

Bessabez d.1616

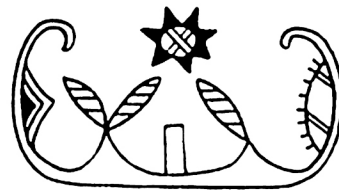
Bessabez (Behss-ah-BAY) was the Penobscot Nation's first recorded leader. He was first mentioned from the report of David Ingram (1568), a shipwrecked English sailor, who speaks of him as being the Head Chief of "Norumbega," a confederation of seven or eight Indian Nations with its capital or chief town at "arembee," which was probably where the city of Bangor now is. This confederation of tribes occupied the area from the Machias River in the East to Cape Ann in Massachusetts to the South. **Champlain** met Bessabez at this same place in 1604. Bessabez was killed in the war with the Micmacs which started in 1606 and raged on until after his death in 1616.

The **Micmac Wars** (1606-1616) began because of the death of Panounias, a Micmac killed by a Saco Indian. The Saco Indians were upset because the Micmacs had taken prisoners and killed them near present day Mt. Desert Island. In response they captured a Micmac, Panounias, and killed him. Membertou, the Micmac leader wanted revenge and waged war on the area of Southern Maine.

Bessabez apologized to Membertou because the death had taken place in his territory. However, Membertou never trusted nor forgave Bessabez. In 1616, following an epidemic that killed many Penobscots, Bessabez was killed by the Micmac.



National Library of Canada, L-3127



There are no known images of Bessabez. This map was drawn by **Samuel de Champlain** who met Bessabez in 1604.

Molly Mathilde



1665-1717



person

Madockawando and Jean Vincent became friends and exchanged cultural beliefs. Pidianiske was baptized and her name was changed to Marie Matilde. Her people couldn't pronounce "R"s and simply called her Molly.

Molly grew up seeing the friendship between the two men that strengthened the relationship between the French and the Penobscots in the area. With war in the area, an alliance between the French and Molly's people was essential.

In 1684, Molly and Jean Vincent got married. Her father insisted on the union because it would strengthen the alliance. Molly protested at first. But her mother pointed out that her marriage to Molly's father was one that strengthened an alliance.

Molly and Jean Vincent had two ceremonies, one a traditional Penobscot ceremony, and one with a **French Jesuit Priest**.

Molly and Jean Vincent had five children. In 1684, Molly Mathilde gave birth to their first child, Bernard Anselm. In 1687, a daughter named Therese blessed the peninsula. Joseph, their second son, came in 1690 and Marie Anastasie along with Jean Pierre in 1692.

Molly Mathilde was born with the name Pidianiske. Her village was located on the eastern shores of Penobscot Bay on a river called the Bagaduce. The year was 1665 and she was the daughter of a powerful Chief named **Madockawando** and his bride, the daughter of a chief herself, from the Kennebec River Valley.

At that time that region was under constant change. It was claimed by both the English and the French. **Fort Pentagoet** was built near the village and changed hands many times as Pidianiske grew.

In 1670 when Pidianiske was just five years old, Jean Vicent d' Abbadie arrived in the area. Just 18 years old, he was sent by the French to protect the fort. He had the heir to the title of **Baron St. Castin**.

