

CHAPTER IV.

THE LAST FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR.

1754—1760.

The treaty of Aix la Chapelle had brought a suspension of hostilities between England and France, but not permanent peace. None of the questions at issue had been settled; both nations were eagerly grasping more territory in America; their interests and their claims continued to clash, and war broke out again in 1754. Since 1749, with occasional exceptions, the returning pioneers and others who had joined them had been left in peaceful possession of their property, and the little settlements in New Hampshire had increased in population, others had been added to them, and all had taken on an air of thrift and prosperity. But now the savages again threatened the frontier.

Foreseeing the impending storm, the legislature took up the militia laws of the province, amended them to suit the times, and made them more stringent and effective. The old laws of 1718 and 1719 provided that "All male persons from 16 to 60 years of age, except Negroes and Indians, should perform military service," and lists of all persons within the precincts of a company or troop were to be taken by the clerk of such company four times a year; that all should attend duty when listed; and heavy fines were imposed for neglect or refusal. The towns were required to "provide a stock of powder, bullets, flints and arms for their poor and renew the same from time to time;" and all the details of military service and discipline were provided for. Under the new laws, company officers were required to call out their troops or companies at least four times a year for military exercise, under a penalty of five pounds for each day's neglect. Every foot soldier failing to perform his military duty was fined ten shillings for each day's neglect, and every trooper twenty shillings; and for all fines an officer could issue his warrant and make

distress—attach the delinquent's property and sell at auction on four days' notice.

Massachusetts offered bounties of fifty pounds for every male Indian over twelve years of age delivered at Boston, or forty pounds for every scalp of such Indian; twenty-five pounds for every female prisoner of any age and for males under twelve, and twenty pounds for every scalp of such female or boy. An act was also passed by the legislature of that province, giving to companies of "not less than thirty men scouting not less than thirty days a bounty of £220 to be paid out of the public treasury for every captive delivered as aforesaid, and £200 for every scalp."

Rangers were considered the best protection for the settlements, and companies were soon formed, the most noted being those of Captain—afterwards Major—Robert Rogers, with Captains John and William Stark, all of New Hampshire. They afterwards joined the expeditions against Crown Point and Ticonderoga and did excellent service there and all through the war. They served as scouts and guides for the army, and distinguished themselves in many bloody encounters. In the last years of the war they were "the most terrible band of partizan warriors in America."¹ "Inured to savage warfare they gained a continental reputation," and "no colony sent better troops into the field."²

There was a military company in Keene at that time, with a full complement of officers, but no roll of its members has been found. It was attached to the regiment of Col. Joseph Blanchard of Dunstable (Nashua) of which Josiah Willard of this town was lieutenant colonel, the same who had command of a company here in 1748.

On the 11th of June, 1754, the Indians came to the house of Nathaniel Meloon of Stevenstown (Salisbury) and carried him, his wife and three children away captives. On the 15th of August, they appeared again near the same place, killed Mrs. Call and Timothy Cook and captured Enos Bishop. Those upper settlements were broken up and the inhabitants retired to the lower towns for safety.

¹ Barstow's History of New Hampshire, page 197.

² Lodge's History of American Colonies.

Gov. Wentworth sent two detachments of twenty men each from Exeter and Kingston, and one of fifty men from Col. Blanchard's regiment, under Major John Goffe, to scout in the eastern and central parts of the province. Before the close of the month he also sent two detachments from Col. Blanchard's regiment under Major Benjamin Bellows to protect the Connecticut valley. One of twenty-one men was stationed at Walpole under Major Bellows himself, who served as lieutenant commanding the company, with the veteran Capt. Phineas Stevens as his orderly sergeant. These officers held the higher rank in the regiment of militia, and at the same time accepted positions of lower rank in the detachments for defence. Major Bellows was expected to cover Charlestown, Walpole, Westmoreland and Great Meadows, and even Westminster and Rockingham, but he had also the local militia to assist. The other company of twenty-six men was placed under Lt. Col. Josiah Willard, who also served as lieutenant commanding the company, and small detachments were stationed at Fort Dummer, Keene and other places in this vicinity. The men were mustered Sept. 13 and discharged Nov. 19, of that year. Ichabod Fisher of Keene was in Willard's company. These troops were in addition to the local militia; but beyond this New Hampshire did almost nothing for the protection of the settlements in the Connecticut valley.

Gov. Shirley of Massachusetts complained to the king of the neglect of New Hampshire, and asked to be relieved from the maintenance of those forts which were now beyond his jurisdiction. The king sent additional instructions to Gov. Wentworth, who urged upon the legislature the necessity of making provision for the defence of the western frontier. But the legislature delayed action, alleged the poverty of the province as an excuse for shirking the expense, and gained time by sending an address to the king. The king's instructions to Gov. Wentworth had contained a threat to restore Fort Dummer to Massachusetts "with a proper district contiguous thereto" if New Hampshire did not provide for its maintenance; and the same threat applied to all these forts in New Hampshire

which Massachusetts maintained. But to the document was also added: "But His Majesty, considering the importance of the said fort, and the great mischief that may happen to his subjects in those parts, in case the same should in the mean time fall into the hands of the enemy, doth therefore think it proper hereby to order and require the governor of Massachusetts Bay to represent to the assembly of that province the necessity of continuing to provide for the security of Fort Dummer until a final answer can be obtained from New Hampshire and His Majesty's pleasure be further signified herein."

