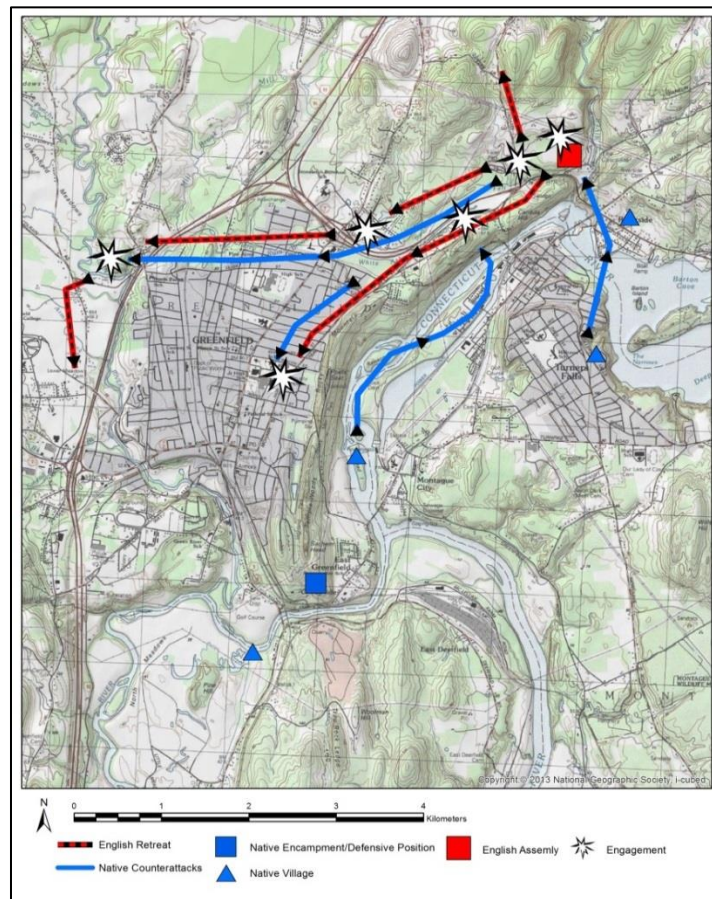


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**Site Identification and Documentation Project  
*The Battle of Great Falls / Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut*  
May 19, 1676**

**Technical Report  
(GA-2287-16-006)**



This material is based upon work assisted by a grant from the Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior.

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**January 19, 2017**

**Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center**

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## Contributors

There were many organizations and people that contributed to the ultimate success of this project. First and foremost, this project would not have been possible without the efforts of the Battlefield Advisory Board, comprised of representatives from the Historical Commissions of the towns of Gill, Montague (Turners Falls), Northfield, Deerfield, and Greenfield, Massachusetts and representatives of the Tribal Historic Preservation Offices from the Aquinnah (Gay Head) Wampanoag, Narragansett, Nipmuck, and the Abenaki Tribes.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, the cooperation and patience of the dozens of landowners within the project was critical to the overall success of the project. Volunteers from the local area, including Jim Rice, provided valuable assistance during the course of the project. The participation and experience of members of the Yankee Territory Coinshooters (YTC) metal detecting club, particularly George Pecia, Mike Horan, Ken Gudernatch, Peter Allyn, David Gregorski, Laura Kucharczyk, Tom Kunkler, Michael Stanczyk and others, was crucial in discriminating and recovering potential battle-related artifacts from some of the most challenging landscapes we have yet encountered in battlefield archeology projects. YTC members were tireless in their efforts to continually revise their methods, techniques and technologies to adapt them to the challenges of the cultural and physical landscape. They served as mentors to crew members who greatly valued their experience and knowledge. YTC members were very knowledgeable in many aspects of the historic period material culture from their many years of detecting and provided important real time perspectives on recovered objects that informed field decisions regarding where best to focus efforts. Many local historians and archaeologists with extensive knowledge of the culture history of the area and battle events made important contributions to the project. Peter Thomas and John Wilson provided many valued archeological and historical perspectives on battle events and were important sounding boards for the ongoing interpretation of the battlefield throughout the field season. The knowledge and experience of the members and staff of the Nolumbeka Project also contributed valuable insights on the project, historical context, and battle events.

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<sup>1</sup> David Brule, Project Coordinator; Ed Gregory, Montague; Joe Graveline, Northfield; Peter Miller Greenfield; John Nove, Deerfield; Ivan Ussach, Gill; Doug Harris representing the Narragansett Tribal Historic Preservation Office; and Elizabeth Perry and Steven Craddock representing the Aquinnah (Gay Head) Wampanoag; and David Tall Pine White representing the Chaubunagungamaug Band of Nipmuck Indians.

## I. Introduction and Project Summary

This technical report summarizes the research, methods, and results of the Battle of Great Falls / Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut (GA-2287-16-006) National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program (NPS ABPP) Site Identification and Documentation grant awarded to the Town of Montague in July 2016.<sup>2</sup> This grant is the second awarded to the Town of Montague supporting research, education, site identification and documentation, and preservation of sites associated with the King Philip's War (1675-1676) Battle of Great Falls / Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut that took place on May 19, 1676 (Figure 1).<sup>3</sup>

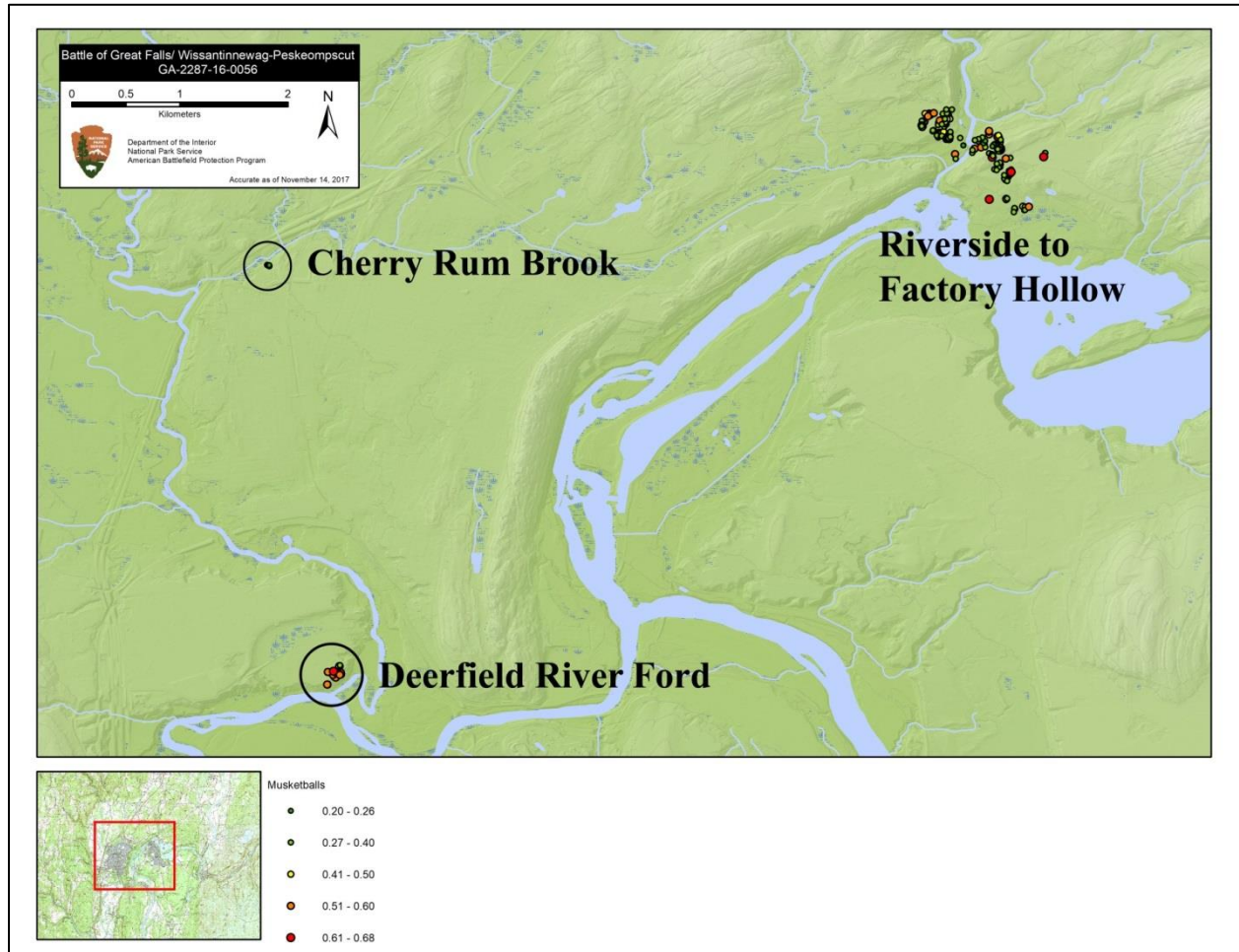
This report will focus primarily on the methods and results for the current grant which consisted of a battlefield survey of approximately 1.25 miles and 170 acres of the estimated 6.5 miles of the entire battlefield from the Riverside area of Gill to the Deerfield River Ford at the confluence of the Green and Deerfield Rivers in Greenfield (Figures 1 & 2). The battlefield turned out to be far more complex than anticipated and as a result the entire battlefield could not be surveyed under this grant. A great deal of time was spent conducting surveys between the Riverside area of Gill and the upper Factory Hollow area in Greenfield, a distance of 1.25 miles. Most of the battle-related objects from the project were recovered from this area. The survey found that the Riverside and Lower Factory Hollow Areas were heavily impacted by late eighteenth through early twentieth industrial and domestic activity which deposited thousands of non-battle related objects (mostly iron) essentially masking evidence of the English attack on the Native village at Peskeompskut (Riverside) and the Native attack at the English Assembly/Horse Hitching Area in Lower Factory Hollow. Weeks were spent surveying these areas with very little success. Another factor was the erroneous assumption that aside from the English attack on the Native village at Peskeompskut there was little action

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<sup>2</sup> The NPS ABPP promotes the preservation of significant historic battlefields associated with wars on American soil. The purpose of the program is to assist citizens, public and private institutions, and governments at all levels in planning, interpreting, and protecting sites where historic battles were fought on American soil during the armed conflicts that shaped the growth and development of the United States, in order that present and future generations may learn and gain inspiration from the ground where Americans made their ultimate sacrifice. The goals of the program are: 1) to protect battlefields and sites associated with armed conflicts that influenced the course of American history, 2) to encourage and assist all Americans in planning for the preservation, management, and interpretation of these sites, and 3) to raise awareness of the importance of preserving battlefields and related sites for future generations.

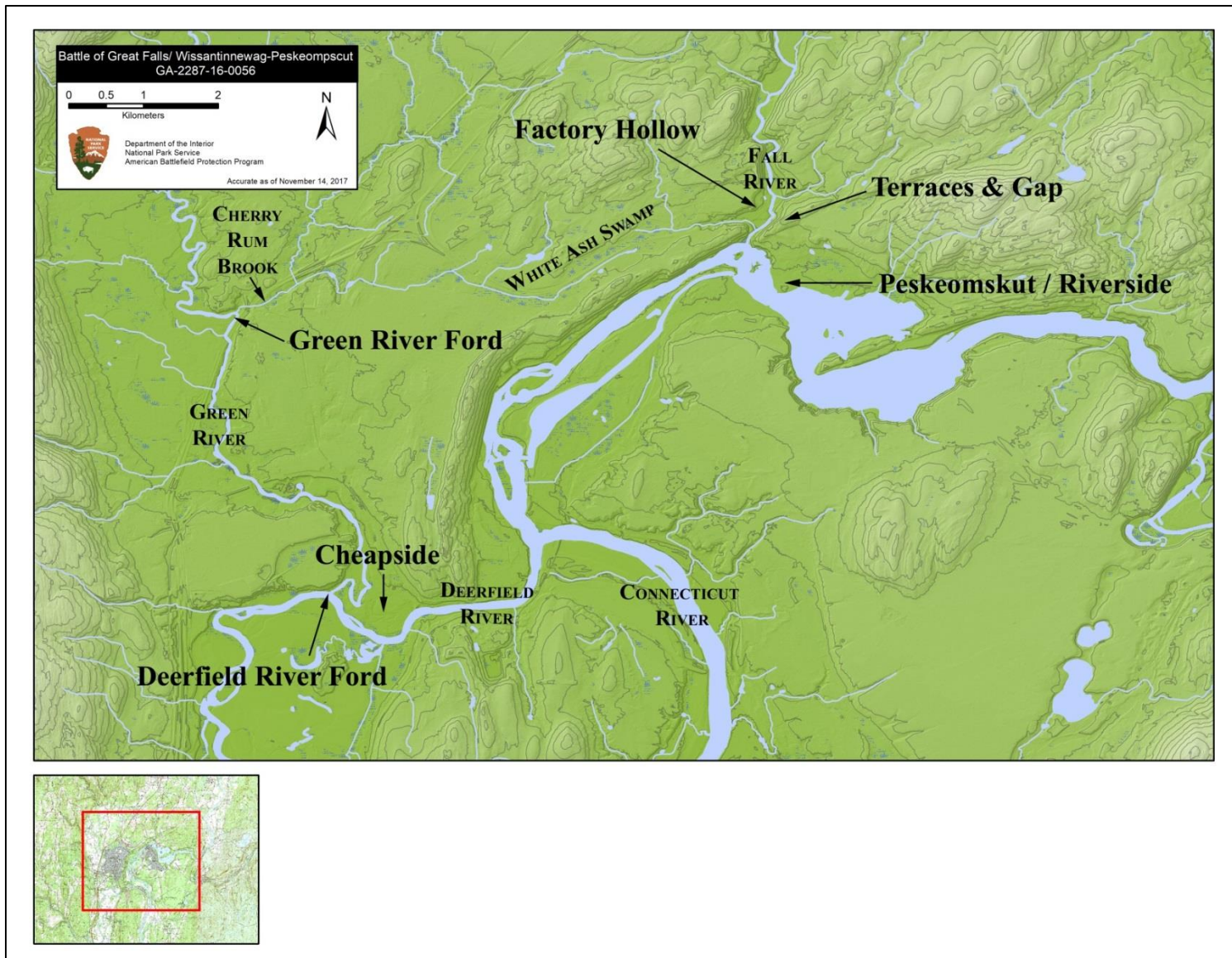
<sup>3</sup>Kevin McBride, David Naumec, Ashley Bissonnette & Noah Fellman, *Final Technical Report Battle of Great Falls (Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut) Pre-Inventory and Documentation Plan* (GA-2287-14-012), report submitted to the Town of Montague, 2016.

until the Native attack on English Assembly Area, on the west side of the Falls River, where it was thought the Native counterattacks began. That assumption was proven to be wrong and the battlefield survey documented intense fighting the entire 1.25-mile distance from just north of the Riverside area and across the Falls River to Upper Factory Hollow.



**Figure 1.** Battle of Great Falls/Wissatinnewag-Peskeompskut Battlefield Survey.

Although no clear evidence of the English attack on the Native village at Peskeompskut (Riverside) was found (one musket ball was found by a landowner and two others in a museum collection), nor any substantive evidence of the battle related objects at the English Assembly Area (e.g. horseshoes, equipment, musket balls), nonetheless the survey was considered highly successful. More than 350 battle related objects were recovered (and 256 non-battle related objects) along the 1.5 miles and 170 acres that were surveyed, including 284 musket balls, domestic and personal objects (e.g. amulets, buttons, scrap brass, spoons), and gun parts and accessories (e.g. trigger, flint wrap, ram rod tip). One of the more challenging aspects of the



**Figure 2.** Battle of Great Falls/Wissatinnewag-Peskeompskut Battlefield Geography.

battlefield reconstruction was documenting the various routes of retreat taken by the disintegrating English forces after they were attacked at the assembly area. An additional challenge was documenting the many avenues of the Native Coalition counterattacks and the complexity of their movements and tactics. Native men from at least five other villages (and perhaps some from Peskeompskut) began to mobilize and counterattack the retreating English at various points within an hour or so after the initial assault on the village ended. It also appears that the Native leaders could easily predict the route of retreat of English forces (or at least the main body) and set up ambushes at various locations along the way. Generally, the battlefield evidence indicates a well-coordinated series of Native counter attacks from the front, flank, and rear that have provided important insights into Native strategy and tactics during the battle.

Three widely separated areas of the battlefield were surveyed; A 1.25 mile stretch from just north of Riverside to Factory Hollow, a 500-yard area along the south bank of Cherry Rum Brook 600 yards (550 meters) from the confluence of Cherry Rum Brook and the Green River where Captain Turner was killed, and a 250 yard (5 acre) stretch near the Deerfield River Ford where the battlefield survey and Native counterattacks ended (Figures 1 & 2). The survey of properties between Riverside and Factory Hollow was conducted to track the English retreat from a known starting point (attack on the Peskeompskut village at present day Riverside) in the hopes that it would lead to the English Assembly Area. Identification of the English Assembly Area was considered critical to locating the route(s) of English retreat as it appears from the accounts of the battle that the English force split into a main body and as many five smaller groups (not including individuals) after the attacks at the assembly area and White Ash Swamp. After months of surveying the area from Riverside to Factory Hollow it was decided to jump ahead to the general area where it was thought that the English forded the Deerfield River along the English Avenue of Approach and Retreat. The assumption, which proved to be correct, was that the English would retreat along the same route as their Avenue of Approach. Thirty- four musket balls were recovered from a 1.5-acre area confirming the English route of retreat over the Deerfield River Ford and documented an intense action that took place near the ford that was either the result of a Native ambush, attack, or blocking force to prevent the English from crossing the Deerfield River.

The survey of the remaining 5.5 miles of the English route of retreat will present a number of challenges as much of the route is very suburban and there are several routes taken by



the various groups of retreating English that will have to be identified. The 2.5-mile route taken by the English along the west side of the Green River from the confluence of the Cherry Rum Brook to the Deerfield Ford may be relatively straightforward, although sections of the battlefield may have been impacted from the construction of Interstate 95 depending on how closely the route of retreat parallels the Green River. The small group of musket balls recovered from the south bank of the Cherry Rum Brook is significant as it indicates the English were retreating along the south bank of the brook at least at that point of the battle. While it cannot be assumed the English stayed on the south bank for the entire 3.0 miles from Factory Hollow to the Green River (and likely did not), the battle evidence at this location provides a starting point from which to track the battle back to Factory Hollow.

### *Project Scope and Objectives*

The primary objective of the Battle of Great Falls / Wissatinnewag-Peskeompskut Site Identification and Documentation Project was to conduct a battlefield archeology survey to locate, sequence, and document battlefield actions (Core Areas) within the Battlefield Boundary and to assess the eligibility of the battlefield for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>4</sup> Although four potential Core Areas were originally identified in the Pre-Inventory Research and Documentation Plan (GA-2287-14-012; Figure 3), the recent battlefield survey has identified several new actions and terrain features. As the battlefield survey has not been completed it is anticipated that additional combat actions, ancillary sites, and key terrain features will be identified during the project. As such, the delineation and revision of the Battlefield Boundary and Core Areas will be done following the completion of the battlefield survey.

Several tasks were identified by the Town of Montague's in the Request for Proposal created for the Battle of Great Falls/Wissatinnewag-Peskeompskut Site Identification and Evaluation Project. The results of these tasks will be discussed below:

**Task 1: Develop an Archeological Research Design** to standards acceptable by the ABPP and in accordance with Massachusetts Historic Commission permitting standards. The Research Design should address NAGPRA and protocols for discovery of human remains. Review Pre-Inventory Research and Documentation Report (Phase I Report).

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<sup>4</sup> McBride, Et Al. *Final Technical Report Battle of Great Falls Pre-Inventory and Documentation Plan* (GA-2287-14-012).

**Task 2: Prepare and Submit a Permit Application** for archeological investigations to the Massachusetts Historic Commission. The Battlefield Grant will be responsible for obtaining landowner permission for excavation and artifact donation.

**Task 3: Conduct Field Survey** in accordance with Secretary of Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeological Documentation

**Task 3.1 Walkover Survey:** Conduct a pedestrian survey of the Battlefield Boundary and Core Areas to identify artifacts that may be visible on the surface. Much of the remaining land in the study areas is covered with vegetation or previously developed and probably will have no visible artifact concentrations. Tribal Cultural Specialists from the Narragansett, Wampanoag of Gay Head–Aquinnah, and/or Nipmuc to tribes will be present during the walkover survey.

**Task 3.2 Remote Sensing:** The walkover will be followed with a metal detector survey of selected areas within each of the Core Areas. The survey will be conducted using a grid of points, established in proportion to the size of the area to be examined. Metal Detector "hits" will be flagged, mapped and evaluated with small excavation units. The grid location and depth of each artifact will be recorded on GPS for use in making a GIS map of artifact distribution. Tribal Cultural Specialists from the Narragansett, Wampanoag of Gay Head–Aquinnah, and Nipmuc to tribes will be present during remote sensing.

**Task 3.3 Subsurface Testing:** Subsurface testing may also be conducted in Core Areas and sites that are expected to contain significant numbers of non-metallic artifacts and features. Examples of these sites are White Ash Swamp and Village Core Areas. Tribal Cultural Specialists from the Narragansett, Wampanoag of Gay Head–Aquinnah, and/or Nipmuc to tribes will be present during subsurface testing.

**Task 3.4 Prepare GIS Map of Battlefield Area** using NPS battlefield survey data dictionary

**Task 4: Laboratory Analysis and Curation.** The field methodology will be designed to document the battlefield boundaries with minimal artifact collection. Some artifacts will be recovered; however, so adequate laboratory facilities are required to handle the expected classes of recovered materials which may include small, corroded metallic objects, such as shell fragments, bullets, buckles and so forth. All artifacts will be cleaned, assessed for conservation needs, identified and catalogued and the location of each plotted on the battlefield base maps. The PI should make arrangements with a museum that meets National Park Service Standards (NPS Museum Handbook I and II) for permanent artifact conservation.

**Task 5: Coordinate a Public Planning Process** which shall include three meetings. The first meeting should be to present the goals of the project. The second meeting will be to solicit public comment on the draft report. The third meeting will be a presentation of the final report.

**Task 6: Prepare a Technical Report** as specified in the work plan, with a preference for a final product that seamlessly combines the Phase I and Phase II report.

**Task 7: Provide Monthly Updates** to the Battlefield Grant Advisory Board through a written report or participation in the monthly board meetings.

## **II. Battlefield Archeology**

The discipline of Battlefield Archeology is concerned primarily with the identification and study of sites where conflicts took place, and the archeological signature of the event. This requires gathering information from historical records associated with the battlefield including troop dispositions and numbers, the order of battle (command structure, strength, and disposition of personnel, and equipment), as well as any undocumented evidence of an action or battle gathered from archeological investigations. The archeology of a battlefield allows battlefield historians and archeologists to reconstruct the progress of a battle, assess the veracity of historical accounts of the battle, and fill in any gaps in the historical record. Battlefield archeology also seeks to move beyond simple reconstruction of the battlefield event, and move toward a more dynamic interpretation of the battlefield.<sup>5</sup>

### *Battlefield Boundary - Battle of Great Falls / Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut*

The first step toward battlefield preservation is defining exactly where the battlefield is on the ground and what remains to preserve of the battlefield. In 2016 the NPS ABPP revised their Battlefield Survey Manual to focus the attention of battlefield researchers on a standard methodology to provide State Historic Preservation Offices, local planners, preservation advocates, and others with a reliable and standardized methodology to enable the NPS ABPP to compare information across all wars and all sites.<sup>6</sup>

One of the more significant changes in the revised manual was the redefinition of the term Battlefield Study Area to Battlefield Boundary:

Perhaps a weakness of the old manual was the use of the term “study area” to indicate the furthest extent of the historic battlefield boundary. Casual researchers frequently equated the “study area” to the Project Area or Vicinity Area of a general study which may include buffers in the boundary of land that really had little value. Just the term devalued the historic resource. It was difficult for our partners to defend that the “study area” has known, studied and identified historic resources. Worst, even less careful investigators use the term to indicate that there

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<sup>5</sup> Richard Fox & Douglas Scott. “The Post-Civil War Battlefield Pattern: An Example from the Custer Battlefield” in *Historical Archeology*, Vol. 25, No. 2, 1991. (92-103).

<sup>6</sup> National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program, *Battlefield Survey Manual* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2016).

was no value outside of the Core Area as defined by our surveys. For this reason, the ABPP has decided to change the term to indicate that the battlefield boundary is indeed the currently understood boundary of the battlefield.<sup>7</sup>

The Battlefield Boundary should accurately reflect the extent of the battle and is defined as the ground over which units maneuvered in preparation for combat, the salient places where battle events occurred, and important cultural landmarks and important terrain features. This requires establishing the Battlefield Boundary and delineating it on a USGS 7.5 series topographic map. The boundary must be defensible based on historical and/or archeological evidence and the final map must demonstrate that the boundaries encompass legitimate historic resources. Battlefield boundaries should be defined as objectively as possible to include the salient places where events occurred and where important landmarks are located, and should accurately reflect the extent of the battle and encompass the ground over which units maneuvered in preparation for combat. The initial survey should include all known historic resources associated with the battle. Once the battlefield survey is completed and the final battlefield map is marked with defining features and boundaries, informed preservation decisions can be made. The battlefield survey should result in the definition of three boundaries:

- Battlefield Boundary defined as the maximum delineation of the historic battle and associated terrain
- Core Area, which defines the area where the most significant combat occurred.
- Potential National Register Boundary (PotNR), which contains only those portions of the battlefield that have retained integrity.

In the case of the Battle of Great Falls / Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut, the Battlefield Boundary, Core Area(s), and National Register Boundary may be very similar and will likely be determined primarily by the distribution of battle related objects and battlefield landscape features given the impreciseness of the historical record.

### *Defining Battlefield Boundaries and Core Areas*

Defining Battlefield Boundaries and Core Areas of the battlefield is a critical part of the battlefield documentation process.<sup>8</sup> The Battlefield Boundary is defined as the maximum delineation of the historical site and should contain all the terrain and cultural features related to or contributing to the battle event including where troops maneuvered, deployed, and fought

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<sup>7</sup> NPS ABPP. *Battlefield Survey Manual*. P. 3.

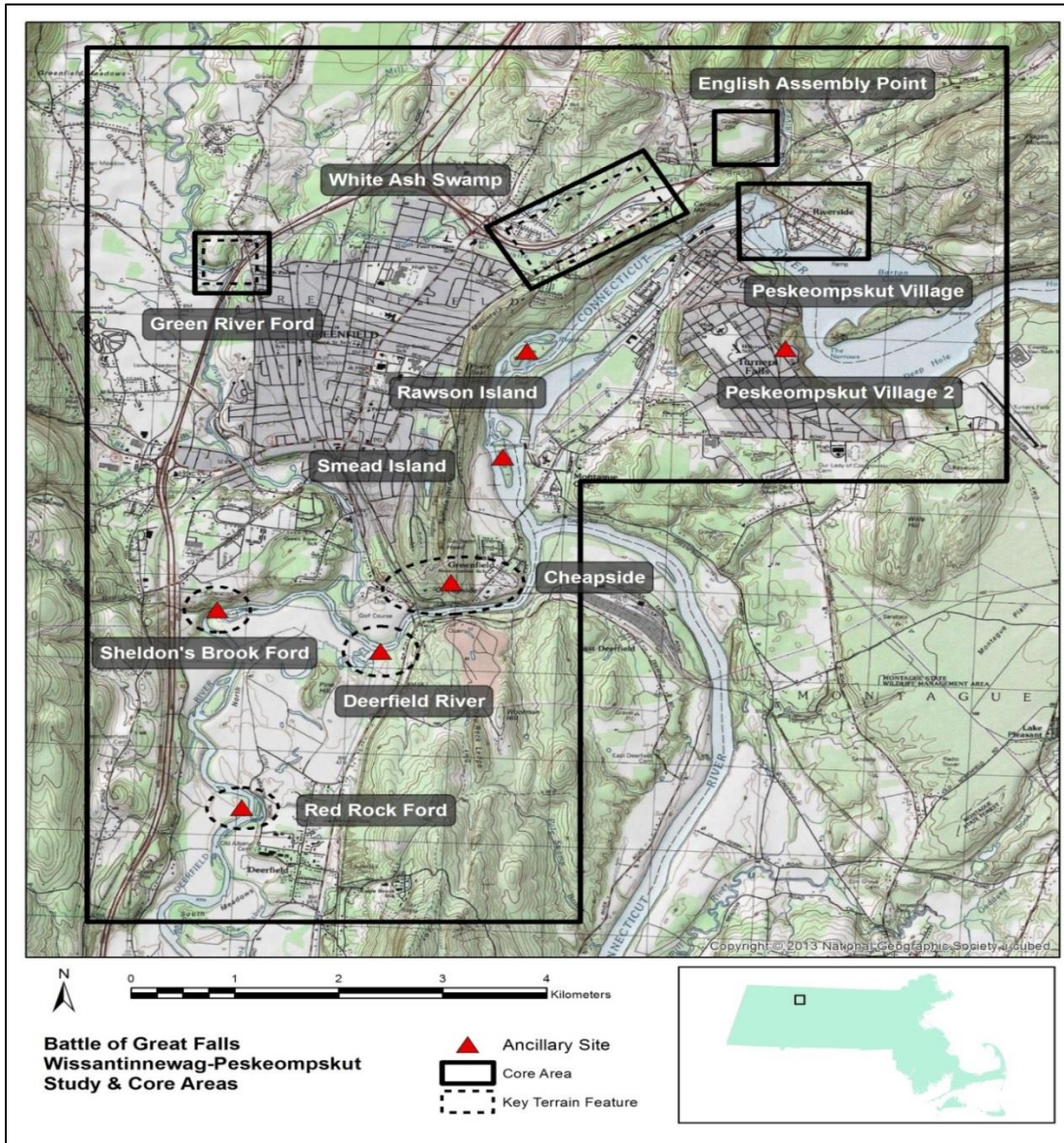
<sup>8</sup> NPS ABPP. *Battlefield Survey Manual*. P. 28-29.

immediately before, during, and immediately after combat. The Battlefield Boundary functions as the tactical context and visual setting of the battlefield. Natural features and contours on relevant USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle maps are used to outline a Battlefield Boundary and should include all locations and terrain features that directly contributed to the development and conclusion of the battle. The Battlefield Boundary should include the following:

- Core Areas of combat;
- Avenues of Approach and Withdrawal/Retreat;
- locations of all deployed units of the combatants on the field, including reserves;
- preliminary skirmishing if it led directly to the battle; and
- logistical areas (supply trains, encampments, storage facilities, villages, watercraft, etc.).

The Core Area of a battlefield is the area of direct combat and includes those places where the opposing forces engaged and incurred casualties. The Core Area must fall fully within the Battlefield Boundary. The natural features and contours on USGS 7.5-minute quadrant maps help to define Core Areas and should include the areas of confrontation, conflict, and casualties. Natural barriers, such as rivers, creeks, swamps, hills, and ridges often restrained the movement of the combatants and sometimes provided a natural landscape or topographical boundary for the battlefield. Generally, Core Areas can be reasonably well defined in Revolutionary War and Civil War battlefields based on better documentation and contemporary maps compared to seventeenth century battlefields. No known period maps document the Battle of Great Falls, and the available documentation with respect to battle locations and actions is ambiguous. As such the Battle of Great Falls Battlefield Boundary and Core Areas will be delineated primarily based on the nature and distribution of battle related and domestic objects and key terrain features. When the original Study (now Battlefield Boundary) and Core Areas were identified it was not precisely known where the English route(s) of retreat were located, how many different routes the English took during the retreat, nor the nature and locations of all the actions associated with the battle (Figure 3). The boundaries of the Study Area and locations of Core Areas were based entirely on primary sources associated with the battle and were imprecise as proven by the recent battlefield survey. The recently completed battlefield survey has confirmed some of the original

Core Areas but has identified several new actions and terrain features. Many more actions should be anticipated when the entire battlefield has been surveyed.



**Figure 3.** Battle of Great Falls / Wissatinnewag-Peskeompskut: Original Study and Core Areas, Ancillary Sites and Key Terrain Features.

## *Original Core Areas*

### Peskeompskut Village

English sources make specific references to a village of around 200 to 300 people that was attacked by the English at dawn on May 19, 1676. English sources indicate it was located on the north bank of the Connecticut River adjacent to the river:

And when it grew so light as that they were able to distinguish between their friends and enemies they marched up to ye wigwam and fired into them...great numbers were slain, of men, women, & children & many others ran into the river & were carried down a steep fall.<sup>9</sup>

The precise location of the village is not known but circumstantial evidence suggests it was in the Riverside area of the Town of Gill.

