

G. W. ELLIS/J. E. MORRIS



KING PHILIP'S WAR

King Philip's War

*Based On The Archives And Records Of
Massachusetts, Plymouth, Rhode Island
And Connecticut, And Contemporary
Letters And Accounts*

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PREFACE

THE period marked by the Indian wars of 1675 and 1676, known as King Philip's War, is one of the most interesting and epochal in the early history of the New England colonies.

It was the first great test to which the New England Commonwealths were subjected, and it enforced upon them in blood and fire the necessity of a mutual policy and active co-operation. The lesson that union is strength was learned at that time and was never forgotten. New England after the war, free from fear of any Indian attacks, was able to turn her attention to her own peaceful industrial and political development undisturbed.

However much we must condemn the arbitrary aggressions which drove the Indian tribes into revolt, the historic fact must be accepted that between peoples the fittest only survive, and that as between races ethics rarely exist.

The importance of this conflict in the minds of the early New England people is attested by the great attention paid to it by contemporary New England historians like Mather and Hubbard, and by the voluminous correspondence of the chief men in the colonies.

The correspondence between the Governors and Councils and the commanders in the field in the records and archives of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, serve as a vast mine for careful exploration of the conflict in almost all its details.

We do not claim for this work that it is an absolutely true history; no absolutely true history is possible on any subject. All the authors claim is that it is the result of a wide and discriminative study of the published and unpublished archives of the New England colonies, and of

the contemporary letters found in the Massachusetts and Rhode Island Historical Society collections.

Among other works consulted have been the contemporary accounts of Hubbard, Mather, and the Old Indian Chronicle, Captain Church's Narrative, the Journals of Mrs. Rowlandson and John Easton, Major Gookin's Christian Indians, Wheeler's True Narrative of the Lord's Providence, etc. Liberty has been taken occasionally to abridge involved and verbose quotations.

The authors wish to acknowledge their great indebtedness to the work of Rev. George Bodge, the late Samuel Drake, Sydney S. Rider, and the constant courtesy and help of Mr. Albert C. Bates, librarian of the Connecticut Historical Society, and to the authors of many of the valuable town histories.

The narrative and references are the work of Mr. George W. Ellis, while the biographical and local notes have been supplied by Mr. John E. Morris. Acknowledgment is herewith made to many local antiquarians for their co-operation and courtesy.

CHAPTER I

IN the opening years of the seventeenth century, Verrazano and Champlain in their explorations along the New England coast, found the land inhabited by a numerous and warlike population. Many a wigwam village with its waving fields of ripening maize and garden patches of beans and squash, lay stretched along the sheltered coves, and the frail barks of the Indian fishermen thronged the inlets of the shore.

Scarcely a generation later Pilgrim and Puritan searching for a habitable site found the coast almost a solitude. A pestilence more fatal to the Indian tribes than their internecine wars had swept over the land. Wigwams had disappeared. Brush and the encroaching forest were fast blotting out the once cultivated fields and the remnants of the tribes had either retired into the forests or remained too broken in power to offer resistance.

In 1675 a traveler following the course of English settlements found no English habitations upon the coast of Maine east of the Penobscot and the gloom of mighty forests reigned undisturbed. The straggling cabins of Pemaquid amidst the stumps of half-cleared pastures along the shore marked the northern limit of English civilization in the New World.

No road as yet traversed the wild hills and forests that intervened between the Connecticut and the Hudson. South and east, save where Long Island gave to the Connecticut shore a narrow strait of quiet water, spread the Atlantic, while north of the Merrimac lay a vast solitude of rugged mountains and slumbering forest reaching to the St. Lawrence. New England was isolated; and was to remain

isolated for many a year to come, a fact of tremendous importance in the molding of New England character.

The political and social center of New England life was Boston, where, beyond the shore edged with docks and wharfs, winding streets and crooked alleys, followed the base of the hills with many a turn, or climbed the slope at the easiest angle. The narrow streets near the wharves were paved with cobblestones, and the shops of one or two stories, and dwellings, mostly of wood, with peaked or gambrelled roofs, presented a medley of shapes and colors.

