

ETHNOHISTORY¹ OF THE PRESUMPCOT WABANAKIS²

©Alvin Hamblen Morrison, PhD

Professor (Emeritus) of Anthropology, SUNY-Fredonia
Ethnohistorical Anthropologist, Mawooshen Research

"What's in a name?"

Anthropologists try to understand the names that a society/culture uses for its persons, places, and things, and what the criteria are for doing so. As outsiders looking in, the task can be difficult, and distorted by what other outsiders previously have misheard or misunderstood. Hearing, saying, writing, and in different dialects within a people, and over time, make changes inevitable in speaking and in meaning. Some examples are:

Names of two important Presumpscot Wabanaki sakamos (chiefs)

-- Skitterygusset [Squidrayset etc.] and Polin [Pooran etc.];

Name of the River -- with or without the second letter/sound R?

Name of the River's people -- not Sokoki, not Rocamecook, (both were different peoples, elsewhere). Just "Presumpscot River Wabanaki" will do. Likewise, the general collective term Wabanaki puts them properly within their larger context of the six DawnLander Peoples of Maritime Canada and northern New England: Micmac, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, Abenaki, and Pennacook.

Located in the Abenaki-Pennacook overlap area, the Presumpscots would have been a band of the combined Abenaki-Pennacook peoples by 1700, after the Pennacook Wabanakis had been forced out of their former Merrimack River villages by the ever-expanding English Newcomers of Massachusetts Bay Colony. Pennacook Wabanakis moved north and east.

¹ **Ethnohistory** combines the findings & theories of ethnology (cultural anthropology) with the methods of historiography (history-writing), thereby mitigating the bias of the limited written records about "the peoples *without history*". An analogy I like is that *ethnohistory* snowshoes beyond the end of the snowplowed pavement called *history*. To quote the American Society for Ethnohistory's website www.ethnohistory.org - "*Practitioners recognize the utility of maps, music, paintings, photography, folklore, oral tradition, ecology, site exploration, archaeological materials, museum collections, enduring customs, language, and place-names. Furthermore, ethnohistorians...use the special knowledge of the group, linguistic insights, and the understanding of cultural phenomena in ways that make for a more in-depth analysis than the average historian is capable of doing based solely on written documents produced by and for one group.*"

² **Wabanaki** (meaning Dawn-Land-ers) is the collective name for those Northeastern Algonquian-Language-Family peoples of northern New England and Maritime Canada, specifically known as today's Micmac, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, Abenaki, and Pennacook. All of these peoples were and are living in Maine, and each people had a number of locally-named bands or communities. When in doubt as to what name to use for any or all "Maine Indian" group(s), the one safe answer is always to say Wabanaki.

In the 1600's, the Wabanaki peoples appear to have consisted of four blocs: Micmac, Eastern-Etchemin, Western-Etchemin, and Abenaki-Pennacook with fluid membership and fluid locations, caused by natural disasters and diseases, warfare, English push, and French pull. Tactically regrouping and relocating was the Wabanaki peoples' inextinguishable strategy for collective survival in their Dawnland.

The Presumpscots occasionally stayed with the Pigwacket/Pequawket band of Saco River (not Sokoki) Wabanakis at now-Fryeburg Maine, and eventually the Presumpscots became enmeshed with the "French Indians" of St-Francois Abenaki missionary village in southern Quebec. Therefore Presumpscots have been tagged with different names and addresses not really their own.

But regularly with the natural bounty of the seasons, the Presumpscot Indians would return to the Presumpscot River that they belonged to. Seasonal nomadism, from coast to lake and back, along their river, was their natural traditional lifestyle - until the evermore numerous English Newcomers overran the Wabanaki lands in Maine and disrupted the ever-precarious balance of Nature, upon which Wabanaki lifeways depended.

As inevitable frictions increased all over New England, both Natives and Newcomers began to consider how they might possibly get rid of the other.

English formed Militias for attempting conquest; Indians formed Freedom-Fighter guerrilla war-parties to try to prevent conquest, or make it costly, if not drive out the English completely.

On the Presumpscot River, the first Indian Freedom-Fighter guerrilla raid was the September 1675 Wakely Family Massacre in Falmouth, and the last was the May 1756 combat-death in Windham of Presumpscot Chief Polin. These "encounters" marked beginning and end of the 80-odd years of strife, today named either the six Anglo-Wabanaki Wars or the one single Anglo-Wabanaki War, to try to "name" and claim whose land this really was.

Massachusetts government had no cash, only land to pay Militiamen for military service during the Indian wars. Much of that land was in Maine, where it was contested in combat. Therefore, paper land-IOUs were issued for paper towns for post-war development. After the first war of the six, the towns-to-be were named for the southern New England 1675 campaign against the Narragansett tribe. For example, what is now Gorham Maine was named "Narragansett No.7". After the second war, the paper-towns were named for the 1690 campaign against Canada. Example: today's Raymond Maine was first named "Beverly Canada", for the veterans from Beverly Massachusetts. But, as one war was soon followed by another, not all veterans actually obtained "their" land, having sold their paper-land certificates for whatever immediate cash land-speculators would pay.

Yet a few new settlements were started, despite the danger. And when Wabanaki Freedom-Fighters returned as raiders to the new English towns, the settlers were forced to live packed inside fort-palisades and garrison-houses for lengthy periods; e.g., Gorham. All in the name of "Progress".

Always the attempted translations of Indian names displease someone(s). However, wise Wabanaki Elders remind us that places bestow their own descriptive names, which Indians take not give. Some researchers say Presumpscot = rough-places? rocky? shoally? but that may not be the name of the whole river, which may have other names for other different places on it.

Landscape similarities with other streams may merit the very same descriptive names thereon, because the names are used as common nouns not proper nouns. Example: The "famous" Piscataqua River of Kittery-Portsmouth has a sister in the Falmouth area, where another Piscataqua River joins the Presumpscot River just before the first falls. Both rivers' names imply branching.

The real puzzler of an Indian name, apparently for our Presumpscot River, comes from early 1600s, seemingly vanishing thereafter: *Ashamahaga*.

Ashamahaga's Context

The name "Ashamahaga", placed alone between Sagadahoc and Shawakotoc in two early-published accounts of Maine rivers (1614 and 1625), clearly implies that it must be the Presumpscot River. Indeed, there is no likely alternative to the Presumpscot River, between the joint Kennebec-Androscoggin Rivers' estuary (often termed the Sagadahoc River) and the Saco River. The 1614 report gives only the list of river-names, but the 1625 chronicle adds tantalizing details. Both accounts resulted from debriefing five Wabanaki men, who were kidnapped from Muscongus Bay (north of Monhegan Island) in 1605 by Captain George Waymouth's expedition, which was sent to the Maine coast to find a suitable location for an English colony.

The five Wabanaki captives were taken to England, to be returned as guides for later English voyages. Three Indians were assigned to Sir Ferdinando Gorges (who would soon become the absentee-landlord of southwestern Maine), and two Indians to Sir John Popham (the first major financier of the Popham-Gorges colonial endeavors, who died in 1607 very soon after his short-lived Sagadahoc Colony had started out from England).

The detailed account published in 1625 as *Description of the Countrey of Mawooshen* presents the first known Wabanaki human geography data – naming (from east to west) ten rivers and the Native communities and leaders living thereon. Probably the 1625 *Description* was the composite product of both the 1605 debriefing and some other data, but there is no way now of telling which is which. However, there is absolutely no mention at all that the *peaceful* theme described therein – a Wabanaki political alliance along the Maine coast from today's Ellsworth to Biddeford, under paramount-sakamo / superchief Bashaba (*Mawooshen* apparently meaning "walk together") -- had begun to unravel with ongoing intergroup warfare by 1607, collapsing by 1615 with Bashaba's murder, and then was followed by a pandemic of European disease during 1616-1619. So, Waymouth's five captives must have been the major raconteurs of this early version of "Maine: the way life should be".