### English Assembly Point / Horse Hitching Area

English sources refer to a location where:

When they came near the Indians Rendezvous, they alighted off their horses, and tied them to some young trees at a quarter of a mile distance, so marching up, they fired briskly into their wigwams...For some of the enemy fell upon the guards that kept the horses<sup>10</sup>

The army came up to the Indians (at the falls) a little before break of day...ye English alighted from their horses at a quarter mile distance from the enemy, & tied their horses to some young trees; and when it grew so light as that they were able to distinguish between their friends & enemies they marched up to ye wigwams, & fired into them...about 20 men, that tarried behind to fire at some Indians that were coming over ye river and were left by ye [main] company, and were forced to dispute ye point with ye enemy a considerable time before they could recover their horses.<sup>11</sup>

These two sources offer two very different descriptions as to the location of the English Assembly Area. The only original source is William Hubbard who states that Turner's soldiers dismounted and then tied their horses to some saplings one quarter of a mile away from where

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<sup>9</sup> Peter A. Thomas, "Any Analysis and Transcription of Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." (1731/32) containing an account of the Falls Fight of May 19, 1676 from first-hand sources and Jonathan Wells' personal story of his escape from the Indians and return to Hatfield." Williams Family Papers, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, MA. P. 13; Williams Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 9. Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library, Deerfield, MA.

<sup>10</sup> William Hubbard, *Narrative of the Indian Wars in New England, 1677* (Boston, MA: John Foster, 1677). P. 85.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." Pp. 13, 15.

they dismounted. This passage clearly does not state the English dismounted one quarter of a mile from the village. Stephen Williams drew from Hubbard's narrative several times in his narrative of the battle and he, like every successive historian used some version of the Williams account (including the MPMRC), and mistakenly concluded that the Horse Hitching Area was "at a quarter mile from the enemy."<sup>12</sup> While Hubbard does not indicate precisely where the Horse Hitching Area might be located, it is not one quarter of a mile from the village. Another consideration is the severe terrain on the east side of the Fall River which would make it extremely difficult for horses to traverse. Additionally, based on the distribution of battle related objects (see below) it appears the Horse Hitching Area is located on the west side of the Fall River likely in the Lower Factory Hollow Area.

### White Ash Swamp

Based on English sources it appears that a significant number of Natives converged from different directions to attack the main body of the retreating English at the White Ash Swamp approximately .55 miles west of Upper Factory Hollow. It is also at this location that it appears the English force began to disintegrate into several groups in their efforts to escape the Native counterattacks and in part because they were separated by the Native attacks coming from several different directions:

When about 20 men came to y<sup>r</sup> horses where ye indians & y<sup>y</sup> fought for y<sup>r</sup> horses & recovered they mountd & went after y<sup>r</sup> company, but y<sup>e</sup> Indians followed y<sup>e</sup> & some came across way & some between y<sup>e</sup> & so y<sup>y</sup> fought upon a retreat being divided into several companies or parties being separated by y<sup>e</sup> Indians...& came up to the Captain [Turner] & persuaded him to turn and take care of y<sup>e</sup> men in y<sup>e</sup> rear but he said better to lose some than all & then he fell into the rear again & took with a small company that separated from the others and they ran upon a parsell of Indians near a swamp & were most of them killed & then they were separated and had about ten men left with him.<sup>13</sup>

...& quickly the army was divided into several parties – one pilot crying out if you love your lives follow me, and another that was acquainted with ye woods cried if you love your lives follow me. J.W. was following a company that road towards a swamp, but perceiving that there was a body of Indians there, he left the company (who were all left) and followed another small company of about ten men.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook.." P. 24.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook.." P. 30.



## Green River Ford

Green River Ford is located just opposite of the confluence of Cherry Rum Brook and the Green River. Cherry Rum Brook (White Ash Swamp Brook) appears to be the route of retreat (and approach) of the main body of English as well as some of the smaller groups of retreating English. An impacted musket ball was recovered along Cherry Rum Brook just 300 yards east of the confluence of the brook and the Green River.<sup>15</sup> Captain Turner's body was recovered on the west side of the Green River near the confluence with the Cherry Rum Brook:

...the chief Captain, whose name was *Turner*, lost his life, he was pursued through a River, received his Fatal stroke as he passed through that which is called the *Green River*, & as he came out of the *Water* he fell into the hands of the *Uncircumcised*, who stripped him, (as some who say they saw it affirm) and rode away upon his horse; and between thirty and forty more were lost in this Retreat. Within a few days after this, Capt. *Turners* dead Corps was found a small distance from the River; it appeared that he had been shot through his thigh and back.<sup>16</sup>

A Narragansett Indian named John Wecopeak testified that "he saw Capt. Turner, and that he was shot in the thigh, and that he knew it was him, for the said Turner said that was his name."<sup>17</sup>

Two additional Core Areas were identified during the recently completed battlefield survey based on the recovery of battle related objects; Cherry Rum Brook and Deerfield Ford (see below). A brief survey of the south bank of Cherry Rum Brook approximately .35 miles east of the confluence of the brook with the Green River recovered four small diameter musket balls and a piece of brass scrap. These finds indicate the English followed along the south bank of the Cherry Rum Book at least in the final leg of their retreat to the Green River Ford.

Thirty-four musket balls (more than 50 percent large diameter) were recovered from a terrace edge overlooking the Green and Deerfield Rivers and the Deerfield River Ford. In addition, 27 seventeenth century Native domestic related objects were also recovered from the location including brass and lead scrap, brass and pewter spoon fragments, a lead bale seal, lead bead, and unidentified hand wrought iron. No firm date can be established for the domestic site but it was likely not occupied at the time of the battle.

It is unclear at this juncture if the battlefield is best conceptualized as multiple Core Areas defined by several areas of direct combat or if the fighting along the English route of

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<sup>15</sup> Joe Graveline, Nolumbeka Project, Personal Communication 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Increase Mather, *A Brief History of the Warr with the Indians in New England* (Boston, MA: John Foster, 1676). P. 50.

<sup>17</sup> John Easton, Franklin B. Hough, Editor, *A Narrative of the Causes which led to Philip's Indian War, of 1675 and 1676*, by John Easton, of Rhode Island (Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1858). P. 180.

retreat is continuous constituting a single Core Area. The next phase of fieldwork should resolve the issue.

### *Areas of Integrity*

Areas of integrity delineate portions of the historic battlefield landscape that still convey a sense of the historic scene (retain visual and physical integrity) and can still be preserved (See: Part III Battlefield Landscape and Key Terrain Features). Any areas of the Battlefield Boundary and Core Areas that have been impacted or otherwise compromised by modern development, erosion, or other destructive forces and can no longer provide a feeling of the historic setting are excluded from areas of integrity. However, some battlefields in suburban areas may still retain integrity and significance if artifacts or other archeological information are intact.

The Riverside neighborhood in Gill, Massachusetts, is the supposed location of the Peskeompskut village attacked by Turner's company. It has been significantly impacted by nineteenth century industrial development with numerous cut and fill episodes, high water levels resulting from the Turners Falls Dam that may have submerged significant portions of the battlefield, and a high density of residential homes. The area certainly has no visual integrity and it remains to be seen if it still retains a degree of physical integrity. The Lower Factory Hollow area has also been impacted by industrial activity, construction and removal of factories, and some light residential construction. The biggest impact to the area is from the thousands of non-battle related objects and debris from industrial activities which makes it extremely difficult to metal detect battle related objects. As the battlefield survey has not been completed, and the precise route of the English retreat has not been identified, it is difficult to assess the impacts to other portions of the battlefield.

However, many portions of the Great Falls/Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut battlefield still retain a high degree of visual and physical integrity that convey a sense of the historic scene and battlefield landscape. Since the 1676 battle, houses, factories, and roads have impacted sections of the battlefield and the nature of the vegetation has certainly changed (it was likely a more open forest), but the battlefield terrain and geomorphology are relatively unchanged and still provide a sense of the visual setting at the time of the battle. The most significant impacts to the battlefield are those resulting from 350 years of land use after the battle. Post-battle artifacts recovered from the battlefield include hundreds of lead bullets, horse and ox shoes, quarry tools

such as feathers and plugs, chain links, and personal items such as coins, buttons and harmonica parts. While these activities resulted in thousands of non-battle related objects deposited on the battlefield landscape, and made the identification of battle and non-battle related objects more challenging, they do not significantly affect the integrity of the battlefield.

### *Battlefield Surveys*

Battlefield surveys are an important aspect of historic preservation as many significant battlefield sites are destroyed or negatively impacted through ignorance of their location and significance. Many battlefields might be preserved if the property owner or the community were aware of their existence, and were informed of the significance of the battlefield, and its contribution to a broader understanding and appreciation of history. Preserved battlefields and related historic sites can add to a community's sense of identify and foster a greater interest in history and preservation efforts. The identification, documentation, and mapping of a battlefield's historic and cultural resources are an essential first step for battlefield preservation efforts. The long-term goal of the Battle of Great Falls / Peskeompskut project is to document the battlefields of King Philip's War, educate the public on the importance of battlefield preservation through community based preservation initiatives, and nominate significant battlefield sites to the National Register of Historic Places.

### *Battlefield Pattern Analysis*

Traditional battlefield interpretations and reconstructions rely primarily on historical information (e.g., battle accounts, narratives, diaries, etc.), occasionally augmented by oral histories and random collections of battle-related objects. These reconstructions tend to focus only on the spatial distribution of battlefield events which result in a static reconstruction of the battlefield, referred to as Gross-Pattern Analysis. Douglas Scott, Richard Fox, and others have advocated for an approach to battlefield archeology that moves beyond the particularistic and synchronic approach characteristic of Gross-Pattern Analysis in battlefield reconstructions.<sup>18</sup> This approach, known as Dynamic-Pattern Analysis, interprets and reconstructs battlefields by

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<sup>18</sup> Douglas D Scott, *Archeological Perspectives on the Battle of the Little Bighorn* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989); Fox and Scott, "Post-Civil War Battlefield Pattern." Pp. 92-103.

integrating discrete battlefield events and their archeological signatures into a cohesive spatial and temporal sequence.

The key to a dynamic battlefield analysis as defined by Scott and Fox is the identification of individual and unit actions that “allows resolution of individual positions and movements across the battlefield.”<sup>19</sup> In the case of the Battle of the Little Bighorn this was largely achieved through modern forensic ballistic analysis of thousands of rifled bullets and cartridge cases which allowed researchers to track individual firearms (bullets and shell casings) across the battlefield. This integrated model of Gross-Pattern and Dynamic-Pattern Analysis has been the paradigm for Civil War and post-Civil War battlefield archeology and analysis since 1985. A dynamic reconstruction of battlefield events requires an ongoing assessment of the congruence of the historical and archeological record to identify discrete group (units) or individual actions and movements on the battlefield to place them in a temporal framework. This approach would seemingly not work on seventeenth century battlefields where the projectiles were musket balls and the actions of individuals could rarely be identified from historical records. Nonetheless, this approach was modified by focusing on group actions and was successfully adapted to document the Great Falls/Peskeompskut battlefield.

Although individual actions could not be identified based on the identification of a unique ballistic signature nonetheless several distinct unit actions were identified on the battlefield. In one instance a Native flanking attack was documented in an action referred to as “The Mountain Gap,” which is a narrow east-west oriented 15-yard-wide natural break through a steep north-south trending bedrock ridge that English forces had to pass through during their retreat. Fifty-five small diameter musket balls (e.g. .28” to .38” diameter) were recovered within the gap, mostly on the north slope of the gap indicating they were fired from south to north in a flanking movement. In another example three concentrations of large diameter musket balls (e.g. .53” to .56” inch diameter) along a long flat plain in Upper Factory Hollow were recovered in direct association with horse tack suggest that English troopers were fired upon by several Native soldiers as they used their disabled horses for cover. For the most part the linear nature of the battle often made it difficult to discern Native from English fire unless the direction of fire could be determined in association with terrain features (e.g. the “gap”, swales, etc.) It was originally assumed the majority of the musket balls recovered from the battlefield were fired by the Native

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<sup>19</sup> Scott. *Archeological Perspectives on the Battle of the Little Bighorn*. P.148.

combatants (and still may be) but a recent review of historical information based on the recovered battle related objects suggests that some of the English eventually mounted a cohesive defense and fought hard along portions of the retreat resulting in a number of Native casualties.

### Military Terrain

Battlefield historians and archeologists attempt to understand and view the battlefield terrain through the soldiers' eyes. The military has developed a process for evaluating the military significance of the terrain denoted by the mnemonic KOCOA—Key Terrain, Obstacles, Cover and Concealment, Observation and Fields of Fire, Avenues of Approach and Retreat.

*Key Terrain:* Ground that when controlled and occupied gives its possessor an advantage. Examples within the Great Falls battlefield include the White Ash Swamp, elevated terraces, bedrock ridges, and the river fords at the Green and Deerfield Rivers. These areas were used by the Native combatants to attack the retreating English column or set ambushes.

*Obstacles:* Terrain features at the time of the battle that prevented, restricted, channeled or delayed troop movements included steep slopes and bedrock ridges, the White Ash Swamp and the Connecticut, Deerfield, and Green Rivers. Other examples include the “Mountain Gap” the English were forced to pass through to escape Native counterattacks, and the swales leading to high ground from lower to upper Factory Hollow and the fords over the Green and Deerfield Rivers. Some of the very steep terrain along the English route of approach and retreat would not have been an obstacle for soldiers on foot but significantly restricted use and access of these areas if soldiers were on horseback. Examples include the terrace edge along the west bank of the Green River and the very steep slopes overlooking the Falls River along the east side of the river.

*Cover and Concealment:* Cover is protection from the enemy's fire, such as the brow of a hill, a ravine, or lip of a terrace. Concealment is cover from observation by the enemy. Examples include the White Ash Swamp that provided concealment to the Native combatants and opportunities to set ambushes.

*Observation and Fields of Fire:* The ability to observe the movements of the enemy and to prevent surprise is a major advantage in battle. This might require occupying high ground that was not necessarily key terrain. An example of a terrain feature that provided Native combatants with an opportunity to observe the retreating English were the elevated bedrock outcrops along the route of retreat such Rocky Mountain and Canada Hill.

*Avenues of Approach and Retreat:* The transportation networks in the broader Turners Falls area at the time of the battle consisted of paths, trails, and cart paths. Jonathan Wells, a soldier who was separated from the main body of English during the retreat mentions traveling along a footpath “which led up to the path the army returned in” as he could see hoof prints. These

networks connected Native villages and Colonial settlements, and fishing places and were used by the English and Native combatants to facilitate movement at the time of the battle.

### *Defining Features*

The Native and English combatants who fought in the Battle of Great Falls oriented themselves on the battlefield by the cultural and natural landmarks of the historic landscape. A *defining feature* may be any feature mentioned in battle accounts or shown on historic maps that potentially can be located on the ground. Defining features referenced in historic sources at the time of the battle or shortly after include the Connecticut, Deerfield, Green, and Fall Rivers, the fords at the Deerfield and Green Rivers, the White Ash Swamp, the five Native villages in addition to Peskeompskut documented in the Great Falls Area “at Deerfield, Cheapside, & the island & up above & on ye east side of ye river,” a Native fort at Smead or Rawson Island, the footpath and road/path the English used during their approach and retreat, West Mountain, and Greenfield River Plain.<sup>20</sup>

Several other defining features were identified based on the presence and distribution of battle related objects including “The Mountain Gap”, the terraces overlooking the Falls River, the Swales leading from Lower to Upper Factory Hollow, and the terrace overlooking the Deerfield River Ford (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Defining Features. Battle of Great Falls / Wissatinnewag-Peskeompskut.

Name	Location	Relevance to Battle	Field Comment	KOCSA Analysis	Integrity Assessment	Remarks
<b>Terrain &amp; Topographic Features</b>						
Connecticut River	The CT River runs south from the border with Quebec, Canada and discharges at Old Saybrook, CT. The portion relevant to the battle begins: Lat/Long Points: South <u>42.563015, -72.556390;</u> <u>North</u> 42.601187, -72.545404	The portion of the CT River beginning south at Deerfield and running north to Gill served as a major obstacle to English and Native forces	Substantial Industrial development around the towns of Gill and Montague, Open Space, Wooded	Key Terrain, Obstacle (English & Native), Avenue of retreat & approach (Native)	Location, setting, feeling, association, material	Battle of Great Falls Battlefield Boundary & Core Area

<sup>20</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” Pp. 13, 15.

Deerfield Plains	Western side of the Connecticut River, approx. 2.5 miles.	English forces traveled north through Deerfield Plains on their approach to the Deerfield River	Moderate Residential Development, Open Space, Wooded, Public Roads	Key Terrain, Avenue of Approach & Retreat (English & Native)	Location, setting, feeling, association, material	Battle of Great Falls Battlefield Boundary
Deerfield River	Forms a boundary between present-day Deerfield and Greenfield. It is a tributary of the Connecticut River.	English forces need to cross the Deerfield River to proceed north to Wissetinnewag-Peskeompskut. There were at least two fords across the river.	Moderate Residential Development, Open Space, Wooded	Key Terrain, Obstacles, Avenue of Approach & Retreat (English & Native)	Location, setting, feeling, association, material	Battle of Great Falls Battlefield Boundary
Cheapside Neighborhood	A neck of land on the north bank of the Deerfield River abutted by the CT River to the east and the Green River to the west.	A Native observation outpost and possible fortification was established on this neck of land which forced the English to cross the Deerfield River further to the west. Native forces were alerted to the noise of horses and mobilized on the early morning of May 19, 1676 but did not encounter English forces.	Moderate Residential Development, Wooded, Public Roads	Key Terrain, Observation (Native), Obstacles, Fortified Place	Location, setting, feeling, association, material culture	Battle of Great Falls Battlefield Boundary
Petty Plain	Located north of the Deerfield River and west of the Green River	English forces forded the Deerfield River and crossed Petty Plain towards the Green River.	Moderate Residential Development, Open Space, Wooded, Public Roads	Key Terrain, Avenue of Approach & Retreat (English & Native)	Location, setting, feeling, association, material culture	Battle of Great Falls Study Area
Green River	A tributary of the Deerfield River that runs north through the Town of Greenfield, MA.	English forces forded the Green River south of Smead Brook. Captain Turner would later be killed in action during the English retreat while leading his men back across the Green River.	Moderate Residential Development, Open Space, Wooded	Key Terrain, Obstacles, Avenue of Approach & Retreat (English & Native)	Location, setting, feeling, association, material culture	Battle of Great Falls Battlefield Boundary
White Ash Swamp	White Ash Swamp is fed by Cherry Rum Brook and runs contiguous to Route 2. It is approx.5 miles northwest of the Connecticut River.	English forces likely maneuvered north of White Ash Swamp before dismounting from their horses before Fall River. During the English retreat Native forces held the swamp and	Low Residential Development, Open Space, Wooded, Public Roads	Key Terrain, Obstacles, Avenue of Approach & Retreat (English & Native), Cover & Concealment (Native)	Location, setting, feeling, association, material culture	Battle of Great Falls Battlefield Boundary & Core Area

		decimated fleeing English. One group of English attempted to cut through the swamp and were killed or captured.				
Fall River	A tributary of the Connecticut River which empties just below the Great Falls.	English forces dismounted and left their horses and a small guard west of Fall River. The main force crossed Fall River and continued east.	Moderate Residential Development, Open Space, Wooded, Public Roads	Key Terrain, Obstacles, Avenue of Approach & Retreat (English & Native)	Location, setting, feeling, association, material culture	Battle of Great Falls Battlefield Boundary & Core Area
Pisgah Mountain, SW Slope	Dominant landform in the area rising 715' (218 m) above the surrounding landscape.	English forces gathered on the southwestern slope of Pisgah Mountain within site of the Peskeompskut encampment.	Moderate Residential Development, Open Space, Wooded, Public Roads	Key Terrain, Observation (English), Obstacles, Avenue of Approach & Retreat (English & Native)	Location, setting, feeling, association, material culture	Battle of Great Falls Battlefield Boundary & Core Area
Peskeompskut	A small neck of land immediately east of the Great Falls.	The site of the Native encampment attacked and destroyed by English forces on the morning of May 19, 1676.	Moderate Residential & Industrial Development, Open Space, Wooded, Public Roads	Key Terrain, Obstacles, Avenue of Approach & Retreat (English & Native), Cover & Concealment (Native)	Location, setting, feeling, association, material culture	Battle of Great Falls Battlefield Boundary & Core Area

### Types of Battlefield Resources

Battlefield resources fall into four broad classes: *natural features*, *cultural features*, *military engineering features*, and *artifacts*. An important aspect of the battlefield analysis is the reconstruction of the historic and battlefield landscape to identify natural and cultural features present within the Battlefield Boundary and to determine how they were used by the combatants and may have influenced the outcome of the battle.<sup>21</sup> A cultural landscape is defined as a geographic area which includes both cultural and natural resources associated with the historic battlefield event.<sup>22</sup> Cultural landscapes such as was present at the time of the Great Falls battle are composed of a number of defining features which, individually and collectively, contribute to the landscape's physical appearance. In addition to vegetation and topography, cultural

<sup>21</sup> John Carman & Patricia Carman, "Mustering Landscapes: What Historic Battlefields Share in Common" in Eds. Douglas Scott, Lawrence Babits, and Charles Haecker. *Fields of Conflict: Battlefield Archeology from the Roman Empire to the Korean War* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2009).

<sup>22</sup> Susan Loechl, S. Enscoe, M. Tooker, & S. Batzli. *Guidelines for Identifying and Evaluating Military Landscapes* (Washington, DC: Legacy Resource Management Program, Army Corps of Engineers, Washing, D.C. 2009).



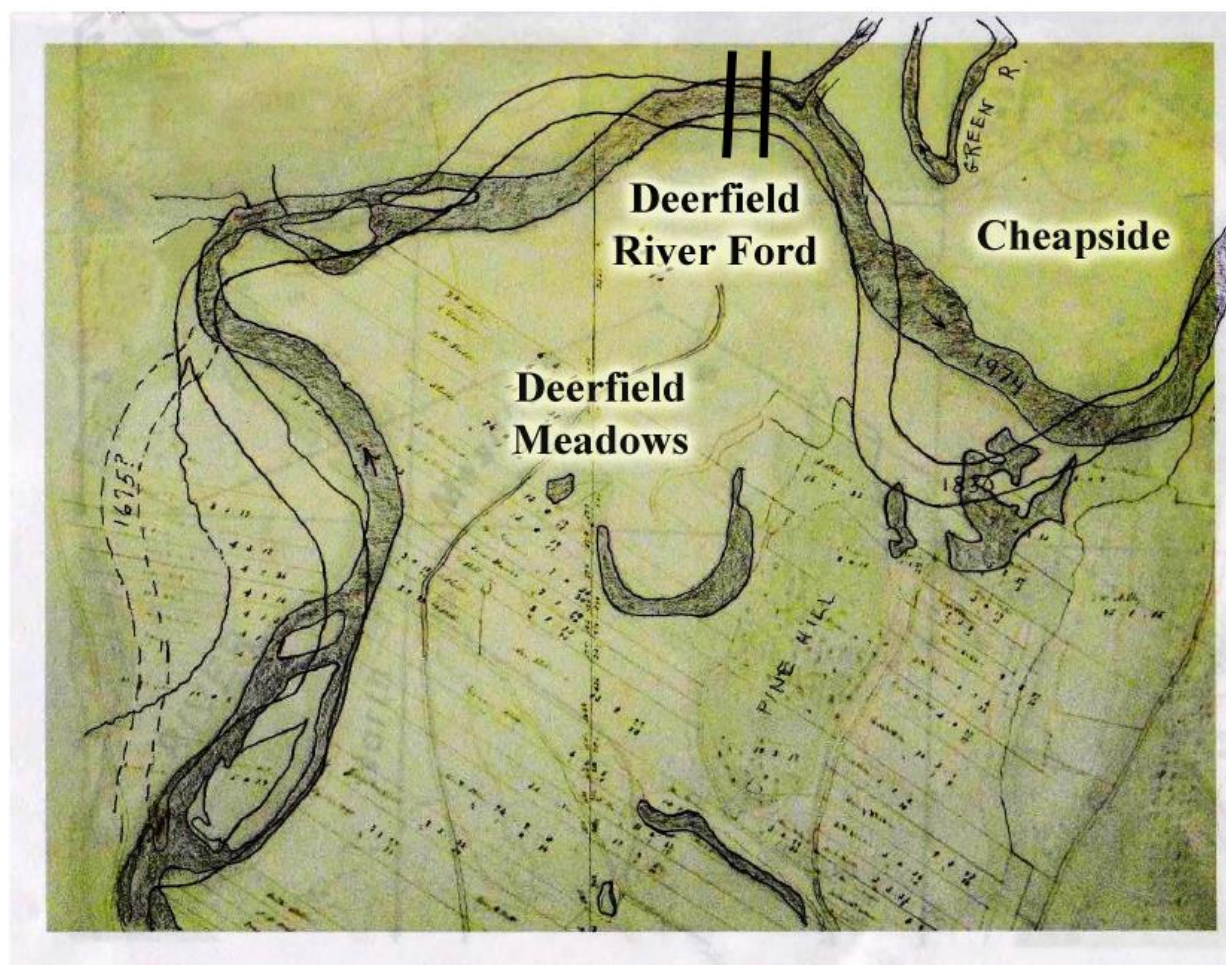
landscapes include water features, such as ponds, streams, wetlands, and rivers; circulation features such as paths, roads, and fords, and the built environment such as fences, corn fields, and villages.

Battlefield Landscapes consist of natural (e.g., hills, streams, valleys, etc.) and cultural (e.g., roads, paths, trails, gun emplacements, trenches, fortifications, villages, etc.) features that defined the original battlefield landscape, but also include the nature and evolution of natural and cultural features over time and their impacts to the original landscape. To identify, document, survey, and map a battlefield, battlefield historians and archeologists must research all available and relevant historical accounts and identify the historic landscape that defined the battlefield through terrain analysis and identification of natural and cultural features associated with the battlefield. Elements of the Great Falls battlefield landscape that can still be seen today include the Connecticut, Fall, Green, and Deerfield Rivers, Cherry Run and White Ash Brooks, White Ash Swamp and the numerous bedrock ridges, terraces, and swales that define and influenced the course of the battle (Figure 6).

### *Natural Features*

The natural terrain or topography of the battlefield landscape is defined by the drainage pattern and relative elevation. Natural features within the Great Falls battlefield include rivers, streams, swamps, hills and valleys, and the natural land cover at the time of the battle which included stands of young and old trees, abandoned and newly planted corn fields, and swamp vegetation. Nuances of the terrain that are not necessarily apparent on a contemporary map may have influenced how the battle was fought. Rocky outcrops along the east side of the Fall River provided cover for Native attackers during the flanking attack at “The Mountain Gap.” The several swales leading from the lower to the Upper Factory Hollow Area provided the only avenues of escape for mounted Englishmen. The steep terrace overlooking the Deerfield River Ford allowed for only a few mounted English at a time to descend to the ford along a narrow trail, essentially acting as a *cul-de-sac* where the retreating English had to wait their turns to descend. This area proved to be an ideal terrain by which the Native attackers could pour fire into the massed group of English waiting to descend to the ford forty feet below. It is also important to assess how much the terrain has changed since the battle event. Have streams been diverted or channeled? Have swamps and bogs been drained or filled? Have terrain features been

destroyed by sand and gravel operations? Have any of the steep terrain features along the Fall, Green, and Deerfield Rivers have been altered by erosion? Peter Thomas' analysis of the changing course of the Deerfield River over the last two hundred years indicates that the original fords may have been destroyed or altered (Figure 4). Erosion along the east bank of the Fall River and Green River may have impacted portions of the battlefield. Finally, the construction of State Route 2 and Interstate 91 may have significantly impacted portions of the battlefield through cutting and filling.



**Figure 4.** Changing Channels of the Deerfield River. Ca. 1675 – 1974  
(Map Courtesy of Peter Thomas).

### *Cultural Features*

Cultural features are elements of the historic landscape created by humans. The Great Falls battlefield landscape was the result of hundreds if not thousands of years of Native land use

that included fishing camps and villages, fortifications, agricultural fields, burial and ceremonial places, and networks of paths and trails that connected communities and important resources. A brief description of either Smead or Rawson Island a month after the Great Falls Battle provides an interesting perspective on the built environment and cultural landscape at the time of the battle. Except for the fort the cultural features described at this location would have been found at any of the Native villages:

*June. 28. About thirty of ours adventured to go up the River towards the Falls at Deerfield, to see what Indians they could espy thereabouts, but coming they found none. They went to an Island where they found an hundred Wigwams, and some English plundered Goods, which they took, and burnt the Wigwams. Also they marched up to a Fort which the Indians had built there, and destroyed it. Digging here and there they found several Indian Barns, where was an abundance of Fish, which they took and spoiled, as also thirty of their Canoos”*<sup>23</sup>

The cultural landscape, in turn, was shaped by topography, natural drainages, elevations, gaps, fords, and soil quality. The presence of the Great Falls and the numerous river confluences in the Great Falls area were ideal locations to capture anadromous fish and greatly influenced the locations of fishing camps and villages. Based on topography and soils, Native and English farmers chose which crops to plant, where to plant, and which farming techniques to employ. Different farming methods influenced population density, the distribution of villages, road networks, and the mosaic of fields and woodlots. The cultural landscape influenced the speed, location, nature, and direction of combat. River fords, paths and trails suitable for horses largely dictated the speed and routes of the English approach and withdrawal and could be used by the Native combatants to predict the route of the English retreat and set ambushes at key locations.

There were at least six Native villages in the Great Falls area at Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut (Riverside) on the north bank of the Connecticut River, on the south bank of the Connecticut River across from Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut, at the confluence of the Deerfield and Green Rivers at an area known as Cheapside, one at either Smead or Rawson Islands, one somewhere east of Deerfield Meadows, and one further upriver from Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut. These villages were part of the cultural landscape within the Battlefield Boundary as all were occupied at the time of the battle and contributed fighting men to the battle. It is unclear why the English decided to attack the village at Wissantinnewag-

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<sup>23</sup> Mather. *A Brief History*. P. 57.