Homespun garments and cloaks of sober hue, set off with white collars, steeple-shaped hats, loose breeches tied at the knee, everywhere met the eye, the gold laced coats of the brighter colors worn by certain individuals, bespeaking a higher station or a taste for finery that the spirit of Puritanism and the statutes had not entirely eliminated.

Sailors with skirts hanging to the knees, farm laborers in leather or deerskins, Indian converts in English dress from the nearby Christian villages, merchants and magistrates, crowded the narrow streets, and if it was training day the cobblestones awoke to the tread of marching companies of foot equipped with muskets and bandoliers, or rang under the hoofs of troops of horse armed with carbines, pistols, swords, helmets and cuirasses over buff coats.'

No card playing or drinking of healths disturbed the decorum of the taverns, arbitrary regulations which made no distinctions between self-regarded sins and crimes against society, were enforced, and liar and idler were terms sufficiently defined for legal regulation.

A democratic theocracy was here building up on its own interpretations of scriptural precedents, a Biblical commonwealth, "a moral oasis in the midst of a world abandoned to sin," the Canaan of a new Israel, where personal calamities were interpreted as the direct judgment of God.

With the theocracy there was no question of non-conformity. It was their purpose, thoroughly carried out, that New England should be made altogether impossible for those who wished the privilege of thinking or acting contrary to the principles and regulations they themselves laid down as necessary for righteousness and social order. "Better tolerate hypocrites and tares than thorns and briars," affirmed Cotton.

It was not religious considerations alone, however, that had caused the people of the old land to seek homes in New England. The profits of the seacoast fisheries and the lumber trade, the opportunity for securing large tracts of fertile land, and the inducement of copartnership in the great joint-stock trading corporations, seemingly enriched by royal charters and monopolies, encouraged many to venture their fortunes in the colonies of New England, while the ambitious saw in the new and undeveloped land that opportunity of bettering their condition denied them by the civil and ecclesiastical aristocracy of England.

From Boston as a radius, like the spokes of a wheel, bringing the outlying settlements in touch with the center, ran out those rough roads, widened Indian trails cut through the forests and made passable along the swamps by foundations of logs and earth. Many led through forests and meadows only a few miles, but several pushed their way to the farther settlements and the Connecticut Path (Bay Trail) wended westward to the towns on the Connecticut.

Within a radius of twenty miles of Boston were a score of small settlements scattered along the coast or in the bottom lands of the Charles, the Concord and the Neponset, where the soil yielded an abundance of maize, vegetables and hemp, and the meadows once given over to the coarse native grass, grew thick with English hay.

All these settlements were constantly casting off new shoots and reproducing themselves in the still unsettled

lands to the north and west. The wide shaded common running the length of the village, the meeting-house and school at one side facing the center; the dingy but often commodious homesteads that look out from the retirement of orchard or garden where tall well-sweeps show among the trees, are familiar to every traveler in New England. Clapboarded houses of two stories, with gambrelled roofs, looked down in 1675 upon rough cabins, surviving relics of earlier days, or vied in picturesque rivalry with the long, quick-falling roofs that cut their neighbor's rear to a single story. Comfort within kept company with appearance without. The windows were paned with glass, the double or single room of the ground floor had developed into a large living room, bedroom, kitchen and pantries. Great chimney-places, with the crane and swinging kettle, swallowed six-foot logs, and high-backed settles protected the back from draughts. The twinkling bayberry dips or candlewood aided the light of blazing logs, while in the chimney corners were the seats for the children, and in the bedrooms feather beds tempered the cold of the long winter nights.

Industries were springing up on every hand and the foundation of New England as a manufacturing community had already been laid. Iron, linen, leather, and household utensils were being manufactured. Each town had its saw and grist mill. Ropewalks, breweries, and, upon the coast, salt works, were springing into being, and every community, besides its common herdsmen had its artisans and carpenters, and a considerable commerce was rapidly developing with England, the West Indies, and Portugal.

West and north, beyond the bay towns, lay the frontier settlements, Lancaster, Marlboro, Groton and Billerica, beyond whose scattered farms a wilderness of mountain and forest, tenantless save for wandering bands of Indians, or some adventurous trader, extended for three hundred miles to the French settlements on the Chaudière.

