



By Allen E. Curtis

## KING PHILIP'S WAR, 1675-1678

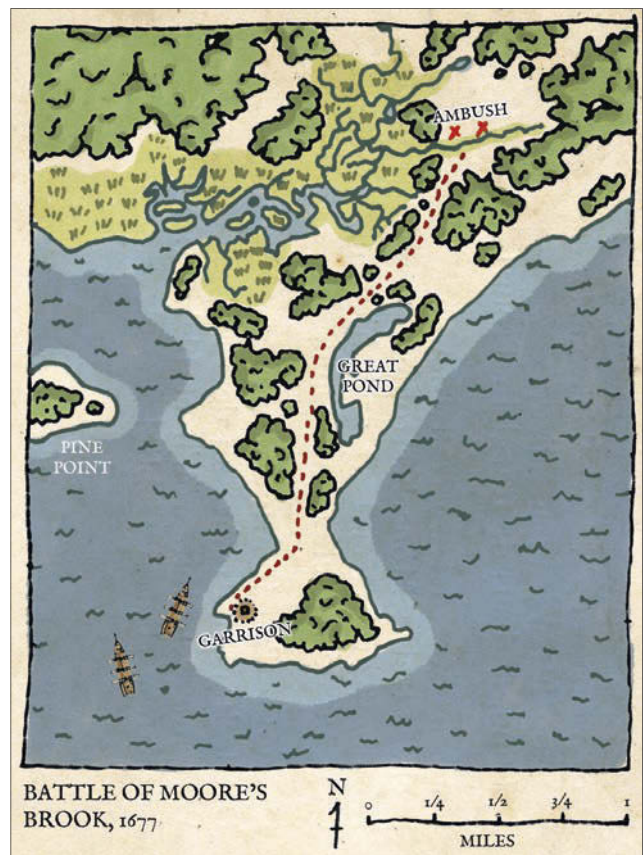
# THE BATTLE OF MOORE'S BROOK

King Philip's War is also called Metacomet's Rebellion; both being names for the Wampanoag sachem who started hostilities against the colonists. It's also sometimes called the First Indian War, as it is characterized by the same sort of widespread attacks on English settlements that would continue into the eighteenth century.

**T**his article (see also *WS&S* 71, page 36) is really not the place to go into the full scope of the war, but let's relate it to those whom we have met so far. The Wampanoag sachem Massasoit who had first met and befriended the Pilgrims maintained good relations until his death. He was succeeded by one son, Wamsutta, who was in turn succeeded by his younger brother Metacomet. Relations with the English had deteriorated, mostly because of the changing nature of the Massachusetts colonies. The English had forbidden trade with the Wampanoags, and were actively proselytizing to converts and 'civilize' them.

When the war broke out, the Wampanoags were among the first raiders against English settlements. The Narragansetts eventually came in on their side; the Mohegans under Uncas stayed loyal to the English. Complicating things were squabbles between all the colonies; England's distraction during the Restoration with other matters, including the Dutch Wars; and competition with the French.

In the end, it was an expensive and bloody war for both sides. Many natives were enslaved and sent to Bermuda. The nature of the Massachusetts colonies was changed, as London and started to pay attention to the colonies. The Massachusetts Bay Colony's charter was revoked (ending Puritan dominance to some degree), the Plymouth Colony's was not renewed, and royal control was increased.



### A HISTORY OF THE AREA

Moore's Brook is in Black Point, in what is now the town of Scarborough, Maine. The end of the point, where the garrison is located in the scenario, is also called Prout's Neck, a lovely summer cottage enclave (for very wealthy folk) and artists community: the painter Winslow Homer had his home and studio here in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Pine Point is where we always went for lobsters. I often bicycled with friends to both points as a lad. I grew up in the next town inland from Scarborough: Buxton. Its original name was Narragansett No. 1, as it was one of a number of

land grants awarded to men who served in King Philip's War, which resulted in the destruction of the Narragansetts. As with the other grants, the continuing conflicts with the natives kept the original grantees from occupying the land; their grants were bought and traded, until in Buxton's case, the first real settlers arrived around 1750, and the town was incorporated just before the War of Independence. Our farm was then awarded to an ancestor for his service in that century-later war! So you can see why I wanted to include this location in my set of scenarios.



