century Anglo-Native American relations rightfully imbued trepidation into the colonial governor. The first three decades of Virginia’s history featured Indian warfare as a staple of plantation life and poor Native relations ignited Bacon’s Rebellion as well. Culpeper doubtlessly knew of the carnage wrought by King Philip’s War from his

¹¹ Lord Culpeper to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 25 October 1781, “America and West Indies” in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1898.), 11:268.

¹² For Culpeper’s argument to maintain English troops in Virginia, see *Ibid.* as well as Stanard, ed., 369. Culpeper states his own opinion that “The present small force” left over in Virginia would have probably prevented Bacon’s Rebellion. He also asserts that “the peace of Virginia is insufficiently secured without the two companies” Additionally, the 1681 estimate of £100,000 converts to slightly more than \$22,603,000 in current funds.

contacts in New England and likewise received news of the Westo War fought between Native Americans and Carolina settlers.¹³ Continued violence with America's indigenous people likely seemed unavoidable, and the governor believed regular English troops a more reliable defensive force.

Turbulence among the settlers of Carolina also proved worrisome to the leader of Virginia. Only a year after Bacon's Rebellion, armed insurgents successfully led an insurrection in which they captured the acting governor and seized the colonial government. Spurred by the enforcement of England's Navigation Act and anti-proprietary sentiment, John Jenkins, George Durant, and John Culpeper—the insurrection's namesake, not to be confused with Governor Thomas Culpeper—formed a triumvirate opposition force that rallied against a series of governors who "failed to preserve order, promote the welfare of the people, or defend the colony against Indians, pirates, and other enemies."¹⁴

Though settlers in Albemarle County suffered the "loss of many men" in conflict with hostile Chowanoc warriors, the assault on planters' profits and poor governance precipitated armed rebellion. Tobacco provided the livelihood for most of the residents of Albemarle and the Plantation Duty Act of 1673 instituted a penny-per-pound tax on the weed when exported to other colonies. Despite Parliament's intentions, Carolinians—including the county customs collector—essentially ignored the toll for several years. Yet,

¹³ The Virginia Governor wrote to the Lords of Trade and Plantations and reminded them of "a dispute in New England between several persons and countries about the Narragansett country . . ." This suggests that Culpeper was aware of recent events in New England. See *Journal of Lords of Trade and Plantations*, 18 October 1681, "America and West Indies" in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies*, 1574-1727, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1898.), 11:259.

¹⁴ William S. Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 63.

as North Carolina historian William Stevens Powell has suggested, the rise of Proprietary scrutiny and oversight as well as the initial appointment of Thomas Miller as customs collector and later promotion to acting governor proved unmaintainable for the residents of Carolina. Powell asserts that “As customs collector [Miller] seized a large quantity of tobacco and other goods illegally imported, and he collected £8,000 in customs duties. As governor, however, he . . . interfered with precinct elections, imposed heavy fines, and arrested and imprisoned several prominent men.”¹⁵ With a small force of approximately forty men the opposition leaders rebelled against Miller’s rule, apprehended the acting governor, and seized the reins of government. It should be noted that Culpeper—ironically selected as the new customs collector—and his ilk did not rebel against England or even the colonial Proprietors. In fact, George Durant sailed for London mere weeks after the rebellion to notify the Proprietors of the change of leadership and to affirm their loyalty. Likewise, Culpeper traveled to England to stand trial for treason but was found guilty “of riot” instead.¹⁶ Despite the limited objectives of the insurgents, Culpeper’s Rebellion illustrated the complete susceptibility of Carolina’s government to hostile takeover by a small armed force.

Compounding looming Indian attacks and insurrections in neighboring colonies, degrading economic conditions stirred new fears of rebellion and desires to maintain a standing force in Virginia. A true boom-or-bust product, tobacco existed as currency, credit,

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 65. Additionally, £8,000 in 1676 correlates to more than 1.5 million 2016 U.S. Dollars.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 67. Powell suggests that the colonial Proprietors feared losing their charter for the inability to control the Carolina colony. Instead of joining the Crown in the prosecution of Culpeper as a rebel and traitor, the Proprietors instead defended him and his actions in an area of “no settled government.” This course of action allowed Culpeper to return to Carolina unscathed and the Proprietors to retain their charter.

and source of livelihood for Chesapeake planters. Times of low export prices proved devastating to regional economics and drove many into poverty. With Virginia mired in depressed tobacco prices, colonial leaders had “great apprehension of a rising among the servants, owing to their great necessities and want of clothes; and they may plunder the storehouses and ships.”¹⁷ Virginians forwarded their fears to the Lords of Trade and Plantations who, in turn, recommended to the King to maintain the two companies of English soldiers in the colony.¹⁸ Standing forces in Virginia proved desirable only as long as England footed the bill.

Mere weeks after the Lords’ recommendation to Charles II, the monarch made a decree that ultimately resulted in the intersection of civil and martial mutiny. The king ordered, “That the payments for the two foot companies in Virginia and for their staff cease at Christmas; and that the companies be disbanded by Lord Culpeper unless the Governor and Council and Assembly of Virginia be willing to pay them.”¹⁹ Though Culpeper had once argued that punctual payment for the soldiers would improve the conditions of the colony, reduction and non-payment certainly undermined it. While the King honored his decree and a ship launched from England with a final payment, Virginia was in no position to continue funding the troops. The crown allocated more than £3,300 per year for the

¹⁷ Journal of Lords of Trade and Plantations, 31 October 1681, “America and West Indies” in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1898.), 11: 275.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 277.

¹⁹ Order of the King in Council, 22 November 1681, “America and West Indies” in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1898.), 11: 299.

Virginia garrison. Such an amount equaled more than the combined salaries of the governors of Virginia, Jamaica, and Barbados during the period.²⁰

While the soldiers and officers grumbled over their poor condition and imminent disbandment, some Virginia planters took matters into their own hands in an attempt to improve local economic conditions. Relying on the simple theory of supply and demand, a group of planters believed reducing the number of tobacco plants would achieve higher prices for their harvests. Known as the “Plant-cutting Riots,” mutinous colonists in Gloucester County began systematically destroying tobacco crops in May 1682. The Secretary of Virginia, Nicholas Spencer, described the agrarian discord that began in Gloucester County. “They [the plant-cutters] have entered into a resolution to force a law of their own wills that no tobacco should be planted this year. To effect this the more readily they began operations on the 1st of this month by cutting up their own plants”²¹ The cutters then turned to coercion to force their neighbors to join the illicit activity. Spencer noted that the rioters “proceeded from plantation to plantation, telling the planters that if they were unwilling to have their plants cut up they would create willingness in them by force. In an hour's time they destroy as many plants as would have employed

²⁰ The crown allotted 3,327£. 11s. 8d for the two foot companies while the governors respectively received 1,000£, 1,000£, and 800£ per annum. See Order of the King in Council, 18 June 1679, “America and West Indies” in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, eds. W. Noel Sainsbury and J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1896.), 10:1022, and Order of the King in Council, 27 June 1679, “America and West Indies” in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, eds. W. Noel Sainsbury and J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1896.), 10:1038. Additionally, this 1679 estimate of £3,300 correlates to nearly \$689,000 in current American currency.

²¹ The Secretary of Virginia to Sir Leoline Jenkins, 8 May 1682, “America and West Indies” in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1898.), 11:495.

twenty men for a whole summer to bring to perfection.”²² Leaders in Virginia—ironically, it turned out—wanted to maintain standing forces in the colony to prevent the domestic disturbance caused by the plant-cutting. Lieutenant-Governor Henry Chicheley succinctly described the messy situation: “I am somewhat apprehensive of the King’s soldiers The country had never more need of their services than now, but they are more inclined to give trouble by joining with the discontented planters than to give help.”²³ Spencer echoed the feelings of the lieutenant-governor. Reflecting on the English troops he affirmed that “They are therefore so far from being an assistance at the only moment when they have been wanted since their arrival, that their mutinous temper doubles our apprehensions of evil events.”²⁴

To dissuade the rioters, government administrators attempted to lock up the English soldiers’ firearms, halberds, and drums—a task easier said than done. English officials received reports that “The soldiers and the plant-cutters encouraged by the general disorder supported each other. The soldiers, maddened by the wildness of the rabble, insisted on terms of disbandment, and, to gain them, refused for some days to quit either the main-guard or the magazine.”²⁵

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Sir Henry Chicheley to Sir Leoline Jenkins, 30 May 1682, “America and West Indies” in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1898.), 11:531.

²⁴ The Secretary of Virginia to Sir Leoline Jenkins, 8 May 1682, “America and West Indies” in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1898.), 11:495.

²⁵ The Secretary of Virginia to Sir Leoline Jenkins, 7 June 1682, “America and West Indies” in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1898.), 11:546.

As English Regulars idly or stubbornly stood by, plant-cutting seemed to spread like an infection. Gloucester acted as the epicenter of the riots but crop destruction did not stop at the county's borders. Rioters quickly spilled over into the nearby counties of New Kent, Middlesex, Rappahannock, and York. Interestingly, records indicate that the destruction of a farmer's crops at the hands of the plant-cutters made him or her more likely to participate in the riots. Secretary Spencer recorded, "when the rabble had by force or persuasion destroyed the plants of one plantation, the master of this plantation was soon possessed of the like frenzy and willingly helped to make his neighbor as incapable of making tobacco as he was."²⁶ This should not suggest that men alone participated in plant-cutting. Some women "cast off their modesty" and participated in crop destruction and wives joined their husbands to assist in the riotous behavior. Though the Council of Virginia minutes include more than a dozen orders for arrest of men involved in plant-cutting, the wives of Thomas Allman and Richard Longest are notably annotated as well.²⁷

In May 1682, cutters destroyed an estimated six to ten thousand hogsheads worth of tobacco in Virginia.²⁸ Unable to rely on the English troops awaiting dismissal, Virginians turned to their local militias to halt the behavior of raucous planters. The colonial government ordered commanders of county militias to provide a "party of horse" to

²⁶ The Secretary of Virginia to Sir Leoline Jenkins, 28 May 1682, "America and West Indies" in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1898.), 11:524.

²⁷ Minutes of Council of Virginia, 25 May 1682, "America and West Indies" in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1898.), 11:522.

²⁸ See Lord Baltimore to Sir Leoline Jenkins, 31 May 1682, "America and West Indies" in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1898.), 11:532. Throughout the month, plant-cutting grew more agitating to Baltimore who informed Virginia's officials he would have his horse militia prepared on the Maryland side of the Potomac to prevent cutters from escaping the colony.

conduct continual patrols in order to prevent further insurrection. The militia patrols proved effective in preventing plant-cutting as well as in providing information. Through the militia, the Council of Virginia learned “of several men who were very active in the work, but as they were inconsiderable people we forbore to prosecute, in the hope of discovering in time not only the actors but the authors.”²⁹ To escape detection from mounted patrols, cutters turned to operations during periods of darkness. Premature reapers maintained their course well into the summer months until Virginia officials captured one of their headmen. Major Robert Beverly, a former militia officer, clerk in the House of Burgesses, and staunch supporter of Governor William Berkeley during Bacon’s Rebellion, was accused of treason for his part in inciting planters to destroy crops in order to inflate tobacco prices.³⁰ Though the militia had played a role in slowing down the rioters, the arrest of their ringleader and subsequent pardon from the King for all plant-cutters (including Beverly) finally stopped them.

Even with the steep decline in cutting, some colonial administrators expressed their anxiety over further trouble. The Secretary of Virginia blamed alcohol for the “extravagant and sick-brained tobacco-plant-cutting” but believed conditions in the colony ripe for further rebellion. He reasoned, “it is plain that Bacon’s rebellion has left an itching behind

²⁹ The Council of Virginia to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 4 May 1683, “America and West Indies” in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1898.), 11:1063.

³⁰ See *Ibid.* Virginia’s colonial officials understood the sorry state of many colonists during the Plant-cutting Riots and they believed they had been led astray by Beverly, who may have only had his self-interest in mind. The Council wrote to the Lords of Trade and Plantations and assessed that “The inhabitants of the country are mostly extremely poor; their only commodity, tobacco, having of late years yielded them little, while their poverty inclines them to listen to all suggestions, however foolish, which are insinuated into them by subtle factious persons, who mask their private ends under a show of public utility.”

it; the lenity then shown was not right for a country such as this, where great part of the people are those spread forth from the better governed portions of the King's dominions."³¹ Despite the lackluster experience of Virginians between the arrival of English soldiers in the wake of Bacon's Rebellion and their disbandment in 1682, Secretary Spencer still believed a standing force the key to securing the colonial government. He argued that a colony as scattered as his needed 150 to 200 soldiers to maintain the peace. The Council of Virginia shared a similar outlook but also suggested some cost-cutting methods in securing a standing guard for the colony. The legislative body advocated for a garrison of sixty soldiers who "would certainly conduce much to our security and the King's honor" as well as "would be a safeguard against all disorders ashore"³² Rather than receive soldiers from England, the Virginians suggested to "raise the men here, and save the cost of transportation, for we have plenty of well-principled men, who for regular pay would cheerfully serve the King."³³ Yet the Council recognized without steady payment, troops posed a mutinous threat and would likely "set a bad example where none is needed"³⁴

Like the period immediately in the wake of Bacon's Rebellion, Virginians, as well as other colonial Americans, found themselves in a state of martial ambiguity. Though traditional English ideology championed and placed the militia on a pedestal, the system did not adequately safeguard colonial communities. During the years roughly comprising the

³¹ The Secretary of Virginia to Sir Leoline Jenkins, 12 August 1682, "America and West Indies" in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1898.), 11:652.