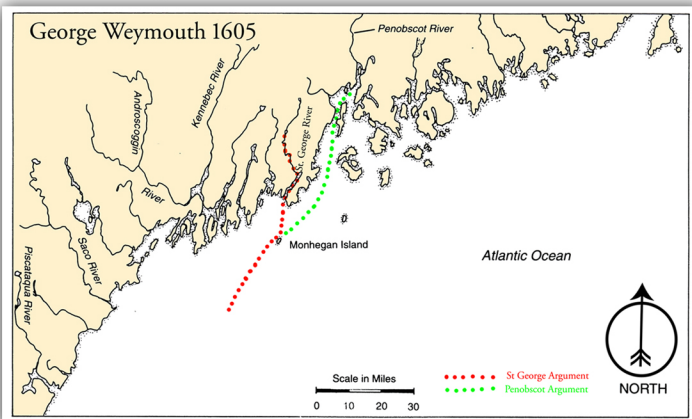
George Weymouth



English
Explorer

In 1605 George Weymouth became the first Englishman to have contact with Maine Native Americans, the Wabanaki. He landed near Monhegan Island off the coast of Maine where he found a safe harbor for his boat the "Archangel." Weymouth and his crew assembled a smaller boat called the "Light Horseman" and explored the western shore of Penobscot Bay. Weymouth and his crew met some Penobscot Indians in the area. According to written accounts by Weymouth's crew, he fed them and got the Native Americans drunk with liquor and then confined them in the hold of his ship. Then he went ashore with some of his men to capture other Native Americans. They opened boxes and showed the Natives the desired goods, but they could not get the Indians to go on the vessel; so Weymouth and his men grabbed two of them. "It was as much as five or six of us could do to get them into the Light Horseman" [the boat], wrote Weymouth, "for their [they] were strong, and so naked as our best hold was by their long hair on their heads." When the anchor was taken up and the ship sailed away for England with the five Penobscot captives, they also took two handsome birch bark canoes. He took the Penobscot prisoners to Europe where they learned to speak English and were gifted to other English sailors and noblemen.

Weymouth wanted the Native Americans because he wanted to teach them to speak the English language so he could communicate with them. Weymouth wanted information about the land and the resources that were there. Weymouth's action set the stage for the future of English/Indian relations in New England.



1605

Historically there has been some argument about which river Weymouth and his crew traveled. Some believe that it was the St. George River, and others think that it was the larger Penobscot River.



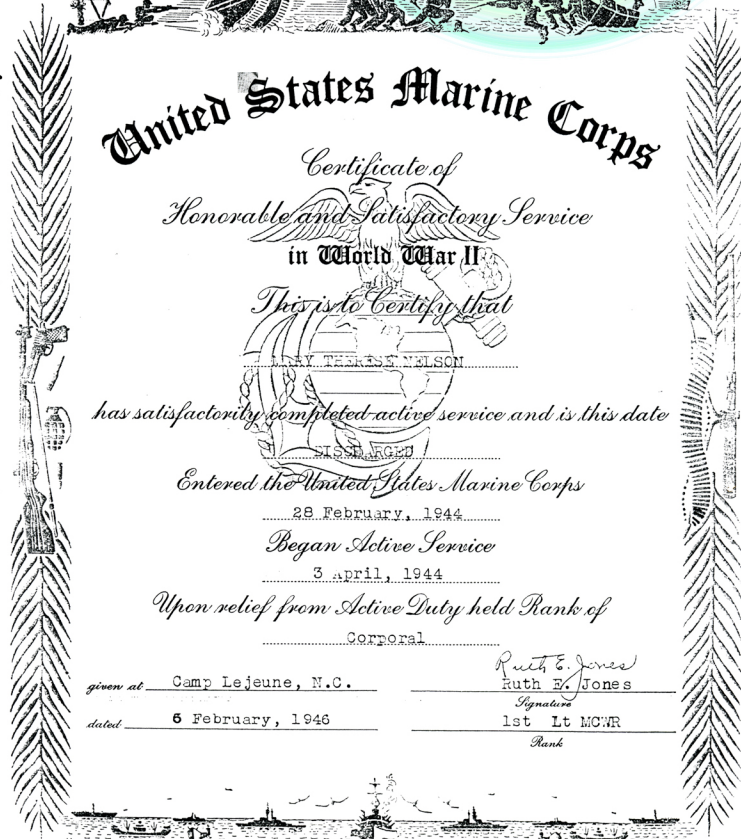
Patsy Mary Therese Nelson

Her friends and family know her as "Patsy." Patsy was born on November 14, 1923, on Indian Island and lived there until the age of 8. Her mother, Opal Jones, moved Patsy to the town of Monson, Maine, near Moosehead Lake. Patsy moved because her father, Roland Nelson, went on the road to become a performer.

