From a draft Technical Report, "A Place Called Nockum" and the Inception of King Philip's War Barrington, Rhode Island, Department of the Interior, National Park Service, American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) (FY2021 Grant #P21AP10840) Town of Barrington, Barrington Preservation Society, Public Archaeology Survey Team, Inc., January 2025, pp. 15-24.

IV. HISTORIC CONTEXT

A. Background History and Timeline up to the Inception of King Philip's War, 24 June 1675

A1. Background History

The events leading up to King Philip's War, 1675-1676 in New England, are complex and occurred over a long period of time. The historical documents written during the war, and in its smoldering aftermath, are vastly incomplete, almost entirely from the English perspective, sometimes contradictory, and are of course representative of the worldviews of the writers, and therefore reflect their religious beliefs, social values, technology, prejudices, and oftentimes reflections of their own personal trauma. It is the first and main task and responsibility of the historian to understand and contextualize these factors as thoroughly and objectively as possible in the context of the people's lives in the time in which they were living. One way of conceptualizing this idea is the "emic" perspective, that is, striving to understand and interpret people and events in the past through the context of their values and beliefs within their cultures and worldviews and therefore not directed and further biased by the addition of lenses from one's "etic" modern political and social views, objectives and personal motivations.

In December 1620 English Separatists, now known as the Puritans or Pilgrims, landed at the uninhabited Wampanoag village of *Patuxet* and began making plans to establish a new settlement and colony. With winter approaching and following a recent skirmish with the Nausets just a few days prior on Cape Cod, where they had opened graves and caches, taking food stores of maize and beans, the Separatists were in most every way possible, unprepared and unlikely to survive. While the Pilgrims' families remained aboard the *Mayflower,* sick and starving, a few men well enough to work began construction a common building ashore in what is now Plymouth. England had been exploring the New England coast intermittently since the early 1600s and perhaps earlier, but this was an attempt at establishing a permanent settlement. It was not, however, England's first attempt to establish a permanent foothold in New England. In 1607 the settlement of Fort St. George in the Popham was begun at the mouth of Kennebec River in Maine. The colony was abandoned in 14 months due to mismanagement and lack of leadership, the cold, low profits, threats from the French, and conflicts with local Indigenous people (Gorges 1890: 205-207). England's 1587 Roanoke Colony in present-day North Carolina had also failed within a few years and the colonists quite literally disappeared, and the 1607 Jamestown settlement in the Virginia Colony was wracked by death and sickness and barely clung to the bank of the James River. Also, during this time, the French were slowing establishing a foothold in the St. Lawrence River Valley and claimed as far south as *Cap Blanc*, or White Cape, in their New France claims, the land English navigator Bartholomew Gosnold renamed Cape Cod in 1602. The Dutch were also establishing their New Netherland colony, first concentrated along the Hudson River. Dutch claims quickly extended from the *Zuydt Rivier*, now the Delaware River, to Cape Cod, which they called *Nieuw Holland*. This vast territory that John Smith renamed New England in 1616 was the homeland of the Wampanoag, the Narragansett, Massachusett, Pawtucket, Nipmuc, Penobscot, Abenaki, Mohegan, Pequot, Niantic, and many other Indigenous nations who had lived there for millennia. In that first winter at Plymouth the Pilgrims lost almost half of their 102 members from disease, malnutrition, and exposure. The fate of the Pilgrims took a great turn the following spring when in March 1621 an Abenaki sagamore named Samoset arrived at Plymouth and introduced himself in broken English he had learned from English fishermen and traders in Maine. Samoset gave the Pilgrims a general description of the geography, the Indigenous nations in the region and their leaders, and told them how where they were living was called *Patuxet* and the village had been decimated by a plague a few years before. Samoset also told the Pilgrims that the sachem or leader of the Wampanoag was named Massasoit or Ousamequin, and that there was a Wampanoag man in the area who also spoke English. A week later Samoset returned with Squanto, or Tisquantum, a *Patuxet* native, who had been a captive in Europe

when the plague had swept through his village (Morton 1937: 23-25; Mourt 1963: 50-59; Johnson 1974: 16; Bradford 1989: 79-86; Altham 1997: 29). Squanto arranged a meeting between Massassoit and Plymouth governor John Carver and each group pledged a covenant, which include the following terms:

