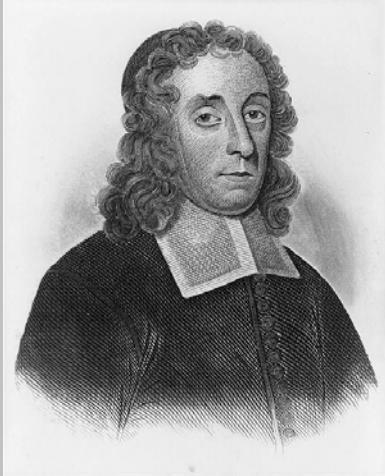
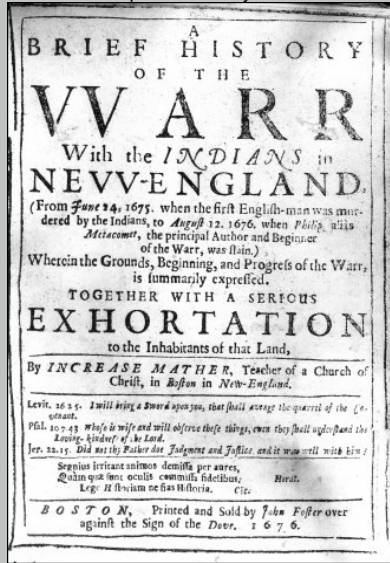


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# A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WAR WITH THE INDIANS IN NEW- ENGLAND

1676

INCREASE MATHER

EXCERPTS

Memorial Hall Museum



[From Mather's Introduction]

**T**hat the Heathen people amongst whom we live, and whose Land the Lord God of our Fathers hath given to us for a rightfull Possession, have at sundry times been plotting mischievous devices against that part of the English Israel which is seated in these goings down of the Sun, no man that is an Inhabitant of any considerable standing can be ignorant. Especially that there have been (*nec injuria*) jealousies concerning the *Narragansets* and *Wompanoags*, is notoriously known to all men. And whereas they have been quiet until the last year, that must be ascribed to the wonderful Providence of God, who did (as with Jacob of old, and after that with the Children of Israel) lay the fear of the *English* [colonists] and the dread of them upon all the *Indians*. The terror of God was upon them

round about. Nor indeed had they such advantages in former years as now they have in respect of Arms and Ammunition, their bows and arrows not being comparably such weapons of death and destruction as our guns and swords are, with which they have been unhappily furnished. Nor were our sins ripe for so dreadful a judgment until the Body of the first generation was removed, and another Generation risen up which hath not so pursued, as ought have been, the blessed design of their Fathers, in following the Lord into this Wilderness, whilst it was a land now sown. . . .

Mather presents a day-by-day review of King Philip's [Metacom's] War, then concludes in his Postscript.

There is another matter of greater importance, sc. *That which doth concern the Grounds of this War, and the justness of it on our part*: concerning which I shall here add a few words. It is known to everyone that the *War* began not amongst us in *Mattachusetts* Colony; nor do the *Indians* (so far as I am informed) pretend that we have done them wrong. And therefore the cause on our part is most clear and unquestionable: For if we should have suffered our Confederates and those that were ready to be slain to

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be drawn to death, & not have endeavored to deliver them, when they sent unto us for that end, the Lord would have been displeased; nor should we have acted like the Children of Abraham, Gen: 14.14.<sup>1</sup> Yea, all the world would justly have condemned us. And as for our Brethren in that Colony where their troubles first happened, It is evident that the Indians did most unrighteously begin a Quarrel and take up the Sword against them.

. . . [I]t seems very manifest to impartial Judges that the *Government* in that Colony [Plymouth] is *innocent* as to any *wrongs* that have been *done* to the Heathen by those *where the War began*. And therefore for their vindication and for the satisfaction of those amongst ourselves (or elsewhere) who are cordially desirous to have things cleared, respecting the *Grounds of the War*, I shall here subjoin a Letter; which I received from *General Winslow* (whose integrity and peculiar capacity (as being *Governor* of *Plymouth* Colony) to give information in this affair is well known) together with a *Narrative of the beginning of these Troubles* as it was presented to the *Commissioners* of the *united Colonies* [New England] in September last, for the satisfaction of confederate Brethren.

