CHAPTER II

WILDERNESS AND INDIANS

BEYOND faint footpaths along the Contoocook or its tributary streams, or perhaps an Indian moccasin track found by the first white hunters in the soft earth on the margin of a hidden pond, or a few arrow heads or crude utensils turned up by the settler's plow near half-filled pits showing traces of buried fires, we have only slight evidence of human habitation here before us. But this does not leave us without our birthright, as a New England town, of an authentic Indian history. We have no massacres to cause frightful dreams, because the Indian wars were over before there was permanent settlement here. Nevertheless, the earliest recorded history of the region around Monadnock is of savage forays upon the Massachusetts frontier in the old French and Indian Wars.

On January 21, 1706/7, three men were killed at Groton and two Tarbell boys, sons of Corporal Thomas Tarbell, were taken prisoners. The following month, Lieutenant Seth Wyman of Groton, perhaps in pursuit of the invaders, or to guard the frontier against a repetition of the outrage, with a small army of rangers was nearly forty miles from home in a wilderness so blank, unmapped, and unknown that it could be described only as "near Monadnock," the one nameable landmark for miles around. If we consider the lay of the land and the natural course of travel from Groton, we may reasonably assume that the locality "near Monadnock" was within the limits of the present town of Jaffrey. Nearly a hundred years had passed since the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, and yet the progress of settlement had scarcely penetrated fifty miles into the interior. Groton and Lancaster were then frontier towns and Lieutenant Wyman and his men were soldiers in a great war known in history as Queen Anne's War. Viewed in this light, as an incident in a century-old struggle between England and France for supremacy in America, this obscure service of theirs rises above the level of mere local history. War had been declared in 1703, and during the intervening years the mysterious woods around Monadnock had been a menace to which the nearest Massachusetts settlements had looked with apprehension and alarm. To ward off the stealthy approach of the wily Indians, who were allies of the French, companies of woods rangers were organized in the frontier towns and were paid by the Province to which they made reports of their service. They were generally commanded by men who had devoted many years to this form of warfare and had acquired the tricks and cunning, as well as the ruthlessness, of their savage foes.

It was a trying situation in which the weary Groton soldiers found themselves on that mid-winter day far up in the woods under the shadow of Monadnock. They had seen signs of the enemy which made them proceed with caution. They heard, or overwrought imagination misled them, the sound of guns; and who could be firing guns in those lonely woods but Indians? In their marauding expeditions the Indians of necessity lived largely off the country and so took advantage of every opportunity to obtain game to replenish their stores.

When the sun was an hour high, in the words of the record, the Groton men ended their march and made camp, probably no more than a fire and a scattering of hemlock boughs on the snow. After approved military practice, Lieutenant Wyman sent out scouts, or pickets, on the right and left wings, with orders to go out a mile and a half to reconnoitre and to return in one hour with their report. There were four men in each scout, that on the right being under charge of Corporal Thomas Tarbell, and that on the left under Samuel Scripture. Meanwhile men in the camp drummed with their hatchets on the trees to guide the outposts and prevent their becoming lost in the gathering darkness. Noises in the woods are often deceptive, especially on a frosty winter night, in a country of rocks and hills. We may never know the true situation in which these brave men found themselves, but in an hour "scouts came running as men afrightened," and as soon as they came in sight of the camp they called to their comrades to put out the fire. Corporal Tarbell, then coming up, reported to Lieutenant Wyman what he had seen. He had steered away from the camp so as to be out of range of the tattoo upon the trees, and had then circled about to the right where he came again upon a sound of drumming, which he believed came from a hostile camp. As he drew nearer "the noyse of the hatchetts were as big as our company, and so reached half a mile." Thinking they heard again the noise of hatchets from their own camp, they then circled about to the left and came again upon the sound of drumming on the side of a near-by hill. He then saw a "smoak" and marched toward it until the "smoak" covered him; and on a hillside near-by he heard a "great discourse of men," which he took to be that of French and Indians. He continued his way around the hill a half mile, he judged, and returned by another way until he came to his own tracks and met the other scouts coming from the left wing and they returned to camp together.

Samuel Scripture, leader of the left wing, reported that he had marched out a mile and a half and found tracks, twenty or thirty in number, which "Jonathan Butterfield thought were of wolves," but which he thought were made by Indian dogs. They had followed the tracks about one-fourth of a mile when, in Scripture's own words, they "saw Tarbell's scout who called us away and told us they believed there was a thousand Indians upon us, upon which we hastened away, but Tarbell's scout ran so fast I could not come up with them to understand what their discovery was until I came to camp where Tarbell related what he had seen."