Peskeompskut, but that decision influenced their route of approach, where they tied their horses, their Avenue of Approach, and their deployment during the attack. The locations of the remaining villages greatly influenced the outcome of the battle based on their positions near or adjacent to the English route of retreat, the number of Native men they contributed to the battle, and the speed and location with which they engaged the English during the counterattack. Native men from all the remaining five villages supplied men during the counterattacks (Figure 5):

...& Captain Wells says that ye difficulties they were exposed to in the retreat was probably owing to ye long stay they made in the place of victory [Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut]...this gave time to ye Indians that were at Deerfield, Cheapside, & the island & up above & on ye east side of ye river to get together & when they did make head against our men ye army drew off in great order and confusion.<sup>24</sup>

The soldiers so cut off were surprised by a party of the enemy belonging to the Indians at Deerfield.<sup>25</sup>

In the meanwhile, a party of Indians from an Island (whose coming on shore might easily have been prevented, and the Souldiers before they set out from *Hadly* were earnestly admonished to take care about that matter) assaulted our men; yea, to the great dishonour of the English.<sup>26</sup>

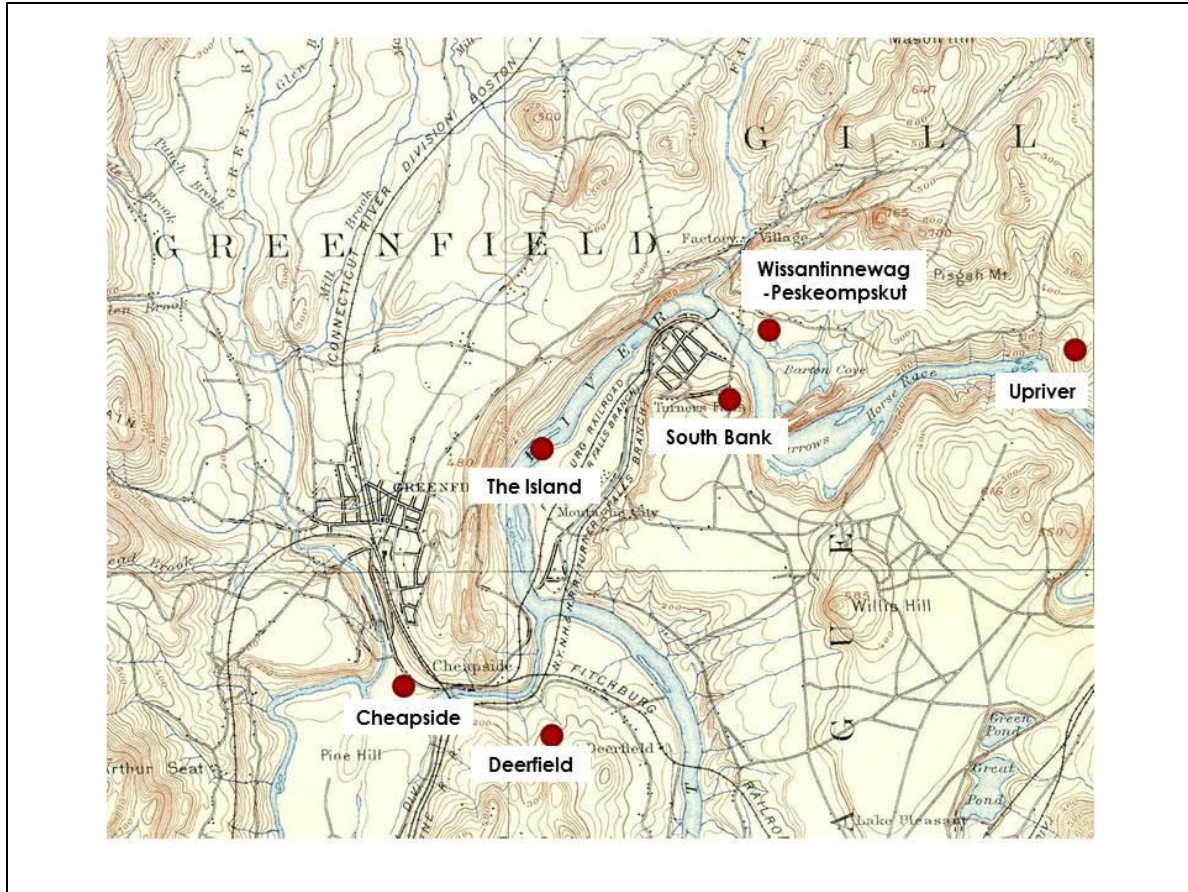
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<sup>24</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." Pp. 13, 15.

<sup>25</sup> Roger L'Estrange, *A True Account of the Most Considerable Occurrences that have Happened in the Warre Between the English and the Indians in New England, From the Fifth of May, 1676, to the Fourth of August Last* (London, UK: Printed for Benjamin Billingsly at the Printing Press in Cornhill, 1676). P. 4

<sup>26</sup> Mather. *A Brief History*. P.49.





**Figure 5.** Locations of Native Villages at the Time of the Battle.

### *Military Engineering Features*

Military earthworks (field fortifications, palisades, entrenchments, trenches) are an important resource for understanding a battle event. Surviving earthworks often define critical military objectives, opposing lines of battle, and no-man’s land. Two Native fortifications are mentioned around the time of the battle, one at Smead or Rawson Island, “they [English] marched up to a Fort which the Indians had built there, and destroyed it” and a second possibly at Cheapside “and their fort close by Deerfield River.”<sup>27</sup> The English do not appear to have been aware of either of these fortifications at the time of the battle.

### *Artifacts*

Although the contemporary visible landscape may present a quiet, pastoral scene, it belies the many hidden artifacts related to the battle. Beneath the surface of the landscape is physical archeological evidence of the many actions and domestic sites and activities associated with the

<sup>27</sup> Mather. *A Brief History*. P. 59; CSL. Colonial Wars, Series I. Doc. 74.

Battle of Great Falls. This includes the English attack on the village at Peskeompskut, the initial Native counterattacks, the disintegration of English forces at the English Assembly Area while regaining their horses, ambushes around the White Ash Swamp, fighting at Deerfield Ford as the English fought to cross the Deerfield River, several locations where English soldiers were tortured, and additional actions yet to be documented. The archeological record provides a direct physical link to recorded battle events and identifies actions that were not recorded in battle narratives. Archeological evidence is the key to documenting the battlefield as the nature and distribution of battle related objects anchors the battle events to the landscape. Without physical evidence there is no proof of the battlefield.

A battle related artifact is only valuable in terms of its relationship, context, and association with other artifacts. The recovery of a single musket ball may be the result of hunting activity, but dozens of impacted and dropped musket balls within a circumscribed area and associated with key terrain features such as “The Mountain Gap” or battle related objects such as horse tack and horse shoes in the immediate proximity to concentrations of musket balls indicate they are associated with battle events. Battlefield archeologists and historians can use this evidence to verify or identify troop movements map out battle actions in time and space, to interpret a battle's progress, reveal previously unrecorded facets of the battles, confirm locations of destroyed Native villages, verify or disprove long-believed myths or “official” accounts of the battle, elucidate short and long term effects of the battle on English and Native communities, and in some instances provide important information on the experiences of battle participants through the recovery of personal and domestic objects from the battlefield. Most defining features identified in the historic documents, and in the field, have archeological resources associated with them such as the village at Peskeompskut, the White Ash Swamp, Conversely, archeological resources can also identify key terrain features as was the case with The Mountain Gap, The Terraces and the terraces overlooking Deerfield River Ford. Defining features are often the most important resource to preserve and protect on the battlefield landscape.

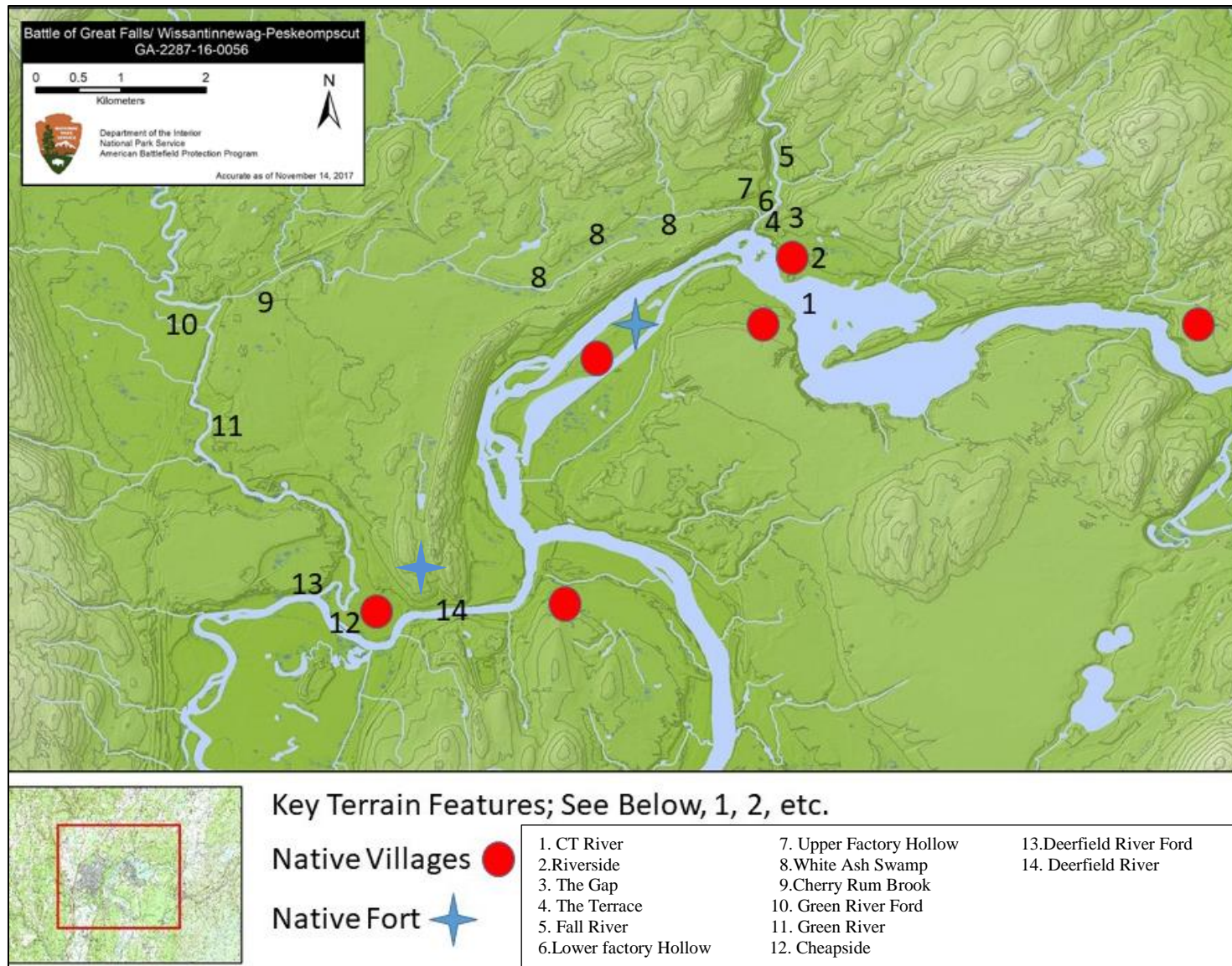
### **III. Battlefield Landscape and Key Terrain Features**

A number of key terrain features associated with the Battle of Great Falls battlefield landscape have been identified and fall into three categories: 1) Terrain features identified from historical records and have yet to be confirmed by direct association with battle related objects;

2) Terrain features identified in the historical record and directly associated with battle related objects; and 3) Terrain features not mentioned in the historical record but identified as such based on their direct association with battle related objects. Figure 6 identifies the locations of Key Terrain features from all three categories. Figures 7-37 represent visual and topographic references to the Key Terrain features.

1. Connecticut River. The river served as an important resource for Native people in the region who gathered along the river in the spring to fish. The river was also an obstacle to the English if they were on horseback, as it prevented them from easily crossing from one side to the other (Figure 7). The Connecticut River also served as an important means of communication and transportation for Native people in the region.

2. Village of Peskeompskut (Figure 8). No solid physical evidence has been recovered to identify the precise location of the village that is believed to be in the Riverside area of Gill. Three musket balls have been recovered from Riverside; a dropped .66” diameter musket ball from a known location on Walnut Street, and impacted .58 and .70” diameter musket balls from an unknown location(s) in Riverside. The village is identified as a Key Terrain feature based on historical narratives and was the objective of the English attack.



**Figure 6.** Battle of Great Falls/ Wissantinnewag-Peskeompscut Key Terrain Features.





**Figure 7.** Connecticut River, Deerfield MA. View South to North.



**Figure 8.** Riverside. View from South Bank of Connecticut River.

3. The “Mountain Gap” (Figures 9 & 10). It is assumed that the English retreated along the same route they used as the Avenue of Approach to attack the Peskeompskut village. As the English retreated following the attack on the village they had to pass through a narrow northwest – southeast trending gap 30 yards long and 10 yards wide that passes through a southwest – northeast bedrock ridge just east of the Falls River. The Mountain Gap exits into a series of terraces overlooking the Fall River (Figures 9 & 11). The bedrock ridge is extremely steep and would have prevented anyone on foot from descending the ridge to the terrace below without going through the Mountain Gap. The Mountain Gap provided the only means of access to the terrace and for the English to recover their horses on the other side of the Fall River. There is no mention in the historical narratives of this topographic feature, and its identification as a Key Terrain Feature is based on the recovery of over 50 small diameter musket balls that were fired from southwest to northeast at a group of English as they retreated through the Mountain Gap.



**Figure 9.** The Mountain Gap.

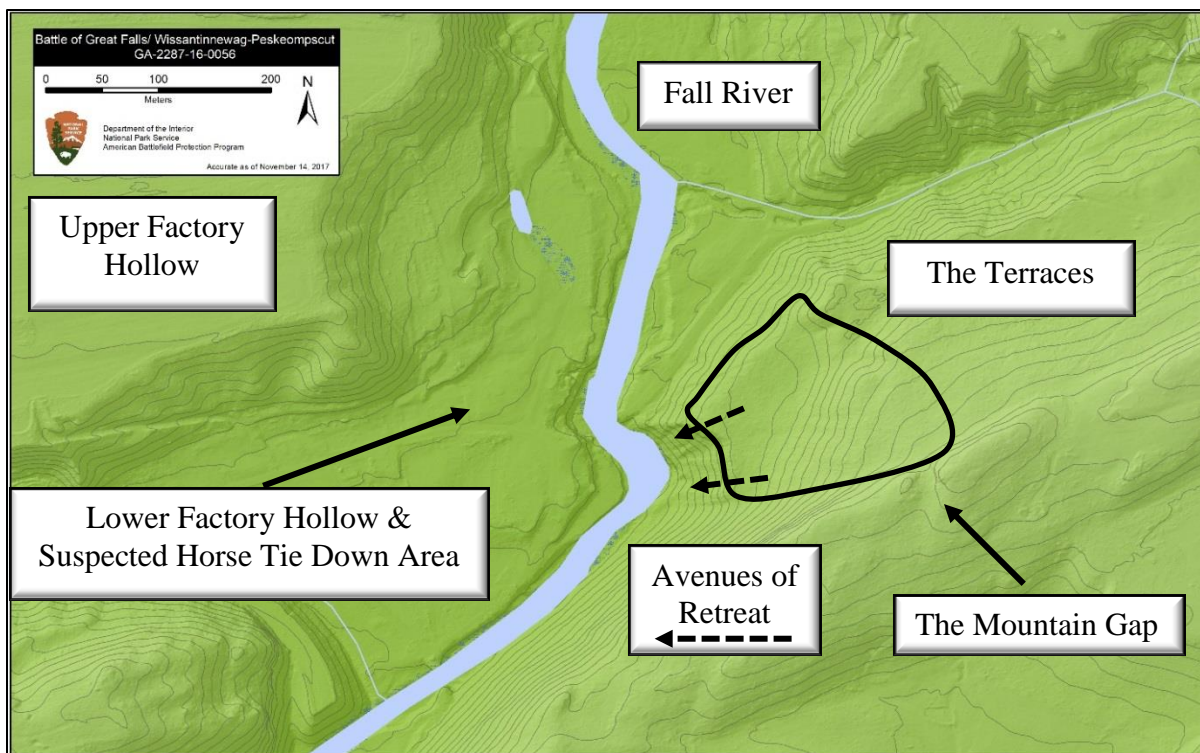




**Figure 10.** The Gap. View Northwest to Southeast.

4. The Terraces (Figures 11- 13). The Terraces are not mentioned in any of the accounts of the battle but is defined as a Key Terrain feature based on the distribution of battle related objects. The northwest side of the Mountain Gap exits into a series of steep slopes interspersed with relatively flat terrain extending over eight acres (Figure 12). The western edge of the terrace overlooks the Fall River 40' – 60' below (Figure 13). The slopes leading down to the river are extremely steep, and would have been a serious impediment to anyone attempting to descend (or ascend) to or from the Fall River whether on foot or horseback. There are two locations (based on the distribution of musket balls) that were used by the retreating English where the topographic relief is not as severe and would have provided access to or from the Fall River. The southern route was probably not on the English Route of Approach as it is still relatively steep but could have been traversed by someone on foot.





**Figure 11.** Topography of the Terraces.



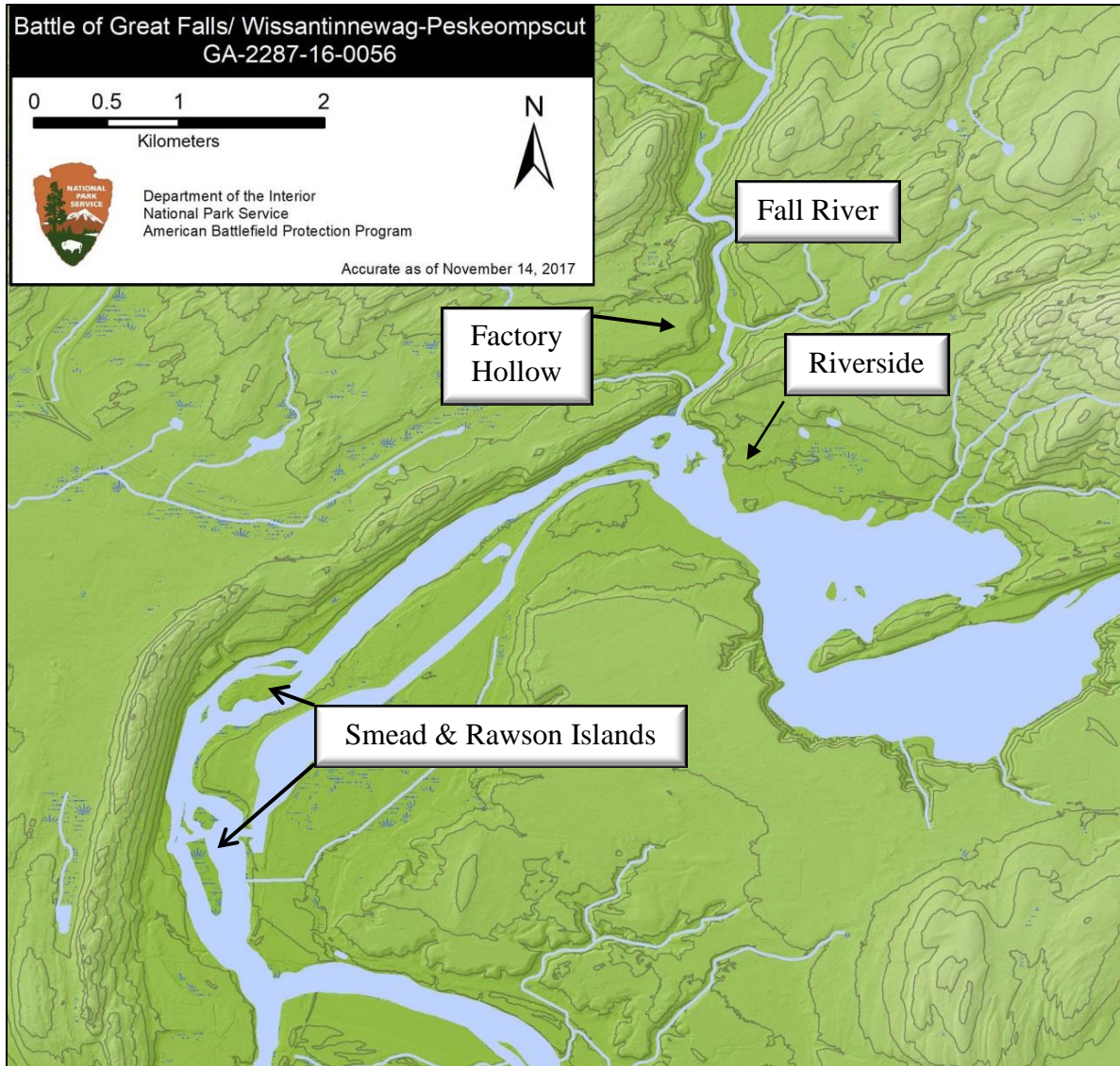
**Figure 12.** Terrace closest to Mountain Gap (to the Right).





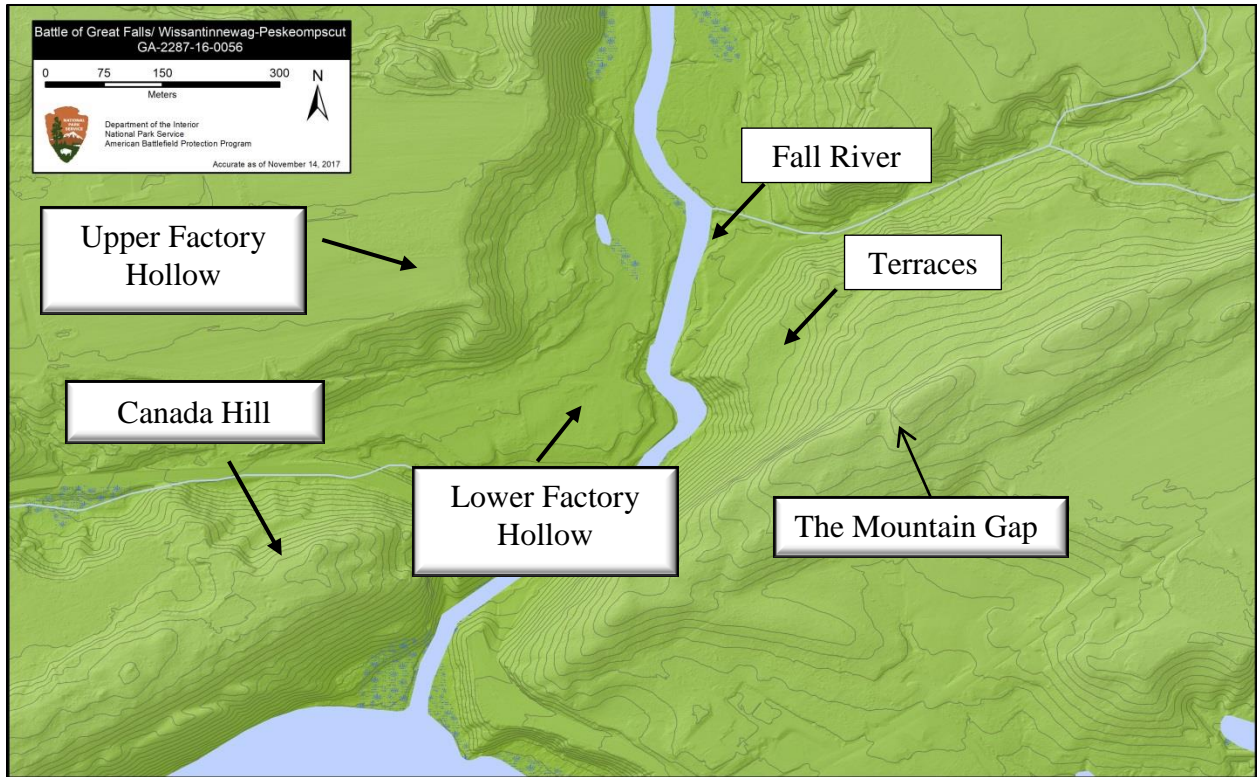
**Figure 13.** Terrace Edge Overlooking Fall River. View East to West.

The northern route is much less steep and could be negotiated on horseback if necessary and corresponds with an old road or trail that cuts at an angle along the terrace edge from the Fall River. The distribution of musket balls within The Terrace lead to these two areas indicating they were used by the English during the retreat. The northern slope was likely used as the avenue of approach by the English. During the retreat it appears the English used any avenue of retreat available to them. The identification of the Terraces landscape as a Key Terrain Feature is based on the recovery of several dozen musket balls in northern and southern distributions that originate just outside the western edge (exit) of the Mountain Gap. The distributions suggest that as the English exited The Gap they split into two groups and each were pursued by Native soldiers.

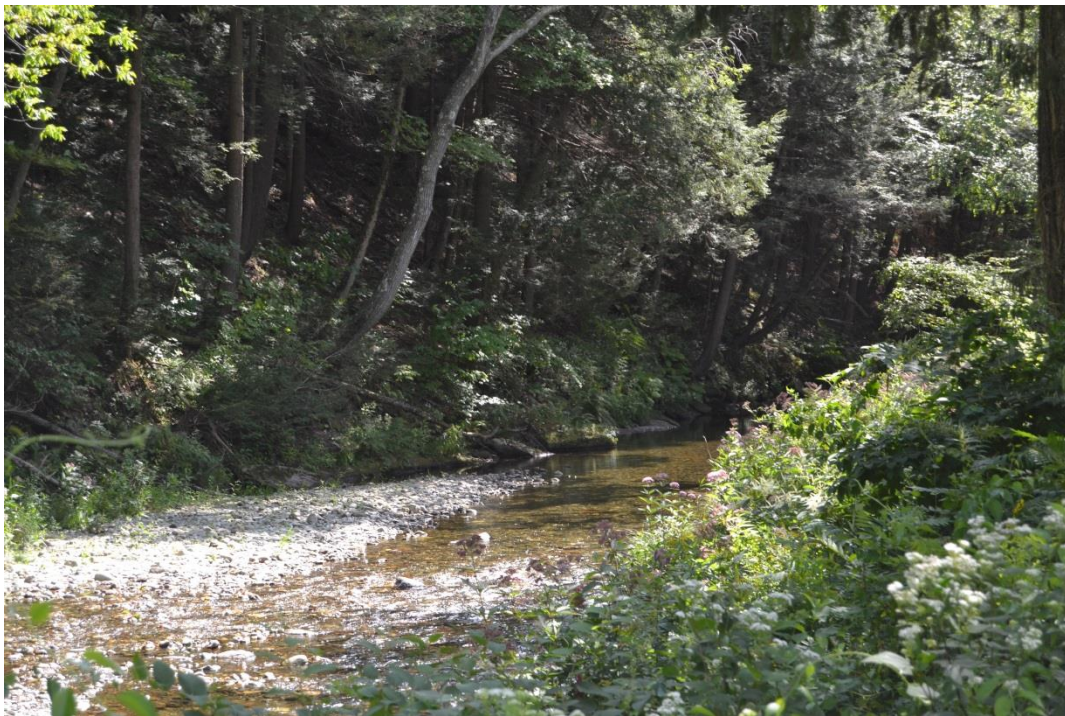


**Figure 14.** Fall River and Smead and Rawson Islands.





**Figure 15.** Fall River.



**Figure 16.** Fall River. Terrace Slope to Left. View North to South.





**Figure 17.** Fall River.

5. Fall River. There are two references to the Natives from an island in the Connecticut River (Smead or Rawson Island) counterattacking the English from the flank and rear and splitting the column into several groups. Canada Hill to the west of Smead and Rawson Island rises rapidly more than 70 feet above the Connecticut River and would have been difficult terrain to ascend (but not impossible) (Figures 14 & 15). The fastest way for the Natives at Smead or Rawson Island to engage the English at the Horse Hitching Area (in addition to those attacking the English from the rear) was via the confluence of the Connecticut and Fall Rivers (Figures 14 & 15). The Fall River is very shallow and would not offer any impediment to travel north through the river to the Factory Hollow Area – a distance of 350 yards (Figures 16 & 17). The reference that the English could easily have prevented the Natives from “an island” from coming ashore



suggests a choke point or natural impasse such as the narrow confluence of the Connecticut and Fall Rivers:

In the meanwhile, a party of Indians from an Island (whose coming on shore might easily have been prevented, and the Souldiers before they set out from *Hadly* were earnestly admonished to take care about that matter) assaulted our men.<sup>28</sup>

When aboutt 20 men came to y<sup>f</sup> horses where y<sup>e</sup> indians & y<sup>y</sup> foug<sup>t</sup> for y<sup>f</sup> horses & and recovered y<sup>y</sup> mounted & went after y<sup>f</sup> company, but y<sup>e</sup> Indians followed y<sup>e</sup> & some came across way & some between y<sup>e</sup> & so y<sup>y</sup> fought upon a retreat being divided into severall companies or parties being separatd by y<sup>e</sup> Indians.<sup>29</sup>

For some of the enemy fell upon the Guards that kept the horses, others pursued them in the rear, so as our men sustained pretty much damage as they retired.<sup>30</sup>

6. Lower Factory Hollow. Factory Hollow is divided into a lower and upper section (Figure 18). Lower Factory Hollow extends from the west bank of the Fall River across a relatively broad and flat area (Figures 19 & 20) to a steep slope that quickly rises 40 feet from the 50-foot contour interval to a flat plain above at the 90-foot interval referred to as Upper Factory Hollow. The steep slope would be difficult for horses to ascend or descend but the slope is interspersed with several swales (low area or depression of lower topographic relief) leading from the Lower to the Upper Factory Hollow Area is believed to be the location where the English tied their horses (Figures 21 & 22). A brief reference by Hubbard is the only primary source that mentions that the English tied their horses:

When they [English] came near the Indians rendezvous, they alighted off their horses, and tied to them to some young trees at a quarter of a mile distance, so marching up, they fired briskly into their wigwams.<sup>31</sup>

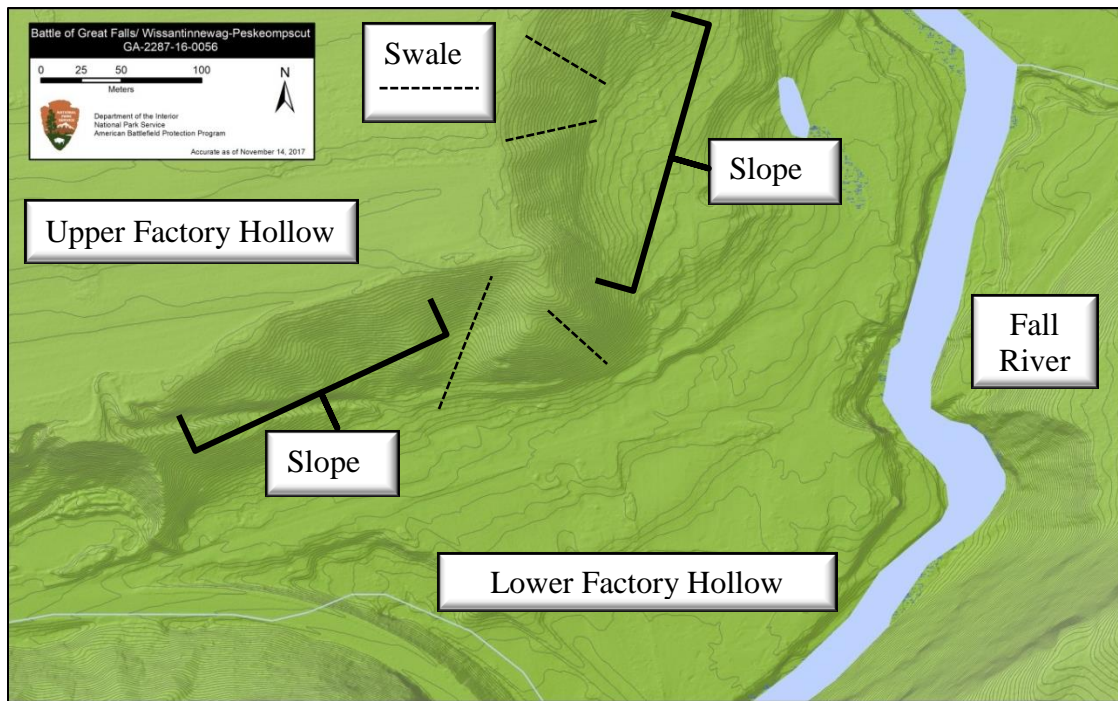
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<sup>28</sup> Mather, *A Brief History*. P. 49.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P. 9.

<sup>30</sup> Hubbard. *Narrative of the Indian Wars*. P. 206.

<sup>31</sup> Hubbard. *A Narrative of the Indian Wars*. P. 85.



**Figure 18.** Lower Factory Hollow and Suspected Horse Tie Down Area.

Hubbard clearly states that the English tied their horses a quarter of a mile distance from where they dismounted, not a quarter mile from the village. Presumably the English dismounted along avenue of approach they intended to use to attack the village, and tied their horses a quarter of a mile away because the young trees offered a convenient way to hitch their horses. It may also be that the 15 or 20 English soldiers charged with caring for the horses walked them to the trees while the remainder of the English made their way to the village. Unfortunately the passage does not provide any information regarding the precise location of the Horse Hitching Area, but the location should have a recognizable signature as a group of 20 English who had stayed behind at the village to fire upon Natives crossing the Connecticut River in canoes “were forced to dispute ye point with the enemy a considerable time to recover their horses<sup>32</sup> The soldiers guarding the horses also came under attack presumably from Natives coming up the Fall River “For some of the enemy fell upon the Guards that kept the horses.”<sup>33</sup> The argument that the Lower Factory Hollow Area is the location of the English Assembly/Horse Hitching Area is:

1. The very steep terrain on the east side of the Fall River is too difficult for soldiers on horseback to negotiate.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 15.

<sup>33</sup> Hubbard. *Narrative of the Indian Wars*. P. 206

2. The further the English moved east of the Fall River the more likely they were to be discovered if they were on horseback particularly if they were only one quarter mile away from the village.
3. All the swales leading from the Lower to Upper Factory Hollow are riddled with musket balls indicating they were used by the English, presumably on horseback, as avenues of retreat from Lower Factory Hollow.
4. There is evidence of horse tack in several areas of Lower and Upper Factory Hollow. In Upper Factory Hollow the horse tack is surrounded by musket balls suggesting the English used downed horses as cover, and were being fired upon as they rode up the swales to Upper Factory Hollow.
5. There is an abrupt end to the distribution of musket balls in the Upper Factory Hollow Area leading up from the swales suggesting the retreating English were on horseback and were quickly able to outdistance their attackers once they reached the level ground. In Upper Factory Hollow.

