# The Siege of Fort Massachusetts

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In North Adams, Massachusetts, a rustic fireplace made of stone stands in the shade of a derelict Price Chopper building, accompanied only by a simple plaque. This fireplace was constructed in 1933 as part of a replica of Fort Massachusetts, a structure that met a similar fate to that of the Price Chopper roughly 250 years earlier. In its heyday, the fort protected the fledgling English colonies dotting the Berkshires as a first line of defense against the French and their Native American allies during King George's War and the French and Indian War. From 1745 to 1760, the fort's valiant soldiers successfully staved off every attack, save for the brutal siege from the 19th to the 20th of August, 1746. Commanded by General Pierre Rigaud de Vaudreuil, 950 French and native soldiers attacked the fort for 27 hours. Those fighting from within, led by Sergeant John Hawks, would surely have continued if it weren't for the near-absolute depletion of their supplies. Vaudreuil recognized the importance of his indigenous allies in successfully defeating the fort; as one Reverend John Norton duly noted in his eyewitness account, the general made multiple major concessions to them as the party, marched into New France immediately following the siege. This paper will discuss in detail the circumstances preceding the siege of Fort Massachusetts in 1746 and delve into the relations between the French and the local indigenous tribes that participated in the attack.

**Context**

From the earliest days of European colonization, North American land had always been extremely valuable to the settlers, leading to continual conflict. Contending countries, namely the Netherlands, France, and England, were desperate to expand outward and into the others' territories to take advantage of the ample natural resources and to enlarge their empires. The extensive forests were filled with sugar maple, chestnut, and beech trees, and were populated with wolves, martens, white-tailed deer, beavers, and otters, all of which had the potential to become expensive pelts. The skies and waterways abounded with partridge, geese, passenger pigeons, brook trout, shad, and salmon. However, the intensely varied geography directly interfered with the prospect of westward expansion, immobilizing the English in particular. The colonies in Massachusetts were bordered by the Taconic Mountain Range, a subset of the Appalachian Range; the Dutch had beat the English in settling the Hudson Valley while avoiding the treacherous journey across the Taconic by traveling north along the Hudson River, forcing the English to temporarily stagnate development westward, particularly after the settlement of Greenfield in 1686. Simultaneously, the French began expanding along the St. Lawrence River, moving southward and ever closer to New England.

Such were the volatile circumstances upon the outbreak of King George's War, fought from 1744 to 1748. King William's War (1690-1697) and Queen Anne's War (1702-1713) had been fought on New England soil as extensions of European conflicts; King George's War followed suit. This war was a direct corollary of the War of Austrian Succession (1740-1748), in which France, Prussia, and Bavaria exploited the questioned legitimacy of Maria Theresa's succession as ruler of the Hapsburg monarchy as a means to challenge the power structure of Europe. Britain was caught in the convoluted web of European alliances; the Treaty of Vienna, signed in 1727, had firmly bound Britain to Austria. England itself had been fighting the War of Jenkin's Ear (1739-1748) against Spain in the Caribbean, instigated by the constriction of markets in South America as well as by the aforementioned tensions overseas. Spain was allied with France on account of the Pact de Famille most recently reaffirmed in 1743, doubly making France an enemy of England. Further exacerbating the animosity between the two nations were the First (1740-1742) and Second (1744-1745) Silesian Wars, fought by Austria and Prussia over. control of Silesia. Prussia was allied with France, and England with Austria, as previously mentioned After extensive planning,

France officially declared war on England in January 1744 with an unsuccessful invasion, kickstarting King George's War in the colonies.