Of course, by the time of 1625 publication, many of the persons and groups named in 1605 had either died or regrouped. Yet the English general public relished hearing any tales of exploration and discovery, and the specific target of publishing them was to lure potential investors into further overseas affairs. National pride was the common issue during that internationally competitive and still-open-ended Age of Discovery. Collectively, the series of travelog publications by both Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas has rightly been called "the great prose epic of the English nation". Even after we discount it for potential propaganda (from captive Indians seeking early return, through English naiveté, to huckster hype), and for misunderstandings and mistakes, it all helps us better understand the spirit of its time. And even for our purposes here, reading about Ashamahaga and Shawakotoc is still fascinating.

"To the Westward of Sagadahoc, foure dayes iourney there is another Riuer called Ashamahaga, which hath at the entrance sixe fathoms water, and is halfe a quarter of a mile broad: it runneth into the Land two dayes iourney: and on the East side there is one Towne called Agnagebcoc, wherein are seuentie houses, and two hundred and fortie men, with two Sagamos, the one called Maurmet, the other Casherokenit.

"Seuen dayes iourney to the South-west of Ashamahaga there is another Riuer, that is sixe fathoms to the entrance: This Riuer is named Shawakotoc, and is halfe a myle broad: it runneth into the Land fiftie dayes iourney, but foure dayes from the entrance it is so narrow, that the Trees growing on each side doe so crosse with their boughes and bodies on the other, as it permitteth not any meanes to passe with Boates that way: for which cause the Inhabitants that on any occasion are to trauell to the head, are forced to go by Land, taking their way vpon the West side. At the end of this Riuer there is a Lake of foure dayes iourney long, and two

dayes broad, wherein are two Ilands. To the North-West foure daies iourney from this Lake, at the head of this Riuer Shawakatoc there is a small Prouince, which they call Crokemago, wherein is one Towne. This is the Westermost Riuer of the Dominions of Basshabez, and Quibiquisso [= today's Union River at Ellsworth, Maine] the Westermost [sic – but obviously meaning EASTernmost]."³

³. **Mawooshen Description** document has been reprinted in full in several modern publications, but my favorite venue (because it appears in such detailed context with so very many other relevant contemporary documents) is *The English New England Voyages 1602-1608*, edited by David B. Quinn and Alison M. Quinn (1983) for The Hakluyt Society, London (Second Series, No. 161). However, I must give a warning: While the Quinns are high among the foremost historical scholars of the Age of Discovery, when it comes to the ethnohistory of the Wabanaki peoples, the Quinns erred grievously in following the lead of the Smithsonian (1978) Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 15: Northeast, wherein the entire 1500s-1600s past of the Western Etchemins is wrongly added to the 1700s-present period of the Eastern Abenakis. Therefore, in their Notes about the documents of the 1500s-1600s, every time the Quinns say "Eastern Abenakis", what they really mean to say, and should have said, is Western Etchemins. This means that most of Captain Waymouth's five Wabanaki captives from Muscongus Bay, and certainly paramount-sakamo Bashaba on Penobscot River (who headed Mawooshen confederacy), really were Western Etchemins. Relocations following Native trade-wars, European-disease epidemics, English pushing, and French pulling, led the Etchemins to move eastward out of the area, into which came eastward the equally-disrupted Abenakis. The 1614 document I refer to regarding Ashamahaga appears in Quinn & Quinn (1983) as Document 25, and the 1625 publication of the Mawooshen Description as Document 50.

That quotation is the entirety of the last two paragraphs of the 1625 *Mawooshen Description*, and the only two paragraphs of it that need concern us. How much of it can or should we believe? Certainly not all, but at least some. Clearly, the Presumpscot River's Sebago Lake attributes are bestowed here upon the Saco River. But *Crokemago* does belong on the Saco, because it seems to be a version of "Narracomecock"- the name of the Wabanaki fort at Pigwacket / Pequawket, (now Fryeburg), (which should not be confused with a place of similar name [Rocameca] on the Androscoggin River). The importance of Crokemago / Pigwacket to the Presumpscot's Wabanakis is nonetheless a key issue for us to consider later. The basic question for us now is about *Agnagebcoc Towne*: Where could A-Towne's remains now be hiding?

Agnagebcoc's Siting

Perhaps the town's name Agnagebcoc itself holds information pertinent to locating it. However, while Fannie Hardy Eckstorm suggested meanings for a few of the names of rivers and towns stated in the *Mawooshen Description*, she seemingly ignored Ashamahaga and Agnagebcoc – and I know of no other properly-grounded scholar who has attempted them. So we are left with only the following barest "facts" (i.e., if we can believe them) and theories.

- Description:** A-Towne = 1 "Towne" of 70 "Houses" and 240 "Men".
Extension: One community averaging 3.4 men (i.e., warriors) per household of at least 9 persons each, = a minimum of 630 total population.
Comments: Not easy to hide big A-Towne; Not easy to feed its big population.
In wartime, protection-by-location is adaptive for both people and crops.

The following ethnohistorical accounts contrast the Native foodways found on the major river-mouths east and west of the Presumpscot, and thus help suggest a potential profile of the lost community of A-Towne.

Note that these accounts mention a wartime setting ignored by the *Mawooshen Description* of essentially the very same date (1605).

French explorer Samuel de Champlain cruised along the Maine coast from the French colonial outpost of Port Royal (now Annapolis Royal in Nova Scotia) in summer 1605 – the same year that Waymouth kidnapped the five Wabanaki men from Muscongus Bay.

About the Sagadahoc Estuary (lower Kennebec River) Indians, Champlain wrote:

"The [Native] people live like those near our settlement [Port Royal NS – i.e., by hunting-fishing-gathering], and they informed us that the Indians who cultivated Indian corn lived far inland, and had ceased to grow it on the coasts on account of the war they used to wage with others who came [by sea] and seized it." (Champlain 1:321)

Of the Saco River-mouth Indians, he stated:

"They till and cultivate the land, a practice we [coming from the northeast, in today's western Nova Scotia] had not seen previously." (Champlain 1:327)

And of the Saco Indians' Biddeford-Pool-vicinity village of Chouacoet, he wrote:

"The Indians remain permanently in this place, and have a large wigwam surrounded by palisades formed of rather large trees placed one against the other; and into this they retire when their enemies come to make war against them." (Champlain 1:329)

The bottom line is that maize-gardening (Indian-corn-cultivation) is necessary for feeding larger populations, but it is labor-intensive and requires sedentary attendance, and often is too risky (via climate, weather, predators) to bother with. The sea-going "Tarentines" were Micmacs and Eastern-Etchemins who lived too far to the colder northeast to grow maize securely, and therefore had to either trade or raid for it across the Gulf of Maine. For the potential producers, the closer they lived to the Bay of Fundy (from which the Tarentines came), the less sensible it was to tempt maize-raiding by growing their corn near the coast.

So, since it is likely that A-Towne required maize to feed its multitude, it is unlikely that A-Towne (or at least its maize-garden) was near the mouth of the Presumpscot River in 1605. The upstream side of at least one if not two or more waterfalls seems to me the most likely place to expect to find it (or its garden).

The lowest / "last" waterfall on the Presumpscot River (i.e., the closest to the sea, which for our purpose of going upstream we must call the "**First" Fall**") is at-or-near the recently-removed Smelt-Hill Dam in Falmouth. From the seaside at Martins Point Bridge (US Route 1) to this First Fall is approximately two-&-a-half miles upstream, much of it mudflats at low tide. For this place in 1623-24, Englishman Christopher Levett stated:

"Just at this fall of water the sagamore or king of that place hath a house, where I was one day when there were two sagamores more, their wives and children, in all about fifty, and we were but seven." (Levett 43).

Clearly, "about fifty" is not big A-Town, and archaeological evidence indicates that this First Fall area was only a regular seasonal fishing camp. However, Levett's trip to Maine was *after* the end of the Native warfare which crescendoed to destroy Bashaba and his Mawooshen alliance by 1615, and which was followed by the devastating "plague" of 1616-1619 which caused up to 90% depopulation among the Indians, and led to major removals / regroupings of survivors throughout the entire region, stretching from Cape Cod to Penobscot Bay.

(That "plague" did not affect the few Europeans present; whatever the disease was, the Europeans had inherited immunity to it, but the Indians had not. A 1634 encore epidemic was identifiable smallpox, which again harmed the Natives severely.)