*Reverend Sir,*

**T**he many Testimonies you have given, not only of your good respects to my unworthy self personally, but also to this whole Colony, manifested in your endeavors to vindicate us from undeserved aspersions that some ignorant or worse than uncharitable persons would lay upon us respecting the Grounds of these troubles, calls for a greater Retribution than a bare acknowledgment . . . I think I can clearly say that before all these present troubles broke out, *the English did not possess one foot of Land in this Colony but what was fairly obtained by honest purchase of the Indian Proprietors*: Nay, because some of our people are of a covetous disposition and the Indians are, in their Straits, easily prevailed with to part with their Lands, we first *made a Law that none should purchase or receive of gift any Land of the Indians without the knowledge and allowance of our Court*, and penalty of a fine, five pound per Acre, for all that should be so bought or obtained. And lest yet they should be straightened, we ordered that *Mount-Hope, Pocasset & several other Necks of the best Land in the Colony* (because most suitable and convenient for them) should never be bought out of their hands or else they would have sold them long since. And our neighbors at *Rehoboth and Swanzy*, although they bought their lands fairly of this *Philip* [Metacom, Wampanoag leader] and his Father [Massasoit] and Brother, yet because of their vicinity, that they might not trespass upon the Indians, did at their own cost set up a very substantial fence quite cross that great Neck between the English and the Indians and *paid due damage if at any time any unruly horse or other beasts broke in and trespassed* . . . And *if at any time they have brought complaints before us, they had had justice impartial and speedily*, so that *our own people* have frequently complained that *we erred on the other hand in showing them overmuch favor*. Much more I might mention, but I would not burden your patience; yet we must own that God is just and hath punished us far less than our iniquities have deserved; yea just in using as a Rod, whose enlightening and Conversion we have not endeavored as we might & should have done, but on the contrary have taught them new sins that they knew not. The Lord *Humble* us and *Reform* us, that he may also save and deliver us, as in his own time I trust he will. . . .

Your obliged friend to serve you,

*Marshfield* May 1  
1676.

*Jos, Winslow.*

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 14:14. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. [King James]

Mather adds documents from the Commissioners of the Colony of New-Plimouth and of the United Colonies.

At a Meeting of the Commissioners of the United Colonies  
held at *Boston September 9th. 1675.*

We, having received from the Commissioners of *Plimouth* a Narrative showing the rise and several steps of that Colony as to the present *War* with the *Indians*, which had its beginning there, and its progress into the *Massachusetts*, by their insolencies and outrages, Murdering many persons and burning their Houses in sundry [several] Plantations in both Colonies. And having duely considered the same, do Declare, That the said *War* doth appear to be both just and necessary, and its first rise only a *Defensive War*. And therefore we do agree and conclude that it ought now to be jointly presented by all the United Colonies; and the charges thereof to be born and paid as is agreed in the Articles of Confederation.

<i>John Winthrop.</i>	<i>Thomas Danforth.</i>
<i>James Richards.</i>	<i>William Stoughton.</i>
	<i>Josiah Winslow.</i>
	<i>Thomas Hinckley.</i>

Next, Mather presents the Covenant that Philip [Metacom] had agreed to five years earlier.

*Taunton, Apr. 10th. 1671.*

Whereas my Father, my Brother and my self have formerly submitted our selves and our people unto the King's Majesty of England, and to this Colony of New-Plymouth, by solemn Covenant under our Hand;<sup>2</sup> but I having of late through my indiscretion and the naughtiness of my heart violated and broken this my Covenant with my friends by *taking up Arms* with evil intent against them, and that groundlessly; I being now deeply sensible of my unfaithfulness and folly do desire at this time to renew my Covenant with my ancient Friends and my Father's friends above mentioned; and do desire this may testify to the world against me, *if ever I shall again fail* in my faithfulness towards them (*that I have now and at all times found so kind to me*) or any other of the English Colonies; and as a real Pledge of my true Intentions, for the future to be faithful and friendly, I do freely engage to resign up unto the *Government of New-Plymouth* all my English Arms to be kept by them for their security, so long as they shall see reason. For true performance of the Premises I have hereunto set my hand together with the rest of my Council.

In the Presence of	The Mark of <b>P.</b> <i>Philip</i>
William Davis.	chief Sachem of <i>Pocanoket</i>
William Hudson.	The Mark of <b>ψ</b> <i>Tavoser</i>
Thomas Brattle.	The Mark of <b>m</b> <i>Capt. Wisposke</i>
	The Mark of <b>τ</b> <i>Woonkaponehunt</i>
	The Mark of <b>8</b> <i>Nimrod.</i>

By all these things it is evident that we may truly say of *Philip*, and the *Indians*, who have sought to dispossess us of the Land which the Lord our God hath given to us, as sometimes *Jephthah* and the Children of *Israel* said to the King of *Ammon*, *I have not sinned against thee, but thou dost me wrong to*

<sup>2</sup> In the agreements of April and September 1671, Metacom agreed to surrender Wampanoag firearms (which did not occur) and to accept the legal authority of the Plymouth colony and the English monarchy.

*war against me; the Lord the Judge, be Judge this day between the Children of Israel and the Children of Ammon. And as Iehoshaphat said, when the Heathen in those days combined to destroy the Lord's People; And now behold the Children of Ammon, and Moab and Mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade when they came out of the Land of Egypt, but they turned from them and destroyed them not, behold how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy Possession, which thou hast given us to inherit, O our God wilt thou not judge them?*

Even so, when *Philip* was in the hands of the English in former years, & disarmed by them, they could easily but would not destroy him and his men. The Governors of that Colony have been as careful to prevent injuries to him as unto any others; yea, they kept his Land not *from* him but *for* him, who otherwise would have sold himself out of all; and the Gospel was freely offered to him and to his Subjects, but they despised it: And now behold how they reward us! will not our God Judge them? yea he hath and will do so.

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F I N I S.

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