The Native Americans inhabiting the settled land were not sitting passively as these strange men roamed and fought; many tribes formed complicated networks of alliances with one another and with the Europeans and heavily participated in the wars fought on their soil. Throughout the 1600s, the Native Americans of Canada were engaged in the Beaver Wars (1609-1701), in which the Haudenosaunee confederacy [1], comprised of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca tribes, fought with Dutch and English weaponry against the Huron, Erie, Wenro, Ottawa, Petun, Susquehannock, Ojibwe, and Mohican tribes, who were all in turn supplied by the French. In the midst of intermittent warfare, from 1675 to 1678, the Wampanoags, Nipmucks, Podunks, Narragansetts, Nashaway, and the Wabanaki confederacy (Mi'kmaqs, Maliseets, Passamaquoddies and Penobscots) waged war against the New England colonies, Mohicans, Pequots, and the Mohawks in King Philip's War, named after Wampanoag chief Metacom's English alias. Although the New England colonies were victorious, the Wabanaki confederacy regained its strength under an alliance with New France during Queen Anne's War (1702-1713); by 1722, they were sufficiently strong to attack New England during Dummer's War (-1725). The Wabanaki tribes, instigated by the Jesuit priest Father Sébastien Râle—on behalf of French colonial interests—and overlooked during the signing of the treaty of Utrecht in 1713 ending Queen Anne's War, fought to resist English expansion.

**Construction of Fort Massachusetts**

In light of the constant warfare both in the New World and abroad, Fort Massachusetts was built in 1745 as the westernmost source of protection for the English settlements in Massachusetts. It was the third fort to be built along the frontier of King George's War, preceded by Forts Pelham in Rowe and Shirley in Heath. Colonel John Stoddard, commanding officer of the Hampshire County Militia and in charge of the defense of all of Western Massachusetts, sent a letter on behalf of Massachusetts Governor William Shirley and the General Court to Captain William Williams, head of the militia company in Deerfield, on July 20, 1744. In it, he detailed instructions for the construction of an initial fort—Shirley—as well as "two or three other forts… Erected Each to be about five miles and a Half Distance." Summarized at the top by the memorandum, "The fort 60 feet Square Houses to be shingled the Soldiers Employed to be allowed the Carpenter nine shillings others six shillings a day Old Tenor," the letter also contained an allowance of "Two Hundred pounds old Tenor" for the construction, which was "to be erected about five miles and a half from Hugh Morrison's house in Colrain."[2]

Captain William Williams was once again dispatched by Colonel Stoddard to build Fort Pelham, this time in a letter dated March 6, 1745, "In ten days after this Date to…[finish] a fort in the place where the Comtee for Building a Line of Block Houses &c agreed with Capt. Moses Rice to Build." When Fort Shirley was commissioned, the committee in charge was chaired by Stoddard and otherwise consisted of Oliver Partridge, the high sheriff of Hampshire County and selectman of Hatfield, and John Leonard, a member of a prominent family in Taunton. However, by the time of the release of this letter, Leonard had been replaced by Thomas Ingersoll, a constable and tax collector. This fort that the new committee approved was much less sophisticated than Shirley; instead of a wooden jointed blockhouse, it was merely a palisaded fort consisting of connected posts and staddle stones buried halfway, forming a parallelogram 12 by 24 rods in area. Luckily, its soldiers were never involved in a substantial battle while the fort was active.

Early in King George's War, as these forts were being built, Governor Shirley came to realize that Fort Louisbourg, the strongest French outpost located on Cape Breton Island, had a major flaw and was therefore pregnable. Upon release, English prisoners at the fort had relayed to Shirley that the fortress was in a questionable condition and location, and that mutiny among the French

[1] The Haudenosaunee Confederacy is more commonly known as the Iriquois; however, many of their enemies, including the Wyandot, were technically also Iriquois, hence this specific name. The Beaver Wars also predate the inclusion of the Tuscarora into the confederacy by 21 years.

[2] Hugh Morrison was a prominent Scotch-Irish farmer and land vendor in possession of 600 acres.

'garrison was imminent. Louisbourg was principally designed for naval assault; as the Canadians never expected visitors from the south, the fort was built on low, level ground and in front of hills, rendering it easily exploitable by land-based forces. With this in mind, Shirley began planning for an eventual siege in January of 1745, recruiting from the best among Massachusetts's military. Notably, joining in the attack was the Hampshire County militia, comprised in part by Captain William Williams, the commander of Fort Shirley, who left in his stead Ephraim Williams, Jr., and Seth Pomeroy, a famous gunsmith who provided an extensive eyewitness account. Armed with a force of 4,300 men, on May 11, one William Pepperell began attacking from the hills as directed by Shirley. After 46 days, the French surrendered their best fort in a resounding victory for the English. For this, Pepperell received knighthood; Shirley, the mastermind behind the battle, was unrewarded.