No detailed account of Presumpscot First Fall area dating earlier than Levett's (1624) is known today, if there ever was one, for comparison of conditions pre- & post-disasters. Captain John Smith's account of his 1614 cruise along the Maine coast, like the 1605/25 *Mawooshen Description*, by default describes a peaceful region (both accounts were promotional propaganda). Smith mentions warfare only in the past tense. Smith states nothing more specific about the Portland area than this:

"Westward of this Riuer [Sagadahock] is the Country of Aucocisco, in the bottome of a large deepe Bay, full of many great Iles, which diuides it into many good Harbours."

Like the name "New England" which we know that Smith coined, his use of Aucocisco seems to be a first in our known records. That he meant it for more than just Portland seems clear from its use again a few pages later, when he lists among "*The chiefe Mountains*" he saw along the Maine coast, "*the twinkling Mountaine of Acocisco*" – Mount Washington seen from Casco Bay. Smith starts his "Description of New England" with a list of Native "*Countries...alied in confederacy*" with Bashaba ("*the chiefe and greatest [leader] amongst them*") – a list including "Ancocisco" – a third spelling. (Smith 717, 721, 706)

Fannie Eckstorm (my guru of place-naming) claimed that *Aucocisco* is Micmac for "muddy-bay", and refers specifically to Back Cove in Portland. Eckstorm saw *Casco* as an Abenaki word for "heron" (a large water-bird), and suggested Casco somehow replaced Aucocisco as an early name for Portland. She does not comment about how or why one small muddy bay's name could be stretched to include a faraway tall mountain in the same "Country" with it. (Eckstorm 168-169)

So, conceivably, before the time of Tarentine maize-raiding, A-Towne might have been on or close to the seashore in today's East Deering section of Portland, a peninsula facing the harbor but on a narrow neck between both Back Cove and Presumpscot River-mouth, both of which are very muddy bays at low tide! Smith in 1614 may have been told an antique name for that place which still applied, generally, to its widespread people: Aucocisco, later somehow becoming Casco for both the English colonial town and its bay-region.

The **Second Fall** upstream is Ammoncongin Fall at Cumberland Mills in Westbrook. This is at-or-near the SAPPI / S D Warren plant's dam. It is over six miles upstream from First Fall, and over eight-&-a-half miles upstream from seaside at Martins Point Bridge – well away from the sea-going Tarentines. Also, it is only around one mile downstream from the **Third Fall** called Sacarappa Fall at the old Dana Warp Mill on Bridge Street in Westbrook.

An Indian planting ground may or may not mean that an Indian village was nearby. It may have been important both to hide the corn from raiders and to keep the village nearer the coast for traders. However, even if it was nearby and cannot be found today, A-Towne still might be accounted for (either here or elsewhere on the lower Presumpscot), theoretically at least, given some geological information about the "Presumpscot Formation" of slippery glacial marine clay (which was named for this very region), combined with local historical information of known stream-bank collapses and mud-slides resulting from the "PF".

Undoubtedly, besides mudslides mentioned by Fobes (pg. 364) and Kendall (pg. 93), there must have been others on the Presumpscot between 1605 and the present, at least one of which could have buried and/or scattered whatever evidence was left of A-Towne, wherever it was. Someone(s) may have found and kept some bits of evidence that may yet come out of storage, or the less-developed areas of Westbrook-Portland-Falmouth may yet yield some unexpected paydirt. So, in sum, I suggest that we may yet be able to site Agnabecoc Towne, even if we cannot truly sight it.

Naming Agnabecoc's (A-Town's) people also is problematical. Today we have no way of knowing what they named themselves collectively, and at however many levels of social organization. Nor do we know the geographic extent of whatever names they did use at that time. The best that we can do is to consider them simply as Presumpscot River Wabanaki and a part of the Abenaki-Pennacook group of the Wabanaki peoples. This is the very same problem as with the Saco River Wabanaki, whose own name we also do not know – only that they were not Sokoki despite that common misconception.

Wabanaki SOCIAL ORGANIZATION and LEADERSHIP

Wabanaki survival has long depended upon fluid social organization and flexible leadership. The Native Wabanakis' Dawnland Diaspora and Mobile Managers have befuddled English and American Newcomers from the Early Contact Period to the present day, as being "not proper" by Euro-American standards. However, the Wabanakis are still around today, their continuing presence a testimony to the effectiveness of their adaptively advantageous social structure – and it was / is cleverly and dynamically structured to organize potentially-chaotic events.

Wabanaki society could shrink or swell its groupings as occasions required; Wabanaki leadership was both authorityless and plural; and both their groups and their leaders were able to relocate and return, repeatedly. Even in battle, and when Wabanakis outnumbered their English opponents, if casualties got too high the Wabanakis might leave the field to fight again elsewhere another day. "Not proper" it may have appeared, but it also was wise of the Wabanakis, even if the English proclaimed each such event as a "Victory". The Newcomers' idea of their God-given "Inevitability" of conquering the Natives has been stymied by the Wabanakis' equally-spiritual idea of response: "We and Our Dawnland are ONE!" Weapons may have changed, but the old ideas remain on both sides.

Anthropological three-level world typology of sociopolitical organization puts traditional Wabanaki society in the middle level of complexity: it is not at Level 1 "Egalitarian" (no real prestige differential, and no economic differential); nor is it at Level 3 "Stratified" (both prestige and economic differentials); but it is at Level 2 "Rank" (prestige differential, and maybe but not necessarily some economic differential, between either individual members of society or their family groups). By contrast, European societies were not only technologically more complex but more societally complex at Level 3. And each European society had only one monarch at a time, with all other leaders obedient subordinates (in theory!).

Each of the Wabanaki peoples had several sakamos at any one time, but all led without real authority – they had to lead by persuasion, to carry out their real responsibility to the group of persons who chose voluntarily to be led by them, and who could vote-with-their-feet to go live in another community led by other sakamos. "Prestige differentials" made the true power-base of any sakamo, and kept each community's membership "fluid". Since their kinfolk were in other communities too, such fluidity did not mean isolation of individuals or families. Frequent intercommunity visitations kept family communications fresh.

A few families who had produced past leaders were looked-to first for new leadership, but any potential candidate, male or female, whether for sakamo or shaman (medicine-person), had to prove personal capability-talent, and new sources of leadership were not overlooked. Adoptees with obvious talents, even French priests and English captives, were occasional admired choices for leadership among the Wabanaki peoples.

There were different levels of sakamos, depending on age, experience, talents, needs, and events. Having shamanic spirit-powers doubled a person's credentials for leadership positions. In some families as well as individuals, reputation for having power is power itself.

In the 1600s, there were at least four Wabanaki paramount sakamos, meaning super-chiefs of super-alliances, who must have had extraordinary leadership talents themselves, and also had married off their kinfolk to further extend their webs of influence. These four lived sequentially in time, but in different parts of the Dawnland. Yet all four had at least indirect influences on the 17th-century Presumpscot River Wabanakis. They were:

1st) Souriquois Micmac, Membertou, (died 1611), whose Micmac and Eastern-Etchemin Tarentine Alliance outlived him to crush Bashaba's Mawooshen Alliance. A former shaman as well, Membertou was the first Native leader in the Northeast to "convert" to French Catholic Christianity, thus raising his own power by making a lasting French connection, and gaining the French title of "First Hereditary Grand Chief" of the Micmacs.

2nd) Western-Etchemin, Bashaba, (died 1615), headed the Western- Etchemin & Abenaki-Pennacook Mawooshen Alliance, whose influence (we are told) extended across southern Maine from Union River (Ellsworth) to Saco River (Biddeford), until it was destroyed by Tarentines. Bashaba's death & resulting realignments were soon followed by the 1616-19 plague.

3rd) Pennacook, Passaconaway, (died c.1665) built a Pawtucket / Pennacook-Abenaki Alliance centered on Merrimack River of today's New Hampshire & Massachusetts but extended into Maine to the eastern end of Casco Bay, by himself and skillfully married-out kin. Also a noted shaman, he never "converted" to English Puritan Christianity, but promoted peace with the English, even as they pushed him out of his homeland -- yet he saved Pennacook lives thereby.