Along the roads near the settlements every stage in the process of reclaiming the wilderness met the eye. By some running stream, in a gash cut in the upland wood, a cabin reared its rough features amid freshly hewed stumps; further along fire had completed the work of the axe, and in the fields crops were ripening for harvest.

The settler's habitation in these clearings, and surviving to some extent even in the older communities, were cabins of square-hewn logs, made tight with clay and mortised at the joints, with irregular exterior chimneys of clay and rock rising above a roof thatched with coarse grass.

Within, generally two, but sometimes a single room about eighteen feet square, occupied the first story, whose floor of beaten earth or split logs merged into the stones of the great hearth, above whose ample breast hung the long musket, flitches of bacon, and sheaves of corn. Small windows filled with oiled paper and protected with heavy shutters, broke the expanse of wall, while at the end of the room a rough ladder led upward to the loft under the roof.

Plymouth, encompassed by sand, "the ancient mother grown old and deserted by her children," had not been favored with prosperity, and, though the oldest of New England towns, presented an aspect more rough and homely than many of the younger settlements in the neighboring colonies.

Westward, toward Narragansett Bay, lay a country of upland and shallow valleys interspersed with wastes of sandy plain, of pine barrens, wooded swamps, a sad and monotonous landscape, the far flung and scarcely populated frontier of Plymouth colony, where the traveler's horse would probably more than once come to a sudden halt, as the half-naked forms of a hunting band of Indians stole stealthily in single file across the road, leaving a vision of deerskins, of coarse black hair, and eyes full of somber fire that belied the habitual stoicism of their faces.

Along the eastern coast of Narragansett Bay lay the territory of the Pocasset and Sagkonate Indians, while to the west, where a broad point of land extending from the north lifts itself in wooded slopes across the water, stood Mt. Hope, at the north end of which lay the chief village of the Wampanoags.

Across the narrow strait to the south was the island of Rhode Island, with its thriving seaport town of Newport, at that time under the political control of the Quakers, and the Antinomian settlement of Portsmouth, where the followers of Mrs. Hutchinson had found the opportunity for biblical interpretation and political dissent denied them in Massachusetts.

At the base of the peninsula, in the meadows along the Warren River was Swansea, a widely scattered settlement of about forty houses on the frontier of Plymouth toward the Wampanoag country to which a bridge thrown across the river afforded access.

At the head of Narragansett Bay, on "Salt River," was Roger Williams's town of Providence, containing some six hundred inhabitants, which with the nearby settlement of old Rehoboth, Warwick, and a few scattered hamlets along the west shore of Narragansett Bay, constituted the colony of Providence Plantations, forming, with Rhode Island, that "nest of pestilential heretics" most abominable in the eyes of the Massachusetts and Plymouth theocracies. Providence supremely so, because its position at the back door of Massachusetts made it at once a sanctuary and a sally port for "every false doctrine that stingeth like a viper."

Never were such a variety of theological cultures collected in so small an area as were found to be in these settlements; the Mecca of every inspired tanner, tailor and woman expounder of Holy Writ, where it was only necessary to announce that a new religion "had come to

town" to make it as welcome "as in ancient days was a new philosophy in Athens. "

Of all the New England colonies those of Providence Plantations and Rhode Island were the weakest in population, the most divided in sentiment, and the least effectively organized for the carrying out of any public policy, yet it was at this point that New England came in touch with the most powerful and independent of the Indian tribes. Massachusetts and Plymouth faced the remnants of broken tribes decimated by pestilence and awed by fear of the dreaded Mohawks, while Connecticut, marching hand in hand with the Mohegans, was served by and unconsciously served the designs of Uncas. But Providence Plantations and Rhode Island, excluded from the New England confederation, faced in their political isolation the powerful Narragansetts and the allied tribes of the Wampanoags. Hostilities, occasioned more by the faults of their neighbors than themselves, had more than once threatened, but had been dispelled by the just and conciliatory policy of Roger Williams and his friendship with the sachems of the Narragansetts.

Along the western coast, where stretches of salt marsh ran into meadows, and numerous inlets driving into the shore provided a lair for many a smuggler and pirate, lay the country of the Narragansetts.

Above the navigable waters of the Connecticut River, a score of miles beyond the nearest of the three towns that constituted the heart of the colony of Connecticut, lay Springfield, with over five hundred inhabitants, its situation at the junction of the Valley Trail and the Bay Path giving it an importance in the valley second only to Hartford.

