

Impact of King Philip's War

The King Philip's War (1675-78) was fought between various Native Americans tribes against New England colonists and their Native American allies. To read about the causes of the war click [here](#). A product of years of struggles between both sides, the brutal war had harsh effects, especially for the Native Americans involved. It also resulted in much death and destruction for the colonists.

Death and Destruction

War is **hell**. You cannot qualify war in harsher terms than I will. War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it. Those who brought war into our country deserve all the curses and maledictions a people can pour out.

- General William Sherman (Civil War)

King Philip's War, especially given the smaller size of the population at the time, was one of the most brutal conflicts in our history. Six hundred colonists died, at least twelve white settlements were destroyed, fifty more were damaged, the economy was severely damaged, and high wartime expenses ([one source](#) says 80,000 pounds) led to high taxes and financial hardship.

Native Americans suffered much worse. Thousands died in combat or by sickness.

Many more were captured and later sold into slavery or indentured servitude. Many were sent to Bermuda, including King Philip's son. Many there today claim ancestry from the Native exiles.

Several smaller bands of South New England Natives were basically destroyed.

As a brutal symbol of the results of the war, the colonists displayed King Philip's head at Plymouth colony for the next 25 years as a warning to other Native Americans.

Native American Sovereignty

King Philip's War in hindsight was the last chance for Native Americans in Southern New England to retain some degree of control and resist growing English power in the region.

King Philip himself was the leader of the Wampanoag tribe, which barely survived (a few hundred members remained) the war. The Narragansett tribe, another major part of the Native resistance, also was greatly harmed. The same fate was suffered by smaller tribes.

A major reason for the war was pressures on Natives by English colonists seeking their land. The small remaining groups of Natives had that much less ability to resist such pressures now.

Natives Americans Continue On

It should be underlined here that Native Americans were not totally wiped out.

[Mashantucket Pequots](#) are but one of the remaining tribes that still are living in the Southern portion of New England. Natives that remained became more closely a part of colonial life, including as servants, fisherman, members of the militia, and in Christian communities.

Natives Americans still had a sizable presence in Northern New England (such as in Maine). Conflict between the Natives Americans and English would continue there for some time.

Some Natives also started to increasingly ally themselves with the French. This would also lead to further complications into the 18th Century, including the [French and Indian War](#).

English Colonial Control

The defeat of Native forces in the long term led to expansion of colonial settlements.

The colonists first needed time to regroup, dealing with the war's consequences. Further settlement and expansion of English control in the region was delayed. More remote inland settlements in some cases only began to thrive once more in the early 18th Century.

A major war also reaffirmed for the English government back home that more direct control was appropriate. Plymouth Colony, home of the Pilgrims, itself ended its existence as a self-governing colony in 1692. It became part of a united Massachusetts Bay Colony.

English/Natives Relationship

King Philip's War was a threat to the English's very existence in the region. But, they survived. The future seemed secure. Victory provided a major psychological sense of assurance.

The security remained an iffy thing. Native Americans still were a major presence, English control still sketchy outside of a thin strip of land near the Atlantic coast. But, over fifty years of increasing control and surviving a major test was a key turning point.

The war also aggravated an already existing troubled relationship. Its very brutality made a type of co-existence seem much less possible.

Both sides fought a type of "total war," civilians not off limits. The idea of the Native American as a dangerous specter lingered on, including in "captivity narratives" by English taken captive by Natives to replace tribal members lost to warfare. Bad feelings lingered on both sides.

The battles between whites and Native Americans were far from over.