On February 28th, 1944, at the age of 21, Patsy became one of the first women in Maine to join the Marine Corps. Patsy was the first Penobscot woman to join the Marine Corps.

On Thursday August 5, 2004, at the age of 82, Mary Therese Nelson was honored with a Distinguished Service Award from the Marine Corps League Greater Bangor Area Detachment 1151 for being the first Penobscot Indian woman to join the United States Marine Corps. Several Marine Corps veterans, State officials and Tribal Representatives turned out on the Penobscot Nation Reservation on Indian Island to witness the honor.

First Penobscot Woman Marine



Roland
Nelson

Advertisement for Patsy's father. He was known as Needahbeh which means "friend" in Penobscot. At the time, many Penobscots acted as performers.

Chief Joseph Orono

1688*-1801

*Debated

Served as Penobscot Chief from approximately 1760 until his death in 1801. Chief Joseph Orono was known as the "Blue-eyed Chief." There is a fair amount of mystery surrounding this Chief because of his light eyes, and because he appeared in the records at a very old age. Even in death Joseph Orono's life is a mystery. Orono's age is highly debated. Some say that his age was 110 to 113 years at his death.



Joseph Orono's signature thought to be a beaver or a seal with head raised*.



Joseph Orono was the son of one of the **Baron St. Castine's** daughters. That would make him the grandson of **Molly Mathilde**, and the great-grandson of Chief Madockawando. Chief Orono was related to a long line of hierarchal Chiefs. He assumed the role of Chief at a time of turmoil for the Penobscot Nation. Around the **Revolutionary War**, Chief Orono received letters from George Washington. Orono was sympathetic to the American cause in the war. In a speech in 1775 Orono said, "Our white brothers (Americans) tell us that they came to our land to enjoy liberty and life. But their kin (of England) is coming to bind them in chains and to kill them. We must fight him. We will stand on the same ground with our brother (the Americans)." The Penobscots had a strained relationship with the English which cemented an alliance with the Americans. This was an important time in Penobscot History. The Penobscot have allied with the Americans, and from this time forward many Penobscot fighters became American Soldiers.

The town of Orono, Maine was named after Chief Joseph Orono.

person



Frank Loring Korean War



person

Frank V. Loring Sr. fought in the Korean War in 1951. He was born on Indian Island and was the grandson of “Chief Big Thunder.”

Frank was a warden for the Penobscot Nation Warden Service for twenty five years. While working as a warden, Frank stopped and question some people walking throught the woods in Chain of Ponds township in Western Maine. These people were terrorist and officer Loring arrested them and kept them from entering the country.



Frank has been an avid participant in the Penobscot Nation's Birch Bark Canoe Revitalization Project. Above is a picture of Frank making ribs for a birch bark canoe.



KOREAN WAR—ERA

AKINS WATIE J
BECKER FRED H
BECKER RICHARD R
DANA ROY SR
DENNIS JOSEPH JR
FRANCIS DONALD
FRANCIS HARRY A JR
FRANCIS JOSEPH S SR
FRANCIS S C SR
GOULD LOUIS A
HAMILTON PETER B JR
HAMILTON RICHARD H

LOLAR GLEN
LOLAR JOSEPH
LOLAR LEON D
LORING FRANK V SR
LOVE JOHN SR
MITCHELL MATTHEW A SR
NELSON DANIEL J
NELSON DONALD R SR
NELSON EARL J
NELSON HILARY E
NELSON JAMES M
NELSON KENNETH J

