

King Philip's War and Our Honorable(?) Ancestors: Have Times Really Changed?

The acts and attitudes of Major John Talcott of Hartford and John Pynchon of Springfield in modern-day light

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If you're a descendant of the Lovetts of Brandon, Vermont, and are getting bored with the usual run of TV, video games and web sites, here's something for you to glance at and soak on. It may be even more boring. But you might discover some things about your early American ancestors that leave you disturbed as well as inspired, and wanting to learn more....

While browsing in Newport's historic Redwood Library (chartered 1747), I became curious about "King Philip's War," the very devastating series of Colonist-Indian conflicts that broke out in several parts of New England in 1675-76. This followed several decades of uneasy but manageable relationships, as the English settlements pressed inland and westward. The War is regarded by some as one of America's cruelest, with whole settlements destroyed, atrocities committed by both sides, and higher per capita death rates than any American war since then.

This led me to wonder: Were any of my own forebears involved? And if so, how did they behave? Were they good guys or bad guys, compared to the behavior of their contemporaries and of our modern-day society? Did they have values and ideas that we can take pride in? Or are some of their actions and attitudes best forgotten? Are our people and leaders coping any better 300-plus years later, in these days of global squeezes on desired space and resources, cross-cultural disconnects, fear of terrorism, and preemptive action?

Two Lovett relatives often mentioned

Sure enough, a couple of family names showed up in a number of books on the War: Major (later Lt. Col.) John Talcott (ca. 1630-1688), son of one of the founders of Hartford, Connecticut and vicinity in the Connecticut River Valley; and John Pynchon (ca. 1626-

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1702/03)², son of the lead founder of Springfield, Massachusetts and surrounding settlements farther upstream in the Valley. John Talcott, took command of Connecticut and friendly Indian troops raised for King Philip's War, and led aggressive campaigns in western Massachusetts, the Connecticut River Valley and Rhode Island. In fact, some books talk about the "Talcott Massacre" of Great Barrington.³ John Pynchon was the main leader of the Springfield area and is depicted as having reluctantly headed the troops for defending the settlements there, following efforts to evolve a system to accommodate both the local Indians and English settlers.

Actually, these are not direct ancestors of ours. They would be great-great...great uncles. As will be shown in more detail later, they were brothers of the 17th century Talcott and Pynchon from whom we've descended.⁴

A couple of other men with family names that appear in our Lovett genealogy – Treat and Holyoke -- receive some mention in the King Philip War histories: *Major Robert Treat* of Connecticut was involved in leading heavy Rhode Island and Massachusetts fighting, and is credited with rescuing settlers stranded at Northfield.⁵ Also, *Captain Samuel Holyoke*, grandson of Springfield founder William Pynchon, is described as taking part in a bloody attack on an Indian encampment at Turner's Falls, near Greenfield, Massachusetts.⁶ I don't yet know what the links are to our Frederick Talcott Lovett line.

There is also an account by one of our relatives about how in April 1677, several months after King Philip had been killed and the War supposedly ended, Indians ambushed and killed 40 soldiers near Ipswich, Massachusetts, north of Boston. The company commander, himself among the slain, was a Captain Lovett. The writer believes that he was Simon Lovett, son of the John Lovett who helped to establish Beverly, Massachusetts—the same John Lovett from whom our Vermont Lovetts descended.⁷

² The 1702/03 is because, before 1752, England and its American colonies used the old Julian calendar, instead of the Gregorian calendar that we now use. New Year's Day was changed from March 25 to January 1. Also 10 or 11 days were skipped and leap year was introduced. So historians and genealogists often show both old and new dates for pre-1752 events. For more, see most almanacs and encyclopedias.

³ See for example, Eric B. Schultz and Michael J. Tougias, *King Philip's War: The History and Legacy of America's Forgotten Conflict* (Woodstock, VT: The Countryman Press, 1999), 232-233.

⁴ The facts about our family trees used in this monograph, especially for Chart 1, are based mainly on genealogical materials compiled by Enid Lovett Brand of Pacifica CA (a granddaughter of F. T. Lovett via his late son Frederick) and the late Rev. David Winslow Lovett (a son of F. T. Lovett who was my grandfather). We owe them a big debt of gratitude for their careful research.

⁵ Schultz and Tougias, *King Philip's War*, 168.

⁶ Schultz and Tougias, *King Philip's War*, 224-225.

⁷ Frank Nelson Hall, *Lovett Genealogy* (no publisher or date shown for the excerpts that I have). I understand that the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints library in Salt Lake City has a copy. He mentions several local histories as information sources—"Perly's History of Salem, Stone's History of Beverly, Mass., a printed pamphlet in the possession of the Beverly Historical Society, and page 1638 Volume 3 of the book Boston and Eastern Mass., by Cutter." Hall's grandmother was Abbie Lovett Hall, whose connection to us I don't yet know.

