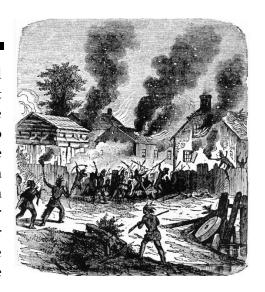
## KING PHILIP'S WAR AND HANNAH DUSTON

he Pilgrims who arrived on the Mayflower and founded Plymouth Plantation expended great effort in forging friendship and peace with the Native Americans around Cape Cod. Relations were so friendly between the Pilgrims and Chief Massasoit of the Wampanoag tribe, that the chief gave his sons English names. Yet over the next fifty years, as one generation gave way to another, this peace broke down. Wave after wave of Puritan settlers and non-religious "strangers" (or fortune-seekers not motivated by religion) arrived in the New World—unaware or perhaps unconcerned about the tenuous peace that had been created by the first arrivals.



Metacomet (also named "Philip" by his father, Massasoit) eventually inherited control of his father's tribe. In 1675 he led a group of Indian tribes in open war against the colonists. The bands known today as Wampanoag Indians joined with the Nipmucks, Pocumtucks, and Narragansetts in a bloody uprising. The reasons for this rebellion are debated, but the Indians had become increasingly dependent on English goods, food, and weapons. Tribal lands had been sold—forcing the Indians into smaller spaces, which restricted their ability to practice their traditional way of life. The war of King Philip (as Metacomet was called by the colonists) was the Indian's last ditch effort to force European settlers out of America. King Philip's War lasted fourteen months and destroyed twelve frontier towns. It is estimated that 1,000 colonists and 3,000 Indians died in the conflict. It was during this bloody conflict that Mary Rowlandson of Lancaster, Massachusetts was abducted and kept for ransom. The narrative she wrote about her captivity is a classic of American literature.

The war ended in August 1676 shortly after the death of King Philip, who made his last stand against the English army in a deep swamp. There he was fatally shot by a praying Indian (Christian convert) named John Alderman. After his death, Philip's wife and nine-year-old son were captured and sold as slaves in Bermuda. Philip's head was mounted on a pike at the entrance to Fort Plymouth, where it remained for more than two decades. His body was cut into quarters and hung in trees. Alderman was given Philip's right hand as a reward.

Some of King Philip's supporters escaped to Canada; those who surrendered were shipped off as slaves to the West Indies. The Puritans interpreted their victory as a sign of God's favor, as well as a symbolic purge of their spiritual community. This conflict marked a turning point in Native American-European relations—a relationship that had begun as peaceful had turned deadly.

Conflicts between Indian tribes and the colonists continued. Hannah Duston was a Puritan woman living in Massachusetts, who was captured by Indians in 1687. As the Indians drove her into the forest, they took her newborn child and dashed it to death against a tree. But Duston would have her revenge. Six weeks later, still in captivity, Duston led two of her fellow captives in a revolt. Duston used a tomahawk to kill two men, two women, and six children of the group that kept her prisoner. Then she scalped her victims as proof of the incident. She and her

comrades stole a canoe and escape down the river. When she returned to her home, she was celebrated throughout New England as a hero.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. What is tragic about the breakdown of peace between the Native Americans and the colonists?
- 2. Do you feel sorry for King Philip? Did he deserve the punishment that he received? Explain.
- 3. Compare and contrast Hannah Duston with Mary Rowlandson. How are they different or similar to one another?
- 4. Cultures in Conflict: America has been called a melting pot of cultures. Yet at various points in the nation's history, these cultures have come into conflict. The ongoing struggle of our nation is to understand and respect cultures different from one's own. How does King Philip's War show an early example of this cultural conflict? What are some cultural conflicts that still exist today in America?