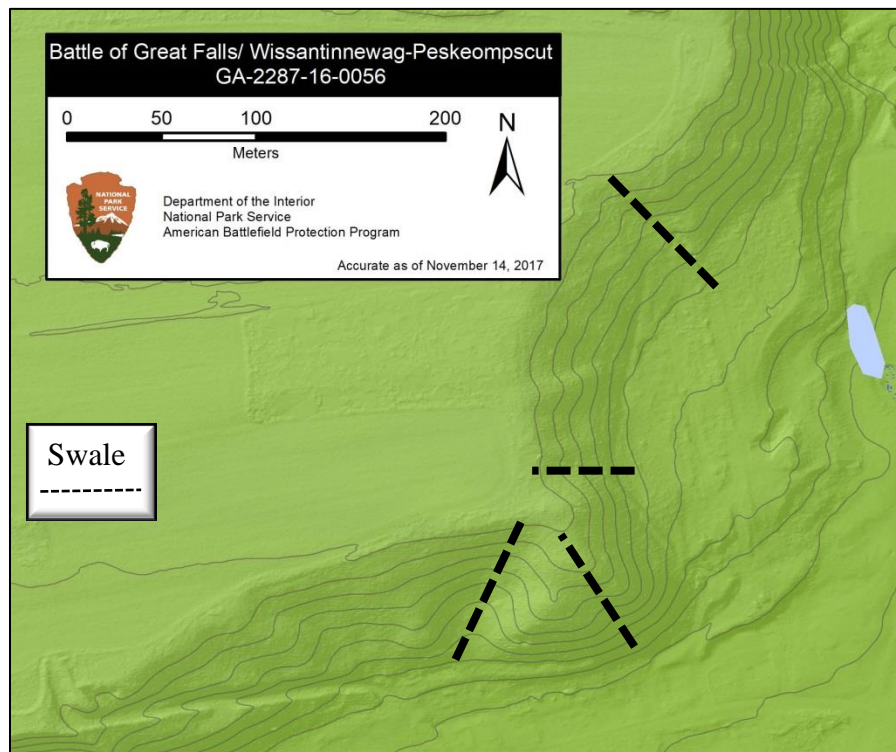


**Figure 19.** Lower Factory Hollow.





**Figure 20.** Lower Factory Hollow.



**Figure 21.** Location of “swales” along the slope rising from Lower Factory Hollow.



**Figure 22.** Swale Leading Upslope from Lower to Upper Factory Hollow. View East to West. Pink Flags Mark Musket Balls.

7. Upper Factory Hollow. Upper Factory Hollow is identified as the flat plain 40 feet above Lower Factory Hollow (Figures 18 & 23). The landform begins at the top of the slope leading from Lower Factory Hollow and extends west to Factory Hollow Brook. Upper Factory Hollow is defined as a Key Terrain Feature as it was used by the English as an avenue of retreat. When the mounted English reached the Upper Factory Hollow Area they could quickly outdistance their Native attackers. The distribution of musket balls leading up from the swales abruptly ends at the summit and the beginning of Upper Factory Hollow. The exception is three concentrations of large diameter musket balls and horse tack 100 yards from the eastern edge of the Upper Factory Hollow terrace indicating an exchange of gunfire took place with perhaps English soldiers taking cover behind dead or wounded horses.





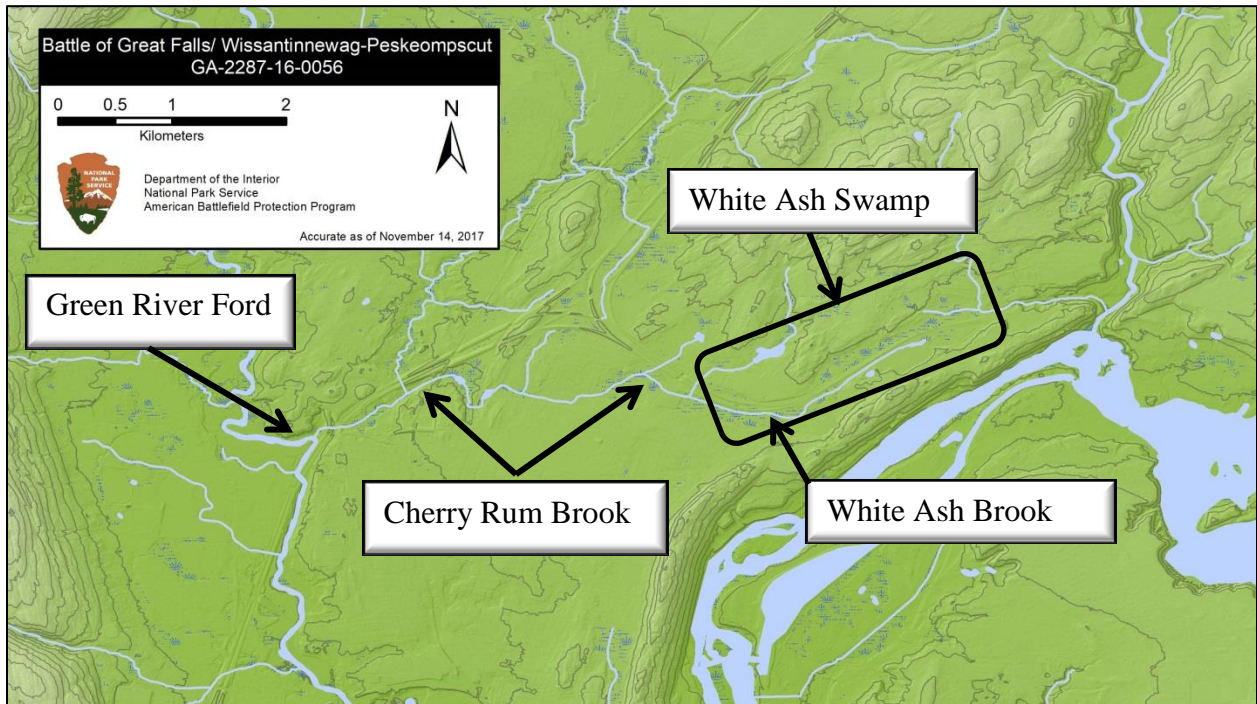
**Figure 23.**Upper Factory Hollow. Swales to Left. View North to South.

8. White Ash Swamp and White Ash Brook. White Ash Swamp is located approximately 400 yards west of Upper Factory Hollow and extends southwesterly for approximately one mile. White Ash Brook runs in the center of the swamp and begins 400 yards west of Upper Factory Hollow, and extends for 1.2 miles where it turns into Cherry Rum Brook which extends for an additional 1.3 miles to the confluence with the Green River. Historical accounts of the battle and limited archeological surveys indicate the English retreated along the swamp and brooks to take advantage of the relatively level ground along the margins of the swamp and brooks. A small distribution of musket balls was recovered along the south bank of the Cherry Rum Brook 550 yards east of the confluence with the Green River. It is not known if the English retreated only along the southern side of the brooks and swamp.

9. The White Ash Swamp is considered a Key Terrain feature as it provided cover and concealment for the Native counterattacks and was used by the Natives to set ambushes against the retreating English (Figure 24):

On their route the Indians had laid ambush in a swamp, but as the English were not all together, only part of them went that way. The ambushing Indians slew many of that group, in fact, about thirty-eight<sup>34</sup>

A Small company y<sup>t</sup> Separatd from others – y<sup>t</sup> ran upon a parsell of indians near a Swamp & were most of y<sup>e</sup> killd.<sup>35</sup>



**Figure 24.** White Ash Swamp and Green River Ford.

10. Cherry Rum Brook. The flat ground along the Cherry Rum Brook was used by the English as an avenue of retreat and may have had a “road” or path running alongside it (Figure 24). In Jonathan Wells’ narrative of his experiences in the battle he relates:

...abt 2 miles [approximately one mile west of Factory Hollow] from y<sup>e</sup> place where y<sup>y</sup> did y<sup>e</sup> Exploit &c & when y<sup>y</sup> had left y<sup>e</sup> track of y<sup>e</sup> company & were unacquainted wth y<sup>e</sup> woods.<sup>36</sup>

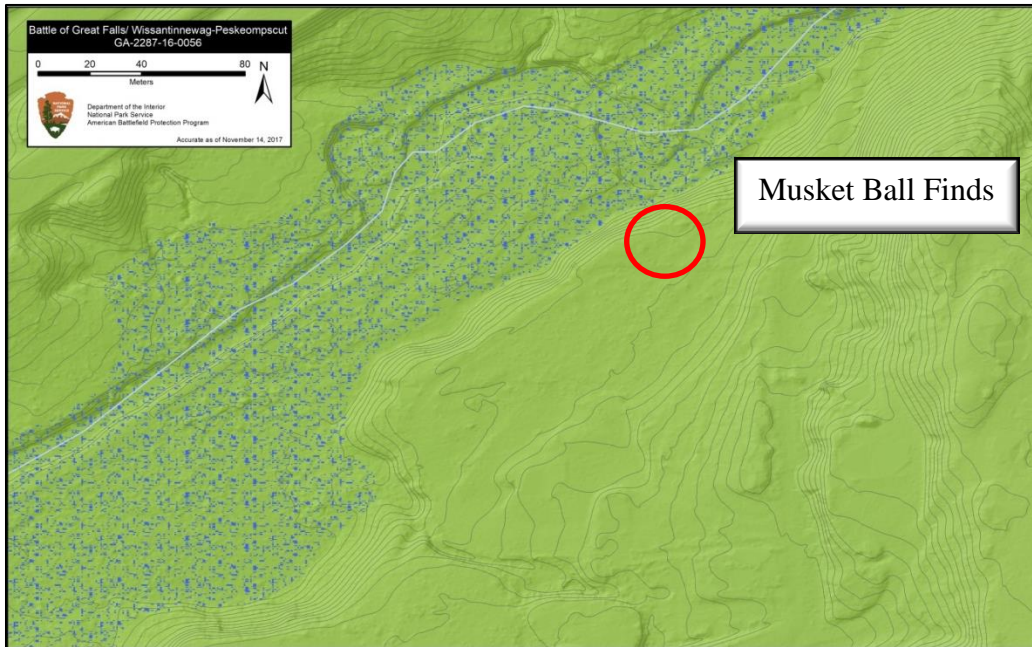
<sup>34</sup> Douglas Leach, Ed. *A Rhode Islander Reports on King Philip’s War: The Second William Harris Letter of August, 1676*, P. 77, Providence, RI: Rhode Island Historical Society, 1963.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 15.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 24.



The English were not familiar with the landscape in the area and likely used the brook to guide them to the Green River. If so the Native leaders were likely able to predict the route of the English Retreat and set ambushes along the way. A small concentration of four musket balls was recovered along the south bank of the brook approximately 550 yards east of the confluence with the Green River (Figures 25 & 26).



**Figure 25.** Section of Cherry Rum Brook with Musket Ball Finds.



**Figure 26.** Cherry Rum Brook.



11. Green River Ford is at the Confluence of the Green River and Cherry Rum Brook (Figures 27 & 28). The Green River Ford is a Key Terrain feature as it was used by the English to cross the Green River during the retreat. The Green River Ford is one of only a few places to cross the river on horseback. The ford served as a chokepoint as steep terrain on both sides of the Cherry Rum Brook near the ford forced the English into a narrow defile making it easy for the Natives to predict where the English would cross the river and set an ambush. Captain Turner was killed just as he crossed the river. Both the Native combatants and English burial parties knew the location of Turner's body next to the Green River Ford:

Within a few days after this, Capt. *Turners* dead Corps was found a small distance from the River.<sup>37</sup>

John Wecopeak, on his Examination saith... that he saw Capt. Turner, and that he was shott in the Thigh, and that he knew it was him, for the said Turner said that was his name.<sup>38</sup>



**Figure 27.** Green River Ford.

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<sup>37</sup> Mather. *A Brief History*, P. 50.

<sup>38</sup> Easton. *A Narrative Of the Causes*. P. 179.



**Figure 28.** Green River Ford. Cherry Rum Brook at Left.

12. Green River. The English used the Green River to orient themselves to the Deerfield River Ford after they crossed to the west bank of the Green River (Figures 29 & 30). The topographic relief of the terraces overlooking the Green River is very steep and would have prevented the mounted English from crossing back to the east side of the river.



**Figure 29.** Green River.





**Figure 30.** Green River and Deerfield River Fords and Cheapside.

13. Cheapside. This area is located along the Deerfield River just a few hundred yards east of the confluence with the Green River (Figure 31). It was the location of a Native village and possibly

a fort at the time of the battle that which provided men during the Native counterattacks. The fords over the Deerfield River were Key Terrain features as they would have been used by the English as an avenue of approach. Native sentries at Cheapside kept watch over the main ford east of the confluence of the Green and Deerfield Rivers (and 500' east of the secondary ford) to get intelligence of English movements, and perhaps to prevent them from using the ford. By chance the English missed the primary ford and used the secondary ford 500 feet west (upriver). Although the English were heard crossing the ford they remained undetected by the Native sentries:

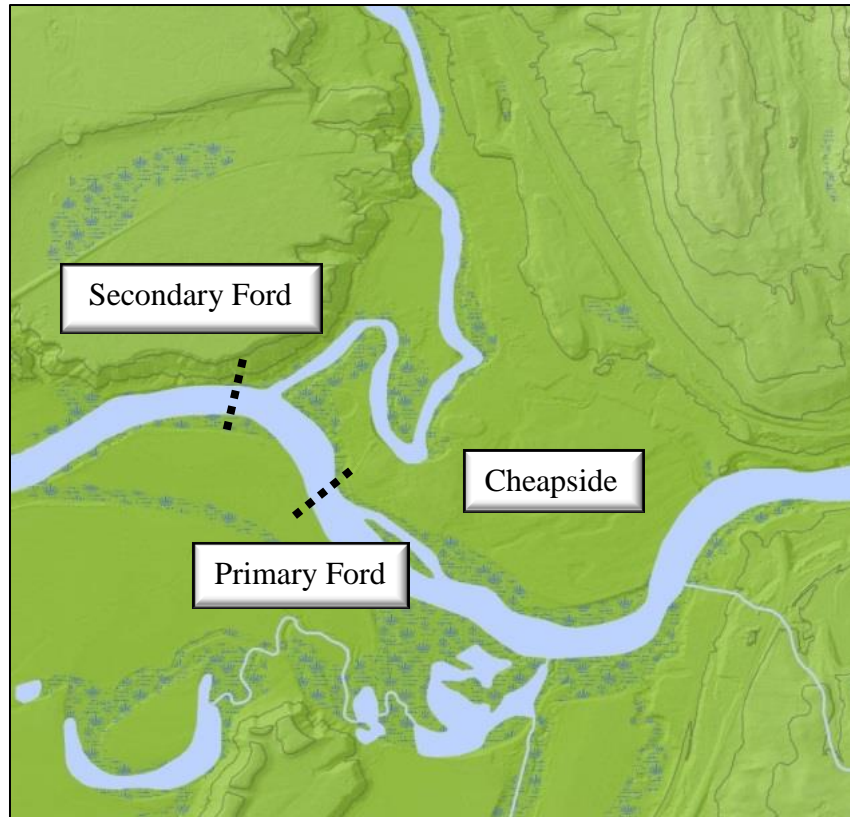
This company went from Hatfield May 17, 1676 being Thursday near night, marched y<sup>e</sup> dead of y<sup>e</sup> night, by Deerfield and passd by y<sup>e</sup> indians y<sup>t</sup> dwelt at cheapside & y<sup>e</sup> noise was heard by the indian watchman, who informd y<sup>e</sup> Indians y<sup>t</sup> he heard horses pass along, upon which y<sup>e</sup> indians went (wth a lightd torch) to ...y<sup>e</sup> usuall path y<sup>t</sup> crossd Green River (but the army had missd y<sup>e</sup> usuall path & crossd y<sup>e</sup> river ab<sup>t</sup> 30 rods [500 ft] higher) & not observing any tracks concluded y<sup>e</sup> watchman was mistaken and y<sup>t</sup> it was moose y<sup>t</sup> he heard & so continu'd quiet & did not send to inform y<sup>e</sup> indians above w<sup>c</sup><sup>h</sup> they could easily have done.<sup>39</sup>

...yet it appears to others that the difficulties they were Exposed to in their retreat was probably oweing to the long stay they made in the place, after the victory, by which means they gave opportunity to the indians that were at Deerfield, Cheapside, and the island in the River & the body of the indians that lay further up the River, and to those that were on the East side of the great River to get together so as to make head against our men; when our men did perceive the Indians were makeing head against them, they drew off in something of disorder & confusion.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P. 13.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P. 20.



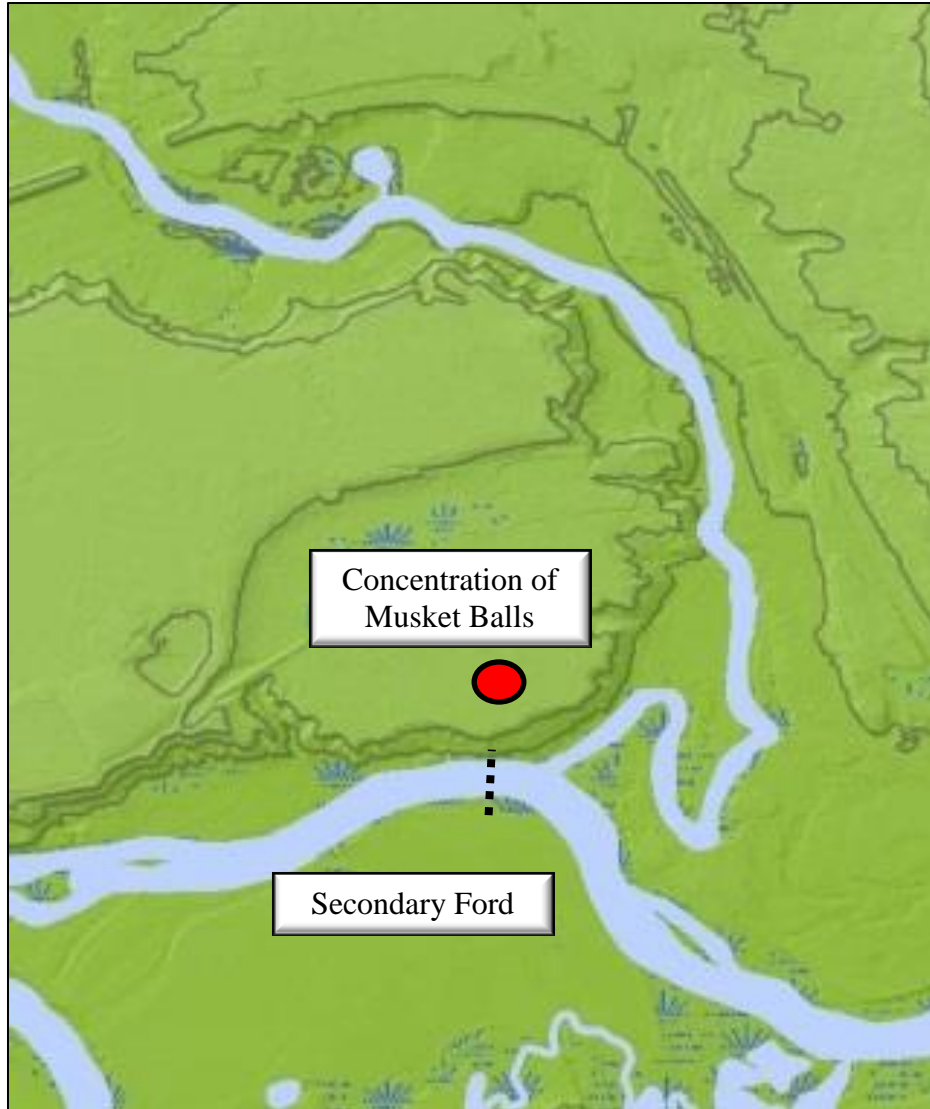
**Figure 31.** Primary and Secondary Fords.

14. Secondary Green River Ford. The secondary Green River Ford was located 500 feet west (upriver) from the primary ford adjacent to Cheapside and was the primary means by which the English crossed the Deerfield River during their approach and retreat (Figures 31 & 32). Stephen Williams' (Jonathan Wells) narrative of the Falls Fight also includes information that could only have been obtained from Native combatants in the battle:

...y<sup>e</sup> noise was heard by the indian watchman, who informd y<sup>e</sup> Indians y<sup>t</sup> he heard horses pass along, upon which y<sup>e</sup> indians went (wth a lightd torch) to y<sup>e</sup> usuall path y<sup>t</sup> crossd Green River (but the army had missd y<sup>e</sup> usuall path & crossd y<sup>e</sup> river abt 30 rods [500 ft] higher).<sup>41</sup>

This is a very specific reference to a secondary ford used by the English. The battlefield survey confirmed the location of the secondary ford based on the recovery of 32 dropped and impacted musket balls on the terrace edge above the secondary ford and two musket balls recovered on the slope leading to the secondary ford from the terrace.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P. 13.



**Figure 32.** Secondary Deerfield River Ford and Terrace.

The terrace overlooking the Deerfield River Ford rises 50 feet above the Green and Deerfield Rivers with a significant slope that would have prevented horses from ascending or descending the slope (Figures 33 – 36). There is a swale just above the ford that was used by the English to descend from the terrace to the ford. The approach to the swale was along a very narrow section of the terrace that was only wide enough for one horse at a time. The English were probably bottlenecked on the edge of the terrace waiting their turn to descend to the ford. It is likely the Natives knew the route the English intended to take during the retreat and anticipated their movements and set an ambush at the ford. The relatively tight distribution of



impacted and dropped musket balls along the terrace edge indicates the English were attacked while waiting to descend to the ford and were firing back at the Native attackers.



**Figure 33.** Terrace View West to East. Green River to Left, Deerfield Ford to Front.





**Figure 34.** Confluence of Deerfield and Green Rivers. View from Terrace Edge. Cheapside to Left.



**Figure 35.** Terrace Slope.





**Figure 36.** Swale leading to Secondary Deerfield Ford. View West to East.

15. Deerfield River. The Deerfield River served as a transportation and communication corridor for the Native people in the middle Connecticut Valley and extends more than 25 miles north and west into the Berkshire Mountains from its confluence with the Connecticut River. The river was a minor obstacle for the English along their avenue of approach to Peskeompskut and could only be crossed at a few river fords.



**Figure 37.** Deerfield River.

#### **IV. Methods**

##### *Battle of Great Falls / Peskeompskut: Battlefield Patterns & Spatial Analysis*

The Dynamic Battlefield Pattern Approach, with its focus on modern firearm analysis, would not appear to be applicable to the interpretation and reconstruction of a seventeenth century battlefield such as the Battle of Great Falls / Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut where the combatants used smoothbore muzzle loading firearms, as musket balls are not amenable to modern firearm analyses. Nonetheless, Fox and Scott's approach has great utility for all battlefield studies which seek to move beyond static historical reconstructions and attempt to identify and interpret the actions and movements which influenced the progression and outcome of the battle.<sup>42</sup> The key to this analysis is the ability of battlefield archeologists to integrate the spatial dimensions of unit actions into a temporal framework. This does not necessarily require identification of individual behaviors through modern firearm analysis, such as was done for the Battle of the Little Bighorn but does require the identification of unit actions and their associated archeological signatures.

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<sup>42</sup> Fox and Scott. "Post-Civil War Battlefield Pattern." Pp. 92-103.

In the case of the Battle of Great Falls this was accomplished by identifying discrete unit actions and movements inferred from the historic record, distributions of battle related objects, KOCOA (military terrain analysis), and analysis of English and allied Native tactics from other King Philip's War battles. This information was used to develop a battlefield timeline of spatial and temporal sequences with anticipated archeological signatures. The recovered archeological battle related assemblages were then compared to the anticipated archeological signature to determine if there was a correlation between the historic record and the battlefield signature. In this way the actual or recovered archeological signature can be placed in a spatial and temporal context and integrated into the overall sequence of battlefield actions and events. However, as is often the case with under-documented seventeenth century battlefields, this process requires ongoing assessment and re-assessment of the congruence of historical and archeological records to get the best possible "fit" between the historical narrative and the archeological signature.

This methodology was successful in reconstructing the Pequot War era (1636-1637), Battle of Mistick Fort (May 26, 1637), as English narratives were fairly detailed and the series of battlefield actions could be divided into two major spatial and temporal divisions (inside and outside the fort).<sup>43</sup> It was also the case that even given the comparatively more detailed narratives associated with the Mistick Fort battle, the archeological record informed the interpretation of the historical records as often as the historical record helped interpret the archeological record. The limited English sources associated with the Battle of Great Falls / Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut made it particularly challenging to develop a detailed battlefield timeline and to interpret and reconstruct the battle. As a result, the assemblages of battle-related objects played a greater role in the overall reconstruction of the battlefield.

With one or two exceptions, the battle narratives do not provide any specific information of actions or events that can be placed in time and space other than the fact that battle events that occurred to the west of the site of village Peskeompskut occurred after the destruction of the village by English forces. Surveyed areas of the battlefield identified only a few areas where the archeological record could be correlated with the historical record. For example, the Jonathan Wells narrative of his experiences during the retreat described the English fighting to recover

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<sup>43</sup> Kevin McBride, David Naumec, Ashley Bissonnette, Noah Fellman, Laurie Pasteryak, Jacqueline Veninger. *Technical Report Battle of Mistick Fort Documentation Plan (GA-2255-09-017)*. National park Service American Battlefield Protection Program. 2012.

their horses as well as the disintegration of English forces as Native soldiers counterattacked from all directions. In these instances, the battlefield timeline could anticipate a clear archeological signature associated with these events.

Nonetheless, the ability to sequence battle actions even in relative time is significant in that battlefield archeologists can examine the nature and evolution of tactics throughout the Battle of the Great Falls / Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut including any patterns that might indicate battle events that took place within or outside of the primary English and Native routes of advance and retreat (e.g., the attack on Peskeompskut village, episodes of intensified battle actions during the Native counterattacks, or small unit actions to take or hold river fords), and differential distributions of musket ball densities or diameters which could indicate changes in tactics. An analysis of the sequence of events, movements, and actions associated with the Battle of Great Falls is presented in Section VI Battlefield Reconstruction. In theory, all the events, movements, actions associated with Key Terrain Features should have a unique archeological signature based on the nature and distribution of battle related objects.

### *Field Methods*

Fieldwork was conducted in four phases drawn from Douglas Scott's battlefield methods developed at the Battle of the Little Big Horn and adjusted to suit the needs of a seventeenth century battlefield.<sup>44</sup> These include: Orientation Phase, Inventory Phase, Archeological Testing Phase, and Laboratory and Evaluation Phase. These phases were often conducted concurrently as the battlefield evolved.

### *Orientation Phase*

Landowner permissions were obtained as needed during the field season depending on the evolving direction of the retreat. Acquiring permissions to conduct the survey was relatively easy outside of the Riverside area as there were fewer properties and most were large, often exceeding 25 acres. Windshield surveys were conducted along roads thought to be adjacent to the battlefield and walkover surveys of individual properties were conducted where permission had been granted. Visual Inspections of individual lots consisted of a walkover of the property with the landholder to gain information on the locations of possible below-ground disturbances

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<sup>44</sup> Scott et al. *Battle of the Little Bighorn*. Pp. 25-26.



(i.e., septic systems, utility lines), and to note landscape features that had either physical or cultural attributes that denoted possible relationships to the battlefield.

### Inventory Phase

The inventory phase consisted of three sequential steps; metal detector survey, recovery of artifacts, and recording of artifacts. This phase consisted of an initial metal detector survey to identify and locate potential battle related objects (e.g., musket balls, brass points, dropped and broken equipment) which would indicate evidence of the battle. If an area was determined to be part of the battlefield landscape a more intensive and systematic metal detector survey followed. All objects were flagged for recovery. During the recovery phase the flagged objects were excavated and tentative identifications made in the field. Objects determined to be modern (e.g., .22 bullet, pop tab, etc.) were discarded. All other objects, including non-battle related objects were placed in an artifact bag and recorded as to object type and material. All metallic objects were removed and bagged as all battlefield areas were subjected to additional metal detector surveys. The recording phase established GPS coordinates for all recovered artifacts. After the object was removed it was sent to the laboratory for further analysis, but information on the object and provenience were recorded on the flag which was temporarily left in place. Leaving the flags in place helped battlefield archeologists to better visualize the battlefield and maintained a record of the object type and provenience should any discrepancies in the paperwork or GPS coordinates be detected later.

The project took advantage of GIS technology for the provenience and subsequent analysis of all cultural material. To accomplish this, a “cloud”-based strategy was adopted, utilizing a series of servers and clients. A geodatabase was created and hosted on a dedicated GIS server. Hosted feature classes were then constructed on the backend to store point data for each artifact, along with associated attribute data, photographs or other media. Other feature classes were also included for the storage of various geographic entities that might be encountered throughout the project such as structures or key terrain features. A variety of base maps were made available such as U.S.G.S 7 ½ series maps, Lidar (light detection and ranging), imagery/satellite, street maps, and plot maps of properties.

A series of front end applications were developed for mobile, web, and desktop devices that allowed for collection, updating, querying, and viewing of all artifact data. An iPad linked to

a GPS antenna was used as the primary collection device. The application loaded on the mobile device focused on tools needed for collection of data in the field, while the application available from the web and desktop applications emphasized tools that focused on viewing and analysis. In the field, mobile phones or tablets, in concert with Bluetooth, enabled high accuracy GNSS devices (Global Navigation Satellite System) that were used to generate proveniences for all artifacts, collect relevant attribute data, and take photographs. This allowed for rapid and precise measurements of all data. The user was presented with a concise interface that allowed them to quickly record all relevant information about an artifact and the surrounding landscape. As the data was collected it was made available in real-time across the network on a variety of other web and desktop applications in the field, laboratory and office environments. Essentially someone in the field or laboratory had access to the same data in real time, a process that made it easy to monitor and follow field operations remotely. Operational layers built into the application included artifacts, base maps, measurement (miles, kilometers, meters, yards, feet):

### Artifacts

Depth of Artifact (centimeters below surface) and soil type

Musket Ball Type: impacted or dropped

Musket Ball Diameter: (inches)

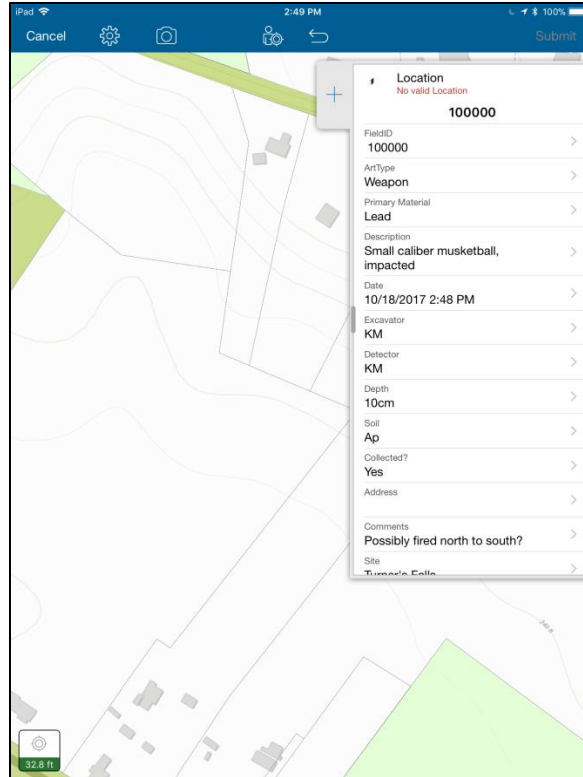
Material: lead, cuprous, iron, glass, silver, lithic, kaolin, ceramic, etc.

Architectural: nail (hand wrought, machine cut, wire), latch, hook, etc.

