

French and Indian Wars, The

(From "Massachusetts Historical Collections", published 1838)

"About 1741 or 2, Fort Washington was built in a narrow part of the valley leading towards Williamstown. This was a part of the line of defense erected to protect the northern and western settlements of New England against French and Indian hostilities. The enemy directed their principal movements towards the Connecticut River. In general, they came down from Canada in the direction of the Connecticut, and were repelled by Fort Constitution at Brattleborough, Vt., Fort Dummer, at Hinsdale, N. H. and Fort Wentworth, N. H., further up the Connecticut, all in connection with each other on the same line. But some came down the Hudson, and, proceeding eastward up the Hoosic, came upon this fortification, and several bloody skirmishes took place. They repeatedly appeared in smaller or larger bodies about the fort. The following facts are taken principally from the Appendix to the "Redeemed Captive," by the Rev. John Taylor, formerly of Deerfield."

'On the 6th of May 1746, as sergeant John Hawks and John Miles were riding out from the fort, they were fired upon by two Indians and wounded. Miles made his escape to the fort; Hawks fought for some time, and might have taken them both prisoners, had he understood their language, as appeared afterwards; for they asked for quarters before he turned and made his escape.

A party of the enemy appeared again at the fort on the 11th of June following, and attacked a number of men who were at a distance from the fort, and a skirmish ensued. After sustaining the fire for a few moments, the enemy fled, having lost one of their men. Two men from the fort were wounded, and one captured.

On the 20th of August, in the same year, an army of about 900 French and Indians, under Gen. De Vaudreuil, made an attack upon the fort. Col. Hawks, who commanded the fort at that time, had only 22 effective men with him, and but 33 persons, men, women and children, and was miserably supplied with ammunition. Notwithstanding these unfortunate circumstances, he defended the fort 28 hours, and probably would never have given it up, had not his ammunition failed. He was finally necessitated to capitulate, and offered such articles as were accepted. One special article was, that none of the prisoners should be delivered into the hands of the Indians. The next day, however, Vaudreuil delivered one half of them to the Indians, on the plea that there was danger of mutiny in his army, the Indians being irritated that they were cut off from the profits of the conquest. The savages immediately killed one of the prisoners, because, being sick, he was unable to travel. In the siege Col. Hawks lost but one man; while the enemy, as near as could be ascertained, lost 45, who were either killed outright or died of their wounds. The prisoners were carried to Canada, where 12 of them sickened and died. The residue, with other prisoners, was sent on board a flag of truce to Boston, where they arrived on the 16th of August 1747. The chaplain of the fort at the time it was taken, the Rev. John Norton, wrote an account of his captivity, which was published. He afterwards settled in the ministry at East Hampton, a parish in Chatham, Conn. Another of the captives was Benjamin Simonds, who afterwards became a distinguished inhabitant of Williamstown, and a colonel of militia.

While the fort was rebuilding, on the 25th of May 1747, there being several hundred people present, an army of the enemy came with the design of hindering the

undertaking. About 100 men had been sent to Albany a few days before for stores of provisions and ammunition. As these were approaching the fort on their return, a scout was sent forward, who, coming within sight of the fort, discovered the enemy and began an attack, which gave alarm to the people at the fort, who had not as yet discovered the enemy. A few issued out and maintained a small skirmish, until the enemy fled. The people remaining at the fort, and the commander of the party with the wagons were much blamed for not affording assistance, and were charged with cowardice. In this action three persons were wounded, and a friendly Indian from Stockbridge was killed.

On the 1st of October following, Peter Burvee was taken captive near this fort. On the 2nd of August 1748, about 200 of the enemy appeared at the fort. It was then under the command of Capt. Ephraim Williams, afterwards Col. Williams. A scout was fired upon, which drew out Capt. Williams with about 30 men; an attack began, which continued some time; but, finding the enemy numerous, Capt. Williams fought upon the retreat, until he had again recovered the fort. The enemy soon withdrew; but with what loss was unknown. A man by the name of Abbot was killed, and Lieut. Hawley and Ezekiel Wells were wounded. In 1755, in the second French war, Col. Williams was sent at the head of a regiment to join Gen. Johnson at the north, and was killed on the 8th of September in that year, near the southern extremity of Lake George.