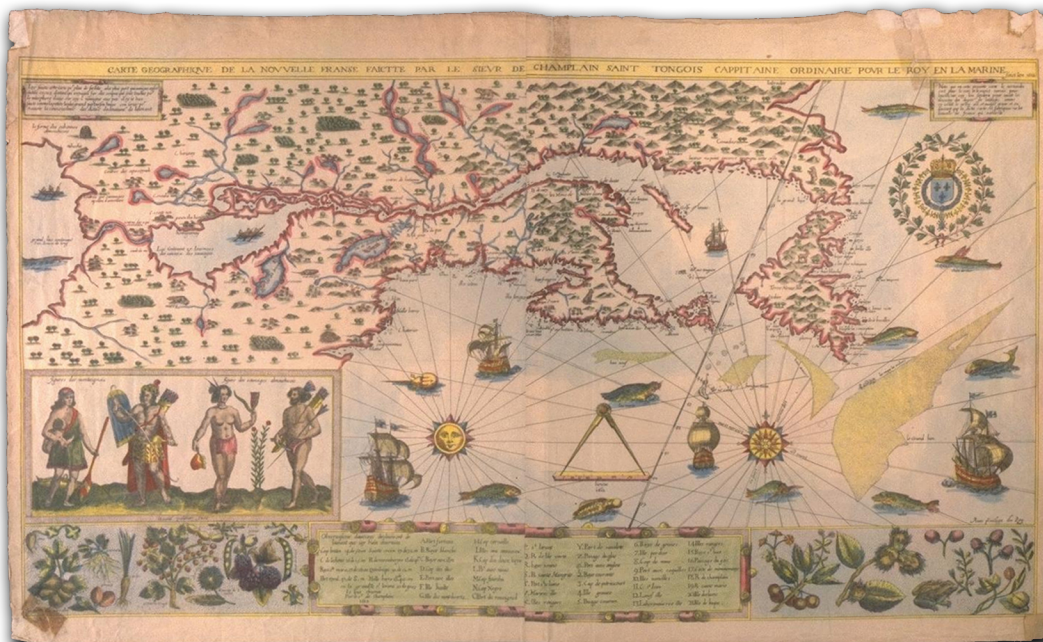
NELSON NORMAND T
NELSON PATRICIA T
NEPTUNE ARNOLD E
NORWOOD RICHARD
PEHRSON WILFRED SR
RANCO AVA
RANCO PAUL H
RANCO ROGER A
SHAY GERALD V SR
SHAY PATRICK
TAYLOR LIONEL A
TOMAH JAMES

person

Samuel de Champlain

Early in the seventeenth century, the French were interested in establishing a colony in the “New World.” King Henry IV granted nobleman Sieur de Monts the territory known as Acadia. In the spring of 1604, de Monts set sail with explorer and royal geographer Samuel de Champlain. They arrived in Maine and de Monts set up a small settlement on **St. Croix Island**.

Champlain continued south with two Native American guides to chart the coast of Maine. He named Mount Desert Island, and went up the Penobscot River. On the Penobscot, he traveled up the river to present-day Bangor. There he was impressed with the landscape and the Native American people he encountered. Champlain met the great Penobscot Chief, **Bessabez** (Behss-ah-BAY). Champlain was the first Frenchman to establish an alliance, or partnership, with the Penobscots in Maine. The French were interested in establishing **fur trade** with the Native American groups in the area. In addition, the French were interested in christianizing the Native population. **French Jesuits** soon established missions among Native American communities through Maine and the Maritimes. The relationship between Champlain and **Bessabez** set the stage for a long history of alliances between the Penobscot and the French in Maine.



