

French and Indian Wars and the Allen Family in Southern New Hampshire Research compiled by Linda Sargent, 2008

Everyone in the Allen branch of our family was deeply affected by the happenings in the time period known as The French and Indian Wars. These wars were a series of conflicts with various names through the years. This series of conflicts with numerous causes lasted off and on for the first 150 years of the colony. Some of the troubles were related to wars that France and England were fighting in Europe and some of the troubles came from struggles between the two powers to control the New World. Added to this were the frustrations and anguish of the Native People over losing their land, broken promises, and tribal wars that sometimes led them to seek strength in numbers by taking sides in the European conflicts.

The Allen ancestors lived along rivers in the early coastal settlements of New Hampshire and Maine such as Chocheo (Dover), Oyster River (Durham) Strawberry Banke (Portsmouth), Sandy Beach (Rye), and Saco.

While there is a long list of ancestors who died in these various conflicts, there would be an even longer list of those who survived but were deeply affected by the loss of neighbors, siblings, aunts, uncles, parents and children.

The Oyster River Massacre

There were several attacks at Oyster River. One attack was in August of 1689. 23 settlers were killed and 29 taken captive. Most of the settlement was destroyed. Soon the Boston militia came and captured 200 Indians. They took them back to Boston where they were either hanged or sold as slaves. This act would later be revenged. In March of 1690 the area was hit again in the Salmon Falls Raid. This time 34 were killed and 54 taken captive. In 1691 another attack resulted in the loss of 10 more lives and the taking of 10 more captives. Then came The Oyster River Massacre. This event was planned as a part of King William's War. The French leader Villeau met with native people in April of 1694 in Canada to plan an attack. They moved south from Arcadia and picked up people from other groups along the way. On the 18 July 1694 the war party of about 250 Indians under the guidance of de Villeau reached Oyster River. The Indian chief, Bombazeen played a large role, as well. Their carefully made plans fell apart when some groups in the lead were too anxious to attack and confusion and brutal slaughter resulted. About 100 settlers were captured or killed. Five garrisons were destroyed along with many other dwellings. Further attacks occurred on 17 September 1707 and 24 May 1724.

The Cocheo Massacre

For over 50 years the native people in the Dover area and the settlers got along quite well. By 1666 there were 41 families living in the area near the Cocheo River. Richard Waldron, the largest landowner, had a large piece of land near the Lower Falls where he ran a sawmill and a large trading post.

In 1676 a large group of native people fled from bloody fighting between tribes and English settlers in Massachusetts. They fled to the Cocheco area. By September there were about 400 Indians in the Cocheco area, about half natives and half from Massachusetts. The presence of so many outsiders made the white settlers anxious. Soon two companies of Massachusetts soldiers arrived in Dover ready to take the runaways back by force.

Major Waldron did not want this to happen. He feared that the native people that had always lived in the area would be harmed as well. There are many versions of what happened that cast the Major in various lights. It is known that he planned a day of games in which he invited the Indians to participate with the idea of fooling them into being captured. It was his plan to separate out the friendly natives and send the Massachusetts Indians back to Boston for punishment. In the end over 200 Indians were taken to Boston where some were hung and others sold into slavery.

After this event, tensions grew. Chief Wonalancet, a peaceful chief, was replaced by Kancamagus who was much more warlike. There was more resentment as the native people lost more and more land to the settlers for insignificant payments. Restrictions on their free travel were another source of tension. Because of the settlers' fears of attack, the Indians could not travel east of the Merrimack River without written permission from Major Waldron. The sham games that had resulted in death and slavery were not forgotten.

By 1684 the Governor ordered that the meetinghouse in Dover be fortified for fear of attacks. Soon there were 50 garrisons in a fifteen mile radius of present downtown Dover. Five of these were fortified at public expense. They were Richard Waldron's, Richard Otis's, Elizabeth Heard's, Tristram Coffin's and Peter Coffin's. These were chosen because of their location on high knolls of land.

The settlers became more and more concerned about the large number of hostile Indians coming into the area and living with the natives. Major Waldron felt he could handle any problems and told the settlers to "go and plant their pumpkins" and he would take care of any problems. Friendly natives tried to warn him of upcoming trouble. Governor Bradford also sent a letter warning of things he had heard about impending danger to the English, especially the Major and Peter Coffin. The letter arrived one day too late.

On June 27, 1689, several Indian women that the settlers knew well asked at each garrison for shelter for the night, a common practice. Early in the morning the women opened the gates and let in several hundred Penacooks. Horrible revenge and murder resulted. One fourth of the settlers were killed or captured.