³² The Council of Virginia to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 4 May 1683, "America and West Indies" in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1898.), 11:1063.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

third quarter of the seventeenth century Anglo-Americans suffered at the hands of Native Americans as well as at those of insurrectionaries. Colonists survived, but experienced the hardships of war or rebel-held governments for years at a time. Leaders like Nicholas Spencer and the members of the Council of Virginia recognized the precarious position of Anglo settlers as well as the need for a dedicated soldiery. Yet neither the Lords of Trade and Plantations nor the King could fully appreciate their colonial subjects' concerns from their innocuous positions across the sea. Instead of soldiers, England exported to its colonies a hardening anti-standing army ideology in the closing decade of the seventeenth century.

The Return of the (Protestant) King and Hardening Anti-Army Ideology

Less than a decade after the chaos of rebellions rocked the middle colonies, James II ascended the throne in England and almost immediately drove the nation into turmoil. In 1685, the Catholic monarch confronted two rebellions that his small standing army, the Kings Guards, successfully defeated. Opening Parliament that year, the king spoke of the rebellions: "But when we reflect, what an inconsiderable number of men began it, and how long they carried it on without any opposition, I hope every body will be convinced, that the Militia, which hath hitherto been so much depended on, is not sufficient for such occasions . . ." Instead, James suggested "there is nothing but a good Force of well-disciplined Troops in constant pay, that can defend us from such, as, either at home or abroad, are disposed to

disturb us”³⁵ The monarch informed Parliament that not only had he doubled the size of the standing army, but he planned to employ Catholic officers known to him. Despite his royal prerogative, the King still needed funding to support the force. Parliament refused. They rejected funding and protested against pro-Catholic policies and an enlarged standing army. James retaliated by indefinitely proroguing the legislature. The army, still very much a symbol of absolutism and expense, grew to nearly 54,000 officers and soldiers on the eve of the Glorious Revolution.³⁶ Though the king controlled a large force, the invasion of England by William, Prince of Orange, and subsequent defection of many of the English monarch’s Protestant officers and noblemen led him to flee to France and set in motion the hardening of anti-standing army ideology.

The English Bill of Rights of 1689 emerged as a result of the Glorious Revolution. Besides providing for freedom of speech, no taxation without Parliament’s approval, and freedom from cruel and unusual punishment, the Bill permitted Protestant subjects to maintain arms for their defense and declared standing armies illegal in peacetime without the consent of Parliament. While The Bill of Rights legally carried the standing army into its death throes, British intellectuals finished the job through literature. Beginning in the middle of the seventeenth century, philosophers such as James Harrington published tracts that influenced generations British and colonial subjects. Originally published and censored during the reign of Oliver Cromwell, Harrington’s *The Commonwealth of Oceana* presented

³⁵ Anchtell Grey, ed., *Debates of the House of Commons from the Year 1667 to the Year 1694*. (London, 1763), 8:353.

³⁶ As a comparison, the English army numbered less than seven thousand troops of horse and foot in the year 1680. See John Trenchard, *A Short History of Standing Armies in England*. (London: Printed for A. Baldwin, 1698), 30-35 for several charts listing troop numbers and types in England and Ireland.

a utopian republic that championed the rights of personal property, distribution of power among men (rather than held by an individual or single class of men), rotating elections, and the militia. Harrington reasoned, “But as he said of the law, that without this sword it is but paper, so he might have thought of this sword, that without a hand it is but cold iron. The hand which holds this sword is the militia of a nation; and the militia of a nation is either an army in the field, or ready for the field upon occasion.”³⁷ Harrington’s *Oceana* influenced other philosophers as well.

With a title that gets to the point, John Trenchard—with help from Walter Moyle—published *An Argument, Shewing that a Standing Army Is inconsistent with A Free Government, and absolutely destructive to the Constitution of the English Monarchy* in 1697. In this concise work, Trenchard attacked what he perceived as the tyranny ushered in at the hands of a standing army. He cited many historical examples of the army being used as a tool to overthrow otherwise peaceful governments and affirmed, “if we enquire how these unhappy nations have lost that precious jewel liberty, and we as yet preserved it, we shall find their miseries and our happiness proceed from this, that their necessities or indiscretion have permitted a standing army to be kept amongst them”³⁸ Trenchard feared most of all the loss of liberty. He mused, “for if we look through the world, we shall find in no country, liberty and an army stand together; so that to know whether a people are free or slaves, it is necessary only to ask, whether there is an army kept amongst

³⁷ See James Harrington, *The Commonwealth Of Oceana and A System Of Politics*, ed. J.G.A. Pocock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 13.

³⁸ See John Trenchard, *An Argument, Shewing that a Standing Army Is inconsistent with A Free Government, and absolutely destructive to the Constitution of the English Monarchy* (London: 1697), 4.

them?"³⁹ Trenchard reminded his readers of tyrannical leaders from antiquity such as Tymophanes of Corinth, Agathocles of Syracuse, and Julius Caesar of Rome. Moving closer to contemporary times, he retold the bloody stories of Oliverotto Euffreducci in Italy, Francis Sforza in Milan, and King Christiern in Denmark and Sweden. The philosopher-author likewise highlighted a rebellion among French slaves in the Caribbean in which he mentioned James Harrington: "And as Mr. *Harrington* judiciously observes, Whatever nation suffers their servants to carry their arms, their servants will make them hold their trenchers."⁴⁰

Trenchard brought these examples to light as a warning to his fellow Englishmen. Not only did he attack the actions of Oliver Cromwell during the Civil War, he lambasted James II as well. He asserted, "For the detestable Policies of the last Reigns were with the utmost Art and Application to disarm the People, and make the Militia useless, to countenance a standing Army in order to bring in Popery and Slavery . . ."⁴¹ For the Anglo readers of Trenchard's works it became undeniably clear that a standing army threatened their rights as citizens. Taking another stab at the Catholic monarch, Trenchard flatly stated that "whilst a standing army must be kept up to prey upon our entrails, and which must in the hands of an ill prince (which we have the misfortune frequently to meet with) infallibly destroy our Constitution."⁴² Even more poignantly he affirmed that "the Constitution must either break the Army, or the Army will destroy the Constitution."⁴³ Adopting a similar

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 4

stance as Harrington in his work *Oceana*, Trenchard believed that the militia existed as the superlative martial system. Where a standing army, either on its own whims or in the hands of a malevolent leader, could bring destruction, tyranny, and the collapse of civil governance, the militia could do the exact opposite. Trenchard believed it a “universal truth” that “where-ever the Militia is, there is or will be the Government in a short time.”⁴⁴

A year after the publication of Trenchard’s *Argument* the Englishman circulated another fiery damnation against standing armies. In *A Short History of Standing Armies in England* (1698), the opening paragraph began “If any Man doubts whether a Standing Army is Slavery, Popery, Mahometism, Paganism, Atheism, or any thing which they please, let him read”⁴⁵ Starting from the Roman withdrawal from the British Isles, the author presented a seedy history of armies in England through the reign of William III, formerly William of Orange. Though many English must have been thrilled to be rid of their former Catholic monarch, Trenchard maintained his displeasure with William’s martial policies during his reign. He confirmed that “his present Majesty in *England* and *Ireland* alone has above three times as many Troops and Companies as *Charles* the Second had in the Year eighty, almost five times as many Commission Officers, near four times as many Non-Commission Officers”⁴⁶ He likewise bemoaned the practice of officers ordered to recruit a three-fold increase in soldiers to fill the ranks of their units. Though James II had created an unprecedented standing army, Trenchard tallied a total of nearly sixty thousand

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ John Trenchard, *A Short History of Standing Armies in England*. (London: Printed for A. Baldwin, 1698), 1.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 35.

troops under the command of William in England, Ireland, Scotland, and Holland, of which nearly eight thousand were “Foreigners, which is the first foreign Army that ever set foot in *England* but as Enemies.”⁴⁷ He likewise evoked enslavement and the mountain of debt that the army incurred.⁴⁸ Trenchard’s works continued to influence Anglos on both sides of the Atlantic throughout the eighteenth century. He consistently attacked the British monarchy as well as tyranny and became a leading figure in Whig ideology. Together with Thomas Gordon, Trenchard contributed to *The Independent Whig* and *Cato’s Letters* during the 1720s. The latter of these publications proved foundational to American Revolutionary rhetoric in the last quarter of the century.

The decades bookending the beginning of the eighteenth century marked a turning point in Anglo martial thought. James II’s desire for a standing army during times of peace strained relations with Parliament that inevitably reached a breaking point. While William of Orange marshalled his troops of horse and foot on continental Europe, English thinkers and writers simultaneously expounded the ills of standing armies and benefits of militias. The Glorious Revolution deposed James II, but more importantly—and influentially—it resulted in the creation of the English Bill of Rights. Combined with the literature of John Trenchard and others including James Harrington and Thomas Gordon, tis powerful legal

⁴⁷ Ibid., 37.

⁴⁸ See Ibid. Trenchard states, “If the Prince of *Orange* in his Declaration, instead of telling us that we shold be settled upon such a foundation that there shold be no danger of our falling again into Slavery, and that he would send back all his Forces as soon as that was done, had promis’d us that after an eight Years War (which should leave us in Debt near twnty Millions) we should have a Standing Army establish’d, a great many of which should be Foreigners, I believe few Men would have thought such a Revolution worth the hazard of their Lives and Estates”

document punctuated English anti-standing army ideology. Events in England in 1689 also created new conflicts as well as fresh insurgents in the colonies.

The Rebellious Effects of the Glorious Revolution in America

Though the Glorious Revolution ended anticlimactically in England with the arrival of William of Orange and the switching of allegiances among James's political and military allies, it played out more tumultuously in the American colonies. In the wake of the king's abdication Nicholas Spencer wrote from Virginia to the English Secretary of War, "The Revolution in England had such an effect here that for some time peace and quiet were doubtful, unruly and disorde[r]ly spirits laying hold of the motion of affairs, and that under pretext of religion."⁴⁹ Small contingents of English soldiers in America repeatedly proved unable to restrain the violence and will of defiant colonists. James's fall from power sparked rebellions in multiple locations including the Dominion of New England—a short-lived administrative union of the New England colonies from 1686 to 1689—and the Chesapeake.

The Catholic monarch's relinquishment of the English throne provided pretext for many colonial Americans to protest local authority. On April 18, 1689, citizens of Boston declared, "We have seen more than a decad[e] of Years rolled away since the English World had the Discovery of an horrid Popish Plot; wherein the bloody Devotoes of Rome had in their Design and Prospect no less than the Extinction of the Protestant Religion . . . there

⁴⁹ Nicholas Spencer to William Blathwayt, 27 April 1689, "America and West Indies" in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1901.), 13:92.

never were such Hopes of Success since the Death of Queen Mary, as now in our Days.”⁵⁰ Perceived Popery stood as but one pillar in a structure of grievances against the Dominion of New England government James II appointed. Bostonians bemoaned the deletion of their Charter, the elimination of their right to a colonial assembly, and the appointment of the “absolute and Arbitrary” Governor Edmond Andros. Colonists complained that “The Government was no sooner in these Hands, but Care was taken to load Preferments principally upon such Men as were Strangers to and Haters of the People”⁵¹ Martial policies within the Dominion also proved a sticking point.

Despite the well-entrenched militia system that existed in New England on the eve of last decade of the seventeenth century, regular English army soldiers arrived to help provide security for the Dominion’s government. Though maintaining public safety and order may have been the troops’ intended purpose, the citizens of Boston viewed them differently. Petitioners asserted that “several Companies of Souldiers were now brought from Europe, to support what was to be imposed upon us, not without repeated Menaces that some hundreds more were intended for us.”⁵² In the eyes of the colonists, English soldiers provided the muscle behind Andros’s absolutism. Furthermore, Bostonians and other New Englanders witnessed the bastardization of their traditional militia system.

⁵⁰ See “The Declaration of the Gentlemen, Merchants and Inhabitants of Boston, and the Country Adjacent. April 18, 1689” in Charles M. Andrews, ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections, 1675-1690* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1915), 175. Fears of a Catholic plot existed in other colonies as well. Writing from Virginia, Nicholas Spencer cited, “a rumour was spread of a plot of Papists against Protestants, which but for the timely measures of the Council would have brought about disturbances fatal to both.” See Nicholas Spencer to Lords of Board and Plantations. 29 April 1689, “America and West Indies” in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1901.), 13:93.

⁵¹ Jameson, ed., 176-177.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 177. The detachment consisted of two companies of English regulars consisting of a total of 100 men.

Though local citizen-soldiers had been raised to combat Native American threats, militias were placed under the command of English officers rather than their locally elected officers. "And tho' 'tis judged that our Indian Enemies are not above 100 in Number," complained the colonists, "yet an Army of One thousand English hath been raised for the Conquering of them; which Army of our poor Friends and Brethren now under Popish Commanders (for in the Army as well as in the Council, Papists are in Commission) has been in such a Conduct, that not one Indian hath been kill'd" ⁵³ The gales of royal abdication and both civil and martial threats to liberty provided the perfect storm for insurrection in the Dominion of New England.

Like American colonists nearly a century later on the verge of revolution, Bostonians perceived themselves a people on the cusp of slavery. ⁵⁴ On the eve of what became known as the "Boston Revolt" or "Boston Bloodless Coup," disgruntled colonials affirmed in 1689 that, "It was now plainly affirmed, both by some in open Council, and by the same in private Converse, that the People in New-England were all Slaves, and the only difference between them and Slaves is their not being bought and sold" ⁵⁵ Providing a model for their descendants, the people of Massachusetts and other parts of New England chose rebellion in opposition to potential enslavement. Bostonians promised Andros "all security for violence to your Self or any of your Gentlemen or Souldiers in Person and Estate," ⁵⁶ for his surrender, but the Dominion's governor refused. A letter written to Increase Mather

⁵³ Ibid., 181.

⁵⁴ Robert Gross highlights that possible enslavement by the British unified the people of Concord, Massachusetts in favor of rebellion in his work. See Robert Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), especially chapters 2-4.