1. That neither he nor any of his should injure or do hurt to any of our people.
2. And if any of his did hurt to any of ours, he should send the offender, that we might punish him.
3. That if any of our tools were taken away when our people were at work, he should cause them to be restored, and if ours did any harm to any of his, we would do the like to them.
4. If any did unjustly war against him, we would aid him; If any did war against us, he should aid us.
5. He should send to his neighbor confederates, to certify them of this, that they might not wrong us, but might be likewise comprised in the conditions of peace.
6. That when their men came to us, they should leave their bows and arrows behind them, as we should do our pieces when we came to them.

"Lastly," the Pilgrims assured Massasoit, "that doing thus, King James would esteem of him as his friend and ally" (Mourt 1963: 56-57). Following the peace conference Massasoit returned to his home at Sowams in what is now eastern Rhode Island. The covenant was a critical military alliance for the Pilgrims, as the Wampanoag had "become a Wall to the English at Plymouth against other Indians" (Hubbard 1864: 107). Another critical part of the alliance maintained that Squanto and other Wampanoags, including Hobomock and Tokamahamon, would remain with the Pilgrims and serve as guides and advisors, and instruct the Pilgrims on many practical skills they would need to survive. Plymouth Governor John Bradford later wrote how at this time Squanto had "directed them how to set their corn, where to take fish, and to procure other commodities, and was also their pilot to bring them to unknown places for their profit" (Bradford 1989: 81).

The covenant of 1621 was the cornerstone of Wampanoag and Plymouth relations for decades; it changed the course of history in New England and ultimately ensured Plymouth's very survival. It would also serve as a model that other New England colonies and Indigenous nations attempted to emulate but were seldom successful. The alliance would be tested many times during the tumultuous decades that followed. In early 1622, the Narragansett sachem Canonicus sent Plymouth officials a bundle of arrows wrapped in a rattlesnake skin. Squanto told Governor Bradford that this was a symbolic challenge from the Narragansetts and that there were rumors that the Massachusett nation was forming an alliance with the Narragansetts to attack their enemy the Wampanoag, and now also Plymouth. Bradford replied by returning the rattlesnake bundle with bullets and gunpowder as a rebuke. The Narragansetts refused its return, and Plymouth intensified the construction of its defenses (Mather 1864: 78-79; Morton 1937: 32-34; Mourt 1963: 81-82; Winslow 1963:8-11; Bradford 1989: 85-97; Pory 1997:12).

In 1628 the Massachusetts Bay Colony was settled and established from Salem to the Boston Basin and thousands of English families began arriving and settling during what has been called New England's Great Migration which lasted from 1620 to 1640. During this time, English colonists/settlers spread through eastern Massachusetts, Rhode Island and into coastal Connecticut and up the Connecticut River, taking up Indigenous land and displacing Native people, causing tremendous stress between Natives and colonists/settlers.

During the early 1630s the Pequots of southeastern Connecticut greatly expanded their control in the region with a series of military campaigns which extend their hegemony over some of their neighboring nations in an effort to extract tribute, control the production of wampum, and control access to Dutch traders who had established trading houses along Long Island Sound to Narragansett Bay and into the lower Connecticut River Valley. The Pequots' expansion and influence brought them into direct conflict with the Narragansetts and the Mohegans of eastern Connecticut (led by their sachem Uncas, who had broken from the Pequots) and the newly established Connecticut Colony and Saybrook Colony. Colonial-Pequot tensions erupted after the Pequots attacked colonists Wethersfield, Connecticut, on April 23, 1637. The New England

Colonies formally declared war on the Pequots a week later and formalized a military alliance with the Mohegans and Narragansetts to defeat the Pequots. The war was devastating to the Pequots, and in the 1638 Treaty of Hartford the Pequot captives and their former lands were divided up among the Narragansetts, Mohegans, and New England colonies. The Pequot nation was declared to no longer exist. The defeat of the Pequots, however, soon led to competition over the distribution of Pequot survivors, control of their former tributaries, and the divisions of Pequot Country. While the Mohegan Nation and Connecticut Colony established a firm alliance in eastern Connecticut, the Narragansetts stood independently, between them and their old enemies the Wampanoag and Plymouth Colony to the east and the Massachusetts Bay Colony to the north (Clap 1844: 37; Mather 1864: 121-155; Hubbard 1865: 1: 38-42; Gardener 1897; Mason 1897; Vincent 1897; Morton 1937: 99-105; Gookin 1970: 7-8; Bradford 1989: 294-297, 394-398).