Upon receiving this order the general court of Massachusetts voted to maintain those forts for three months; and they afterwards extended the time and kept troops there till the spring of 1757, when they were made places of rendezvous by the generals commanding the British forces, and remained under their control through the war. At this time there were thirty-two families at Charlestown, and they had left the fort and settled on their lots. The place was generally called No. 4 until after the close of this war, and even in the early part of the 19th century.

On the 30th of August that place was again visited by the savages. Eleven of them went to the house of Capt. James Johnson, about 100 rods north of the fort, captured him, his wife, three children, a young sister of Mrs. Johnson, Ebenezer Farnsworth and Peter Larabee, and took them to Crown Point and thence to Canada.

This and the outrages at Stevenstown were committed by the St. Francis Indians and their allies, the Schaghticoques and Squawkheags, who formerly inhabited this region.

Capt. Phineas Stevens, who was at No. 4, immediately sent a dispatch to his commanding officer on the frontier, Col. Hinsdale, at Fort Dummer, announcing the capture and stating the time to have been on the morning of the 30th of August. Maj. Bellows was at Westmoreland when the news reached him, and he immediately reported the fact to his regimental commander, Col. Blanchard, but makes an error of one day in the time of the capture.

Letter from Major Bellows to Col. Blanchard.

"Sir: We have the news from Charlestown, that on Thursday morning, the 29th of this instant, the Indians came to the house of James Johnson, broke in and took said Johnson, his wife, and three children, and a maid, and one Ebenezer Farnsworth and Larabee and they suppose have carried them all off. They have not found any of them killed. The people are in great distress all down the river and at Keene, and at Swanzey, and the few men sent, will not supply more than one town, and the people cannot secure their grain nor hardly keep their garrison &c.

"BENJAMIN BELLOWS.

"Westmoreland, Aug. 31, 1754.

Colonel Joseph Blanchard.

"P. S. I have got no further than Westmoreland, when I wrote this, and got all the men safe there. B. B."

Mr. Hale in his *Annals of Keene* says: "In this year, the savages again committed acts of hostility.—Some time in the fall, an express arrived at Keene, bringing information, that a party of the enemy had appeared in the vicinity of Penacook (Concord), where they had killed, and captured, several whites. This was in the afternoon. The inhabitants immediately assembled, and appointed several persons to keep guard, through the night, directing them to walk, continually, from the house of David Nims (near Lewis Page's house, in Prison-street), to the meadow gate (near Mr. Carpenter's); and agreed immediately to complete the fort, the re-building of which had already been commenced. The next day every one able to labor, went to work upon the fort, and soon prepared it for the reception of the settlers." (That is, repaired the eighteen or twenty houses inside the fort for families to occupy. Mr. Carpenter lived where Mr. E. F. Lane now does.)

The spring of 1755 opened with the movement of three expeditions against the strongholds of the French on our borders. One under Gen. Braddock to Fort Duquesne; one under Gen. Shirley of Massachusetts against Niagara; and one commanded by Gen. Johnson against Crown Point.

However delinquent New Hampshire may have been in protecting the settlements in the Connecticut valley, she did nobly in furnishing troops for outside expeditions. For the army of Gen. Johnson, the province raised a regiment of 600 men under Col. Joseph Blanchard of Dunstable, with Josiah Willard of Keene lieutenant colonel. That regiment was ready to take the field on the 1st of April, and was

ordered to rendezvous at the fort in Stevenstown, now Franklin. The fort was on the bank of the Merrimac river, on the farm since owned by Daniel Webster. The regiment marched from there to No. 4, and thence via Fort Dummer and Albany to join Gen. Johnson, and was posted at Fort Edward. No names of Keene men are found on the rolls of this regiment except that of Lt. Col. Willard, doubtless for the reason that all were needed to protect their own settlement.

Early in the season the Indians began their ravages in these valleys. At No. 4 they killed a number of cattle, carrying away every part that was valuable for food or for any other purpose. So free from these raids had the country been for several years that people had pushed out into the wilderness and taken up lands beyond the protection of the forts. These advanced settlers, some of them miles away from any fort or neighbors, were now in great peril. Several families in this vicinity, among them Mr. Peter Hayward, the first settler in what is now Surry, hastened to the fort in Keene. His next neighbor, Mr. Ebenezer Day of Keene, came at the same time.

