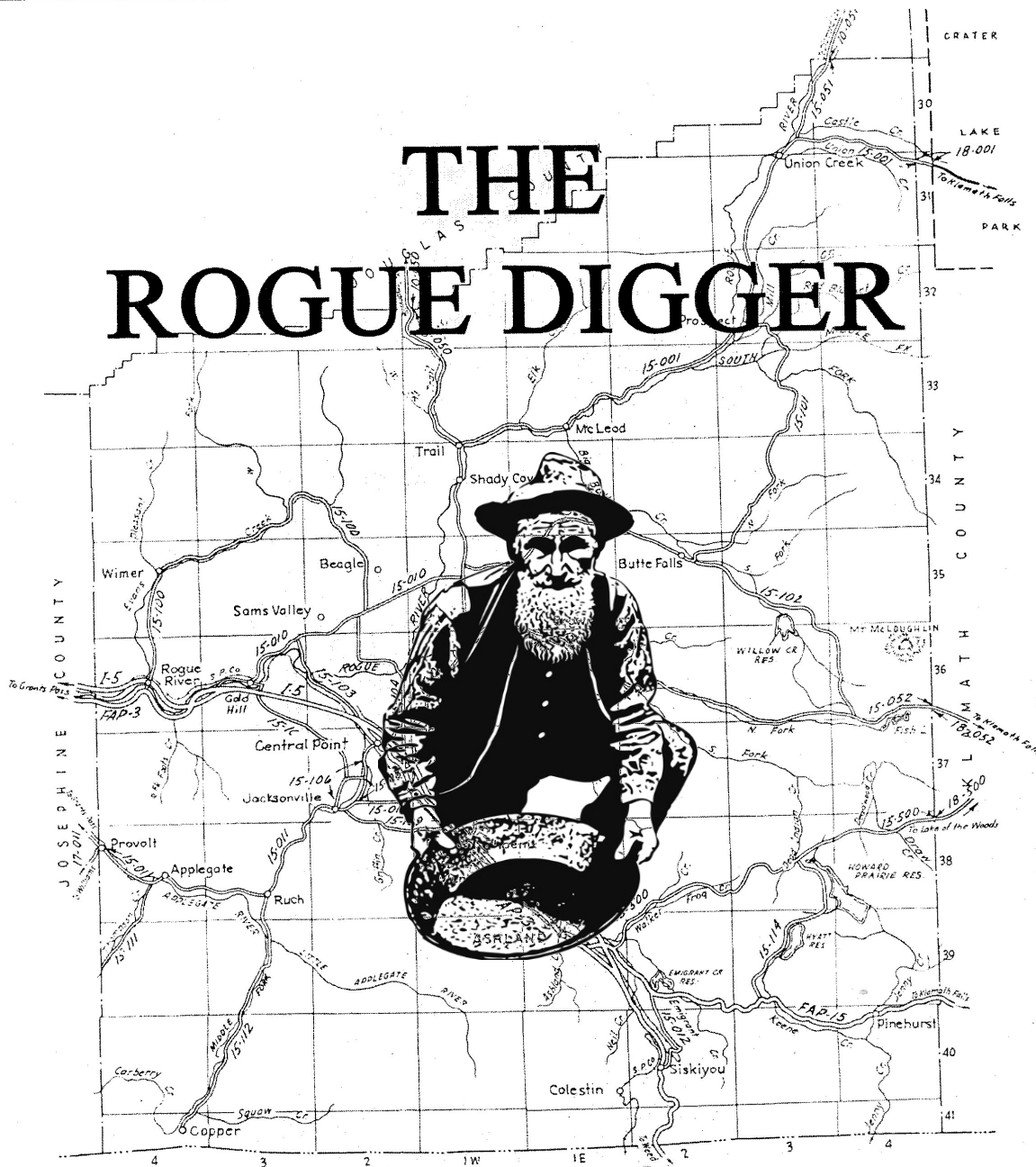


THE ROGUE DIGGER



ROGUE VALLEY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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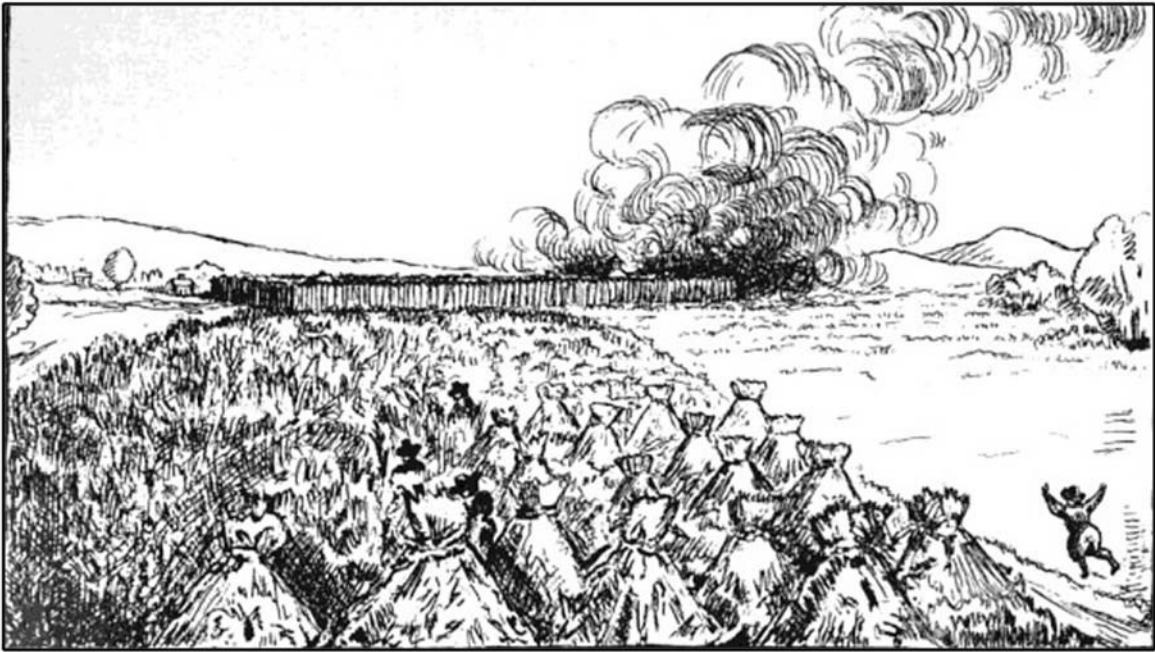
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First Prize Winner
Second Annual RVGS Writing Contest
May 2011

Note: Although every attempt was made to reproduce this entry accurately, some minor changes have been made to layout and formatting of the contents. The original submission can be seen at the Jackson County Genealogical Library, 95 Houston Rd., Talent, Oregon, OR 97535-1468 or on the society's website, <http://www.rvgsociety.org>

Captured By Indians!