Throughout the 1640s and 1650s the New England colonies continued to expand in territory and population. Tensions between the colonies and their Mohegan allies, and the Narragansetts under their sachem Canonicus, and then his nephew Miantonomo, continued. The Narragansetts fought a bitter war with the Mohegans for control in the region, culminating into the Battle of Sachem's Plain in 1643 and the Siege of Fort Shantok in 1645, in Connecticut (Mather 1864: 187-198; Hubbard 1865: 1: 40-43; Winthrop 1908: 2: 134-136). In 1643 the New England Colonies established the New England Confederation, a military pact among the colonies of Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Saybrook, Connecticut, and New Haven, the latter founded in 1638, on the Long Island Sound shore in southwestern Connecticut. The following year the Saybrook Colony consolidated with the Connecticut Colony. The main purpose of the Confederation was to provide a united front against aggression from Indigenous and competing European nations, particularly the French and the Dutch. The Dutch increasingly contested what they believed were English expansion and influence, into their own claimed New World lands, culminating in a series of global-wide conflicts beginning with the First Anglo-Dutch War, 1652-1654 (Mather 1864: 193-198; Winthrop 1908: 2: 100-105; Bradford 1989: 330-332). On August 27, 1645, the Narragansetts and United Colonies signed a non-aggression pact, in an effort to deescalate tensions in the region. The treaty stipulated that the Narragansetts paid restitutions in wampum and maize, and they would return captives and canoes to the Mohegans (Bradford 1989: 437).

In 1651 the Reverend John Eliot (1604-1690) established his first mission for Native peoples at Natick among the Massachusett nation. Over the next 25 years Reverend Eliot and his associates established 14 Native "praying towns," mostly in the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay Colonies. Other mission communities, mostly made up of members of the Wampanoag and Massachusett Nations, were located at Mashpee, Gay Head (Aquinnah), Herring Pond, Wabbaquasett, Hassanamessit, Ponkapoag, Magunkaquog and other places throughout southern New England. The purpose of the praying towns was to convert and instruct the indigenous mission community in Christianity, teach them English agriculture and industry, and to read and write. Eliot studied the Massachusetts language and with the help of Native interpreters translated the Bible into theMassachusett, it was printed in Cambridge in the early 1660s (Eliot 1834; Clap 1844: 37-38; Winthrop 1908: 1: 319-320; Gookin 1970: 45-49; Johnson 1974: 44; Josselyn 1988: 104-105).

Other ecclesiastical movements during this period were contrary to the strict beliefs and doctrines of the Puritan establishment. Just four years after his arrival at the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Roger Williams (1603-1683) was tried and exiled for his ecclesiastical views, including religious tolerance and separation from the Church of England. Before he was forced to return to England, Williams fled to Narragansett Country, where Canonicus allowed him to settle and purchase land. Williams drew followers and established Providence Plantation in 1638, receiving a Royal Charter from King Charles II in 1663. He established relations with the Narragansetts, learning their language, and in 1643 published *A Key into the Language of America*, in which he recorded passages of the Narragansett language and his observations of their culture. Wiliams also opened the colony to Quakers, Baptists, and followers of other faiths (Williams 1874, 1973, 1988; Winthrop 1908: 1 & 2).