In June the Indians attacked a party at Hinsdale, on the west side of the Connecticut, in what is now Vernon, Vt., killed two men and captured one. The others escaped to the fort. On the 27th they surprised Caleb How, Hilkiah Grout and Benjamin Gaffield near the same place. How was killed, Gaffield was drowned in attempting to cross the river, and Grout escaped. The savages then went to Bridgman's Fort, where these men belonged, captured fourteen persons and burned the fort. Among the prisoners was the wife of Caleb How, "The Fair Captive," whose pathetic story is told in a brilliant manner by Col. Humphrey in his "Life of Gen. Israel Putnam."¹ On the 30th of the same month, they appeared again at Keene.

"On one of the last days of June, an attack was made on the fort at Keene, then in command of Capt. William Syms. The savages were beaten off; but in their retreat they killed many cattle, burned several buildings, and captivated Benjamin Twitchell."²

¹ See also Belknap's History of New Hampshire, vol. 3.

² Massachusetts Archives.

“When traces of Indians were discovered, near any of the frontiers, it was the custom to fire, as an alarm to all within hearing, three guns in regular and quick succession. If heard at any of the posts, it was answered in the same manner; if not answered, the alarm was repeated. In June, the people at Westmoreland, discovering traces of Indians, fired an alarm, which was heard at Keene. A body of men was immediately sent to their relief; but they returned without discovering the enemy. That they were lurking in the vicinity, and that they followed home the party from Keene, is probable, as, the next day they captured Benjamin Twitchell. He had been to Ash Swamp; on his return, he took with him a tub, which, it is supposed, he carried upon his head. This tub was afterwards found, on the East bank of the river, near where the mills now stand; and there the Indians probably seized him. He was conducted up the river; in the meadows, West and North of deacon Wilder’s, the Indians killed several oxen, a horse and colt. The colt was cut up, and the best pieces of meat carried off. In this meadow, they left a bow made of leverwood, and several arrows. They encamped, for the night, in M’Curdy’s meadow, in Surry, where four crotched sticks were discovered driven into the ground, in such positions as led to the belief that to each was confined one of the limbs of the prisoner. The party then proceeded to Quebec, where Twitchell met with Josiah Foster and his family, who were captured at Winchester. For the honor of Foster, the particulars of his capture should be recorded. Returning home, one evening, he found his house in the possession of Indians, who had captured his wife and children. He could have escaped, but he determined to give himself up, that he might share their fate, and have an opportunity to alleviate their sufferings. He accompanied them to Quebec, carrying his wife on his back, a great part of the way. There they remained until, being ransomed, they were sent, by water, to Boston. Twitchell was put on board the same vessel, but, being taken sick, he was set on shore, and died in a few days.

“A month or two afterwards, a party of Indians were discovered in the meadow, South of the town line, by the people of Swanzey. They, with four soldiers to guard them, were coming, in a body and armed, to work in the North meadows. The soldiers, who were in advance, heard a rustling in the bushes, and one, supposing it caused by a deer, fired his musket at the spot. The Indians, supposing they were discovered, rose and fired at the soldiers, who, frightened, ran to the quarter, now called Scotland. The people, coming up, saw the Indians, attacked them, and

drove them to the plain, West of the factory. An express was instantly sent to Keene; and a party of fifteen men, under Capt. Metcalf, went out to meet them. This party went first to the foot of the hill, beyond Mr. Heaton's, supposing the Indians would there cross the Branch. Remaining there a short time, without discovering any Indians, a Mr. Howard proposed to go to another ford still farther up. Josiah French, a shrewd man, observed, 'those who wish to meet with the Indians, had better stay here: I feel no desire to see them, and will go over the hill with Howard.' It was agreed to go over the hill; but no sooner had they reached the top of the nearest eminence, than they discovered nine Indians crossing at the ford they had left. They lay in wait for them a few hours, but did not see them afterwards. Returning to the fort, Howard received no mercy from the men, women and children within it. Several days afterwards, the men went, in a body and armed, to hoe Mr. Day's corn, near Surry, and discovered that an old house, in that neighborhood, had been burnt; it was supposed to have been set on fire by the same party of Indians.

"Afterwards, but in what year is not recollected, another, and the last party of Indians made a visit to Keene. The inhabitants had cleared and fenced a large common field consisting of about two hundred acres, laying southwardly of Mrs. Lanman's [Thomas Thompson's] house. This field was used as a cow pasture, and the access to it was by a path which led southwardly along the high ground East of the place where the turnpike and Baker's lane unite. When driving their cows to this pasture, it was the custom of the inhabitants not to go in the path, for fear of a surprise, but on one or the other side of it. Early one morning, they came suddenly upon a party of Indians, concealed in thick bushes, and busily engaged in mending their moccasons. They instantly started up and escaped. It was afterwards ascertained that the leather, with which they were mending their moccasons, had been stolen, the night before, from a tannery at Walpole or Charlestown." (Annals, pages 32-4.)