After the death of Col. Williams, the oversight of the fort was committed, it is believed, to one Capt. Wyman. He is known to have lived in the house within the pickets and to have occupied the land reserved for the use of the fort. On June 7 1756, a body of the enemy came again to this fort, and Benjamin King and a man by the name of Meacham were killed. The location of the fort is still indicated by the print of a cellar, and the horseradish, which was planted by the soldiers, and still grows upon the spot.'

Becket – A few persons came into the township as early as 1740, but for fear of the Indians soon returned, but not till they had erected a sawmill in the east part of the town, and some other buildings.

Lanesborough – Settlement of this town commenced about 1754 or 5 by Capt. Samuel Martin and two other families, which were driven off by the Indians in the second French war. Of these, Capt. Martin was the only one who returned. About 1760 a fort was built for the protection of the settlement from Indian assaults. On the approach of the Indians, on one occasion, the settlers fled to Pittsfield. A scout was sent after them from Massachusetts Fort, who, following tracks that they found, discovered two Indian chiefs, who were stooping down, tying their moccasins. Each of the scouts selected one, and both chiefs were killed on the spot. The scouts escaped to the fort, though closely pursued by the Indians. A party shortly after set out from the fort in search of the bodies of the slain chiefs, who found them buried in their war costume.

Lenox - The first English inhabitant of this town arrived in 1750, soon to be followed by a few other families. In 1755 these families removed to Stockbridge, through fear of the Indians, who were instigated to hostilities by the French in Canada. While the few families north of Stockbridge were hastening to that place for safety, a man by the name of Stephens, while passing a ledge of rocks in the south part of town, was shot by the Indians and fell dead from his horse. The horse was also killed, but a young woman by

the name of Percy, who was on the horse with Mr. Stephens, by the aid of Mr. Hinsdale, escaped unhurt.

Stockbridge – This town was originally laid out by the general government of the state in 1735, for the accommodation of the Indians. In the year previous a mission was commenced among the Housatonic Indians by Mr. John Sergeant, then a candidate for the ministry, assisted by Mr. Timothy Woodbridge as schoolmaster, under the patronage of the board of commissioners for Indian affairs in Boston, of which his excellency Jonathan Belcher, then British governor of Massachusetts, was an active and influential member. At that time about half of these Indians lived in the great meadow on the Housatonic in this town, called by them *Wnahktukook*. Here Konkapot the chieftain resided, whom Gov. Belcher had just before honored with a captain's commission. His cabin stood on a knoll a few rods north of the Konkapot Brook, on the east side of the county road. The other Indians lived on their reservation in Sheffield, called by them Skatehook. For the better improvement of their moral condition it was soon found desirable to have these united and settled in one place, with such other Indians in the vicinity as might be disposed to join with them. Being made acquainted with their situation, the legislature, on the 17th of March, 1735, granted them a township 6 miles square, to be laid out on the Housatonic River, immediately north of Monument Mountain, provided the proprietors and settlers of the Upper Housatonic could be induced to give up their right to that portion of their lands on which the new township would partly fall. It was wished to include the fine alluvial ground at Wnahktukook, where the chieftain resided, and which to some extent, was under cultivation. The committee met with but little difficulty in performing the duties assigned them, and in April 1736, they laid out the town in a square, which included the present townships of Stockbridge and West Stockbridge.

Early in May of that year the Indians began to move into their plantation, and by the last of June there were more than 90 persons in the settlement. In January 1737, the subject being laid before the legislature by the governor, they ordered that a meetinghouse 40 feet by 30, together with a schoolhouse should be built for the Indians at the charge of the province. On the 7th of May in this year the grant of the town was confirmed to the Indians, their heirs and assigns; and in 1739, the town was incorporated by the name of Stockbridge, after the town of that name in England.

The settlement gradually increased for many years, until they numbered nearly 500, though it is probable that their average number, while they remained in the town, was about 400. A short time before the Revolutionary War, a township 6 miles square was given them by the Oneidas, in the state of New York. After the close of the war in 1783, some of them removed, a large proportion of them in 1785, and the residue in 1788. In 1810 they were thought to have numbered more than 600. In 1822 these Indians began to move to Green Bay, on the southern shore of Lake Michigan, on to a tract of 5,000,000 acres purchased for them and other Indians in the state of New York, for \$500, of the Menominie and Winnebago tribes. The head of Green Bay is near the center of their purchase. The residence of Capt. Konkapot has been mentioned; that of King Ben (Benjamin Kokkewenaunaut) was on the elevated ground back of the Housatonic, half a mile west of the plain. In 1771, being then 94 years old, this chieftain told his people that they must appoint another king, and King Solomon (Solomon