The mid-17th century continued to see many changes in New England as the colonies' populations and towns multiplied. Many Indigenous populations steadily decreased through warfare and disease and their lands shrank though land sales and losses through theft and "rights

of conquest." Some of the smaller Indigenous nations broke up and dispersed and integrated into other larger nations. The Mohawk Nation of the upper Hudson River Valley continued to exert considerable influence and shape events throughout the Northeast from the Great Lakes to Lower Canada, and into Southern New England with highly aggressive and effective warfare tactics, savvy diplomacy, and by being directly supplied with firearms, shot and gunpowder, and other trade goods by Dutch traders (Gookin 1970: 34-37, 40-43; Wood 1977: 75-78; Josselyn 1988: 103-104). While the Mohawks made few assaults on English settlements, as they shared a common enemy with the French, many of the Algonquian nations in New England were subject to sporadic raids and capture. Mohawk influence was especially felt toward the end of the Pequot War when the sachem Sassacus and a group of Pequots were attacked when seeking refuge with the Mohawks and their heads and hands were sent to Hartford as a gesture of the Mohawks' "love and service" to the English (Vincent 1897: 107). After the war rumors circulated that the Narragansetts were plotting with other Indigenous nations, including the Mohawks, to form an alliance and attack the colonies and Mohegans and assassinate Uncas (Hubbard 1864: 2: 217-218, 234; Winthrop 1908: 2: 6-7, 349-350; Bradford 1989: 339-344, 394-398).

Mohawk raids against the New England Algonquian nations and praying towns were very destructive during this period (Mather 1864: 256-257). In 1669 a military campaign was planned to retaliate and decisively defeat the Mohawks. The force was comprised of 600 to 700 fighters made up of Massachusett, Wampanoag, Pawtuckets, and Christian converts, and led by the Massachusett sachem Josiah Wampatuck, son of the sachem Chickataubut, who had aided the colonists in the early years of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. According to French Jesuit Father Jean Pierron, who was with the Mohawks at the time, there were also about 24 women. On route to Mohawk Country, however, the Mohawks learned of the force's approach and strengthened their fortifications. The Algonquians attacked the fortified village of Gandawague at dawn and laid siege but were unable to take it. Wampatuck and his men abandoned the attack, having spent their ammunition and rations with some too sick to fight. On their retreat, about 20 to 30 miles from Gandawague a force of Mohawks caught up to Wampatuck and his party and ambushed them in a craggy pass between two swamps called Kinquariones. Many were killed in the Mohawks' first volley of shot. During the fierce fighting, much of it hand-to-hand, Wampatuck and at least 100 were killed. Gookin noted that this included "about 50 of their chief men…but I suppose more" (Gookin 1970: 43). The number of Mohawks killed was unknown. The Battle of Kinquariones was the last and most fatal conflict between the Mohawks and New England Algonquians and greatly weakened the Algonquian nations who participated in the campaign. At a peace conference at Albany in 1671 with English and Dutch emissaries, the Mohawks and some of the New England Algonquian nations concluded a peace agreement (van Epps 1932: 420-430; Gookin 1970: 40-43).

The mid-17th century also witnessed gradual changes in the leadership of the Indigenous nations and the colonies. Many of the original Pilgrims, or Old Comers, who had survived that first year, were now elderly or had passed. Edward Winslow, who came on the *Mayflower*, served in many important positions for Plymouth, including as governor and commissioner to the United Colonies of New England, and was instrumental in ensuring Plymouth's autonomy and economic stability, and establishing and maintaining diplomatic relations with Massasoit and the Wampanoag. Winslow left Plymouth when Oliver Cromwell selected him to serve as commissioner for an English naval mission against the Spanish in the West Indies, where he died aboard ship of yellow fever on May 7, 1655 (Turner 2020: 212). Winslow and Massasoit were instrumental in maintaining mutual respect and therefore peace between Plymouth and the Wampanoags. There were great changes for the Wampanoag. On June 13, 1660, Plymouth General Court recorded that, Wamsutta, Massasoit's eldest son, requested:

> …that in regard his father is lately deceased, and hee being desirouse, according to the custome of the natives, to change his name, that the Court would confer an English name upon him, which accordingly they did, and therfore ordered, that for the future hee shalbee called by the name of Allexander Pokanokett; and desireing the same in the behalfe of his brother [Metacom], they have named him Phillip (Pulsifer 1855: 3: 192).