The war also spread beyond the area we've been looking at before. As a result of competing land grants and French claims, more and more attention was paid to the province of Maine—until now mainly a collection of coastal trading posts—and the war reached it, too. So why pick Moore's Brook for a scenario? First of all, it's "home" for me personally. It sets the stage for other large skirmish actions: I have a trilogy of scenarios for the "Down East Way of War", if our worthy editor is interested in publishing it. And it completes the development of weapons and tactics during the century.

Towards the latter part of the war, the Massachusetts colonist decided to send an expedition to secure an abandoned post and fort at Pemaquid (it's not identified on the map, but is located on the southern tip of the very last peninsula in the northeast corner of the map). Both Massachusetts and New York claimed Pemaquid, and recent French claims increased the threat to that area. Along the way, the expedition was to clear the coastal area from the Merrimack River north of Boston to the Picataqua River (now the Maine-New Hampshire boundary at the coastline), and continue on to Black Point.

Wabenaki tribes (the Sokokis and Ammoscoggins) had taken the opportunity of the chaos during the war to raid the Maine coastal settlements, led by an angry chief named Squando, who had been friendly to the English and had converted to Christianity, until his baby son was drowned by English sailors who overturned the canoe in which Squando's wife and son were traveling, to see if Indian children could swim from birth. Scarborough had been abandoned the year previously (in 1676); the garrison house at Black Point had been occupied by a native chief named Mogg! Earlier in 1677, some settlers had come back, the garrison house was re-occupied, and in some skirmishing, Mogg was slain.

A fairly motley force was scraped up from mostly northeastern Massachusetts towns and sent part by land, and part by sea. Under the command of an aged, nearly seventy-year old major named Clarke (how appropriate, I say to Lardy Rich!), assisted by a young captain (Swett) and lieutenant (Richardson), it comprised ninety to a hundred men, including up to three dozen natives from Massachusetts tribes. We have detailed rosters to show many details of both both enlistments and casualties, but it's not exactly clear how many men marched out from the garrison at Black Point. We do know that only twenty of the Massachusetts soldiers had prior military experience, and that the soldiers' average age was only twenty-four.

Two miles from the garrison house, the force, marching in two or three files had just crossed Moore's Brook when it was ambushed by natives attacking from both sides: from the marshes to the west, and across the fields to the east. In the lead, Lieutenant Richardson was killed outright at the start; casualties mounted rapidly. Captain Swett fell quickly, too. Major Clarke had wisely stayed behind. The colonial force broke and ran. Fifty to sixty of the force were killed or mortally wounded, including eight allied natives; at least forty were killed in the ambush. The ambushing natives most likely did not outnumber the colonial force.



**The English efforts to convert the Wampanoags met with somewhat mixed results. Figures by Conquest Miniatures.**

As you can see on the map, the land to the west of the route is cut with waterways and a large extent of marshland. The rest of the map is characterized by small woods interspersed with vacant fields; the area had been cultivated before being burned out by the Wabenaki under Mogg.

After the ambush, Major Clarke proceeded with the remnants of his troops to Pemaquid, only to find there a well-built new fort occupied by New York troops.

For this military disaster, let us give the forces for *Sharpe Practice* something near to actual strength:

Six Groups of 8 x Regular Provincials (may use Open Order from LLC), flintlock musket, poor shots. Determine number and grade of Big Men per the table in the rules (section 17); two of the Grade 1 Big Men should be Captain Swett and Lieutenant Richardson.

Four War Parties of 6 x Allied Wasemit Warriors, flintlock muskets, reasonable shots. Determine number and grade of Big Men.

Eight War Parties of 8 x Wabenaki Warriors (Aggressive), flintlock muskets, reasonable shots. Determine the number and grade of Big Men. One of the Grade 1 Big Men should be Squando.

I'm not sure how one can force the English player to be as utterly ill-prepared and easily surprised as was the actual force; requiring a march formation until contact will help, as will the use of Sharp Practice blinds. Of course, the Wabenaki player does not have to conduct the ambush at the same location as his historical counterpart. **WS&S**

***If you're looking for suitable figures to use in this scenario, Brigade Games' King Philip's War range is ideal, but near-contemporary European troops painted as civilians rather than in uniform can stand in.***