Unhaunnauwaunnutt) was chosen his successor. His house was on the south bank of the Housatonic, opposite Little Hill. He died in February 1777, aged 50. King Ben lived till April 1781, being 104 years old. Some of the Indians' houses were on the plain, some on the meadows near the river and a few about Barnum's Brook. These Indians at first were called by the English *River Indians*, afterwards more generally Housatonic Indians, until the incorporation of the town; since which they have more generally been called Stockbridge Indians. They have also sometimes, as well as the tribe at Norwich, Conn., been called Mohegans, which is a corruption of their proper name Mahhekaneew or Muhhekaneok, signifying "the people of the great waters, continually in motion."

One very important effect that this mission produced was that the friendship of these Indians was effectually secured to the English. They performed numerous kind offices for the early settlers of the county; in time of war were spies for the English, and often fought and sometimes shed their blood for them in the army.

Though Fort Massachusetts was repeatedly attacked in the time of the first French war, and terror was spread through all this region, yet, in consequence of the well known friendship of the Muhhekaneews, no hostile Indians ventured down into the vicinity of this place, and the southern section of the county was saved from such calamities as befell some of the settlements on the Connecticut River, and others to the west, in the state of New York. Though in the second French war a few families in different parts of the county were disturbed, yet the mischief was small compared with what probably would have been done had it not been for the friendship of the Stockbridge tribe.

In this war many of the Indians were received as soldiers in the service of Massachusetts, and showed their fidelity by fighting for the whites. In the Revolutionary War a part of the company of minutemen under the command of Captain Goodrich of this town, was composed of these Indians. A company went to White Plains under Capt. Daniel Nimham, where some were slain and others died with sickness. Numbers served at other places. At the close of the war Gen. Washington directed the contractors for supplying a division of the army at West Point with provisions, to give the Indians a feast in consideration of their good conduct in the service. An ox weighing 1,100 lbs. was roasted whole; the entire tribe partook of it; the men first, and then the women, according to custom. The feast was held near the residence of King Solomon, and after this was over the Indians buried the hatchet in token that the war was past, and performed some other ceremonies in their own style for the gratification of the company.

The school begun for these Indians in 1734 remained in service until the Indians emigrated to the region of the Oneidas.

Williamstown – This town was explored in 1749 and the laying out of lots took place in 1753, but the settlement of the town, like that of so many others in that time period, was retarded by Indian hostilities. Several young men from Connecticut came to make preparations to move their families there, but were interrupted by the increasing hostility of the Indians. Returning to Connecticut, they enlisted in a company raised to protect the frontiers, and came again with others to this location and garrisoned a fort, which stood a few rods north of the present meetinghouse, and also a block house near the west college. A few soldiers were kept here in garrison until 1760. But the inhabitants were exposed to frequent alarms; some were carried into captivity, and in an attack July 11, 1756, Capt. Chapin and two others were killed

The first French War was a result of a war between England and France, which continued from 1744 to 1748, the so-called second French War began in 1755.

Bernardston – First settled in 1738, the first four houses, or forts, as they were called, were built of hewn logs, and served the double purpose of houses to live in, and a defense against the sudden, and often fatal attacks of the Indians. They were built with portholes, through which the people inside could fire upon the enemy.

The Rev. John Norton, from Windham, Conn., was the first minister, and in the first French War, he acted as chaplain at the fort, which was kept at Hoosic, near Adams. He was there at the time that fort was surprised and taken by a party of French and Indians, whence he was carried captive into Canada. After his release he was installed a pastor in Chatham, Conn.

About 1755, commenced the second French and Indian War, in which the settlers in the town suffered severely; while it continued, the people lived mostly in Burk's Fort. Every man that was capable bore arms, and in some cases females were under the necessity of bearing arms to defend their dwellings from the attacks of a barbarous enemy. When the men went into the fields, they took their arms with them and constantly had someone on guard. Agriculture and education were but little attended to. The Indians were almost constantly lurking in the woods, which kept them in a perpetual state of danger and alarm.