Hartford's John Talcott in the War

Coming back to John Talcott, he was a high Connecticut official who made a name [of sorts] for himself as a Major (later promoted) during King Philip's War, even though he didn't join the fighting full-time until the closing months:

Lieutenant-Colonel John Talcott, born in England, was deputy from Hartford, 1660-1661; chosen treasurer, May 17, 1660, to succeed his father, which office he held until 1676, when he resigned to take command of the troops raised for King Philip's war. He was very successful in fighting and defeating the Indians, and obtained great renown as an Indian fighter. . . .⁸

Talcott had already commanded some of the Connecticut troops called in to help at early stages of the War in August 1675:

In the English villages of the upper Connecticut Valley the atmosphere grew increasingly tense. . . . Since the great river valley was their principal route of communication and transportation, these settlements in some respects felt more closely related to Connecticut than to Massachusetts, even though they were actually a part of the Bay Colony.

The enemy was believed to be somewhere east of the River, between Hadley and Squakeag (Northfield). . . . Chief responsibility for military affairs in the upper valley rested upon the shoulders of John Pynchon of Springfield, prominent merchant, Indian trader, and civic leader. Upon first learning of the trouble at Brookfield, Pynchon had procured troops from Connecticut, subsequently reinforced by additional men under the command of Major John Talcott of Hartford.⁹

The ensuing months didn't ease the problem. While Connecticut and Massachusetts troops were away to protect some smaller places, Indians invaded and burned much of the town of Springfield itself. More attacks and atrocities took place, Indian whereabouts and loyalties were elusive, Colonial leadership was in disarray, and settlers lived in fear.¹⁰

One senses that, came the following Spring, Talcott was among those who wanted to take the bull by the horns. His next action was once again in Massachusetts along the Connecticut River Valley:

By June 1 [1676] the United Colonies were ready to begin a new, combined offensive. Massachusetts Bay sent five hundred troops under Major Daniel Henchman to raid the enemy camp at Mount Wachusett and then join up at Hadley with both Connecticut's eighty troops under Newberry and a force of 440 English and friendly natives under Major John Talcott. As the troops marched to their rendezvous they captured or killed nearly one hundred natives, among these a group fishing at Wausaccum Pond. The Connecticut troops, arriving first in the area, defended Hadley on June 12 from attack from a large native force. This assault on Hadley would prove to be the last coordinated native military

⁸ *Connecticut Genealogy Vol. 3*... (Library code F93 C99 1911 v. 3), 1270, as copied by Enid Lovett Brand for her genealogy notebook section on the Talcotts.

For more on John Talcott, plus sketches of his brother Samuel Talcott and their father, an earlier John Talcott (both of whom relate to us as great-great...great grandfathers), see: James Grant Wilson and John Fiske (eds.), *Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1888), Vol. VI, 23.

⁹ Douglas Edward Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War* (New York: Macmillan, 1958), 85-86. This book has been regarded by many as the best overall account of the War. But the reader has to be alert for embellishments that creep in.

¹⁰ Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, 86-102.

action in the Connecticut Valley. By June 16 the combined English force was moving along the Connecticut River, finding only empty native camps. At the end of June the offensive was called off and the frustrated troops returned to their respective colonies.

While a decisive engagement was denied the English, their June offensive proved crucial to ending the war. As the natives fled, they left choice fishing locations and some of the few fields they had been able to sow. With hunger and sickness growing, their leadership debated increasingly desperate measures. . . .¹¹

Surprisingly quickly for travel and communications of that time, Colonial attention turned to Southeastern Massachusetts and to Rhode Island. Talcott was in on that too:

Traveling in the area around Hadley throughout June, Talcott's men found only minor skirmishes. It seems that following a string of defeats, Indians were fleeing the region. Many of these Indians headed in the direction of homes they had earlier abandoned. This sent Narragansetts into Rhode Island and Philip and other Wampanoags into Plymouth.

Under orders from the Connecticut leadership, Talcott led his forces into northern Rhode Island. The large number of Mohegans in the expedition undoubtedly sought to advance their cause against their Narragansett rivals. Connecticut, too, had ulterior motives beyond simply ending the war, having long disputed its boundary with Rhode Island. . . . In conquering the Narragansetts, Connecticut stood to pull the rug out from Rhode Island's claim to some of the most fertile real estate in New England. . . .