In fear of retaliation after the successful Louisbourg siege, construction of Fort Massachusetts began in the summer of 1745 in the relatively unexplored region of the northwest corner of the state. The northern border was defined four years earlier by Richard Hazen, a surveyor from Haverhill. He had been commissioned by then-Governor Jonathan Belcher to map out a clear line in response to territorial disputes between New Hampshire and Massachusetts. However, the western border was unclear; Governor Shirley was concerned that Dutch farmers were encroaching beyond the New York border as they expanded outward from the Hudson River. In addition, the ominous presence of Schaghticoke[3] and Abenaki along the Hoosic river bank exacerbated English fears about the ongoing war. When Second Lieutenant John Catlin ventured westward from Fort Shirley, ordered to commence construction of Fort Massachusetts, he must have known its future significance as the primary English stronghold against the French, Dutch, and native inhabitants. The location Catlin chose was approximately one mile away from the intersection of the Ashuwillticook and Mayunsook rivers, now known as the start of the North Branch of the Hoosic River. It was to be far enough from the Hudson Valley, occupied by the Dutch and easily accessible by the French, to not provoke these colonies while also protecting the English as a first line of defense.

Modeled specifically after Shirley, both forts were sturdy affairs encircled by hefty log stockades. Fort Massachusetts measured 120 by 100 feet in area and soared to 12 feet in height. Its walls were 14 inches thick, made of drywall stone and pine timber dovetailed and fastened with pins of red oak. Houses and barracks with sloping saltbox roofs lined the interior of the eastern and southern walls. At the southeast and northwest corners were "great houses" equipped with watchtowers measuring 12 square feet and 7 feet high, ensuring security for the fort's inhabitants. Under the towers, the lower floors of these mounts were reserved for officer's quarters and the storehouse. To the northeast stood a well measuring 49 inches across and 60 feet deep.

As Catlin directed soldiers from Fort Pelham and Shirley in assembling this new fort, he grew wary of the Schaghticokes, Akwesasnes, and Abenakis, who were demanding money in return for the "Great Meadow" underneath. Apparently, Catlin swindled the tribes out of their land. Six years after the fort was completed, on September 3, 1751, Captain Ephraim Williams Jr. reported in a letter to Spencer Phips, the Lieutenant Governor, that:

*Last week came to ye fort 8 Scattecook Indians, who told me the land was theirs, and that the English had no Business to Settle it Untill such times as they had purchased of them. They further said yt when we began to Build the first Fort, they told the English they must not Build the Fort Except they would pay them for the land, and that the Commandr had promist them pay, but the English had not been as good as their word.*

Williams dismissed their claims as instigation by the French; nevertheless, on January 23, 1752, the Massachusetts House of Representatives voted that Colonel Lydius of Albany and Williams make a "thorough Enquiry respecting the Indian Title to the said lands." Unfortunately, due to the onslaught of the French and Indian War in 1754, the inquiry was shoved to the wayside, and the matter remains inconclusive to this day.

Once the Native Americans demanding compensation were placated with assurances, Catlin focused on stocking up the fort. This was no easy task, as the surrounding lands were unpopulated by the English. There were no roads bridging the mountainous terrain from Fort Massachusetts to Deerfield-which had, until

[3] The Schatighcoke were an amalgamation of Mohican, Oweantinock, Pequot, Pootatuck, and Tunxis peoples.

recently, been the frontier of English settlement—save for the lengthy and equally craggy Mohawk Trail, via which lugging heavy equipment would have been impossible. Flour was particularly hard to drag to the fort; as such, Catlin was advised to negotiate with the Dutch in one of the first substantial interactions between the two colonies. On August 3, 1745, Catlin reported to William Williams that a Mr. Van Ness (spelled in three different ways) offered the fort everything they needed—rum, pork, beef, flour, stockings, and shoes—albeit at an inflated price compared to what Thomas Bardwell of Hatfield and Eleazar Hawks of Deerfield, older brother to the soon-to-be-famous Sergeant John Hawks, were offering. Interestingly, Garret Cornelius Van Ness, the most likely candidate for Mr. Van Ness' identity, had never ventured beyond Albany, connoting that Catlin must have traveled far to secure a trade deal. Despite the difficulties presented by the remote location of the fort, come winter 1745, the fort was sufficiently complete for 43 men to garrison from December 10 to June 9 under the direction of Ephraim Williams.

