

Native American Roles in the American Revolution

Table of Contents

Introduction and Scope
Subject Headings and Browsing Areas
Encyclopedias and Handbooks
Books
Periodicals
Journal Articles
Web Resources

Introduction and Scope

It is hard to imagine now, but at the time of the American Revolution, Anglo-American interaction with Native Americans was a common, if not everyday, occurrence. Native Americans were considered to be excellent trading partners, and also important political allies. However, research on Native American roles in the American Revolution and colonial life has always taken a back seat to the study of the Founding Fathers, the British officers and politicians, ordinary American citizens, and slaves. But Native Americans had a very large, if often overlooked, part in the build-up to the war, the battles, and the aftermath. Native Americans had complex trade relationships and political alliances with both the British and colonial governments, and had their own motivations for keeping the two sides at odds with each other. When war broke out, Native American tribes did not act as one, but rather took sides with either the British or the Americans based on past relationships with either government. These alliances also shifted continually, as the Native Americans tried to promote their own interests, specifically, keeping white settlers out of the Old Northwest (now Ohio and Michigan). Native American culture also played a large role in shaping how the Founders thought of democracy. The Iroquois League was a group of five, and then six allied Indian tribes that had maintained a confederacy among themselves for hundreds of years, even before white settlers arrived in America.

It is difficult to conduct research on Native Americans because the search terms used to refer to them vary among databases and catalogs. Both “native American” and “Indian” are acceptable terms, but they also generate confusion for the researcher. A source will pick which term it uses, which means that both must be searched for. To make the situation more confusing, both terms can also refer to peoples who have

nothing at all to do with the indigenous people of the United States of America. If practical and relevant to the research, it is suggested that the user choose a tribe to research, as this specifies exactly what to search for, and avoids uncertainty.

This pathfinder uses the books and periodicals available at the University of Maryland, College Park library system. It is meant to introduce the user to the topic, and therefore presents sources that deal with several geographical areas, including the Old Northwest frontier, Pennsylvania, New York, and Virginia. It also includes multiple Indian tribes.

Subject Headings and Browsing Areas

These subject headings and browsing areas should help narrow the search terms down, or give the user place to start looking.

Subject Headings

Indians of North America

Indians of North America – History

Indians of North America – History – Revolution, 1775-1783

Indians of North American – History – 18th century – Sources

Indians of North America – Government relations

Indians of North America – Wars – 1775-1783

LC Classification

E – United States History

75-99 – Indians of North America

81-83 – Indian Wars

99 – Indian Tribes and Cultures

201-298 – The American Revolution

Encyclopedias and Handbooks

Johansen, Bruce, and Mann, Barbara Alice (Eds). (2000). *Encyclopedia of the Haudenosaunee*. Westport, Conn. : Greenwood Press, 2000.

E99.I7 E53 2000

The Iroquois (Haudenosaunee was their name in their language) were one of the most influential Indian tribes during the colonial period.

E99.I7 E53 2000

Kessel, William B., and Wooster, Robert. (Eds.). (2005). *Encyclopedia of Native American Wars and Warfare*. New York, NY: Facts on File.

A guide to all the wars Native Americans have been involved in, as well as their fighting tactics.

E81 .E98 2005

Pritzker, Barry M. (1998). *Native Americans: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Peoples*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO.

This is a general overview of all Native American tribes of the United States.

E77 .P89 1998

Purvis, Thomas L. (1995). *Revolutionary America 1763-1800*. New York: Facts on File.

Part of the Almanac of American Life series, this almanac has statistical information for each colony/state during the American Revolution, including demographic information on Native Americans.

E 162 .P86 1995

Schultz, Jeffrey D., et al. (Eds.). (2000). *Encyclopedia of Minorities in American Politics*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.

This book contains a chapter on Native Americans and their role in American politics in general.

E184.A1 E574 2000

Books

Abler, Thomas S. (2007). *Cornplanter: Chief Warrior of the Allegany Senecas*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press.

Cornplanter was an important chief during the time of the American Revolution and signed several treaties on behalf of the Seneca Indians. This book deals with his life.

E99.S3 C673 2007

Dunn, Walter S. Jr. (2007). *Choosing Sides on the Frontier in the American Revolution*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger.

This book looks at the pioneers of the frontier and their interactions with Native Americans, the British, and the Americans.

E263.N84 D86 2007

Galloway, Colin G. (1995). *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

This book looks closely at some Indian communities during the Revolution, how the war contrasted to previous Indian wars, and what it meant for Indians afterwards.

E83.775 .C35 1995

Glatthaar, Joseph T. and Martin, James Kirby. (2006). *Forgotten Allies: The Oneida Indians and the American Revolution*. New York: Hill and Wang.

This book explores the relationship between the Oneida and the American forces during the Revolution, and why this alliance was forgotten over time.

E99.O45 G54 2006

Griffin, Patrick. (2007). *American Leviathan: Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier*. New York : Hill and Wang.

This book looks at frontier life during the Revolution, and how its politics were different from the colonies'.

F517 .G79 2007

Hoxie, Frederick E., Hoffman, Ronald, Albert, Peter J. (Eds.). (1999). *Native Americans and the Early Republic*. Charlottesville: Published for the U.S. Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia.