There followed intense excitement in camp. The men from all sides crowded up to hear the reports, and when Lieutenant Wyman ordered them to withdraw, "scatter and stand on guard," so that a council of officers could be held, they obeyed with too much alacrity. Three-fourths of the men ran homewards with such speed that an officer sent to check their flight could not overtake them. Upon the return of the company to Groton their leader was tried by court martial for his disorderly retreat, and thus was preserved a circumstantial account of one of the earliest scouting expeditions into the Monadnock wilderness.

In 1722, with England and France technically at peace, irregular warfare broke out again between their dependencies in America. The Monadnock region was still unsettled and a constant menace to the growing settlements in Massachusetts, only a few miles away. Lieut.-Gov. William Dummer, then acting in place of Governor Shute, who was abroad, became commander in chief of the military forces in New England. This war is generally known in history as Dummer's War but has also been called Lovewell's War, after a famous Indian fighter of the period. The frontier towns which had suffered greatly from Indian depredations and massacres, were placed in a state of defence, block houses or garrisons were built and companies of scouts were enrolled and equipped by the provinces. A bounty of one hundred pounds for each Indian scalp taken was offered, which stirred to activity not only the scouts, but also the so-called friendly Indians. The news of this action spread far and wide, and a letter of the time from Governor Saltonstall of Connecticut to Governor Dummer stated that "the friendly Indians of Connecticut seem inclined to hunt for scalps around Monadnock and further side of Dunstable and Groton."

Among the most experienced scouts of the period called into service at this time was Captain Jabez Fairbanks of Lancaster. The *History of Lancaster* credits him with being the first of that town's military heroes. He was also prominent in civil affairs and several times represented the town in the general court. He had been early incited to hostility against the Indians by having witnessed the massacre of his father and brother and many of his neighbors and friends. In the archives of Massachusetts are many reports in his own hand of his expeditions into the northern wilderness. He was bold alike with sword and pen, and in the encounter with uncouth Indian names he rushed in where a lexicographer might fear to tread. His quaint reports, terse and unadorned as the commentaries of Julius Caesar, are priceless records of New England's heroic age.

Captain Fairbanks knew the region from Lancaster to Monadnock like a book. He had traversed it for twenty years as policeman of the woods before there was a habitation of white man or a cart path in our unbroken wilderness. One winter day in February, 1724, we find him up at "Wanomihouck" (Monomonock) ponds, a locality which he calls thirty miles from Lancaster. This was then the collective name for the group of ponds in present day Jaffrey and Rindge. His record continues, "from thence to Wachusett hills and Ocsechoxit hills [Sterling] and Washacum ponds [near Lancaster] and then hom."

Again a scout set out "to the Turkey Hill [Lunenburg], to Mashapoge pond to Cateconimong pond [Lunenburg] to Unchecowalounck pond [unknown] and came hom by Lancaster North river." Next we find them on a longer march. In mid-winter ten sturdy woodsmen, commanded by Sergeant Edward Hartwell, loaded like pack horses, tramped "to Turkey Hills and from thence to ye Dimon hills, and to the head of Mullipers river [Mulpus Brook] and to the head of Squannicook river and from thence to the head of Sowhegan river [in Ashby or Ashburnham], to the Watutuck hill [Watatic Mountain] and then steared towards the grand Wanodnock hill, and from thence to Wanominock ponds, and from thence to Wachusets Hills and to Oxsechoxits Hills, and mostly to such places as ye Indians are Most Likely to Hount In there coming to our Towns."

Captain Jabez also lent his assistance to another frontier town, Dunstable (now in part the city of Nashua), and from that place he directed his patrol toward the Monadnock wilderness. He went again "to Sowhegan river [in Wilton and Milford], so up said river about six miles, so crossing ye woods to several grate mountains

[Wapack Range] and ponds where ye Indians were formerly use to live and Pass so to Nashaway River." "Another scout to several ponds to Sowhegan river and then campt ye first night, crossed river to a brook called Baboosuck brook, so up brook and parting our scout, so driving ye woods, meeting again at night and camping at a pond called Sabenes pond, so from thence to Strawberry hill and along by ye East hunkenoonert hill [Uncanoonuc] then to Pasentaquage [Piscataquog] river, and campt two nights being a great storm of snow, so from thence to Sowhegan and campt and so up said river to several grate hills and ponds and so return again."