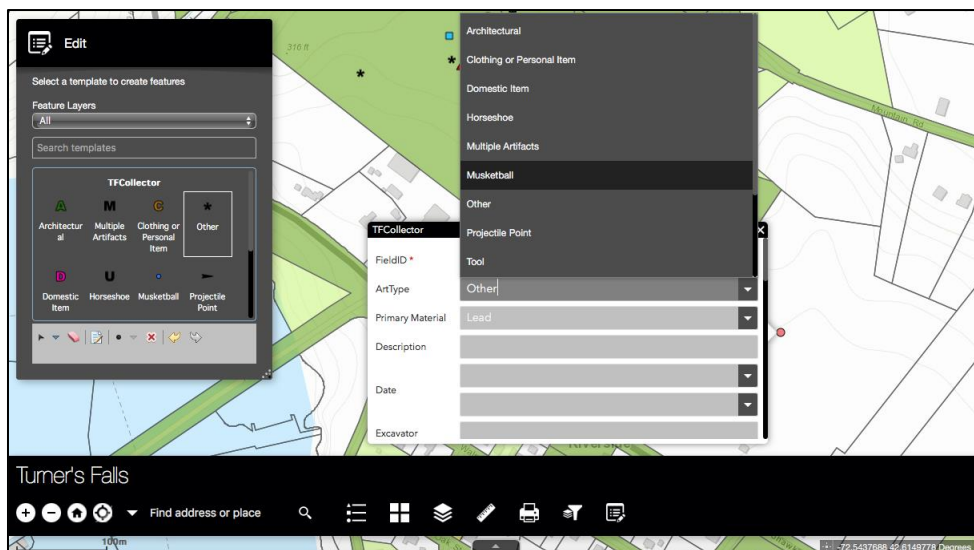
Clothing and Personal: button, aglet, buckle, brooch, amulet, ring, bead, coin, cufflink

Domestic: pot hook, straight knife, kettle, bale seal, horse shoe, horse shoe nail, horse bit, escutcheon, spoon, key, tack, folding knife

Tool: axe, awl, wedge



**Figure 38.** Artifact Data Collection Interface.



**Figure 39.** Editing and Layer Interface.

### Archeological Testing & Metal Detecting Phase

A metal detector is a remote sensing device designed to locate subsurface metallic items based on the differential electrical conductivity of metal objects. All metal detectors include a handle, search coil, cable, and metal box that contains the battery, tuning apparatus, and in more recent detectors a computer that provides the ability to program the detector for certain kinds of metals, digital readouts of metal type, possible metal depth, and soil conditions. All metal detectors work on the same general principle. An electromagnetic field produced from the search coil, when held at ground surface, penetrates the earth in a cone shape emanating downward from the coil. Coils are available in a variety of sizes designed to provide preferences to depth, discrimination (ferrous vs. non ferrous), and precision in pinpointing object locations. Generally, larger coils are more effective for locating deeply buried objects, but less effective in discriminating between metals (i.e., brass and lead from iron).

Different metal detector models also vary in their operating frequency and therefore their relative effectiveness in identifying certain kinds of metals. Therefore, some metal detectors are more effective in identifying ferrous objects, others brass, lead, silver and copper, and gold.<sup>45</sup> Different metals produce different phase responses in metal detectors, allowing some instruments to effectively discriminate among different types of metals.<sup>46</sup> Generally, two different technologies characterize the various brands of metal detectors, Very Low Frequency (VLF) and Pulse Induction (PI) units. VLF units have superior discrimination capability, compared to PI units, which generally have better depth capabilities. The most effective metal detector brands utilized were produced by Minelab and Whites.

Factors that affect the results of a metal detector survey include the experience of the operator, soil conditions (e.g. mineralized soils, saturated or dry soils), the variable qualities of metal detecting equipment which can affect the detector's ability to discriminate between metals, detection at various depths and in different weather conditions, and proximity to EMI emissions. The variability in metal detectors was considered an advantage during the survey and an important factor in the decision to utilize as many different brands and types of metal detectors

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<sup>45</sup> Melissa Connor & Douglas D. Scott. "Metal Detector Use in Archeology: An Introduction." *Historical Archeology* 32(4), 1998. Pp. 76-85; G. Michael Pratt, "How Do You Know It's a Battlefield" in Eds. Douglas Scott, Lawrence Babits, and Charles Haecker. *Fields of Conflict: Battlefield Archeology from the Roman Empire to the Korean War* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2009).

<sup>46</sup> Don H. Heimmer and Steven L. De Vore. *New-Surface, high resolution geophysical methods for cultural resource management and archeological investigations* (Denver, CO: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1995).



as possible. Electro-Magnetic Interference (EMI) also influenced metal detector stability and therefore the ability to detect at different depths and different types of metal. Interference can come from many sources including: soil oxidation, proximity to other metal detectors, approaching thunderstorms, planes flying overhead, and even the natural magnetic flux lines from the Earth's magnetic core. In addition, the saturation of soils enhances any detector's ability to detect metallic objects at greater depths. As a controlled experiment, an area was resurveyed following a period of rain. It was discovered that several objects were identified that had not been detected in the initial detection survey. When excavated, these artifacts were found to be at a greater depth than objects detected during periods of dry weather. Thereafter, many operators preferred to detect during a light rain or after a period of heavy rain. Conversely, it was also discovered that over-saturated soils, and excess water on the ground surface diminished the effectiveness of most metal detectors. One of the biggest problems encountered with the metal detector surveys was the presence of mineralized soils in portions of the battlefield. These soils completely negated the effectiveness of some types of machines. Subsequent re-surveys by Mine lab pulse machines identified dozens of objects that were not detected by other technologies. As a result, these areas were subsequently re-surveyed.

The metal detector operators used in the survey reflected a wide range of experience, from a few months to decades. Volunteers from the Yankee Territory Coinshooters (YTC) metal detecting club based out of East Hartford, Connecticut were used throughout the project and were instrumental in its success. Each volunteer was unique in their experience, focus, technique, equipment, and availability. Based on these qualities different operators and detectors were assigned to where they would maximize their strengths to best serve the project. A core group of seasoned and experienced detectorists known as "The Jedi Masters" were relied on throughout the battlefield survey. These individuals had decades of experience and were students of the technology, physics, and application of a variety of metal detector types. It was always important to know if the lack of battle related objects was the result of the inability of the detectorist to identify battle related objects in challenging conditions or if battle related objects were simply not present. Only the Jedi could be relied upon to make this distinction.

The direction at which the operator approaches an area often impacts how effective the metal detector survey will be. Locating metallic objects of different shapes, sizes, and orientation in the soil requires an area to be detected from multiple angles by machines with different

capabilities. Artifacts are buried at various angles in the soil, and therefore may not present a solid plane to detect depending on the angle of approach (particularly thin brass objects). The metal detector will best detect a thin artifact at its widest or broadest face. Therefore, the larger the face that is presented the more likely the detector's signals will strike the artifact. Experiences in the Pequot War battlefield surveys locating brass arrow points was particularly challenging, especially if the point was oriented in such a way that it presented the smallest possible face to the detector. Approaching the point from different directions allowed the detector to read the broadest widest face of the point. Therefore, the best way to find artifacts is with multiple angles of approach across the search area. As such, the standard initial metal detector survey methodology was two angles of approach or "sweeps" at 90-degree angles within a search box (e.g., 10m x 10m).

The field methodology that was adopted following the initial metal detector survey that located the English retreat route consisted of establishing a grid of 10m x 10m blocks across a search area. Within these blocks, multiple operators and different detectors were employed. The major departure from traditional battlefield methodology was the number of times each block was surveyed and the numbers of different angles of approach. The battlefield survey consisted of detecting along north-south and east-west transects that were one meter wide. A wide variety of machines were employed during the survey phase, but Minelab and White's detectors were primarily used.

### Recovery Phase

The recovery crew (staff archeologists and metal detector operators) excavated a 25cm x 25cm square hole with a small shovel or trowel to recover an artifact that had been previously marked by a flag during detection. The excavation location was detected a second time to make sure there were no other metal objects present before the hole was filled. If the recovered object was clearly modern it was discarded (e.g., .22 bullets, aluminum foil, pull tabs, tin cans, roofing nails). This was recorded on fieldwork recovery forms and placed directly in a "discard bag."

All recovered artifacts were placed in a plastic bag and left at its location marked by a flag for the recording crew. Standard archeological data-recording was used for all recovered artifacts. Non-metallic artifacts that were found during the recovery process were also recorded and bagged (i.e., historic ceramics, prehistoric lithics, shell). The recording team recorded information on artifact depth and soil conditions as well. The GPS reading and tentative object

identification was recorded on the plastic bags containing the artifacts and as well as field excavation forms.

### Laboratory and Evaluation Phase

Real-time laboratory analysis was the most important aspect of fieldwork, as the immediate (within two to three days) results of the identification of metallic (primarily ferrous) artifacts to determine if they were battle-related greatly influenced decisions as to where to focus fieldwork efforts. All iron objects were X-rayed to both identify the type of object which was also obscured by oxidation and to determine if the object was cast or hand wrought. Except for cast iron kettles few seventeenth century artifacts were cast, most were hand wrought. X-ray analysis can easily distinguish between cast and hand wrought objects.

### King Philip's War Battlefields and Engagements Database

A thorough analysis of primary and secondary source materials was conducted to identify every engagement that could be identified in King Philips War (1675-1678). Although town histories are not generally considered primary sources they often contain oral traditions or segments of written histories on King Philip's War that are often overlooked by historians. A database was created for each action that included all the primary sources that mentioned the action. The primary sources were cross referenced to get the most accurate information on the type of action, who initiated it, how the attack was conducted, the outcome, casualty estimates, number of captives, structures and property destroyed, and tactics. When information conflicted on casualties from various sources either the most consistent information was used or an average taken. The survey identified 218 separate engagements that were divided into six operational theaters. The theaters were delineated based primarily on the 'enemy' Native tribes who inhabited a theater and the primary English colony that conducted operations within the theater. The Theaters of Operation are defined as follows:

*Northern:* The extreme northeastern corner of Massachusetts into Maine. Tribes inhabiting the theater included the Nashaway and various Eastern Abenaki groups in southern Maine. Massachusetts Bay was the only colony that conducted field operations in this theater.

*Southern:* The Southern Theater is entirely within the boundaries of Rhode Island Colony and abuts the western boundary of Plymouth Colony, a portion of the Eastern Theater. The Narragansett were the principal Native tribe inhabiting the Southern Theater. Connecticut conducted most of the field operations in the theater although Plymouth and Massachusetts conducted a few operations in the northern and eastern portions of the theater. The only joint colonial operation in the theater was the Narragansett Swamp Fight of December 19, 1675 and a brief operation by a combined army in the northern portion of the theater shortly after the swamp fight.

*Eastern:* The Eastern Theater is defined from just outside Boston and forms a broad arc to the east side of Narragansett Bay and to Rhode Island Sound. Various Wampanoag bands including the Pokanoket and Pocasset inhabited the more southern portions of the theater. Plymouth Colony conducted almost all the field operations in the southern portion of the theater within the boundaries of the colony. Massachusetts conducted all field operations in the northern portion of the theater.

*Western:* The Connecticut Valley from Springfield (Agawam) to Northfield (Squakeag) extending a few miles east and west of the Connecticut River inhabited by the Squakeag, Pocumtuck, Norwottock, Nonotuck and Agawam. Connecticut conducted most of the field operations in this theater. Massachusetts Bay conducted some field operations late in the war but mostly provided soldiers for garrison duty.

*Central:* From Brookfield (Quabaug) east to just a few miles outside of Boston and north to Maine and south to Narragansett Country in Rhode Island and Connecticut. Tribal groups within the theater include the Nashaway, Nipmuck (multiple bands), and Quabaug. Massachusetts conducted most of the field operations in the theater although Connecticut conducted field operations at Wabaquasset, Watchusett, and Quabaug.

*Connecticut:* This theater is entirely within the boundaries of Connecticut. There were some minor actions and raids within Connecticut but no major actions aside from the burning of Simsbury as most of the Native population in the theater were allied with the English. Many of the raids and actions were conducted by Natives from outside the colony.

Identified combat actions were characterized by type of engagement: Battle, Skirmish, Raid on an English Settlement, Raid on Native Village, Native Ambush, English Ambush, Mass Native Surrender, and Massacre. Some actions may appear in multiple categories as for example the Great Swamp Fight and the Battle of Great Falls as it might fall into several categories such as, Raid on Native Settlement, Battle, and Massacre. Information was also entered on Date, Location, Native Strength, Native Leaders, Native Casualties, Native Non-Combatants Killed, Captured Natives, English Strength, English Leaders, English Casualties, Captured English, English Non-Combatants killed, Destruction of Property, Torture/Mutilation, Destruction of



Food Stores, Duration of Action, and when possible, the precise longitude and Latitude of the action. The types of actions were defined as follows:

*Battle:* A sustained engagement with at least one hundred combatants on each side.

*Skirmish:* An engagement conducted by small detachments of combatants, generally less than one hundred combatants on either side.

*Raid on Native Settlement:* Defined as the destruction of Native villages including the destruction of wigwams and food stores by English forces. Generally, Native casualties resulted from these attacks.

*Raid on English Settlement:* Any type of attack on an English settlement that may or may not have resulted in casualties but did result in the destruction or stealing of property (often livestock).

*Native Ambush:* Native forces conducting a surprise attack on English combatants and noncombatants from a concealed position

*English Ambush:* English forces conducting a surprise attack on Native combatants and noncombatants from a concealed position.

*Mass Native Surrender:* Natives groups that turned themselves in to the English.

*Massacre:* The indiscriminate killing of Native non-combatants

## **V. Historical Context of the Battle of Great Falls / Peskeompskut**

### *Battlefield Narratives*

There are several primary sources that document the events of the King Philip's War, and the Battle of Great Falls / Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut in particular. Some were narratives and correspondences written by Native or English soldiers who participated in the various battles of the war or were written by individuals who directly observed actions and battles during the war. Some accounts were written based on interviews or oral traditions obtained from soldiers or other eyewitnesses to the war, and others were histories written years after the war drawn from primary sources, some of which no longer exist. Most of the accounts provide a fair amount of detail on aspects of the Battle of Great Falls / Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut.

Historians generally rely on several principal sources regarding King Philip's War, and the Battle of Great Falls / Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut in particular. These include Increase

Mather, *A Brief History of the Warr With the Indians in New-England*, William Hubbard, *A Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians*, Roger L'Estrange, *A New and Further Narrative of the State of New-England*, the *Second William Harris Letter of August, 1676*, the Reverend Stephen Williams notebook, Daniel Gookin's *An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England*, as well as documents from the *Connecticut Archives Colonial Wars Series* and the *Massachusetts State Archives*.

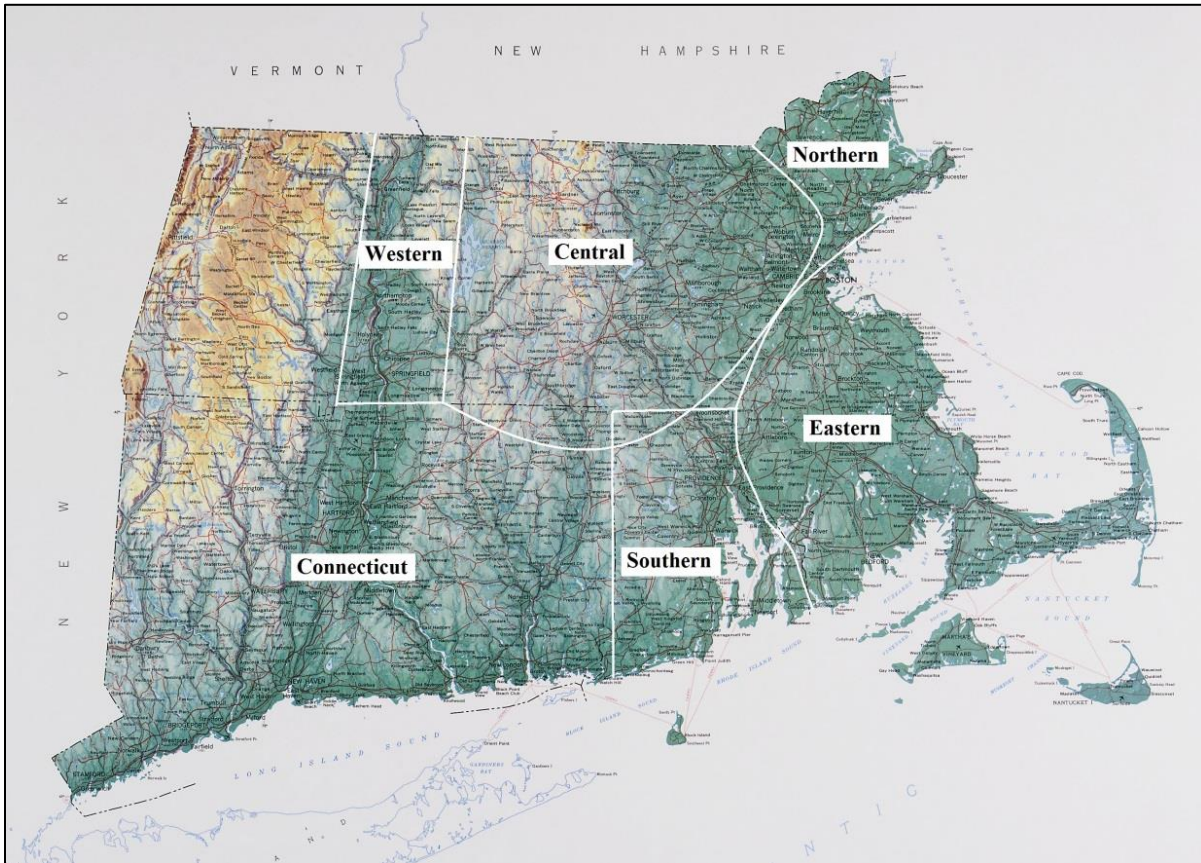
### *King Philip's War Battlefields and Engagements Database*

Figures 40 – 43 were created using the data base of 218 actions recorded for King Philip's War. The data synthesized in these figures can potentially provide information on evolving Native Coalition and English strategies and tactics during the war by theater and over time. Native Coalition raids on English settlements and ambushes were by far the most common Native offensive actions in the war (Figure 42). Coalition forces generally tried to avoid pitched battles unless they clearly had the tactical advantage (e.g. Bloody Brook, Pierces Fight, Sudbury) or if they were forced to engage the English to buy time for non-combatants to escape. In that way. Most of the examples of Native initiated battles were when the English were approaching a group of that included women and children and a contingent of Native soldiers would break away from the group to engage the English to buy time for the women and children to escape.

The most common offensive action on the part of the English were skirmishes followed by attacks on Native villages, and ambushes (Figure 43). It should be noted that the English were probably incapable of staging an ambush unless there was a contingent of Natives allies accompanying the English force such as Praying Indians or Mohegan and Pequot. Native allies did not always accompany an English force (particularly Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth forces) which explains the large difference in Coalition initiated ambushes and English initiated ambushes. The key to a successful ambush was stealth and silence which most English soldiers were incapable of. Daniel Gookin relates two anecdotes that illustrate English ineptitude in field operations:

One of the English soldiers had on a new pair of shoes that made a creaking noise as they travelled. The Indian Captain was not quiet until he had persuaded the fellow with the creaking shoes to take his moccasins and wear them, and the Indian carried the Englishman's shoes at his back, and went himself barefoot. Another English soldier had on a pair of leather breeches, which being dry made a rustling noise; the Indian Captain was not satisfied until he had persuaded the man

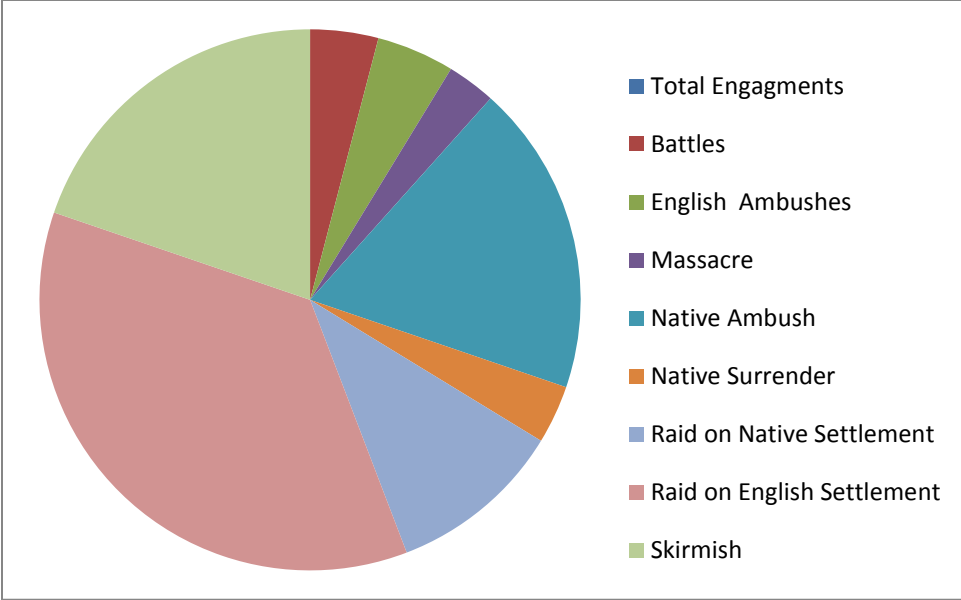
to take off his breeches, or else to wet them in the water to prevent their rustling. By this relation, which is a truth, we may observe how circumspect and careful they are in order to obtain advantage over their enemies.<sup>47</sup>



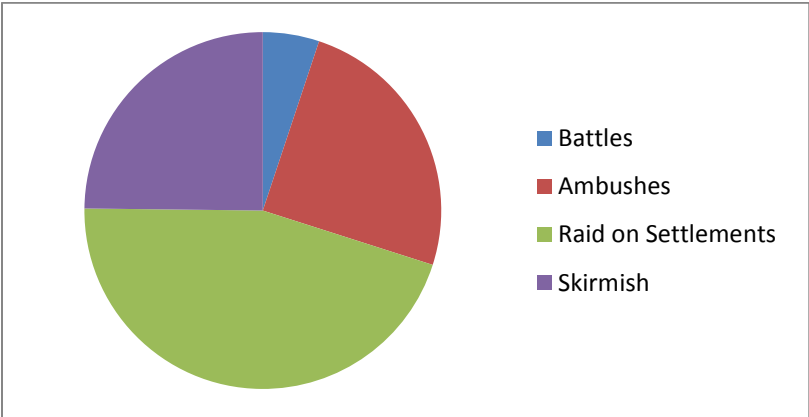
**Figure 40.** Theaters of Operation.

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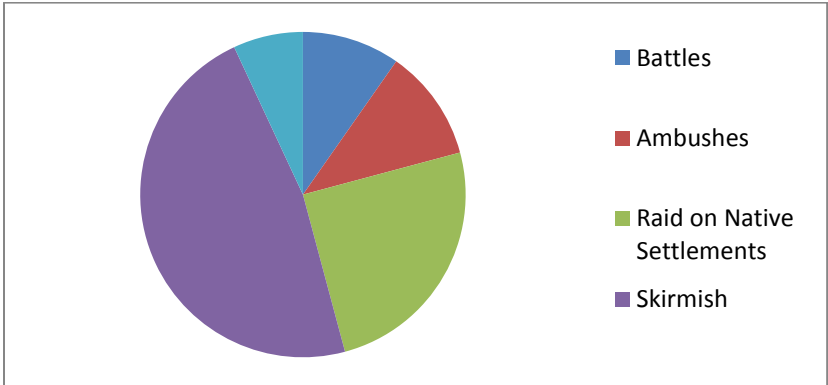
<sup>47</sup> Daniel Gookin. *An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England, In the Years 1675, 1676, 1677* (Cambridge, UK: Folsom, Wells, and Thurston, 1912). P. 442.



**Figure 41.** All Engagements, June 1675 – September 1676.



**Figure 42.** Native Offensive Operations, June 1675 – July 1676.



**Figure 43.** English Offensive Operations, June 1675 – September 1676.



### *Brief History of King Philip's War*

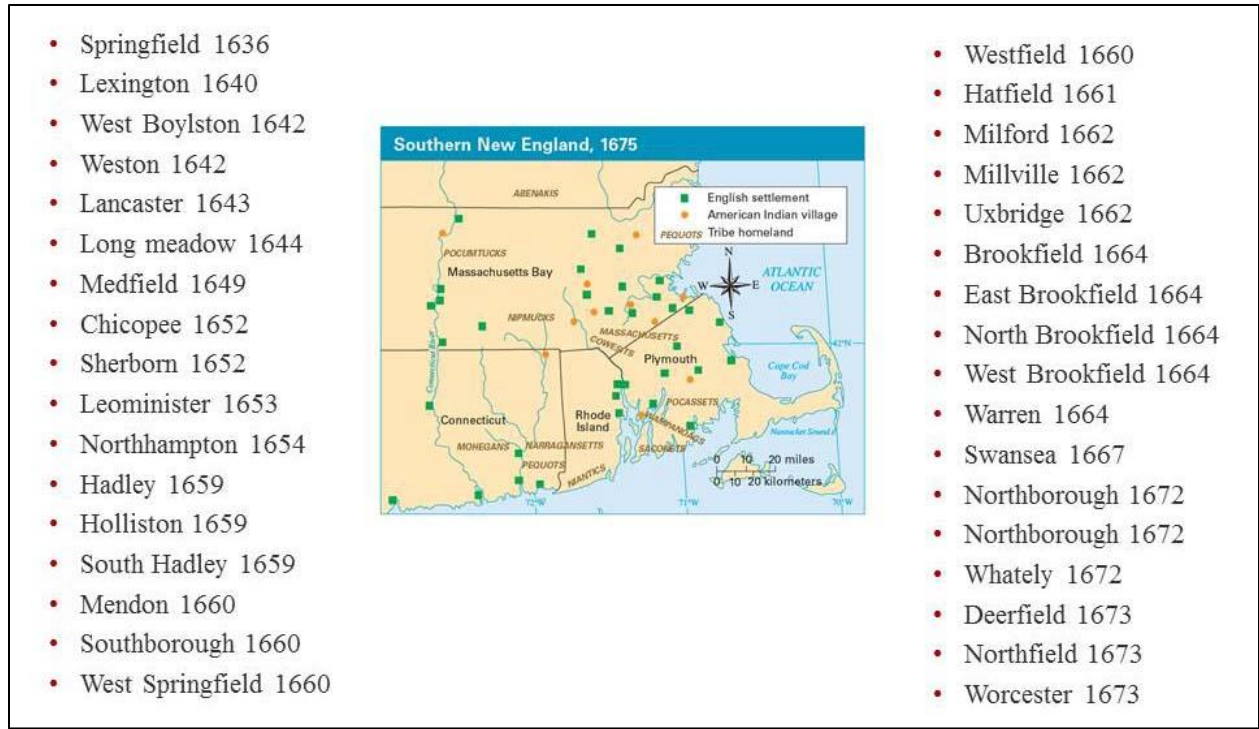
Know by this paper, that the Indians that thou hast provoked to wrath and anger will war this 21 years if you will. There are many Indians yet. We come 300 at this time. You must consider the Indians lose nothing but their life. You must lose your fair houses and cattle.<sup>48</sup>

This brief letter written by Nipmuc Christian Indian James the Printer was nailed to a bridge post following the Battle of Medfield on February 21, 1676. The letter epitomizes the anger Native people throughout New England felt toward the English and their deep concern for their futures. It also speaks to a broader Native strategy in King Philip's War to destroy the English livelihood and infrastructure.<sup>49</sup> English settlements were established in Native homelands at an astounding rate which greatly impacted their lifeways and forced them into ever diminishing territories (Figure 44). Thirty-Four English settlements were established in Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay between 1636 and 1673 and the rate continued to increase in the decade before King Philip's War.

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<sup>48</sup> Gookin. *Christian Indians in New England*. P. 494

<sup>49</sup> King Philip's War has also been referred to as the First Indian War, Metacom's War, or Metacom's Rebellion. Most recently, Major Jason Warren has referred to the conflict as the Great Narragansett War in his book *Connecticut Unscathed: Victory in the Great Narragansett War* (2014).



**Figure 44.** English Settlements on the Eve of King Philip’s War

King Philip’s War was not the first-time Native peoples in New England contemplated a general war against the English, as Native people clearly understood the long-term implications of the expanding English settlements decades before King Philip’s War. Shortly after the Pequot War started in September of 1636 the Pequots approached the Narragansett to make peace and to enlist their aid in their war against the English. Their arguments to the Narragansett to unite with them against the English, and the tactics they proposed, are eerily like the events and course of King Philip’s War forty years later:

The Pequods...did at the last by all subtle insinuations and persuasions try to make their peace with the Narragansetts, using such arguments as to right reason seemed not only pregnant to the purpose but also most cogent and invincible...That the English were strangers, and began to overspread the country, which would soon be possessed by them to the depriving the ancient inhabitants of their right, if they were not timely prevented, and that the Narragansetts would but make their way for their own ruin, by helping to destroy the Pequods, for after themselves were subdued, it would not be long ere the Narragansetts themselves, would in the next place be rooted out likewise; whereas if they would but join together against the English they could demonstrate how the English might easily either be destroyed or forced to leave the country, and that without any danger to themselves: Telling them also that they never need come to any open battles, they might destroy them only by firing their houses, and killing their cattle, and lying

in wait for them as they went on their ordinary occasions; which course, if it were pursued, they said their new and unwelcome neighbors could not long subsist; but would either be starved with hunger and cold, or forced to leave the country.<sup>50</sup>

In 1642, Miantonomoh, one of the chief sachems of the Narragansett Tribe also tried to enlist Native tribes throughout southern New England and Long Island in a plan “for destruction of the English and generally throughout New England to make war upon the English because the English did get possession of all the best places and did drive the Indians away and were likely to take away the country from them.”<sup>51</sup> Many of the sachems were reluctant to become a part of the conspiracy “as that the English were too strong for them.” In a speech to the gathered sachems on Long Island Miantonomoh replied:

So are we all Indeans as ye English are, and Say brother to one another, So must we be one as they are, Otherwise we will all be gone shortly, for you know our fathers had plentie of deare, & Skins, our plaines weare full of dear as also our woods and of Turkies, and our Coves full of fish and foule, but these English having gotten our land, they with Sythes cut downe ye grass, and with axes fell the trees their Cowes & horses eat ye grass and their hoggs spoyle our Clambanks, and we Shall all be starved: therefore it is best for you to do as wee for wee are all the Sachems from East to west both Moquakues & Mowhauks Joyning with us, and we are all resolved to fall upon them all at one appointed day.<sup>52</sup>

These complaints were echoed 33 years later, one week before King Philip’s War began, during a meeting between King Philip (Metacom) and the Rhode Island Deputy Governor John Easton. Easton invited Metacom and 40 of his men to discuss Pokanoket grievances in the hopes of finding a solution and prevent a war. Metacom and his councilors listed many grievances that echoed Miantonomoh’s speech forty years earlier:

They said they had been the first in doing good to the English, and the English the first in doing wrong; they said when the English first came, their king’s father was as a great man and the English as a little child. He constrained other Indians from wronging the English and gave them corn and showed them how to plant and was free to do them any good and had let them have a 100 times more land than now the king had for his own people. But their king’s brother, when he was king, came miserably to die by being forced into court and, as they judged, poisoned. And another grievance was if 20 of their honest Indians testified that a Englishman had

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<sup>50</sup> Hubbard. *Narrative*. Pp. 29-30.

<sup>51</sup> James Kendall Hosmer, Ed. *Winthrop’s Journal History of New England, 1630-1649* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1908). P. 79.

<sup>52</sup> Lion Gardener. *Relation of the Pequot Warres* (Hartford, CT: Acorn Club. 1901). P. 26.

done them wrong, it was as nothing; and if but one of their worst Indians testified against any Indian or their king when it pleased the English, that was sufficient. Another grievance was when their kings sold land the English would say it was more than they agreed to and a writing must be proof against all them, and some of their kings had done wrong to sell so much that he left his people none, and some being given to drunkenness, the English made them drunk and then cheated them in bargains...that now they had no hopes left to keep any land. Another grievance was that the English cattle and horses still increased so that when they removed 30 miles from where the English had anything to do, they could not keep their corn from being spoiled, they never being used to fence, and thought that when the English bought land of them that they would have kept their cattle upon their own land. Another grievance was that the English were so eager to sell the Indians liquors that most of the Indians spent all in drunkenness and then ravened upon the sober Indians and, they did believe, often did hurt the English cattle, and their kings could not prevent it.<sup>53</sup>

The immediate cause of King Philip's War was Plymouth Colony's execution of three of King Philip's men in June 1675. The three men had been tried and found guilty of murdering John Sassamon, a Harvard educated Christian Indian who had served as an interpreter and advisor to Metacom, but whom Metacom had accused of spying for the colonists. Increase Mather claimed, "but the main ground why they murdered him seems to be, because he discovered their subtle and malicious designs, which they were complotting against the English."<sup>54</sup> In fact, the causes of the war were far more complex. The murder and executions ignited a tinderbox of the underlying tensions between Indians and the English that had been smoldering for over 50 years over competing land claims, disputes over the grazing of colonial livestock, impacts on Native hunting, and fishing grounds, and agricultural fields, interracial insensitivities, and English cultural encroachment on Native lifeways.

