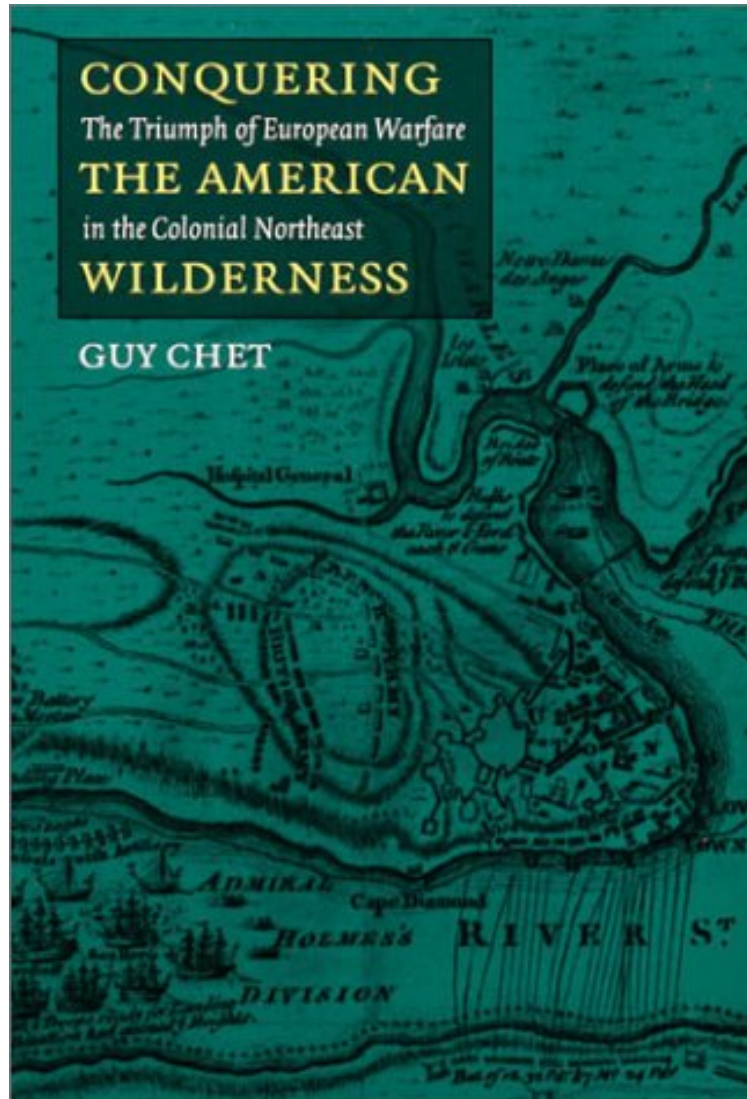


(Mobile pdf) Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast (Native Americans of the Northeast)

Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast (Native Americans of the Northeast)

