



WOMPATUCK NEWS

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Paul Revere's engraving of King Philip.



Local arrowheads found in the Blue Hill Cemetery (left), along North River (middle) and on a trail in Milford (right). Probably from the Ponkapoag, Wampanoag and Nipmuck tribes.

The Forgotten War

By Raymond Gendreau

It has been over four years since Wompatuck News covered the King Philip War in issue one, a war revealed as a sad and regrettable chapter in American history.

The following story is a more detailed version contributed by Raymond



Ray Gendreau *Gendreau is a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel and a veteran of the Vietnam War era.*

Although Chief Wompatuck was killed in 1669 fighting in the Mohawk War, his son Charles Josiah, who succeeded him as chief in 1671, experienced King Philip's War a few years later.

The story runs three pages.

Jim Rose

FOW News Editor and Historian

Background

When the Pilgrims arrived on Cape Cod, all of the Indian tribes of the Atlantic coast (from Virginia to Quebec) spoke a similar language but with various dialects (they were known as the Eastern Algonquian Confederacy). The tribes local to Plymouth at that time were the Pequot, Wampanoag and Narragansett.

The Pilgrims were followed nine years later by a stricter religious group called the Puritans. Both religions originated in England.

The Atlantic coast was especially bountiful with game (caribou, bison, deer, etc.) and the sea and fresh waters yielded a never-ending supply of fish. The Indians had also learned to grow corn, squash, tobacco, kidney beans, and Jerusalem artichoke (items that they could also store and con-

sume during the winter months). It was a healthy place to live and so the Algonquian were peaceful people.

DNA and other new tests now indicate that Indians lived on the Atlantic Coast for 9,000 - 11,000 years before the English arrived. Previously, the most ancient civilization was Mesopotamia (now parts of Iraq, Syria and Turkey) that existed much later (3,900 - 5,500 years ago). Not only were the Algonquians a very ancient civilization, they were also much healthier than the English. For example, the average Englishman was five feet tall (due to centuries of poor diet) while the average Indian man was six feet two inches tall.

When the Pilgrims arrived in November of 1620, the local Indian chief helped the English survive that first harsh winter. Unfortunately, 55 years after being greeted by Indian

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The Forgotten War (continued from page one).

Chief Massasoit, the chief's son, King Philip, tried to eliminate all traces of the English settlers. Note that they were never called "chief." They were either the "sachem" if south of Maine or "sagamore" if north of Maine. Note also that their sachem or sagamore never ruled like our mayors, governors or president. They acted more like referees within their tribes. All adult men and all women had an equal right to vote on common issues that the sachem or sagamore would moderate.

The Indian culture and customs were very different than the English ways:

- The English lived very much like we do today. They had a written language. They dressed with clothing made of cloth. They lived in permanent structures. They buried their dead with a marker. They had allegiance to a leader they had chosen. Each wanted to own land.
- The Indians had none of this. They wore little clothing. They had no written language. They lived in tents. They buried their dead near where they died without a marker. They did not have a leader that made their decisions for them. Most uniquely – the Indians did not want to own land.
- The English considered the Indians to be savages.

How did the English react?

Once it was understood how different the two cultures were, the Puritans tried to convert Indians to Christianity and get them to live in towns like the English. About 4,000 Indians did convert under Natick's Reverend John Eliot's efforts. Fourteen Praying Indian towns were established where the Indians attempted to live like the English. (Hopkinton was one of these towns.) However, the English later moved the Christian Indians to Deer Island in Boston Harbor – as they did not know who was a "good Indian" or who was a "bad Indian."

Why did King Philip start a war with the Pilgrims?

By selling their land to the English colonists, Indians did not understand that they were losing the right to continue using it. They thought it was as if they were selling the everlasting air the English breathed. Eventually they lost the right to fish, hunt and grow crops in areas that had always been available to them. They then had to settle for land "in the wilderness" west of lands they had always known. The immense numbers of newcomers also caused the Indians concern, as an average of 10,000 English were arriving each year. Many Algonquians were also concerned about the loss of their culture because of the establishment of the Praying Indian Towns.

What was this war called?

King Philip's War and sometimes Metacom's War or Metacom's Rebellion because Metacom was King Philip's Indian name.

Where was it?