### *King Philip's War Begins*

King Philip's War (June 1675 – August 1676) was an armed conflict between dozens of Native American tribes and bands who inhabited (and still do) present-day southern New England who were fighting against the United Colonies of Connecticut, Massachusetts Bay, and Plymouth. The war is named after the Pokanoket sachem Metacom, known to the English as "King Philip," as the war began in Plymouth Colony, the homeland of the Pokanoket, and due to

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<sup>53</sup> John Easton, Franklin B. Hough, Editor, *A Narrative Of the Causes which led to Philip's Indian War, of 1675 and 1676, by John Easton, of Rhode Island.* (Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1858). Pp 11-13.

<sup>54</sup> Mather. *A Brief History.* P. 11.



King Philip's leadership role during the conflict. Dozens of frontier towns in central Massachusetts and the Connecticut Valley were attacked and burned during the war, as were settlements in Providence Plantations, Plymouth Colony and eastern Massachusetts (Figure 45). The conflict is often referred to as the deadliest in American history based on English and Native civilian and military casualties relative to the population.<sup>55</sup>

There is some evidence that Metacom had been planning a war against the English for years; accumulating firearms, storing food, and forging alliances with Native tribes through the region. The evidence for such a conspiracy comes only from English sources and therefore must be viewed with a degree of skepticism. As early as 1671 Plymouth Colony accused Metacom of plotting a war against them: "Phillip and his council did acknowledge that they had bine in a preparation for war against us; and that not grounded upon any injury sustained from us, nor provocation given by us, but from their own naughty harts."<sup>56</sup> In 1675 Plymouth Colony accused Philip of sending his messengers to several Indian sachems to join with him in a confederacy against the English to which he apparently confessed to:

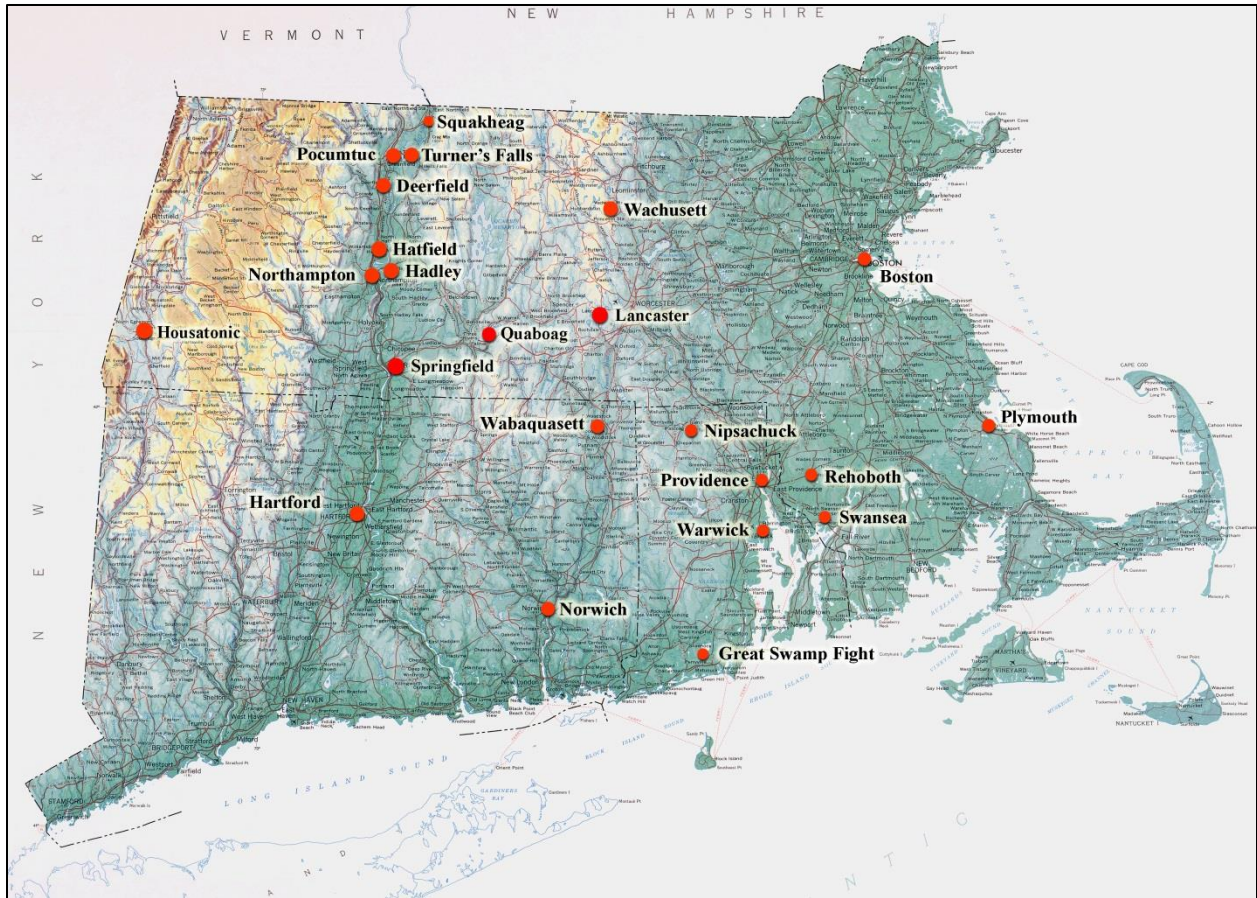
...to enter into a confederacy with him against the English, and himself arms about 700 of his men, and obtains 1000 more of his confederates: and what others besides these he hath engaged to his party, is to the English unknown, though its shrewdly suspected this cruel subtle fellow hath engaged most of the Indians in the country to espouse his quarrel as a common cause. All this spring Philip's soldiers (who were well fitted with guns, powder, shot, etc. which they had long since gotten of the Dutch, French, yea and of some English themselves) were seen marching in their arms even at the planting of their corn.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Douglas Leach, *Flintlock and tomahawk; New England in King Philip's War* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1958).

<sup>56</sup> Nathaniel Shurtleff, Ed. *Records of Plymouth Colony*, Vol. 5 (Boston, MA: William White, 1671). P. 63.

<sup>57</sup> Roger L'Strange. *A Brief and True Narration of the Late Wars Risen in New England* (London, UK: Printed for J.S., 1675). P. 4.



**Figure 45:** Selected Towns, Native Communities and Place Names (1675-1676).

William Harris of Providence removed to the relative safety of Newport during but was aware of the events taking place in Pokanoket territory just a few miles away. In 1676 he wrote a letter to Sir Joseph Williamson, Secretary of State for the British crown outlining many of the events of King Philip's War:

Phillip did intend this war long since: aboute foure years, & had executed it: but y<sup>e</sup> god's Imedyate hand then preuented him: twice at y<sup>e</sup> least by great mighty raynes, which after ward was made knowne by Some Indeans, And he being required then to answer: had all moste broke out then, very neer he was to a war, & then stode vpon his gard in Armes; but at y<sup>e</sup> last he apeared (much adoe) & then confesed his guilt of y<sup>e</sup> sd fact. He hath resolved this war: though y<sup>e</sup> s<sup>d</sup> writt had nevr come out against him, And all y<sup>e</sup> Indeans with him in these partes, apears, by they<sup>r</sup> preparation for it, laying up great quanteties of corne, not after theyr useall manner, but y<sup>e</sup> year before: as a store for y<sup>e</sup> war, and Soe layd up, as cannot easely be founde, makeing y<sup>e</sup> ground level: & grass growing vpon them: yl they layd up y<sup>e</sup> last year; and y<sup>l</sup> they layd up this year (wher y<sup>e</sup> grass had not time to be made to grow over it ) they make hills in they<sup>r</sup> fields like hills of Corne on they<sup>r</sup> barnes, & put dead stalkes of corne as if they had the<sup>r</sup> grew, whereas: at all

other times of peace: they make theyr barnes y<sup>l</sup> any Child y<sup>l</sup> paseth by may see where they are (y<sup>l</sup> are vsed to them) And by they<sup>r</sup> prouiding powder: & Shott & Arrowes, which y<sup>c</sup> English perceiueing: & takeing notice of the Indeans pretended they<sup>r</sup> preparation against ye moowhagues [Mohawks].<sup>58</sup>

King Philip's War began on June 25, 1675 when a group of Metacom's men attacked and killed several English at Swansea, Massachusetts because of rising tensions between the Pokanoket and Plymouth Colony following the execution of three Pokanoket men by the English several months earlier.<sup>59</sup> This action initiated a sequence of events that engulfed all of New England in a full-scale war within a few months. Once the Pokanoket (Bristol, RI), Pocasset (Tiverton, RI), and other Wampanoag bands eluded English forces at Mount Hope (Metacom's homeland) and fled to central Massachusetts in late August, almost all the Native groups in Massachusetts joined the war against the English.<sup>60</sup> It was reported that there were even some Mohegan's who fought for Philip. Roger Williams reported that after the Great Swamp Fight "14 Monhiggins are now marcht away with the Nahigonsiks."<sup>61</sup> The Narragansett of Rhode Island entered the war in December of 1675 following a surprise attack on their fortified village by the United Colonies on December 19, 1675.

The movements of Metacom following his escape from Mount Hope indicate the close kinship ties the Pokanoket had with the Quabaug of west central Massachusetts, and by extension the tribes in the Connecticut Valley as the Quabaug had kin ties with the Agawam, Norwottuck, and Woronoco.<sup>62</sup> Metacom's immediate goal after leaving Pokanoket territory was to seek the protection and aid of the Quabaug Natives (Brookfield) who had long acknowledged Massasoit and Philip as their sachem. Metacom arrived at Quabaug Old Fort on August 5. There is evidence to suggest that Mattaump and the other Quabaug sachems anticipated Metacom's arrival as "the sachems had sent men to Philip to conduct him to Squabauge [Quabaug], with

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<sup>58</sup> William Harris. *A Rhode Islander Reports on King Philip's War; The Second William Harris Letter of August 1676*, P. P. 20, 22. Transcribed and Edited by Douglas Edward Leach. Providence: Rhode Island Historical Society, 1963.

<sup>59</sup> George Madison Bodge, *Soldiers in King Philip's War: Being a Critical Account of that War* (Boston, MA: Rockwell and Churchill Press, 1906). Pp. 25-27

<sup>60</sup> The Nipmuc of central Massachusetts and northeastern Connecticut, as well as the Pocumtuck (Deerfield), Norwottuck (Hadley), Agawam (Springfield), Woronoco (Westfield), Nonotuck (Hadley), Squakheag (Northfield) of the middle Connecticut Valley, and various Nipmuc tribes including the Quabaug (Brookfield) and Nashaway, Quahmsit, and Segunesit of north central Massachusetts.

<sup>61</sup> LaFantasie. *Correspondence of Roger Williams*. P. II:714

<sup>62</sup> *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, "Letter from Nathaniel Thomas to Governor Winslow, June 25, 1675." (Boston, MA: Samuel Hall, 1798). Pp. 86-87.

assurance that they would protect him.”<sup>63</sup> The first attacks on the English outside of Plymouth Colony were on the English settlement at Brookfield in Quabaug territory on August 2<sup>nd</sup> just before Philip arrived. Attacks on English settlements in the middle Connecticut Valley followed a month later. It is no coincidence that most of the raids in the summer and early fall of 1675 were on English settlements within the territories of the Quabaug and Connecticut Valley Indians.

From the summer of 1675 through the early winter of 1676 The Pokanoket and Pocasset Wampanoag, Narragansett, Nipmuc, middle Connecticut River Valley tribes (Pocumtuck, Nonotucks, Agawam, Norwottock) and the Quabaug, Nashaway, and Sokokis, launched dozens of highly successful attacks against English settlements in the Western, Central, and Eastern theaters (Figure 40, 46-49). These attacks had a devastating impact on English settlements. The experiences of John Kingsley of Rehoboth were like those throughout the English settlements:

I now, in my sickenes, my skin is ready to cleave to my bones. Now being unknowne to you beloe on the river, I say I am the 1 man & onely left of those that gathered the Church that is now in Dorchester, yet of late have lived at Rehoboth or Seconke & hath suffered deepe, with my neighbours. Now to tel you what wee have & how wee are like to suffer, my hart will not hould to write & sheetes would [not] contain. I am not able to beare the sad stories of our woeful day, when the Lord made our wolfish heathen to be our lordes, to fire our townc, shout & holler to call to us to come out of our garisones. Some did goe out alive, with success; but had not our God restrained them, thay were enough to have swallowed us all up. Thay burnt our milles, brake the stones, y<sup>e</sup>, our grinding stone; & what was hid in the earth they found, corne & fowlcs, kild catel & tooke the hind quarters & left the rest, yea, all that day that the Lord gave license they burnt cartes wheles, drive away our catel, shipe, horses, in a word had not the Lord restrained thay had not left one to have told of our Woeful day. We lost but one silly man that day. We are shut up in our garisones & dare not goe abroad far to our outlande, without some strength. Some of our souldiers are removed. Nobody comes to say, how doe ye...but alas, what will we doe against famine!

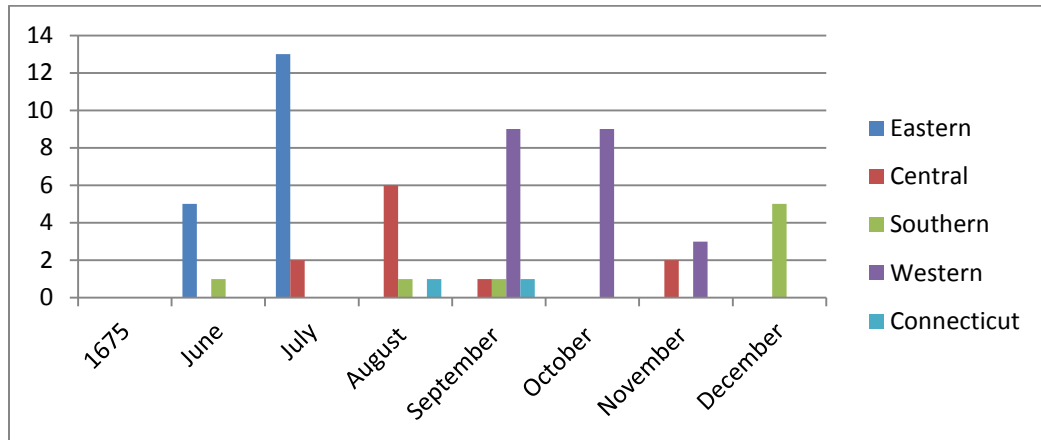
Coalition attacks on the middle Connecticut Valley settlements forced the English settlements at Northfield (Squakeag) and Deerfield (Pocumtuck) to be abandoned by September 1675. In October of 1675, strategic Native attacks on English corn and grist mills in the valley forced Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut to send soldiers to garrison and fortify the remaining middle

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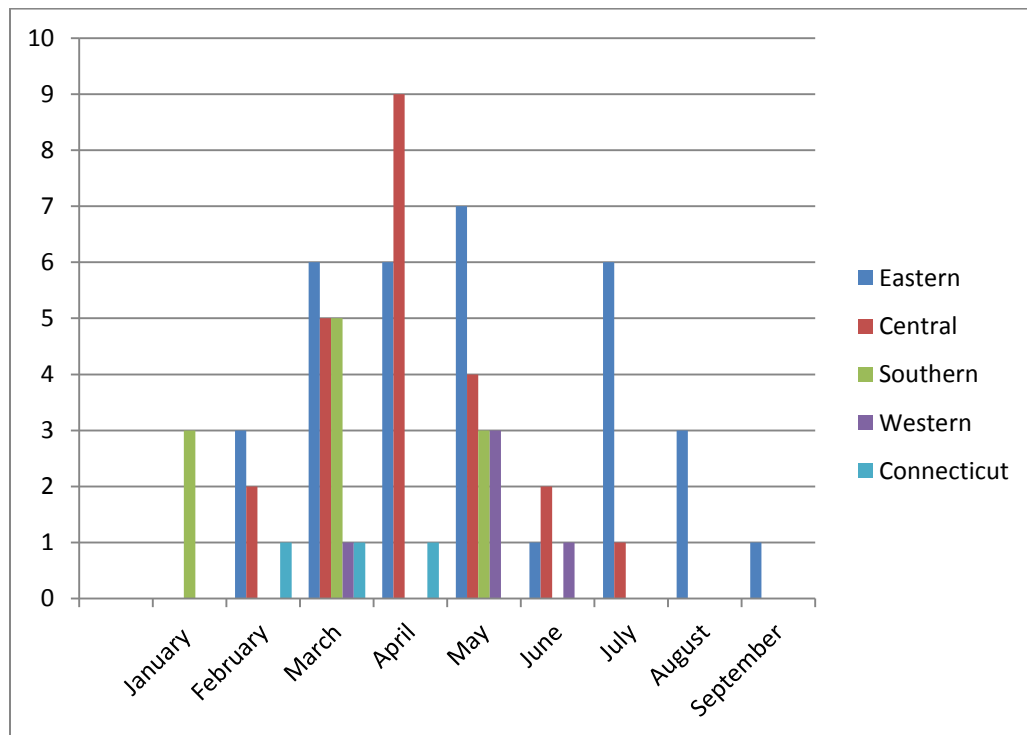
<sup>63</sup> J. H. Temple. *History of North Brookfield, Massachusetts* (North Brookfield, MA: Town of North Brookfield, 1887). P. 99.



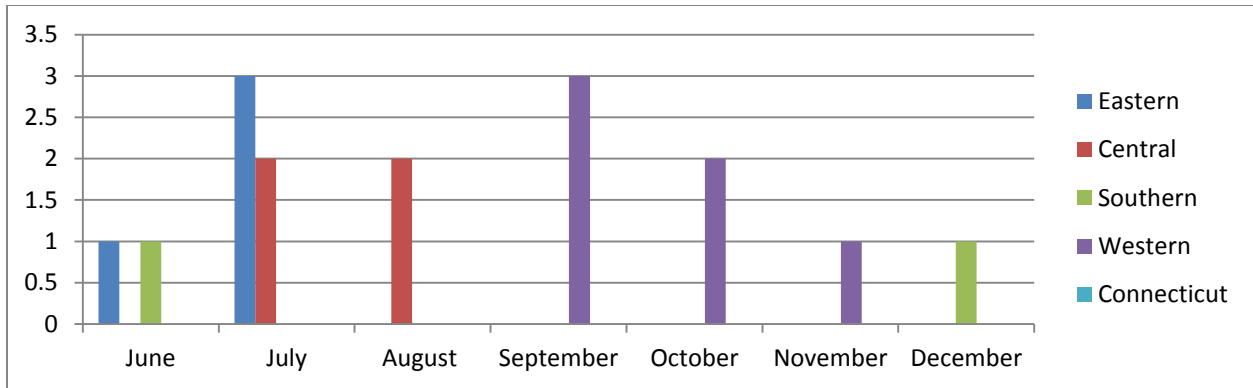
valley settlements of Springfield, Hatfield, Hadley, and Northampton during the winter of 1675-1676. This greatly increased the burden on the local population who had to feed and house the soldiers, and they often complained of overcrowding and shortages in medicine, food and clothing.



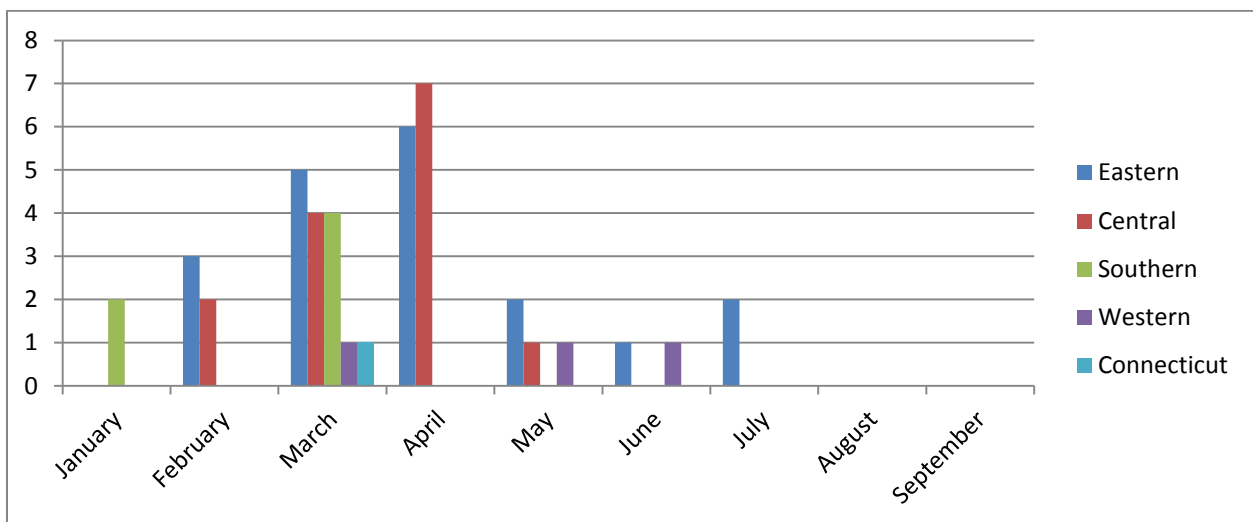
**Figure 46.** Native Attacks by Theater, June –December 1675



**Figure 47.** Native Attacks by Theater, January 1676 – September 1676.



**Figure 48.** Native Attacks on English Settlements, June 1675 – December 1675.



**Figure 49.** Native Attacks on English Settlements, January 1676 – September 1676.

During the winter of 1675-1676 English towns experienced severe hunger and famine, but not nearly to the extent in Native communities. Chronic food shortages, malnutrition, and consumption of spoiled meat (e.g., decomposed horse legs) led to a severe deterioration in the overall health of Native communities. Mary Rowlandson was captured in the raid on Lancaster on February 10 and spent almost three months with Coalition communities. During that time, she was able to observe their diet on a daily basis:

It was thought, if their corn were cut down, they would starve and die with hunger; and all that could be found was destroyed, and they driven from that little they had in store, into the woods, in the midst of winter... Though many times they would eat that that a hog would hardly touch; yet by that God strengthened them to be a scourge to his people. Their chief and commonest food was ground

nuts, they eat also nuts and acorns, artichokes, lilly roots, ground beans, and several other weeds and roots that I know not. They would pick up old bones, and cut them in pieces at the joints, and if they were full of worms and maggots, they would scald them over the fire, to make the vermine come out, and then boil them, and drink up the liquor, and then beat the great ends of them in a mortar, and so eat them. They would eat horses guts, and ears, and all sorts of wild birds which they could catch.<sup>64</sup>

Dysentery (“bloody flux”) spread throughout the Native communities in the winter of 1676 along with a dramatic increase in the number of deaths from battlefield casualties, exposure to the elements, and other unidentified illnesses. Although not documented in Native communities during the war, smallpox was frequently reported in English settlements and undoubtedly had a significant impact on Native communities as well. Massachusetts Bay soldiers may have inadvertently spread sickness and disease throughout the English and Native communities when they returned home from the field or as captives. Though European peoples had developed some antibodies protecting them against such viruses, illnesses such as smallpox and influenza were opportunistic and highly infectious diseases which infected thousands of Natives and English during the war, particularly during the winter and spring of 1676.<sup>65</sup> James the Printer spent the winter and spring with Coalition forces and reported: “many of the Indians are dead since this War began; and that more have dyed by the hand of God, in respect of Diseases, Fluxes, and Fevers, which have been amongst them, then have been killed with the Sword.”<sup>66</sup> Increase Mather reported “In these two months of May & April [1676], besides the Sword of War, in respect to the Heathen, the Sword of the Lord hath been drawn against this Land, in respect of Epidemical Disease, which sin hath brought upon us; Sore and (doubtless) Malignant Colds prevailing everywhere.”<sup>67</sup> Native settlements in Narragansett country, central Massachusetts and the middle Connecticut Valley were abandoned as Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut forces destroyed Native cornfields and food stores, and kept Native communities on the run to prevent them from gathering and hunting to “see to it the Indians would likewise face hardships come winter.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Mary Rowlandson. *Narrative of the Captivity and Removes of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*. P. 67-68. Lancaster: Carter, Andrews & Co. 1828.

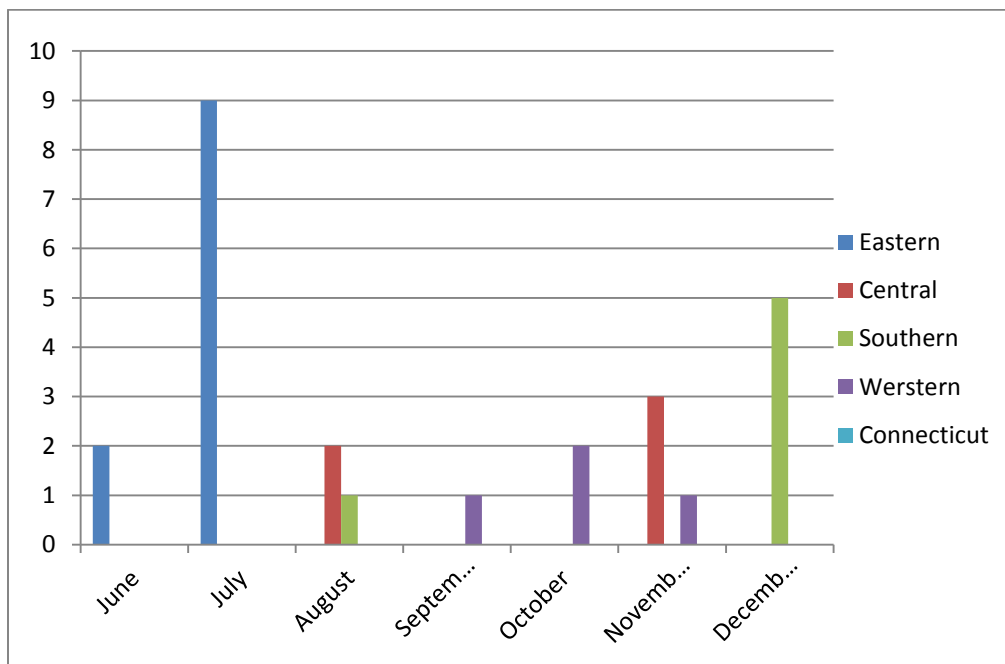
<sup>65</sup> Increase Mather, *Diary, March 1675-December 1676* (Cambridge, MA: John Wilson and Son, 1900). P.18.

<sup>66</sup> Mather. *Brief History*. P. 62.

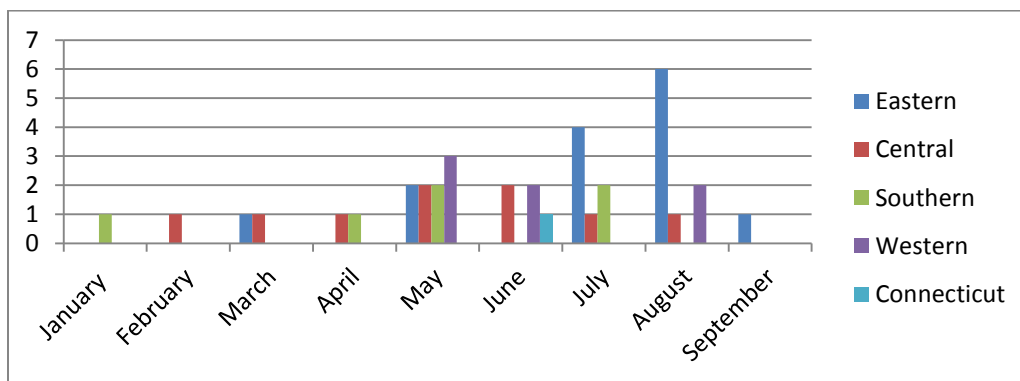
<sup>67</sup> Mather. *Brief History*. P. 62.

<sup>68</sup> Gookin. *Christian Indians in New England*. P. 448.

By the spring of 1676, the war had raged for nearly a year with heavy casualties on both sides, but the Native coalition was far more successful on the battlefield than were the English. Even so, the tide of the war began to turn in favor of the English as they began to aggressively pursue, harass, and attack Native communities throughout the region, not allowing them time to rest, gather food, or plant their fields (Figures 50, 51). By the early spring both sides were exhausted and there was a brief pause in the war as the combatants took time to rest and resupply. English forces in Connecticut, Massachusetts Bay, and Plymouth refitted their armies, provided for the defense of their towns, and prepared for spring offensives against the Native coalition.



**Figure 50.** English Offensive Operations, June 1675 – December 1675.



**Figure 51.** English Offensive Operations, January 1676 – September 1676.



Native communities began gathering in the middle Connecticut River Valley to find refuge and recover from the long winter, plan their strategy, rearm and refit, plant corn, and gather food supplies, particularly fish for immediate and future consumption. There were far more Native attacks in all theaters between January and May of 1676 than in the previous five months in part because of the addition of the Narragansett to the coalition and likely because the coalition used the winter to plan and prepare for wide ranging offensive operations (Figures 46-49). Similarly, we see a dramatic increase in English offensive operations in the spring of 1676 as well (Figures 50-51). This surge may have been partly in response to Native attacks but was also the result of developing experience in battlefield operations and execution, and logistics and planning. The English operations in the spring of 1676 (mostly attacks on Native communities) had a tremendous impact on Native people throughout the region. These operations prevented Native communities from gathering food supplies, planting, and directly and indirectly caused thousands of deaths from battlefield casualties, malnutrition, and sickness and disease.

By April the broader Peskeompskut/Great Falls area of the upper Connecticut River, had become a center of a multi-tribal gathering with perhaps a dozen villages located between Deerfield and Squakeag. The immediate area around Peskeompskut consisted of two flat plains along the north and south banks of the Connecticut River adjacent to the falls. The bedrock formation at Peskeompskut forms one of the largest water falls along the Connecticut River where anadromous fish such as shad, alewife, salmon, and eels are easily caught as they make their way upriver to spawn. The confluences of the Green and Deerfield Rivers, the Fall and Connecticut Rivers, and the Banquaug (Millers) and Connecticut Rivers were also ideal fishing places for anadromous fish. Native peoples from all over the region had been gathering at Peskeompskut for thousands of years during the spring to take advantage of the tremendous quantities of fish, renew ties with other communities, and for ritual and ceremony.<sup>69</sup>

The English and the tribes gathered at Peskeompskut were war weary by the early spring of 1676, and each began to make peace overtures. Earlier messages were exchanged between the Narragansett sachems and the English in late December and early January, but nothing came out of these early attempts. The English thought the Native leaders were playing for time (which

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<sup>69</sup> Personal Correspondence, Battle of Great Falls / Wissatinnewag-Peskeompskut Native American Battlefield Study Advisory Board.

they probably were), but also because there were serious divisions among the Native leaders whether to even engage in peace negotiations. Seventeenth century historian William Hubbard reported that on January 12, 1676 a messenger came from the Narragansett Sachem Canonicus “desiring the space of a month longer, wherein to issue the treaty, which so provoked the Commander of our forces, that they resolved to have no more treaties with the enemy, but prepare to assault them, with God’s assistance, as soon as the season would permit.”<sup>70</sup> Hubbard also reported the “rest of the winter was spent in fruitless treaties about a peace, both sides being well wearied with the late desperate fight, were willing to refresh themselves the remaining part of the winter with the short slumber of a pretended peace at least with a talk or a dream thereof.”<sup>71</sup> On March 11, the Commissioners of the United Colonies issued a letter to the respective Colonial governments stating:

We are well informed that the enemy hath given it out that they keep some English which they have taken captive in order to their making of peace and for that end our council have it in consideration to commission two or more meet persons...to embrace & improve all ...with assurances that they shall not be remanded by the English so as to be sold for slaves or to lose their lives...the enemy are far the greatest part of them weary of the war, as well as the English, only the youngest and their pride and fear of slavery have propose for a peace...<sup>72</sup>

The return of English captives and the peace process were now inexorably linked. For their part the Connecticut War Council sent a letter dated March 28 to “the Indians in hostility against us” proposing a prisoner exchange at Hadley. They also offered “if the said Indians do desire any treaty with us, and make appear that they have been wronged by any of the English, we shall endeavor to have that wrong rectified and hear any propositions that they shall make unto us; and that if any of the sachem have a desire to treat with us, they shall have liberty to come to us and go away without any molestation.”<sup>73</sup> The letter was carried by a Narragansett man named Towcanchasson who was a trusted advisor to Narragansett Sachem Pessicus and Squaw Sachem Quiapan. Towcanchasson was called upon on several occasions in the winter and spring of 1676 to serve as an intermediary between the English at Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay and the Narragansett, Wampanoag, and Pocumtuck sachems. Evidence suggests there were

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<sup>70</sup> Hubbard, *Narrative*. P. 148.