With such high stakes, Talcott struck the Narragansetts as hard as the collective conscience of his mixed force allowed. On July 2, 1767, they surprised a large encampment of Narragansetts near a swamp. Comprising mostly nonsoldiers, the encampment resisted only mildly. Such weakness did not prevent Talcott's men from wreaking vengeance. They knew that on June 19 the Massachusetts General Court had offered "mercy" to those who surrendered. Given that these Indians were in Rhode Island rather than before officials in Boston, they could technically be interpreted as still in a state of flight.¹²

Talcott's own report on the July 2nd fighting, which took place in North Smithfield, Rhode Island, says [using my modernization] that within three hours, his force slew and took prisoner 171. Of these, 45 were women and children that the Indians saved alive; 34 men were slain and 15 taken [leaving 77 women and children slain?] He says that among the slaughtered was "that old piece of venom" squaw Magnus.^{13 14}

Talcott [who spelled his name *Tallcott*] goes on to say that on July 3rd they went toward Providence and received information that the enemy was there to make peace with some of the Rhode Islanders. . . . After that the same day they proceeded South to Warwick Neck, and slew and took captive 67, of which 18 were men slain, and 27 were captives. He reports that the whole number taken and slain in these two engagements was 238, and that

¹¹ Schultz and Tougas, *King Philip's War*, 63.

For another account of Talcott at Hadley, see Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, 205-207.

¹² James D. Drake, *King Philip's War: Civil War in New England, 1675-1676* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1999), 154-155.

¹³ *A Letter Written by Maj. John Talcott from Mr. Stanton's at Quonocontaug to Govr. William Leete and the Hond. Council of the Colony of Connecticut* (July 4, 1676). Reprinted for the R.I. Society of Colonial Wars by the E. L. Freeman Co., Providence, 1934, 6 pp. (Available in Newport's Redwood Library.)

¹⁴ Apparently she is the same slain person mentioned in some accounts as Qaiapen, sister of the Narragansett sachem, Ninigret. See Leach, 211; and Schultz and Tougas, *King Philip's War*, 64.

thankfully he had lost only one Indian and no English. On July 4th he looked for more Indians in southern Rhode Island (near Wickford and Point Judith) but found only one woman who was left asleep. He indicates that his forces, while ready to fight more when requested, need rest and supplies, and it's better to return to Connecticut for a few days than living off the land where they now are.

Another account embellishes on the July 3rd encounter beyond what Talcott says:

Meanwhile, another party of about eighty Narragansetts had arrived in the vicinity of Providence, and their leader, Potuck, had made so bold as to enter the town and inquire how he might get to Boston safely in order to make peace. Several of the Providence men persuaded him to go to Newport instead. . . . Accordingly, Potuck's party trekked on down to Warwick to wait for their leader's return. . . . Talcott cared not a fig for any peace talks that might be going on in Newport, and even less for the unofficial promise of safe conduct given by some of the Providence men. Therefore, on July 3rd, the Connecticut troops headed down the trail toward Warwick, where they had no trouble finding and overwhelming the waiting Narragansetts.¹⁵

The losses in Southeastern New England caused many despairing Indians to flee westward with their women and children, and Major Talcott and his men followed them eagerly.¹⁶ The next month found Talcott applying his delicate touch to western Massachusetts, in what was to become known as "The Talcott Massacre":

In other areas of New England, open warfare turned to clean-up operations. . . . During the month of August, Major Talcott mercilessly pursued and slaughtered natives fleeing in desperation across western Massachusetts to New York, which Governor Andros had officially opened as a place of asylum for New England's native refugees in May 1676. On August 12 Talcott's troops hunted down one such group, killing thirty-five and capturing twenty at present-day Great Barrington, Massachusetts.¹⁷ . . . Talcott, short of supplies, was forced to break off the chase.¹⁸

Despite the "massacre" label, this was apparently regarded by at least some in years that followed as a heroic event:

In August, 1904, a monument was erected in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, a large boulder commemorating the victory gained by Colonel Talcott over the Indians at the ford in the Housatonic River . . . in 1676.¹⁹

What did John Talcott himself think about all the killing? It's hard to know. Unlike John Pynchon, who wrote lots of letters that have been saved, writings by Talcott that indicate how he felt are not well known. Not mentioned by Talcott in his July 4 report from Rhode Island is the torture of a Narragansett Indian who was captured by his force. It was described a year later in a book by a Puritan minister-historian, on the basis of writings of witnesses, or interviews with them. The account describes in gory detail the gradual dismemberment by Indians (Mohegans) in Talcott's army. The Englishman who related

¹⁵ Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, 211-212.

¹⁶ Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, 236.