4th) Western-Etchemin, Madockawando, (died c.1698) was based on Penobscot Bay, near his son-in-law French Baron de St-Castin (aka "Castine"). He wanted to make and keep English connections as well as French, but French Governor Villebon of Acadia denied him that. He was both a shaman and a war-chief (kinap) as well as being the last Wabanaki superchief. (Mme. Castine's names were Pidianiske and Molly Mathilde.)

Sakamos (aka sagamores, sachems) also could become Mobile Managers, traveling far in some cases. Famous examples are Wabanaki, Samoset, of Pemaquid ME welcoming the Pilgrims in Plymouth MA (1621), and Mahican, Paugus, of Scaticook NY acting as warchief at Pigwacket (now Fryeburg ME) in Lovewell's Fight (1725). Kinfolk in not-very-foreign communities, even outside their own "home-tribe" (especially after Native warfare, disease epidemics, English push, and French pull, caused removals and regroupings), called in new leadership as needed. So, when opportunity knocked, "Have Skills, Will Travel".

The Dawnland Diaspora for Wabanaki survival was never fully understood by the ever-increasing-and-encroaching English colonials and their European-minded leaders, who saw it only as further "treachery". Repeated Wabanaki tactical retreats to French missionary-stations in Canada (especially Odanak⁴ on the St-Francis River near the St-Lawrence) were seen by the English as strategic abandonment of "former" Native territory.

So, repeated Wabanaki tactical returns were seen only as French-inspired invasions, ergo "intolerable".

⁴ **Odanak** was / is the village / community of the "St-Francis Abenaki", famous for outliving Rogers' Rangers' Raid there on 4 October 1759.

It is located in southern Quebec Province, Canada near the mouth of the Saint-Francois River, which flows northwest from Sherbrooke city, through Drummondville city, to Pierreville community, where it joins Lake St-Peter (Lac St-Pierre), which is a very large bulge in the big St-Lawrence River. (From the flat Vermont border 75 miles due north.)

ARSIKONTEGOK was the Native name of both river and village, a place-name derived from geographical characteristics, not from any name of the founders, as some have claimed. In some English treaties AROSAGUNTACOOKs appear as delegates from St-Francis / Odanak.

Odanak became both an important French religious-political mission station and the rendezvous point for French & Indian raids on the English frontier settlements. Indian refugees moved to Odanak after suffering English attacks, famines, and diseases. Many refugees were temporary, however, and returned home whenever possible, at least seasonally – confusing English confiscation of "abandoned" lands.

Odanak's two major resident peoples were the SOKOKI / Sokwaki / Squakeheag from the middle Connecticut River in northernmost Massachusetts, and the ABENAKI from all across northern New England (ME, NH, VT). The Abenaki gave the name to the heteroband of "St-Francis Abenaki", and the language was of combined dialects.

Caught in the middle, the Wabanakis preferred French pull to English push, yet still tried to maintain Wabanaki autonomy. Wabanakis were not mere pawns of the Europeans. They still needed their traditional natural resources (now English-held), but preferred English trade-goods. My own research of Wabanaki frontier encounters leads me to believe that, with the French for "friends" the Wabanakis really did not need the English for "enemies". I believe that the Wabanakis knew and acted upon all of that. Their encounter dynamics on the Presumpscot River seem to me to reflect all of the above.

Encounter Dynamics on and around the Presumpscot, 1623-1756

During the 133-year span 1623-1756, it seems that there are only two Presumpscot Wabanaki sakamos well-enough-known-about to discuss in any detail. In between, there were of course innumerable Anglo-Wabanaki encounters, some very worthy of note, whose casts of characters involved are either anonymous or nearly so. In what follows, we will begin with sakamo Skitterygusset (fl. 1623-1657), end with Chief Polin (d. 1756), and in between selectively outline chronologically some of the more significant local encounter events.

In 1623, English entrepreneurial-agent Christopher Levett met, liked, and was liked-by, sakamo "Skedraguscett", who "*hath a house*" (and 50-odd guests) at Presumpscot First Fall. This sakamo and others adopted Levett as their "cousin" and wanted him to return and settle. After fond farewells, Levett went back to England, where unforeseen circumstances prevented his promised return. Thus ended a rare opportunity for peaceful cooperation between Natives and Newcomers.

The next we hear of Skitterygusset, he was accused of leading a murder-gang against dishonest English fur-trader Walter (Great Watt) Bagnell, in 1631 at Richmond Island (off Cape Elizabeth) where Bagnell had set up his trading-post (English goods for Indian furs). Two years later (1633), an English expedition, unsuccessfully hunting pirates, put in at Richmond Island, where they found and lynch-hanged another sakamo, Black Will (guilty or innocent), in revenge for Bagnell's murder.

Some interesting points are: 1) Black Will most probably was Black William / Poquanum who was a sakamo of Nahant MA; 2) Fannie Eckstorm (161), without any comment, calls Skitterygusset "a sachem of Lynn MA" in her placename entry for "*Skitterygusset: a creek near the mouth of the Presumpscot* [in Falmouth ME]". Lynn and Nahant are two abutting communities on the North Shore of the greater Boston area. Here we seem to have Mobile Managers at work in a Native Maine-Massachusetts (Passaconaway?) connection.

Perhaps it was to Massachusetts that Skitterygusset went in 1634, the time of the second major Native epidemic (smallpox this time). He seems not to have been at Presumpscot then, because John Winter, the new trade-agent in residence at Richmond Island, wrote to Robert Trelawney (his boss in England) in April 1634: "*The trading heare abouts with the Indians is not worth any thing, for heare is no Indian lives nearer unto us then 40 or 50 myles, except a few about the River of Salko...*"; and again in August: "*Theris a great many of the Indyans dead this yeere, both east and west from us & a great many dyes still to the eastward from us.*" (Trelawney 461)

Wherever he was in 1634, Skitterygusset outlived the epidemic and still belonged to the Presumpscot. On 27 July 1657 "Scitterygussett of Casco Bay Sagamore" signed a deed with fisherman Francis Small of Casco Bay (to share? or abandon?) a very large tract of land on Presumpscot River, in return for an annual coat to wear and gallon to drink. Seeming more like rent or lease amounts, those petty payments imply that the Native thought that he was making a personal alliance with the Newcomer for sharing, not selling-out. But was Francis Small's intention the smaller or the larger of those possibilities?

[LAND-DEED of SCITTERYGUSETT to FRANCIS SMALL]

Casco Bay 27: day of July 1657:

Bee it knowne vnto all men by these presents, that I Scitterygusett of Casco Bay Sagamore, do hereby firmly Couenant bargan, grant, & sell vnto Francis Small of the sd Casco bay fisherman, his heyres, executors, Administrators, & assignes, all that vpland & Marshes at Capissicke, Lijing vp along the Northerne side of the riuer, vnto the head yr of, & soe to reach & extend vnto ye river side of Ammecungan/ To haue & to hould & peaceably to possesse & Injoy all the aboue sd Tract of Land with all manner of Royaltys, of Mines, Mineralls, fishings, fowlings, Hawkinas, huntings, Immunjtyas profetts, Comoditys, libertys, & priuiledges wtsoeuer, for the same for euer to abide, & remajne, to the soole & onely pper vsse, & behoofe of him the abouesd Fran: Smale, his heyres, executors Administrators & assigns for euer; In witsnesse wrof I haue here vnto sett my hand & seale the day & yeare aboue written/

Signed sealed & Deliuerd

The marke of

In the psence of,

Scitterygusett/

Payton Cooke/

Nathanjell Wallis/

Vera Copia Transcribed, & Compared

The marke of

by ye original July : 8 : 59 : Edw:

Peter Indean/

Rishworth Re: Cor:

Memorandum yt I Francis Smale do bind my selfe yearly to pay unto ye sd Scitterygusett Sagamore during his life one Trading Coate for Capussicke & one Gallone of Lyquor for Ammomingan/ Francis Smale

Transcribed out of ye originall

p Edw: Rishworth Re: Cor:

[Source: York Deeds Book I / Part I / Fol. 83. (1887) Portland]

Nagging questions of Natives' sharing or abandonment of land via Newcomers' "deeds" afflict all such early colonial transactions – and "Scitterygusett to Small" seems to be the first such on the Presumpscot⁵. Land was the property-in-common of a Native band. Any sakamo supposedly was authorityless, and those of his followers who disliked his decisions were free to leave him and go elsewhere. Would his people have been consulted, either about a personal alliance for sharing their land, or about their outright abandonment of it? In other words: How far apart were the theory and the practice of sakamoship? What-if-any agency for land-decision-making did Wabanaki followers have relative to that of their leaders? The ethnohistorical jury is still out, for a verdict on most of these questions.