The John Carter Brown Library, Brown University

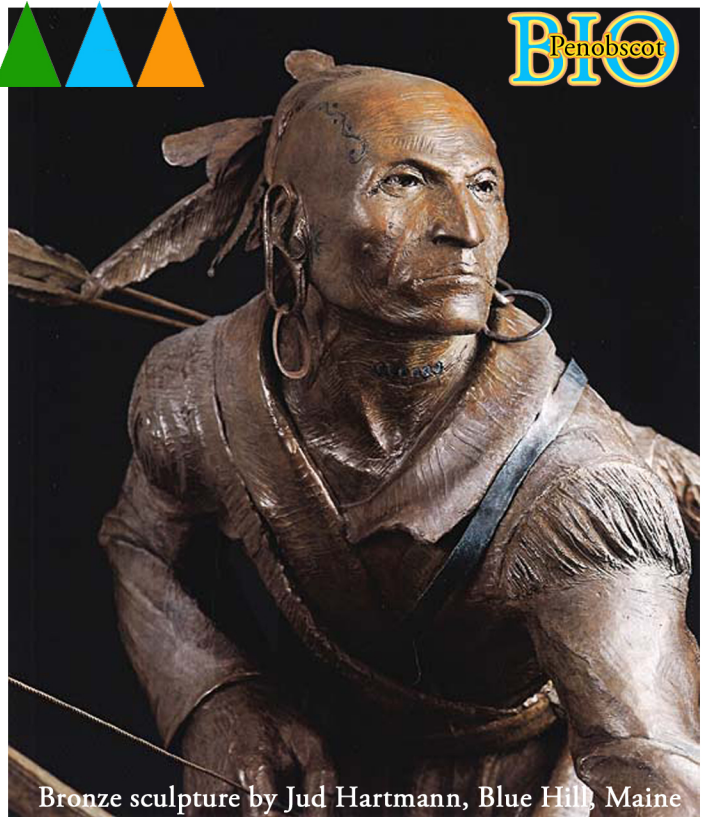
1604



From the collections of
Maine Historical Society

Madockawando ▲▲▲▲▲

Madockawando was a Penobscot Chief. During the time of **King Philip's War** Madockawando sought peace between the Penobscot and the English. He attended many peace meetings with Lt. Governor William Phips of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Phips drafted a treaty that called for the Penobscots to live under English rule and to cut all alliances with the French. Most Penobscots, even those who wanted peace could not agree to those terms.



Bronze sculpture by Jud Hartmann, Blue Hill, Maine

Madockawando lived on the Eastern shore of the Penobscot Bay. Today it is near the town of Castine. The town was named after Madockawando's son-in-law the **Baron St. Castin**. Castin married Madockawando's daughter **Molly Mathilde**. The French **Fort Pentagoet** served as a trading post for local Indians.

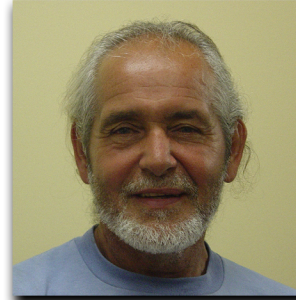
Madockawando married the daughter of a Chief from the Kennebec River. This was an arranged marriage.



Madockawando tried hard to stay out of the conflict of **King Philip's War**. However, attempts at peace failed. After the death of his sister to English forces, and the attack on **Fort Pentagoet**, he and other Penobscots joined the conflict.

d. 1698

Eugene Loring Jr.



Eugene Loring Jr. was 18 years old when he volunteered for the U.S. Army. In September of 1966 he was so determined to fight for his county that he made the recruitment officer guarantee that he would go into the Airborne Infantry.

Eugene became a part of the 173rd Airborne Infantry in March of 1967, became a squad leader, and within 7 months had achieved the rank of Sergeant (E-5) while fighting in Vietnam.

While with the 173rd Airborne Infantry, Eugene received 8 decorations. He earned 3 Bronze Stars and 5 Army Accommodation medals. His tour ended when he was wounded and was sent back to the United States with a Purple Heart medal.

At the end of 1968, Eugene went back for a second tour and volunteered for the Airborne Rangers. He received 2 more Bronze Stars while in that unit.

In 1986, Eugene started to compete in triathlons. In his first triathlon, in Old Town, Maine he achieved first place. In the early 1990's he started to compete in the Minnesota Border to Border triathlon. This 500 mile triathlon includes biking, running and canoeing.

Eugene, like many Penobscots, has been a national champion in white water canoeing a dozen times.



Purple Hearts are given to soldiers wounded in combat.

Eugene is a roofing contractor who, after retirement, wants to move to Hawaii to train for the prestigious Ironman Triathlon.



White Francis BIO d. 1775?