¹⁷ Schultz and Tougias, *King Philip's War*, 66.

See also Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, 236-237.

¹⁸ Schultz and Tougias, *King Philip's War*, 232-233, which also has more details about the Talcott Massacre.

¹⁹ *Connecticut Genealogy*, Vol. 3, 1270.

this--some think it may have been Talcott himself--apparently stood in the circle that witnessed it. He is said to have been entranced, tearful, repulsed.²⁰

All in all, one has the impression that John Talcott, at least as an officer in King Philip's War, was among the stalwarts of Puritan leaders of his time and place. He appears to have been a hard-nosed type who saw settling New England and overwhelming the Indians as almost mandates from God, with the ends justifying the means, harsh as they sometimes must be.

Springfield's John Pynchon in the War

John Talcott was related to John Pynchon of Springfield, Massachusetts, who was also prominent in the War. Talcott's brother Samuel (1645/35-1661) was married to Hannah Holyoke (1644-1677/78), daughter of Mary Pynchon (? -1657) and granddaughter of William Pynchon (1590-1662), founder of Springfield. John Pynchon was William's son.

William Pynchon was an unusually interesting bird: Born in Southeast England in the midst of religious turmoil. One of the charter members of the Puritans who established the Massachusetts Bay Colony in and near Boston in 1630 (he founded Roxbury). Became a trader of furs. In 1636 was named commissioner to govern new settlements above Hartford along the Connecticut River. With his son John Pynchon, acquired lots of land, organized grain and livestock systems that included Caribbean markets, and tried to assimilate small farmers and Indians into the fledgling Connecticut River Valley agrarian and small-town economy. Was accused at various stages of dominating commerce and fixing prices. Became uptight about Puritan self-righteous narrow-mindedness and exclusiveness, and in 1650 published a religious treatise that was censured and banned in Boston. In 1652, turned things in the Springfield area over to his son John, and retired to an estate in England to write more religious tomes.²¹

²⁰ Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1998), 3-18.

She bases this account on some quotes from William Hubbard, *A Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians of New-England* (Boston, 1677), as reprinted in Samuel Gardener Drake (ed.), *The History of Indian Wars in New England* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1865; Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1990).

²¹ For discussion and chronology of William Pynchon, and a reproduction and interpretation of his 158-page religious tract of 1650, see: Michael W. Vella, Lance Schachterle and Louis Mackey (eds.), *The Meritorious Price of Our Redemption/William Pynchon* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1992).

The Pynchons are mentioned in a number of books on New England settlement, such as:

Robert J. Taylor, *Colonial Connecticut: A History* (Millwood, NY: Kraus-Thomson Organization Press, 1979), 8-9 and 16-19.

Douglas R. McManis, *Colonial New England: A Historical Geography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 36-38, 44-45, 92 and 98.

Howard S. Russell, *A Long, Deep Furrow: Three Centuries of Farming in New England* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1976), 54, 61 and 66.

Gloria L. Main, *Peoples of a Spacious Land: Families and Cultures in Colonial New England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 46, 49 and 56.

William Pynchon had left by the time that King Philip-related Indian troubles arose in 1675. But his son John became squarely involved, even though he was not a military type. He learned the local Indian language and tried hard to work out things with various tribes and native communities in the Valley, western New England and the Hudson Valley. Unlike Talcott, John Pynchon was more concerned with defending the settlers against Indian attacks than with offensively going after them, at least at the start. He commanded troops in the Springfield area at first, but asked to be relieved after Indians destroyed much of Springfield itself, in addition to nearby settlements.

But he still could be tough-minded, strategic and decisive: As a magistrate and commander, he ordered executions of Indians who had committed murders and other atrocities. Later, in the late 1600s when the Canadian French and their Indian allies stirred up a new war in New England, John Pynchon tried to manipulate things so that the Mohawks and some other tribes would seek out and fight them.

Many of John Pynchon's letters have been compiled in a book called *The Pynchon Papers*.²² Often the letters were to John Winthrop, Jr., a physician who founded the New London area, obtained Connecticut's charter and served as its Governor for a long time. In modern-day terms, Pynchon seemed to be a "networker" with many links (but the messages had to go by horseback, boat, Indian foot runner). Before the War, besides business and governance matters, threats of Dutch expansion from New York along the coast and up the Connecticut Valley was a serious concern. Pynchon was on close personal terms with Winthrop and often sought medical advice for family ailments

During the War, much of what he wrote was about Indian trickiness, violence, devastation, and urgent requests for military help to relieve the settlers. Yet I notice that, unlike many Colonial writers, he doesn't refer to Indians as "savages," "heathens," "primitives" or names like that (though these might have been edited out). Also, he often spoke of nearby Indian allies as "our" Indians or by the Colonial communities they lived near, rather than impersonal tribes. As one footnote in *The Pynchon Papers* puts it, "Throughout these letters, Pynchon reveals his unshakeable belief that the Lord was using the Indians to punish New Englanders for their sins, and that He alone could save them."²³

John Frederick Martin, *Profits in the Wilderness: Entrepreneurship and the Founding of New England Towns in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 33-36, 44-45, 47-52, 58 and 126.