By Neal L. Smith
Jacksonville, Oregon
2011



"September 19, 1677"

Introduction

In 1677, Abigail Allis, the author's 7th great grandmother, was captured by Indians* when she was just 5½ years old. With 20 other captives, she was captured in Massachusetts Colony and taken to Canada. This is the story of her captivity and rescue.

September 19, 1677, Hatfield

It was 11 o'clock in the morning on September 19, 1677**, a beautiful fall day in Hatfield, Massachusetts Colony. Most of the men were in the fields, harvesting and stooking*** corn, while the women and children were busy with domestic chores at home.¹

With five young children, Mary Meekins Allis' household would have been a busy place. She would have been inside, preparing the noonday dinner and tending to her youngest children, Ichabod and Eleazar. Abigail may have been helping with chores, perhaps fetching vegetables from the kitchen garden. Certainly she would not have been playing, for "The old deluder Sathan [Satan] was not permitted to find many idle hands ready for his mischievous work." Even four-year-old Hannah would have been busy, for "girls were taught to knit as soon as their little hands could hold the needles." Older son Joseph, 7, may have been tending cattle or sheep, or helping his father in the fields.^{2, 3, 4, 5}

Events that followed are described in [A History of Hatfield](#):

"At eleven o'clock, when the savory odors of the noonday meal were rising into the tranquil air, a blood-curdling yell suddenly pierced their ears--the dread war-whoop of the Indians. In a moment, the savages were upon the defenseless village and the work of destruction was begun. ...

"Through Middle Lane poured a band of armed and painted warriors who fell upon houses lying outside the stockade. The torch was applied to the buildings of Samuel Kellogg at the corner of the lane. ...His wife, Sarah and her infant son were killed and another child ...was seized and bound. ...Obadiah Dickinson and one child were captured.



Figure 1 – Girl Knitting

*For consistency with quoted passages, "Indians" is used throughout rather than the newer term "Native Americans."

**Dates are according to the then-used Julian calendar, or "old style". Add 10 days to get Gregorian calendar or "new style" dates.

***Tying into bundles to dry in the field – see cover drawing

A History of Hatfield continues with a blow-by-blow account of the rest of the attack, diagrammed below.

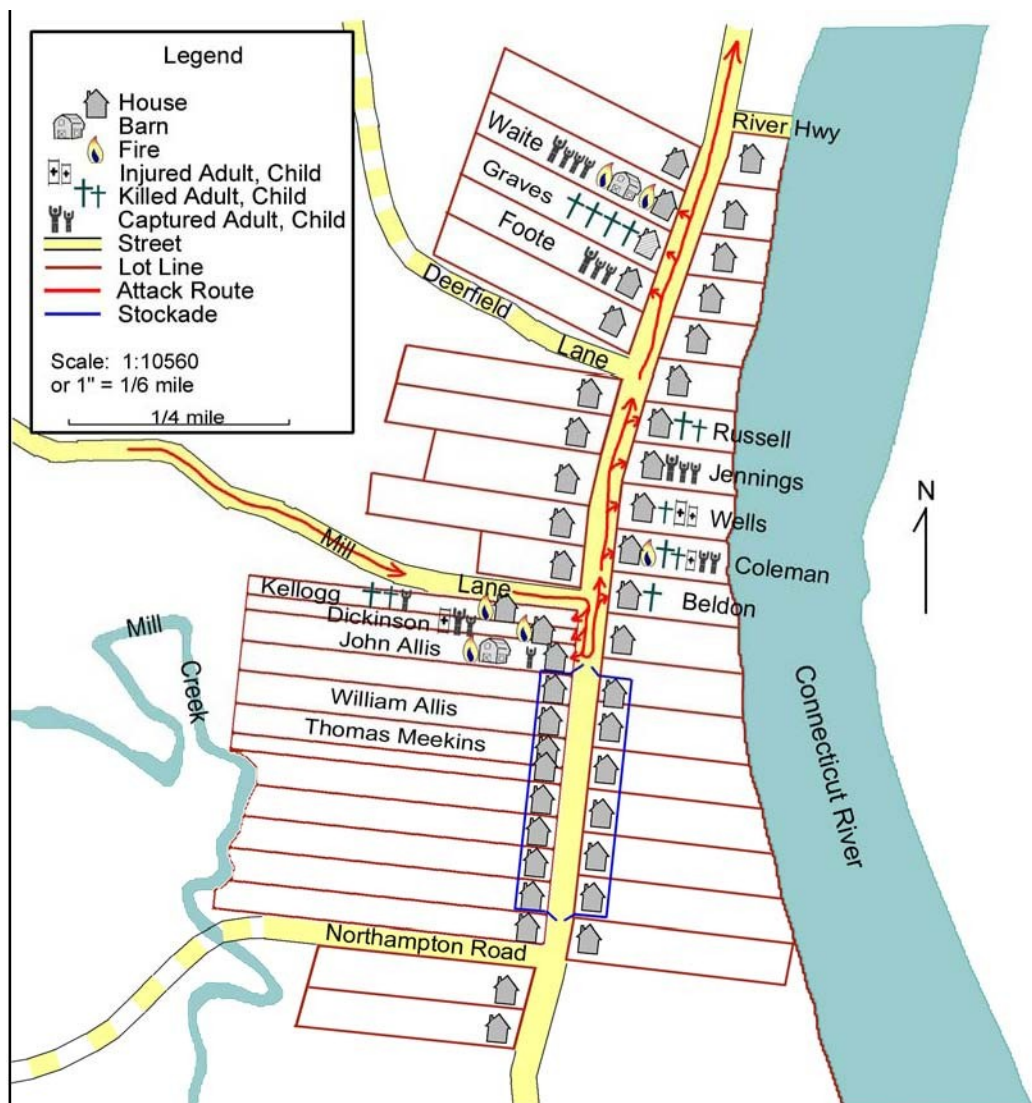


Figure 2 - The Hatfield Raid

...His wife was wounded and left for dead and their house was set on fire. John Allis's barn was burned and his six-year-old* daughter, Abigail, captured.” In an instant, Abigail’s life was turned upside down.⁶