⁵ A year later (1658), when Massachusetts took over government of southern Maine, there were, according to William Willis (p 98), who specifically names them: "On the east side of Presumpscot River" four persons' families; and "On the west side of that river" three persons' families. Why Francis Small's name is not included in the Willis list is because Willis was stating only the mouth-of-the-river settlers, who had received their lands from English-grant-holders who had previously received *their* lands "directly" from the English Crown (Christian to Christian), with no consideration whatever about ("pagan") Indian "possession" as a potential issue. King's grants were the first and only "legality" early-on.

If this seems ethnocentric, racist, et cetera, it was simply in-sync with the earliest Western European mind-set at the dawn of the Age of Discovery - namely, that God granted all lands to the Pope to distribute to Christian monarchs. The Papal Line of Demarcation (1493-94) divided the entire non-Christian world between Spanish and Portuguese spheres of influence. Balboa's 1513 "discovery" (and claim-for-Spain) of the Pacific Ocean was the first proof that there is a "New World" between western and eastern sides of the then-known Eurasian landmass (thereafter called "Old World"). The existence of Native peoples in this New World (not being mentioned in *Genesis*, and called "Indians" when Columbus thought in 1492 that he had landed off the coast of India) caused a theological and practical crisis which took time to ponder. Finally, it was decided that Indians were "truly human", and a Papal Bull of 1537 pronounced the decision. (Protestants had to make up their own minds.)

The "meaning" of Indian-land-deeds was different in different regions of the continent, and clearly evolved over time everywhere. At first, the Wabanakis could not have known the English concept of private alienation-by-sale. Their concept of land was joint-usage, and shared beyond the in-group by alliance. At first the few English were welcomed, but later they wore out their welcome by overcrowding and land-grabbing beyond toleration. Just after 1700, the population of New France was 15,000 French, while that of New England was 100,000 English. Furthermore, by then the patterns had been set of the French wanting Indians ON the land for trading, and the English wanting Indians OFF the land for farming.

THE SIX ANGLO-WABANAKI WARS

From east to west, the WABANAKI Peoples (= Dawnlanders) at one time or another collectively included the MICMAC, MALISEET, PASSAMAQUODDY, PENOBSCOT, ABENAKI, and PENNACOOK, and the various divisions thereof.

1. KING PHILIP'S WAR 1675 – 1678
NORTHERN FRONT
(No European Counterpart)
2. KING WILLIAM'S WAR 1688 – 1699
St-Castin's War
(War of the League of Augsburg)
(War of the Grand Alliance)
3. QUEEN ANNE'S WAR 1702 – 1714
(War of the Spanish Succession)
4. ABENAKI WAR 1721 – 1726
Governor Dummer's War
Rale's War
Lovewell's War
Grey-Lock's War
(No European Counterpart)
5. KING GEORGE'S WAR 1744 – 1749
Governor Shirley's War
(War of the Austrian Succession)
6. *THE FRENCH & INDIAN WAR* 1754 – 1763
(Seven Years War)

PLUS TWO MORE POTENTIAL WARS, WHEN WABANAKI AFFAIRS WERE STILL VERY VOLATILE:

7. AMERICAN REVOLUTION 1775 – 1783
First War for American Independence
8. WAR OF 1812 1812 – 1815
Second War for American Independence

In 1675, in southern New England where these ever-increasing pressures were greatest, the lid finally blew off the pot, and King Philip's War began. The Massachusetts Colony government by then controlled what is now Maine, and to "protect" themselves from the north, started an unwise policy of demanding that all Maine Wabanakis turn in their firearms, which by then had become the Natives' tools of choice for subsistence hunting. That intolerable policy, and Southern New England Indians fleeing northward, plus a Saco River Sakamo Squando's infant son being killed by callous Englishmen, touched off a separate new region of the war:

1st King Philip's War Northern Front (Anglo-Wabanaki War).

Except for Newcomers' few written reports of recognizing individuals in the attacking Native crowd, the composition of most war-parties is anonymous to us today. Not all potential warriors from any one village or band, but often some warriors from other villages and bands, were likely to be included. Avenging wrongs, demonstrating courage, taking spoils, and seeking adventure were usually enough to cause automatic recruitment.

But certainly the Presumpscot Wabanakis were not involved in all of the attacks and battles discussed here -- only general Wabanakis are meant.

In Maine, Wabanaki wrath against English encroachment turned to violence early in September 1675, first near Brunswick, with Indians burning the homestead of Thomas Purchas, who had (overly?) enriched himself by privately trading for furs from the Natives. No English lives were lost there, but the marauders declared it a warning that much worse was to come. Indeed, a few days later, the full horrors of the Wars Era's deadly hit-and-run raids began in today's Falmouth, on the east bank of the Presumpscot, just north of today's Middle Road (Rte 9) bridge, and between Merrill Road and the river.

The extended family of John Wakely (4 adults, 3 children) were surprised at home and butchered there, except 11-year-old Elizabeth. She was taken away captive and held for nine months, before being released at Coheco (Dover NH) by Saco Sakamo Squando.

For Maine, the Wakely massacre and captivity provided the first English war casualties in the first of six Anglo-Wabanaki Wars, and set a gruesome pattern for decades to come, all because of English push and Wabanaki retaliation, stretching from 1675 to 1763, and frequently fired by French involvement too, both political and religious (French pull).

For the high number of casualties (killed, wounded, captured), relative to the small New England population, this was an extremely costly war - and to the Natives also. Both sides lost, neither side won. Nothing was settled except each side's mind against the other, and all the causal issues would erupt again and again. All along the Maine coast's thin ribbon of settlements, from the Piscataqua River to Pemaquid Point, the homeless surviving colonists fled southward to the Massachusetts Bay Colony heartland. The greater-Portland area (including the small settlements on Presumpscot River), since 1658 called Falmouth, was so hard-hit that its survivors first fled to the islands of Casco Bay, but even there they still were attacked. This was the first destruction of "Portland" - and also of all other Maine coastal communities. Indeed, all English settler' Maine towns were abandoned if not destroyed.

Green colonial militia units were ineffective protectors even of themselves - thus, at repeatedly-attacked Black Point (in Scarborough), an ambush led to the name "Massacre Pond".

And it was from Black Point on 15 September 1676 that two leading citizens wrote to the Massachusetts governor that they had seen "two or three Frenchmen" with the Indian attackers. Some historians have claimed no French involvement in King Philip's War, but on the Northern Front there were at least French "observers" (as we term them today).

In southern New England, the war ended soon after the killing of Pokanoket Wampanoag sakamo Metacom / King Philip by an English-allied Pocasset named Alderman, in August **1676**. Yet in Maine the Northern Front continued until 1678, when the real threat that the English would call in Mohawk allies from New York tipped the balance. (Earlier, raiding Mohawks hit Wabanakis repeatedly – on the Penobscot and Kennebec Rivers as recently as 1662. These were the *Traditional* Iroquois-League Mohawks of today's New York state, who were long term enemies of the Wabanakis, and who had become allies of the English; not the *Separatist* French-Catholic Mohawks, who after 1668 lived in the Montreal area and befriended the Wabanakis, with whom they together raided the New England frontier and fought English armies as French allies.)