Charlemont – This town was incorporated in 1765, one of the frontier towns during the French and Indian Wars, and thus open to the ravages of the times. In the limits of the town were three garrisons, part of a cordon of fortifications built in 1754. These works were either *mounts*, a diminutive kind of blockhouse, or stockaded dwelling houses, bearing the names of the resident families, defensible only against musketry. In June 1755, as a party of people were at work in a meadow in the upper part of Charlemont, near Rice's fort, they were attacked by a party of Indians; two men were killed and two taken captive and taken to Crown Point and from thence to Canada. One of them was later taken to France, then to England, and then affected his return to Northampton, his native place.

Deerfield – During the French and Indian Wars, Deerfield was often exposed to the incursions of the French and their savage allies. In the evening of the 29th of February, 1704, Major Hertel de Rouville, with 200 French and 142 Indians, after a tedious march of between 200-300 miles through deep snow, arrived at an elevated pine forest, about two miles north of the village, (now called Petty's Plain,) bordering Deerfield Meadow, where they lay concealed till after midnight. Finding all quiet, and the snow being covered with a crust sufficient to support the men, Rouville left his snowshoes and packs at the foot of the elevation, and crossing the Deerfield River, began his march through an open meadow before daylight with the utmost caution. This caution proved to be unnecessary, as the guard had retired to rest a little before daylight.

Arriving at the northwest quarter of the fort, where the snow had drifted in many places nearly to the top of the palisades, the enemy entered the place, and found all in a profound sleep. Parties detached in different directions broke into the houses and dragged the astonished people from their beds, and wherever resistance was made they

were generally killed. A party forced the door of the house of the Rev. Mr. Williams, who, awakened by the noise, seized a pistol from his bed and snapped it at one of the Indians who were entering his room. He was seized, bound and kept standing in his shirt for nearly an hour. His house in the meantime was plundered, and two of his children, with a black female servant, were murdered before the door. They then permitted him and Mrs. Williams, with five other children, to put on their clothes. Two days after the attack, on their way back to Canada, Mrs. Williams, who had given birth only a few weeks earlier, became fatigued, and proving a burden to the Indian who had been assigned her master, killed her with a blow of his tomahawk to the head. She was left on the ground where her body was recovered by the English several days later. The house of Capt. John Sheldon was attacked, but as the door at which the Indians attempted to enter was firmly bolted, they found it difficult to penetrate. They then perforated it with their tomahawks, and thrusting through a musket, fired and killed the captain's wife, as she was rising from a bed in an adjoining room. The captain's son and daughter, awakened by the assault, leaped from a chamber window, at the east end of the house, by which the latter strained her ankle, and was seized by the Indians, but the son escaped to the woods and reached Hatfield.

After gaining possession of the house, which was one of the largest in the place, the enemy reserved it as a depot for the prisoners as they were collected from other parts of the village. The whole number made prisoners was 112, and the number of killed was 47. Having collected the prisoners, plundered and set fire to the buildings, Rouville left the place when the sun was about an hour high. Every building within the fort was reduced to ashes except the meetinghouse and that of Capt. Sheldon, which was the last fired, and saved by the English, who assembled immediately after the enemy left the place. This house is still standing near the center of the village. [In the 21st century, the house still stands in Old Deerfield Village, along with the savaged door, complete with tomahawk damage.]

The captives were taken to Canada, where, in 1706 an English ship was sent to Quebec and brought 58 back to Boston. All of Rev. Williams' children returned with the exception of his daughter Eunice, who was left behind, being about ten years old. She adopted the Indian manners, to one of whom she married and adopted the Catholic faith. She repeatedly visited her relatives in New England; every inducement was offered to make her remain among her connections, but she uniformly persisted in wearing her blanket and counting her beads. 28 of the captives remained in Canada, mixed with the French and Indians and adopted their manners and customs, and were thus lost to their friends.

A journal, kept by Maj. Rouville, is still supposed to exist at a Quebec convent, and a small church bell, removed by the Indians from Deerfield, is now hanging in an Indian church in St. Regis.

Gill, originally part of Deerfield, was incorporated in 1793 and named for Lieut. Governor Moses Gill. Near the point where the boundaries of this town, Montague and Greenfield meet, there is in the Connecticut River the most interesting waterfall in the state. They were formerly called Miller's Falls, but of late have received the name of Turner's Falls, in commemoration of Capt. Turner, who surprised a body of Indians in

1676, at this place during Phillip's War. An artificial dam has been constructed at the falls, more than 1000 feet long.