There were 18 warriors in the group, led by Pocumtuck chief Ashpelon. Working quickly, the warriors continued south past the Allis’ house. When they reached the town’s stockade, they made a u-turn. The stockade, a primitive structure, was made from tree trunks “planted” side by side. Even so, it was effective, for the Pocumtucks would not enter. By past experience, they knew that a stockade, easily invaded, could also serve as a trap.⁷

*Abigail, born 25 February 1671/2, was actually only 5½.⁸

The warriors headed north, continuing their attack on the east side of the main street. With time running out, they made their escape to the north, but not before capturing Benjamin Waite's wife and four children. Waite, 37, had been a hero of King Philip's War; it's believed his family was specifically targeted. Hearing the war-cries, and seeing smoke, the men of the town rushed back from the fields, but were too late to help. In a matter of minutes, a beautiful day had turned tragic.⁹



Figure 3 – A Stockade

For a small town, the numbers were staggering: six houses burned, 12 dead, four wounded and 17 kidnapped. Those killed included four women and four children, plus four men who were building a house for an engaged couple. The Captives included one man, three women and 13 children ranging in age from three to eight. Two of the three women — Martha Waite and Hannah Jennings — were pregnant.¹⁰

Table 1 - The Hatfield Captives^{11, 12}

Abigail Allis, 5½
Abigail Bartholomew, 8 child Coleman
Sarah Coleman, 4
Obadiah Dickinson, 36 child Dickinson
Mary (Merrick) Foote, 30 Nathaniel Foote, 5 Mary Foote, 3
Hannah (Dickinson) Jennings, 28 child of Hannah Jennings child of Hannah Jennings
Samuel Kellogg, 8
Martha (Leonard) Waite, 28 Mary Waite, 5 Martha Waite, 4 Sarah Waite, 2

Founding of Hatfield

Hatfield, Massachusetts Colony, was originally part of Hadley. Hadley's founding agreement required settlements on both sides of the Connecticut River. The east side, with a large and fertile meadow in a large bend of the river, was the larger of the two settlements. Most of those settling on the west side, which later became Hatfield, were from Wethersfield, Connecticut Colony. Only two of the 1661 Hatfield signers — William Allis and Thomas Meekins (Abigail Allis' grandfathers) — were from the Massachusetts Colony.¹³

William (1622 - 1678) and Mary (d. 1677) Allis emigrated from England and settled in Braintree (near Boston) sometime before 1640 (when William was declared a freeman). There they raised a large family and became prominent in the community. William was a selectman in 1651 and 1652. He was a commissioner from 1656 to 1658 and presided at three marriages. In 1658, he was ordained a deacon.^{14, 15}

Thomas (abt. 1614 - 1687) Meekins arrived from England with his parents aboard the Griffin in 1633. They settled in Braintree where he married Sarah (1615 - 1651). After Sarah's death, Thomas married Elizabeth Tulston. Like Allis, Meekins was active in the leadership of Braintree: he was chosen as a Representative to the General Court of Massachusetts Colony in 1644.^{16, 17}

We don't know why they would leave Braintree, where they were well established, for the frontier town of Hadley. Perhaps it was a quest for more land, both for themselves and for the next generation.

In any event, Allis and Meekins signed the Hatfield agreement, packed up their families and headed west. They were now pioneers, far from the relatively civilized environs of Boston. Hadley was the northernmost town on the Connecticut River, the edge of European civilization, the frontier. Sixteen years later, at the time of the 1677 attack, there were still only two small hamlets - Deerfield and Northfield - further upriver.¹⁸

The divided town proved to be awkward. Commerce between the two settlements required an often-arduous crossing of the river. There was only one meetinghouse (church), and only one preacher. On Sundays, most of West Hadley would cross the river to worship. In a petition to the General Court at Boston, 3 May 1667, the west side settlers described the difficulty of getting to Sunday worship:

"Sometimes we come in considerable numbers in rainy weather, and are forced to stay till we can empty our canoes, that are half full of water, and before we can get to the meeting-house are wet to the skin. At other times, in winter seasons, we are forced to cut and work them [the canoes] out of the ice. ... At other times, the winds are high and waters rough, the current strong and the waves ready to swallow us--our vessels tossed up and down so that our women and children do screech."¹⁹

Besides the danger of the crossing, the petition noted that leaving the town unattended was a security problem: "We leave our relatives and estates lying on the outside of the colony, joining to the wilderness, to be a prey to the heathen, when they see their opportunity."²⁰

Thomas Meekins' was the first of 25 signatures; presumably he wrote or dictated the petition. Meekins, along with Allis and Isaac Graves, traveled to Boston to present their case to the General Court.²¹

After 2½ years of negotiations, an agreement was reached on December 22, 1669. The western portion of Hadley was officially established as the town of Hatfield on May 31, 1670. By the end of 1671, the meetinghouse and minister's residence were complete and Rev. Hope Atherton was hired for £60 per year.²²