The death of Massasoit was a great loss for the Wampanoag as he had skillfully guided them through tumultuous times for four decades. By 1660 the Wampanoag homelands had dramatically changed, as Plymouth Colony towns continued to expand in size and number with increasing and relentless pressure to obtain Wampanoag lands through purchase or ploy. Problems between Plymouth officials and Wamsutta began soon after he became sachem. Wamsutta took a hard resistant position against incursions on Wampanoag lands and against relinquishing Wampanoag sovereignty. He also refused to accept Christianity, and rumors began circulating that he was conspiring with the Narragansett to attack Plymouth. In 1662 Wamsutta was summoned to Plymouth to answer these allegations. But before arranging a meeting, Major Josiah Winslow took a party of men to Sowams and surprised Wamsutta and his company while hunting and threatened him with a pistol because Wamsutta did not comply quickly enough. Wamsutta was forced to go to Plymouth and stay with Winslow at his house in Marshfield, but he had become gravely ill and died on his return to Sowams. Many Wampanoag accused the English of poisoning and killing Wamsutta, including his younger brother King Philip, who then ascended to sachem of the Wampanoag (Mather 1864: 226-231; Hubbard 1865: 1: 49-50).

Relations between Plymouth Colony and the Wampanoag under King Philip continued to decline, as he maintained a position of resistance to Plymouth's authority. In 1671 Hugh Cole, of the newly established colony town of Swansea, went into Sowams to investigate rumors that King Philip and the Wampanoags were planning for war. Cole reported to the General Court that while at the main Wampanaoag settlement at Mount Hope, he saw them making and repairing weapons and that there were "many Indians of several places." Shortly after this Cole heard reports that King Philip and 60 men had marched toward Swansea. There were also renewed rumors that the Wampanoag and Narragansett nations were conspiring against the English (Turner 2020: 257-258). On April 12, 1671 King Philip and Plymouth authorities, including Governor Prence, met at a conference in Taunton whereby Plymouth hoped to deescalate tensions and repair their relations, renew their formal alliance, and ultimately force King Philip to take responsibility for the conspiracies of which he had been accused. At the conference King Philip signed a new covenant and agreed to a number of terms, including declaring the Wampanoags to be under the authority of Plymouth Colony and subjects of the English monarch Charles II, and to turn over their firearms (Mather 1864: 232; Hubbard 1865: 1: 50-54; Turner 2020: 257-258). War, it seemed, had been diverted.

On January 29, 1675, the body of a Massachusett Christian convert named John Sassamon was discovered in the ice at Assawompset Pond. Sassamon was educated by the English, could read and write in English, had been an interpreter and counselor for King Philip, and had been at the Taunton Conference. The two men had had of a falling out, however, as Philip suspected that Sassamon was essentially a spy working for Plymouth and that earlier in the month he had had gone to Josiah Winslow, who was now Plymouth's governor, and warned him that King Philip and others were conspiring, including with the Narragansetts, against the English. At first, it appeared that Sassamon had fallen through the ice and drowned in a hunting accident as he also had his hat and firearm. A coroner's investigation of the murder by English authorities suspected foul play as his body had multiple cut wounds and his neck was broken "… by twisting of his Head round; which is the Way that the Indians sometimes use when they practice Murthers" (Mather 1864:236). A Christian convert named Patuckson soon after came forward and claimed that he had secretly witnessed the murder and disposal of the body by three Wampanoag suspects: Tobias, his son Wampapaquan, and Mattashunnamo. The men were arrested and put on trial by a jury made up of four Indigenous and 12 English jurors on June 1, 1675. The accused men denied the charges. All three were convicted of Sassamon's murder and were hanged on June 8, a Tuesday. Wampapaquan's noose broke, he allegedly confessed to have been present at murder, and was then shot after a month's reprieve. The murder investigation, trial, and executions were seen by King Philip as violations of his authority as sachem and of Wampanoag sovereignty and furthered the resentment of the Wampanoags toward the English, and to an extent, Indigenous Christian converts (Pulsifer 1855: 2: 262-263; Mather 1864: 233-239; Hubbard 1865: 1: 49-50, 60-66; Easton 1913: 7-8; Saltonstall 1913: 24-25; Williams 1988: 2: 693-7).