Another scout went to Souhegan River, "and so up said river about ten mile so being out a week in them woods, so among ye hills and between several ponds, so hom again, one week out." One more scout under Captain Fairbanks went out from Dunstable, and "ye first night campt at Sowhegan River the next day parting their men, meeting again at night at a great pond and campt, so still scouting on ye west side of Merrimack River about ten mile from said river, to eight Grate ponds, so to Contoocook River, being so high up ye country as Pennecook which is a Bout forty mile from Dunstable, so searching between ye ponds a foresaid and several grate hills and streams, and crossing ye woods more westward hom again, this scout was out Twelve Days."

These were not all the "scouts" to the region of Monadnock and the Monomonock ponds reported by Captain Fairbanks, but they may be accepted as sufficient basis for the statement that the ponds in the Monadnock region were recognized haunts of the Indians during the many years of the Colonial Wars. Such was the life of the forest patrol—up the rivers and over the hills and around the great ponds, after an enemy more elusive than the wild animals of the forest. Their work was in the main preventive; and the Indians, though seldom caught, came to have a wholesome dread of those regions that were ranged by the scoutmasters and their tireless men. Only one scalp appears on the record to the credit of Jabez and his men. In July, 1724, a man was killed by the Indians in Groton. The scouts were soon on their track, four Indian packs were taken, and one Indian killed, and his scalp was carried to Boston for record and reward.

Jabez Fairbanks died March 2, 1758, aged about 85 years, and with him was buried some of the choicest history of many New England towns. He was of sterling stock; and, as he subscribed his reports to the Governor, he was always "ready to sarve." He married a daughter of John Prescott, the first settler of Lancaster and progenitor of all the Prescotts who have lived in Jaffrey. His descendants have shown the same quality of the blood in many positions of honor and trust; and it is no surprise to find an upstanding son of Jabez, in the fifth generation, born in Vermont, in the person of Charles W. Fairbanks, equally "ready to sarve," as United States Senator from Indiana and Vice President of the United States.

The years 1724 and 1725 furnished the climax of Indian warfare in New England. The limit of patience had found expression in the voting by Massachusetts Bay of a substantial bounty for Indian scalps. Captain John Lovewell, a famous Indian fighter of Dunstable, came to the fore as the champion berserker of them all. He brought more scalps "home to Rome" than all the rest, and it was under him that the restless and reckless of the province liked best to serve.

In February, 1724, by the Saco River near the present Maine and New Hampshire boundary, Lovewell and his companions, hard after that bounty of one hundred pounds, came upon Indian tracks in the snow. They followed stealthily until they came in sight of an Indian camp. Waiting until two o'clock in the morning, when the Indians were wrapped in their soundest sleep, they crept into the camp. They found the Indians huddled together on the ground, like kittens in a basket, completely covered with their blankets. To make every shot count, Lovewell disposed his men so that they should advance and fire in squads of five. He took the lead with an Indian guide named Toby. Toby, according to orders, poked back the blankets with the muzzle of his gun so as to reveal the heads of the sleepers. Lovewell fired at close range and was quickly followed by all his men. The Indians died writhing on the ground, all but one, who, though wounded, sprang to his feet and ran into the forest where in his weakened condition he was soon overtaken and scalped. Lovewell and his men now marched in triumph to Boston, where they were received with popular acclaim and military honors, and were awarded bounties amounting to more than seventeen hundred dollars.

The people were now afire for action, and a wave of excitement swept over the provinces. Lovewell and his men were the heroes of the day. There were many volunteers; it was easy money and as always fame was sweet. But two could play at that game, as they found out that same summer when an attack by the Indians was made on Dunstable and two men captured and carried to Canada. A party of ten who set out in pursuit were ambushed and all but one man killed.

Captain Lovewell, with Joseph Farwell and Jonathan Robbins, at this time petitioned the Massachusetts legislature for authority to form a company of rangers to scout the woods continuously for several months. They asked for five shillings a day as a wage, and also a bounty in case they brought back scalps. Their offer was conditionally accepted; they were required to keep accurate journals of their service and were allowed two shillings and six pence a day for the time actually out, and one hundred pounds for each scalp, but no allowance for subsistence.