⁵⁵ Andrews, ed., 178.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 182.

succinctly captured the actions of the Boston Revolt: "On the 18th inst. the people of Boston rose and seized Captain George of H.M.S. Rose. Thereupon Captain Hill brought six or seven of the ancient magistrates to the Councilhouse, while the people imprisoned Sir Edmund Andros's officers. About eleven o'clock they read a declaration, and summoned Sir Edmund to surrender himself and the fort."⁵⁷ As morning passed into afternoon, nearly 1,500 men organized into twenty companies assembled in the outlying towns and neighborhoods of Boston. Later, "Information . . . came that a boat was sent from the [English] frigate to the Governor with arms, but the boat was seized. Mr. John Nelson then demanded the fort, and summoned the Governor before the Council, who that night was committed to a private house and next day to the fort . . ."⁵⁸ Outnumbered more than ten-to-one, English troops could do little to dissuade the actions of a rebellious mob motivated to topple the colonial government. Although Bostonians captured Andros, his Lieutenant Governor, the career army officer Francis Nicholson, still governed from New York. There, in a second wave of insurgency, the provincial militia led the attack against local authority.

As news of the Glorious Revolution in England and the much-closer-to-home revolt in Boston reached New York, Lieutenant Governor Nicholson hopelessly attempted to maintain order.⁵⁹ The magistrate quickly lost control of the colony to the currents of rebellion and fear of French interlopers. He wrote to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, "In

⁵⁷ See Extract of a letter from Bristol, New England, to Mr. Mather and others, 29 April 1689, "America and West Indies" in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1901.), 13:96.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ See Stephen Saunders Webb, "The Strange Career of Francis Nicholson," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 23 no. 4. (October 1966): 514-48. Specifically, Webb asserts that Nicholson threatened to "shear the ears off anyone" who spread the news of civil revolt in England or the American colonies.

Suffolk County, at the east end of Long Island, the magistrates and military officers were first put out and replaced by others of the people's choice. Queen's County and West Chester followed in their steps; and not content with that, under pretext of zeal for the safety of this city and fort against French aggression, great part of their militia have taken up arms."⁶⁰ Nicholson feared that insurgent colonists and militiamen planned to sack his stronghold at Fort James and plunder the wealthy citizens of New York City. He observed rightly that "some disaffected and restless spirits have tried to stir up the city to sedition and rebellion."⁶¹ As anxiety over armed rebels and looming war with France propagated among the Lieutenant Governor and his few remaining loyal officials, many of the disillusioned and agitated characters were brought in the gates of Fort James as militiamen to augment the small English garrison.

Relations between English soldiers and militiamen quickly degraded. Historian Stephen Saunders Webb suggests that Nicholson, "supported the regulars in inevitable quarrels with the militia, using his authority as commander of New York. When he thought his authority challenged, Nicholson threatened to shoot the militia officers involved and said he would rather see New York in ashes than have it commanded by them."⁶² Though

⁶⁰ The Lieutenant Governor and others of New York to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 15 May 1689, "America and West Indies" in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1901.), 13:121.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Webb, "The Strange Career," 524. See also Declaration of the inhabitants and soldiers belonging to the train-bands at New York, 31 May 1689, "America and West Indies" in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1901.), 13:160. The militiamen stated, "But when we were threatened and cajoled by Lieutenant Governor Nicholson; when he presented a pistol at our corporal and told Lieutenant Cuyler that he would set the city on fire because we did our loyal duty, we then for the safety of the protestants, and in view of the daily coming of papist soldiers to Lieutenant Governor Nicholson, resolved to live no longer in such danger, but to secure the fort; which we have effected without bloodshed. We shall now hold it pending further orders from the King."

the rebellion in New York had previously been limited to the counties outside New York City, the Lieutenant Governor's words set off a firestorm within the ranks of the colonial militia. Stephen van Cortland, mayor of New York City, recalled, "The drums beat and the town was in uproar . . . They [militiamen] marched to the fort . . . and in half an hour's time the fort was full of armed and enraged men, crying out that they were betrayed and that it was time for them to look to themselves."⁶³ Without bloodshed, the New Yorkers seized control of the stronghold and named Captain Jacob Leisler its commander.

With the support—and force—of the militia, Leisler acted as the colony's *de facto* governor for nearly two years. Halfway through his mutiny-born term, some New Yorkers found the administrators' actions and policies as reprehensible as those of Andros and Nicholson. As conditions deteriorated, petitioners sought respite from their newly crowned king and queen: "We are imprisoned without warrant or *mittimus*, and shut up in dark, noisome holes without access from our friends or relief by law. They seize our estates without trial or conviction, plunder our houses, pretending it is for your Majesty's service, open all our letters, abuse the ministers of the reformed churches and seize their revenues. We beg for protection and relief."⁶⁴ Leisler and his committee of safety attempted to govern New York, but officials in England viewed the colony as existing in an unsettled state. With a rebel-turned-administrator at the helm of a colony bordering French territory, English officials dispatched Colonel Henry Sloughter and two companies of regulars to

⁶³ Stephen van Cortlandt to Governor Andros, 9 July 1689, "America and West Indies" in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1901.), 13:241.

⁶⁴ Address of the inhabitants of New York to the King and Queen, 19 May 1690, "America and West Indies" in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1901.), 13:887.

reestablish legitimate control of the colonial government. Yet Leisler proved unwilling to resign his position peacefully. The militia captain's stubbornness escalated to open hostility and the continent's first engagements between provincials and English soldiers.⁶⁵ Such aggressive actions resulted in the rebel leaders' incarceration and execution for treason.

Paralleling the outbreak of rebellion in New York, colonists in Maryland revolted against the proprietary establishment in the Chesapeake plantation. With a public declaration that decried unbridled proprietary authority, unfair legal practices, excessive trade fees, and, most of all, toleration of Catholicism, the Protestant Association under the leadership of John Coode presented "the Reasons, Motives, and Considerations, which . . . have induces us to take up Arms, to Preserve, Vindicate, and Assert the Sovereign Dominion, and Right, of King William and Queen Mary in this Province . . ."⁶⁶ The Protestant insurgents also criticized impressment of men and supplies during peacetime and, like their English cousins across the Atlantic as well as in the New England colonies, inclusion of Catholics in the soldiery.

While the rebels disapproved of any "Armed Force consisting of Papists" (especially officers and commanders) and jails with "Popish Guards," few defenders of any faith offered much in the way of resistance.⁶⁷ Having promulgated false reports of a Catholic plot to employ Native Americans to kill Protestants, rebel leaders recruited a colonial army to march on the provincial capital, St. Mary's. Making a stand at the state house, a small

⁶⁵ See Leach, *Roots of Conflict*, 23. The author states that colonists fired upon regulars near the town hall while regulars engaged colonists at Fort James.

⁶⁶ The full list of grievances is available in *The Declaration of the Reasons and Motives for the Present Appearing in Arms of Their Majesties Protestant Subjects in the Province of Maryland*, first published on November 28, 1689. A transcription of the document can be found in Andrews, ed., 305-314.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 310.

detachment of approximately 100 armed men under the command of Colonel William Digges served as the only constabulary force to prevent Coode's Rebellion. The resistance proved meager and inadequate. Nineteenth-century Maryland historian John Thomas Scharf asserted, "After a short skirmish and parley, Colonel Digges concluded to surrender, as 'his men were not willing to fight,' and moreover he knew it would be useless to contend against the superior numbers of the rebels who were gaining in strength every hour."⁶⁸ After Coode's victory at the state house, his forces swelled to more than 700 men. With the aid of "some great guns of one Captain Burnham, master of a ship belonging to London," the rebel leader turned his army on the remnants of the colony's proprietary council located near Lord Baltimore's estate, Mattapany, and awaited its surrender.⁶⁹

The proprietary government's apathy towards defense and its state of unpreparedness provided inroads for insurgency and the establishment of revolutionary rule. As seen in the colony earlier in the century, Maryland lacked adequate reliable defenders.⁷⁰ After the capitulation of the capital's garrison, the council requested provincial officer Colonel Henry Jowles command the colony's remaining forces. Rather than serve the proprietary, Jowles and his 160 men joined the rebellion and sealed the fate of the council. It formally submitted to the Protestant Association on August 1, 1689, and relinquished command and control of the colony to John Coode. The new governor's writings suggest that inadequate forces represented only part of Maryland's defensive

⁶⁸ John Thomas Scharf, *History of Maryland from the Earliest Period to the Present Day, vol. 1: 1600-1765*. (Baltimore: John B. Piet, 1879), 310.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 360.

⁷⁰ See Ingles Rebellion during which the colony was virtually defenseless.

quandary. Corresponding with the English Secretary of State, Coode asserted that “We are in great want of ammunition, our papish Governors keeping little in the magazine, but we have collected enough from private sources for present needs.”⁷¹ While little ammunition had been used to stop the Protestant Association’s hostile takeover, the new establishment now worried if enough armaments existed to prevent French aggression. Moreover, leaders like Coode feared an alliance between England’s imperial enemies and Maryland’s recently defeated Catholics. He stated, “We daily expect invasion of the French, but are in a good posture of defence against them and the Papists here. The chiefest of the latter have fled to Virginia, where we have asked the Government to secure them, fearing complications with our Northern enemies, if they fly further.”⁷² Though no attack came, Coode prepared and served as Maryland’s top administrator for nearly two years until a new royal governor arrived.

More than a decade after the Glorious Revolution, insurgents and internal dangers continued to threaten Anglo-American colonists. In North Carolina the 1711 Cary Rebellion pitted the incoming and outgoing colonial governors, Thomas Cary and Edward Hyde, against one another and ushered in chaos and violence. Each administrator rallied supporters, militiamen, and supplies (including a brigantine ship for Cary) to wage a localized civil war. To protect his own colony and to profess his loyalty to the Crown, Virginia’s undisputed governor, Alexander Spotswood “ordered the Militia out of our

⁷¹ John Coode to the Earl of Shrewsbury, 24 March 1690, “America and West Indies” in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1901.), 13:792.

⁷² John Coode to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 17 December 1689, “America and West Indies” in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. J.W. Fortescue, (London: Her Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1901.), 13:644.

frontier Countys to draw together, intending to carry a Detachment of them into Carolina.”⁷³ The Virginian also secured a small contingent of Royal Marines to assist Hyde. Exasperated, Cary retreated to the countryside, allegedly attempted to ally with local Native Americans, and ultimately fled the colony. The ousted official did not make it far, instead finding himself imprisoned in Virginia before being sent to stand trial in England. In his correspondence with a royal official, Spotswood prophetically mused, “I must humbly offer my opinion, that if measures are not taken to discourage such mutinous spirits, especially when they are so audacious as to take up arms, and even to confederate with savages, it may prove a dangerous example to the rest of H.M. Plantations.”⁷⁴ Despite the governor’s observations, little discouragement materialized.

Where Cary’s rebels had been defeated, some of North Carolina’s indigenous people became emboldened, and actions on the frontier demonstrated the colony’s inability to adequately defend itself. On the heels of the insurrection, the natives struck: “On the 22nd of the last month [September, 1711] some towns of the Tuscaruro Indians and other Nations bordering on Carolina . . . begun a barbarous massacre on the inhabitants of the frontier plantations, killing without distinction of age or sex about 60 English and upwards of that number of Swiss and Palatines, besides a great many left dangerously wounded.”⁷⁵

⁷³ See “Gov. Alexander Spotswood to Lord Dartmouth, Virginia, July 15, 1711” in Alexander Spotswood, *The official letters of Alexander Spotswood, Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1710-1722: now first printed from the manuscript in the collections of the Virginia Historical Society* (Richmond: The Virginia Historical Society, 1882), 81-86. Spotswood’s quote is found on 84.

⁷⁴ Lt. Governor Spotswood to [? Lord Dartmouth.], 31? July 1711, “America and West Indies” in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. Cecil Headlam, (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1925.), 26:60.

⁷⁵ Lt. Governor Spotswood to the Council of Trade and Plantations, 15 October 1711, “America and West Indies” in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. Cecil Headlam, (London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1925.), 26:120.

The slaughter in North Carolina prompted officials in Virginia to take measures to prevent similar actions in their own colony. Governor Spotswood mustered militia detachments to prevent uprisings of "Tributary" Indians but worried his local citizen-soldiers could not sustain adequate protection for Virginia's population if Native violence escalated. He wrote concernedly to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, "I must not conceal . . . the incapacity of this country for an offensive or defensive war. Our Militia are in a manner wholly destitute of ammunition, and as ill provided with arms that are usefull, and unless H.M. will be pleased to send in a supply of both to ly ready against an emergency, I fear I shall not be able to sustain any considerable attack of an enemy."⁷⁶ Not only did Virginia lack sufficient armaments, its legislature failed to provide adequate funds for its defenders. Echoing the actions of past sessions of Parliament that rejected funding conscripted and standing armies, the Virginia Assembly pressed the matter even further and evaded "the payment of the publick debts, such as the charge of the Militia"⁷⁷ raised in the aftermath of the butchery in North Carolina. Vexed, Spotswood dissolved the assembly.⁷⁸ Though the governor desired to evade prolonged Indian conflict in Virginia, he could not prevent the looming Tuscarora and Yamasee Wars that engulfed North and South Carolina in the second decade of the eighteenth century.

⁷⁶ Governor Spotswood indicated in correspondence from November, 1711, that he drew together a force of 600 militiamen. For quote, see *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Lt. Governor Spotswood to the Council of Trade and Plantations, 8 February 1712, "America and West Indies" in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1727*, ed. Cecil Headlam, (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1925.), 26:301.