Seventeen miles to the north was the settlement of Northampton, while across the river in the wide expanse of meadow lay Hadley, looking out across the stream on the north at the hamlet of Hatfield.

The meadows, the sloping uplands, and the glades of the wood where the fires of many years had cleared away the undergrowth, offered good pasturage, and a rich soil for cultivation, while the broken trail fit only for riders or ox teams, the log cabins clinging closely together for protection, and the frequent Indian wigwams were unmistakable tokens of frontier life. Throughout these valley settlements the traveler met frequently with Indians; now the slovenly squaw selling her corn baskets in the villages, or harvesting the crops in the Indian fields; or the warriors themselves, relieving the long periods of indolent loafing with hunting and fishing, or a spasmodic tilling of the white man's field with an eye to the enjoyment of that firewater, which, despite the stringent regulations as to its sale, was already working the ruin of the race.

Northwest of Hadley, near the junction of the Green and Deerfield Rivers, was Deerfield, a rude community of some thirty houses, while a few miles farther up the valley, on the uplands, stood the frontier hamlet of Northfield, amid meadows and fields cleared by former generations of the Squakheags.

Here ended the Valley Trail, and the little hamlet, like a lonely sentinel, faced the encompassing wilderness — three hundred miles of tangled forest and rugged mountains, traversed only by adventurous traders or wandering bands of Indian hunters, until the French settlements, on the St. Francis, were reached.

Fifty thousand settlers, almost exclusively English, of the yeomanry and middle classes, and, with the exception of a few merchants and traders from Devon and Dorset, representative of the Teutonic stock which predominates in the eastern shires of that country, were distributed among these towns and hamlets, their leaders were almost all men of education, many of them graduates of the English universities, particularly of Cambridge.

The suppression of luxury and the penalty against idleness, the supervision of social and business life, and the geographical isolation which virtually compelled New England to a life of its own, had already intensified individuality and concentrated the energies of its people upon the cultivation of the land and the development of trade.

In his journey through New England the traveler would have noticed, scattered along the inlets of the coast and on the banks of the ponds and rivers, many an Indian village surrounded by clearings and cultivated fields.

Arranged around a center left open for the performance of the village games and ceremonies, were the wigwams, constructed of saplings, which, set firmly in the ground and bent together, were fastened at the top and covered with bark or mats. Some were cone-shaped, holding only a single family, while others, resembling a covered arbor, varied in length from twenty to one hundred feet.

The wigwams were pitched closely together, and the village seldom occupied more than from three to four acres. Within the wigwams, and arranged around the walls, were the woven baskets that held the corn, stone or earthen household utensils, the bark pails and the low raised bunks covered with boughs and skins. In the center blazed the fires, which, either for the purpose of cooking or for warmth, were kept constantly light, and the smoke from which found its way skyward through a hole in the roof. The life of the inmates, what with the dirt, the fleas, unruly children, yelping dogs and the blinding smoke, which with every gust of wind filled the interior, was one of extreme discomfort.

These villages were seldom permanently located in one place, the scarcity of fish or game in the vicinity, or lack of shelter, of firewood against the winter, leading to a prompt removal of the population to a more favored locality.

On the top of some prominent hill commanding an extensive prospect of the surrounding country, or some swamp-surrounded hillock in the midst of the woods, offering shelter in the severe winter and a refuge in time of war, were the stockaded villages, the headquarters of the sachems.

The men were tall, straight, and admirably proportioned, but the women, short, clumsy, and seldom handsome even in youth, were quickly deprived of every trace of feminine grace by a life of hard labor and mental and moral degradation. The force of natural selection left few weaklings, but the strength of the Indian was that of the hunter rather than the sinewy power of the husbandman.

Smallpox swept their crowded and dirty villages at intervals, with fearful result, the smoke caused blindness to many, and rheumatism and diseases of the lungs were common. Their medicines were concoctions made from roots and herbs, and vapor baths. But even more effective in their eyes were the gorging feasts and the incantations of the medicine men. All manual drudgery, except the cultivation of tobacco, was left to the women, who tilled the fields, cooked the food, cured and fashioned the deerskins and wove the mats, while the warriors, save when engaged in hunting, fishing, or warfare, passed their time at indolent ease, gorging themselves with food, if food was plenty, or gambling with rushes, rude painted pebbles, or in field sports.