On May 9, 1725, Lovewell's men, now reduced in numbers to forty-six, came upon the Indians on the shore of a lake just over the Maine boundary, in the present town of Fryeburg. A battle was begun and Lovewell was among the first killed. Lieutenant Seth Wyman assumed command. The battle lasted all day, and only nine of Lovewell's men escaped unhurt. Many of the wounded might have been saved by surgical attendance and care, but they were many miles back in the untracked wilderness. Lieutenant Robbins, unable to stand, asked to have two loaded guns left by his side so that when in the morning the Indians came to scalp him, he could sell his life at a dear price.

On May 13th, at night, four days after the battle, a handful of survivors came to Dunstable with news of the disaster. Two days later Lieutenant Wyman and three others came in. They had been without food for five days except "two mouse squirrels" they shot on the way. This was the famous Pigwackett fight, the theme of ballad and legend for a hundred years. Never before had there been such excitement in New England. It was believed that the frontiers already swarmed with Indians and that this fight was only a preliminary skirmish in a widespread invasion about to overwhelm the settlements.

Governor Dummer called every available soldier into service. Colonel Tyng was sent with his company to Pigwackett to bury the dead, and Captain John White of Lancaster was ordered to join him with his company of volunteers. Governor Dummer reported his action to Colonel Wentworth of New Hampshire and added: "I must pray that you will act in concert with us in this affair and send at once from New Hampshire a party of men upon the same ground. For if the enemy are in such strength as to defeat Lovewell they will thereupon be upon our frontiers in great numbers. It is of the greatest importance that something be done vigiously and expeditiously on this occasion." To this Colonel Wentworth replied, somewhat ambiguously, "You may depend, sir, that they will be down on your frontier towns very soon, and it may be both. There is fish enough and other good hunting, so that if we can make up an army of 200 men we may range all that country, as Pigwackett etc. But this must be done with all possible dispatch, we can have no dependence on the men you have sent from the westward, whether we shall find them or not. I am of the opinion that Captain Lovewell wounded many of the Indians and that they cant get off."

The reference by Colonel Wentworth to the men sent from the westward was probably to the company from Lancaster under Captain John White, previously mentioned. In pursuance of his plan to "range all that country," Governor Dummer had ordered Captain Blanchard of Dunstable to proceed with his company up the Merrimack to Pemigewassett, and Captain Samuel Willard of Lancaster was ordered to take a more westerly course and unite forces with Captain Blanchard at Pemigewassett.

Captain Willard, at this time thirty-five years old, was one of the most prominent men in the province in military and civil affairs, and it was to be expected that his services would be in demand in such an emergency. In 1711 he had commanded a regiment of two companies of about ninety men each, which had marched five hundred miles to the headwaters of the Saco and Pemigewassett Rivers, the very country it was now determined to rid of Indians.

Captain Willard, in obedience to orders from Governor Dummer, according to his journal, mustered his men at Lancaster, Thursday, July 15, 1725. On Friday he marched to Rutland, where he provisioned his force for not less than forty days in the wilderness. Never before had there been for his company so good a prospect of real fighting and exciting adventure as now. The full account of the disaster at Pigwackett had been published in the *Boston Gazette* on May 17, and it had been ever since the one theme of conversation. Captain John White and his volunteers from their own neighborhood of Lancaster had already gone to the scene of action to bury the dead.

On Monday, the nineteenth, with "fifty-two able bodyed men," and five friendly Hasanamisco Indians as pilots, Captain Willard launched into the wilderness. Various mishaps befell them. They were heavily laden and some of the men broke down under the weight of their packs. When five days out, and "wide of Wanadnock and Wachusett," Captain Willard sent in his first report.

They had scouted the woods in front of the settlements. One man had sprained his ankle and three were sick. These he had sent back to Rutland "with a well man to take care of them." He now announced his purpose to head for Monadnock, there to scout about for two or three days and then march to Pemigewassett. At the same time, believing game to be handy, he expressed his determination "not to be in any town for five and thirty days unless we get some Indians."

He was delayed by "foule weather" so it was not until the thirtieth day of July that he arrived at Peewunsenn or Peewumsenn Pond, in the vicinity of Monadnock. There his men found signs of the Indians about, but none of recent origin. They heard guns which they believed to be Indian guns, but their scouts were unable to locate them.