<sup>71</sup> Hubbard, *Narrative*. P. 145.

<sup>72</sup> Connecticut State Library, *Connecticut Archives, Colonial War, Series I, 1675-1775*. Document 45.

<sup>73</sup> Trumbull, Ed. *Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut*. P. II:425.

several Narragansett, Wampanoag, and River Indian communities in the upper Connecticut valley at this time, including King Phillip, based on Mary Rowlandson's narrative.

No immediate reply was forthcoming from the sachems, perhaps because Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay continued to attack the Narragansett and other tribes in the Connecticut Valley, as well as Nipmuc and Narragansett territory during this period. The silence on the part of the native sachems which so frustrated the English may also have been because of the deep divisions within the coalition whether to pursue peace. English strategy was to: "put the greatest dread upon the enemy...so also the prudently to embrace and improve all opportunities for obtaining a peace, so that the enemy with thorough hopelessness of having a case of submission be made desperate in their designs."<sup>74</sup> Understandably Native leaders were loath to expose their communities to the uncertainties of an English peace. In early April the Narragansett Sachem Canonchet, a highly respected leader among Natives and English alike, was captured by Connecticut Dragoons in early April and executed by the Pequot and Mohegan when he returned to Narragansett Country to retrieve seed corn and raid English settlements for livestock. Canonchet's death was a tremendous blow not only to the Narragansett but the entire coalition. The principal Narragansett Sachem Pessicus (Sucquance) responded to the Connecticut War Council's peace proposal in late April and stated that he would gather the other sachems to present Connecticut's terms and requested that any Narragansett sachems imprisoned by the English to be released.<sup>75</sup> On May 1, 1676, the Connecticut Council sent a message to:

Pessicus, Wequaquat [Pocumtuck], Wanchequit [Norwottuck], Sunggumachoe [Nonotuck] and the rest of the Indian sachems up the river at Suckquackheage [Northfield]...we have received your writing brought by our two messengers and by Pessicus his messenger [presumably Towcanchasson], and in it we find no answer to what we proposed, and therefore once again we have sent these lines to you, to inform you that, as we sayd before, we are men of peace, and if they will deliver unto us the English captives that are with them, either for money or for captives of yours in our hands, to be returned to them, we shall accept of it so far ; and if they will attend a meeting at Hadley within these eight days, if the Sachems will come thither bringing the captives with them as a sign of their real desire of peace, we shall appoint some to meet them there, and to treat them upon terms of peace.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Trumbull, *Colony of Connecticut*. P. II:425.

<sup>75</sup> Trumbull, *Colony of Connecticut*. P. II:425.

<sup>76</sup> Trumbull, *Colony of Connecticut*. P. II:439

It appears that Connecticut was serious about peace negotiations, primarily to secure the release of captives held by coalition forces. Connecticut was negotiating chiefly with Pessicus and sachems from Pocumtuck, Norwottock and other River Indian tribes based at Squakeag, while Massachusetts Bay opened negotiations with the Narragansett, Quabaug, and Nipmuc sachems based at Quabaug. In early May the Connecticut War Council instructed Reverend Russell and the settlers at Hadley not to take any aggressive action as “in any onset should be made upon the enemy whilst the captives are in their hands they will destroy each of them...if they accept a treaty we may send a good guard to attend the messengers that shall be sent to joyne with such...accordingly to be improved to best advantage.”<sup>77</sup> The council offered to exchange Native prisoners for English captives and proposed to meet the sachems at Hadley within eight days (May 9).<sup>78</sup>

The sachems never responded and it appears that there were significant differences within the coalition regarding whether to return the English captives and pursue a peace with the English. Roger L’Estrange reported that “were it not for him [Philip] and one sachem more [Megunneway, an Eastern Abenaki sachem], the Indians would gladly yield to any terms of peace with the English.”<sup>79</sup> These differences were one of the primary causes of the dissolution of the coalition following the Battle of Battle of Great Falls / Wissatinnewag-Peskeompskut:

This treaty about the captives, and the consequences thereof, had no small influences into the abatement of the enemy’s violence and our troubles, and had a tendency to dividing them and break their union, and consequently their strength; for Philip, and some others of the enemy’s chief men, were utterly against treating with the English or surrendering the captives. But some of their principal sachems, that were more inclinable to a reconciliation with the English, thought that their compliance with the English about surrendering the captives (especially being well paid for their redemption) would mollify the Englishmen’s minds in order to make peace. This contest about the treaty, caused them to fall and divide. Philip and most of the Narragansett Indians separated from the inland Indians, and went into their own country, and the inland Indians staid about Watchusett Mountain.<sup>80</sup>

On May 15, 1676 Russell reported to the Connecticut Council that captive Mary Rowlandson had been released (on May 2) and a Mr. Hoar “brought a letter subscribed by Philip:

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<sup>77</sup> CSL, *Colonial War, Series I*. Document 67.

<sup>78</sup> Trumbull, *Colony of Connecticut*. P. II:439

<sup>79</sup> L’Estrange. *A True Account*. P. 262.

<sup>80</sup> Gookin. *Christian Indians in New England*. Pp. 508-509.



The Old queen [Quiapan] & sundry sachems containing a desire of peace or rather an overture for a cessation that they might quietly plant at Menden, Groton, Quaboag etc.”<sup>81</sup> In late May it was reported that the “enemie” was planting at “Quabaug & at Nipsachook, nigh Coweesit: that Philip’s men & the Narraganset are generally come into these above mentioned places, only Pessicus, one of the chief of the Narragansett sachems did abide up at Pocumtuck with some few of his men.”<sup>82</sup> These letters suggest that with the exception of Pessicus and probably the River Indians, the Pokanoket, Nipmuc, and many of the Narragansett left Peskeompskut shortly after the Great Falls battle and began to return to their homelands.

Evidence indicates a growing rift within the coalition with each tribe considering different courses of action; whether to continue to fight or to sue for peace and return to their homelands to plant. English sources place the Narragansett Sachem Pessicus at Pocumtuck in late May, and Metacom and Quiapan at Watchusett in early May. It does not appear that Metacom and Quiapan were at the Battle of Great Falls / Peskeompskut, although some of their soldiers may have been.

### *Native Strategy and Tactics*

The broader strategic goals of the Native coalition are difficult to discern as Native voices rarely come through in the English narratives or battle accounts. Many historians have questioned King Philip’s leadership role in the war as there is no evidence that he was ever present on a battlefield after he left Pokanoket territory. However, there is considerable circumstantial evidence that he was a central figure in planning and implementing the broader strategic goals of the Coalition during the war and in acquiring much needed supplies and ammunition for the Coalition. The characterization of Metacom as a war leader, grand strategist, and leader of the “rebellion” are overly simplistic and does not convey his important role and broader influence in the conflict. It does appear that Metacom initiated the “insurgency” and was planning for it for years, but after the war started he does not appear to have been a field or military commander.<sup>83</sup> George Memicho was a Praying Indian captured by the Quabaug on August 2, 1675 when they attacked a party of twenty-two English and three Indian guides led by Captains Wheeler and Hutchinson as they were on their way to meet with the Quabaug sachems

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<sup>81</sup> CSL, *Colonial War, Series I*. Document 71.

<sup>82</sup> CSL, *Colonial War, Series I*. Document 80a.

<sup>83</sup> Metacom was not present at any of the battles following the First Battle of Nipsachuck on August 1-2, 1675.

to discuss peace. During the engagement, Captain Wheeler and eight others were killed and five others wounded. Memicho was present when Philip arrived at Quabaug following the First Battle of Nipsachuck on August 2nd. He related that:

Upon Friday the 5<sup>th</sup> [6<sup>th</sup>] of this instant (August) Philip and his company came to us at this swamp, six miles from the swamp where they killed our men. Philip brought with him about forty men, but women and children many more, the number I cannot tell. Philip's men were about 30 of them armed with guns, the rest had bows and arrows. He observed there were about ten of Philip's men wounded. Philip was conducted to the swamp by two Indians, one of them Caleb of Tatumasket, beyond Mendon. The Indians told Philip at his first coming what they had done to the English at Quabaug; then he presented and gave to three sagamores, viz. John, alias Apequinash, Quanansit, and Mawtamps, to each of them about a peck of unstrung wampum, which they accepted. Philip, as I understood, told Quabaug and Nipmuck Indians, that when he first came towards the Nipmuc country and left his own, he had in his company about 250 men, besides women and children, including the Squaw Sachem [Weetamoo] and her company, but now they had left him, and some of them were killed, and he was reduced to 40 men, besides women and children.<sup>84</sup>

This brief account provides some important information on the number of soldiers under Metacom and their armaments. When Metacom left Pokanoket territory he had 250 Pokanoket and Pocasset fighting men. Metacom's men suffered heavy casualties following attacks by the Mohegan at Smithfield, Rhode Island in late July and by Plymouth Colony forces at the First Battle of Nipsachuck on August 2, 1675. The high casualties were not necessarily the result of superior numbers of the enemy or better armaments, but as commonly noted throughout the war Native men were willing to take heavy casualties in delaying actions to buy time for women and children to escape. After the Nipsachuck battle Weetamoo, Squaw Sachem of the Pocasset, left Metacom at Nipsachuck and sought safety with the Narragansett. She eventually rejoined Philip and was with him in Nipmuc country and in the middle Connecticut Valley during the winter and spring of 1675/76.

Memicho states that 30 of the 40 Philip's men were armed with guns and ten with bows. It would be dangerous to assume that the percentage of firearms (75 percent) counted among the Pokanoket in early August 1675 carried through to all the Native combatants during King Philip's War. As the war continued, and Native victories mounted, Native soldiers could better munition themselves by capturing English armaments or purchasing arms and powder from

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<sup>84</sup> Temple. *History of North Brookfield, Massachusetts*. Pp. 100-101.

Native communities at Paquiag on the west side of the Hudson River. It is also noteworthy that Memicho mentioned bows which are rarely mentioned in English narratives. During the Siege of Brookfield (August 2-5) Captain Wheeler's narrative makes frequent reference to bows but always in the context of shooting fire arrows at the garrison house. When the siege was lifted on August 5, 1675 the English found a "great store of arrows they had also prepared to shoot fire upon the house that night" indicating that they were intended for use as incendiary devices.<sup>85</sup> Englishman Joshua Tift fought with the Narragansett at the Great Swamp Fight and was captured a few weeks later and executed. At his trial he said that there were "about 800 fighting men' in the fort and 400 guns."<sup>86</sup>

The number of Pokanoket combatants identified in English sources rarely exceeds 100, suggesting that Metacom's influence and contribution during the war was not in the numbers of men he could bring to battle, but in his contributions as a strategic planner, diplomat, and logistician. In this context Metacom was active in pursuing and maintaining alliances within the coalition and with obtaining material support (arms, ammunition, and other resources) from Native groups outside of the coalition (e.g., Mohawk, Paquiag [Mahican], "French Indians") as well as Europeans (e.g., French, Dutch). Joshua Tift related at his trial "The Nahigonsiks [Narragansett] powder is (generally) gone and spent but Philip hath sent them word that he will furnish them enough from the French...and that the French have sent Philip a present viz a brass gun and bandoleers Suitable."<sup>87</sup>

There are several examples of Metacom offering wampum to the Quaboag, Nashaway and Nipmuc sachems presumably to solidify or confirm their allegiance to him and the broadening coalition. When Metacom arrived at Quabaug on August 5, 1675:

The Indians told Philip at his first coming what they had done to the English at Quabaug [Brookfield]; then he presented and gave to three sagamores, viz. John, alias Apequinash, Quanansit, and Mawtamps, to each of them about a peck of unstrung wampum, which they accepted.<sup>88</sup>

In late August it was reported that:

King Philip now beginning to want money (having a coat made of all of Wampameag, (i.e., Indian Money) cuts his coat into pieces, and distributes it

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<sup>85</sup> Temple. *History of North Brookfield, Massachusetts*. P.86.

<sup>86</sup> LaFantasie. *The Correspondence of Roger Williams*. P. II:712.

<sup>87</sup> LaFantasie. *The Correspondence of Roger Williams*. P. II:712.

<sup>88</sup> Temple. *History of North Brookfield, Massachusetts*. P. 100.

plentifully among the Nipmoog sachems and others, as well to the eastward and southward, and all round about.<sup>89</sup>

In early January Metacom went to Albany (probably Schaghticoke) with “4 or 500 hundred North Indians [River Indians and Abeniki? and probably some Narragansett], fighting men” ostensibly to enlist the aid of the Mohawk against the English and perhaps to acquire powder and shot.<sup>90</sup> This diplomatic and strategic overture failed and the Mohawk attacked Metacom’s company killing a number of his men. Even while in ‘Albany’ Metacom seemed to have maintained control over matters of policy and strategy. In mid-January Praying Indians James Quannapohit and Job Kattenanit were sent by Massachusetts authorities to Quaboag to gain intelligence on the “state of the enemy [principally the Narragansett]. On his return Quannapohit reported that the Quabaug sachem Mattaump told him “that he should accompany him [Mattaump] to visit Philip, and to acquaint and inform him of affairs at Boston, and of the breach between the English and Narragansets.”<sup>91</sup> Quannapohit also reported on the broader strategic goals of the coalition:

...and that Philip and his soldiers not far from Albany. The Nipmuc and divers others at Menumese [Quaboag] That they intended a general Rondezvous in the spring of the year, and then they would prosecute the war vigorously against the English, burn and destroy the towns. They heard of the fight between the English and the Narragansets, and rejoiced much at that breach, hoping now to be strong enough to deal with the English, when the Narragansets were joined.<sup>92</sup>

This Indian [Monoco or One Eyed John Nashaway sachem] told me, they would fall on Lancaster, Groton, Marlborough, Sudbury, and Medfield; and that the first thing they would do is cut down Lancaster Bridge, so to hinder their flight, and assistance coming to them; and that they intended to fall upon them in about twenty days time from last Wednesday.<sup>93</sup>

Quannapohit indicated that Philip was considered the leader of the coalition by the other tribes, and that while he was at Quabaug “there were messengers sent from the Narraganset to the Nipmucs that quartered about Menumesse, declaring their desire to join with them and Philip.”<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Roger L’Estrange. *The Present State of New England with Respect to the Indian War* (London, 1675). P. 13.

<sup>90</sup> Trumbull. *Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut*. P. II:397.

<sup>91</sup> Gookin. *Christian Indians in New England*. P. 488.

<sup>92</sup> Gookin. *Christian Indians in New England*. P. 488.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* P. 488-489.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* P. 488.



The military arm of the coalition had some very capable leaders such as Matoonas [Nipmuck sachem], Sagamore Sam [Upchattuck/Shoshanim/Uskattuhgun, Nashaway sachem], Canonchet [Narragansett sachem], Quiapan [Narragansett sachem], Mattaump [Quabaug sachem] and Tuspaquin or the Black Sachem [Assawamsets/Nemasket sachem]. These men collectively and individually planned and implemented some very sophisticated attacks on English settlements, fortifications during the war including Hadley, Hatfield, Deerfield, Sudbury, Mendon, Marlborough, and Providence employing a variety of siege and open field tactics and stratagems. The Native coalition forces under their command were also very successful against relatively large numbers of English troops at the battles of Bloody Brook, Pierces Fight, and Captain Beers Fight.

With few exceptions no one Native war leader can be identified as having planned an attack or led coalition forces in the field. It appears that in every documented attack the Native force was comprised of men from several different tribes, and the leader of the attack was not necessarily from the tribal territory where the attack took place. In the Hadley attack on June 21, 1676 the Quabaug sachem Mattaump led a diverse coalition force that included Narragansetts, Pocumtuck and Wampanoag.<sup>95</sup> On the attack on Providence on March 29 (and presumably on Captain Pierce's men a few days before) Roger Williams reported the enemy force of 1,500 was composed of "Nahigonsets, and Cowwesets, and Wampanoags, and Neepmucks, and Quntocoogs [Connecticut Valley Indians]."<sup>96</sup> Roger Williams also provided information on the command structure within the coalition. Although the attack on Providence involved an unusually large number of Native men, the basic command structure was probably similar for smaller attacks commensurate with the number of men involved in the attack "I [Roger Williams] asked who commanded here: They said many captains and inferior sachems, and councilors."<sup>97</sup> Even though the attack was in Narragansett/Cowweset territory Williams identified the leader of the attack as "A Qunniticutt [Connecticut Valley] sachem A stout lustie brave fellow, and I think the chief in command of them."<sup>98</sup>

There is no doubt that when the Narragansetts entered the conflict the entire complexion of the war changed. Joshua Tift, an Englishman who fought with the Narragansett at the Great

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<sup>95</sup> Mather. *Troubles*. Pp. 155-156.

<sup>96</sup> LaFantasie. *Correspondence of Roger Williams*. P. II:722.

<sup>97</sup> LaFantasie. *Correspondence of Roger Williams*. P. II:722..

<sup>98</sup> LaFantasie. *Correspondence of Roger Williams*. P. II:722.

Swamp Fight on December 19, 1675 had intimate knowledge of the number of fighting men at the Great Swamp Fight and the number that survived. At his trial for treason Tift stated at “their fort where was about 800 fighting men with “97 slaine and 48 wounded.”<sup>99</sup> James Quannapohit, the Natick Indian sent by Massachusetts Bay to gather intelligence on the whereabouts and intentions of the Narragansett in mid-January 1676, soon after the Great Swamp Fight, reported “there is seven hundred fighting men, well-armed left of the Narragansett’s.”<sup>100</sup> The spring offensive was likely planned before the Narragansett entered the war but the number of attacks documented between February and April of 1676 and the number of men involved in the attacks indicates the Narragansett presence was a crucial factor in the success of the broader offensive strategy.

#### *Brief History of the Battle of Great Falls / Wissatinnewag-Peskeompskut*

In April of 1676, the northernmost English settlements along the upper Connecticut River were the towns of Northampton, Hadley, and Hatfield. The English settlements at Deerfield and Northfield were destroyed and abandoned in September of 1675. The English also suffered significant defeats and heavy losses through the month of September from the ambush of Captain Beers’ Company and at the Battle of Bloody Brook. The Coalition also conducted several attacks on the English settlements at Springfield, Hatfield, Hadley, and Northampton in the fall of 1675.

The attacks were part of a broader Coalition strategy to force the English out of the middle Connecticut valley, and it was succeeding. The winter of 1675/76 was relatively quiet in the middle valley with virtually no attacks recorded as the Native coalition shifted their attention to the eastern and southern theaters (Figures 46-49). A false sense of security developed within the English settlements with the promise of peace negotiations and the cessation of Coalition attacks during the winter. That perspective changed when an estimated 500 Narragansett, Pocumtuck, Wampanoag, and Nipmuck soldiers attacked Northampton on March 14, 1676. The attack brought an immediate response by the Reverend John Russel of Hadley who wrote the Connecticut War Council on March 16, two days after the attack:

Although the Lord hath granted us an interval of quiet this winter yet since the coming on of y<sup>e</sup> Spring the war here is renewed with more strength and violence here than in any other part while we remaine for as we had intelligence by the Captain who is returned (commonly called “Speckled Tom”), Philip intended with

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<sup>99</sup> LaFantasie. *Correspondence of Roger Williams*. P. II:714.

<sup>100</sup> Gookin. *Christian Indians in New England*. P. 488.

his whole power to come upon these towns and taking them to make his planting place a fort this year at Deerfield so on y<sup>e</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> instant the enemy to the number of 1,000 as judged made a sudden and violent iruption upon Northhampton...Here also above Deerfield is the great place of their fishing which must be expected to afford them their provisions for the yere, so that the swarm of them being here and like to continue here we must look to feele their utmost rage except the Lord be pleased to break their power.<sup>101</sup>

By the early spring of 1676 the Great Falls and surrounding area had become a gathering place for many tribes and bands in the Coalition where they could rest, resupply and participate in ceremonies and ritual. The English in the valley recognized the threat from the Native tribes gathering near the falls and well understood the broader Native strategy to force the English from the valley so they could resettle it. With the planting season just weeks away it was imperative for both sides they win command of the valley. Whoever won the upcoming struggle would control one of “one of the best granaries” in the colony and seriously disrupt the other’s ability to support their war effort.<sup>102</sup> What emerged was a debate between the English at Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay, and the leaders of the remaining English settlements in the middle Connecticut valley on the best strategy to deal with the Native threat. Massachusetts advocated abandoning the remaining English settlements and aggregate their population and troops at Hadley. In early April the Massachusetts Council had:

...come to a conclusion to draw in the out garrisons of the town...and to contract their fortifications...The Bay Council had advised that Westfield should be abandoned, and its inhabitants remove to Springfield.<sup>103</sup>

Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay had very differing opinions on the best strategy to gain and maintain control of the valley given the increasing Native presence in the area and the expectation of renewed attacks. Connecticut advocated for a strategy of prisoner exchange tied to peace negotiations while focusing on field operations in lieu of augmenting garrison troops. In early April, Towcanchasson, a Narragansett diplomat and councilor for Narragansett Sachem Pessicus and Squaw Sachem Quiapan (Squaw Sachem), carried a letter dated March 31 from the Connecticut War Council to the Indian sachems in the upper Connecticut River Valley. The letter stated that:

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<sup>101</sup> Bodge. *King Philip’s War*, P. 236.

<sup>102</sup> CSL. CT Archives, Colonial Wars, Series I. Doc. 66.

<sup>103</sup> Trumbull. *Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut*. P. II:432.

...we haue thought meet to declare to the said Indians that we are willing to tender them an exchange of captives, for such English as they have in their hands; and that upon the return of o" to Hadley, where we will meet them, theirs shall be set at liberty to come to them. We also tender that if the said Indians doe desire any treaty with us, and can make appeare that they haue been wronged by any of the English, we shall endeavour to haue that wrong rectified, and heare any propositions that they haue to make unto us.<sup>104</sup>

The Connecticut War Council expressed their concern to the Massachusetts Council in late April regarding Massachusetts' strategy to abandon most of the English settlements in the valley and consolidate the populations into one town and pointed out the broader strategic implications of such a move. The council wrote that:

We received a letter from our friends of Hadley and those townes intimating an advice given to them to gather into one towne for more safety, & so desert the rest unto w<sup>ch</sup> we returned our apprehensions negative & gave our reasons viz that herby our enemy will be animated immediately to destroy the deserted places and possess themselves of the land for rendezvous and to plant great numbers upon such desirable, rich & ready accommodations...and when the enemy is so strengthened and accommodated for reception of a great confluence of Indians to them then it may be very difficult to bring them off & and when all our store is spent; for we hear they have great ambition to possess those parts which would suffice thousands of them: If so one of the best granaries in your colony will be lost.<sup>105</sup>

The English settlers in the valley refused to abandon their farms and settlements and argued for a more aggressive course of action against the Native communities gathering at Great Falls in spite of the ongoing peace negotiations which to date had born no fruit. In late April English settlers in the upper valley were advocating for an immediate an attack on the Natives at the Great Falls and laid out a strategy and plan of attack. On April 29, Reverend John Russell, Captain William Turner, and others wrote to the General Court of Massachusetts and argued:

The enemy is now come so near us that we count we might go forth in the evening, and come upon them in the darkness of the same night. ...now is the time to distress the enemy; and that could we drive them from their fishing and keep out though but lesser parties against them famine would subdue them.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Trumbull. *Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut*. P. II:425.

<sup>105</sup> CSL. CT Archives, Colonial Wars, Series I. 66.

<sup>106</sup> Ellis and Morris. *King Philip's War*. P. 225.

In a letter to the Connecticut War Council on April 29, Russell, Turner, and others laid out a case to Attack Great Falls:

Such things will weaken the enemies strength and spirits: and rational it is to think y<sup>t</sup> might be undertaken against them here in conjunction with what is in other parts it might at such a time sinke their harts and brake their rage and power; and make them more real for peace...The spirit of man with us are more than ever heightened with desire and earnestness to be going forth against the enemy.<sup>107</sup>

The Connecticut War Council replied on May 1 and cautioned patience and restraint while peace negotiations continued:

We having so far proceeded in a treaty with them we cannot judge it rational whilst this treaty is in hand to use hostility against this but we judge it expedient to be silent for the present as to action, we have confirmed them [sachems] to five days to bring an answer to Hadley that they will meet with us...we feare that any onset should be made upon our enemie whilst the captives are in their hands they will destroy each of them as are with them.<sup>108</sup>

The events of May 13, 1676 made the argument moot and provided the final justification for the valley settlements to conduct an immediate attack on the Native communities at Great Falls. Native soldiers from the Great Falls area raided Hatfield meadows and captured seventy cattle and horses which they drove north to Deerfield Meadows.<sup>109</sup> This incident enraged the English settlers at Hadley and the other river towns, who had been urging colonial officials to attack the upriver Native settlements for weeks and were concerned that the tribes would be able to gather enough dried fish and eventually corn to continue the war through the year. Revenge may also have been a factor. The deaths of more than 100 English soldiers and settlers in the upper valley at the hands of the Indian enemy in the previous six months certainly contributed to a growing desire on the part of the settlers to attack the Native people gathered at Wissatinnewag-Peskeompskut. There were probably several soldiers in Turner's command from outside the valley who may also have sought vengeance. For example, Ephraim Roper, a private in Turner's company at the Battle of Great Falls, was a resident of Lancaster when coalition

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<sup>107</sup> CSL. CT Archives, Colonial Wars, Series I. 67a.

<sup>108</sup> CSL. CT Archives, Colonial Wars, Series I. 67b.

<sup>109</sup> For information regarding the cattle raid see: L'Estrange. *A True Account*. P. 3; Hubbard. *A Narrative*. P. 85; CSL, Connecticut Archives, Colonial War, Series 1.Doc. 71.



forces attacked on February 10 and killed his wife.<sup>110</sup> Several others in Turner's Company were survivors of both the ambush on Beer's Company and the Battle at Bloody Brook.<sup>111</sup>

On May 15, two days after the cattle raid, Reverend John Russell of Hadley and others, including Captain William Turner, wrote to the Connecticut War Council to press Connecticut to join the upper river towns in an attack against the Natives gathered at the falls. Russell informed the War Council that the upper river towns were going to take immediate action against the Native encampments at Peskeompskut whether Connecticut was willing to assist or not, and regardless of any ongoing peace negotiations:

We have yet no return from the Indians: and are now past expecting of anything further... They sit by us secure without watch, busy at their harvest work storing themselves with food for a year to fight against us and we let them alone to take the full advantage... This being the state of things we think the Lord calls us to make some try and what may be done against them suddenly without further delays and therefore the concurring resolution of men here seems to be to goe out against them tomorrow night so as to be with them the Lord assisting before break of day.<sup>112</sup>

In the letter Russell also mentioned "about sunrise came into Hatfield one Thomas Reedy [Reed], a soldier who was taken captive [at Hadley] when Deacon Goodman was slain [April 1]."<sup>113</sup> Thomas Reed was taken captive by Native men who at the time were part of a large group based near present-day Hinsdale, New Hampshire. Mary Rowlandson was with this group as well and mentioned "About this time [April 3] they came yelping from Hadley, where they killed three Englishmen, and brought one captive, viz. Thomas Reede."<sup>114</sup> Rowlandson related that Reed's captors "all gathered around the poor man, asking him many questions."<sup>115</sup> As a soldier on garrison duty at Captain Turner's headquarters at Hadley he likely would have had operational knowledge of troop strength in the various settlements, and he would certainly have known that Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay troops had pulled out of the upper valley leaving the settlements lightly defended and the garrison troops incapable of any offensive operations.

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<sup>110</sup> Ellis and Morris. *King Philip's War*. P. 172.

<sup>111</sup> Wilson. The Probable Composition of Captain William Turner's Forces: February 20 – May 19, 1676. Pp 10-11.

<sup>112</sup> CSL, Connecticut Archives, Colonial War, Series 1.Doc. 71.

<sup>113</sup> CSL, Connecticut Archives, Colonial War, Series 1.Doc. 71.

<sup>114</sup> Mary Rowlandson, *A Narrative of the Captivity, Sufferings, and Removes, of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, who was taken prisoner by the Indians; with several others, and treated in the most barbarous and cruel Manner by those vile Savages: with many other remarkable Events during her Travels* (Boston, MA: Thomas and John Fleet, 1791). P. 21.

<sup>115</sup> Rowlandson. *Narrative of the Captivity*. P. 21.

Ironically, the fact that the Native communities at Great Falls felt secure “and not fearing any assault from our soldiers” may have been a direct result of the information they received from Reed.<sup>116</sup> Sometime after his interrogation Reed was taken to the Great Falls area. During the time he spent there he seems to have passed back and forth between the two villages on either side of the Great Falls as he was able to provide an estimate of the soldiers he saw there. After remaining there for several weeks, Reed escaped and made his way back to Hadley on May 15.

Reed provided information to Turner on the whereabouts and organization of the Native communities on the north and south banks of the Connecticut at Wissatinnewag-Peskeompskut, including their activities and the number of fighting men. He also reported that the Natives felt secure and had not posted any guards. Turner did not entirely trust Reed’s estimates and mentioned “Altho this man speakes of their numbers as he judath yet: Thay may be many more for we perceive their number varies and thay are going and coming so that there is no trust to his guess.”<sup>117</sup> Armed with the information provided by Reed, the upper river town militia committees gathered garrison soldiers under Turner’s command and volunteers from the towns of Northampton, Hadley, Hatfield, Springfield and Westfield. The combined force prepared for an immediate attack on the Native encampments at Peskeompskut.

English forces began to assemble from the various towns at Hatfield prepared to march to Great Falls before the Connecticut Council even received the March 15 dated letter from Russel and Captain Turner. Turners force of 150 men prepared to march to Great Falls on the evening of May 18. Turner’s largely inexperienced force, drawn from townspeople and garrison troops, counted on the element of surprise and presumably greater numbers of soldiers. The latter consideration was based on Reeds assessment that there were only 60-70 fighting men between the two Native communities at Great Falls. Benjamin Wait of Hatfield and Experience Hinsdale of Hadley were selected to serve as guides presumably because of their knowledge of the region.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Hubbard. *A Narrative*. P. 204.

<sup>117</sup> CSL, Connecticut Archives, Colonial War, Series 1.Doc. 71.

<sup>118</sup> Sylvester Judd, *History of Hadley* (Springfield, MA: H.R. Hunting & Company, 1905). P. 171; Bodge. *King Philip’s War*. P. 245.

### *Disposition of Native Forces – Battle of Great Falls/Peskeompskut*

By early March Native tribes from throughout southern New England began to gather along the Connecticut River near the Great Falls and eight miles further upriver at Squakeag (Northfield). Mary Rowlandson was at Squakeag in early March and mentioned that King Philip and the Pocasset Squaw Sachem Wetamoo were there with hundreds, if not thousands of men, women, and children.<sup>119</sup> The communities further north probably began to gather around the Great Falls when the anadromous fish began to run in late March/early April. Around the time of the battle English sources provide descriptions of where the villages were located. To a large extent the distribution of Native communities in early March mirrored their locations on the eve of the Battle of Great Falls/Peskeompskut. The Nipmuck, Nashaway, and Quabaug continued to occupy their homelands, and with the help of the Narragansett and Wampanoag conducted several major attacks in central Massachusetts during the spring. Wampanoag, Quabaug, and Narragansett men may have returned to the Great Falls area around the time of the battle as many participated in the Battle of Great Falls. In late March and early April, a large force of 1,000-1,500 Narragansett, Nipmuck, Wampanoag and Connecticut valley Indians conducted several attacks in Rhode Island and Plymouth Colonies. It is not certain, but the River Indians and Narragansett were probably based in the Turner's Falls area and/or perhaps further north near Squakeag and many of these men had likely returned to the Connecticut Valley around the time of the Battle of Great Falls.