Forts Shirley and Pelham were in the midst of total peace; however, there were a few skirmishes at Fort Massachusetts during this period. On May 9, 1746, John Mighills and Sergeant John Hawks were fired at by a few Native Americans; Mighills retreated into the fort with a slight injury, whereas Hawks drew his gun and scared the assailants, all the while nursing a substantial wound from which he eventually recovered. On June 11, two days after the recording of the muster-roll of all the soldiers present, Cadenaret, the chieftain of the St. Francis Abenaki, and his men from the village of Becancour on the St. Francis River ambushed the fort. They fatally shot and scalped Elisha Nims and wounded Gershom Hawks, a relation of the aforementioned Hawks. Benjamin Taintor was captured. In response, the soldiers in the fort killed Cadenaret, who was hastily buried with a rope meant to string future English prisoners-of-war together on the return trip to Quebec. According to French records, Cadenaret was actually killed on the 17th during a fight at the Contoocook River in New Hampshire; regardless, the Abenaki were eager to exact revenge on the English in some capacity.

Meanwhile, as King George's War raged on, France was to send its colony massive reinforcement, and England was preparing for a second major attack on New France. Williams was commissioned, along with 1500 other men from Massachusetts, to rendezvous in Albany under Governor Clinton before marching to Montreal. In the interim, Sergeant John Hawks was left in charge of Fort Massachusetts. Clinton operated under the assumption that the King would dispatch a fleet to Louisbourg to participate in his planned amphibious assault; however, before starting northward, the colonists were met with news of the imminent arrival of 40 French ships manned with 3000 men, commanded by Jean-Baptiste Louis Frédéric de La Rochefoucauld de Roye, duc d'Anville. The English plan crumbled under mismanagement and fear of the fleet; however, Williams was still enlisted to join Colonel Joseph Dwight in protecting Boston from this potential naval assault, far away from Fort Massachusetts. Luckily, the French onboard were wholly unprepared for the early September winds, and the offensive shattered; the duke died from grief on September 27 in Halifax, and his successor, Constantin-Louis d'Estourmel, attempted suicide in an act of desperation soon after. In August of 1746, this horrendous failure was still one month in the future; the Canadians were confident enough to engage in warfare in New England to further their cause.

**The Siege**

By now, Fort Massachusetts was too weak to properly defend itself as the first point of contact with the enemy; the garrison was undermanned and many of the soldiers were sick with dysentery. On August 15th, Reverend John Norton, Dr. Thomas Williams, and 14 reinforcements from Fort Shirley arrived. The next day, Hawks sent Dr. Williams and another 14 men to Fort Deerfield to ask Ephraim Williams, who had recently been stationed there, for supplies and ammunition. This left a total of twenty soldiers to defend the fort, ten of whom were sick. Unbeknownst to these parties, General Rigaud de Vaudreuil had sent eight Schaghticokes and three Frenchmen to scout the fort a few days prior. Vaudreuil had been dispatched earlier in the month by Charles de la Boische, Marquis of Beauharnois, the governor of New France, upon receiving intelligence that the English were poised to seize Fort St. Frederic in Crown Point. However, the Marquis later learned that there was to be no such assault; as such, Vaudreuil headed instead for New England, emboldened by the impending arrival of d'Anville. On August 10th, the Canadians and their Native allies held a council, deciding that the force should attack Fort Massachusetts; 10 days later, they arrived at the Hoosac Valley.