The Indians during Philip's War resorted to the falls for the purpose of taking fish, as vast quantities of shad, salmon and other fish ascended the river during the spring season. Several hundred Indians took a station on the right bank of the river, on elevated ground; a smaller party occupied the opposite bank; and another was stationed at what is now called Smead's Island, upwards of a mile below. As the English forces at Hadley and the adjacent towns were not, at this time, numerous, the Indians appeared to have considered themselves but little exposed to an attack. Two young men, who had been taken prisoners and carried to the falls, fortunately made their escape and gave information of the position and carelessness of the Indians. On receipt of this intelligence, it was determined to attack them by surprise. About 160 mounted men assembled at Hatfield, under the command of Capt. Turner of the colony troops. He was accompanied by Capt. Holyoke of Springfield, and Ensign Lyman of Northampton. Under the direction of two skilled guides, the English commenced their march for the falls, about twenty miles distant, in the evening of the 17th of May 1676.

"Passing the ruins of Deerfield, and the river at the northerly part of the meadow in that town, they were heard by a lodge of Indians, seated at what is now called Cheapside, a small distance below the place where the English forded. The Indians immediately turned out and examined the usual place of crossing, but, finding no trail, supposed the noise to proceed from moose wading the river, and returned to their lodge. Turner, having passed Green River and a trackless forest of about four miles, halted on elevated ground a small distance west of Fall River, about half a mile from the Indian camp at the falls, where his men dismounted and left their horses, tied to saplings, under a small guard. About the dawn of day the English crossed Fall River, and climbing up an abrupt hill, went rapidly through an intervening wood, rushed upon the camp and found the Indians in a deep sleep, without even a watch. Roused from their slumber by the sudden discharge of musketry, they fled towards the river, exclaiming, "Mohawks! Mohawks!" verily believing this furious enemy was upon them.

Many leaped into their canoes, some in the hurry forgetting their paddles and, attempting to cross, were shot by the English or precipitated down the cataract and drowned. Some were killed in their cabins; others were cut down under the shelving rocks of the riverbank where they had fled for shelter. One hundred Indians were left dead on the ground, one hundred forty passed down the falls, and only one escaped drowning. Their whole loss, as was acknowledged afterwards, was about three hundred men, among whom were some of their principal chiefs.

Northfield – This township was granted in 1672. It was laid out on both sides of the Connecticut River. The northern boundary of Massachusetts was at the time not known, but it was assumed that most of the grant was within the province.

Northfield suffered greatly from the horrors of Indian warfare. Upon the opening of Philip's war, Northfield, being a frontier settlement, was much exposed to the attacks of the enemy. In 1675, many of those who were living within the stockade there were killed in Indian raids and the survivors brought back to Hadley. The buildings at Northfield were all burnt to the ground.

During the first part of “King William’s War”, which commenced in 1690, Northfield was again occupied by a few settlers, but they were not able to overcome the savagery of the Indians and once again the settlement was burnt by the enemy. Immediately after the peace of 1713, the settlers of Northfield returned to rebuild once again. This time the return was permanent, although Indian attacks occurred periodically until about the midpoint of the eighteenth century.

Rowe – This town was incorporated in 1785. One of the cordon of forts erected about 1744 for a defense against the French and Indians was situated in this town.

These are the Massachusetts communities that formed a buffer between the French and Indians to the north, and the settlements in western Connecticut. Had it not been for them, and the sacrifices that were made by their inhabitants, our history would be far bloodier and shorter than it is. The original highways through our area, built at the request of the colonial legislature, were laid out to facilitate troop movements from the populated Connecticut River Valley to the Hudson River Valley. Note that settlers having military titles populated many of Colebrook’s and her surrounding towns. Many of these were earned during the so-called northern campaigns. Locally, we do not have any military graves decorated with emblems from these early wars, but many are to be seen in eastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island. These use a fleur-de-lis design to hold the flag, as opposed to the Revolutionary War veterans, who have a five-pointed star enclosed within a ring of laurel leaves.

Colonial Conflict Between the Native Americans and the Colonists

There is a continuous interest in the Indians who inhabited these parts prior to the coming of the Europeans; I must get five or six queries a year. The bare facts are that there were no permanent villages in or near Colebrook; the nearest Native American communities were along the Housatonic River. With this in mind, a logical question would be why there was such a dread of Indians by the early settlers. To find the answer, we must begin with the earliest conflicts between the two groups in what is now eastern Massachusetts.