The course of their march leaves little question that Peewunsenn Pond was the body of water now known as Contoocook Lake. They had camped two days before "at ye south end of Nockeed pond" (Naukeag Lake in Ashburnham). The next day they had scouted about the headwaters of Millers River and "found where ye Indians had lived last year and made a canoe at ye north end of a long pond," (probably Monomonock Lake in Rindge, the source of Millers River). The following day, Friday, they "march north in ye forenoon and come to a pond which run into Contoocook River." This was unmistakably what is now known as Hubbard Pond in Rindge, the uppermost catch basin of the Contoocook River. It lies just over the divide between the valleys of the Contoocook and the Connecticut, and in a northerly direction from the start of their day's march at Monomonock Pond. It was also without doubt one of the first ponds previously noted by Captain Jabez Fairbanks, when from the head of the Souhegan River he crossed the "grate hills" to several ponds where the Indians used to live. In the afternoon Willard's company marched northwest from Hubbard Pond, probably following an Indian trail along the Squantum Brook, "in all about 12 miles" and made their camp at Peewunsenn Pond, probably on the south shore not far from the present town line between Jaffrey and Rindge. From this place they sent out scouts "4 miles and they found 2 wigwams made last year," and in one of the wigwams they found a paddle and some squash shells, which they surmised had been carried away from Rutland at the time of the attack on that place the previous year.

On the following day, July 31, 1725, in pursuance of their plan of scouting the region, they divided into parties and Captain Willard, with fourteen men, marched, as they judged, twelve miles and "campt on ye top of Wannadnuck." This was in accordance with scouting practice. We read that it was the custom of scouting parties to seek look-outs on the mountains—"to lodge on ye top and view morning and evening for smoaks." We may imagine the scene before them. Summer was then in its full and neither smoke nor haze obscured their view. A world, unspoiled, where Nature had done her best, lay at their feet. Not a steeple pierced the canopy of variegated green, not a settler's chopping made a brown patch on its surface, not a road drew its seam across the broad expanse. Entranced by the beauty of the scene, as thousands since have been, they counted twenty-six woodland lakes that shone like skylights of the forest caves below. The struggling settlements that they had left in dread of this endless wilderness were below the horizon to the south, or covered by the woods that fringed the distant hills. They saw Wachusett and the rounded summit of Watatic which marked the path by which they came. But with greatest interest they scanned the northern horizon whither they would next shape their course. They made out "Cusage" (Kearsarge) to the north, and, as they thought, "Winnepeseocky Laying North East from sd Wannadnuck." And then, "Laying one point from sd mountain," they saw, as they supposed, "Pigwackett," the far away objective of their search, where the bloody massacre had so lately taken place, which it was their purpose to avenge. Then as the north darkened to their view they turned, and across leagues of glowing wilderness they saw the sun go down behind the Green Mountains of the New Hampshire Grants, yet to be known as the State of Vermont.

After spending the night in their camp on the top of Monadnock, Captain Willard and his men saw the sun rise over the eastern hills, flooding again the great valley and crowning the hoary mountain summit with the light of a new day. Reluctantly, we may believe, they left their watchtower, and again took up the path of duty. They went slowly down the west slope of Monadnock, looking on every side for signs of the Indians. On this day, the first of August, they found four more wigwams and in them "sixteen spits such as the Indians use to rost their meat." Here was evidence by which to estimate the size of a war party that had gone that way before them. For two weeks more they plodded on toward Pemigewassett and found only faded signs of the threatening foe. Their provisions were running low. Already their improvident Indians had exhausted their rations, and some of the English were approaching like destitution. They met Captain Blanchard at the mouth of the Contoocook and returned with him to Dunstable. Two days later, weary but "ready to sarve," they arrived home at Lancaster, where Captain Willard, having carried out his instructions, made the following report to the governor:

Lancaster Aug. ye 16, 1725

For ye Honourable William Dummer, Esqr.,

May it please Your Honner, persuant to your Honners Instructions to me I marched from Rutland north or thereabouts till we came to Wanadnuck, and from there North East for pemichewassett until Sabbath day ye 8 of August Intending to have mete Capt. Blancher there. But by reason of much foule weather and Extreme Bad Woods to travel in, we Being persweaded Capt. Blancher was come from pemisiwassett though it more searvisable to come down to a distance from ye river which we Did about 35 miles and their came to ye river and mete with Capt. Blancher at ye mouth of Contoocook and so came down ye river and arrived well at Lancaster Thursday August ye 12 with most of our men some Being so weary with their March we Left them at Groton. if your Honner Have any further Instructions I shall be Ready to Sarve.