After the Treaty of Casco Bay in April 1678 officially ended War #1, some of the evacuees started returning to their ruins in Falmouth, accompanied by newcomers. Old land-titles were respected and new ones granted, and within a decade considerable prosperity had redeveloped there. Yet inasmuch as no real issues of English encroachment on Wabanaki lands and lifeways had been addressed (indeed they continued to increase, and ever-further toward the eastward), by August-September 1688 Wabanaki patience had worn out and **War #2** started with a vengeance.

2nd Anglo-Wabanaki War / King William's War 1688-99

This war saw fullest French involvement, because it had a counterpart in Europe, called both the War of the League of Augsburg and the War of the Grand Alliance. In Maine, the frequent result was joint raids by French and Indians together in large numbers, although raids by smaller war-parties of Indians alone still continued.

Today's Greater Portland area, (K/Casco or Aucocisco to the Natives, heron place, for tall wading birds fishing on mud-flats of both Back Cove and estuary of Presumpscot River, together surrounding East Deering), has a long history of often changing names and boundaries of its inner and outer communities. Thus Falmouth, now a separate town at Presumpscot River-mouth, once was the single name of a very much larger area. "Old" Falmouth included both the Presumpscot and Fore Rivers -- the "Neck" between Fore River and Back Cove being the center of City of Portland and the dockside north shore of Portland Harbor.

By 1690, at the east end of the Neck, at the harbor end of today's India Street, stood Fort Loyal, the easternmost bastion of Massachusetts Colony's supposed control. This fort was the theoretical last stop for any English refugees fleeing from outer area garrison houses -- if lucky.

In May 1690, with few soldiers and many refugees inside, Fort Loyal was besieged by a large attack force of French and Indian allies. The fort was defended bravely enough to merit French terms of surrender with right of safe passage away, but only by the word of the French themselves. The Indian allies balked, claiming they previously had been promised the right of spoils, which they insisted upon, and took. (This was first of a number of identical problems during the French & Indian Wars.) Fort Loyal's evacuees were either killed and scalped, or captured for taking to Canada. The fort and the entire Neck were burned flat, and surrounding English settlements suffered likewise. English settlers throughout the southwest Maine coast fled back to Massachusetts, and did not return for a decade. This was the second destruction of "Portland" etc.

Remaining souvenirs of the Second Anglo-Wabanaki War/King William's War (1688-99) are two "Captivity Narratives" from the Fort Loyal disaster:

- 1) fort commander Sylvanus Davis, written by himself (a brief report); and
- 2) refugee housewife Hannah Swarton, written by Cotton Mather (a long Puritan sermon). Also, from the same war, but from the Pemaquid area:
- 3) farm-boy John Giles, written by himself later when he was an adult, and interpreter of Wabanaki languages for Massachusetts government. All three of these Captivity Narratives are available in various formats of this genre of Early American Literature and Ethnography.

3rd Anglo Wabanaki War / Queen Anne's War 1702-14

Some writers in the past have labeled Fort Loyal either Fort Casco or Casco Bay Fort, and both are alternative names but easily confused with what happened next. When some English settlers eventually returned to today's Greater Portland area, they shunned "Old" Falmouth Neck as haunted, or at least tainted, because the Fort Loyal dead had lain there unburied for two years. It took a military expedition to do the burial job even then. The new Newcomers chose to settle across the Presumpscot Estuary in today's Town of Falmouth, as being a better place, if more isolated.

Massachusetts put the replacement for Fort Loyal where the new settlers were going. Located on the Casco Bay shore, southwest of Waites Landing, it was named Fort New Casco. It contained a fur-trading post and blacksmithing shop to try to please the Wabanakis who had long but unsuccessfully tried to stop the English from expanding ever more northeasterly. Also, Fort New Casco was to be the venue for Anglo-Indian peace conferences, one of which in June 1703 hosted a who's who cast, including Massachusetts Governor Dudley and many Wabanaki sakamos, even honorary sakamo Jesuit priest Rale of Norridgewock. However --

Having familiarized themselves with Fort New Casco, just six weeks later (August 1703) Wabanakis in a massive attack force hid until after a very small group pretended to want to talk to Fort Commander Major John March. He was not tricked as they hoped, and the siege began in earnest, including trying to tunnel-in under the fort wall. Fortunately and most unexpectedly, the Province Galley warship arrived offshore and scattered the attackers. This was a blessing for the fort, but a curse on the new settlements when a large frustrated war-party vented havoc on them, Major March's farm included. Among the attackers was warrior Nescambiouit, originally from Pigwacket/Pequawket, but exiled from there for his great nastiness. He became the darling of the French for his terror against the English, even being taken to Versailles in 1705 to meet King Louis 14th.

This third Anglo-Wabanaki War truly had hardened minds on both sides against each other. We can only shudder to know what they could not, that there were another three wars to go. The treaties after the end of each war, all made in Europe, settled little if any of the meaningful matters in America.

4th Anglo-Wabanaki War / Dummer's War / Abenaki War 1722-27

So New Englanders themselves went on the warpath. England and France supposedly were at peace for a while, but the French in Canada were not happy to see their buffer of Wabanaki warriors suffer, when Massachusetts started expeditions against Wabanaki strongholds known to be the proper targets to attack. During this Fourth Anglo-Wabanaki War (1721-27), in 1723 the Penobscot village at Old Town was destroyed. In 1724, after prior attempts had failed, Norridgewock Abenaki village was destroyed and their Jesuit missionary Sebastien Rale (an honorary sakamo) was killed at last.

Governor Dummer's Treaty of 1725 agreed that English must not disturb Wabanaki hunting territories, and that Wabanakis must allow all English settlements built before the war, but can retain rights to all other lands.

Closer to home, Massachusetts bounties for Indian scalps prompted English frontiersmen to go get 'em; the 1725 case of Lovewell's Fight at Pigwacket (Fryeburg on the Saco River) became famous in song and story. Before Lovewell's bounty-hunting party found the Indians, the Pigwackets found them instead, as Paugus, a mobile-manager Mahikan war-chief was leading a returning Pigwacket war-party. Both Lovewell and Paugus and others were killed. (Portland poet Longfellow and other Bowdoin College persons were fascinated by this local epic, especially on its 1825,100th anniversary.)

War #4 was officially terminated in July 1727 in a tent on Munjoy Hill with the signing of the Treaty of Falmouth, but the Wabanakis soon complained it was mistranslated to them. The idea that Wabanakis were to be "loyal subjects" of the British Crown, guilty of "treason" if they had "unlawful" dealings with French, made no sense to them, even if translated perfectly.

By 1727, massive removals and regroupings of Wabanakis had occurred. While many moved north to French mission-stations in Quebec at Odanak I St-Francois and Wolinak / Becancour, many others moved eastward to form the Eastern Abenaki Penobscot community, and the Etchemin formed the Passamaquoddy and Maliseet that we know today. War #4 was a truly definite turning point in the Dawnland Diaspora for Survival, but their seasonal returns to their traditional hunting-fishing-gathering places both befuddled and angered the English, and the French still wanted a to have a Wabanaki buffer zone between Canada-Acadia and English settlements.

In the 1730s the English started widening their settlement belt inland, safe or not. Their coastal ribbon was being outgrown, and needed to become a sash. This was also a time of technical small-industrial development. Dam- and-mill construction blossomed on many rivers and streams, increasingly interfering even more with seasonal fish-runs, and polluting the water. The English seemed intent on fighting Nature with artificiality, a non-win fight as the Natives saw things.

A prominent developer in the now-Portland area was Colonel Thomas Westbrook, who moved from Portsmouth to (Old) Falmouth, where he named his neighborhood Stroudwater, and eventually lent his name to today's City of Westbrook. Besides being a Mast Agent for the Royal Navy, he was an entrepreneur on his own account and with partners. His 1734-35 construction of a "great dam" at the First Fall of the Presumpscot River was the largest project yet in the area. However, a necessary fish-way to allow seasonal fish migrations to pass upstream was not used, which cut off the Wabanakis' food supply -- a cause for alarm and redress.

Records show only that a complaint was made in 1736 to Massachusetts Colony government in Boston, by three unnamed Indians "belonging to Ammiscogan River" [i.e, Presumpscot River, using the name of the Second Fall]. Also in 1736, John Phinney became the first English settler in the new town Narragansett #7 (now Gorham); and in 1737 Thomas Chute became the first settler of another new river town, New Marblehead (now Windham). There was now unprecedented squeeze on the Presumpscot .Wabanaki homeland.