King Philip's War began in 1675. Philip resided in Mount Hope, R.I., and was the grandson and successor of Massasoit, with whom the Plymouth colonists had made a treaty some fifty years before. His object seems to have been to unite all the Indian tribes to make a combined effort to exterminate the colonists and thus preserve their hunting grounds and independence. The spark that touched off this war was the execution of three Indians by the English, whom Philip had incited to murder a Christian Indian who had informed the whites of the plot Philip was forming against them. Philip, to avenge their deaths, commenced hostilities, and by his influence drew into the war most of the tribes in New England. The Indians, by this time, had acquired the use of firearms, and the war soon became a general conflagration.

Their first attack was made June 24, 1675 upon the people of Swanzeey, [the next town south of Keene, New Hampshire] as they were returning from public worship; eight or nine people were killed. Brookfield, in Worcester County Massachusetts was next attacked, and every house burnt but one. During the month of September, Hadley, Deerfield and Northfield, all on the Connecticut River were attacked; many people were killed and many buildings burnt to the ground. During the winter the colonists raised an army of about 1,000 men, some of whom were on horseback. The men came from Massachusetts and Connecticut, with Connecticut supplying five companies. This was the largest assemblage of troops on the short history of the Europeans up to that time. The attack on the enemy's fort in December was completely successful. It was a counterpart of the memorable expedition against the Pequots 40 years before by the men of Connecticut. The Narragansett nation never recovered from the results of this battle in which 700 of their fighting men were killed outright and another 300 died later as a result of wounds received that day. The colonists lost 85 killed and 150 wounded

From this blow, called the "swamp fight", the Indians never recovered, although they were not yet effectually subdued. On the 12th of August 1676, the finishing blow was given to the Indian power by the death of Philip, who was killed by an Indian friendly to the whites. In this war the English lost 600 men, the flower of their strength; twelve or thirteen towns were destroyed, and 600 dwelling houses burnt down.

Early in 1689, William, Prince of Orange (in the Netherlands) invaded England and dethroned the king. The people of New England, reeling under the heavy-handedness of the king's emissary, Edmund Andross, arrested Andross and returned him to England in chains to stand trial for overstepping his authority.

It was at this time period (1690) that the French in Canada instigated the northern and eastern Indians to begin hostilities against the English settlements. The first to feel the effects of this new threat were villages in New Hampshire, Maine and upstate New York. This war harassed English settlements for seven years, until peace took place between France and England; this became known as the first French and Indian War. But

in a few years war again broke out between France and England, which immediately involved the American colonies. In February 1704 Deerfield, on the Connecticut River was surprised during the nighttime and about 40 persons were killed and more than 100 made prisoners. In 1710, New England, assisted by armed forces of the mother country, succeeded in capturing the French fortress at Port Royal, Nova Scotia and changed the name to Annapolis, in honor of Queen Anne. This success led the English to have visions of conquering all of French Canada, and a fleet of warships was sent to capture Quebec City, while at the same time an army of New England troops was assembled at Albany to prepare for a land invasion from the south. The fleet met with severe weather conditions while attempting to ascend the St. Lawrence River and had to return to England, whereupon the troops in Albany returned to their homes. In 1713, peace was made between France and Great Britain at Utrecht.

In 1744, war again broke out between France and England, and the colonies were involved with its calamities. Their commerce and fisheries suffered greatly from privateers fitted out at Louisburg, a strong fortress on the island of Cape Breton. This place was considered one of the strongest in America; the fortifications had taken twenty-five years to build and had cost France five and a half millions of dollars. (1837 dollars) The legislature of Massachusetts, convinced of the importance of reducing this place, planned a daring but ultimately successful attack. Accordingly, about 4,000 men from Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Connecticut sailed from Boston for the conquest of Louisburg. These troops, with four warships, arrived about May first, 1745 and commenced a six-week siege that ended with the surrender of the fortress. A treaty signed in 1748 ended the war, by which all prisoners were exchanged and all conquests made during the war were returned to their former owner.

Scarcely had the colonies begun to reap the benefits of peace, before they were again thrown into anxiety and distress by yet another war with France. This war actually began in 1754, but was not formally declared until May 1756. Early in the spring of 1755, preparations were made by the colonists for vigorous exertions against the enemy. Four expeditions were planned: one against the French in Nova Scotia; a second against the French on the Ohio; a third against Crown Point; and a fourth against Niagara. The expedition against Nova Scotia, consisting of 3,000 men, was mostly from Massachusetts. After being joined by 3,000 British regulars in the Bay of Fundy, there commenced a campaign that ended with the complete capitulation of the French. In order to put an end to these incessant episodes of warfare with the French, all French inhabitants were evacuated from Nova Scotia and dispersed among the English colonies.