Pynchon sketches can be found in some encyclopedias and biographies, such as:

John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes (eds.), *American National Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 20-22.

Wilson and Fiske (eds.), *Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, Vol. V, 144-145.

Dumas Malone (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), 290-293.

Who Was Who in America: Historical Volume 1607-1896 (Chicago: Marquis – Who's Who, 1963), 428.

²² Carl Bridenbaugh (ed.) with Juliette Tomlinson, *The Pynchon Papers, Volume I: Letters of John Pynchon, 1654-1700* (Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1982).

²³ Bridenbaugh (ed.), *Pynchon Papers*, 139, footnote 5.

Here from an August 19, 1675 letter to John Winthrop, Jr. is a firsthand account of how Pynchon resisted popular opinion about how to deal with Indians on at least one occasion:

He is one of the Northampton Indians, only Hadley and Northampton people suspect he is one that drew off to the enemy and came with bags to get provision for them. They are strangely incensed with him, think I have done ill to discharge the lad, and conclude the man is a man of death. . . . I have sent the Indian to Major Willard at Brookfield. Sir, the people cry out that he is not dispatched; I wonder at such a spirit in people for our most faithful Indians tell me they cannot think but that he was coming in from his hunting wigwam to the English out of dislike of the enemy, he having a father, mother, wife, and children at Northampton. Were he released, I think it would be --- advantage, but I am said to be overfavorable and have --- sent him away....²⁴

But here from a second letter to Winthrop that very same day in 1675 is a firsthand account that shows Pynchon's tougher side -- still relying heavily on the views of friendly local Indians:

[O]ur Indians have brought in one of Philip's men: his name is Cherauckson, a man about 20 years, . . . [A]ll our Indians say he is one that hath killed English; and indeed he did own it and then denied it and since denies everything, will not disprove plain things. Our Indians have taken a great deal of pains to get him to confess, but he says little, hides everything almost; . . . An Indian woman that is a Windsor woman was out a little from the fort and he coming to her she brought him in to our Indians, who presently bound him and brought him to me. It being a most clear and evident case all the Indians also desiring he might be killed, I bid two of our men take him out and shoot him, which is done accordingly. The Lord grant that so all our enemies may perish.²⁵

The next few days brought Indian attacks on more settlements in the Valley, and on September 8, 1675 Pynchon was once again pleading for reinforcements, this time from the Governor of Massachusetts in Boston:

You cannot be sensible how these Indians here do rage, and if forces be not out to give check (however chargeable) it is to be feared they will quickly (unless the Lord prevent) be busy in firing all our towns and we shall not be like to hold it without a strong garrison. We have at present 16 here [in Springfield], sent yesterday from Hartford, which may be called off this day or two.²⁶

By September 30, he was so discouraged with his own capabilities to protect the settlements that he reiterated to the Massachusetts Governor an apparent earlier request to be relieved of his duties as the area military leader:

It is too much that I should still trouble you with my continued desires for a release from the charge you have laid on me which I am necessitated to do that the work may not miscarry by so weak and unable a manager. It were far better some more thorough and meet instrument were employed in the service and I discharged upon that very account.²⁷

He goes on to cite his wife's poor health and spirit as another reason, expresses his readiness to serve in other ways that God may call him to do, and recommends a

²⁴ Bridenbaugh (ed.), *Pynchon Papers*, 146.

²⁵ Bridenbaugh (ed.), *Pynchon Papers*, 147.

²⁶ Bridenbaugh (ed.), *Pynchon Papers*, 152.

²⁷ Bridenbaugh (ed.), *Pynchon Papers*, 154.

replacement. Some writers speculate that to be able to attend to his business interests was another reason, but I haven't yet seen firm evidence.