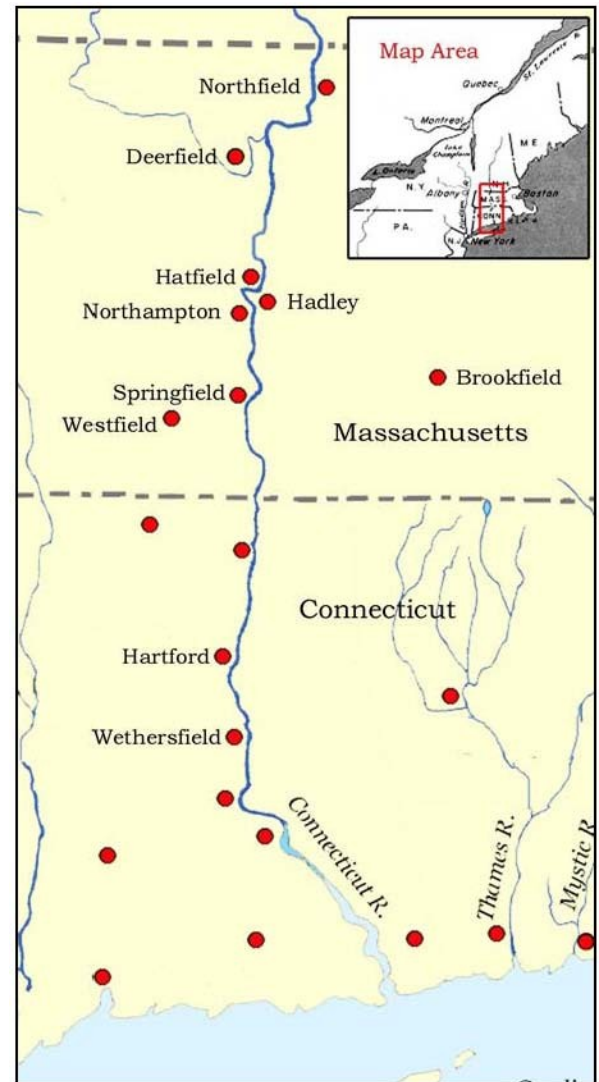


Figure 4 – Connecticut River Valley, 1677

Meekins and Allis continued to be active in leadership of the new town. In 1671, they were named as two of the original town commissioners. Hatfield grew and prospered. By 1675, there were about 50 houses and 300 to 350 residents.^{23, 24}

King Philip's War

In 1675, Metacomet, or "King" Philip, leader of the Wampanoags of southeastern Massachusetts, rallied many of the tribes of New England for a war against the colonists. Tribes of the Connecticut River Valley, who had always been friendly, were pressured to pick sides. Many left the area to avoid the conflict. The two year war, 1675-1676, was disastrous for both sides.^{26, 27}

Philip and his allies led raids against the colonists as far west as Hatfield, which was attacked at least three times. The largest of these was on May 30, 1676. Seven hundred warriors attacked Hatfield, but the colonist's militia was able to fight them off with only five English lives lost.²⁸

To the north, Deerfield was also attacked and destroyed. During the evacuation that followed, 71 men were ambushed and died at Bloody Brook.²⁹



Figure 5 – King Philip

Table 2: Allis & Meekins Families of Hatfield, 1677 ²⁵

William Allis (1622 - 1678) m. **Mary** (abt. 1614 - 8/10/1677)

John Allis (1642 - 1691) m. **Mary Meekins**

Joseph (1670 - 1724)

Abigail (2/25/1672 - 1731)

Hannah (1673 - ?)

Ichabod (1675 - 1747)

Eleazar (7/23/1677 - 1758)

Samuel (1647 - 1691) m. Alice Mehitable (7/2/1677 -)

Josiah (1651 - ?)

Hannah (1654 - 1718) m. William Scott

Josiah (1671 - ?)

Richard (1673 - 1750)

William (1676 - 1759)

Mary (1657 - 1690)

Thomas Meekins (abt. 1614 - 1687) m. 1. **Sarah** (1615 - 1651); m. 2. Elizabeth (abt 1619 - 1683)

Joseph (1639 - ?)

Sarah (1641 - 1706)

Thomas (1643 - 1675) m. Mary Sarah (1666 - ?)

Mary (1670 - ?)

John (1672 - 1754)

Thomas (1673 - ?)

Mehitable (1675 - ?)

Mary (1645 - 1705)

Hannah (1647 - 1688)

The war ended with the death of King Philip, but the cost was enormous on both sides: over 600 colonists and 3,000 Indians died. Many tribes removed to New York or Canada. By September 1677, the colonists were hoping for a renewed time of peace and focused on rebuilding and paying off the massive debt of the war.³⁰

September 19, 1677, Deerfield

After making off with the Hatfield captives, the Pocumtuck warriors left Hatfield, but they weren't done yet. They headed north, stopping to attack Deerfield, where a few men were rebuilding the town. Three men and a boy were captured, and one man was killed.³¹

One of the Deerfield men, Quintin Stockwell, wrote an account of the attack and its aftermath. His account, published by Increase Mather, begins:

"In the year 1677, September 19, between sunset and dark, the Indians came upon us, I and another man being together, we ran away at the outcry the Indians made. ... We took a swamp that was at hand for our refuge. ... One of the enemy stepped to me, with his hatchet lifted up to knock me on the head, supposing that I had been wounded, and so unfit for ... travel. I ... had a pistol by me, which ... I presented to the Indian, who presently stepped back, and told me, if I would yield I should have no hurt."³²

First Days of the Captivity

Stockwell surrendered, and "soon was I brought into the company of captives, that were that day brought away from Hatfield. ... We were led away in the night over the mountains ... about four miles further, before we took up our place for rest ... on the east side of that mountain."³⁴

This first rest was at East Mountain, not far from Deerfield. We "were staked down and spread out on our backs; and so we lay all night. ... They told me their law was, that we should lie so nine nights." By the 10th day, captives would be too exhausted, too dispirited and too far from home to attempt an escape. "The manner of staking down was thus: our arms and legs stretched out were staked fast down, and a cord about our necks, so that we could stir no ways. The first night of staking down, being much tired, I slept as comfortably as ever."³⁵

Table 3 - The Deerfield Captives³³

John Plympton
 Samuel Russell, 8
 Benoni Stebbins, 22
 Quinton Stockwell, 40



Figure 6 – Deerfield Raid, King Philip's War



Figure 7 – East Mountain

History of the Pocumtucks

The Pocumtucks were once a numerous and prosperous tribe, the main inhabitants of the middle part of the Connecticut River. Although one of the “Great Tribes,” they suffered many setbacks in the 1600s. At Fort Hill in 1664, they were “nearly annihilated by a body of Mohawks, whom they had grossly insulted.” Still, relations with the colonists were generally peaceful.^{36, 37}



Figure 8 – Tribal Areas of New England

Not wanting to be drawn into the war, “The Indians disappeared from the region, some taking refuge in New York near Albany and some in Canada.” Ashpelon and his Pocumtuck warriors were among those who had resettled in Canada. By 1677, what remained of the once-great tribe was little more than scattered groups.^{38, 39}