The recently incorporated town of Swansea in Plymouth Colony, on the border of the colony and Sowams and Mount Hope, would become the epicenter of the breakout of King Philip's War just a few weeks later (Map 4).

A2. Timeline of the Inception of King Philip's War, 24 June 1675

The month of June 1675 witnessed an unprecedented period in Plymouth and Wampanoag relations characterized by deep resentment, distrust, and fear. The English became convinced that King Philip had ordered the murder of John Sassamon for telling Governor Winslow that he was conspiring to attack Plymouth Colony settlements and other betrayals.

On Friday June 11th Lieut. John Brown of Swansea reported to Governor Winthrop that King Philip and the Wampanoag had sent their women to take refuge with the Narragansetts, were armed, and fighters were now arriving from the Cowesit, Showamet, Assowomsett, and Pocasset, the Narragansett Country, and other areas to join him. He also reported that the road between Swansea and Taunton was being watched by King Philip's men. Swansea and the surrounding towns became greatly alarmed by the developments (Brown 1675; Rawson 1913: 62-64; Leach 1958: 34; Harris 1963: 18-27; Hubbard 1971: 1: 63-64). News of the escalation of tension was now reaching the other New England colonies, as well as misinformation. Just two days later Roger Williams wrote Connecticut Governor John Winthrop, Jr. that he believed the tensions between Plymouth Colony and King Philip and the Wampanoag over the executions of Sassamon's accused murderers had subsided (Williams 1988: 2: 690-3).

On Monday June 14th, the Plymouth Colony Council sent a message to King Philip, accusing him of escalating tensions in the region and ordering him to immediately dismiss all outsiders who were gathered at Mount Hope. Lieut. John Brown sent a message to King Philip that he would meet with him to mediate their disagreements, but did not receive a reply from the sachem (Pulsifer 1855: 2: 262-263; Hubbard 1865: 1: 65-66). About this time the sachem Awashonks of the Sakonnet Wampanoag held a gathering and asked Benjamin Church, who was living there (now Little Compton, Rhode Island), to join her for a meeting. She warned Church that there were increasing Wampanoag grievances, and they were preparing for conflict. Church also asserted in his memoir that King Philip wanted the Sakonnets to join him, and that if Awashonks did not enter into an alliance with the Wampanoag, he would draw her into a conflict (Church 1865: 5-7). Church was also similarly warned by the husband of Pocasset sachem Weetamoo, Peter Nunnuit, that King Philip had held a large gathering and had invited Weetamoo (who was previously married to King Philip's brother Wamsutta), and was preparing for conflict and that men from other areas were arriving at Mount Hope to join him (Church 1865: 11-14).

On Thursday June 17th, John Paine and several other men from Rehoboth went into Mount Hope at King Philip's request to retrieve lost horses; the men were seized but later released (Pulsifer 1855: 2: 362-6). About two days later the house of Job Winslow in Swansea was broken up and robbed while he was away (Pulsifer 1855: 2: 362-6). Job, a shipwright and early arrival in Swansea, was the son of Kenelm Winslow, a brother of Governor Edward Winslow (and therefore first cousin of then Governor Josiah Winslow) (Holton and Holton 1877: 80-81). They were among the first colonists to settle Marshfield, an early Plymouth satellite town established in 1640.

On June 20th, 1675 Swansea families attended the Sabbath at their meetinghouse on Nockum Hill. While there, two houses in Swansea were "rifled" and burned by the Wampanoag (Pulsifer 1855: 2: 362-6; Church 1865: 15). Also, on this day about seven or eight Wampanoag men went to a house in Swansea and asked the owner if they could sharpen their hatchet on his grinding wheel. The owner refused their request as it was his belief that no work was allowed to be conducted on the Sabbath. The Wampanoag men left without incident but were later observed taking food from another house. The men also seized and then release an Englishman (Saltonstall 1913: 27). Wampanoag men were now presenting themselves to the residents of Swansea as armed and defiant (Pulsifer 1855: 2: 362-6). Alarmed by the confrontations, Swansea officials sent a message to Governor Winslow asking for immediate military help (Saltonstall 1913: 27).