By October 8, 1675, John Pynchon was really in the dumps. While he and some troops had gone off to protect Hadley, a settlement upstream near present-day Amherst, Indians had come right into Springfield and burned most of it – 30 houses, about 25 barns, grain stores, and Pynchon's grist, corn and saw mills. Three persons had been killed, and two more dying. Many residents were without shelter and food. King Philip was rumored to have at least 200 men in the area and to be urging local Indians to ally with him. Pynchon felt that a thousand men would be needed to cope with the Indians over the winter. He saw God's hand and disappointment with New Englanders in all the devastation. He thought it was at least partly because he (Pynchon) lacked proper spirit, felt incapable of holding a command, and once again asked to be relieved.²⁸

But 10 months later, August 1676, Pynchon was still in there pitching as Massachusetts' magistrate for the region. (A magistrate was the principal official for administering laws in those days.) He had succeeded in getting Connecticut to send Major John Talcott with reinforcements. Troops were ranging farther to seek out and chase away enemy Indian bands. There were still some "skulking" Indians, but he felt the situation had eased enough to get by with fewer soldiers.²⁹

And one and two decades after King Philip's War, in the late 1680s and 1690s, with the title of Colonel Pynchon and despite health problems, he was still writing letters. This time many were about his efforts to build alliances with Indians to combat the French-Indian threats to the whole New England and Upstate New York region. They were also about new raids and needs to keep the local peace that kept reappearing at places like Deerfield, Hatfield and Brookfield in the Connecticut Valley itself. He was still seeing in the events the hand of God and need for His guidance.³⁰

The Talcotts and Pynchons in broader perspective

One of the books I've read on King Philip's War, James E. Drake's *King Philip's War*, pays more attention than most to the dilemmas and values underlying the behaviors of both the Colonials and the Indians. Here are some his backgrounders that I've found helpful:

The New England that erupted into violent conflict in 1675 had been built by the conscious interweaving of English and Indian politics by individuals hoping to preserve their identities in a rapidly changing world. This entailed building strong links between people of diverse backgrounds. By 1675 many Indians and English people had tried to merge their futures and needed one another for their communities to persist. . . . Just as the nuclei of atoms in a covalent bond remain intact [to use a chemistry analogy], Indian and English to a large extent retained their distinct cultural identities, but they concurrently merged together to form a new form of matter, a "covalent society." . . . The postwar incarnation of

²⁸ Bridenbaugh (ed.), *Pynchon Papers*, 156-163.

²⁹ Bridenbaugh (ed.), *Pynchon Papers*, 166-171.

³⁰ Bridenbaugh (ed.), *Pynchon Papers*, 179-311.

New England society differed so much from its prewar version that it must be considered a new one.³¹

Men notable for their colonial leadership such as William Pynchon, Benjamin Church, John Mason, Richard Smith, and Roger Williams epitomized the character of some of New England's early town founders. It is no coincidence that these men earned reputations for their skill in diplomacy or warfare with the Indians. Their skills in dealing with the Indians enabled them to become leaders at the colony level. They, like southern New England Indian leaders, functioned as chiefs. Like chiefs, colonial leaders struggled for the loyalty of their subjects, facing the ever-present threat that their followers might reject their rule.³²

[John] Pynchon, a man of tremendous importance primarily in the village of Springfield but also in the colony of Massachusetts, which he served as a magistrate, saw strong ties between local English communities and nearby Indians, and not just between the larger provincial government and Indian confederations.³³

English settlers believed that Indians could become full-fledged members of English polities. Nevertheless, in the seventeenth century, English settlers in New England came nowhere near treating Indians as their equals. . . . Some of the main obstacles to egalitarian treatment within the New England polities that Indians faced included legal restrictions imposed on their purchasing of arms and liquor, as well as their selling of furs and pork. . . . [R]estrictions on trade worked to preserve the power of central governments—both Indian and English. Trade in seventeenth-century New England provided lucrative avenues to both material profit and political power. The Indians and English provided one another large markets for goods.³⁴

When the Connecticut River Valley Indians turned against the English from August to October 1675, it reflected not so much an ethnic alliance between those natives and the Wampanoags [King Philip's tribe from eastern Rhode Island] as it did the breakdown of commercial ties and the resurfacing of old rivalries with the Mohegans to the south [who were helping the Connecticut troops].³⁵

[I]n the town of Springfield, where he was the most powerful citizen, large numbers of the English distrusted the very Indians Pynchon most valued. . . . Apparently many . . . were prepared to disregard the protections afforded a prisoner of war and even the due process reserved for a civilian traitor.

In a war out of control and with the colonies forced to rely partially on volunteers and impressed soldiers, restraint was sometimes lacking and atrocities were committed. Moreover, the colonists and their Indian allies only became more ruthless as the course of the war shifted in their favor and they sensed impending victory. . . . Not fearing retaliation as they would have earlier, some colonists and Indian allies often wreaked vengeance on the enemy—man, woman, or child.³⁶

³¹ Drake, *King Philip's War*, 14-15.