Your Honners
Very Humble Sarvent
Samuel Willard.

I should have sent to Inform your Honner Before But Capt. Blancher told me he should send that we Both came in together.

Thus ended to no effect Governor Dummer's punitive campaign. It was also the end of Dummer's War, so far as it affected the Massachusetts frontier. The Indians, perhaps as severely punished as the Colonists, had returned to Canada; and the following December a treaty was signed which for a few years brought peace to the distracted frontier settlements. Perhaps the sense of duty performed and the feeling of security against further depredations of their Indian foe may have made sufficient amends for the unfulfilled visions of glory and the hope of reward with which they set out on their great adventure a month before.

Captain Willard's Journal of his expedition has been preserved and is of great historical interest to the later-established town of Jaffrey as portraying the march through its borders of a real army, engaged in international warfare between the two foremost powers of the world, as well as being the first definite record of the visit of white men to the summit of Monadnock.

In the scouting service of this period there was a young man from Dunstable who was laying up knowledge of the Monadnock region that was to affect the lives of thousands who perhaps have never heard his name. He was Joseph Blanchard, the son of Captain Joseph Blanchard, bred in arms and in the occupation of land surveyor and the building of townships. One of the name met Captain Willard at the mouth of the Contoocook as above stated, and one led scouts up the Souhegan River, and around the ponds of the Monadnock region which he described in the very language of Captain Jabez Fairbanks as "the several ponds where ye Indians formerly lived." Owing to the identity of names we are unable to ascribe this service with certainty to the younger or elder man of the name, but in the same line of service the young man became Colonel Joseph Blanchard, who commanded a regiment in the French and Indian War of 1755, in which Captain Peter Powers commanded a company and Captain Robert Rogers served with his famous company of Rangers in which John Stark of later Revolutionary fame was lieutenant. Of Joseph Blanchard much will be heard later. (See Middle Monadnock and Town of Jaffrey.)

The war ended in December and was followed by a brief reign of peace in which settlements crept nearer to the foot of Monadnock. Massachusetts, at this time claimant to all lands west of the Merrimack, now of New Hampshire, had granted territory comprising a large part of the present townships of Rindge, Jaffrey and Peterborough, and settlement was well begun when, on March 29, 1744, England declared war against France, and for thirteen of the nineteen years beginning with 1744 and ending in 1763, the colonies were almost constantly involved in war. Again dusky files of silent warriors threaded the woods from Canada to renew their depredations upon the advancing frontier. In this war, known as King George's War, Samuel Willard, now Colonel, commanded a regiment in the first siege of Louisburg. With the appearance of the Indians on the scene, the new settlements at the foot of Monadnock, including Jaffrey and Peterborough, Keene and other towns were abandoned, and the settlers returned to the greater security of the garrisoned towns whence they came, stout Abel Platts only remaining in Rindge.

In that part of Lunenburg now known as Ashby, on July 5, 1748, Old Style, a war party of thirty or forty Indians attacked the garrison of John Fitch. The house was well known as a place of entertainment for travelers to the northern wilderness, and was also headquarters for the scouts who patrolled the nearby woods. All but two of its soldiers were away on a scout. John Fitch was at work in his hayfield and his wife was returning from a near-by spring with a pail of water, when the attack was made. The two soldiers were killed, the house sacked and burned, and Fitch, with his wife and five small children, were taken prisoners. Another Captain Tarbell with his men from Groton, Lancaster, and Westford, started immediately in pursuit, but before they had proceeded far they found a message from Fitch on a piece of paper stuck in the bark of a tree, saying that if pursued the Indians would kill their captives, upon which the scouts returned to their homes. After great hardships the Fitch family, with their captors, reached Canada, where the youngest child, an infant at the breast, died. One of the children, a small boy, had been strapped so tightly to the back of his Indian captor that he was in a measure crippled for life. His legs were so paralyzed by this cruel treatment that they were always of dwarfish proportions. The family were soon after ransomed, and returned by ship to Providence, Rhode Island, where in December of the same year, Susannah, the mother, died from the consequences of her hard experience.