White Francis may have been one of the first Penobscots to die fighting for America. Below is a letter from Captian Neptune Nicolas asking for some assistance for White Francis' daughter, Tellys Money [probably Molly]. This letter is dated 1836, approximately 60 years after the death of White Francis. The letter indicates that White Francis died fighting the British (English) on the Bagaduce River, near Castine Maine. He was fighting for the American cause in the Revolutionary War. The author of the letter, Captian Neptune Nicolas, was born in 1764, making him very young at the time of the battle. According to Joseph Orono, the Chief of the Penobscot Nation at the time of the Revolutionary War, the Penobscots would fight side by side with their American brothers. White Francis fought and sacrificed his life for the American cause.

To the hon^{be} General Court of the State of Maine
now in session at Augusta humbly sheweth
That so hereas White Frances an Indian belonging
to the Penobscot Tribe at the time when the
English Troops were in possession of what was
then called Bagaduc & that a part of that tribe
as above named were then imbodied there
with americans and were then furnished by
the Americans with armor & ammunition
to fight the said English Troops which they did
under Major Gilman and that the above
named white Frances an Indian was then
in the ranks of the Indians by my side
fighting the English, when I see him fall
by my side by a musket ball from the English
and that I did endeavor to raise him but
to no purpose he was slain & left behind
to the great disadvantage to his Daughter now
living at Indian Old Town by the name of
Telly Money and has remained very poor
ever since the Death of her Father as
above Stated. I have been and am now
a living witnes to the fact and that the
said Telly Money do ask some assistance
of your Ho^{be} Body as in duty I am bound
to pray

Indian Old Town Feby 25, 1836 Capt Neptune Nicholas
being 72 years old

To the Hon^{ble} General Court of the State of Maine
now in session at Augusta humbly sheweth
That so hereas White Frances an Indian, belonging
to the Penobscot Tribe, at the time when the
English Troops were in possession of what was
then call Bagaduc, & that a part of that tribe,
as above named, were then imbodied then
with americans, and were then furnished by
the Americans with armor & ammunition
to fight the said English Troops, which they did
under Major Gilman, and that the above
named White Frances, and Indian was then
in the ranks of the Indians, by my side
fighting the English, when I see him fall
by my side, by a musket ball from the English
and that I did endeavour to raise him but
to no purpose, he was slain & left behind
to the great disadvantage to his Daughter now
living at Indian Old Town, by the name of
Tellys Money, and has remained very poor
ever since the Death of her Father as
above Stated. I have been and are now
a living witnes to the fact, and that the
said Tellys Money, do ask some assistance
of your Ho^{ble} Body, as in duty I am bound
to pray
Indian Old Town Feby 25, 1836 Capt Neptune Nicolas
being 72 years old

Charles Norman Shay



Charles Norman Shay was born in Connecticut in 1924. At the age of 6, his family moved home to Indian Island. He attended schools across the river in Old Town and graduated from Old Town High School in 1942.

In 1943 he was drafted in the United States Army and trained as a medical technician, a “medic.” He was assigned to the 1st infantry division, 16th infantry regiment, 2nd battalion and had his first taste of combat at Omaha Beach on 6th of June 1944, when thousands of US and Allied Troops stormed the beaches of Normandy now remembered as “D-Day.” Units participating in the first waves of the invasion suffered 50% casualties. Charles was able to save the lives of many of his comrades who had been critically wounded by pulling them from the treacherous seas to dry land to keep them from drowning. The Army honored him with the Silver Star for his unselfish heroism on that day on Omaha Beach.

The following spring in March of 1945 the squadron that Charles was attached to was assigned the mission of securing a beach-head following the crossing of the Rhine River at Remagen, Germany. During this action the Squadron became separated from other units and were cut off by German forces. On March 25th Charles and other members of the Squadron became prisoners of war. He was released on 12 April 1945.

Learn more about Charles in the Biography section.

person

Charles spent much of his life in the military. He served in both the Army and the Air Force, and lived in Austria until he retired and moved home to Indian Island. In addition to WWII he also served in the Korean War.

Today, Charles has established a small Family Museum in the “Teepee” on Indian Island to honor members of his family that includes Francis Nicolar, Florence Shay, Lucy Poolaw Shay, and Leo Shay.