In July came the depressing news of Braddock's defeat in his attempt on Fort Duquesne. The province had been drained of men to swell those three armies of invasion, every one of which was defeated. In many places the crops were lost or greatly injured from want of men to cultivate and gather them, and the outlook for the coming winter was exceedingly gloomy.

July 25, Seth Field of Northfield, writes: "Since the disastrous tidings from Ohio, and the delay of the Crown Point forces, the mischief done above us together with our circumstances, has so discouraged the hearts of our people that they are almost ready to give up all and care only for their lives. A fine harvest is on the ground, and likely to be lost for want of a guard. The few soldiers we have are constantly on duty, and not half sufficient to guard the laborers." (History of Northfield.)

The Indians made frequent attacks on the New Hampshire frontiers during the summer, particularly in the Connecticut valley. Sometime in July, Daniel Twitchell and John Flint were cutting timber for oars on the hill half a mile east of the town of Walpole. Both were shot dead, one was scalped, the other cut open and his heart taken out and laid on his breast—a threat of continued war.

On the 22d an attack was made on Hinsdell's fort, and two men were killed and two or three captured. In a letter of Col. Hinsdell to Gov. Wentworth, written at this time, he says: "I entreat your Excellency's compassionate regards for myself and the people in these parts, and earnestly pray your Excellency will send us a suitable protection. We are loath to tarry here merely to be killed."

Gov. Wentworth sent a company of twenty-one men to No. 4, under Capt. James Neall, to scout that part of the country, and Massachusetts sent two companies to the posts below. Capt. Neall's company was mustered into the service on the 13th of August, and discharged on the 1st of October.

John Kilburn, the first settler of Walpole, had built his log cabin on the border of the rich intervale a little to the south of Cold river. About noon on the 17th of August, Kilburn and his son John, seventeen years old, and a man named Peak, and his son, were returning home from their work, when they discovered Indians "as thick as grasshoppers" concealed among the bushes. They hastened to the house, fastened the door and prepared for defence. Mrs. Kilburn and the daughter Hetty bravely seconded their efforts, ran the bullets and aided in every way possible.

Their game having escaped and taken refuge in the house, the Indians decided to make their first attack on Col. Bellows, whose house, or fort, was a mile and a half south of Kilburn's. As they crawled up the bank and crossed a foot path east of their house the Kilburns counted 197 of them, and there were as many more lying in ambush near the mouth of Cold river. Col. Bellows had a mill on "Blanchard's brook," a mile east of Kilburn's, where he was at work with his gang of about twenty—some authorities say thirty—men. The Indians waylaid his path. Bellows and his men, each with a bag of meal on his back and his gun in his hand, started for his fort, and soon their dogs gave warning of Indians. Bellows ordered his men to throw down their meal, advance to a rise of ground just in front of them, crawl up the bank, then spring to their feet, give one whoop, and drop into the sweet ferns.

The manoeuvre succeeded admirably. Upon hearing the whoop, the Indians rose in a semicircle across the path, and Bellows' men gave them a volley that laid several of them low, and so disconcerted the whole body that they fled into the bushes without firing a shot. Bellows filed his men off to the south, and reached the fort in safety.

The whole body of Indians then returned to Kilburn's house. One of them, "Philip," who had previously made Kilburn visits of pretended friendship, came forward and called out from behind a tree: "Old John, young John, I know you; come out here. We give ye good quarter." "Quarter!" replied Kilburn in a voice of thunder, "You black rascals, begone or we'll quarter you."

Philip retired, a consultation was held, and then the war-whoop sounded, as if "all the devils in hell had broke loose," and a furious assault began.

"Probably no less than four hundred bullets were lodged in Kilburn's house at the first fire." The enemy were on higher ground, and when the fight was over "the roof was a perfect 'riddle sieve.'" Some fell to butchering cattle, others to destroying hay and grain, "while a shower of bullets kept up one continued pelting against the house." The two men and two boys poured in their

shots with deadly aim. The two women loaded the guns, and the firing was so rapid as to heat the barrels till they were compelled to wait for them to cool. The Indians believed that a much larger force was in the house. The women gathered up the bullets that fell through the roof and ran them over for their own use. All that afternoon the incessant firing was kept up. As the sun went down the savages began to creep away, taking their dead and wounded with them; and when night came on, the brave little garrison was relieved from the strain and left to enjoy the victory it had so gallantly won. Peak was wounded in the thigh, and died five days later from want of surgical care. All the others escaped unhurt.

Thus Keene was covered and protected by these more advanced settlements, and her battles were fought on their ground.

The attacks of the enemy were so frequent and the troops so few that in September the citizens of No. 4, despairing of aid from New Hampshire again petitioned the authorities of Massachusetts for protection, stating that on ten different occasions attacks had been made on that place within the two years preceding. Massachusetts responded and again sent her soldiers for the defence of that town and others in the vicinity, and a guard remained at the fort until it came under the control of the British generals in 1757. With the exception of killing and driving away some cattle, no more outrages were committed in the Connecticut valley during that autumn.