Fortunately, Beauharnois had intricate records kept of even the smallest military campaigns, providing valuable insight into the make-up of Vaudreuil's army. At the River au Chicot, or Wood Creek, a tributary of Lake Champlain in Whitehall, Vaudreuil had combined forces with that of Lieutenant Jacques-Pierre Daneau de Muy, whose unit comprised of "5 ensigns, 6 officers of the militia, 10 cadets, 48 settlers, and about 400 Indians." The Native component consisted of 38 Iroquois of the Five Nations, tribes normally aligned with the English; 69 Outawois of Detroit [Ottawans], "some of whom returned home being unwilling to go to war"; 16 Menominees; 14 Kiskakons of Detroit "who gave proofs of their fidelity to the French"; 4 Sioux; 64 Poutewatamies; 15 Puans; 10 Illinois; 50 Outawois of Michilimakinac, and 40 of the Forks; 65 Mississaguez from Lake Ontario; 80 Algonquins and Nepissings from Lake Nepissing, near Lake Huron; 31 Ojibwe; and 24 Wyandot. To retain the 38 Iroquois, the government supplied the French-Iriquois diplomat Philippe-Thomas Chabert de Joncaire, also known as Nitachinon, with "munitions and presents" for the tribe. Several of the 38 Outawois of Detroit, 17 Ojibwe, 24 Wyandot, and 14 Poutewatamis that arrived on August 22, as listed under de Muy's regiment, initially came from Vaudreuil's initial detachment, complicating efforts to ascertain the exact numbers of the army; however, de Muy ultimately had a total of roughly 470 men. These Native Americans were led by Cadenaret's brother; the council may have picked Fort Massachusetts in part to avenge the great chief's death. This may have united the tribes under a common cause; after all, the Mohawks and Schaghticokes from Vaudreuil were mortal enemies of the Wyandot and Mississaguez of de Muy's cohort.

De Muy was initially ordered to wait at Wood Creek for a fortnight for Vaudreuil's arrival before engaging in warfare in New England. During this time, roughly half of the Native Americans "formed parties and [went] out on excursions," some of them never returning. Vaudreuil had in his command "2 captains, 1 lieutenant, 3 ensigns, 2 chaplains, whereof one is for the Indians, 1 surgeon, 10 cadets of the regulars, 18 militia officers, 3 volunteers, and about 400 colonists and 300 Indians," totaling 740 men. After the rendezvous and the loss of some of de Muy's men, 950 men in all began marching down the Hoosic River, written as Kakekoute in the records. de Muy was left in charge of 30 men and a canoe fleet near Poultney River; the rest continued around Skene Mountain. They then traversed the land of the Mohican chief Keepedo and then that of the Owl Kill trail in the Tiashoke village near the present-day hamlet of Eagle Bridge. At this point, the army split in half, with one brigade put under the management of Sieur de la Volterie on the south bank of the Hoosic and Sieur de Sabrevois on the north. The Native Americans were placed in the front, back, and flanks of the brigades, effectively shielding the French soldiers from bullets and shrapnel. Once divided up, the troops marched 14 miles before encamping on the Cohoha cornfield in North Pownal, leaving 14 more miles for the early hours of Tuesday, August 19.

Early that morning, the French scouts reported to Vaudreuil that a substantial group of English had left the fort, leaving only one sentinel in the watchtower as the vast majority of those inside suffered from dysentery. Upon hearing the news, Vaudreuil was exceedingly confident in a future victory; he galvanized the 950 men, declaring, "My children, the time is near when we must get other meat [in reference to the money they would receive for every prisoner-of-war from Beauharnois upon their arrivals to Quebec] than fresh pork, and we will eat it together."[4] Their spirits high, the men split into their respective brigades upon praying mass and began to march on either side of the Hoosic in the rain. Ten miles later, they all stopped at the River Bend campground, where the council of war agreed for Vaudreuil's force to approach from the forest to the west of the fort, and for de Muy's Native Americans to do so from the river bank to the southeast, armed with scaling ladders and battering-rams. Reverend John Norton wrote in his account—dramatically entitled, "Narrative of the Capture and Burning of Fort Massachusetts by the French and Indians: In the Time of the War of 1744-1749, and the Captivity of All Those Stationed There, to the Number of Thirty Persons... Written at the Time by One of the Captives, the Rev. Mr. John Norton"–that at 9 a.m., the French army surrounded the fort and started firing from the northwest and southeast at the watchtowers. Sergeant Hawks was endowed with the Herculean task of defending the fort with 22 soldiers, roughly half of which were in no condition to fight, and with limited resources; recall that he had sent a party to Deerfield to ask Williams for provisions and reinforcements. The

[4] Qtd. in Greylock, p. 137

identities of these men (many of them future founding members of Williamstown) were dutifully recorded by Norton. They valiantly fought until 9 p.m. that day, upon which the French retreated to St. Francis Indian Ledge 60 rods, or 0.2 miles, away.