³² Drake, *King Philip's War*, 31.

³³ Drake, *King Philip's War*, 39.

³⁴ Drake, *King Philip's War*, 40-41.

³⁵ Drake, *King Philip's War*, 100.

³⁶ Drake, *King Philip's War*, 130-131.

Nothing makes the colonists' perceptions of Indians' inferiority more apparent than the mass selling of enemy Indians into slavery. Although it was considered acceptable for Christian victors to enslave Christian captives, in practice it was primarily non-Christians who suffered this fate. . . . Forcing Indians into slavery or servitude also helped satisfy the dilemma of what to "do" with them. The war produced hundreds of Indian refugees, who lived as vagabonds within or at the edges of New England towns. . . . Accordingly, the treatment of Indians reflects as much the English disgust with idleness as their loathing of rebellious Indians.³⁷

What's in a name?

So, what do you make of all this? Are you feeling good, or not so good, about being a descendant of Talcotts and Pynchons? Before you start bragging or disowning too loudly, let's look at some numbers.

Say you're in my kids' generation – a great-great grandchild of that Vermont preacher, Frederick Talcott Lovett. *Chart 1* traces the links way back to Major John Talcott and earlier. His brother Samuel would be your great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great grandfather. But only about 1/1000th of your genetic makeup comes from Samuel. You stem from more than 1000 other 8th great grandparents too!

And look at William Pynchon, your 10th great grandfather – you have only a pinch of that Pynchon in you. To add all the pinches from your family tree that make up your unique genetic recipe, you'd have to trace things back to more than 4,000 other 10th great grandparents.

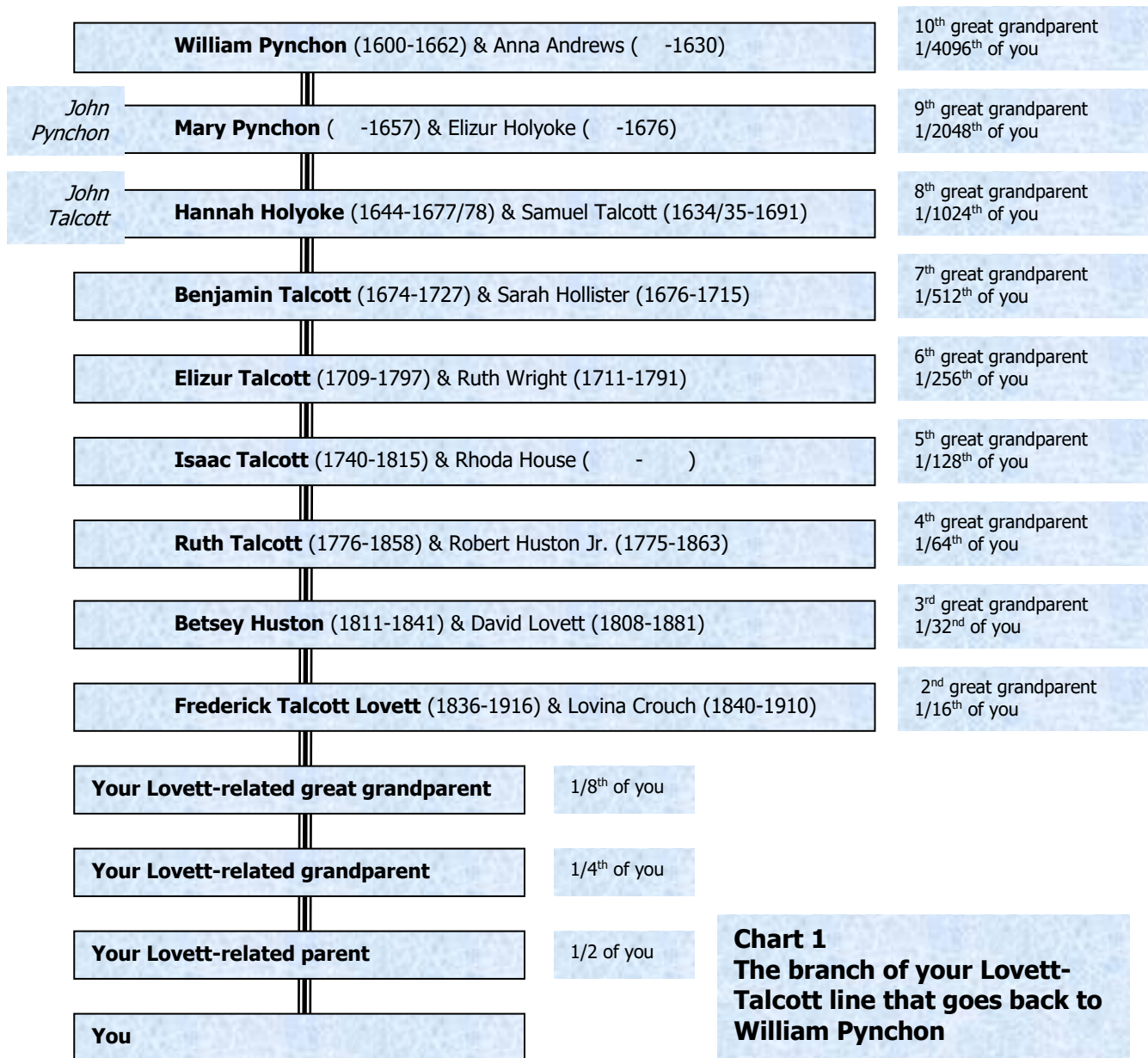
Quite a task. But maybe some interesting characters – and character -- along the way? Not to mention that so little is yet known about what the women in our lineages did and thought.