World War II



Baron St. Castine

In the 17th century the Penobscot River Valley was a disputed territory. On the eastern shore of Penobscot Bay the French constructed **Fort Pentagoet** (1635). The fort was then taken by the English in 1654. The French obtained the fort back in 1670 and sent an eighteen(18) year old named Jean Vincent de Abbadie to oversee the fort. The young man, from a noble family in France, was a skilled woodsman and didn't keep himself walled up in the fort. He chose to live in a nearby Indian village that was occupied by Penobscot Chief **Madockawando** and his family. Unlike the English in the area who wanted to reshape the land to fit their needs, Jean Vincent lived like the Indians. He lived in the Indian village, eating the same foods, and speaking the same language.

Jean Vincent was a businessman who set up a trading post near **Fort Pentagoet**. He traded with the English Colonists, French Colonists, and the Indians. He had abandoned the site of the fort to erect two European style structures in the Penobscot Village. One of these structures was his home. The other was the trading post. These were surrounded by 16 birch wigwam structures.



Jean Vincent received a bit of ridicule from his French colleagues. They considered it scandalous and unbecoming of the heir to the title "Baron de St. Castin."

Even more scandalous, he married the daughter of the great Chief **Madockawando**. Her name was Pidiwamiska until she got baptized as Marie Mathilde. Her people knew her as **Molly Mathilde**. Jean Vincent and Molly had children and raised them in the small village near modern day Castine Maine, on the Bagaduce River. Jean Vincent returned to France in 1701 and left the region in the hands of his sons, who like their father, fought in support of the French and Penobscot cause.



1670-1700

Sylvester Francis 1896-1959

Sylvester Francis served in **World War I** and was honorably discharged on July 4th, 1920. After the war Sylvester returned home to Indian Island where he worked on the log drives in the spring, and as a trapper in the winter. One of his favorite spots to trap was on a small tributary of the Penobscot River called Sunhaze stream. Later he became the policeman for the Penobscot Nation. From the years of 1938 to 1950 Sylvester was the ferryman shuttling people between Old Town and Indian Island. He was the last ferryman for the Penobscot Nation, a bridge was erected in 1950.



While working as a ferryman for the Penobscot Nation, Sylvester was photographed by the Evinrude outboard motor company. This photograph was used in the company's advertisement campaign.

As a young man, Sylvester was a very accomplished runner. At the age of 16 he won the annual Old Town Nine Mile Marathon. To the right is a photo of Sylvester, 6th from the left, on the starting line of that marathon.



photo courtesy of Nos Histoires De L'lie , www.old-town.org

James Eric Francis



person

After graduating from Old Town High School in 1986, James Eric Francis joined the United States Air Force. James went to the Air Force Basic Training in San Antonio, Texas before reporting to Francis E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyoming. F.E. Warren AFB is home to the world's largest missile wing. The base was home to Minuteman I, Minuteman II, and the MX (peacekeeper) Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM). James worked in the 90th Civil Engineering Squadron during peacetime.

James served a four year tour in Cheyenne and returned home to attend college at the University of Maine to study history. James is now the Tribal Historian for the Penobscot Nation. James was married in 2004 in a traditional Penobscot wedding ceremony on Indian Island.

US Air Force

1675-1678 King Philip's War

King Philip's War was the beginning of a century of war in New England. King Philip was not king. He was a Massachusetts Wampanoag Chief named Metacom. He was the son of Massasoit who befriended and aided the Pilgrims who landed at Plymouth in 1620. On June 24, 1675, Metacom led his people into war against expanding English settlers in Southern New England at a town called Swansea, Massachusetts. Increasing numbers of English colonists and their hunger for land caused tension in the region. Fueling this tension was the continuing problem of English cattle trampling Native American cornfields. In addition, the death of Sassamon (Sachem Squando's child), caused a breakdown in peace relations that led to war.

In Maine, the war involved the Penobscots along with many other people. Colonists in Maine became nervous about the activities in Southern New England and denied the sale of guns and ammunition to the Native population. Native people depended on these guns to hunt.