Guy Chet

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Guy Chet : Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast (Native Americans of the Northeast) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast (Native Americans of the Northeast):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Excellent Study in Colonial American WarfareBy CustomerAll nations' identities are tied to myths, especially myths of military prowess, and the United States is no exception. In *Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast* Guy Chet argues that one of the United State's most cherished military ideals of independent colonialists adopting indigenous guerilla techniques defeated the British military ushering in a American way of war is not backed by historical events. Through a careful review of primary and secondary sources Dr. Chet shows that early colonialists used European methods of warfare while increasingly relying upon British regular forces in their conflicts with Native Americans and the French. What is important about Chet's work is his analysis of early American military history provides a clear continuity between American and European military traditions challenging ideas of American military exceptionalism.Chet challenges the idea of a American style of war by pointing out that while early settlers in the 1600's were able to sometimes defeat large groups of natives and "intimidate them into submission through extreme violence" this was generally not the case (pg 20). This was in part due to Colonial militaries being undermanned and poorly trained. When colonial militaries were used offensively against natives they could be easily ambushed or flanked. Rather than resorting to native methods of war Chet points out early colonists made use of defensive structures and methods to resist attack (pg 43-44). When colonists moved away from conventional tactics tragedy often struck.Chet delineates a period of military decline during the mid 1600's till the mid 1700's when colonials started to expand and stopped maintaining their defensive posture. Towns were left poorly defended by militia forces who were "remarkably inexperienced and unprepared for combat" (pg 49 - 50). This resulted in them being easily tricked into abandoning a defensive form of war with tragic results. Indeed militias during this period were so poor at defending themselves they petitioned for provincial professional garrisons to protect them (pg 96). Instead British commanders preferred offensive operations to wear down the natives by destroying their resources and shelter. This augmented by a system of regular forts across the frontier linked by roads in a classic and methodical approach to warfare (pg 98). This system of garrisons and fortifications would allow the British to steadily strengthen and expand the frontiers as well as help the British defeat the French, and their native allies, during the Seven Years War.Chet makes an effective case for the British success in North America during the French and Indian wars was because of their very conventional approach to warfare that built upon conventional military doctrine. Chet further argues that the French adoption of aggressive raiding style tactics with indigenous allies actually allowed the British to capitalize on superior firepower and position and that it was these lessons that later revolutionary officers would remember in the conflicts with the British (pg 141). As such Dr. Chet's work provides an insightful review of early American military history, its growth from traditional European approach to war, which provides a useful challenge to American military exceptionalism.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. American or European Way of WarBy Pete DornanWe've become so accustomed to hearing about the "American Way of War" that we rarely bother to reexamine it. In *Conquering the American Wilderness*, Chet challenges the assumption that English settlers learned from Native Americans how to fight as guerillas. He demonstrates that English fighting methods remained the same throughout the colonial period, and that the failure of colonial forces to do the job well led to greater and greater reliance on British Redcoats.The key to the poor performance of provincials and to the overwhelming success of British regulars (culminating with the capture of Canada during the French and Indian War) was professionalism of officers, NCOs, and enlisted men.What's interesting about this book is that it explains the wisdom and demonstrates the effectiveness of Europe's linear tactics (which are so often portrayed as senseless ritual). Chet then illustrates why large heavy formations, drawn in lines of battle, were so effective against French and Indian guerillas.*Conquering the American Wilderness* also explains the origin of the myth of Americanization/Indianization of European warfare in the colonies, but because the book ends with the first battle of the American Revolution, it doesn't deal with the way the retelling of American victory magnified and enshrined the myth of the American guerilla tradition ("the American Way of War").7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Colonial WarfareBy A CustomerAn interesting book that manages in 200 short pages to effectively challenge the tradition (or orthodoxy) of American Exceptionalism and "Americanization" through the lens of American military history.The narration of the sometimes-horrifying and sometimes-comical encounters between English, Indian, French and British military forces indicates not only that American settlers retained their Old-World way of war (rather than creating a unique American way of war), but also that the 'old ways' triumphed in the New World.This book serves to further demonstrate that the Atlantic Ocean was not a barrier that culturally and politically separated the colonies from England. Instead, it was a bridge that, as Chet states, allowed the "transportation of English culture --- military culture --- to the frontier of European civilization." "When examined within the context of imperial history, the story of warfare, like the story of politics and culture in colonial America, reads as a process by which the colonies were drawn toward England's cultural and administrative sphere of influence, rather than attempted to liberate themselves from it."

A study of military tactics and strategy before the War of Independence, this book reexamines the conquest of the North American wilderness and its native peoples by colonial settlers. Historians have long believed that the peculiar conditions of the New World, coupled with the success of Indians tactics, forced the colonists to abandon traditional

European methods of warfare and to develop a new "American" style of combat. By combining firearms with guerrilla-like native tactics, colonial commanders were able not only to subdue their Indian adversaries but eventually to prevail against more conventionally trained British forces during the American Revolution. Yet upon closer scrutiny, this common understanding of early American warfare turns out to be more myth than reality. As Guy Chet reveals, clashes between colonial and Indian forces during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did not lead to a reevaluation and transformation of conventional military doctrine. On the contrary, the poor performance of the settlers during King Philip's War (1675-76) and King William's War (1689-1697) prompted colonial magistrates to address the shortcomings of their military forces through a greater reliance on British troops and imperial administrators. Thus, as the eighteenth century wore on, growing military success in the New England colonies reflected an increasing degree of British planning, administration, participation, and command. The colonies' military and political leadership, Chet argues, never rejected the time-tested principles of European warfare, and even during the American War of Independence, the republic's military leadership looked to Europe for guidance in the art of combat.

"Chet's enterprise is to explain the character and consequences of American war in its formative period, before the Revolution. He shows that it is not Americanized warfare, but the progressive Europeanization of war in America by professional British military and naval officers that ultimately overwhelms the poorer, less numerous, and less well-organized French-Indian axis of Canada and the West. Professionalism is the decisive factor, and it carries on into the Revolution and the early national period as an unsung but decisive influence on the creation of a new American empire." Fred Anderson, author of *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* "Chet's book presents a timely and convincing challenge to the deeply ingrained belief that colonial New England militiamen fought 'Indian style.' In reality, the Revolution's Minutemen embodied the culmination of a process by which the military tactics of the old world triumphed in the new." Kevin Sweeney, Amherst College

From the Publisher: Challenges longstanding myths about the nature of warfare in early America. About the Author: Guy Chet is associate professor of history at the University of North Texas and author of *The Ocean Is a Wilderness: Atlantic Piracy and the Limits of State Authority, 1688-1856* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2014).