⁷⁸ See *Ibid.* Spotswood complained, "So that finding nothing could be expected from a sett of men so regardless of their duty to their country, I thought it more advisable to put an end to their session, than to burthen the people by keeping them longer together to prosecute their fruitless contentions, and on the last of January dissolved the Assembly"

Conclusion

The years between the closing quarter of the seventeenth and opening quarter of the eighteenth century demonstrated not only the viciousness of early American life, but the limitations of local militias to protect colonial societies as well. Though retaliation against Native Americans spurred the actions of Nathaniel Bacon, he and his volunteer militia quickly became a threat to security in the eyes of Virginia's authorities. Militiamen with divided loyalties clashed, looted, and created financial encumbrances in the colony that drew the ire of the English king. Despite Bacon's death, the rebellion confirmed the precarious position of Americans' security in the hands of militiamen. Yet the event also confirmed colonists' attitudes toward professional soldiers. Virginians resented the troops sent to provide the safety their militias failed to deliver. Though Bacon's Rebellion endured as the largest insurgency in seventeenth-century America, it would not be the last time Americans wrestled with their martial quandary. Militias in North Carolina and Virginia failed to prevent Culpeper's Rebellion and the Tobacco Cutting Riots as well as actively participated in insurrections that flared in Boston, New York, and Maryland in the aftermath of England's Glorious Revolution. Despite perennial war, conflict, and insurgency, the militia maintained its preeminent place in American martial practice and thought.

Chapter Three: Rebellion as Revolution, A Contentious Army, and New Insurgencies

British Victory and American Resistance

The end of the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth century witnessed new imperial struggles on the North American continent. England (later Great Britain after the ratification of the Acts of Union in 1707), Spain, and France struggled through a series of conflicts including King William's War, Queen Anne's War, and King George's War. To assist England during the imperial wars, American colonies developed provincial armies to serve alongside their professional European counterparts. Though some Americans participated in combat, significantly more served as garrison troops and performed fatigue duties.¹ A similar strategy was employed in the decisive Seven Years' War. For many American colonists of the Revolutionary generation, the mid-century conflict provided their first exposure to European warfare.² Despite the conflict's humble beginnings as a small skirmish between French soldiers and a band of colonials under the command of young George Washington, it erupted into war on a truly global scale.³ Though colonists from both empires served, historian John Shy argues, "The Seven Years' War was fought and won by . . . regulars, with the American provincials performing, in each successive campaign, more of

¹ For more detailed information pertaining to the colonial wars see John Ferling, *Struggle for a Continent: The Wars of Early America* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1993) and Howard H. Peckham, *The Colonial Wars, 1689-1762* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964). Provincial soldiers enlisted under contractual terms and frequently served under the command of elected officers. While some colonial units fought in joint operations such as campaigns to Port Royal, Cartagena, and Louisbourg, others were relegated to duties such as standing guard, clearing trees, building roads, and digging ditches.

² For example, historian Robert Gross asserts that more than half of the officers and non-commissioned officers in the Concord Militia served in the Seven Years' War.

³ For an expansive history of the Seven Years' War, see Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000). Anderson shows that some of the most decisive military action of the war actually took place outside of North America.

an auxiliary function.”⁴ Fred Anderson, one of the foremost scholars of the clash, contends “if viewed not from the perspective of Boston or Philadelphia . . . the Seven Years’ War was far more significant than the War of American Independence.”⁵ Undoubtedly, it set in motion the events that led to the cries for independence and rallied anti-standing army ideology among Americans.

Victory in the Seven Years’ War created an expansive British North American empire in 1763, but it also created a multi-layered crisis. Financial burdens acted as the most conspicuous concern. European soldiers and money poured across the Atlantic as the British and French battled for control of North America. Still, the provincial price paid should not be discounted. In reference to American contributions to the war effort, Benjamin Franklin stated to Parliament, “The Colonies raised, paid and clothed, near 25000 men during the last war, a number equal to those of Britain, and far beyond their proportion.”⁶ Though colonials mustered “auxiliaries” rather than a standing army, “they went deeply into debt doing this and all their taxes and estates [were] mortgaged, for many years to come, for discharging that debt.”⁷ Yet the financial strains on the colonies paled in comparison to those of the greater British Empire. Recurring imperial conflict with the French and their allies and the habitual requirement of a large standing army as well as a superior navy

⁴ John Shy, *Toward Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 19.

⁵ Anderson, xviii.

⁶ David Henretta, ed., *Documents for America’s History, Volume 1: To 1877* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2011), 110.

⁷ *Ibid.*

during the first half of the eighteenth century created a formidable mountain of debt that necessitated new and increased revenues from the Empire.⁸

Additionally, territory west of the Appalachian Mountains—lands formerly under the sovereignty of France and peopled with various Native American tribes—required new administrators and garrisons to assert British dominion. Retaining British soldiers in the western posts offered the most expedient method of control. In all, Great Britain stationed fifteen battalions of Regulars in the newly acquired North American territory. The standing force proved expensive, though. Historian William R. Nester estimates that sustaining the western garrison required nearly £550,000 annually.⁹ The battalions contributed to the spiraling British debt as well as proved largely ineffectual in remotely located forts along the frontier. Within months of French capitulation in the trans-Appalachian west, Native Americans began planning against the new imperial occupiers.

Anglo-American encroachment, unprincipled traders, land disputes, goods and gift shortages, and rumors of French regional reentry all provided motivation for Indians in the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley to rally under what became known as Pontiac's Rebellion.¹⁰

⁸ Adam Smith suggests that "In the course of the four French wars, the nation has contracted more than a hundred and forty-five millions in debt, over and above all the other extraordinary annual expence which they occasioned, so that the whole cannot be computed at less than two hundred millions." See Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd. 1904), Book II, Chapter III, paragraph 35. This huge sum estimated by Smith in 1776 computes to more than \$32.1 billion dollars in 2016 currency.

⁹ See William R. Nester, *"Haughty Conquerors": Amherst and the Great Indian Uprising of 1763* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 2000), 27. Nester itemizes annual expenses as £200,000 for provisions, £200,000 for transportation, supply, and maintenance, and £45,000 for ordnance. In total, the annual sum of £550,000 in 1763 currency converts to well more than \$107 million in today's dollars.

¹⁰ See *Ibid.*, especially Chapters 1 & 2. Nester places particular emphasis on British Commander-in-Chief of North America General Jeffery Amherst's "containment policy" in pushing Native Americans toward rebellion. The policy denied reasonably priced goods to indigenous people as well as fewer gifts, ostensibly to weaken the economic and martial position of the Natives as well as to lower the British national debt.

Under the loose leadership of the Ottawa Chief, Pontiac, nearly a dozen tribes struck almost simultaneously at the isolated British forts and garrisons—centers of imperial control. Though Pontiac led a prolonged yet unsuccessful siege of Fort Detroit, his allies prevailed in capturing seven forts in little over one month in May and June, 1763.¹¹ Natives continued to press their gains through the summer, forcing the British to abandon two more outposts. Redcoat casualties mounted in successive engagements including the Battle of Bloody Run, the Battle of Bushy Run, and the Devil’s Hole Massacre. Historian Nester boldly proclaims that “The British could not win the war militarily; at best they could only deploy the army to stave off defeat.”¹² Though surprise attacks and guerilla warfare allowed Natives to gain early tactical advantages and military victories, larger forts proved impregnable without the necessities of reliable supply lines and artillery. Despite the inability of Pontiac and his allies to deliver the deathblow to the British at places such as Forts Detroit and Pitt, their actions in the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley resulted in nearly 2,500 Anglo-American casualties—nearly 500 of them British regulars. Unable to maintain peace, order, or even moderately effective defensive positions in the West, imperial officials looked to the negotiating table. Though administrators at Whitehall attempted to create a boundary between its subjects and the western Indians with the Proclamation Line of 1763, the imaginary mark on the

¹¹ See Ian K. Steele, *Warpaths: Invasions of North America*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 237. In order the defensive outposts included Forts Sandusky, St. Joseph, Miami, Venango, Michilimackinac, Green Bay, and Ouiatenon. Natives destroyed the entire garrison force in each of the first five successful attacks.

¹² Nester, 164.

map through the Appalachian Mountains did little to prevent further discontent and violence.¹³ Nothing short of a chaotic, treasury-bleeding situation evolved in the West.

Along with mounting debt and the messy West, victory in the global conflict created a panic among some of the Empire's Anglo-American colonists. In particular, some began to fear the traditional bugaboo that threatened English liberty and rights: the standing army. Only one year after the Treaty of Paris ended the Seven Years' War, Pennsylvania's own Benjamin Franklin seemingly foresaw the coming storm wrought by the Anglo triumph during the imperial struggle and predicted the crisis that would lead to the American Revolution: "That *we shall have a standing Army to maintain*, is another Bugbear [goblin] rais'd to terrify us from endeavouring to obtain a King's Government." Prophetically he declared, "It is very possible that the Crown may think it necessary to keep Troops in America henceforward to maintain its Conquests, and defend the Colonies; and that Parliament may establish some Revenue arising out of the American Trade to be apply'd toward supporting those Troops."¹⁴ The "Bugbear" did, in fact, exist, and the British

¹³ For more on the history of the Proclamation Line of 1763 and violence between Native Americans and colonial Americans see Patrick Griffin, *American Leviathan: Empire Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier* (New York, Hill and Wang, 2007). Griffin provides an examination of the trans-Appalachian West between 1763 and 1795 and provides detailed information on Native-Anglo conflict as well as the role of Western settlements before, during, and after the American Revolution. Of note, the author explores the Paxton Uprising of 1763 in Pennsylvania in which colonial authorities requested British soldiers to stop Anglo-American colonists who had begun to dispense indiscriminate vigilante justice against local indigenous people in the wake of Pontiac's Rebellion. Griffin also examines Lord Dunmore's War in which the governor of Virginia (John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore) commanded more than two thousand militiamen into the eastern edge of the Ohio Valley to subdue Native tribes and secure additional territory for Virginia and Anglo-American colonists. Emphatically the author contends that violence "was becoming the new basis of society in the West." See page 154 for additional information.

¹⁴ Benjamin Franklin to a Friend in the Country, 12 April 1764, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Ellen R. Cohn, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT. This letter was also published in the colonies: Benjamin Franklin, *Cool Thoughts on the Present Situation of Our Public Affairs. In a Letter to a Friend in the Country* (Philadelphia: W. Dunlop, 1764). It can be retrieved easily online at <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-11-02-0038>.

resolved to maintain twenty regiments of Regulars in North America (including the West Indies) to both defend and police the colonies.¹⁵ With a national debt nearing £130 million,¹⁶ Parliament initiated new taxation aimed “towards defraying the expences of defending, protecting, and securing the said colonies and plantations” as well as the Quartering and Mutiny Acts.¹⁷ The string of legislation enacted in London resulted in the increasing financial burden on American colonists to support the standing army and to repay a war debt that, as Franklin affirmed, many provincials believed had already been remunerated.

During the interwar years the New York Tenant Riots provided tangible justification of colonial fears. In open retaliation to manorialism in Dutchess County, tenant farmer William Prendergast led an agrarian revolt against large landholders a decade before the Declaration of Independence. Though many farmers had “only sticks,” the governor ordered a regiment of British Regulars marched against them.¹⁸ Upon his capture, Prendergast was charged with high treason and, though he would be reprieved, sentenced to death by drawing and quartering. That same year, additional riots took place in the upper Hudson River Valley. Again, the army responded, but this time more violently. Historian Gary Nash has thoroughly researched these events and affirms, “The British

¹⁵ Shy, 79 and 82. Shy argues that the soldiers would police through acting against “banditti” in the fur trade, “squatters” who settled on Native American lands, and “smugglers” who undermined trade interests.

¹⁶ For national debt figures, see Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 61. This figures correlates to nearly \$28 billion 2016 dollars.

¹⁷ This is part of the Long Title of the Sugar Act of 1764. The Long Title of the Stamp Act of 1765 contains similar language.

¹⁸ G.D. Scull, ed., *The Montresor Journals* (New York: New York Historical Society, 1882), 375-376.

regulars, about 250 strong, finally routed the rioters, stealing their livestock, carrying off their possessions, and driving several hundred into the woods for refuge.”¹⁹ The experiences of the tenants in the upper Hudson River Valley made a long-lasting impact on local impressions of standing armies. Events in Boston a few years later solidified similar beliefs on a national level.

In response to colonial disobedience expressed through boycotts and riots born from the unpopular Townshend Revenue Act, the British ministry deployed two regiments of British Regulars to occupy Boston in 1768, ultimately to become associated with the standing army’s symbolic embodiment of absolutism and tyranny. Revolutionary War scholarship has long supported that American colonists held standing armies in contempt as champions of oppression. Gordon Wood states in his celebrated *The Creation of the American Republic*, “The sending of new troops to America was merely the introduction of despotism’s traditional instrument—the standing army.”²⁰ Similarly, Bernard Bailyn stresses that pre-Revolutionary Americans recalled “a number of despotic states” such as Venice, Sweden, and Denmark “that had within living memory been free” but lost their liberties to tyrants and standing armies.²¹ Bailyn may have been channeling John Adams who enquired, “Was there ever, in any Nation or Country . . . a standing Army that was not carefully

¹⁹ Gary Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 83-87.

²⁰ Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), 42.

²¹ Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1967), 64-65.

watched and controuled by the state so as to keep them impotent, that did not, ravish, plunder, Massacre and ruin, and at last inextricably inslave the people?"²²

As part of a series entitled "The Colonist's Advocate," Benjamin Franklin expressed concern for the future: "We have been taught by our Forefathers to look upon the British Government as free. What our Sons may call it is not yet certain. Free Government depends on Opinion, not on the brutal Force of a Standing Army." The next installment likewise referenced "an odious and dangerous standing Army."²³ The Massachusetts legislature expressed an equally strong opposition to the occupying force, asserting that "a Standing Army, which being uncontrouled by any Authority in the Province, must soon tear up the very Foundation of Civil Government."²⁴ Though British soldiers had been sent ostensibly to maintain law and order in Boston, the regulars routinely contributed to the disorder. Desertion, drunkenness, and violence served as common symptoms among the regiments living among the Bostonians.²⁵ Loyalist Andrew Oliver, Jr., noted, "Terrible as well as strange things have happen'd in this Town since my arrival Skirmish after Skirmish between the Inhabitants & the Soldiery with dangerous Wounds on both Sides."²⁶ Local acts of violence evolved into one great act with momentous consequences: The Boston Massacre.