The war continued with varied success, until the conquest of Quebec in September 1760. This event caused great and universal joy in the colonies, and public thanksgivings were generally appointed. A definitive treaty was signed at Paris in 1763, by which all Nova Scotia, Canada, the island of Cape Breton and all other islands in the Gulf and River St. Lawrence were ceded to the British crown.

We will continue next week.

Historic Bytes

Bob Grigg

By understanding the events that preceded the population of Colebrook and the surrounding towns, you will see the reasons behind the timing of certain events in our local history; the laying out of the first highways for troop movements during the French and Indian War, the lack of desire to populate the frontier lands that lay beyond the ability of the militia to protect inhabitants against the incursions of the French and their Indian allies, and the almost universal use of military titles by the men who became the early settlers. In Louis Hurd's diary, kept during his involvement in the Continental Army, there is a statement to the effect that almost every man and boy in the colonies were veterans of one or more campaigns, and by the time military action was taken in the War of Independence, all the troops, regulars and militias alike, were accustomed to privation and the requirements of military life. Without a synopsis of these engagements however, it is difficult to grasp the whole picture.

What follows is an outline history of Connecticut's involvement with Indians:

In 1634, one year after the first English settlers arrived from Massachusetts, a number of Indians in confederation with the Pequots, murdered ten men who made up the crew of a ship that had arrived at the mouth of the Connecticut River with the intent of trading with the Dutch, who had established a small trading post near the site of present day Hartford. In 1636, a Capt. Oldham was killed on Block Island, where he had gone to trade. Several of the murderers went to the Pequots and were protected by them. Massachusetts sent 90 soldiers to demand the return of the murderers, but the Indians were able to elude the troops by hiding in the swamps. The Massachusetts soldiers, not wanting to return empty handed, burnt about 60 wigwams and 200 acres of corn. The troops then sailed for the village of Pequot, now New London, and again demanded that the Indians either turn over the murderers or make some sort of restitution. The 300 or so Indian braves that happened to be in the vicinity decided that they would not negotiate with the English, and began shooting arrows at the soldiers. This response made the Massachusetts troops land on each side of the river where they proceeded to burn wigwams, killing one or two Indians while doing so.

This expedition caused great concern among the colonists in Connecticut, as it did nothing to subdue, but instead exasperated a haughty and very warlike enemy.

The Pequot prince Sassacus and his captains were proud men with independent spirits; they had conquered and now governed the Indian tribes around them. They viewed the English as intruders and they were determined to drive them from the country. For this purpose they endeavored to unite the Indians against them; they spared no pains to make peace with the Narragansetts, and to engage them against the English. The governor of Massachusetts, to prevent a union between these tribes, sent for their chief sachem, with some other important men of the nation, who came to Boston, and made a treaty of peace with the English.

The Pequots continued hostile during the year 1636, and killed a number of persons in various places, and during a greater part of the winter following kept the fort at Saybrook in a state of siege. When the spring came, they became still more troublesome. They waylaid the roads and fields, and kept the whole colony in a state of alarm. The

settlers could neither hunt, fish or cultivate their fields, but at the peril of their lives, and their prospects were dark and gloomy in the extreme. In this important crisis, a court was summoned at Hartford, on Monday, the first of May. As they were to deliberate on matters that concerned the very existence of the colony, the towns for the first time sent committees. This court decreed that as the Pequots had killed some 30 colonists, determined that offensive war should be immediately carried on against them. For this purpose they voted that 90 men should be raised immediately: 42 from Hartford, 30 from Windsor and 18 from Wethersfield.

The report of the murders committed by the Pequots roused the other colonies to spirited exertions against the common enemy. Massachusetts determined to send 200, and Plymouth 40 men to aid Connecticut in prosecuting the war.

On May 10 1637 the Connecticut troops sailed down the Connecticut River heading for Saybrook. Their force consisted of 90 Englishmen accompanied by Uncas, sachem of the Mohegans, with about 70 friendly Indians. The trip downriver was for some reason quite slow, and the Indians asked to be put ashore, where they felt they could make better time. On their way they engaged about 40 of the enemy and killed 7 and took one prisoner, whom they put to death in the most barbarous manner.