On Monday June 21st events in Swansea began to escalate. Governor Winslow received the news from Swansea and quickly sent dispatches to Taunton and Bridgewater with orders for a

company of militia sent to relieve Swansea with another force to be assembled and march the next day. Governor Winslow also sent a letter to Massachusetts Bay Governor Leverett in Boston informing him of the developing crisis and to send reinforcements to Swansea the next day. Winslow also requested that they quickly send mediators to the Narragansetts and Nipmucs to get assurances of their neutrality, fearing the conflict could spread to other nations (Hubbard 1865: 1:66). Governor Leverett sent the party, as well as a third group of mediators to Mount Hope to meet with King Philip in an attempt to avert further conflict. Leverett further ordered a vessel to be loaded with arms and ammunition and sent to Swansea by water (Pulsifer 1855: 2: 362-6; Church 1865: 16-17; Hubbard 1895: 1: 66; Leach 1958: 40).

Governor Winslow called for a Day of Humiliation to be observed on Thursday, June 24, as a day of public fasting and prayer to end the developing conflict (Pulsifer 1859: 362-6; Church 1865: 16-17).

Many families in Swansea now began to abandon their homes and flee to fortified garrison houses, fearing war with the Wampanoag (Easton 1913: 12; Saltonstall 1913: 27). Their abandoned houses were robbed and burned, and cattle were killed (Church 1865:18; Pulsifer 1859: 362-6; Hubbard 1971: 1: 60-66). In Swansea there were at least four garrison houses. One was of the Baptist minister of the Nockum Hill meetinghouse, Reverend John Myles, located near Myles Bridge over the Palmer River; the others were at James Willet's at Wannamoisett; Jared Bourne's garrison house at Mattapoisett; and a fourth garrison house at Thomas Chaffee's lot. The population of Swansea at this time is estimated to have been 250, with most families living in the area of New Meadow Neck (Bicknell 1898:162). Also, about this time a second group of Plymouth reinforcements rendezvoused at Taunton, organized by Major William Bradford. The force was under command of James Cudworth, with Benjamin Church to lead a vanguard of militia with a small group of Indigenous Christian convert allies or "Friend Indians" (Church 1865: 16-17; Leach 1958: 30-49). On June 22nd, a Tuesday, the first of the Plymouth forces arrive at Swansea in the evening and were chiefly dispersed to John Brown's Garrison and the Rev. John Myles Garrison (Church 1865: 17-22; Leach 1958: 30-49).

The first casualty of the escalation occurred on Wednesday June 23rd when a Wampanoag man was mortally shot while allegedly rifling a house by John Salisbury of Swansea, who was on guard with his father William Salisbury. The wounded Wampanoag man had made it back to Mount Hope where he shortly died of his wounds. A group of Wampanoags confronted the colonists at a garrison house about the incident and were told by John Salisbury that it was of "no matter." His father William attempted to ameliorate his son's harsh statement, saying they were "but an idell lads words," though it did little to address their anger and the Wampanoag abruptly left (Easton 1913: 12; Hubbard 1971: 1: 64-65). About 12 more houses were rifled in Swansea at this time (Pulsifer 1855: 2: 362-6). With updates on the escalating conflict, Governor Leverett pledged men, arms, and provisions in support of colonists/settlers. Governor Coddington of Rhode Island agreed to provide a fleet to blockade King Philip and the Wampanoag on Mount Hope peninsula. Alarmed by the prospect of war with the Wampanoags, and possible allied Indigenous nations, a small group of mediators was sent to Mount Hope by Governor Leverett, led by Capt. Edward Hutchinson, and accompanied by Roger Williams to meet with Narragansett sachems, who assured them of their neutrality in the conflict. The group returned to Boston with assurances that the Narragansetts would not enter the conflict (Williams 1988: 2: 693-6; Leach 1958: 41-2). Mediators sent to the Nipmuc received similar assurances of neutrality and that they would call back any of their men who had gone to Mount Hope (Leach 1958: 40-41).