²² John Adams, "VII. An Essay on Man's Lust for Power, with the Author's Comment in 1807," 29 August 1763, Papers of John Adams, Volume 1, *Founding Families: Digital Editions of the Papers of the Winthrops and Adamses*, ed. C. James Taylor. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2015.

²³ Benjamin Franklin, "The Colonist's Advocate VII," *The Public Advertiser*, February 1, 1770; Benjamin Franklin, "The Colonist's Advocate VIII," *The Public Advertiser*, February 5, 1770.

²⁴ Massachusetts House of Representatives to Benjamin Franklin, 6 November 1770, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*.

²⁵ See Shy, 305-309.

²⁶ Andrew Oliver, Jr. to Benjamin Lynde, 6-7 March 1770, Oliver Family Papers, Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society.

“What has been the Effect of introducing a standing Army into our Metropolis?” asked John Adams two years after the Boston Massacre. He continued, “Have we not seen horrid Rancour, furious Violence, infernal Cruelty, shocking Impiety and Profanation, and shameless, abandoned Debachery, running down the Streets like a stream?”²⁷ The deaths of Crispus Attucks, Samuel Gray, James Caldwell, Samuel Maverick, and Patrick Carr on King Street at the hands of British regulars elevated anti-standing army sentiment to a new level. The physical realities of death, funerals, orations, and commemorations transcended previous ideological and intellectual resistance to a professional force. Prolific eighteenth-century media in the forms of newspapers, broadsides, and engravings condemned the event and spread anti-army and anti-British feelings not only in Massachusetts, but throughout the colonies.²⁸ Embellished with five black coffins, each with a skull and crossbones and the initials of one of the men killed in the Massacre, the broadside *A Verse Occasioned by the late horrid Massacre in King-Street* sensationalized and memorialized the event while Paul Revere’s and Henry Pelham’s respective engravings *The Bloody Massacre perpetrated in King Street, Boston on March 5th 1770* and *The Fruits of Power*, each depicting an orderly rank of Redcoats discharging their weapons and Bostonians lying dead or retreating through the smoke, imprinted the reality of tyranny in the minds of many American. Likewise, *The Boston-Gazette, and Country Journal* reported a week after the incident on King Street, “We have known a Party of Soldiers in the face of Day fire off a

²⁷ John Adams. “Notes for an Oration at Braintree Spring,” February 1, 1772, *Diary of John Adams*, Volume 2, *Founding Families*.

²⁸ See Jedidiah Morse, *The American Geography; or A View of the Present Situation of the United States of America* (Elizabethtown: Shepard Kollock, 1789), 145. Writing in 1789, Jedidiah Morse stated “not less than 30,000 [newspapers were] printed every week in New England, and circulated in almost every town and village in the country.”

loaden Musket upon the Inhabitants, others have been prick'd with Bayonets, and even our own Magistrates assaulted and put in Danger of their Lives." Assailed with snow balls that fateful day, the British commander ordered, "Damn you, Fire, be the consequence what it will!"²⁹ Though John Adams subsequently defended that same captain and his men in court, even he noted publicly as Novanglus, "Keeping an army in America has been nothing but a public nuisance."³⁰ Privately he believed the Boston Massacre properly named and the strongest proof of the danger of a standing army.³¹

²⁹ Editorial, *The Boston-Gazette, and Country Journal*, March 12, 1770, *The Annotated Newspapers of Harbottle Dorr, Jr.*, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. 60.

³⁰ John Adams, "IV. To the inhabitants of the Colony of Massachusetts-Bay," 13 February 1775, *Papers of John Adams*, Volume 2, *Founding Families*.

³¹ John Adams, "1773. March 5th. Fryday," 5 March 1773, *Diary of John Adams*, Volume 2, *Founding Families*.



Figure 3. Paul Revere’s sensationalized depiction of the Boston Massacre. British Regulars are depicted in file, as if in battle, and firing a coordinated volley into an unarmed, retreating crowd of Bostonians.³²

³² Paul Revere, *The bloody massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th 1770 by a party of the 29th Regt.*, 1770, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.

Prior to the outbreak of hostility or any formal declaration from the American colonies, Benjamin Franklin offered a rather cogent rationale in opposition to a standing army. Writing from England he affirmed that without the consent of American legislatures, troops stationed in Boston during peace time could not be “agreeable to the [English] Constitution.” Furthermore, would the Parliament of Great Britain acquiesce to the king raising an army in the American colonies and Ireland and quartering it in England during a time of peace? “I am persuaded he would soon be told he had not Right so to do and the Nation would ring with Clamours against it.”³³ Franklin made a similar argument a few years later, contending “that if the King could bring into one Part of his Dominions, Troops rais’d in any other Part of them, without the Consent of the Legislature of the Part to which they were brought, he might bring Armies rais’d in America into England without the Consent of Parliament, which probably would not like it”³⁴ Writing to his friend Joseph Warren just shy of five months before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the leader of the Sons of Liberty, Samuel Adams, expressed the sentiments of many soon-to-be American Patriots towards standing armies when he maintained that such a force was “always dangerous to the Liberties of the People. Soldiers are apt to consider themselves as a Body distinct from the rest of the Citizens. They have their Arms always in their hands. Their Rules and their Discipline is severe. They soon become attached to their officers and

³³ Benjamin Franklin to Samuel Cooper, 8 June 1770, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*.

³⁴ Benjamin Franklin to William Franklin, 22 March 1775, *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*.

disposed to yield implicit obedience to their Commands.” In short, he surmised, “Such a Power should be watched with a jealous Eye”.³⁵

Adhering to their rights as Englishmen, colonists identified the illegality of a standing army in times of peace. Americans transcribed their disdain for the Redcoats into grievances sent to the king, and the First Continental Congress in 1774 declared Britain’s actions unlawful.³⁶ Among the many objections to British rule in the Declaration of Independence, the issues of a standing military (one supreme to the civil power), the quartering of soldiers, and the transporting of “large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation, and tyranny” maintained a central place as well.

Britain did not idly stand to the side while its former colonies declared independence and formed a new confederation. The British not only employed their own standing army, but nearly 30,000 mercenary Germans (Hessians) as well. Within a month of declaring independence, William Cushing, writing from Boston, heard “of ten thousands Germans on their way to New York” and Joseph Ward recalled in 1777, “Yesterday a severe skirmish happened between a party of seven hundred of our Troops and two or three thousand *Barbarians* . . . It gives me pain that so much of Country between the Enemy and us is exposed to their ravages . . .”³⁷ The scale and embellishment of destruction, of course, varied. In his personal diary, John Adams recorded the destruction of a greenhouse by Hessians thought to be in search of money. Less than two years later as part of a report

³⁵ Samuel Adams to Joseph Warren, 7 January 1776, *Warren-Adams Letters* [Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections*, LXXII-LXXIII] (Boston, 1917-1925), I: 197-198.

³⁶ See Worthington Ford et al, eds., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789* (Washington, 1904-1947), 34 vols. I: 115-120, 70.

³⁷ William Cushing to John Adams, 29 July 1776, *Papers of John Adams, Volume 4, Founding Families*; Joseph Ward to John Adams, 4 September 1777, *Papers of John Adams, Volume 5, Founding Families*.

to the Comte de Vergennes, Adams affirmed that the British military “have already burnt down the beautiful Towns of Charles Town, Falmouth, Norfolk, Kingston, Bedford, Egg Harbour, and German Flatts, besides innumerable single Buildings and smaller Clusters of Houses, wherever their Armies have march’d.”³⁸

The Development and Subsequent Demobilization of an American Army

Though militarism and the traditional reliance on citizen-soldiers inundated the colonies since the earliest English settlement, military-minded Americans realized that colonial militias alone could not have defeated the professional British force. Planning to incorporate the existing militias, the Continental Congress resolved to create the Continental Army in June, 1775. Before it was organized, the opening salvo of war fell on the Massachusetts militia with events at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts, on April 19, 1775, marking the first military engagements of the American Revolution and forever memorialized as “the shot heard round the world.” Though disputable which side fired first, the initial American report undeniably came from a colonial militiaman—a Massachusetts Minuteman. Militarily, the militia won the day. Suffering less than three percent wounded, the Minutemen from Concord and the surrounding areas inflicted a casualty rate of nearly twenty percent upon the Redcoats.³⁹ Infused with patriotism, the desire to protect their homes, and a resolve to fight, which the British likely did not expect,

³⁸ John Adams, “Sept. 20. Saturday,” 20 September 1777, *Diary of John Adams, Volume 2, Founding Families*; John Adams, Benjamin Franklin and Arthur Lee to the Comte de Vergennes, 9 January 1779, *Papers of John Adams, Volume 7, Founding Families*.

³⁹ Robert Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), 33.

the Massachusetts Minutemen provide an example of the American militia at its very best. Many militiamen continued serving after Lexington and Concord at the Siege of Boston. While some were recruited into the Continental Army, others continued militia duty. The combined force seemed incomparable to the British Redcoats. Writing from the military camp at Roxbury, Samuel Osgood, a Continental officer and future statesman, expressed “I fancy such an Army was scarcely ever collected before. What a Contrast do my Eyes behold every Day: in Boston an Army of Slaves!—on this side the Sons of the respectable Yeomanry of New England.”⁴⁰ Americans clearly did not regard their army in the same light as that of the British.

Despite the heroics of the militia in April 1775, the citizen-soldiers of the Revolution ran from British Regulars more often than defeated them in battle. Rather than fight during the Battle of Camden in 1780, entire companies of militia bolted the field, some never firing a volley. Though some blame must be attributed to the American commander’s tactics that day, the actions of the militia at Camden show almost the polar opposite of the effectiveness of the Minutemen five years earlier. John Adams remarked, “Flight was unknown to the Romans . . . I wish it was to Americans.” Likewise, he wished “every Man upon the Continent” could serve as a soldier, “determined to conquer or to die.”⁴¹ Militiamen during the Revolution faced a similar problem to those who served in Jamestown in the early seventeenth century: leaving homes and farms for military

⁴⁰ Samuel Osgood to John Adams, 4 December 1775, Papers of John Adams, Volume 3, *Founding Families*.

⁴¹ John Adams to General Parsons, 19 August 1776, Diary of John Adams, Volume 3, *Founding Families*; John Adams, “October 1, 1776,” Diary of John Adams, Volume 3, *Founding Families*.

campaigning caused considerable economic hardship. Out-trained and outgunned, men fled the field and the army altogether. Daniel Hitchcock believed the militia “not worth a farthing” in 1776 as they deserted “by Hundreds in a Drove, affrighted and scared out thiere Wits.” Similarly, “A considerable number of our 3 Months militia have returned, deserted” noted Abigail Adams in the spring of 1777.⁴² Despite the commendable actions of the Massachusetts Minutemen at Lexington and Concord, the American militia could not be expected to regularly perform more than an auxiliary function. In the same correspondence condemning the militia, Hitchcock implored for a more functional army: “for Heaven’s Sake, for our Country’s Sake and for Liberty’s Sake, do let Us have an established Army; I ask it not for Myself, but for Posterity, that the Continent may not be sacrificed by having dependence on Men that will not defend it.”⁴³

Americans turned to a professional army out of necessity, but not without criticism. “[T]he idea once so horrid in the ears of an American,” recorded Benjamin Rush, “is *tolerated* even among our rulers.”⁴⁴ Particularly in the early stages of the war, many Americans held their own professional army in contempt. William Tudor decried the “infamous desertions, the Shameless Ravages, and seditious Speeches and mutinous behavior” of the new Continental Army. In his estimate the government was not creating soldiers, rather “breeding Highwaymen and Robbers.”⁴⁵ A Massachusetts woman agreed, “Private Property will be plundered, where there is an Army whether of Friends or

⁴² Daniel Hitchcock to John Adams, 9 September 1776, Papers of John Adams, Volume 5, *Founding Families*; Abigail Adams to John Adams, 10 March 1777, Adams Family Correspondence, Volume 2, *Founding Families*.

⁴³ Daniel Hitchcock to John Adams, 9 September 1776, Papers of John Adams, Volume 5, *Founding Families*.

⁴⁴ Benjamin Rush to John Adams, 27 October 1778, Papers of John Adams, Volume 7, *Founding Families*.

⁴⁵ William Tudor to John Adams, 6 September 1776, Papers of John Adams, Volume 5, *Founding Families*.

Enemies.”⁴⁶ Whether opinions believed Americans were producing professional soldiers or thieves, the army and war proved expensive. Though the independent states enjoyed commercial growth and an economic upsurge outside of British trade restrictions in the opening years of the conflict, Congress financed the Revolutionary War through the issuance of paper money and procurement of foreign loans. Economist Farley Grubb estimates that nearly 200 million Continental dollars went into circulation between 1775 and 1779 and accounted for more than three-quarters of all congressional spending during that period.⁴⁷ It should be noted that states maintained a role in financing the Continental army too. In one instance the state of Massachusetts ordered agents to “procure the Loan” in Europe “of One hundred and fifty Thousand Pounds Sterling, part of which . . . to invest in Goods for the use of the Officers and Soldiers belonging to the Army.”⁴⁸ Despite the Continental Army’s distinction as a wartime force, its price tag could not escape condemnation.

The organization and discipline of the army served as easy targets for the critical eye as well. William Tudor, Judge Advocate of the Continental Army, affirmed in 1777, “What is the Number of our whole Army I cannot tell. I wish it was better disciplined than it is.” In comparing his forces to British Regulars, General Nathanael Greene observed that the coolness of the enemy “might have given us a general defeat.” Greene also noted short

⁴⁶ John Adams, “Sepr. 20. Saturday,” 20 September 1777, *Diary of John Adams, Volume 2, Founding Families*.