This book is a collection of chapters that cover Indians during the Revolution from the Northwest, to Pennsylvania, to the South, as well as some cultural studies about the intellectual impact Indian cultures had on White society.

E93 .N35 1999

Mancall, Peter C. and Merrell, James H. (2007). *American Encounters: Natives and Newcomers from European Contact to Indian Removal, 1500-1850*. New York: Routledge.

This is an overview of Indian relationships with Europeans. This book helps place the American Revolution in the overall history of Native Americans.

E98.F39 A54 2000

Mann, Barbara Alice. (2005). *George Washington's War on Native America*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger.

This book describes how the Native Americans kept their hold on the Old Northwest, preventing white settlers from gaining a firm foothold during the Revolution, and posits that George Washington tried to systematically break the strong Iroquis League.

E230.5.N67 M36 2005

Pencak, William A. and Richter, Daniel K. (Eds.). (2004). *Friends and Enemies in Penn's Woods : Indians, Colonists, and the Racial Construction of Pennsylvania*. University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press.

This book looks at the diverse racial make-up of the settlers in Pennsylvania during the colonial era, including Native American relationships with other settlers.

F152 .F865 2004

Skaggs, David Curits. (Ed.). (1977). *The Old Northwest in the American Revolution: an Anthology*. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

This book has several chapters dealing Native Americans and their encounters with the British and American forces during the Revolution.

E263.N84 O43

Taylor, Alan. (2006). *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

This book explores the Revolution through the friendship of two men, one an Indian, the other a colonist.

E99.I7 T299 2006

Periodicals

Because the search terms regarding Native Americans can be confusing, it can be helpful to go straight to periodicals that are known to be useful.

American Indian Quarterly

This journal is published by the University of Nebraska Press, and is one of the foremost journals in American Indian scholarship.

Ethnohistory

This anthropology journal is published by Duke University Press, and frequently includes American Indian history articles, often with an anthropological bent.

Wicazo Sa Review

This is another renowned journal in Native American Studies. It is published by the University of Minnesota Press, and its current editor is of Pawnee Indian descent.

William and Mary Quarterly

One of the most respected journals in colonial US history; it covers all aspects of the time period, including Native Americans.

Journal Articles

Holton, Woody. (1994). The Ohio Indians and the Coming of the American Revolution in Virginia. *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 60, No. 3. pp. 453-478.

This article explains how the British were desperate to keep the Ohio Indians happy and loyal, which is why they would not allow Virginians to settle in the Ohio country.

Johansen, Bruce. (1990). Native American Societies and the Evolution of Democracy in America, 1600-1800. *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 37, No. 3, pp. 279-290.

This article describes the impact Indian societies, especially the Iroquois Confederacy, had on the shaping and writing of the state constitutions and the Articles of Confederation.

Lee, Wayne E. (2001). Early American Ways of War: A New Reconnaissance, 1600-1815. *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 44, No. 1. pp. 269-289.

Abstract: This review examines recent work on the ideology, culture, and socio-economic composition of early American militaries down to 1815. A fresh place has been given to the role of a Native American culture of war in influencing colonial warfare, although the exact nature of the synthesis of European and Indian traditions remains unclear. Social and economic investigations of the colonial militias and the Continental Army have revealed persistent patterns of expectations of contractual service and subsequent effective resistance when those conditions were not met. Taken together these works have brought us closer to a deeper understanding of the links between culture and military behaviour.

Levinson, David. (1976). An Explanation for the Oneida-Colonist Alliance in the American Revolution. *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 23, No. 3 pp. 265-289.

Abstract: During the American Revolution the Oneida Indians, unlike the majority of their Iroquois confederates, supported and aided the Colonists. This Oneida-Colonist alliance is usually viewed as the result of the influence of the Reverend Samuel Kirkland on the Oneida. It is argued here that this interpretation is an oversimplification. In its place, a new theory of the Oneida-Colonist alliance is suggested and tested. The new theory suggests that the alliance was the result of a series of factors, the most important being the gradual Europeanization of the Oneida, a strengthening of ties between the Oneida and their Colonist neighbors, and a gradual weakening of ties between the Oneida and their Iroquois confederates.

Web and Electronic Resources

There are very few Internet resources that deal with this topic in depth.

<http://americanrevolution.org/ind1.html>

This is an article that gives a broad overview Indian relations with the British and American forces, as well as having an extensive list of further reading.

<http://www.nps.gov/fost/historyculture/the-oneida-nation-in-the-american-revolution.htm>

This is the National Park Service's website for Fort Stanwix, where the Oneida helped the Americans during the war.

http://history.clas.asu.edu/files/shared/H-AmIndian_Bib_-_AmericanRevolution.pdf

This is another pathfinder done by students at Arizona State University, which can be found online, and is useful for further reading.

Fixico, Donald L. (Ed.). (2008). *Treaties with American Indians: An Encyclopedia of Rights, Conflicts, and Sovereignty*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO.

An electronic encyclopedia of the treaties signed by Native Americans with the United States government.

KF8203.6 .T74 2008eb

(REV. 12/11/2008)