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## **Introduction**

The Indians and the English colonists had a tumultuous relationship that was plagued with conflict. These conflict arose of many issues including the taking of the Indians land, the destruction of the Indians crop by the Englishmen's cattle, inequality of the law with regard to the Indians, and more. By the mid-1600s, the Puritans and the Indians existed in close proximity in the colonies. However, the Puritans did not view the Indians as equals. They had a different culture and different practices that the Puritans frowned upon. This led to a lack of respect for the Indians in the minds of the Puritans. The Indians were not viewed to have their own sovereign nations; instead, they were considered to be subject to colonial rules. Therefore, when the Indians rebelled or revolted, these acts were met with a harsh response by the colonists, the extent of this harshness included enslavement and mass executions. Throughout this paper, I will describe the relationship between the Puritans and the Indians in the 1600s and 1700s. Furthermore, I will state the reasons for the tensions between the two groups and how these tensions were settled.

## **The Pequot War**

The Pequot War was a conflict between rival Indian tribes; the Puritans were also involved in the conflict against the Pequot tribe. The Pequot War took place in 1634 through 1638 in the Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth colonies between the Pequot tribe of Indians and the Puritans of that colony. The Narragansett and Mohegan tribes also came to the aid of their Puritan allies (See Mason). The war was sparked by the Englishmen's desire to expand

their land to the Connecticut River, as this was considered profitable land that they wanted to acquire. Furthermore, control of the fur trade in that area was in dispute. The war was basically fought over control of resources and means of trade in that area. The result of the war was that the Pequot tribe of Indians was nearly wiped out. Over 700 were killed. Many of the remaining members of the tribe were sold into slavery in the West Indies. The article “Pequots and Puritans: The Causes of the war of 1637” discusses the events of the Pequot War. It states that the significance of the war is that the most powerful tribe in New England was wiped out (See Vaughan, 1964). Furthermore, it describes some of the egregious acts that took place against the Pequot tribe in their loss; 500 men, women, and children were burned to death in one Puritan attack (See Vaughan, 1964). In the end, the Narragansett and Mohegan tribes split the land that formerly belonged to the Pequot tribe between the two victorious tribes. Therefore, the Puritans and Indians sometimes had similar interests and work together in concert against a common enemy. Following the Pequot War, there was a substantial period of peace between the Indians and the Englishmen, lasting approximately 40 years.

## **Growing Tensions Between Indians and Englishmen**

The article “Metacom Relates Indian Complaints about the English Settlers, 1675” discusses the conflict between King Philip, also known as Metacom, and the English settlers of the Rhode Island colony. There were a number of reasons for the growing tensions between the Indians and the European colonists. One of the main reasons for the conflict between the two groups had to do with the steady taking of Indian land by the European colonists.

Furthermore, the destruction of the Indian crop by the Englishmen's cattle caused the Indians to harbor resentment toward the European settlers. Additionally, the Indians felt that they received unequal justice in the English courts (See Metacom).

An additional source of contention was that Metacom felt the Englishmen were too eager to sell the Indians liquor; this caused many Indians to spend a great deal of time in drunkenness. These drunken Indians often preyed on the sober Indians. Moreover, the Englishmen supplied the Indians with liquor to take advantage of them; the Englishmen would often negotiate deals for land and other goods of value with the Indians while they were intoxicated. The Indians would later complain that the price or amount of property was not what they had agreed too.

## **How Were the Tensions Resolved?**

The article "Restraining Atrocity: the Conduct of King Philip's War" discusses the nature of King Philip's War which took place in 1675-1676. It states that "over the centuries, warfare among European colonists and Native Americans has earned a reputation for excessive brutality. King Philip's War, 1675-76, with its horrors committed on both sides, was ultimately the war to end all wars in New England's battle for supremacy. For many historians an earlier conflict, the Pequot War of 1637, exemplifies the ruthlessness and lack of respect for their opponents that the Puritans would reveal in King Philip's War" (Drake, 1997).

What took place during the war and during the Pequot War of 1637 were describes as atrocities by modern historians. Many go even further and describe the acts of the Puritans against the Indians during wartime as

bordering on acts of genocide. The reason for these acts, as speculated by historians, is that the Puritans may have had less respect for their Indian opponents' sovereignty and way of life than they did other opponents they had faced in the past. Puritans may not have considered the 'law of nations' to apply to the Indians (See Drake, 1997). Indian leaders had sworn loyalty to the colonies; thus, insurrections by the Indians were viewed as acts of treason or revolutionary forces. The Puritans, when they were confident of victory, would inflict harsher and harsher penalties upon the Indians. Indian were even sold as slaves so that the Puritans could raise money. This was prompted, in part, by the Puritans negative view of the Indians. "Forcing Indians into slavery or servitude also helped satisfy the dilemma of what to do with them. the treatment of the Indians reflects as much the Puritans' disgust with idleness as their loathing of rebellious Indians" (Drake, 1997, p. 54).

In the end, the colonist prevailed in the conflicts between them and the Indian tribes in the colonial areas. The Indians suffered great losses in numbers as a result of the battles fought with the Puritans. Furthermore, they were subjected to horrible treatment during and as a result of the battles. Fighters were far from the only losses the Indian tribes suffered. Women and children were killed in large numbers in some of the battles between the Puritans and Indians of that time period. In the end, the Puritans had full control over the colonies and the sovereignty of the "Indian nations" was lost.

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