The season of 1755 had been one of great distress to the people of these frontier towns. They were harrassed with the constant danger of attack from the savages, and those dangers frequently culminated in massacre or captivity. At Hinsdale and vicinity eighteen persons had been killed or captured during the season.

“The exertions made for the reduction of Crown Point, not only failed of their object, but provoked the Indians to execute their mischievous designs against the frontiers of New Hampshire; which were now left wholly uncovered, and exposed to their full force. Between the rivers Connecticut and St. Francis there is a safe and easy communication by short carrying places with which they were

perfectly acquainted. The Indians of the latter river, therefore, made frequent incursions, and returned unmolested with their prisoners and booty." (Belknap's History of New Hampshire, vol. 2, page 293.)

At this time Lieut. John Hawks was in command of a line of forts on the western frontier of Massachusetts, from Northfield through Greenfield, Colrain and Charlemon to Hoosack mountain. Indian scouts were seen along the border and it was a time of general alarm.

In the provincial council at Portsmouth, Jan. 2, 1756, was read:

"The Humble Memorial & Petition of Josiah Willard Benjamin Bellows & Isaac Parker (of Claremont) in behalf of the Inhabitants of the Towns of Keene, Swansy, Winchester, Walpole, Putney & New Charles Town all in the Province of New Hampshire, Shews—

"That the Towns aforesaid are Situate on the Frontiers of the Province aforesaid, and tho they are very Considerably Improved So as to Raise all the Necessary Provisions for the Inhabitants, yet are now but Weak handed many of their ablest Men having Listed in the Late Expedition & are Still absent— And by their Situation the Said Inhabitants are Greatly Expos'd to Danger from the Incursions of the French & Indian Enemy from whom there Seems to be a Greater Probability of an Attack now * * * * than at any time Since the Last War. That the Said Inhabitants have at their Own Expense Built Good Forts which would be Sufficient for their Defence with a Competent number of Men which they did & Defended their Settlements while they got their Daily Bread at the Peril of their Lives During the Last War. But as there Seems to be no other Rout for the Enemy to take or at Least not any where they are Invited by an Equal Prospect of Success, As there is no Room to Doubt of their Inclination or Vigilance to Improve Every Opportunity to Annoy us, nor of their Ability to Execute their Schemes for making a Descent upon Our Settlements, which they Look upon with a very Envious Eye, the Said Inhabitants Cant but Apprehend their Danger Greater now than Ever—This Fear is Quicken'd also by the Remembrance of their Great Sufferings During the Last War & which they now begin to feel again with others of the Same kind Coming upon them with Double Weight—For besides the Loss of many Lives w^{ch} they then Sustained, it is not a most uncomfortable Situation to be kept always in fear of being Ambushed to have Life Continually hang in Suspence &

Doubt, from those who Lye in Wait to Destroy—to fear being Suddenly Dispatched or Captivated by a Barbarous Enemy when about Business in the Secure Retreat they have—that the very Water they use is Purchased with the hazzard of their Blood as well as their Bread at the Peril of their Lives and to have no Prospect of Help nor Asylum to fly to for Safety This State of Life Every One on the Least Attention will See is most Pittiable—* * * *
 That the Said Inhabitants Weary of Such a Precarious Condition will not Endure it much Longer but Will & must Quit their Habitations tho' they now begin to be Pleasant (in other Respects) as Well as Profitable yet they had Rather part with all than Risque their Lives in the manner aforesaid * * * * But whether this will be for the Public Good—whether the Advantage Arising to the Province by Maintaining & Supporting these Settlements will Countervail the Charge is what your Petitioners would Humbly Suggest to be Considered And which Way Soever it Shall be Determined they Pray they may have an Explicit & Speedy Answer That they may not be kept in Expectation till they have no Way of Escape—till they are either Killd Captivated or have their Substance Destroyed And as they Apprehend the Danger Great w^{ch} is Impending they Pray Your Speedy & wise Resolution upon the Premises and they Shall as in Duty Bound Ever Pray &c—

Josiah Willard
 Benj^a Bellows
 Isaac Parker

“In Council Jan^{ry} 2^d 1756 read & recommend & Sent Down to the Hon^{ble} y^e Assembly

Theodore Atkinson Sec^{ry}”

(State Papers, vol. 18, page 434.)

Apparently no action was taken upon this petition. On the 7th of June the Indians again appeared at Winchester and captured Josiah Foster, his wife and two children. On the 18th they visited Charlestown and killed Lieut. Moses Willard and wounded his son. They also appeared at Hinsdale, and were discovered in ambush by Zebulon Stebbins and Reuben Wright, who gave the alarm and prevented the capture of several persons for whom they were lying in wait. Wright was wounded, but both he and Stebbins escaped.

