Anglo Powhatan Wars

Main Idea: The Anglo-Powhatan Wars refer to the struggle between the Native Americans living near Jamestown and the British settlers located in the same region. Over a period of about 40 years, the two fought for control of the area.

1st War: 1610-1614

* Chief Powhatan wanted the colonists to come and move onto his territory, however the colonists were resistant. Powhatan wanted the colonists to make his metal tools in change for use of the land and food. The relationship deteriorated as the “Starving Time” in Jamestown led many colonists to attack the Native Americans for food and other supplies. The war began when the colonists led an attack against the natives killing many. The war continued until both sides had captured numerous hostages. Finally, the marriage between Pocahontas and John Rolfe served a peace territory amongst the two. By this time, Rolfe had introduced a strong strain of tobacco that was allowing the colonists to make money and be less dependent upon the Native Americans.

2nd War: 1622-1632

* Chief Powhatan’s brother, Opechancanough led an attack against the colonists killing over 300, almost a 1/3 of the entire colony. As fighting continued for the next years, a lack of supplies prevented both sides from gaining too much of an advantage.

3rd War-: 1644-1646

* Opechancanough led a final uprising killing almost 500 white settlers, however this time the settlers were more prepared. After the initial assault, the colonists were able to organize a counter-attack resulting in the death of Opechancanough and an end to the wars between the two sides. The colonists held on to the land they claimed and the Native Americans in the area conceited it to them. The Native Americans were granted reservations with some limited hunting rights outside of those reservations.

King Philip’s War

Main Idea: This war took place from 1675-1678 and was between the Puritans and the Native Americans living in Massachusetts. It spread to neighboring Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Maine. Some historians believe this was the deadliest war in American history.

Key People:

* King Philip, or Metacom: the key Native American leader
* Major Benjamin Church: the key colonial leader

Causes:

* The Wampanoag tribe had signed a treaty with the British citizens living in Massachusetts for protection. They believed they were safe. However, the treaty did not keep them safe from British expansion into their territory. It appeared to them that land they had been living on was now being given to other Native American tribes to use as reservations.
* As conditions deteriorated between the two sides, the colonial leaders began forbidding trade with the Native Americans.
* Metacom was brought before a colonial court where he was told it would be illegal for him to put together any sort of Native American military to fight against British expansion. The Native American translator working for the British in their fight against Metacom and his followers at the court house was later found murdered.

The Fighting:

* Native Americans held the upper hand for the first year and a half of the war. Over 600 colonial men were killed and 12 villages destroyed. The Native Americans ended up losing many more, mainly to disease. The colonists were forced to spend over $150,000 on the war, which was huge considering the average colonist made about $20/year.

The Aftermath:

* Even though the colonists were successful, the war itself made the relationships between the colonists and the Native Americans worse. The deterioration between the two groups forced Plymouth to merge with Massachusetts Bay to form a single colony.

Pequot War

Main Idea: The Pequot War was a conflict between the Pequot tribe and the settlers of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies now living in Connecticut. It lasted from 1634 to 1638 and had disastrous consequences for the Native Americans living in the area.

The Main Ideas: After numerous trade disruptions and arguments, Native Americans were attacked by the colonists in 1634. The Native Americans quickly mounted a counter attack after gathering an army of over 400 men. The Pequots began launching successful raids against the colonists in Connecticut making it unsafe to venture outside of the colony itself. After one such raid, colonial leader John Mason ordered an attack of the Mystic Village, which was had only women and children remaining with the men off fighting. He ordered his men to surround the village and then set it on fire. Of the 700 Pequot there, only 14 survived.

Aftermath: Only 200 Pequot survived the war. With no neighboring tribes willing to take them in, they surrendered themselves as slaves in exchange for their lives.