⁴⁷ Farley Grubb, “State Redemption of the Continental Dollar, 1779-90,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (January 2012), 147-180. 147.

⁴⁸ Committee of the Massachusetts General Court to John Adams and Francis Dana, 22 July 1780, *Papers of John Adams, Volume 10, Founding Families*. This sum equates to more than \$26.3 million 2016 dollars.

enlistments and “the still shorter aid of the militia” as problems within his force.⁴⁹ Overall ineptitude and poor officering did not go unnoticed either. The disastrous Quebec campaign in 1775 exposed poor generalship as well as a lack of organization, provisions and supply lines, military intelligence, and medical care. The following year, the British capture of Fort Washington and the loss of “2600 Men cooped up inside” could not have given “the world” a “very great opinion of American Generalship.”⁵⁰ Though the Continental Army was necessary, the “Watchfull Eye” of Americans remained paramount to ensure it did not take from them “that Liberty for which all have been contending.”⁵¹

In the face of criticisms and outward displays of negative opinions toward the Continental Army, many patriotic Americans displayed support for those fighting the British. Concerns over the professionalism and order of the army diminished after Prussian Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben famously introduced the Blue Book to the Continentals. Though misspelling the foreign officer’s name, the Paymaster General of the army noted, “I am Informed by my Friends at Congress that our Army is very respectable both with regard to Numbers and discipline. The Baron d. Stubun has performed wonders in regulateing the discipline of the Army.”⁵² Despite the cost associated with maintaining armed forces, both militia and Continentals, Adams believed it necessary. He thought the states could raise sufficient funds and if the people “are so blind, blockish, and stupid” as to not realize that

⁴⁹ William Tudor to John Adams, 7 March 1777, Papers of John Adams, Volume 5, *Founding Families*; Nathanael Greene to John Adams, 3 March 1777, Papers of John Adams, Volume 5, *Founding Families*.

⁵⁰ William Tudor to John Adams, 7 March 1777, Papers of John Adams, Volume 5, *Founding Families*.

⁵¹ John Adams to Joan Derk van der Capellen, 21 January 1781, Papers of John Adams, Volume 11, *Founding Families*.

⁵² James Warren to John Adams, 7 June 1778, Papers of John Adams, Volume 6, *Founding Families*.

their taxes ultimately went towards protecting their liberty, "it is a Pity."⁵³ On two separate occasions, Adams spoke in Congress in favor of the army. He questioned in 1780 why Americans "for the Defense of their Altars and Firesides" could not sustain a similarly-sized army as European nations that maintain forces "merely for parade"? The following year he used even stronger language, suggesting that the Continental Army maintained peace and good order in America. "[I]f it were not for a standing Army and Troops posted about in several Cities, it is probably there would have been popular Tumults before now."⁵⁴ Regular citizens displayed support, too. David Waldstreicher has shown that citizens frequently toasted the army and performed illumination celebrations in their homes regularly on Independence Day as well as after the Continental victories at Saratoga and Yorktown.⁵⁵ In Philadelphia, Esther Reed, a London-born immigrant who became devoted to the American cause during the war, led a Sewing Circle of upper-class women that contributed their own cash and jewelry to purchase supplies to create uniform items for poorly-equipped Continental soldiers.⁵⁶

The anti-standing army and militia-first mentality paradigm proved inadequate in the American colonies during the Revolutionary War. Instead, a professional force was necessary to meet and defeat a similarly styled enemy. The militia cannot be discounted for providing valuable service during the war; however, its role must not be overstated either.

⁵³ John Adams to James Warren, 25 February 1779, Papers of John Adams, *Founding Families*.

⁵⁴ John Adams to the President of Congress, 14 October 1780, Papers of John Adams, Volume 10, *Founding Families*; John Adams to the President of Congress, 18 March 1781, Papers of John Adams, Volume 11, *Founding Families*.

⁵⁵ David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), specifically Chapter One.

⁵⁶ For more information, see Lyman Butterfield, "General Washington's Sewing Circle," *American Heritage* 2, no. 4 (Summer, 1951), 7-10.

Americans may have abandoned their inherited martial ideology and distaste for professional soldiers, but they did not do so for long. Following the peace accord with Britain, America's predisposition to standing armies returned in force and the Continental Army was almost completely demobilized. Without an external threat, the cost and danger associated with a standing army in a new nation outweighed its benefits. Once again, Americans relied on their militias for defense.

New National Insurgents and Reevaluating American Martial Ideology

Within roughly a decade of the end of the American Revolution, three rebellions in New England and Pennsylvania demonstrated that traditional martial ideologies had to evolve in the fledgling United States. In the year leading up to the 1787 Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, an uprising of nearly 9,000 militants commonly known as Shaysites or Regulators gripped much of New England. Historian David Szatmary has shown that Shays's Rebellion stemmed from "The overtrading of New England merchants and the subsequent drain of hard money" that "led to a credit crisis and a strangling chain of debt collection."⁵⁷ Unable to repay their debts in specie, many farmers found themselves in debtor's court faced with the bleak reality of prison time or worse, relinquishing their farms and livelihoods. Though debtors peacefully petitioned for relief, Secretary of War Henry Knox accurately predicted "this business must and will progress from one stage to another

⁵⁷ David Szatmary, *Shays' Rebellion: The Making of an Agrarian Insurrection* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), 26.

until it amounts to a pretty formidable rebellion.”⁵⁸ Unanswered requests for assistance led to armed protest against courts and government officials.

State militias acted swiftly in the peripheral areas of the rebellion including Vermont, New Hampshire, and Connecticut. At the epicenter of insurrection, Massachusetts, state troops proved less reliable. Several of the Shaysite leaders participated in the Revolutionary War and “had drilled and recruited for the patriot forces.”⁵⁹ These same men performed similar functions for their new cause and many of the state’s rural citizen-soldiers joined the ranks of the Shaysites or refused to muster in support of the state government. In response, Governor James Bowdoin requested assistance from the Confederation Congress. Though the legislature approved the appropriation of more than a half-million dollars and 1,300 troops from the states—veiled as support against Native Americans as opposed to agrarian citizens—to aid Massachusetts, all but Virginia “rejected the \$530,000 requisition and effectively undermined the federal troop plan.”⁶⁰ The impotence of the state militia and national government led Bowdoin to suggest and create a privately funded, volunteer force commanded by Benjamin Lincoln to act on behalf of the government. The seriousness of the situation in Massachusetts agitated many Revolutionaries, including George Washington. Writing to Lincoln he asked, “are we to have the goodly fabric that eight years were spent in rearing, pulled over our

⁵⁸ Henry Knox to Henry Jackson, 17 December 1786, *Literary and Historical Manuscripts (LHMS)*, Miscellaneous American, J. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

⁵⁹ Szatmary, 64.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 84.

heads?"⁶¹ Backed financially by the pocketbooks of the wealthy and militarily by *ultima ratio regum*, artillery, Lincoln's volunteer army marched against the Regulators.

Though the rebels had some successes in looting local merchants as well as in preventing court sessions and subsequent imprisonment of their neighbors for unpaid debts, they proved incapable of pitched battle when they came face-to-face with the hired forces of Massachusetts on a frigid February morning at the Springfield Armory. Reporting on the showdown, *The Hampshire Gazette*, a newspaper founded in Northampton, Massachusetts to chronicle the rebellion, stated that "General Shephard . . . ordered several cannon to be discharged on [the Shaysites'] right and left, but they still advanced; he then ordered the pieces to be leveled against the insurgents, at which time they were within 55 rods [907.5 feet]; as soon as they were discharged, the insurgents fled with the utmost precipitation"⁶² Broken and battered, the defeated Regulators escaped to the countryside in order to evade capture. Less than one week after the "battle," Lincoln wrote to Shays directly to end the insurrection: "WHETHER you are convinced or not of your error, in flying to arms; I am fully persuaded that before this hour, you must have the fullest conviction upon your own minds, that you are not able to execute your original purposes." The General affirmed that the Shaysites lacked resources, cover, and hope, and beseeched the rebel leader not to "hesitate a moment to disband your deluded followers." He continued, "To prevent bloodshed you, will communicate to your privates, that if they will instantly lay down their arms, surrender themselves to government, and take and subscribe

⁶¹ John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1939), 29:59.

⁶² William Butler, "Northampton, January 31," *Hampshire Gazette*, January 31, 1787.

the oath of allegiance to this Commonwealth, they shall be recommended to the General Court for mercy.”⁶³ Shays and his followers had little choice between hiding from Provincial forces and submitting to the commonwealth’s administration.

Like many of the insurgencies of the eighteenth century, Shays’s Rebellion ended innocuously with pardons under blankets of amnesty from local governments. Even Daniel Shays, who had fled to Vermont, ultimately received a pardon from the governor of Massachusetts, John Hancock. Shays’s rebellion, not unlike Bacon’s Rebellion a little more than a hundred years earlier in Virginia, highlighted the failures of the traditional militia system. Neither the state nor national government could rally adequate or sanctioned defensive measures to protect the commonwealth. Though some Americans still recoiled at the notion of a standing army, the insurrection prompted fears of future insurgencies among some of the new nation’s founding fathers and staunch Federalists. Perhaps more than most of his contemporaries, Alexander Hamilton expressed his concerns. Writing as “Publius” in the aftermath of the late rebellion in New England, Hamilton argued that, “the instance is . . . of use to instruct us that cases are likely to occur under our government . . . which will sometimes render a military force in time of peace essential to the security of the society It also teaches us . . . how little the rights of a feeble government are likely to be respected, even by its own constituents.”⁶⁴

⁶³ Benjamin Lincoln, “Copy of a Letter from Gen. Lincoln to Capt. Shays,” *Hampshire Gazette*, January 31, 1787.

⁶⁴ Alexander Hamilton, *Federalist* No. 25, in *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Clinton Rossiter, (New York: New American Library, 2003), 162-163.

Hamilton desired and called for nothing short of a standing army in America. Going against nearly two centuries of Anglo-American martial ideology, the then-Delegate to the Continental Congress from New York launched an offensive against America's militia system. "Here I expect we shall be told that the militia of the country is its natural bulwark," said Hamilton, "and would be at all times equal to the national defense. This doctrine, in substance, had like to have lost us our independence. It cost millions to the United States that might have been saved."⁶⁵ Though he did not dismiss the value of the traditional defensive forces, the representative of New York found the system wanting: "The American militia, in the course of the late war, have, by their valor on numerous occasions, erected eternal monuments to their fame," stated the *Federalist*, "but the bravest of them feel and know that the liberty of their country could not have been established by their efforts alone, however great and valuable they were."⁶⁶ In Hamilton's estimates, the newly independent governments of the United States required an army during peacetime. Shays's Rebellion may have been suppressed, but the New England insurrection would likely strike again. After all, Hamilton reasoned, "that seditions and insurrections are, unhappily, maladies as inseparable from the body politic as tumors and eruptions from the natural body."⁶⁷ Held only a few months after the end of the New England insurrection, Constitutional Convention delegates responded to the growing concern of national defense. In the wake of Shays's Rebellion, Congress gained the powers

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Alexander Hamilton, *Federalist No. 28*, in *The Federalist Papers*, ed. Clinton Rossiter, (New York: New American Library, 2003), 174.

to raise and support armies for terms up to two years and to “[call] forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress insurrections and repel Invasions.” (U.S. Constitution, art. 1, sec. 8) Instead of a creating a standing army, Congress established federal authority to nationalize the state militias.

Soon after the national government gained its new martial powers, civil disturbances in Pennsylvania tested federal resolve to utilize military force. Unspectacularly initiated as resistance to federal excise taxes on domestically distilled spirits, the Whiskey Rebellion quickly engulfed western Pennsylvania and insurgents brazenly attacked the home of Federal Excise Inspector John Neville. Scholar and high-ranking member of Pittsburgh society Hugh Henry Breckenridge identified and highlighted the consequences of the attack: “The citizens have rushed to arms; they have assailed the house of one who holds an office, because he holds it . . . in legal construction treason is committed . . .” He chastised the insurgents, “O mad-men; do you know what evils you are about to bring on us? you are [a]bout to sully our independence.”⁶⁸ Within months of Breckenridge’s oration, the federal government unleashed its power to suppress the insurrection and lawbreaking associated with the Whiskey Rebellion.

Historian Thomas P. Slaughter asserts that “Before it was over, some 7,000 western Pennsylvanians advanced against the town of Pittsburgh, threatened its residents, feigned an attack on Fort Pitt and the federal arsenal there, banished seven members of the

⁶⁸ Parts of Breckenridge’s speech can be found in footnote 2 of “Edmund Randolph to George Washington,” July 17, 1765, in Carol S. Ebel, ed., *The Papers of George Washington* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015), 18:359. It was also printed in *The Gazette of the United States* (Philadelphia), July 18, 1794.

community, and destroyed the property of several others.”⁶⁹ While historian Merrill Jensen contends that “Shays’ Rebellion frightened [George Washington] out of retirement and into politics,”⁷⁰ the Whiskey Rebellion thrust him into action. Unanimously elected President of the United States in 1789, Washington found himself in the saddle (literally) at the head of the nation’s military forces in the summer of 1794. However, before the President donned his military uniform and headed west from Philadelphia, he declared, “I, George Washington, President of the United State, do hereby command all persons being insurgents as aforesaid, and all others who it may concern, on or before the first day of September next to disperse and retire peaceably to their respective abodes.”⁷¹ Despite the declaration, the Pennsylvania insurgents did not disperse, and Federal fear of violence and insurrection spreading to surrounding states resulted in the nationalizing of nearly 13,000 militiamen from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia into a force mirroring the size of Washington’s Continental Army. Though not the standing army of Cromwell, nor the Redcoats that ransacked the property of tenant farmers in New York in the 1760s, perpetuated the Boston Massacre in 1770, or warred against the American independence movement, the nationalized militia ostensibly served as the sword against liberty rather than the shield.