So, in 1739, after the Presumpscot Wabanakis had received no positive response about the seasonal opening of fishways in dams, their last sakamo known to us by name, Chief Polin, went to Boston to appeal to the Governor and Council personally, as a last hope.

The official records⁶ of their talk include this question and answer about the size of Polin's band on the Presumpscot:

Governor Belcher: "*How many Familys have you att Pesumpscot?*"

Chief Polin: "*About 25 Men besides Women & children.*"

⁶ Official records about Polin seem to be limited to 3 named and 1 unnamed Primary Source accounts in the Maine Historical Society's publications of archival manuscripts.

Listed by date they are:

1736: MHS Documentary History Baxter Manuscripts Vol. 11 (1908) pp.172-173.

1739: MHS Documentary History Baxter Manuscripts Vol. 23 (1916) pp. 257-262.

1749: MHS Collections Vol. 4 pp. 145-167, especially 147.

1754: MHS Documentary History Baxter Manuscripts Vol. 24 (1916) p. 17.

This projects to between 75 and 100 or more persons, of all ages and both sexes – *but nothing was said about where they were based, and if they were seasonal or year-round.*

The Governor and Council agreed with Polin that fish-ways should be opened on dams, wherever Native fishing took place, and decreed so. However, there was no sure way to enforce that decree, especially in Maine. So, while Polin won the round, he lost the fight. And, understandably, Polin also lost his will to respect Englishmen and their laws. After trying in vain to play by their rules, he was left with no choice but to try to get even.

Before very long the new towns began being troubled by Wabanakis who were both reacting to local pressures and hearing rumors of yet another European war: England's 1739 war with Spain morphed in 1740 into the full continental War of the Austrian Succession. So, in 1743 the Massachusetts government ordered that a line of defensive forts be built against future French and Indian attacks, and both Gorham and Windham were funded to do so. In each town, in 1744, a Province Fort was built, supposedly big enough to enclose the community's evacuated citizens during an attack. In Gorham, the fort was on Fort Hill (west side of Fort Hill Road just north of cemetery); in Windham, it was on Anderson Hill (north side of Anderson Road at intersection with River Road).

5th Anglo-Wabanaki War (King George's War) was declared in June 1744. In 1745, New England militias had their finest hour by capturing the largest stone fort in North America, the French Fortress of Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island NS. The 4000 New Englanders were led by Colonel William Pepperell of Kittery, who was created a baronet for his / their efforts. One of his officers was Moses Pearson of (Old) Falmouth, whose Portland-area veterans eventually (really after War #6) would be granted Pearsontown (now Standish) for their military service. Also under Pepperell at Louisbourg was a group of Pigwacket warriors who chose to side with the English, and moved to Boston – proving Wabanaki flexibility in choosing leadership (and the Pigwackets themselves) still thrived.

But that was the good news. The bad news was that the English treaty-makers soon gave Louisbourg back to the French, in 1748, much to the ire of New Englanders. And in the new inland towns of Maine (Gorham and Windham), home-life during War #5 was grim.

Out of 18 families in Gorham, nine decided to stay on throughout the war, and nine left the new town temporarily for coastal communities. In April 1746, Gorham was fatally raided, one house at a time, so unless other families saw or heard mayhem, or received refugees before raiders, there was little time for either home-defense or evacuation to the Fort.

Yet, whenever rumors of imminent raids made it seem wise to live at the Fort, proper care for livestock and crops suffered neglect. A trade-off was for men to form collective guarded work-parties which moved from farm to farm during day light, while women and children stayed in the Fort. Still, livestock and crops often were destroyed, and any person found momentarily separated from any group easily could be captured or killed by the "skulkers".

Even the coastal community of (Old) Falmouth had a terrible scare in September-October 1746. Furious over their loss of Louisbourg, the French Navy planned a bombardment and invasion of New England ports, Falmouth included. A large French fleet and over 3000 troops arrived in Nova Scotia, but it was hit by an epidemic, which killed the admiral. And then a violent gale scattered the fleet and destroyed many ships.

Spring and summer 1747 found Presumpscot River communities under attacks again. Saccarrapa and Windham suffered multiple casualties and captivings – one of the captives being young Joseph Knights, who would again be captured in War #6. Two whaleboats were sent from (Old) Falmouth to Sebago Lake to be used in pursuit of raiding parties – although pursuit sometimes meant that the raiders would kill their least-fit captives who might delay the resulting necessarily-speedier-flight from the pursuers, posing another trade-off decision.

"Pooran⁷, Chief of the St. François" was expected to attend a Treaty Conference at Falmouth in October 1749, but apparently did not come. However, the wording of that comment tells us that Polin was then a sakamo in residence at Odanak / St-Francis, the large Wabanaki village and French mission-station on the Arsikontegok / St-Francois River, near its junction with the St-Lawrence River, in southern Quebec, and it suggests that he seems to have given up entirely on diplomatic approaches to his grievances about English intrusions on the Presumpscot. Odanak was a major new base for many displaced Maine Wabanakis.

⁷ How can Pooran be the same person as Polin? Simply because there are different dialects in some Algonquian-Language-Family languages: so a speaker of an **R**-dialect would pronounce Polin's name differently than a speaker of an **L**-dialect, and an English translator or secretary would write it down differently – and since this was a statement about Polin, not by him, that scenario seems like the simplest explanation of the difference.

In Europe, the War of the Austrian Succession ended with the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in October 1748. London celebrated it with Handel's Music for the Royal Fireworks, etc. But in New England, despite Massachusetts Governor Phipps' proclamation of November 1749 to "*require all his Majesty's good Subjects to live in Peace with the Indians*", they did not do so, nor did the Wabanakis do so with them. Different accounts give different dates, depending on local circumstances, as to when War #5 (King George's War) really did end, but I suggest that, despite Conferences of 1752, 1753, 1754 with different groups of Wabanakis, War #5 simply morphed into War #6 (*The French & Indian War*), which was part of the so-called Seven Years War between Britain and France for world empire. On the Wabanaki Frontier in Maine the same old grudges defied any sort of diplomacy. (But in now-Portland area it seemed safe to build houses: Tate House in Stroudwater and Whipple Farm in Falmouth, from 1750s, still stand today.)

Being relatively short, the Presumpscot River would have become ever more hazardous for Wabanaki regular residence by this time of Wars #5 and #6, as English settlers (despite the dangers) continued ever northward. So it is likely that Wabanaki bands used easy access to Saco River valley, closest to Presumpscot River at the southwest corner of Sebago Lake.

Pigwacket village (Fryeburg) was a logical first stop, enroute to Odanak / St-Francis village (southern Quebec) where French priests and military men marshaled raids on the English frontiers.

In the still more-theoretical-than-actual newest town on the Presumpscot (also on the Saco), Pearsonstown (now Standish), the fort was built in 1754, long before actual settlers came to live. Workers had the fort almost completed, and had gone to (Old) Falmouth for supplies, when an Indian raid set it afire. Other raids kept the workers inside the fort for days on end.

Notes from the 25 July 1754 meeting of Governor Shirley's Council in Boston state:

"His Excellency mentioning to the Board the many Outrages & Hostilities suppos'd to be done by one Polan an Arssagunticook Indian [meaning Odanak / St-Francis]. Unanimously advised that his Excellency be desir'd to pursue such measures as he shall think most proper for taking & securing the said Indian that so any further mischief may be prevented being done by the said Indian." (MHS BM 24:17)

Showing the rising desperation (and inflation?) during the colonial period in New England, Massachusetts government offered bounties for (enemy) Indian scalps, starting with £3 each during War #1 and ending with £300 each during War #6. There was counterfeiting in some cases, by substituting friendly Indians' scalps. (This understandably hastened a new hostility outbreak in 1755 in Maine.) The bounties not only stimulated in-person scalp-hunters, but also stay-at-home investors who outfitted bounty parties for profit-making - somewhat comparable to US citizens investing in Government War Bonds in World War 2.