In later years, Paul Fitch, one of the family of captives, settled in Jaffrey on the hill north of the present Cheshire factory, known as the Benjamin Pierce farm. John Fitch, the father, once a great land owner and a well-to-do, never recovered from the disastrous experience. He also suffered great losses from the depreciated currency of the time and in his old age became poor and dependent. He, too, came to Jaffrey to make his home with his son, but in September, 1781, was waited upon by the constable and warned out of the township. Contrary to custom, he seems to have heeded the warning; but time has its revenges, monuments have been erected to his memory, and the city of Fitchburg, Massachusetts, which adopted his name, is his proud memorial to this day.

On October 4, 1750, the people of Peterborough, in an appeal to the Massachusetts Legislature for protection from the Indians, stated: "Several Indians have appeared in the township, and last Sabbath day some of them broke open a House there and none of the family being at home Rifled the same and carried away many things. And the inhabitants are put in Great Fear and Terror of their lives So that they Must be Obliged to leave the Town which is now very considerably settled Unless they can have some Relief from the Great Goodness of your Honours." Similar petitions were sent from Winchendon (Mass.) where guns were heard in the woods, and the people, as in Peterborough, were shut up in their fort in fear of their lives. Tradition, supported by the letter of Reverend Laban Ainsworth upon early conditions in the township, asserts that a similar experience befell the settlers of Jaffrey.

These petitions from neighboring towns give an idea of the feeling of apprehension and alarm that pervaded the whole region about Monadnock, and delayed for many years the permanent occupancy and development of the region. After eight years more of war, peace finally came to the distracted colonies by the surrender of Montreal to the English and the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763.

The records of scouting expeditions in the State Archives of Massachusetts and New Hampshire abundantly prove the frequent presence of Indians in the territory of Jaffrey, if not their permanent residence here.

In 1784 Ebenezer Stratton moved from the west part of Jaffrey across the line into Rindge, where he took up land on the shore of Bullet Pond. Not long after his settlement, according to family tradition, a roving band of Indians, who claimed the region as their former home, came and camped for a time on the shore of the pond. The story is probable and accords with the stories repeated in many other towns of roving bands of Indians returning to their former hunting grounds.

Jaffrey has nothing laid up against the aborigines. They gave names to our ponds and streams, to us in many instances meaningless and soon forgotten, but again of such haunting beauty and majesty that they have never yielded to the commonplace designations that our unimaginative progenitors were wont to apply. For two names that have dignified the town of Jaffrey since its beginning we are under perpetual obligation to our Indian predecessors. These names are *Monadnock* and *Contoocook.*

Indian arrow heads of chipped flint, brought, it is said, by Indian traders from the far West, have been found in considerable numbers around our ponds and streams. Four broken flint arrow tips have been found near Squantum in recent years. These doubtless marked the spot where luckless Nimrod missed his game and hit a tree. The fact that relics so small and inconspicuous have been occasionally picked up suggests that many still remain to reward sharp-eyed search. When the railroad was built across the marshes at the lower end of Contoocook Lake, Indian relics were uncovered in a gravelly island and among them a nearly perfect specimen of the stone pestle with which they used to pulverize their dried corn. On the Blake farm by the east shore of the same lake, now owned by George L. Jowders, tradition tells us that land near the shore was already cleared when the white men came, and Indian fireplaces, a few of which escaped the plow and may still be seen in the shape of depressions in the ground, said to be paved with stones bearing evidence of fire. These, by their number and size, would indicate a former Indian village of more than seasonal duration.

On this farm was reared Hon. Hiram Blake, for many years a lawyer in Keene. He was much interested in archeological research relating to the Indians, and is authority for statements concerning the Blake farm here given. He had in his possession a large number of arrow heads, weapons and utensils, amounting, it is said, to more than half a bushel, which were uncovered by the plow in a single cache on his home farm. These, according to his theory, were hidden by the owners when going away from the village on a migration from which they never returned.

By these records of the scoutmasters, based on actual knowledge and the experience of their time, it is clearly shown that our section was once a favorite hunting ground, if not the permanent home, of Indian tribes. The scattered relics named are corroborative evidence to the same effect. Our aboriginal history, though neither spectacular nor sanguinary, is secure.

When the lands around Monadnock, once occupied as hunting grounds by the Indians, were allotted to settlers, there was no one of the original proprietors on the ground to question the white man's title to his new found real estate. That was to be the white man's own quarrel and makes the next chapter in the history of Jaffrey.