Intellectually they were well developed, but being governed by their emotions were as changeful in purpose as children. Poets and artists by nature, their artistic side was well worthy of development. Their sense of humor, it may be safely said, was more developed than their white neighbor's.

In warfare they bore themselves as did the Greek heroes of the Homeric Age, boasted of their own exploits and taunted the foe with sarcastic reflections on his skill and

courage. Generosity or chivalrousness toward a discomfited enemy were qualities unknown, and, like Achilles, their triumph was never complete unless they dragged their fallen enemies in the dust, or forced upon them the bitterest dregs of humiliation.

"Their virtues, like their vices, were the product of the state of society in which they lived." Proud, dignified and courteous, they were grateful for favors, nor was kindness ever forgotten. Hospitable to friends and strangers, they were generous to improvidence, and if, despite coolness of temperament, their morals were free and easy and their treatment of their women unchivalrous, they were devoted fathers. Parental authority, however, was little more than a name, and the boys particularly, were trained to independence rather than restraint.

Dressed in moccasins and small breeches of tanned deerskin, fringed and embroidered with wampum, the body left bare above the waist was greased, and, on the warpath, adorned with grotesque and startling designs in black, yellow and vermilion, the totemic emblem of their clan, the bear, wolf, or tortoise being featured on the breast. The sachems were distinguished by heavy belts and caps of wampum, and the Indian dandies adorned themselves with long mantles of multi-colored feathers. In fall and winter, mantles of fox and beaver, deer and bearskin, with the hair turned in, were worn.

The hair was arranged in a variety of fashions according to the taste of the individual. Some shaved one side of the head and let the hair grow long on the other. Some left only a ridge in the middle extending from the forehead to the neck, which, kept short and stiffened with paint and grease, resembled the crest of a Roman helmet, while still others shaved all but a small tuft, the scalp lock, on the back of the skull.

Their diet consisted chiefly of fish, wild fowl and game, corn, beans and squash, ground nuts and berries, prepared

in a variety of ways without regard to the niceties of life, the bones and entrails of fish and the smaller animals being seldom removed before cooking.

Two of their dishes were early adopted by the whites. Corn mush or samp, consisting of corn meal and currants boiled with water to a paste and served plain or fried in fat. The other was succotash, made of boiled corn, beans and fat, to which fish was sometimes added. The great dish, however, in times of abundance, was a stew of all manner of flesh, fish and vegetables boiled in a common pot and thickened with powdered nuts. The clambake was a favorite way of cooking shell fish, and was early adopted by the whites.

While on the warpath or engaged in hunting, parched corn and maple sugar were carried, and on this coarse food, moistened by water from a spring, they covered long distances. Against the winter they provided stores of parched corn, maize and dried fish, stored in pits (the so-called Indian barns) dug in the slope of a hill and covered with mats and earth.

The Indian mind rarely grasped the essential elements of the Christian faith. Their own gods were not moral preceptors but mere dispensers of good or evil fortune, the last much more to be appeased and regarded than the spirit naturally benign.

Every inanimate as well as animate thing had its spirit. There was the spirit of the deep woods and the flowing river; the spirit of the waterfall, of fire, of cold, of the sea and the tempest.

Said an Indian to Roger Williams, " Fire comes out of the cold stone, it saves us from dying of hunger; if a single spark falls in the dry wood it consumes the whole country. Can anything which is so powerful be anything but a deity?"

They believed in the immortality of the soul which found beyond the grave a land lying in the southwest flowing with

milk and honey, bright with sunshine, and where neither disease, old age, nor want were known.

Their Government was monarchical from father to son; but the mother must be noble, for if the mother is noble the son is at least half noble. If the mother is ignoble, the son may not have a drop of noble blood in him.

At the head was the sachem. Attending him, a council of sagamores, distinguished for warlike deeds or wisdom. The authority of the sachems was both loose and strong, as was natural in a state of society where custom and tradition take the place of law.