The war started in Swansea, Massachusetts. Major battles were in Deerfield, Lancaster, Marlboro, Massachusetts and at Great Swamp, Rhode Island. Indians attacked over 80 towns in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut.

Greatest loss of life, by percentage of population

Eight hundred out of fifty-two thousand English colonists of New England (1 out of every 65) and three thousand out of twenty thousand natives (3 out of every 20) lost their lives to the war, which makes it proportionately one of the bloodiest and costliest in the history of America.

What was unique about this two year war?

The Indians were mad with lust for blood. The Indians killed whole families and entire towns. Children and

pregnant women were not spared. Most were killed slowly and painfully. Not only scalps were taken but also fingers, hands, ears, sex organs, and even all the skin was taken before the victims were killed. The body parts were then displayed for all to see. Clearly, they were savages.

How did colonists change?

After several raids by King Philip's Indians, the colonists then attacked them. Quickly they learned to kill Indians in the same manner that they had been dealt with. The colonists skinned them alive. The colonists removed body parts. The colonists burned them alive. The colonists had four animals pull on the Indians four limbs until the body was pulled asunder. The colonists killed women and children. Those they could not kill, they captured and sold as slaves. What did they become? Savages.

How did it end?

One of King Philip's warriors killed him at Mount Hope, Rhode Island in August, 1676.

Could the English have lost?

Yes. King Philip asked the Mohawks (his historic enemy) to join him. They said no. If the Mohawks had joined King Philip, it would have more than doubled his military force.

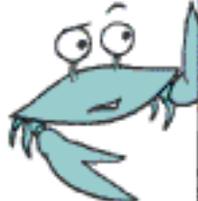
Nobody talks about it

My first American History class was in the fifth grade on the West Coast. In less than a half hour the Mayflower, the First Thanksgiving, and King Philip's War were all covered. My wife spent a little more time on these topics as a fifth grade school teacher in Boston. Since preparing for this talk, I have asked numerous people if they know anything about King Philip's War...in every case, their knowledge was weak, at best. Why were we not taught more about King Philip's War? Shame perhaps?

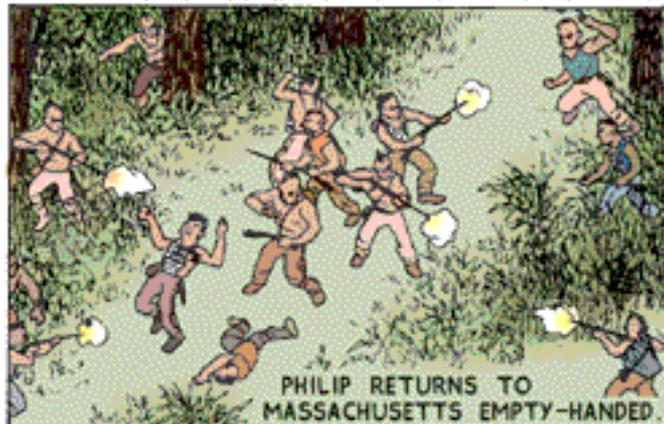
CHESTER THE CRAB 1630 PURITANS IN MASSACHUSETTS 1676 1733 GEORGIA FOUNDED

WHO WON KING PHILIP'S WAR IN 1676?

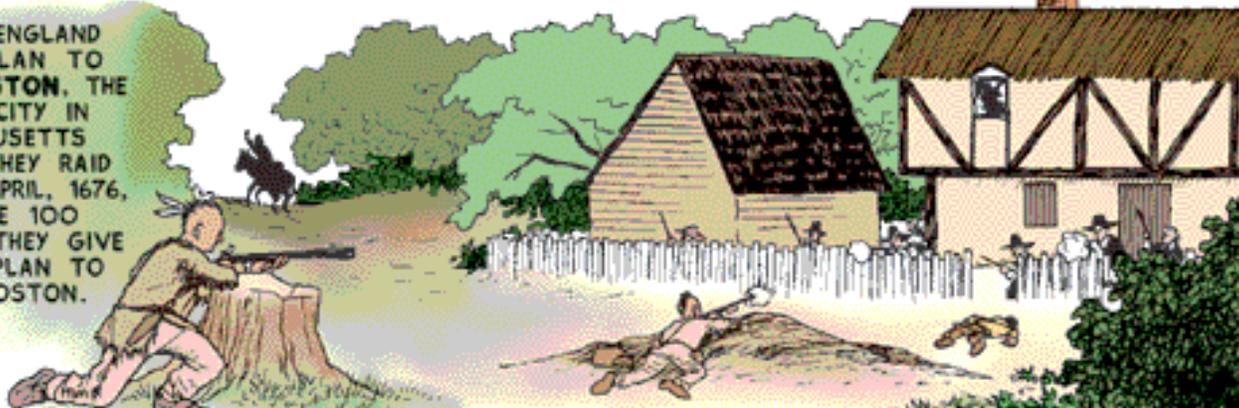
KING PHILIP GETS MORE INDIAN GROUPS TO JOIN HIS WAR AGAINST ENGLISH COLONISTS IN NEW ENGLAND IN 1676...