As the army marched west, “Local people resented this martial intrusion in their daily lives, the damage caused by marauding soldiers who broke down fences, trampled

⁶⁹ Thomas P. Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 3.

⁷⁰ Merrill Jensen, *The New Nation: A History of the United States During the Confederation, 1781-1789* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950), 250.

⁷¹ To view Washington’s entire proclamation dated August 7, 1794, see *Annals of Congress*, 4th Cong., 2nd sess., 2796-2798. For quote, see 2798.

crops, and stole food, firewood, and shelter as it suited them.”⁷² The ultimate loss of liberty occurred with the loss of life when, on two separate occasions, nationalized citizen-soldiers killed Pennsylvania citizens—one a sickly boy shot in the groin and the second a drunkard bayoneted to death.⁷³ Despite its purpose, the army captured few insurgents. Out of the twenty sent to trial in Philadelphia, two were convicted of treason. “Anticlimactically,” asserts historian James Kirby Martin, “President Washington wisely pardoned both men Such was the inglorious end of the Whiskey Rebellion.”⁷⁴ Though the army successfully ended the insurrection in western Pennsylvania, it did so at enormous cost.

Notwithstanding the price of innocent life and the ill-feelings created by the actions of troops who stripped the countryside of improvements, resources, and consumables, the expedition drained the national treasury in excess of one million dollars.⁷⁵ Despite the collapse of the insurrection and “every appearance of quiet & submission to the laws”⁷⁶ under the pressure of a large nationalized militia, a second rebellion in Pennsylvania only a few years later fundamentally changed both the American response to rebellion as well as the course of martial ideology and composition of armed forces in the new nation.

In the months following the successful suppression of the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794, both the United States Senate and House of Representatives authored congratulatory

⁷² Slaughter, 205.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 205-206.

⁷⁴ Steven R. Boyd, ed., *The Whiskey Rebellion: Past and Present Perspectives* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985), 6. The two men convicted of treason were Philip Vogel and John Mitchell. Vogel’s stay of execution can be found in Ebel, ed., 18:242-243.

⁷⁵ Paul Douglas Newman, *Fries’s Rebellion: The Enduring Struggle for the American Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 155. Newman estimates a total cost of \$1.2 million. A total of \$1,122,569.01 for pay and supply of the militia’s four month service is given in “Henry Knox to George Washington,” November 18, 1794, in David R. Hoth and Carols S. Eber, eds., *The Papers of George Washington* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia press, 2015), 17:172.

⁷⁶ See Ebel, ed., 18:506.

notes to George Washington that praised the merits of America's militia system. On behalf of the Senate, John Adams affirmed that "Our warm & cordial acknowledgements are due to you, Sir, for the wisdom and decision with which you arrayed the militia to execute the public will; and to them, for the disinterestedness and alacrity, with which they obeyed your summons." The Vice President continued, "The example is precious to the theory of our Government, and confers the brightest honor upon the patriots who have given it."⁷⁷ The Speaker of the House, Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, likewise championed the militia and stated, "All [Americans] must particularly acknowledge and applaud the patriotism of that portion of citizens, who have freely sacrificed every thing less dear than the love of their Country, to the meritorious task of defending its happiness."⁷⁸ Yet the warmth that radiated on America's traditional martial forces quickly cooled in some prominent circles. Alexander Hamilton, the man who crusaded for a standing army following Shays's Rebellion, exploited anxieties over the degrading relationship and looming conflict with France to once again sound the alarm for a strong federal army.

The outspoken Federalist and former Secretary of Treasury, Hamilton utilized his power to influence members of the legislative branch of government. He used his particularly strong friendship and political alliance with William Loughton Smith, Congressman from South Carolina. In private correspondence with Smith, the former Secretary authored a step-by-step preparation for war with France—a document with

⁷⁷ See "From the United States Senate to George Washington," November 22, 1794, in Hoth and Ebel, eds., 18:198-199.

⁷⁸ See "From the United States House of Representatives to George Washington," 29 Nov, 1794, in *ibid.*, 218.

transmittable ideas that could infect Congress. Hamilton again called for defensive measures beyond the American militia. A step on the road to war: "The establishment of a provisional army of Twenty thousand infantry. They may be engaged to serve if a War breaks out with any foreign power" He likewise played to the fears and prejudices of southern legislators such as Smith and asserted that additional artillery and cavalry would not only be invaluable in defense against invasion, but also "useful guards against the Insurrection of the Southern Negroes." For those who doubted the threat of invasion, Hamilton drew upon memories of the recent War of Independence. The current French threat could be just as dangerous and realistic as that of the British less than two decades prior. "Those who may think an Invasion improbable ought to remember that it is not long since there was a general Opinion the U States was in no danger of War . . . They ought to suspect that the present opinion that there is no danger of invasion may be as chimerical as that other which experience proves to be false."⁷⁹ The shrewd Hamilton also made inroads with the nation's top executive.

Expressing a similar message to that found in the letter to Smith, Hamilton's words made their way to Secretary of War James McHenry at the end of April, 1797. From there, anxieties over possible invasion and insufficient defenses passed to John Adams. In a speech to Congress, the second President of the United States expressed his concerns: "While we are endeavoring to adjust all our differences with France by amicable negotiation, the progress of the war in Europe, the depredations on our commerce, the

⁷⁹ For all quotes in this paragraph, see Alexander Hamilton, *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton: Volume 21 April 1797-July 1798*, ed. Harold C. Syrett (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 39-40.

personal injuries to our citizens, and general complexion of affairs, render it my indispensable duty to recommend to your consideration effectual measures of defense.”⁸⁰ While a major “measure of defense” included a naval establishment to protect commerce on the high seas, the President echoed the recommendations of Hamilton nearly verbatim. He instructed members of Congress to seriously consider the creation of regular artillery and cavalry in addition to a provisional army.

Deliberations in the legislature did not last long, and on May 28, 1798, the Fifth Congress passed *An Act authorizing the President of the United States to raise a Provisional Army*. In addition to allowing Presidential control of state militias, the act, resonating the letters of Hamilton and speech of Adams, sanctioned the Commander-in-Chief to raise ten thousand “non-commissioned officers, musicians and privates” divisible into corps of artillery, cavalry, and infantry in the event (or imminent threat) of a foreign invasion.⁸¹ This provisional force would augment the very small military establishment recently created in 1796. The entire army consisted of, “the corps of artillerists and engineers . . . two companies of light dragoons . . . and four regiments of infantry, of eight companies each.”⁸² Like the British after the Seven Years’ War, a portion of these soldiers occupied posts along the frontier and remained “out of sight, out of mind” of the American people. Still, the martial legislation adopted in 1796 and spring of 1798 served only as prequels to the final *coup de gr ce* against America’s traditional militia-first mentality.

⁸⁰ For Adam’s speech, see *Annals of Congress*, 5th Cong., 1st sess., 54-59.

⁸¹ Richard Peters, ed., *The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America from the Organization of the Government in 1798 to March 3, 1845* (Cambridge: Metcalf and Company, 1845), 558-561.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 483-486.

As fears of French invasion spread during the Early National Period, a final insurrection in Pennsylvania provided the catalyst for the United States's government—spurred by Hamiltonian Federalists—to march a portion of America's regular army against its citizens as well as permanently employ a standing army. Once again, rebellion found its origins in taxation. Likewise, local militiamen participated once more. The Fries's Rebellion (though more a riot than a rebellion) of 1798-1799 began as simple resistance to taxation. In order to create the Provisional Army (as well as the new American Navy) Congress required approximately \$2 million and thus enacted further legislation, the *Direct Tax Act of 1798*, also known as the *House Tax Act of 1798*. Adopted explicitly to fund a larger army and navy, the act placed levies on dwellings, lands, and, where applicable, slaves. Congress designated how much revenue it required from each state and local assessors counted windows, measured property lines, and tallied bondsmen and women. However, inspectors met resistance in Eastern Pennsylvania. In Northampton County, north of Philadelphia, some locals flatly refused assessors' access to their property and railed against the legislation. Simultaneously arguing that the taxation unfairly burdened those who had improved their property, the Pennsylvanians decried the Provisional Army Act. Local Henry Strauss petitioned the national legislature, "That while we are warmly attached to the Union, we cannot but express our concern at several acts passed in the last two sessions of Congress: 1. The law for erecting a standing army."⁸³ Despite protests, the Pennsylvanians

⁸³ Newman, 101. The primary source of this quote is "Deposition of Henry Strauss", given before Judge William Henry, February 16, 1799, Rawle Papers 2: 15-16.

soon witnessed the willingness of the United States to enforce its laws as well as its inclination to employ a peacetime force.

The failure of some Northampton farmers to pay the House Tax led the Federal government to send U.S. Marshal William Nichols from Philadelphia to arrest the non-compliers. Though the arrests occurred without incident, news of their neighbors' imprisonment resulted in immediate backlash. In Northampton County, nearly 100 militiamen mustered and prepared a rescue mission. At the same time, auctioneer, militia Captain, and Revolutionary War and Whiskey Rebellion veteran John Fries rallied approximately forty more men in neighboring Bucks County. With unmistakable Revolutionary rhetoric he boomed, "All those, who were Tories in the Last War mean to be the leaders, they mean to get us quite under, they mean to make us Slaves!"⁸⁴ With his men, some in military uniform, Fries marched north and converged with the Northampton militia on the outskirts of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where the Federal Marshal had established a temporary jail for his prisoners.

Fries took command of the entire martial force and marched in orderly military fashion into town. To drum and fife music, the cavalry led a file of infantry as they encircled Nichol's jail, the Sun Inn.⁸⁵ Though organized and orderly in the beginning, the addition of hundreds of angry unarmed onlookers and the consistent flow of alcohol from inside the inn quickly devolved the collective discipline of the combined militias. Fries repeatedly attempted to secure the release of the marshal's prisoners, but each unsuccessful bid

⁸⁴ Newman, 15. This quote is also found in "Deposition of Phillip Schlough before Judge Richard Peters," April 15, 1799, Rawle Papers.

⁸⁵ See Newman, 138 for testimony and further details.

resulted in a more frenzied crowd. As the day wore on—and the drinks kept flowing—the militia Captain lost control of his troops. While attempting to negotiate once again, militiamen stormed inside the inn and forced Nicholas to release their neighbors. Despite Fries’s attempts to offer bond in return for the prisoners, the marshal refused, thereby ensuring the illegality of the day’s action.

In the days and weeks following “Fries’s Rebellion,” newspapers denounced the “Northampton Insurrection” and President Adams declared the actors treasonable. In doing so, the Federal Government could evoke the Provisional Army. Interestingly, Adams retired to his home in Massachusetts and left the government’s martial response to the leaders of the War Department. As militia forces gathered from nearby states, more than 600 regular army soldiers also mobilized. Together, more than 1,000 troops marched to the affected area less than a month after the declared insurrection. Surprisingly, the soldiers found little resistance, let alone a state of rebellion. Many of the identified insurgents voluntarily turned themselves in. Even John Fries, after what amounted to little more than a childhood game of hide-and-seek, peacefully surrendered. Though later convicted of treason, he, like countless insurgents who participated in Shays’s and the Whiskey Rebellion, received a pardon. Despite another anticlimactic ending to American insurrection in the Early National Period, the martial response to Fries’s Rebellion represented a turning point in the process of shifting American military history and trajectory. America’s leaders created the nation’s first standing army and utilized it as a constabulary force against its insubordinate citizens.

Conclusion

The years immediately following the Seven Years' War ushered in financial devastation for the British as well as reinforced American fears of the standing army. Mounting debt, military defeat, and colonial insubordination forced the imperial power to realign its forces to the East. As relationships soured at the local level between British soldiers and American colonists, the association between Britain and its colonies suffered similar deterioration and rebellion at the national level proved a practical outlet of frustrations and hostilities. Though militiamen fired the first shots of the conflict and played an integral role in the opening stages of war, Americans necessarily adopted a professional wartime army to fight against their European enemies. Yet the rapid demobilization of the Continental Army after the Revolution permitted the resurgence of insurgents. Without adequate constabulary forces, rebellions spread in New England and Pennsylvania. Perhaps more than his contemporaries, Alexander Hamilton read and believed social philosopher Thomas Hobbes who stated "And covenants, without the sword, are but words and of no strength to secure a man at all."⁸⁶ For nearly two centuries of colonial and Early National history, Americans held steadfastly to their inherited English martial ideology and the words of Hobbes blossomed into reality for many. Yet tremendous violence—frequently perpetuated by those meant to prevent it—rarely swayed Anglo-Americans to adopt security measures any more significant than their local citizen-soldiers. In this sense, the Hobbes's sword existed, but it often proved a dull and unwieldy one. Not until the end of

⁸⁶ See Thomas Hobbes and J. C. A. Gaskin, *Leviathan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), Chapter 17.

the eighteenth century did the power of English ideology begin to lose its unshakable grip.

The power of an idea persisted until the threat of invasion and actuality of perceived insurrection provided the means to a new-ordered end.

Conclusion

Though military officers and adventurers like John Smith and Myles Standish accompanied the earliest, permanent English settlers, their tactics, techniques, and procedures did not become engrained in plantation societies and did little more than provide the local defense and protection required to assure their tiny footholds in the New World. Even in Jamestown where the bellicose Smith and his successors implemented martial law and referred to each other as “souldier,” overt militarism dwindled during the second decade of the seventeenth century and resulted in the near-destruction of Virginia’s English population. Conflict between Anglo-Americans and Native Americans persisted throughout the colonial period but never altered martial policies. Though the Anglo-Powhatan Wars and King Philip’s War ravaged populations, the militia prevailed as a bulwark in colonial societies. Yet disgruntled Native Americans were not the only threat and harbingers of violence. Conditions in England as well as disobedient colonists and militiamen often proved just as dangerous to local security. The English Civil War provided the first catalyst to open insurgency in the American colonies and also solidified anti-standing army ideology in the minds of English men and women on both sides of the Atlantic.