The Indian tribes were divided into a number of great clans or families, each distinguished by a symbolic totem, Uke the bear, the wolf, the tortoise. Each clan had its separate ward in the village, and its warriors marched together on the warpath. All members of the totemic clan were as brothers and sisters, — to injure one was to injure all, but intermarriage was forbidden.

White law demands that brother shall give evidence against brother in behalf of the State, but the totemic law exalted the individual. Understanding this we shall immediately recognize the fundamental divergence of the savage and civilized points of view. The importance, therefore, of the individual under the totemic system, created among the Indians a closely-knit democracy in which all were essentially equal. Insults were never borne except by those too physically weak to revenge them, and the offensive air of superiority assumed by the English settlers stung the Indians to the quick.

Southern New England in the seventeenth century was occupied by five great agricultural tribes of the generic race of the Algonquins, in numbers and lands the greatest of the Indian races of North America, but far inferior in political and military organization to the Five Nations, or Iroquois confederacy, whose hand lay heavy on all the tribes from Hudson Bay to Tennessee.

Of the New England Indians the Massachusetts were broken, enfeebled and largely converted to Christianity, and occupied the country around the Bay towns, many of them living in the stockaded villages established by the Rev. John Eliot.

Along the east coast of Narragansett Bay were the Wampanoags, considerably reduced by pestilence from their former strength when their confederacy comprised the whole Plymouth peninsula, but still numbering about five hundred warriors, while along the west shore of the Bay, and extending to the Pawcatuck River, lay the territory of the formidable Narragansetts who were able to bring about a thousand warriors into the field.

Between the Connecticut River and the Thames were the scattered tribes of the old Pequot confederacy, on whose ruins, Uncas, the son-in-law of the Pequot sachem, Sassacus, had built up the supremacy of the Mohegans.

From Northfield, and extending south and east into Connecticut and Providence Plantations (Rhode Island), were the Nipmucks, or Nipnets (fresh water Indians), whose numerous villages supplied about a thousand warriors, Nashaways, Squakheags, Pocumtucks, Nonotucks, Agawams and Quabaugs.

Each village was politically independent, and the bonds of the old confederacy which had once loosely united them, had completely broken; indeed, even among the Narragansetts, the political adhesion of the different tribal units were falling apart and each local Sagamore had begun to act his own pleasure without reference to his sachem.

Along Cape Cod were the Nausets who formerly owed fealty to the Wampanoags, but whose conversion to Christianity had made them dependent upon the English. They probably numbered less than four hundred men, women, and children. The Pennacooks, tributary to the Nipmucks, held the country along the banks of the

Merrimac in northeastern Massachusetts and New Hampshire, while to the east, between the Piscataqua and the Kennebec and stretching northward into Canada were the wandering hunting tribes of the Abenakis or Tarratines. The boundaries of the lands of all these tribes were not set, but overlapped, and the semi if not complete independence of the petty sachem of each village and the lack of political cohesion into which the tribes had fallen, present a confusion of village communities and tribes which it is impossible to disentangle and reduce to accuracy.

CHAPTER II

THE intercourse between the Indians and the English had been advantageous to both. The Indians had taught the early settlers to enrich their fields with fish and to raise corn and had during almost the whole of the first generation been the actual producers of food-stuffs. By the time the industry and improved agricultural methods of the settlers had freed them from this form of dependence, the increased demand for furs still held the Indian temporarily on an economic level with his white neighbor, for furs, fish and lumber were the means by which the colonists made return to the joint-stock corporations and paid for their imports.

The economic relation between the races can be clearly traced by the rise and fall of the value of wampum. Thirty years after the landing of the Pilgrims it had become the accepted currency of New England. It figures in old wills in place of coin. It was made by law legal currency and colonial records are full of acts regulating its value.

About 1662 the fur trade had largely declined and fish had become the great article of export. Silver received from the Indies and Europe in exchange for fish and lumber had come into the colonies, and between 1662 and 1670 wampum gradually ceased to be the medium of exchange. When the Indian had ceased to be either a producer of food or a supplier of furs, the old economic relations perished. No longer necessary to the English he was soon regarded by them as an encumbrance.

The Indian had both profited and been injured by his contact with the English. Civilization increased his comforts but degraded him. The white man's blanket or the