Just as the English exploited the geography of St. Louisbourg to secure victory, so did the French exploit the strategically disadvantageous position of Fort Massachusetts.. Just to the north, from where Vaudreuil initiated the siege, the elevation of the terrain drastically increased, so much so that the French were easily able to shoot over the walls and into the fort. Vaudreuil gained the upper hand by 11 a.m. the next day. He had his men raise a flag of truce and offered Hawks an opportunity to surrender. Else, Vaudreuil would burn the fort to the ground. After a quick analysis of the supplies left—with what they "did not judge to be above three or four pounds of powder and not more lead," they could have lasted only "a few minutes" more–Hawks and Norton agreed to relinquish the fort. "Had we all been in health, or had there been only those eight of us that were in health, I believe every man would willingly have stood it out to the last," Norton regretfully wrote. "For my part I should; but we feared, that if we were taken by violence, the sick, the wounded, and the women, would most, if not all of them, die by the hands of the savages." The French successfully captured the fort by 2 p.m. The victors hoisted a flag prominently displaying the fleur-de-lis atop the watchtower to the northwest, and the Jesuit chaplain let the banner of the Holy Cross unfurl over the southeast tower. Norton placed a "Notice of the Surrender of Fort Massachusetts" on the burned well sweep for Dr. Thomas Williams to find, which read:

*These are to inform you that yesterday, about nine of the clock, we were besieged by, as they say, seven hundred French and Indians. They have wounded two men and killed one Knowlton. The General de Vaudreuil desired capitulations, and we were so distressed that we complied with his terms. We are the French's prisoners, and have it under the General's hand, that every man, woman, and child shall be exchanged for French prisoners.*[5]

Soon after, the 29 men, women, and children of Fort Massachusetts embarked on their journey to Montreal, where they arrived on September 25th under these terms of imprisonment, as Norton recorded:

I. That we should all be prisoners to the French; the General promising that the savages should have nothing to do with any of us.

II. That the children should all live with their parents during the time of their captivity.

III. That we should all have the privileges of being exchanged the first opportunity that presented.

Besides these particulars, the General promised that all the prisoners should have all Christian care and charity exercised towards them; that those who were weak and unable to travel should be carried in their journey; that we should all be allowed to keep our clothing; and that we might leave a few lines to inform our friends what was become of us. In comparing these terms and Norton's account of the entirety of his imprisonment with the experiences of other prisoners-of-war, like those from the Raid on Deerfield in 1704, for example, one must assume that the party was treated quite nicely. Those who could not keep up on the way to Quebec from the Deerfield massacre were killed; conversely, Josiah Reed, one of the sick soldiers captured during the Siege, was carried on the back of a Native American.

The siege left in its wake tragic repercussions. Ultimately, two people died: Cadenaret's brother, shot by Hawks, and Thomas Knowlton, the sole watchguard. He was scalped and an arm and leg were taken from him as a war prize. 12 of the French were wounded, including Vaudreuil, who was shot in the arm; John Aldrich and Jonathan Bridgeman were injured as well, the latter dying en route. There was more destruction to come. Vaudreuil sent 60 Abenaki and Iroquois to meet the returning party, consisting of 19 men. Not having met them, on August 25th, the Native Americans instead killed seven in Deerfield South Meadow—Samuel Allen's child, Eleazer Hawks (the sergeant's nephew), Oliver Amsden, Simeon Amsden, Constant Bliss, and Adonijah Gillet–in what is now known as the Bars[6] Fight and immortalized in a poem by Lucy

[5] Qtd. in Perry, p. 142

[6] Bars was a colonial term meaning "meadow."

Terry, a slave from Rhode Island, making it the first known work of literature by an African American. The Native Americans brought back Samuel Allen and one Black man as prisoners. In addition, 17 Mississaguez from de Muy's detachment who had left before besieging Fort Massachusetts had returned to Vaudreuil with 4 scalps; Norton saw them as well as those from the victims of the Bars Fight on August 31.

