



# Warpaths: Invasions of North America

By Ian K. Steele

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In 1513, only a few years before Cortes conquered the Aztec empire, Juan Ponce de Leon and three shiploads of conquistadores landed just south of what is now St. Augustine, Florida. The Spanish adventurers, however, were quickly driven away by the Timucua people; further landings were similarly defeated by the extraordinary archers of the Calusa, who ultimately took the lives of Hernandez de Cordoba and Ponce de Leon himself. Clearly, the European experience in North America would be a far cry from their swift victories over the Aztecs and Incas.

A panoramic history of the numerous European invasions of North America, this book paints a dramatic new portrait of the centuries of warfare that shook the continent. From the defeat of Ponce de Leon in 1513 to a negotiated peace with the British in 1765, Steele's fascinating account destroys the old image of technologically advanced Europeans overrunning primitive savages, and reveals how Amerindians rose to the challenge of each successive invasion with martial and diplomatic skill. In war after war, the Amerindians and Europeans battled in a precarious balance, adapting each other's technology and tactics and seeking each other out as allies and supply sources for food and weapons. Steele follows the experience of the Spanish at San Agustín, the English at Jamestown and Plymouth, the French at Québec, and the Dutch at Albany, revealing the vast range of Amerindian strategies for coping with the invaders.

The conflicts that erupted with the European arrival have long been distorted by myth and self-congratulatory folklore. *Warpaths* offers students of American history and Native American studies a startling new look at this pivotal era, combining social, cultural, and military history to provide a more nuanced portrait of the violence that gave birth to modern North America.

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## Editorial Review

From Library Journal

The myth of an easy conquest of America by the Europeans is debunked in this revisionist history by Canadian historian Steele, who reveals the Amerindians' powerful and significant resistance.

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From [Booklist](#)

Examining the response of Native Americans to European encroachment is hardly virgin territory. Nevertheless, Steele provides a fresh perspective in analyzing Native American/European conflicts from the sixteenth century to the close of the French and Indian War in 1763. Steele rejects the current tendency to portray Native Americans as confused, doomed victims who were inevitably overwhelmed by a more aggressive and technologically advanced culture. Rather, the indigenous peoples of the eastern woodlands were themselves often quite aggressive. They were diverse and politically sophisticated and frequently gave as good as they got in conflicts with Europeans. Many tribes became experts at playing the French and English off against each other. Steele pays full tribute to the cultural strengths of those tribes without sentimentalizing them, and he avoids demonizing Europeans. He has provided a valuable and original view of a cultural and military conflict that has been so instrumental in shaping our national character. *Jay Freeman*

Review

"*Warpaths* is a considerable achievement. Scholars can admire its breadth of approach and its deft and unsentimental synthesis of a mass of specialized studies; teachers will value its clarity of presentation and its capacity to introduce students to a complex and grimly realistic multicultural world."--Richard R. Johnson, *University of Washington*

"[P]rovides a good introduction to both European and Native American warfare, and...clearly shows how various groups of colonists and Indians influenced each other's conduct of war, whether as allies or foes."--*New York History*

"Excellent overview! Very well written and with a clear perspective."--William Gilmore-Lehne, *Richard Stockton College*

"[R]emarkable book....*Warpaths* is an outstanding work of synthesis and innovation, certainly the most insightful book yet written about the clash of cultures in North America. From start to finish Steele demonstrates a masterly command of the subject and a rare ability to explain complicated matters deftly."--*Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*

"A focused study which does a fine job of pointing out the complexities of cross-cultural relationships in late

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