During the winter of 1756-7, a company of rangers, numbering fifty-five men, under Capt. John Burk, was

stationed at Hinsdell's fort by the authorities of Massachusetts. No incursions were made until the 20th of April, when about seventy French and Indians came to No. 4, captured Dea. Thomas Adams, David Farnsworth, Samson Colefax, Thomas Robbins, and Asa Spofford and took them to Canada. Only Farnsworth and Robbins returned.

Early in March of this year another regiment of 500 men was raised by New Hampshire to continue outside operations against the French. Men from the neighboring towns joined this regiment, but none from Keene, so far as appears. One battalion under Lt. Col. John Goffe, of Bedford, had its rendezvous at No. 4; but it arrived too late to prevent the outrage committed there on the 20th of April, and after halting a few days at that post marched to Albany and thence to Fort William Henry. This force was replaced at No. 4 by a regiment of 500 men from Connecticut under Col. Whiting. These troops were active and ranged the woods as far as Lake Champlain.

Lord Loudon, now commander-in-chief of the English forces, took command of the expedition to Halifax, leaving the cowardly and inefficient Gen. Webb in command before Crown Point, who with 4,000 men lay timidly in his camp, and allowed Montcalm, with a force scarcely superior to his own, to capture Fort William Henry, including the garrison of 2,200 men. After the surrender the Indian allies of the French, in spite of Montcalm's orders to the contrary, massacred many of the prisoners, including 80 of the New Hampshire battalion of 200 men.

The settlers were seized with consternation and dismay. Webb was terror-stricken and sent pressing appeals for help, and New Hampshire immediately raised another battalion of 250 under Col. Thomas Tash of Durham. After his success, however, Gen. Montcalm withdrew to Canada, and Col. Tash with his battalion was stationed at No. 4, replacing the Connecticut troops, who marched to Fort Edward.

During these years of the war the annual town meetings of Keene had been held on the first Tuesday in March in each year as required by the charter, and at each,

money had been raised for the Rev. Mr. Carpenter's salary and other expenses. Before the meetinghouse was completed these meetings were held at private houses—that of 1755 at Joseph Ellis's, and that of 1756, at Nathan Blake's. That of 1757 was opened at the fort and adjourned to the house of Joseph Ellis. "Voted to Build a Bridge Over the River at the Place called Dales Ford-way."¹ Isaac Clark, Lieut. Ephraim Dorman, Ensign William Smeed, Ebenezer Nims, Nathan Blake and Dea. David Foster were chosen a committee to build the bridge, and "Seventy Pounds New Tenor" were voted to defray the expense.

The annual meeting of 1758 was held "at the House of Ser. Ebenezer Nims in the Fort." "One Hundred and Thirty Pounds New Tenor" were raised for the support of the gospel for the year—showing that one dollar of specie was worth five of the paper currency of that time, his salary being twenty-six pounds, silver money.

Article 7 of the warrant, "To see if they will do anything further toward finishing the meetinghouse," was dismissed. The hardships and dangers of the war were so great, the production of crops so restricted, and money so depreciated that real poverty was upon the settlers with all its privations and discouragements. They suffered at times from want of sufficient food and clothing; and, rigidly and devoutly pious as most of them were, they could not spare the money to complete their church edifice.

All the military expeditions of the English in this country in 1757 had failed, and again New Hampshire raised her quota of 800 men for the three planned for 1758. Of those troops one hundred men were detailed for garrison duty at No. 4. During the summer of this year, the Indians continued their incursions on the frontier towns. "At Hinsdale, they killed Capt. Moore, and his son, took his family, and burned his house."² At No. 4 they killed Asahel Stebbins, took Mrs. Stebbins and Isaac Parker prisoners, and slaughtered a large number of cattle. The cattle of the frontiersmen, roaming in the woods, often served to furnish provision for the skulking savage. Capt.

¹ The first bridge at what are now Faulkner & Colony's mills,

² Belknap's History of New Hampshire, vol. 2, page 302.

John Burk with his company of rangers guarded the lower towns in the Connecticut valley. John Hawks was now a major, commanded troops in western Massachusetts and in the campaign against Ticonderoga; and Capt. Isaac Wyman, who afterwards came to Keene, had commanded at Fort Massachusetts in 1755-7, and continued to hold the same position.

The disastrous defeat of Gen. Abercrombie before Ticonderoga had caused great depression in the hearts of the people, but their hopes revived when Gen. Amherst, soon after his success at Louisburg, arrived at Boston with six veteran regiments and pressed on through the woods to Albany and took command of the army before Ticonderoga. It was too late for offensive operations that fall, but the confidence of the people was restored, particularly when, in November, Gen. Forbes took Fort Duquesne, and changed its name to Pittsburg, in honor of William Pitt, whose vigorous war policy had brought success to the British arms.

During the winter No. 4 was garrisoned by 100 regular troops from the army, under Capt. Cruikshanks, but the Indians made no incursions.