By the evening of August 20, all that was left of Fort Massachusetts was the note Norton left and a mess of rubble, smoke, and ash. The fort lay in ruin until the winter of 1747, when it was rebuilt after Governor Shirley sent a letter on April 10, 1747, to John Stoddard, authorizing him to "erect and build a good commodious Blockhouse at or near the place where the Fort called Massachusetts late stood." This new fort defended the colony of Massachusetts throughout the remainder of King George's War, which was completed with the signing of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, and until the end of the French and Indian War in 1763. As the years progressed, the fort fell into disrepair, and parts were repurposed for the building of houses throughout the region. Thus concludes the history of the siege of Fort Massachusetts, save for that of Native American involvement.

**Indigenous Involvement**

The staggering diversity of tribes participating in the siege was indicative of the complex history between the French and the Native Americans. To conduct a complete analysis, one must travel back in time to the end of the Beaver Wars in 1701, after which the Great Peace of Montreal was signed, as organized by Louis-Hector de Callière, governor of New France. Signed treaties between colonial powers and tribes were exceedingly rare since most alliances were informal and were made for primarily commercial benefit. Often, amicable relationships were established between the French and tribes upon the first instance of prolonged contact, most of which occurred throughout the 17th century. However, analyzing the signers of this treaty yields a nearly complete picture of the indigenous peoples connected to the French.

Although King William's War, a theater of the Nine Year's War–fought between France and the Grand Alliance (Holy Roman Empire, the Dutch Republic, England, Spain, and Savoy)–had officially ended with the ratification of the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697, the question of with which European power the Haudenosaunee were allied had remained unresolved. Tribes allied with the French continued to conduct sporadic attacks on those within the confederacy, yet both the English and French claimed Iroquois land as within their respective empires. Preliminary agreements ceding prisoners to the French and land to the English were reached on September 3rd of the preceding year in Onondaga, where the village of Manlius, New York is currently located, and on July 19, 1701, as part of Nanfan's Treaty. However, the French wanted to expand their influence by placating previous animosities between the Haudenosaunee and enemy tribes. 38 tribes signed the Great Peace treaty, including, most pertinently, the Abenaki (as a proxy for the Wabanaki Confederacy), Ottawa, Algonquin; Mississaguez, Nipissing, Poutewatamie, Miami,nMenominee, and all those belonging to the confederacies of the Haudenosaunee and the Illinois (Kaskaskia, Peoria, Tamaroa, Maroa, Coiracoentantanons, and Moingwena). While overseeing the delegations, Callière smoked and passed a Calumet of Peace presented to him by the Miamis. Of the motley of tribes that participated in the Fort Massachusetts siege, all but the Sioux, Wyandot, and Schaghticokes, all informally aligned with the French through trade or during future wars, were present. The Sioux had been collaborating with the French since 1660 when fur traders Médard Chouart des Groseilliers and Pierre-Esprit Radisson first explored parts of Wisconsin. Earlier, Jesuit missionaries had encountered the Wyandot as early as 1639, as noted by François du Peron in the Jesuit Relations chronicles. The Schatighcoke were initially allied with the English but shifted towards the French after the Governor of New France supplied them with ammunition during Dummer's War. All of these tribes had previously had idiosyncratic connections to one another and the French, but this was the first time they were all assembled in a political settlement of this magnitude.

Prior to the Beaver Wars, the Haudenosaunee controlled a huge swath of land across what is now the northeastern part of the United States and southeastern Canada, pushing other tribes further west and into contact with the French. The Beaver Wars united these tribes under the umbrella of French protection; during this conflict, many were introduced to European weaponry for the first time. Once the Iriquois collaborated with the French to sign the Great Peace of Montreal, Callière was placed in an optimal position. Although not all the signers were allie with the French against the English—the Haudenosaunee

Confederacy often sided with the British—this promise of peace secured for New France the opportunity to recruit warriors for future battles, including those fought during King William's War in New England.

Alliances with native inhabitants of America were exploited throughout early colonial history as a means to conquer competing European settlements. The roughly 950 Native Americans that accompanied Vaudreuil when he marched into the Hoosac Valley in August 1746 were present on account of an extensive list of tribe and confederacy-specific treaties and negotiations previously made by the French. Eventually, the English and French embroiled themselves in the French and Indian War (1754-1763), a corollary of the Seven Year's War (1756-1763), resulting in the removal of the French from North America. As the English expanded into the French territory and further westward, the tribes that had once participated in European wars were either exiled or forcefully assimilated into the settlers' culture, permanently staining the history between the Native Americans and the modern United States.

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