While Anglo societies resisted the implementation of professional soldiers, local militias performed constabulary functions. At times, militiamen proved unprepared to execute their duties swiftly. Though New Englanders eventually turned to the brutal tactics of total war to defeat their enemies during King Philip’s War, more than 500 militiamen and an additional 1,000 colonists perished in the struggle. In extreme cases, such as Bacon’s

Rebellion, citizen-soldiers turned their weapons against sanctioned colonial authority. The late-seventeenth century insurrection demonstrated the self-perpetuating system of anti-standing army ideology and lack of adequate constabulary forces in microcosm. With few defensive forces in place to stop the ravaging forces of Bacon, Charles II deployed English soldiers to protect his interests in Virginia. Poorly received, supplied, and maintained, the soldiers withered to a point where they themselves participated in subsequent insurgency.

A little more than a decade after the death of Nathaniel Bacon, the Glorious Revolution caused instability in both England and the American colonies. Though the event served to inculcate hardening anti-standing army ideology among Anglo citizens in both rhetoric and legislation, it also ushered in significant rebellions in the American colonies. In Massachusetts, New York, and Maryland—areas with few English troops—colonists and militiamen forcefully overthrew local governments during a period of increasing European tensions. The ascension of King William and Queen Mary in England following the Glorious Revolution set off a firestorm of conflicts that protracted nearly six decades and introduced Provincial forces to professional European armies. Throughout this period, imperial wars, rebellions, and struggles with Native Americans all reinforced the violent reality American colonists confronted.

The British victory at the conclusion of the Seven Years' War resulted in new challenges for Anglos on both sides of the Atlantic. British soldiers stationed in newly acquired western territory suffered devastating military defeats during Pontiac's Rebellion and their retreat to populated eastern colonies triggered fear and distress in Anglo-Americans who still stigmatized the army. However, despite some outspoken reservations,

Americans turned to a professional force—albeit temporarily—to wage war during the colonies’ most famous and impactful rebellion, the American Revolution. The grip of anti-standing army ideology remained in place in the wake of independence and the Continental Army all but disappeared. Mirroring the martial conditions in place during the colonial period, the Confederation Period and opening decade of the Early National era suffered similar insurgencies. Existing without the deterrents of an army or other significant constabulary forces, rebels resorted to disobedience and violence as forms of protest in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. Shays’s, Whiskey, and Fries’s Rebellions all served as practical outlets of defiance, but they also acted as the catalyst leaders like Alexander Hamilton needed to redefine America’s military establishment. Ironically, resistance against taxation designed to fund a substantial army and navy resulted in America’s first standing army and a revolution in martial ideology.

This study intersects and augments several prominent historiographies as it bridges the gap between Anglo-American martial dogma founded on anti-standing army ideology and militia-first mentality and the ubiquitous violence, warfare, and insurgency that personified the early American experience. This work improves the narrow field of Anglo-American anti-standing army ideology scholarship. Though preeminent monographs such as Bernard Bailyn’s *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* and Gordon S. Wood’s *The Creation of the American Republic* reference American fear, distrust, and disgust towards standing armies, the books neither place martial policy central to the narrative nor provide analysis of its development. Conversely, Lois B. Schworer’s *“No Standing Armies!”: The Antiarmy Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England* provides what is

likely the most comprehensive examination of anti-army ideology. While the author contends that “principle, propaganda, partisanship parliamentary tactic, parochialism, and personal advantage played a part” in forming the martial dogma, the work is limited in both duration and location as noted in the subtitle.¹ Schwoerer deftly navigates through the kingships and important events of seventeenth-century England, but makes no attempt to explain or explore the transmission, proliferation, and expression of anti-standing army ideology in the New World. This scholarship aims to do just that.

In addition to enhancing the body of scholarship focused on Anglo-American martial thought, this study importantly adds to the literature concerning early American military development and the professionalization of the army. Utilizing several approaches, historians have examined how America’s military metamorphosed from a system of colonial militias during the colonial period into a professional, standing army in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Foundational to this field is Lawrence Delbert Cress’s *Citizens in Arms: The Army and the Militia in American Society to the War of 1812*. Focusing on military ideology and policy, the author states that his work “examines the relationship between eighteenth-century perceptions of the military needs of a free society and the development of political policy intended to secure and preserve traditional English liberties in America.”² Cress carves the place of the American military establishment within burgeoning republicanism and contends that a standing army proved necessary both politically and militarily. “The ‘courage and good intentions’ of the citizen militia,” states

¹ Schwoerer, 190.

² Lawrence Delbert Cress, *Citizens in Arms: The Army and the Militia in American Society to the War of 1812*. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982.) xi.

the author, "would no longer suffice if America were again invaded by a European Army."

(162) Written as a political and military history, Cress's work stresses the importance of modernizing tactics and technology in the transition away from America's militia tradition.

Several scholars have focused on the role of English and British troops in the transformation of American martial development. In his concise work *Struggle for a Continent: The Wars of Early America*, John Ferling depicts the English as conquerors from the outset of colonization attempts at Roanoke in 1584 through the conclusion of the Seven Years' War. The author examines the eastern seaboard where warfare, first with Native Americans and later with European rivals, takes center stage. With his work centering on the imperial conflicts between Britain and France during the eighteenth century, Ferling concludes that throughout the period a separate "American" identity developed. While partially sparked by poor martial views of one another, the author states, "the colonists gradually came to understand that their interests were not the same as those of the parent state."³

Similarly, Douglas Edward Leach's *Roots of Conflict: British Armed Forces and Colonial Americans, 1667-1763* examines several abrasive episodes and military campaigns between Bacon's Rebellion and the Seven Years' War to demonstrate the growth of mutually antagonistic attitudes between colonists and Anglo soldiers. The author argues that "Anglo-American friction caused by the presence of British regular forces prior to 1763 was indeed an important contributing factor in the coming of the American Revolution, especially in the form of intergroup attitudes and perceptions hardening into stereotypes

³ Ferling, 208.

and traditions.”⁴ Much of Leach’s work focuses on the deteriorating English-American relationships during the eighteenth-century imperial wars and he illustrates that two distinct people emerged as a result of these conflicts. While Anglos viewed provincials as undisciplined and cowardly, colonial troops witnessed British severity and vulgarity that reinforced their wariness of professional forces. Leach argues compellingly that “a potentially dangerous atmosphere of antipathy and mistrust between the British professional forces and the American civilian population” existed at the dawn of the American Revolution.⁵

In the same vein as the works of Ferling and Leach, Fred Anderson’s *A People’s Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years’ War* also suggests that interactions between Anglo and American soldiers facilitated the creation of a separate, non-British identity among colonists in the mid-eighteenth century. Anderson argues that “the New England Provincials of the Seven Years’ War subscribed to notions about military service and warfare that were wholly incompatible with the professional ideals and assumptions of their British regular army allies.”⁶ While experiences of campaigning helped form a shared memory, provincials developed common feelings of British mercilessness and haughtiness as well as their own moral superiority. Likewise, the British soldiery viewed provincials operating through kinship ties and willing to desert under contractual terms as incapable of serving as good soldiers. Ultimately, the two sides drew lasting conclusions

⁴ Douglas Edward Leach, *Roots of Conflict: British Armed Forces and Colonial Americans, 1667-1763*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986.) ix.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁶ Fred Anderson, *A People’s Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years’ War*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984.) viii.

about one another and wartime service “graphically illustrated the divergences between British and colonial ways of thinking.”⁷

Conversely, John Shy takes a different perspective in his work *Toward Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution*. Rather than a force deployed to crush liberty or wage war on the American people, Shy suggests the British military’s role in the colonies was to prevent conflict, especially along the frontier. Particularly in the years immediately following the Seven Years’ War, Shy argues colonists cooperated with the army and shared a “wartime attitude.” The author asserts that “It is no wonder then that the Americans were slow to object as a matter of principle to the retention of Canada, Florida, and the backcountry of a part of that army to whom they felt a certain gratitude, with whom they shared a sense of mutual accomplishment.”⁸ Even after the British occupation of Boston and the Boston Massacre, Americans and Anglos greatly influenced one another. Rampant desertion, land acquisition, and influx of British officers who married American women resulted in what Shy styles the “Americanization” of the European army. Conversely, close civil-military relationships allowed strong Anglicizing influences on the upper ranks of colonial society.

Charles Royster places the Continental Army central to his intellectual history, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783*. In his extensive book, he “studied the ideals that Americans defined for themselves in creating, recruiting, and fighting in an army” and then “studied the relationship of these

⁷ *Ibid.*, 195.

⁸ John Shy, *Toward Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965.) 146.

ideals to their experience with their army.”⁹ Rather than a traditional military history focused on generals or grand strategy, Royster focuses on civil-military relations and the professionalization of the American force. He insists that the “trial of national character was the central theme in American’s discussion of the Continental Army’s role in the winning of the revolution.”¹⁰ The realities of warfare against British Regulars and a pronounced lack of discipline among American troops required the professionalization of the Continental Army. Although Continentals and militiamen fought together to achieve victory during the American Revolution, intellectual schisms grew between civilians and military members and “Americans refused to conclude that the war showed independence to rest on professionalism as well as voluntarism.”¹¹ Despite the civil-military division, Royster concludes that victory in the war “enabled a whole generation to claim that their strength had been proven by the standard of 1775 and to bequeath the standard and the example to posterity.”¹²

Lastly, this study supplements colonial military historiography by placing rebellions at the center of the story. It is important to note, however, that events such as Bacon’s Rebellion, Shays’s Rebellion, and the Whiskey Rebellion all have their own significant historiographies.¹³ Given its magnitude and coincidental occurrence exactly 100 years before the American Revolution, Bacon’s Rebellion has long interested scholars. From more

⁹ Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979.) viii.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 3.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 333.

¹² *Ibid*, 368.

¹³ The historiography of the American Revolution is purposely omitted here.

heavily criticized works such as Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker's *Torchbearer of the Revolution* and Wilcomb Washburn's *The Governor and the Rebel* to highly acclaimed monographs like Edmund S. Morgan's *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*, historians have sought to determine the significance of Nathaniel Bacon and his followers.

Post-Revolutionary insurgencies have also received much attention from scholars. As early as 1788, George Richards Minot produced the first history of Shays's Rebellion in his work *History of the Insurrections in Massachusetts*. Yet the most significant interpretations of the event proliferated in the twentieth century. Progressive Charles Beard included the Shaysites in his magnum opus *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, and historians in the latter part of the decade wrote entire books and edited compilations dedicated to the rebellion. Robert Feer's Harvard-dissertation-turned monograph *Shay's Rebellion*, David Szatmary's *Shays' Rebellion: The Making of an Agrarian Insurrection*, and *In Debt to Shays: The Bicentennial of an Agrarian Rebellion* edited by Robert A. Gross all stand out as works dedicated to the causes and effects of the revolt. Similarly, whiskey rebels can be found central to works such as Thomas P. Slaughter's *The Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution* and *The Whiskey Rebellion: Past and Present Perspectives* edited by Steven R. Boyd.

Collectively, these works addressing specific rebellions are exceptions within the greater historiography. More often than not, lesser-publicized insurrections—for example Ingle's Rebellion or the tobacco cutting riots—are rarely more than acknowledged and glossed over without significant explanation. Crisscrossing the histories of anti-standing

army ideology, early American martial development, and colonial and early national insurgency, this study enhances the understanding of all three fields.

The preceding chapters have demonstrated that Anglo-American martial ideology based on anti-standing army sentiment and doctrinaire reliance on the militia system resulted in frequently catastrophic consequences. Each section forms the foundation of a multilateral argument. First and foremost this work demonstrates that violence existed as an inescapable part of life for many Anglo-American colonists during the colonial and the beginnings of the Early National period, and that the martial policies adopted and adhered to amplified the danger and viciousness of reality. Secondly, the chapters establish that traditional reliance on the militia created environments with few organized and prepared constabulary forces. Given these conditions, outbreaks of violence and rebellion erupted, threatened local security, and sometimes toppled sanctioned authority. Despite persistent warfare and the threat of insurgency, Anglo-Americans held fast to their martial policies. Finally, this work illustrates that in the years before the American Revolution, violence and rebellion had become mainstays in American society and served as practical outlets of Anglo-American frustration and hostility, against the British government and later against their own administrations during the Early National Period. Despite the horrific violence and persistent insurrections, the power and persistence of martial ideology triumphed for nearly two hundred years. War, death, and destruction could not dissuade men like Founding Father Elbridge Gerry who affirmed in 1789 that: "What, sir, is the use of a militia? It is to prevent the establishment of a standing army, the bane of liberty. . . . Whenever

Governments mean to invade the rights and liberties of the people, they always attempt to destroy the militia, in order to raise an army upon their ruins."¹⁴

¹⁴ *Annals of Congress*, 1st Cong., 1st sess., 778.

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COLONIAL REBELLIONS AND NEW NATION INSURGENCIES:
VIOLENCE, UPRISINGS, AND THE GENESIS OF ANGLO-AMERICAN
MARTIAL IDEOLOGY, 1600-1800

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This study explores the evolution of Anglo-American martial traditions and the often violent results of those developments from the period of earliest English permanent North American settlement until the end of the eighteenth century. It examines the causes and consequences of Anglo-American's martial policies born from English martial ideology based on anti-standing army sentiment and doctrinaire reliance on the militia system to construct a tripartite argument. First, Anglo-American martial policies amplified the dangers and viciousness of reality. Secondly, traditional reliance on the militia created environments with few prepared constabulary forces to effectively suppress localized outbreaks of violence and rebellion. Thirdly, violence and rebellion became mainstays in American society and served as practical outlets of Anglo-American frustration and hostility, first against the British government and then their own administrations during the Early National Period. Inherited American martial ideology remained inflexible until the 1790s and concurrent threats of rebellion and European warfare.