Settling in to the Wigwam

The Pocumtucks and their captives, now numbering 21, headed north along the Connecticut River, stopping near present-day Putney, Vermont. Feeling they were now safe from English pursuit, they built a large wigwam and had a huge celebration. There was much dancing, and many of the warriors wanted to torture and kill some of the captives. Stockwell: “Here they had a great dance as they call it and concluded to burn three of us. ...I was one that was to be burnt, Sergeant Plimpton another and Benjamin Wait his wife the third. I could not sleep for fear of next day's work.”^{40,}



Figure 9 – A Wigwam

Ashpelon, a compassionate man, opposed any killings. He also thought the captives might bring a handsome ransom. Stockwell said Ashpelon was much respected by the captives: "Ashpelon the Indian captain ... was all along very kind to me and a great comfort to the English." His name, which means "magnanimous sachem," was well-chosen.^{42, 43}

Reaction to the Capture in Hatfield

Back at Hatfield, the shocked community met to decide what to do. Many felt that the attackers must have been Mohawks, since a party of Mohawks had been seen in the area a few days earlier. Benjamin Waite was sent to Albany and returned with the news that the attackers were not Mohawks.⁴⁴

The militia was called up from Springfield and headed north in pursuit of the Indians. John Allis (Abigail's father) was a captain in the militia and was most likely part of the search party. Some sources say they located the wigwam, but didn't attack for fear the captives would be killed. Other accounts say they pursued the Indians only as far as Northfield. Either way, the militia returned empty-handed.^{45, 46, 47}

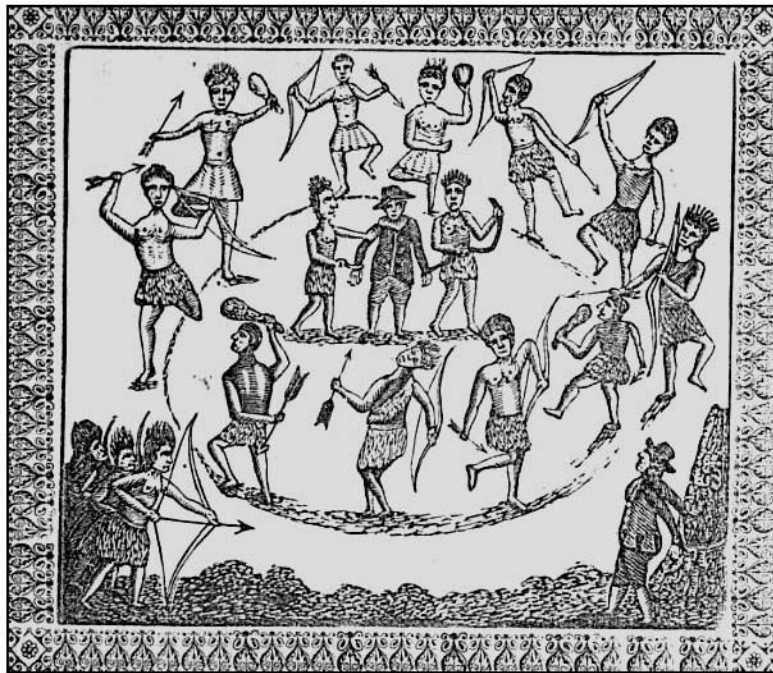


Figure 10 Indian Dance

More Tribes Join the Pocumtucks

While staying at the wigwam, the Pocumtucks were joined by Indians from two other tribes - the Nipmucks and the Pennacooks, who were allied by marriage. The Nipmucks had come down from Canada with the Pocumtucks, and then headed east to meet up with the Pennacooks near Wachuset Mountain, Massachusetts colony. The Pennacooks were led by Wonalancet, who was a friend of the English and had embraced the Christian faith in 1674. His conversion was regarded as an event of great importance. His name, which means "breathing pleasantly," was indicative of his character.^{48, 49, 50, 51}

Having pledged friendship to the British, yet unwilling to fight against his kinsmen, Wonalancet resolved to remain neutral in

King Philip's War. He led his remaining people

away from their Merrimack Valley home and into the mountains. After the war, Wonalancet returned to his former residence but "some lawless whites had seized upon his lands and looked upon him with envious eyes as though he had been an intruder and had no right there." By September 1677, Wonalancet's group numbered just eight men and 50 women. The Nipmucks persuaded or compelled Wonalancet to leave with them for the north.^{52, 53, 54, 55, 56}

Since the Nipmucks had no way of finding the wigwam, Ashpelon sent a party to Wachuset Mountain to give them directions. Benoni Stebbins, one of the Deerfield captives, was part of this party and managed to escape on the way back to the wigwam. He made his escape on October 2 near present-day Templeton, about 40 miles east of Hatfield. Stebbins reached Hatfield on October 4, and brought news of the captors' identity and their ultimate destination - New France (Canada).⁵⁷

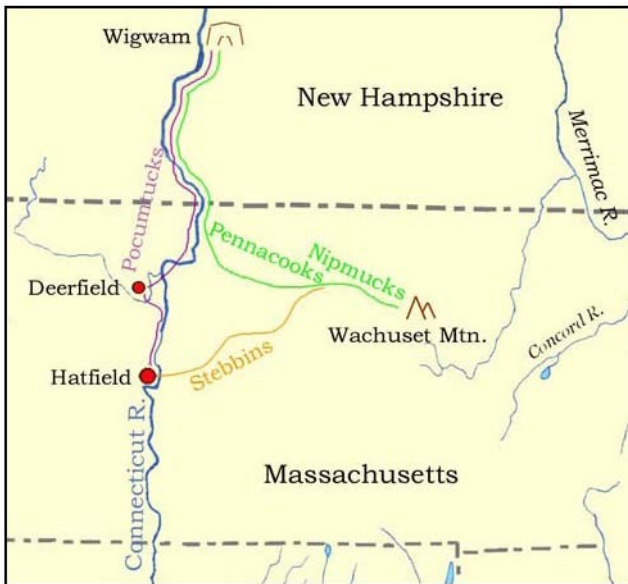


Figure 11 – Routes to the Wigwam

the Indians and their habits and methods; a man of great endurance and fertile in expedients. The other a man of great discretion, Stephen Jennings, a thoughtful, silent man but resolute, persevering and patient.”⁶¹

