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## TOM QUICK Infection

As Tom Quick and his Lenape friends went about their lives, chasing white-tail deer and wild turkey through the gorges, hauling brook trout and shad from the creeks and rivers, thousands of miles away, across the Atlantic Ocean, in great European capitals, men were plotting.

By the 1750s, the major European powers, France and England chief among them, were embroiled in the first great global conflagration, a model for the world wars that would savage the globe more than a century and a half later. It was called The Seven Years War, and it soon spread from Europe across much of the known world at the time, mutating into a battle for control of the rich colonial holdings from the lush tropical spice islands of the Pacific to the pelt-rich woodlands of North America.

The war had come to Pennsylvania almost by accident, when an ill-prepared and green colonel from the Virginia militia named George Washington stumbled into a confrontation with French forces in the western Pennsylvania wilderness, and, to his everlasting shame and the embarrassment of the Crown, was forced to surrender at the makeshift escarpment he had build and dubbed Fort Necessity.



Colonel George  
Washington

It was, to be sure, an inauspicious beginning, not just for Washington's career — he would later find other ways to redeem it — but for a war that would soon engulf the entire frontier.

During the French and Indian War, the French proved particularly masterful at manipulating politics. Both sides realized that in order to win control of the colonial wilderness, they needed to control the Indians who lived there. Though the British formed some alliances with Indian groups, for the most part, they preferred to achieve dominance the way the British traditionally did in the days of the Empire — by brute force, sometimes even by terror. Scalping was one of the tactics they embraced. Historians are divided over when the practice first took hold in the Americas — there is conflicting evidence about whether Indians practiced it before European colonization. But there is abundant evidence that the British developed a taste for scalps as early as the 11th century. Later, the British began offering money for the scalps of particularly incorrigible Irishmen after discovering through trial and error that transporting and collecting entire heads was, logistically speaking, impractical. As early as 1706, records show, some colonial governments

offered attractive bounties for Indian scalps. Because there was no way of telling the age or gender of the victim from a hunk of hair and flesh, a cottage industry sprang up in some areas, slaughtering men, women and children indiscriminately. By the beginning of the French and Indian War, scalping had become a matter of policy, and if the Indians hadn't practiced it before the British showed up, they were encouraged to do so now. In fact, throughout the war, both the British and the French provided their Indian allies with steel scalping knives specifically designed for the purpose.

If that kind of crude terror failed, the British had other, more insidious, means at their disposal. Toward the end of the war, Sir Jeffrey Amherst, commander in chief of the British forces in America, wrote to one of his underlings, a colonel who was then struggling against a particularly volatile Indian revolt on the western frontier, "Could it not be contrived to send smallpox among these disaffected tribes of Indians? We must use every stratagem in our power to reduce them."



Sir Jeffrey Amherst

"I will try to inoculate the (Indians) with some blankets that may fall in their hands, and take care not to get the disease myself," the colonel replied. As the BBC put it in a report entitled "Silent Weapon: Smallpox and Biological Warfare": "Smallpox decimated the Native Americans, who had never been exposed to the disease before and had no immunity."

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