The spring of 1759 opened with a still more vigorous prosecution of the war. Commanders of high rank who had failed to win victories were superseded by young, ambitious officers of true military ability. Gen. Amherst had replaced the weak and pompous Abercrombie; Gen. James Wolfe, then but thirty-two years old, was sent to operate against Quebec; and Gen. Prideaux was directed to seize the forts at Niagara and then descend the St. Lawrence river and capture Montreal.

Pitt made a personal appeal to Gov. Wentworth for troops and supplies, and New Hampshire responded with a regiment of 1,000 men under Col. Zaccheus Lovewell of Dunstable. The veteran John Goffe was its lieutenant colonel. Other towns in this vicinity sent their quotas, and no doubt Keene furnished its proportion, but nearly all the rolls of that regiment have been lost. Its rendezvous was at Dunstable, and it marched thence via Worcester to Springfield, where it was mustered into the

British service. From Springfield it marched to Albany and thence to Oswego and Niagara.

Early in May the 100 regular troops were withdrawn from No. 4 to join the army of Gen. Amherst, and were replaced by an equal number of Massachusetts troops sent up from Deerfield under Capt. Elijah Smith.

About the first of August the French dismantled and abandoned the fortresses at Ticonderoga and Crown Point, which had been for nearly thirty years their base of operations against the New England settlements, and they were immediately occupied by Gen. Amherst. This ended those raids on our frontiers which had brought such barbarous atrocities upon our people.

Wolfe and Montcalm met on the plains of Abraham on the 12th of September, and both fell. Quebec was surrendered to the English on the 18th.

But there was still one other post that had been the rendezvous of those who had committed the most inhuman barbarities on the English settlers. This was the village of the St. Francis Indians at the junction of the St. Francis river with the St. Lawrence. From that point scores of raiding parties had been fitted out, and to that village they had returned with their prisoners, scalps and booty, received their bounties from the French, divided their plunder, and danced their war-dances while torturing their victims. It was determined to wipe that place out of existence, and chastise its brutal inhabitants.

On the 13th of September, Gen. Amherst despatched Major Rogers with 200 men, most of them his New Hampshire rangers, with orders to destroy that village "in such a manner as shall most effectually disgrace and injure the enemy," but to spare women and children.

The story of that perilous expedition is a thrilling one, but is too long for insertion here. No raid of the savages on the white settlers, in any war, was more frightful and bloody, or fell upon the victims with a more complete surprise. Two hundred Indians were slain, twenty women and children taken prisoners, and the village totally destroyed by fire. Pursued by a superior force, the rangers made a hasty and disastrous retreat. Nearly one-half their

number died from fatigue, exposure and starvation, or were slain by the infuriated enemy. The remainder reached No. 4 in a starving condition sometime in October.

All the great expeditions planned by Pitt for this year's campaign had been successful. With Forbes at Pittsburg, Johnson at Niagara, Amherst at Crown Point and Ticonderoga, and Wolfe's army at Quebec, all pushing the enemy to the wall, the Indians had enough to do to aid their allies in defence, and had no time for ravages. Consequently the settlements in this region had been left in peace through the season of 1759, although not free from fear of the lurking foe.

Having Ticonderoga and Crown Point in our possession, these settlements were covered by our armies there, and in October, the troops stationed at the several posts on the frontier, except Forts Dummer and No. 4, were withdrawn.

Instead of following up his advantage and pushing forward and seizing Montreal, which he might easily have done, and which would have insured possession of what he had already gained, Gen. Amherst spent the autumn in building fortifications and preparing the country about Lake George for permanent occupation by the English. He detailed Lt. Col. John Hawks, with axemen, and a guard of rangers who were also axemen, under Capt. John Stark, to cut a road through the forest from Crown Point towards No. 4. Starting from Crown Point on the 26th of October, and following the old Indian trail—the same that Hawks had traversed at least twice before, in his exchange of Raimbault for Nathan Blake—they opened the road across the country to Otter creek, and thence up that stream and over the mountains; and before winter set in they had the work completed to within twenty-six miles of No. 4.

In the spring of 1760, New Hampshire raised another regiment of 800 men under the veteran Col. John Goffe. Its rendezvous was at Litchfield, whence it marched through Milford, Peterboro and Keene to No. 4. They found only a bridle path from Merrimac to Keene, but they made it a comfortable road. Before they reached this vicinity, the

lurking savages, without much other demonstration, had carried off Joseph Willard, his wife and five children from their homestead near No. 4. An infant, Samuel, being burdensome, they took it aside on the second day out and beat out its brains against a tree. No other outrage was committed, and very few traces of Indians were found.