By the spring and early summer of 1676, more than a 150 Native Americans died from starvation in the Androscoggin and Kennebec River Valleys. The Indians were forced to attack Arrowsic, a trading post on the Kennebec River for much needed supplies.

Chief **Madockawando** led an attack on the settlement of York in Southern Maine during King Philip's War, only after trying to remain neutral.

Metacom (King Philip)



Bronze Sculpture by Jud Hartmann, Blue Hill, Maine.

The outcome of the war was devastating to the traditional way of life for Native people. They were sold into slavery, or forced to become servants locally. Many Native people moved from their traditional lands. This war was one of the bloodiest in American history.

Scalp Proclamation

King George II (1727-60 AD) was the King of Britain (England) at the time this proclamation was issued. Born November 10th 1683.

Lolon Saguarrab was the Chief of the Penobscot Nation at the time of the Proclamation. He was a great warrior, a greater diplomat, and an executive of ability. So tireless he spent an entire summer between Boston and Quebec seeking peace for his people.

Requires "his majesty's subjects" to "embrace all opportunities of pursuing, captivating, killing and destroying all and every" Penobscot Indian.

They wanted the Penobscot Indians to be submissive to "his majesty."



By His HONOUR
S P E N C E R P H I P S, Esq;
Lieutenant-Governour and Commander in Chief, in and over His Majesty's Province of the *Massachusetts-Bay* in *New-England*.

A P R O C L A M A T I O N.

WHEREAS the Tribe of *Penobscot* Indians have repeatedly in a perfidious Manner acted contrary to their solemn Submission unto His Majesty long since made and frequently renewed;

I have therefore, at the Desire of the house of Representatives, with the Advice of His Majesty's Council, thought fit to issue this Proclamation, and to declare the *Penobscot* Tribe of Indians to be Enemies, Rebels and Traitors to His Majesty King *GEORGE* the Second: And I do hereby require His Majesty's Subjects of this Province to embrace all Opportunities of pursuing, captivating, killing and destroying all and every of the aforesaid Indians.

AND WHEREAS the General Court of this Province have voted that a Bounty or Incouragement be granted and allowed to be paid out of the Publick Treasury, to the marching Forces that shall have been employed for the Defence of the *Eastern* and *Western* Frontiers, from the *First* to the *Twenty-fifth* of this Instant *November*;

I have thought fit to publish the same; and I do hereby promise, That there shall be paid out of the Province-Treasury to all and any of the said Forces, over and above their Bounty upon Enlistment, their Wages and Subsistence, the premiums or Bounty following, viz.

For every Male *Penobscot* Indian above the Age of Twelve Years, that shall be taken within the Time aforesaid and brought to *Boston*, *Fifty Pounds*.

For every Scalp of a Male *Penobscot* Indian above the Age aforesaid, brought in as Evidence of their being killed as aforesaid, *Forty Pounds*.

For every Female *Penobscot* Indian taken and brought in as aforesaid, and for every Male Indian Prisoner under the Age of Twelve Years, taken and brought in as aforesaid, *Twenty-five Pounds*.

For every Scalp of such Female Indian or Male Indian under the Age of Twelve Years, that shall be killed and brought in as Evidence of their being killed as aforesaid, *Twenty Pounds*.

Given at the Council-Chamber in *Boston*, this Third Day of *November* 1755, and in the Twenty-ninth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord *GEORGE* the Second, by the Grace of GOD of *Great-Britain, France* and *Ireland*, KING, Defender of the Faith, &c.

By His Honour's Command,
J. Willard, Secr.

S. Phips.

G O D Save the K I N G.

B O S T O N: Printed by *John Draper*, Printer to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governour and Council. 1755.

This Proclamation put a bounty on the heads of women.

More devastating and cruel this Proclamation put a bounty of the heads of children under the age of 12.

Spencer Phips (1685-1757)

Royal Governor of Massachusetts
1749-1753, 1756-1757

Spencer Phips was the nephew of former governor and treasure hunter Sir William Phips.



1755

items