What are we to make of this?

Still, having that pinch of Pynchon and touch of Talcott can help to view present-day issues in more personal historical light. How would we have acted if we had been in their shoes? How would they have acted today? Have we progressed in treating fellow humans better and resolving claims for geographic and political space?

Clearly, one can't judge people's behavior in events like King Philip's War without knowing where "where they were coming from." Historians would point out that our Puritan forebears were much influenced by the 16th and 17th century religious strife in England, the ways that swift justice was handed out there, the Calvinist outlook, and how the Spanish had treated native people in Latin America. We in the 21st century supposedly

³⁷ Drake, *King Philip's War*, 137-138.



have the benefit of more lessons learned, more education and more global outlook. Yet is it fair to say...

Native Americans aren't assimilated yet -- there have been sad dealings with Indians long after King Philip's War (e.g., the Cherokees' Long March), many Indians have not shared in our socio-economic progress, and we are still squabbling with tribal communities about their legal rights?

God is still viewed by quite a few Americans as entering the picture – not as having a plan that includes punishing us for failings, which many Puritans believed, but as being on our side in the fight against “evil” and supportive of whatever actions our leaders choose to take?

Slavery—then viewed as better than a “take no prisoners” policy--no longer is part of our American scene, but worrisome new forms are common in the world, such as kidnapping young girls into prostitution and forcing/luring young males to become suicidal soldiers?

Torture, summary executions and public displays are not officially part of modern-day American culture, but there is less than full disclosure about how captured enemies are treated, we sometimes let others do dirty work for us, “taking out” has become an accepted term in foreign operations, and to view on TV the aftermath of brutal deaths has become almost a national pastime?

Our response to terrorist actions is still to lash out at other cultures, religions and nations, and target their leaders, without seeking to improve basic understandings or to alleviate root causes at the human level?

In some ways, leaders like the Pynchons were doing better than we are in terms of trying to build up an enduring system of socio-economic relationships with cultural groups that are very different and volatile?

And so...

A theme underlying this monograph is that family history can be much more than adding oodles of names to the tree, and hoping to discover famous ancestors and neat stories. (That’s what some call *vertical genealogy*.) It can be also a way to gain personalized insights into major events of the times, their broader settings, and human attitudes (*horizontal genealogy*). That’s basically what I’ve tried to do here.

To put it another way, I have found that examination of events, issues and responses from our ancestors’ times can help one to come to grips with present-day dilemmas in a more detached, yet realistic way.

The very process of ferreting out information about King Philip’s War and our relatives’ entanglements has nudged me into interesting tangents: What Puritans believed. Why some left the Boston area to settle in the interior. What the various Indian tribes were like, and how they coped with the Colonial intrusions. The early squabbles among the English colonies and with the Dutch. Methods used in those days to build coalitions.

I’m still soaking on these, and delving into more. I hope that, for you too, this monograph has sparked fresh thoughts, questions and inquiry. Maybe you have some corrections, reactions or additions. If so, by all means share them with the rest of us!

You’re welcome to share this monograph with others

But please do the right thing and indicate the source: David W. Brown, *King Philip's War and Our Honorable(?) Ancestors: Have Times Really Changed?*, monograph, July 2003.

And likewise, if you use quotes in this monograph, you should indicate the books they came from—e.g. James D. Drake, *King Philip's War*, 1999, page 31, as cited by David W. Brown, *King Philip's War...etc.*

That way, readers can know where the material came from and where to find more (and also they can’t blame you for the errors!). These days, especially with the internet, much stuff is passed around in genealogical circles, without any idea of sources and reliability. Thanks, DWB.