Waite’s pregnant wife and three daughters, and Jennings’ pregnant wife and his two stepchildren were among the captives. Waite and Jennings left for Boston on October 4, the same day Stebbins had arrived at Hatfield. “These two humble farmers clothed in the rough garb of their calling and the times, armed with nothing but their trusty guns, turned their backs upon the little village to travel a hundred miles on foot through rough paths and wooded lanes to Boston.”^{62, 63}

In Boston they were received by Governor Leverett and the General Court of Massachusetts Colony. With the colonial coffers emptied by war debt, the colony couldn’t provide the hoped for resources – troops and supplies – for a rescue party. But they did provide a letters of authorization. By Oct 22, Waite and Jennings were back in Hatfield.^{64, 65}

Consequences at the Wigwam

Back at the wigwam, Stebbins’ escape put more stress on the captives. They had been told, if anyone tried to escape, they would all be tortured and burned at the stake. It was no idle threat, for the English knew that torture was commonly practiced by the Indians. For example, During the Pequot War (1634-1638) Indians “seized some that were passing up Connecticut River and tortured them in a most cruel manner, with most barbarous and inhuman cruelties.”^{66,}

67

Fortunately, the women would also have known that sexual abuse by Indians was rare. Mary Rowlandson of the Boston area had survived three months as a captive in 1676. Her first hand account, published in 1676, would have been well known to the women of Hatfield. Rowlandson

Stebbins reported that the Pocumtucks “talked of carrying the captives to the French & selling them to the French.” Another meeting of the Hatfield settlers was now held. Knowing that their friends were in the hands of the Northern Indians who were taking them to French territory, the townsfolk decided to appeal to Albany and Boston for help. ^{58, 59}

Two letters were sent to Albany, one to the Fort Albany commander, Captain Salisbury and one to the Mohawk Tribe. The hope was that the Mohawks could be convinced to go up to Lake Champlain, intercept the Pocumtucks, and rescue the captives. These appeals fell on deaf ears.⁶⁰

Two men were selected to make the appeal to Boston: “Benjamin Waite, a noted Indian scout and fighter, familiar with

But y^e
conveying speedy word to y^e Maquas gives not only
a Possibility but a Probability of their overtaking y^m
w^{ch} Deare S^r is y^e end of these lines to yo^u; To request
yo^u (if none of y^e Maqua Sachems be at Albany) to
send at o^r charge to y^e Chiefe of y^e Maqvas, & give y^m
an acco^t of matters, & desire their speedy Pursuing
these Bloody Villains & enymys of y^m & forthwith
& without any delay, by which meanes I hope this Bar-
barous Crow (who are enemys to Religion Civility &
all humanity & haue so deeply Imbrued their hands
in most Innocent Blood) may be met wth in their
returne, before they come to y^e Lake or at y^e Lake &
so o^r captives Recovered for w^{ch} we shall give y^e Ma-
ques suitable rewards.

Figure 12 – Excerpt of 10/5/1677 Letter to Captain Salisbury at Fort Albany

In answer to the petition of Hatfeild, & for the
recouery of their captiues, the hono^d Gouverno^r is
desired & empoured to take order & care therein, by
granting comission to such meete persons as may be
employed in that service, & giving them instructions
to mannage that affayre, and by them to write to the
French gouno^r at Canada, as also to those Indians that
haue the prisoners in possession, and make such oner-
tures to them as may tend to the regayning the prison-
ers & the settling of the peace of the country, & that
the chardge thereof be borne by y^e country.

Figure 13 – Massachusetts Colony Order empowering Waite and Jennings

reported many deprivations, horrible and inadequate food, but “not one of them ever offered the least abuse of unchastity to me in word or action.”⁶⁸

Stockwell recalled “when the news of [Stebbins] escape came we were all presently called in and bound; ...the Indians spoke of burning us. ...He said there would be a court, but he would speak last, and would say, that the Indian that let Stebbins run away was only in fault, and so no hurt should be done us.” For the second time, Ashpelon had saved the captives from an agonizing death. There was a stalemate of sorts among the various Indian factions. Ashpelon wasn’t able to gain agreement about negotiating with the English, but at least he was able to stop the warriors from torturing or killing the captives.^{69, 70}

The Journey to Canada

After a stay of about three weeks at the wigwam, the Indians began to run out of provisions and headed north with the captives. Stockwell’s account continues: “We went over a mighty mountain; we were eight days a going over it, and traveled very hard, and every day we had either snow or rain: we noted that on this mountain all the water run northward. Here also we wanted provision; but at length met again on the other side of the mountain.”⁷¹

The exact route isn’t known, but if the Indians followed their the most common route for travel to Canada, they would have left the Connecticut at the White River, crossed a mountain to the Winoo-ski River and followed that downstream to Lake Champlain. Another possibility was the “Indian Road” along West River and Otter Creek. Either way, it must have been a grueling journey, but Abigail Allis and the other children would have had ample incentive to keep up, for “Their manner was, if any loitered, to kill them.” Three-year-old Mary Foote of Hatfield fell behind and was killed.^{72, 73, 74}

They were now at Lake Champlain, where the party stopped to make canoes. Samuel de Champlain had explored the area in 1610 and described the area at the north end of the lake: “There are many pretty islands here, low, and containing very fine woods and meadows, with an abundance of fowl and animals of the chase.”^{75, 76}

While Champlain had reported good hunting, the Indians had so little success hunting that they asked the captives to pray for them. “All the Indians went a-hunting but could get nothing. ...Then they desired the English to pray ...and see what the Englishman's God could do. I prayed so did Serjeant Plimpton in another place. The Indians reverently attended morning and night. Next day they got bears.”⁷⁷

Having built canoes, the group headed out onto Lake Champlain, where they were caught by a



Figure 14 – Mary Rowlandson



Figure 15 – Captives’ Route to Canada



Figure 16 – Canoe Building

the Indians came back for him, pulled his sled and warmed him by a fire. In time, they reached the north end of the lake. They were now in New France (Canada), the first English ever to travel from New England to New France by land, and the first captives ever taken to Canada. Having made it this far, eight-year-old Samuel Russell of Deerfield slipped and got a foot wet in the river. He was killed shortly thereafter.^{79, 80}