The Sandy Beach Massacre

Rye was the scene of several raids. On 29 September 1691, 21 farmers were killed while working in their fields by a group of 20-40 Indians who had come over from York. Their homes were burned and the children taken captive and brought to Canada. This was known as the Brackett Lane Massacre. Another raid in which men working in their fields

were also killed by attackers from York occurred 26 August 1696. In this raid known as the Sandy Beach Massacre, Captain John Locke is remembered for cutting off the nose of his attacker who had mortally wounded him with his own scythe.

Saco

Saco was another settlement area that saw a number of raids. This area was territory of the Sokoki tribe of Abenaki. It became contested as European settlers began moving in. Both New France and New England laid claim to the land, as well as the original owners. Settlers there were attacked on several occasions, especially in the 1690's.

Our Ancestors

It is likely that all of our ancestors in the Dover, Durham, Rye, and Saco areas were affected deeply by the various attacks on the settlements. Our ancestors who were not directly involved, had a brother, sister, cousin, or other family member who was. The number of families in these settlements was small and many of the people had moved to the settlement together in family groups so most of the people were related to each other by blood or marriage and everyone knew their neighbors.

William Horne, killed, Coheco Massacre, Major Waldron's garrison, Dover, June 1689

Major Richard Waldron, killed Coheco Massacre, Major Waldron's garrison, Dover, 1689

Lt. James Huckins, killed Oyster River, August, 1689

Sarah Burnham Huckins, wife of Lt. James Huckins and daughter of Robert Burnham, captured, Oyster River August 1689, returned about a year later

James Nute, killed, 1691

Francis Rand, killed 29 September 1691, Brackett Lane Massacre, Rye

Christian Rand, wife of Francis, killed 29 September 1691, Brackett Lane Massacre, Rye

David Hamilton, killed 28 September 1692, Saco

Annah Jackson Hamilton, wife of David, killed 28 September 1692, Saco

Robert Huckins, killed 24 July 1694, Oyster River Massacre, Oyster River

Judith Davis, captured, Oyster River, held for several years

Capt. John Locke, killed 26 August 1696, Sandy Beach Massacre, Rye

Elizabeth Clough Horne, widow of William Horne, probably killed, from Rev Pike's journal, "Old Widow Horne was taken by Indians near the lower corner of Capt. Gerrishes field." 30 Sept. 1707, Dover

John Horne, wounded, but survived 1711, Dover

Micah Emerson, killed Oyster River, 1734

One Survivor's Connections

**Hannah Emerson
wife of Capt. William Allen,**

Hannah's known relations:

Her father, Micah Emerson, killed

Grandmother, Judith Davis Emerson, captured

Great-grandfather Lt. James Huckins, killed

Great-great grandfather, Robert Huckins killed

Great-grandmother, Sarah Burnham Huckins, captured

Father's great-aunt Hannah Emerson Dustin, captured, her infant killed

Her great-uncle, husband of Sarah Huckins Chesley, killed

Her mother-in-law's aunt, Elizabeth Burnham, killed

Mother-in-law's uncle, killed

Mother-in-law's aunt Sarah held captive

Mother-in-law's cousin Elizabeth Burnham killed

This only shows the known relations. There probably are others. In most cases, when the men were killed their children and sometimes the wives were taken captive. There were no doubt, many other relatives that Hannah knew who had had encounters as well as a great many neighbors.

Another Surviving Ancestor Dover's Heroine

Elizabeth Hull Heard

Elizabeth Hull came from England and married John Heard. They lived on Garrison Hill in Dover. The site was not at the top of what we think of as Garrison Hill, but rather at the top of the hill on Central Avenue near the curve by the present hospital. Their garrison was the last outpost between the settlement and Canada. Elizabeth was a widow at the time of the Cocheco Massacre. She had gone to Portsmouth with four of her thirteen children, one of her grown daughters and three sons. They returned by boat and found the settlement under siege. After calling to be allowed into Major Waldron's garrison and getting no response, one son climbed up and looked over the fence to behold a gruesome site. Elizabeth was overcome and could go no further. She urged her children to leave her and save themselves which they reluctantly did. There are a couple of legends about Elizabeth being seen by an Indian as she lay in the bushes and being spared because he recognized her as a woman who had helped him in the past. Eventually she was able to return to her home and found that her garrison had been well defended by a neighbor and was the only one that survived the attacks. Her friends and family urged her to move to Portsmouth after this, but she insisted on staying in Dover. Cotton Mather wrote of her "This gentlewoman's garrison was the most extrem of the province... nevertheless by her presence and courage, it held out all the war; even for ten years together; and the persons in it have enjoyed very eminent preservations. The

garrison had been deserted if she had accepted offers that were made her made by her friends; of living in more safety at Portsmouth; which would have been a damage to the town and land: but by her encouragement this post was thus kept.” Rev. Pike also wrote of her in his journal as a woman of great courage.