NEW YORK GOVERNOR EDMUND ANDROS SENDS HIS MOHAWK INDIAN FRIENDS TO ATTACK THE MAHICANS. THE MAHICANS DECIDE TO NOT JOIN PHILIP'S WAR.

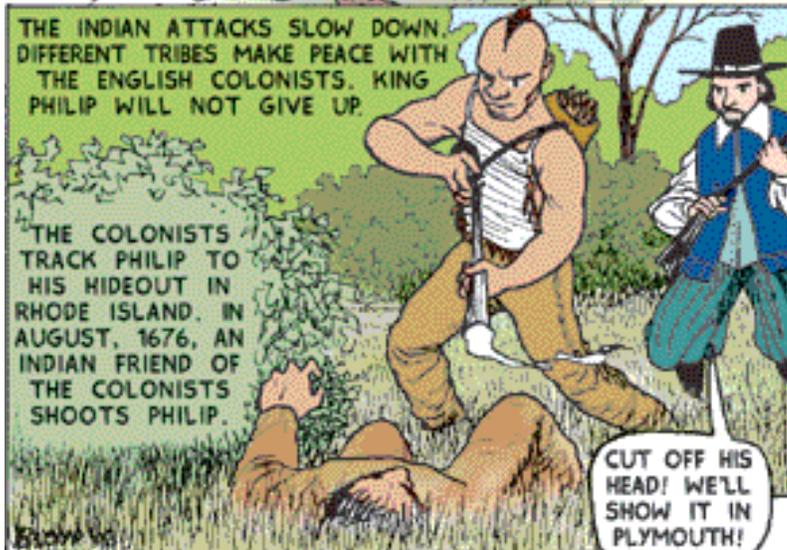


THE NEW ENGLAND INDIANS PLAN TO ATTACK BOSTON, THE BIGGEST CITY IN MASSACHUSETTS COLONY. THEY RAID SUDBURY IN APRIL, 1676, AND LOSE 100 WARRIORS. THEY GIVE UP THEIR PLAN TO INVADE BOSTON.



THE INDIAN ATTACKS SLOW DOWN. DIFFERENT TRIBES MAKE PEACE WITH THE ENGLISH COLONISTS. KING PHILIP WILL NOT GIVE UP.

THE COLONISTS TRACK PHILIP TO HIS HIDEOUT IN RHODE ISLAND. IN AUGUST, 1676, AN INDIAN FRIEND OF THE COLONISTS SHOTS PHILIP.



PHILIP'S WAR IS THE BIGGEST INDIAN WAR IN COLONIAL AMERICA. ABOUT 3,000 INDIANS AND ABOUT 1,000 COLONISTS ARE KILLED. WHOLE INDIAN AND ENGLISH VILLAGES ARE WIPED OUT.



THIS WAR STALLS ENGLISH SETTLEMENTS FOR DECADES — BUT MANY INDIAN GROUPS ARE ERASED. IT'S A PRICE MANY GROUPS WILL PAY AS AMERICA GROWS. **END**

Cartoon by Bentley Boyd.

TIMELINE

12,000 BC: Earliest British artifacts
11,000 BC: Indians on Atlantic Coast
3,100 - 320 BC: Mesopotamia
1492 AD: Columbus Arrives

1620 AD: Pilgrims Arrive
1629 AD: Puritans Arrive
1635 AD: Hingham Incorporated
1651 AD: Praying Indians in Natick

1675 - 1676 AD: King Philip's War
1775 - 1783 AD: American Revolution
1789 - 1797 AD: George Washington is President