On Thursday June 24th the residents of Swansea attended the Day of Humiliation services prescribed by the governor at the Nockum Hill Baptist meetinghouse, one day after John Salisbury killed a Wampanoag man and dismissed it as "no matter." As the families were leaving the meetinghouse shots rang out as they were attacked by Wampanoags. William Hubbard wrote in 1677 that:

> **…so as on the 24th of June, 1675, was the Alarm of War first sounded in Plimouth Colony when eight or nine of the English were slain in and about Swanzy: They first making a Shot at a Company of English as they returned from the Assembly where they were met in way of Humiliation that Day, whereby they killed one and wounded others…**

> **…and then likewise at the same Time, they slew two Men on the High-way, sent to call a Surgeon, and barbarously the fame Day murdered six Men in and about a Dwelling-house in another Part of the Town: all which Outrages were committed so suddenly, that the English had no Time to make any Resistance** (Hubbard 1865: 1: 64-65).

In 1676 Increase Mather published *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians in New-England*, covering the time period "From June 24, 1675. When the first English-man was murdered by the Indians, to August 12, 1676 when Philip, alias Metacomet, the Principal Author and Beginner of the Warr, was slain" Reverend Mather related that:

> **At the conclusion of that day of Humiliation, as soon as ever the People in Swanzy were come from the place where they had been praying together, the Indians discharged a volley of shot, whereby they killed one man, and wounded others...**
>
> **…Two men were sent to call a Surgeon for the relief of the wounded, but the Indians killed them by the way: And in another part of the Town six men were killed, so that there were Nine Englishmen murthered this day. Thus did the War begin, this being the first English blood which was spilt by the Indians in an Hostile way** (Mather 1676: 3).

One of the men killed on the road to get the surgeon Matthew Fuller to treat the wounded was the Scots brickmaker and Swansea resident William Cahoon. The party sent by Governor Leverett to negotiate with King Philip encountered the bodies on the road and promptly turned back for Boston. Six to eight more English men were killed and wounded when they were ambushed while foraging for food and supplies outside of the Bourne Garrison at Mattapoisett (Mather 1676: 3; Church 1865: 18-19; Hubbard 1865: 1: 64-5, 2: 39; Saltonstall 1913: 28-9). Several people were also shot at the Myles Garrison including a sentry who was mortally wounded as was Reverend John Myles' Black slave (Pulsifer 1855: 2: 362-6; Church 1865: 19-20; Hubbard 1865: 1: 64-5; Saltonstall 1913: 28-29; Leach 1958: 43; Williams 1988: 2: 698-701; Turner 2020: 277-279).

The fighting and destruction sparked at the meetinghouse quickly spread throughout Swansea and into the neighboring towns. A small, mounted reconnaissance party out of the Myles Garrison led by Quartermaster Joseph Belcher and Corporal John Gill was ambushed as it crossed over Myles Bridge. Belcher was wounded and the pilot, William Hammond of Swansea, was killed (Church 1865: 20-22; Bodge 1891: 58). In a letter from Henry Stevens to Mr. Stanton in Connecticut dated June 29, 1675, we learn of the spread of the war. Stephens wrote that at least 12 houses in Swansea had been burned, including a garrison house, and that Seekonk was also attacked with houses burned and several killed by Nipmuc fighters and that there were rumors that King Philip was on his way to Connecticut to create an alliance with the Mohegans against the English (Stephens 1849: 17). By the end of June and into early July 18 houses in Swansea had been burned and within a year all but a few houses were left standing (Hubbard 1865: 2: 39-40, 47; Saltonstall 1913: 30).

The burials for June 24th in the Swansea town records recorded by town clerk Nicholas Tanner included: William Salisbury, John Salisbury, John Jones, Robert Jones, John Fall/Full, Nehemiah Allin/Allen, William Cahoon, Gershom Cobb, and Joseph Lewis. On July 2nd John Druce was buried, and William Hammond, who was shot at Myles Bridge was buried on June 1675 (Rounds 1992). The number of Wampanoag killed in the beginning of the war is unknown. On June 24, 1675 King Philip's War, the deadliest and most destructive war in American history, had begun at the Baptist meetinghouse on the summit of Nockum Hill.

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