Arrival in Chambly



Figure 18 – New France Winter Scene

The Richelieu River starts at Lake Champlain, and flows north to the St. Lawrence. Together with Lake George and Lake Champlain, the river was a major travel and trade route for the Iroquois Nation. The mouth of the Richelieu is at Sorel, between Québec and Montréal. The Iroquois used the Richelieu to disrupt travel and commerce between the two French settlements. In 1661 alone, the Iroquois killed or captured 180 French. In 1665 King Louis XIV of France ordered a series of forts be built on the Richelieu, including Fort Richelieu at Sorel and Fort Chambly.^{81, 82}

The Pocumtucks and their captives reached Fort Chambly, where Stockwell was left with the French to recuperate, and then continued to Fort Richelieu. The Indians were glad to be back in their adopted home of New France. To celebrate, they burned John Plympton at the stake. Mrs. Jennings and four others were sold to the French for liquor. They camped nearby with the rest of the captives.^{83, 84}

The Rescue

Benjamin Waite and Steven Jennings, who returned from Boston with their letters of authorization on October 24, wasted no time. They made plans for a rescue mission and headed west the same day, arriving at Fort Albany on the 30th.⁸⁵

In Albany, they met with Captain Sylvester Salisbury, “a prominent British military officer [with] a distinguished career.” He even had a poem written about him.

“The doughty captain held the fort
The subject of the British crown
Commissioned by the royal court
He served his country with renown.”⁸⁶

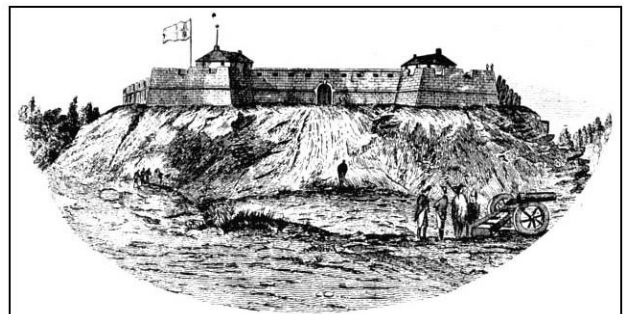


Figure 19 - Fort Albany

storm. “We thought we should all be cast away; but at last we got to an island. ... Upon this island we lay still several days, and then set out again; we had a little sled upon which we drew our load. We had no provision but raccoons, so that the Indians themselves thought they should be starved.” Winter was upon them; it was a wonder that many did not succumb to the cold and lack of food.⁷⁸

Starved, exhausted and frozen, Stockwell began to fall behind and collapsed, prepared to die. One of



Figure 17 – Indians with Sled



Figure 10 – New York, 1673

The Matter being taken into consideration
Resolved, that they be permitted to proceed on their
voyage wth way they shall think proper, for wth order
to bee sent to the Commander at Albany.

Figure 21 - Council Minutes 11/10/1677

Waite and Jennings “were coolly received by Captain Salisbury and ordered to call on him again later.” Not willing to be delayed, they went to Schenectady to secure a guide. Miffed, Salisbury had them arrested and sent to New York City.⁸⁷

In New York, Lieutenant Governor Brockholds was more sympathetic to the Hatfield cause. “They appeared before the council on the 10th of November, and the nature of their mission and cause of detention being explained, they were dismissed, with an order that no hindrance should be again permitted within the jurisdiction of the colony.”⁸⁸

The men returned to Albany, hired a Mohawk guide and headed north on December 10. If they had any trepidation about an unsupported winter expedition to Canada, there is no record of it. The guide took them as far as Lake George, built a canoe for them, and sent them on their way with a birch bark map. They canoed across Lake George in three days and then portaged two miles to Lake Champlain.⁸⁹

Storms made the crossing of Lake Champlain difficult, but they eventually reached the head of the lake on January 1 and Chambly on the 6th. Continuing to Sorel, they found the captives who had been sold. Jennings was delighted to find his wife among this group. The Pocumtucks and the rest of the captives were not far away. But finding the captives was one thing; securing their freedom was another matter entirely. Waite and Jennings “hastened to bargain for their redemption” but they had little to offer.^{90, 91} Storms made the crossing of Lake Champlain difficult, but they eventually reached the head of the lake on January 1 and Chambly on the 6th. Continuing to Sorel, they found the captives who had been sold. Jennings was delighted to find his wife among this group. The Pocumtucks and the rest of the captives were not far away. But finding the captives was one thing; securing their freedom was another matter entirely. Waite and Jennings “hastened to bargain for their redemption” but they had little to offer.^{90, 91}

Québec City

Waite and Jennings continued on to Québec City to



Figure 22 - Waite & Jennings Route to Canada

appeal to the Governor of New France for help. Louis de Buade Count de Frontenac (1622 - 1698) had a stellar military career. In New France, he was successful in expanding France's military reach and in dealing with the Iroquois. He was not so adept at dealing with the church, which would lead to his recall in 1682.⁹² Waite and Jennings continued on to Québec City to appeal to the Governor of New France for help. Louis de Buade Count de Frontenac (1622 - 1698) had a stellar military career. In New France, he was successful in expanding France's military reach and in dealing with the Iroquois. He was not so adept at dealing with the church, which would lead to his recall in 1682.⁹²

In 1677, as luck would have it, Frontenac needed a favor. It seems a few Frenchmen were being held prisoner in Boston. Frontenac helped negotiate the Hatfield captives' release for a ransom of £200, and promised an escort of 11 soldiers. News of the release was relayed to Hatfield via Albany. Unfortunately, the letter to Hatfield mentioned only that the dead were "2 children & the old man". That wouldn't have been much comfort to the parents of Abigail Allis and the other children.^{93, 94, 95}