Col. Goffe with his regiment passed through Keene about the 1st of June. One of his soldiers died here, and one was left sick. From Keene, he marched by the way of Great Meadows to No. 4, where he made his headquarters for some time. Throwing his regiment across the Connecticut at Wentworth's ferry, two miles above the fort, he set his men to the work of opening a road to the west to meet the one cut the year before by Lt. Col. Hawks. It cost them forty-four days' time to clear a road over those twenty-six miles, but they performed the work so thoroughly that they transported their ammunition, baggage and supplies to the foot of the Green mountains in wagons,¹ following up the north bank of Black river through the present towns of Cavendish and Ludlow. From there they used pack horses and horse-barrows. They took with them for the army at Crown Point a large drove of cattle which had been collected at No. 4, and reached their destination in time to join the army of Gen. Haviland, then preparing to advance on Montreal. The regiment was present at the reduction of Isle Au Noix, St. Johns, Chamblar and Montreal—September 8—which gave the English all Canada and closed the war.

The troops returned home and were discharged in November. Prisoners were released and there was great rejoicing. The capture of the Willard family, in the spring, was the last incursion of the Indians into this county, and the war-whoop of the savage has never since been heard in this part of the country. The Willards were taken to Montreal, but returned after the capitulation of that city.

After fifteen years of almost constant terror from the savages, the country was at peace, and the brave pioneers could cultivate their lands without fear of butchery for themselves or their families. Those fifteen years had

¹ Belknap's History of New Hampshire, vol. 2, page 305, note.

completely roused the military spirit of the people, had trained them all in the arts of war, had made veteran soldiers of all the able bodied men in the country, and prepared them for the Revolutionary struggle which was to come fifteen years later.

No other province had furnished so many men for this war in proportion to the number of inhabitants as New Hampshire. None had been more prompt to fill its quotas, and none had furnished hardier, more skillful, or more effective antagonists of the wily savage. Five thousand men had been sent into the armies by this small province of only about 40,000 inhabitants, and great had been the losses and the sufferings of the people.

Of the ten regiments of militia in New Hampshire at this time, the 6th covered all this part of the province and was commanded by Col. Josiah Willard, with Benjamin Bellows of Walpole lieutenant colonel; and Col. Willard¹ continued in command until 1775.

The annual town meeting in 1759, held "at the house of Ensign William Smeed in the fort," again voted to dismiss the article relating to finishing the meetinghouse, but the salary of the minister was raised as usual.

No records of proprietors' meetings are found after that of Dec. 24, 1754, until 1759. On the 29th of May in that year "A legal meeting of the proprietors" was held at the house of Joseph Ellis, David Nims, moderator. Dea. David Foster was then proprietors' clerk.

"Voted upon the Tenth article to Grant to Messieurs David Belden Joshua Graves & Elisha Scott and Abner Graves the Liberty to turn the waters of the Stream known by the Name of the East Branch in the most Convenient Place for the use of a Saw-Mill and Corn-Mill and Shall have the Liberty and Priviledge of Said Stream so much as to Support sd Mills so long and upon these Conditions Hereafter Named viz That they will in the Space of two years Time Build and fit a good Saw Mill and Corn Mill and that the Inhabitants and Residents of the Town of Keene Shall have as good Priviledge both in Sawing and Grinding as the Inhabitants of Swanzey Passible Loggs to be Saw'd for the value of the one half of the Boards from Time to Time and

¹The adjutant general's reports put Col. Willard down as of Keene, but he lived at Winchester. His son, Capt. Josiah Willard, came here to live about 1762.

at all Times and when the above Said Gentlemen Shall Cease or Neglect to keep Mills there in good Repair to answer the Necessity of this Township for Sawing and Grinding then sd Priviledge to Return to this Propriety again."

This was the time when the waters of the East branch were turned from their natural channel below South Keene and diverted to the South branch, and the water power at Swanzey Factory was created.

On the 28th of August, a town meeting was held for the first time in the new meetinghouse, Capt. Michael Metcalf, moderator—the meetinghouse having been so far finished as to be used for that purpose—but on the 30th of January following a town meeting was held at the house of Joseph Ellis, which voted to raise ten pounds sterling money towards finishing the meetinghouse, and Gideon Ellis, Ebenezer Nims and Eleazar Sanger were chosen a committee to go on with that work.

The annual meeting of 1760, chose Dea. David Foster, town clerk. David Nims had held that position since the organization of the town.

On article third: "Voted that Eaighly Seven Spanish Mild Dollars be asses'd on Pools and Rateable Estates in this Town for the Support of the Gospel in this Place for the Present year." It was also voted to build a pound, thirty-six feet square, in front of house lots No. 28 and 29—the two lots next south of the present railroad, on the west side of Main street.

On the 29th of July, the town "Voted Not to Joyn with the People of Swanzey in Maintaining and Carrying on the worship and Ordinances of God," and that connection ceased.

Another meeting, on the 25th of September, Capt. Michael Metcalf, moderator: "Voted to hire a Suitable Person to Preach the Gospel in this Town for the space of Two Months"—and chose Lieut. Seth Heaton, Ebenezer Clark and Dr. Obadiah Blake a committee for that purpose.

The road along the eastern base of West mountain was laid out this year by the selectmen.