One such investor was (Old) Falmouth's leading clergyman, Harvard graduate Parson Thomas Smith, whose father Thomas Sr was Truckmaster (Indian-trading-post manager) on the Saco at Union Falls in today's Dayton ME, and whose son became Parson Peter Smith in New Marblehead (Windham). Thomas Jr wrote in his Diary for 18 June 1757: *"I received £165, 3s, 3d of Cox for my part of scalp money."* His salary that year, he reports elsewhere, was £800. It is from Parson Thomas Smith's Diary that we learn details about events leading to and including Chief Polin's last raid of revenge, on Windham, in: 1756.

May 10. *"This morning we are alarmed with young [Joseph] Knights, who escaped from the Indians three days ago, and got to North Yarmouth this morning, who brings news of 120 Indians coming upon the frontier who are to spread themselves in small scouts [scouting-parties] from Brunswick to Saco."* [Smith 165] [This was JK's second captivity.]

May 14. *"This morning, one Brown was killed and Winship was wounded and scalped at [New] Marblehead [Windham]. Manchester fired upon them, and we hope killed an Indian [He did; it was Polin!], as did Capt Skillin another. The Indians fled affrighted and left five packs, a bow and a bunch of arrows, and several other things."*

"Brown and Winship were going with a guard of four men and four lads to work upon Brown's Place, about a mile from the fort, right back, and the two Walkers forward on about 60 rods, and the Indians fired on them; whereupon Manchester fired once, but Farrow and Sterling with the other two lads run away home, and the Indians fled also in great haste. Capt Skillin with a company being gone out in the woods about a mile, were called back and with Capt Brown's scout (that happened also to be there) pursued the Indians and fired on one, and then all shouted for victory. Manchester was the hero of the action, but Anderson behaved gallantly calling, follow on my lads; or the English, perhaps all of them, would have been killed." [Smith 165-6]

Only decades-later accounts tell the follow up. The Wabanakis supposedly carried away Polin's body, went up the Presumpscot, and buried (most of) him, under the roots of a tree that they partly bent over and set straight again. Some say one of Polin's legs was taken back to Canada for Catholic burial.

Some say that decades later still, workmen by the Songo Lock dug up bones that were considered to be Polin's – including a huge mandible (lower jaw) that could surround a normal sized one. If it were indeed Polin's jaw, it could indicate that he had acromegaly, a form of gigantism, probably hereditary, that could have been seen as a supernatural distinction for himself, and his lineage, and would give chiefly status by default. Some persons claim to have seen these bones; some claim to know where they are now. Some persons claim that Polin's descendants are alive and well. Cooperation and DNA testing perhaps could tell us much more about the last known sakamo of the Presumpscot, who truly deserves respect as the Last Freedom Fighter of the Native Period⁸ of the River. Currently, facts about Polin cannot easily be separated from fables.

⁸ The *Last Freedom Fighter*? On the Presumpscot, yes. Among the Wabanakis, no. In the American Revolution (War #7 on the list), while some Wabanakis joined the American Colonial forces to fight the British, other Wabanakis stayed neutral, and a few even joined the British cause, if only to revenge past American Colonists' taking away their homeland or hunting-fishing opportunities. Bethel ME (then still called Sudbury Canada) was raided, with a few Colonists killed or captured. In the War of 1812 (War #8 on the list) it was properly feared that the same grudges might erupt again, but they seem not to have done so.

The 19th-century American poet John Greenleaf Whittier wrote Polin a sort of eulogy in 1841, but got both the geography and the ethnicity wrong: The Funeral Tree of the Sokokis. The Saco River Wabanakis were just that, not Sokokis (who lived on the middle Connecticut River). And the Saco River does not drain Sebago Lake – the Presumpscot River does. That much we do know, along with the sad fact borne out by this sad story: that Indian Treaties have been mostly pothole patches at best, not by any means making for smooth roads forward.

The term Freedom Fighter is hard for us to understand. We can only marvel at English statesman William Pitt Sr, who, in 1777 during the American Revolution, told the English Parliament "*While a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms – never –never—never!*" He could grasp the validity of the Americans' desire to expel the English. But a decade earlier very few if any of those same Americans could have grasped the validity of the Indians' desire to expel the American English invaders of the Indians' homeland. And we today still seem to have that same non-relativism in world affairs.

Ethnohistory reminds us that our ancestors were not ourselves by candle-light – their world and worldview then were very different from our world and worldview now. But once in a while we can find a "positive?" value in common that inspires across the time gap. In the case of Elizabeth McLellan McLellan (she and her husband Hugh were distant cousins), I find a sort of role-model for the ages, and a fascinating tale of encounter dynamics on the Wabanaki Frontier. Hugh and Elizabeth were Ulster Scots ("Scots-Irish") who came to settle in Narragansett # 7 (Gorham) in the winter of 1738-39 and lived there through Wars #5 & #6 and beyond. Their story is told by their descendent Hugh D. McLellan in his 1903 *History of Gorham* – admittedly a potentially biased account, but still valuable to consider. My next paragraph below sets the stage for the final paragraph's quoted coda.

The McLellan family went to the Fort (on Fort Hill) to live in it, the day after a truly brutal massacre of the Bryant family in the Indian raid of April 1746, and "*in about seven years, they returned to their log-house!*" In autumn 1750, during the theoretical "peace" between Wars #5 & #6, and while all the men and boys were collectively harvesting the fields, the women and children were in the fort without any guard but their own wits – and old Bose, Elizabeth's dog. Bose's sudden growling sent Elizabeth to bar the fort's gate and climb to the watch-box with a rifle she knew how to use well. While other women present, except one, refused to believe her, a lengthy wait-&-watch finally produced a "skulking" Indian, whom Elizabeth shot and mortally wounded.

Later, captives from isolated Gorham homes eventually reported that Bose's and Elizabeth's actions had scared off the planned attack on the fort – the raiders assuming that a guard-party of soldiers must have been on duty there.

"Mrs McLellan lived to a good old age, and would never give up that she did not kill or desperately wound an Indian and save all in the fort. During her entire life she held an unconquerable antipathy against Indians; still she treated them kindly. In passing through the town they always made her a call, and she never let one go away hungry, and made her conduct invariably kind to them. From policy she did not let them know her feelings. An Indian was never known to treat her otherwise than with kindness and respect, and she enjoined on every member of her family to treat the Indians kindly, for she knew the talk among the settlers was that the barbarities exercised toward the Bryants was heightened by a trifling insult received previous to the war, by a young Indian, from one of the females of the family. And as peace with the Indians was precarious, she kept an eye on the main chance." [McLellan 65; see also 62-64, 658-660]

RECENT RELATIONSHIPS

Then and still now, all the strife between Natives and Newcomers stems from just two things: LAND and SOVEREIGNTY. Natives say "We belong to the Dawnland." Newcomers say "The Dawnland belongs to US". Therefore, Freedom Fighters versus "Imminent" Domainers. Stalemate.

The Maine Indian Federal Recognition and Land Claims "Settlement" of 1980 and Supplement of 1991 (both of which I was honored to be involved in) soon were found to be only incomplete, temporary patchwork. Native "Sovereignty" over various key matters was not clearly established, and some "Rights" usually included in similar treaties with other Native American peoples were somehow omitted. Like many "Indian Treaties" of the past, their shelf-life was short and souring.

Unlike the other four of the six Wabanaki peoples of Maine, the Abenaki and Pennacook peoples are not "Officially Recognized", and seem to suffer from the curse of the old truism that "History is a Winner's Tale". In their parts of the Dawnland they were earlier-crowded-out by many more encroaching English colonists, and then became affiliated with French bases in Canada. Their "history" works against them in New England frontier folklore still today. Non-Natives too easily forget who invaded whom first, as they too easily remember Chief Polin as the last Native raider.

The descendants of the Presumpscot Wabanakis, like the descendants of other fellow Abenaki-Pennacook Wabanaki peoples, surely must cynically notice that existing stewardship of Presumpscot River still allows on paper but does not enforce the fish-passageways that Chief Polin worked for, won, and died about.

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