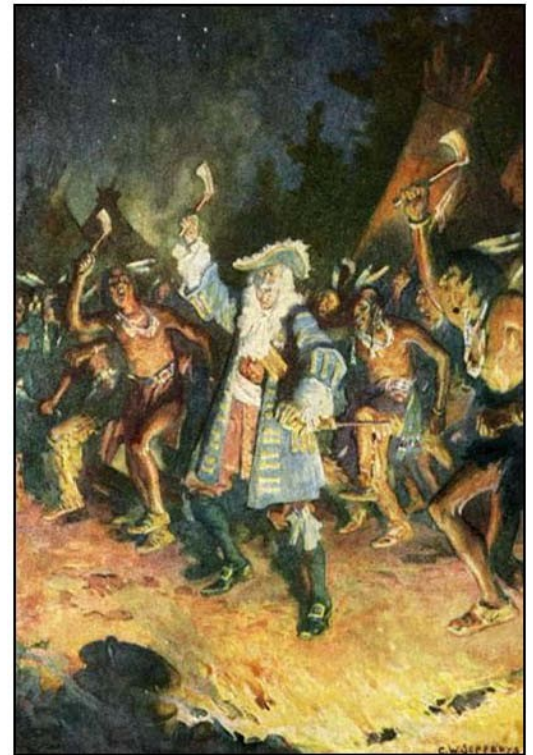


Figure 23 – Frontenac with Indians

The Return

The party waited until spring to make the return trip. Meanwhile, Waite and Jennings were delighted by the birth of new daughters Canada Waite and Captivity Jennings.⁹⁶

By May 2, the long Canadian winter was behind them and they started for home. Sieur de Lusigny led the French escort. Naturally, his orders included continuing on to Boston to retrieve the Frenchmen imprisoned there. The group arrived at Albany on May 22, where they paused to rest and Waite wrote to Hatfield for help.^{97, 98}

They rested five days at Albany and then continued down the Hudson to Kinderhook. Having received Waite's May 23 letter, Hatfield sent a rescue party, with horses and provisions, which met them at Kinderhook on May 27. What a joyous reunion it must have been! A few days later they were back home in Hatfield.⁹⁹

The ordeal had lasted over eight months; the captives had traveled over 600 miles. Of the 21 captives, 18 returned home, plus the two newborns.

Waite and Jennings had traveled from Hatfield to Boston, Albany, Schenectady, New York, Albany, Sorel, Québec, Sorel, Albany, Kinderhook and back to Hatfield, a total of 1560 miles, largely on foot. They were the

Albany february 14th 1677

Most Worthy Major

S^r Having now this occasion by two french from Canady who arryved here the 14th Instant beeing about 12 dayes since they cam from Canaday & now bound for Boston, wee have by these ffrench Intelligence of Benjamen Wait and the oy^{rs} Save arryvell att Canada: and also thar wyves & children restored unto y^m, the rest y^t were Living are redeemed from under the Indians, ther is three of the Companie dead that is 2 children & the old man the oy^r are all in good health

Figure 24 – Excerpt of Letter to Hatfield, February 14

"ALBANY, May 23, 1678.

"To my loving friends and kindred at Hatfield—These few lines are to let you understand that we are arrived at Albany now with the captives, and we now stand in need of assistance, for my charges is very greate and heavy; and therefore any that have any love to our condition, let it moove them to come and help us in this straight. There is 3 of ye captives that are murdered,—old Goodman Plympton, Samuel Foot's daughter, Samuel Russell. All the rest are alive and well and now at Albany, namely, Obadiah Dickenson and his child, Mary Foot and her child, Hannah Gennings and 3 children, Abigail Ellice, Abigail Bartholomew, Goodman Coleman's children, Samuel Kellogg, my wife and four children, and Quintin Stockwell. I pray you hasten the matter, for it requireth greate hast. Stay not for ye Sabbath, nor shoeing of horses. We shall endeavor to meete you at Canterhook; it may be at Houseatonock. We must come very softly because of our wives and children. I pray you, hasten then, stay not night nor day, for ye matter requireth greate hast. Bring provisions with you for us.

"Your loving kinsman,

"BENJAMIN WAITE.

Figure 25 – Benjamin Waite's Letter, May 23

first Europeans to make the journey from Albany to the St. Lawrence via Lake Champlain.

The Fund Raising Effort

There was still the matter of the £200 ransom to be paid. Waite's May 23 letter was forwarded to Boston, where the governor proclaimed June 6 a day of fasting and prayer. He asked that the letter be read in every church in the colony. £345 was raised from 46 churches.^{100, 101}

Later history of Abigail Allis and Others

In 1796, Abigail Allis married Ephraim Wells, son of Thomas Wells of Hadley. Not surprisingly, they settled in Colchester, Connecticut, away from the frontier. Ephraim and Abigail had four children. Abigail died at age 59 in 1731.^{102, 103}

Benjamin Waite died February 29, 1704, while trying to rescue captives during another raid in Deerfield. Benoni Stebbins (the captive who escaped) was slain by Indians in the same raid. Stephen Jennings also died at Indian hands, July 20, 1710. Quintin Stockwell died January 22, 1714.^{104, 105}

Wonnalancet died in Canada about 1697, aged about 78. History does not record the fate of Ashpelon.¹⁰⁶

Sarah Coleman's Shoe

The reader may be surprised to learn that there exists an artifact from the Hatfield captivity. A single shoe, worn by four-year-old captive Sarah Coleman on the return trip, is preserved at the Deerfield museum.¹⁰⁷



Figure 26 – Sarah's Shoe

Appendix - Author's Ancestry^{108, 109, 110, 111}

Abigail Allis (1672 – 1731) married Ephraim Wells (1671 – 1748). One of their daughters was:

Lydia Wells (1712-1762) married (as his 2nd wife) Elnathan Rowley (abt 1700 - 1786). One of their sons was:

Ephraim Rowley (1737 - 1830) married Margaret Lilie (1738 - 1830). One of their sons was:

Erastus Rowley (1769 - 1835) married Lydia Richardson (1776 - 1864). One of their sons was:

Joseph Rowley (1812 - 1883) married Elizabeth Smith (1819 - 1907). One of their sons was:

Ory Rowley (1840 - 1932) married Julia Wilson (1840 - 1921). One of their sons was:

Robert Rowley (1864 - 1932) married Margaret Ames (1862 - 1913). One of their sons was:

Glen Rowley (1891 - 1954) married Ruth Andrews (1894 - 1977). One of their daughters was:

Doris Rowley (1923 – 1995) married Edwin Smith (1919 – 2004). They had six children, including the author.

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Figure 1 –Albert Anker, "Little Girl Knitting," 14 May 2010, 13 Apr. 2011 < http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Little_Girl_Knitting_-_Albert_Anker.png >.

Figure 2- Original map drawn to scale by the author.

- Lot lines and location of stockade: Judd and Boltwood, 39.
- Home locations and names: Wells and Wells, 52.
- Route of the attack and graphics showing fires, captures and casualties: Wells and Wells, 90.

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