On May 1 the Connecticut War Council addressed a letter to Pessicus (Narragansett), Wequaquat (Pocumtuck), Wanchequit (Norwottuck), Sunggumacho (Nonotuck) “and the rest of the Indians sachems up the river at Suckquackheage [Squakeag] proposing peace talks.”<sup>120</sup> As the letter is dated just two weeks before the battle it is likely these sachems (and others) were still residing in the Squakeag area at the time of the battle (Pessicus was still there a few weeks after the battle). It's always been a little unclear if the communities at Squakeag contributed any men to the battle given the distance (8 miles). A half Narragansett / Mohegan man named Menowniett was captured in Rhode Island in August of 1676 and was Court Martialed and executed. Menowniett was at the Battle of Great Falls and during his interrogation testified that “In y<sup>e</sup> Fall

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<sup>119</sup> Rowlandson. *Narrative of the Captivity*. Pp. 13-16.

<sup>120</sup> Trumbull. *Colonial Records of the Colony of Connecticut*. P. II:439.

fight were slayne 40 Norwottog, Quabaog 10 Narragansetts and [illegible]” illustrating the diversity of the Native combatants who were engaged in the battle.<sup>121</sup>

Jonathan Wells identified five villages in addition to Peskeompskut in the immediate vicinity of Great Falls that contributed men to the battle. In his narrative:

capt: Wells Says y<sup>t</sup> the difficulties y<sup>y</sup> were exposed to in y<sup>r</sup> retreat was probably owing to y<sup>e</sup> long stay y<sup>y</sup> made in ye place of y<sup>e</sup> victory S<sup>d</sup> y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> [that this] gave time to y<sup>e</sup> indians y<sup>t</sup> were at Deerfd, cheapside & y<sup>e</sup> Island up above & on y<sup>e</sup> east side of y<sup>e</sup> River to get together & wn y<sup>y</sup> did make head agst or men<sup>122</sup>

The village of Peskeompskut was located at Riverside and a second village was located directly across the river next to the falls. Cheapside was located just north of the confluence of the Deerfield and Green Rivers on the west bank of the Deerfield River, and the village “upon the island” was located either at Smead or Rawson Island. The village on the island appears to have been an important logistical, supply, and defensive location. A month after the battle, on June 21, 1676, a group of Connecticut soldiers from Hatfield or Hadley went upriver to the falls to determine if any Natives were still in the area. The area was deserted but on one of the islands:

...they found an hundred *Wigwams*, and some English plundered goods, which they took, and burnt the *Wigwams*. Also they marched up to a Fort which the Indians had built there, and destroyed it. Digging here and there they found several Indian Barns, where was an abundance of Fish, which they took and spoiled, as also thirty of their Canoos.”<sup>123</sup>

There may have been a second fort (perhaps at Cheapside) as a few days after the battle Russell mentions “their fort close by Deerfield River.”<sup>124</sup> It is not clear precisely where the village “up y<sup>e</sup> river further” was located. The reference seems to indicate it was on the west bank of the Connecticut River not too far north from Peskeompskut (Riverside). The precise location of the Deerfield community is not known but as Turner’s men did not encounter it as they passed through Deerfield Meadows it may have been located on high ground further to the east. It is difficult to estimate how many Native men, women, and children were in the Peskeompskut village and the one on the opposite bank. Based on casualties reported during the battle at least

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<sup>121</sup> Trumbull. *Colonial Records of the Colony of Connecticut*. P.II: 471.

<sup>122</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” Pp. 13, 15.

<sup>123</sup> Mather. *Brief History*. P. 57.

<sup>124</sup> CSL. Colonial Wars Series I, Doc. 74.

200 people were at Peskeompskut. Soon after his escape, Reed reported that Native communities were “planting at Deerfield and have been so these three or four days or more.”<sup>125</sup> Reed also mentioned that the Natives around the Great Falls felt secure because most of the English army had withdrawn from the valley leaving only a few garrison troops. He also reported that two days earlier the Natives raided Hatfield upper meadows and drove away 80 horses and cattle and brought them to Deerfield meadow where they were fenced in.

Reed probably passed back and forth between the two villages at the falls several times and was familiar with the layout of both villages. He was also brought to Deerfield meadows (perhaps to assist in planting) several times as he observed the Natives planting corn over a few days, and he also saw where the animals were penned. Interestingly he does not seem to have been aware of the other five, which turned out to be an unfortunate lapse in intelligence when Turner planned the attack. It was likely Reed’s information that led to the decision to attack Peskeompskut. It is not entirely clear why the village that was located on the opposite (south) bank from Peskeompskut was not targeted as logistically it would seem to be a safer and shorter route. Reed must have had information that steered Turner away from that option.

The number of coalition fighting men in the six villages probably exceeded several hundred, far more than the 60 to 70 soldiers estimated by Reed. By this time of the war, these men were battle hardened, well-armed, and led by experienced Sachems, Captains, and Councilors. Many of the men had probably participated in many attacks on English settlements and English forces. During Menowniett’s interrogation he not only confessed that he fought in the Battle of Great Falls, but that he participated in a number of engagements including the attacks on the English settlements at Deerfield, Hadley (where he was wounded in the leg), and Northampton. He also said he participated in several attacks on Connecticut colonists. His experiences were probably not unique among coalition forces as he also named eleven other Native men (Munch, Cohas [Narragansett], Tosocum, Cawcohehoage, Wewawoas, Johnnot, Mashinott, Wequash [Squakeag or Sakonnet?], Whowassamoh [?], Pawwawwoise [Agawam], Mawcahat [Agawam], Sanchamoise [Abenaki?], and Wesoncketiachen [Norwottuck] who made up raiding parties of four, seven, or nine men to attack Connecticut settlers at Middletown, Wethersfield, and Podunk (South Windsor), and in the burning of Simsbury.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> CSL. Colonial Wars Series I, Doc. 74.

<sup>126</sup> Trumbull. *Records of the Colony of Connecticut*. P.II:472.



### *English Forces – Battle of Great Falls/Peskeompskut*

The number of men reported to have been under Turner's command varies. Hubbard mentioned 150, Mather 160, and Stephen Williams stated "y<sup>e</sup> standing forces with about 60 and about 60 volunteers."<sup>127</sup> For the purposes of this narrative the figure of 150 is used. Turner's "standing forces" were a mix of volunteers and settlers most with relatively little combat experience. Turner was placed under the command of Major Savage when he left Boston on February 21, 1676 and was sent to relieve the Town of Medfield that had been attacked that morning. As his company passed through Dedham they were attacked and one man was seriously wounded. Turner's company accompanied Savage as the army pursued retreating Coalition forces through Brookfield, Wenimesset, and Paquayag (Athol) until they reached the Banquaug (Millers) River around March 3-5. Hundreds of Natives crossed the river on rafts trying to escape from the English and built wigwams on the north side of the river. For some inexplicable reason Savage elected not to cross the river and pursue the Natives on the other side. Mary Rowlandson, captured at Lancaster on February 10 lamented "On that very day came the English army after them to this river, and saw the smoke of their wigwams [which the Natives set on fire as they retreated], and yet this river put a stop to them. God did not give them courage or activity to go after us."<sup>128</sup> Nonetheless Turner and his men may have seen some action during the pursuit as Rowlandson also reported:

The occasion (as I thought) of their moving at this time was the English army [under Major Savage], it being near and following them. For they went as if they had gone with their lives, for some considerable way, and then they made a stop, and chose some of their stoutest men, and sent them back to hold the English army in play whilst the rest escaped.<sup>129</sup>

Turner and his men also saw action on March 14 when over 500 Nipmuck, Narragansett, Quabaug, Wampanoag, and Connecticut Valley Indians attacked the garrison and settlement at Northampton. Unknown to coalition forces the garrison had been reinforced the day before by Connecticut troops and the Natives suffered heavy casualties. The only two military casualties

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<sup>127</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P. 9.

<sup>128</sup> Rowlandson. *Narrative*, P. 8.

<sup>129</sup> Rowlandson. *Narrative*, P. 8.

reported were in Turner's company perhaps indicating that he and his men were in the thick of the battle.

Turner's Company was disadvantaged from the start in terms of veteran soldiers, necessary supplies, and a developed battle plan. Another factor may have been the overall health of both the soldiers in the company, and their commander, Captain Turner. On May 15, 1676 Reverend John Russel of Hadley wrote to the Connecticut War Council and reported a "general visitation by sickness which you wrote of hath passed unto us also." Whatever the sickness was it seriously impacted Turner's ability to command. As noted by Hubbard, Turner's Company:

...who in their retreat were a little disordered for want of the help of the eldest captain that was so enfeebled by sickness before he set out that he was no way able for want of bodily strength (not any way defective for want of skill or courage) to assist or direct in making the retreat...the loss that befell our men in the retreat was occasioned principally by the bodily weakness of Captain Turner, unable to manage his charge any longer."<sup>130</sup>

Turner's failure of command was also attested to by Jonathan Wells who states that when he tried to persuade Turner to "turn and take care of y<sup>e</sup> men in the rear" during the retreat, Turner responded "better lose some than lose all."<sup>131</sup>

After Turner left Boston in early 1676 his company was reorganized several times over the next few months giving Turner and his officers and non-commissioned officers little opportunity to get to know their men or their capabilities. John Wilson estimates that only 20 of the new transfers were veterans who had served in two or more campaigns.<sup>132</sup> Wilson also estimates that only 17 percent of the soldiers whom Captain Turner had commanded in the defense of Northampton on March 14 continued to serve with him at the Hadley garrison and available for the expedition to Great Falls. The remaining 83 percent of his command were soldiers he had never served with and barely knew. Turner's newly organized command also suffered from a lack of experienced officers and non-commissioned officers and many of the Corporals and Sergeants had only recently been promoted from the rank of private.<sup>133</sup> However, despite Lieutenant Holyoke's lack of combat experience he is later credited with getting the company reorganized during the retreat and saving most of the remaining men. Hubbard noted

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<sup>130</sup> Hubbard. *Narrative*, Pp. 206-207.

<sup>131</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P. 24.

<sup>132</sup> John **Wilson**. "The Probable Composition of Captain William Turner's Forces: February 20 – May 19, 1676" (Unpublished Manuscript, 2016). P. 10.

<sup>133</sup> Wilson. *The Probable Composition of Captain William Turner's Forces: February 20 – May 19, 1676*. Pp 10-11.

that “if Captain [Lieutenant] Holyoke had not played the man at a more than ordinary rate, sometimes in the front, sometimes in the flank and rear, at a fatal business to the assailants...and so carried off the soldiers without any further loss.”<sup>134</sup>

Isaiah Toy (or Toye/Tay) was one of the original privates in Turner’s company who quickly rose through the company ranks to Sargent, and just before the Battle of Great Falls Turner promoted him to Ensign making him second in command in the company and third in command overall behind Lieutenant Holyoke. Although Toy does not appear to have had much combat experience John Wilson believes he may have been promoted as result of exceptional ability and/or some act of bravery during the defense of Northampton. Most of the remaining men in Turner’s company, particularly the colonists drawn from the river towns, had little or no combat experience which in addition to failed leadership on Turner’s part was likely a major factor that contributed to the panic that spread throughout the company during the Native counterattacks following the English attack on Peskeompskut.

Another challenge facing Turner in addition to few experienced soldiers may have been a lack of adequate supplies, particularly ammunition. Turner had hoped for material support in the form of men, powder and shot from Connecticut but no reinforcements or supplies arrived in time and Turner’s company may have gone into battle short on ammunition. William Hubbard stated that if the attack had “been done with a little deliberation, waiting for the coming of supplies, expected from Hartford, [it] might have proved a fatal business to all the said Indians.”<sup>135</sup> Hubbard also states that the lack of ammunition contributed to the disorganized retreat “yet some say they wanted powder, which forced them to retire, as fast as they could, by Captain Turners order.”<sup>136</sup>

The criticism by Hubbard regarding the lack of planning was certainly legitimate. The plan of attack was probably developed in just a few days either following the raid on the cattle and horses in Hatfield meadow on May 13, or after the arrival of Thomas Reed at Hatfield on the morning of May 15. In that short period (3-5 days) Turner had to gather men, horses, equipment, supplies, and ammunition, and plan the attack. A breakdown in overall intelligence gathering and a failure to properly act on what little information Turner had on the disposition of Native forces was probably the most serious oversight in the English battle plan which directly contributed to

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<sup>134</sup> Hubbard. *Narrative*. P. 207.

<sup>135</sup> Hubbard. *Narrative*. P. 204.

<sup>136</sup> Hubbard. *Narrative*. P. 205.

the English defeat during the retreat. It does not appear that Turner sent out any scouts along the anticipated avenue of approach in the days before the attack, nor does it appear he sent out any scouts or flankers along the avenue of approach on the day of the battle. Turner also failed to respond to intelligence that there was a Native force at Smead or Rawson Island. While he may have been aware of a village on one of the islands he was apparently unaware of the village at Cheapside. According to Mather:

In the meanwhile, a party of Indians from an Island (whose coming on shore might easily have been prevented, and the Souldiers before they set out from Hadley were earnestly admonished to take care about that matter) assaulted our men.”<sup>137</sup>

This force probably came up the Fall River and attacked the English at the English Assembly Area, splitting the English forces and then pursuing the main body as they retreated west. The statement by Mather suggests that the English had intelligence of the Native presence on the island and the English could have easily been prevented them from entering the battle if Turner had positioned a blocking force presumably at the confluence of the Connecticut and Fall Rivers.

### *Battle of Great Falls/Peskeompskut*

The narrative of the Battle of Great Falls/ Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut that follows was drawn primarily from three sources; William Hubbard’s *Narrative of the Indian Wars*, Increase Mather’s *An Brief History of the Indian Wars in New England*, and the “Reverend Stephen Williams Notebook.”<sup>138</sup> These sources, and others, were discussed above, but it is worth reiterating some of their historic contexts to better understand how they were used to reconstruct the battle events. While it is not known from whom Hubbard or Mather obtained their information, their narratives are generally considered correct and factual (although not without cultural bias), as they can often be substantiated by other sources. They would have received their information directly from individuals who were present at the battle or had at least spoken or received letters from knowledgeable individuals about the events (perhaps Reverend John Russell of Hadley). Their information was recorded soon after the battle events, perhaps within a few days or weeks. Stephen Williams obtained his information primarily from Jonathan Wells,

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<sup>137</sup> Mather. *Brief History*. P. 49.

<sup>138</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.”

who was a 16-year-old soldier at the time of the battle. When Williams recorded Wells' narrative around 1731/32, Wells was in his 70s and had achieved the rank of Captain for his service in King William's (1688-1697) and Queen Anne's (1702-1713) Wars. Wells' narrative was obtained more than 50 years after the battle event so the veracity of the information recorded after so many years should be considered, although there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of Wells' account. The other sources Williams may have relied on were "Several very valuable persons in this engagement possibly Japhet Chapin, Captain Fuller, and Captain Hitchcock."<sup>139</sup>

Williams also drew upon William Hubbard's Narrative for some information that is sprinkled throughout his narrative to which Williams attributes to Hubbard. As discussed above Williams did make one serious error in transcribing a portion of Hubbard's narrative. Williams states "ye English allightd from y<sup>r</sup> horses at a quarter of a mile distance from the Enemy, & tyd y<sup>r</sup> horses to Some young trees" indicating Turner's company rode to within one quarter of a mile of the village before they dismounted.<sup>140</sup> In fact what Hubbard what said was "When they came near the Indians rendezvous, they alighted off their horses, and tied them to some young trees at a quarter of a mile distance."<sup>141</sup> Hubbard's mention of one quarter of a mile distance is in reference to the small trees, not the distance to the village. While seemingly minor, the error has major implications for trying to determine the location of the English Assembly / Horse Hitching Area and the nature of the fighting that took place there. One of the more interesting aspects of the Wells narrative is that some of the information was obtained from Native men who participated in the battle and is one of the few times Native voices come through in the narratives of King Philip's War. The information is such that Wells could not have observed or known about certain actions that took place on the battlefield unless it was told to them by a Native who was present at the battle:

There happening a short flash of thunder & lightening just before Y<sup>y</sup> got there...Some Indians Y<sup>t</sup> were out fishing were beat in.<sup>142</sup>

...and passd by y<sup>e</sup> indians y<sup>t</sup> dwelt at cheapside & y<sup>e</sup> noise was heard by the indian watchman, who informd y<sup>e</sup> Indians y<sup>t</sup> he heard horses pass along, upon which y<sup>e</sup> indians went (wth a lightd torch) to y<sup>e</sup> usuall path y<sup>t</sup> crossd Green River (but the army had missd y<sup>e</sup> usuall path & crossd y<sup>e</sup> river abt 30 rods [500 ft]

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<sup>139</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P. 15.

<sup>140</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P. 13.

<sup>141</sup> Hubbard. *Narrative*. P. 204.

<sup>142</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P. 9.



higher) & not observing any tracks concluded y<sup>e</sup> watchman was mistaken and y<sup>t</sup> it was moose y<sup>t</sup> he heard & so continued quiet & did not send to inform y<sup>e</sup> indians above wch they cd easily have done.<sup>143</sup>

...y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Monday after y<sup>e</sup> fight 8 men y<sup>t</sup> were lost came to them & offerd to Submit themselves to y<sup>e</sup>, if they would not putt them to death; but whether they promised them quarter yea or not they took them, and burnt y<sup>e</sup>. The method of burning them was covering them with thatch & put fire to it & set them running & when one coat of thatch was burnt up they would putt on another &c The barbarous creatures that have given this account of their inhumanity & barbarity have in a Scoffing manr: addd y<sup>t</sup> the English men wd cry out as they were Burning &c Oh dear Oh dear.<sup>144</sup>

...an indian was comeing over y<sup>e</sup> River in a Cano to him [Jonathan Wells] coming ashore to him near. He presntd his Gun & y<sup>e</sup> indian frightend jmpt out of y<sup>e</sup> canoo & left his Cano & went & told y<sup>e</sup> indians y<sup>e</sup> English army were come again for he had seen one of ye Scouts himself (y<sup>e</sup> indians gave this acct afterwards & sd y<sup>y</sup> went to look but y<sup>y</sup> saw nothing but y<sup>e</sup> indian being a narragansett y<sup>y</sup> concludd he was frightd groundlessly so y<sup>y</sup> hold y<sup>e</sup> No better than Squaws &c)<sup>145</sup>

On May 18 Captain Turner and approximately 150 soldiers and colonists from various towns “came from Hatfield a little before night...ye most with horses & a few footman.”<sup>146</sup> Turner’s force travelled north 15 miles along the west side of the Connecticut River through Deerfield Meadow to the Deerfield River. Two local men, Experience Hinsdall of Hadley and Benjamin Waite from Hatfield, served as guides for Turner’s Company. The English originally intended to cross the Deerfield River at the main ford across from Cheapside just east of the confluence with the Green River “but the army had missed ye usual path & crossed ye river about 30 rods higher.”<sup>147</sup> The secondary ford was located 500’ upriver from the main ford at Cheapside and just west of the confluence with the Green River. As the English crossed the river:

...y<sup>e</sup> noise was heard by the Indian watchman [near the main ford], who informed y<sup>e</sup> Indians [at Cheapside] y<sup>t</sup> he heard horses pass along, upon which y<sup>e</sup> Indians went (with a lighted torch) to y<sup>e</sup> usual path y<sup>t</sup> crossed y<sup>e</sup> Green [Deerfield] River...& not observing any tracks concluded y<sup>e</sup> watchman was mistaken and y<sup>t</sup> it

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<sup>143</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 9.

<sup>144</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 15.

<sup>145</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 26, 28.

<sup>146</sup> Hubbard. *Narrative*. P. 9.

<sup>147</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 13.

was a moose y<sup>t</sup> he heard & so continued quiet & did not send to inform y<sup>e</sup> Indians above which they could easily have done.<sup>148</sup>

Turner's force then proceeded north for approximately 2.5 miles along the west side of the Green River until they reached the Green River Ford at the confluence with Cherry Rum Brook. From there the English travelled east 3.25 miles paralleling the Cherry Rum Brook, White Ash Swamp, and Fall Brook to the Fall River arriving there just before dawn. English forces travelled the 21 or so miles from Hadley to the Fall River in the dark in approximately 8 to 9 hours, at a speed of 2.5 to 3.0 miles an hour. William Hubbard states that "When they came near the Indians rendezvous, they alighted off their horses, and tied them to some young trees at a quarter of a mile distance" and then marched to the village.<sup>149</sup> As discussed earlier, the English Assembly, or Horse Hitching Area, is believed to be on the west side of the Fall River in the Lower Factory Hollow Area partly because the terrain on the east side of the Fall River is too difficult for horses to traverse if they are carrying a rider. Assuming 150 horses, Turner would have probably left 15 to 20 men behind to adequately care for and guard the horses, thereby reducing the attacking force to 130 to 135 soldiers.

The distance from the Fall River to the Riverside area where the Peskeompskut village was located is about .75 miles, which is also a typical distance for dragoons (mounted infantry) to dismount from the intended locus of attack in order not to be detected. Stephen Williams described the approach and the attack on the village based on interviews with Wells and perhaps other veterans of the battle as well as some information he obtained from William Hubbard.

The army came up to the Indians (at the falls) a little before break of day whom y<sup>e</sup> found very Secure without any watchman. (Some y<sup>t</sup> had been at the river fishing y<sup>t</sup> cd have been like to have discovered y<sup>e</sup>, having been driven from y<sup>r</sup> fishing by a little storm of thunder and lightning, y<sup>t</sup> happened a little before ye sun came up y<sup>t</sup> happened a little before y<sup>e</sup> sun came up, y<sup>e</sup> *English allighted from y<sup>r</sup> horses at a quarter of a mile distance from the enemy, & tied their horses to some young trees*; and when it grew so light as y<sup>t</sup> they were able to distinguish between y<sup>r</sup> friend & enemies they marched up to y<sup>e</sup> wigwams...<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P. 13.

<sup>149</sup> Hubbard. *Narrative*. P. 205.

<sup>150</sup> Williams obtained the information in italics from Hubbard, but Williams mis-transcribed the information. What Hubbard said was "When they came near the Indians rendezvous, they alighted off their horses, and tied them to some young trees at a quarter of a mile distance". The Hubbard's reference to one quarter of a mile is in reference to the distance to the young trees from where the English dismounted, not the distance to the village. See: Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P. 13.

No sentries had been posted, or if they had been they were recalled due to earlier thunder and lightning strikes. The number and arrangement of the wigwams in the main part of the village dictated, or at least greatly influenced, the English plan of attack. As Thomas Reed had spent time in the village he knew something about the distribution of wigwams and Turner would have planned accordingly.

The total number of people in the village is difficult to determine as the sources vary widely and are based primarily on casualty estimates. Assuming 250 people and approximately 8 to 15 people per wigwam, there may have been 15 to 30 wigwams in the village. One ambiguous reference by an English soldier described “a wigwam or two [a] little higher than the rest” of the village, which could either refer to a singular structure further upslope and otherwise removed from the main village, or it could refer to a wigwam on an elevated topographic feature such as Fort Hill in Riverside.<sup>151</sup> It probably would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the English to completely surround the village given its size and the potential they would be discovered. Another issue was certainly the danger of friendly fire, which did occur once during the assault. As no battle related objects were recovered from the Riverside area, and none of the sources describe the English battle formation or plan of attack, no firm conclusions can be drawn regarding the evolution of the battle

One scenario is that Captain Turner and Lieutenant Holyoke commanded their respective companies on the east and west wing of the formation. If the company was organized in a single file the formation would have extended for approximately 1200 feet, and if the company was organized in two files the line would have extended for 600 feet.<sup>152</sup> The formation would likely have attacked the village with the wings simultaneously attacking the ‘top’ or northern portion of the village while the wings moving to simultaneously envelope the east and west sides of the village driving the villagers to the river. By all accounts the English forces advanced to within point-blank range of the village without being detected, to the extent that some soldier “put their guns even into their Wigwams” as the signal was given to fire.<sup>153</sup> If that is the case, English forces may have advanced right up to the village perimeter as a loose line of single file

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<sup>151</sup> CSL. Colonial Wars, Series I. Doc. 74

<sup>152</sup> John Wilson, Personal Communication. 2017.

<sup>153</sup> L’Estrange. *A True Account*. P. 3.

skirmishers, allowing them to approach individual wigwams, and take aim into them as depicted in primary accounts.

On a given signal English forces opened fire and fell upon the unsuspecting inhabitants of the village at Peskeompskut and indiscriminately killed any Native people they encountered. A number of sources report that when the first shots were fired the villagers thought it was the Mohawk attacking them. English soldiers who took up positions along the shoreline opened fired on the swimmers and people in canoes and those hiding under the bank of the river:

...others of them creeping for shelter under the banks of the great river, were espied by our men and killed with their swords; Captain Holyoke killing five, young and old, with his own hands, from under a bank.”<sup>154</sup>

Roger L’Estrange provides the most graphic and disturbing account of the massacre:

Our soldiers got thither after a hard march just after break of day, and took most of the Indians fast asleep, and put their gums even into their wigwams and poured in their shot among them, whereupon the Indians that durst and were able to get out of their wigwams and did fight a little (in which fight one Englishman only was slaine) others of the Indians did enter the river to swim over from the English, but many of them were shot dead in the waters, others wounded were therein drowned, many got into canoes to paddle away, but the paddlers being shot, the canoes over-set with all therein, and the stream of the river being very violent and swift in the place near the great falls, most that fell overboard were born by the strong current of the river, and carried upon the falls of water from those exceeding high and steep rocks, and from thence tumbling down were broken in pieces and cast ashore, above two hundred.<sup>155</sup>

As old men, women, and children ran from English soldiers towards the banks of the Connecticut River, Native men in the village would have engaged the English taking heavy casualties to slow the assault so that the women and children could escape. One of the only Native descriptions of the battle is from the testimony of a Narragansett man named John Wecopeak who was court martialled at Newport after the war and testified:

...that he was at the fight with Captain Turner, and run away by reason the shot came as thick as rain, but said that he was at a great distance.<sup>156</sup>

A Pawtuxet Indian named Wenanaquabin “also confessed that he was at the fight with Captain Turner, and there lost his gun, and swam over a river to save his life.”<sup>157</sup> It is not clear if the

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<sup>154</sup> Hubbard. *Narrative*, P. 206.

<sup>155</sup> L’Estrange. *A True Account of the Most Considerable Occurrences*. Pp. 3-4

<sup>156</sup> Easton. *A Narrative of the causes*. P. 180.

testimony of these men described events at the Peskeompskut village fight or the retreat battle (or both). The sense one gets from Wecopeak's testimony is that he was at the Peskeompskut fight and then presumably made his way to the confluence of the Green River and Cherry Rum Brook where Turner was killed. That would be a distance of several miles but given that the English delayed along the river after the battle counting the dead and taking plunder, it is entirely possible. Alternatively, he may be referring to somewhere along the retreat where heavy fighting took place and then made his way to the Green River. If so it would suggest the English fought very hard along the retreat, consistent with Russell's inference that upwards of 30 Native men were killed in the retreat battle. Wenanaquaban's statement that he "swam over a river" is probably not a reference to the Connecticut given the current and the number of people who were swept over the falls. It is more likely he was referring to the Green or Deerfield River. Either way it suggests heavy fighting along the retreat.

During the attack the English destroyed large amounts of food supplies, ammunition, and blacksmith forges:

We there destroyed all their Ammunition and Provision, which we think they can hardly be so soon and easily recruited with, as possibly they may be with Men. We likewise here demolished Two Forges they had to mend their Armes; took away all their Materials and Tools, and drove many of them into the River, where they were drowned, and threw two great Piggs of Lead of theirs (intended for making of Bullets) into the said River.<sup>158</sup>

Estimates of Native casualties vary considerably although 300 is the number most commonly cited. A few days after the battle Reverend John Russell wrote a letter to the Connecticut War Council enumerating Native casualties from the battle he obtained from men in Turner's company and who took time after the battle to carefully count the dead around the village and those that were swept over the falls:

As to the number of the enemy slain; many of the soldiers say they guessed them to be about fourscore [80] y<sup>t</sup> lay upon the ground. But Serjeant Richard Smith saith he had time and took it to run them over by going from wigwam to wigwam to do it & also what was between y<sup>t</sup> bank and the water and found them about an hundred he hath sometimes said six score [120] but stands to y<sup>e</sup> y<sup>t</sup> they were about 100. Seventeen being in a wigwam or a two little higher up than the rest.

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<sup>157</sup> Easton. *A Narrative of the causes*. P. 179.

<sup>158</sup> L'Estrange. *A True Account of the Most Considerable Occurrences*. P. 4.



Likewise William Draw a soldier y<sup>t</sup> terms of good behavior & credit being two or three soldiers to stand in a secure place below the bank, more quiet than he thought was [illegible] for the time; He asked them why they had stood there saith they answered that they had seen many goe down the falls and they would endeavor to tell how many. Here upon he observed with them: until he told fifty; and they said to him that those make up six score and ten [70]. Some of them were also slaine in their pursuit of ours where so many of [illegible] fall. Hence we cannot judge but there were above 200 of them slaine.<sup>159</sup>

Based on these figures it appears that there were about 170 Native casualties in the battle.

Mather states that:

...yet it be as some Indians have since related, the victory was not so great as at first apprehended: For sundry of them who were at several times taken after this slaughter, affirm that many of the Indians that were driven down the falls got safe on shore again, and that they lost not above three score men in the fight...I am informed that diverse Indians who were in that battle, but since come in to the English at Norwich, say that there were three hundred killed at that time, which is also confirmed by an Indian called Ponham, who saith that of the three hundred there were an hundred and seventy fighting men.<sup>160</sup>

The wide disparity in casualty figures is impossible to reconcile. The reference “Some of them also were slaine in their pursuit...We cannot but judge but there were above 200 of them slaine” is significant because it is the only reference to the possible number of Native casualties (30+?) in the retreat battle. Some Native sources provide specific figures on the number and tribal affiliation of Native men killed at Peskeompskut. Menownieth, the half Narragansett and Mohegan man who fought in the battle, reported that “in ye Fall Fight were slayne 40 Norwottog [Norwottuck], Quaboag 10 Narragansett.”<sup>161</sup> It is not known if these casualties were just from the attack on the village or from the English retreat as well, but the figure of 50 casualties among the Native men is consistent with the Native informants Mather refers to who stated there were 60 Native men who died in the battle. The high number of Norwottuck casualties is interesting and it raises the possibility that the Native population in the Peskeompskut village may have been primarily Norwottuck. One source states that 70 Wampanoag men were killed in the battle.<sup>162</sup> Hubbard claims that prisoners taken after the battle “owned that they lost 300 in that camisado

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<sup>159</sup> CSL. Colonial Wars, Series I. Doc. 74.

<sup>160</sup> Mather. *A Brief History*. P. 50.

<sup>161</sup> Trumbull. *Records of the Colony of Connecticut*. P. II:471.

<sup>162</sup> L'Estrange. *A Brief and True Narration*, P. 4.

[surprise attack], some whereof were principal sachems, and some of their best fighting men that were left, which made the victory more considerable than else it would have been.”<sup>163</sup>

If the casualty figure of 50 men given by Menowniett refers only to the Peskeompskut massacre it would seem to be a very high number given that Thomas Reed estimated a total of 60-70 men between the two villages on both sides of the Great Falls. However, as mentioned previously there are many examples during the war where Native men were willing to sustain extraordinarily high casualties to protect women and children to give them time to escape, and to defend wounded comrades, and to recover the dead. It may also be that some of the casualties occurred as men from the village on the opposite bank canoed across the river to engage the English. Two English soldiers were wounded during the attack and one was killed by friendly fire: “Of our men, one was killed in the action, by his friends, who takeing him for an indian as he came out of a wigwam shot him dead.”<sup>164</sup>

Confident in their victory, and apparently unaware of the other Native villages preparing for a counterattack, the English delayed their retreat to count the dead, burn wigwams, destroy supplies, and loot the village for trade goods. In the meantime, Native men from the other villages began to mobilize to attack the English. During the attack on the village the English rescued an English boy:

...who was found in the wigwams, spake as if Philip were coming with a thousand Indians; which false report being famed among the soldiers, a pannick terror fell upon many of them, and they hastened homeward in a confused rout.<sup>165</sup>

The report quickly spread among the English soldiers and almost at the same moment the information was received the English were attacked by Native men coming across the river in canoes. The congruence of the rumor about Philip and the attack coming from across the river spread panic and fear through the English ranks, and the retreat quickly turned into a rout. Wells relates the events that took place soon after the attack on Peskeompskut as Native soldiers from the remaining five villages began to mobilize:

...& capt: Wells Says y<sup>t</sup> the difficulties y<sup>y</sup> were exposed to in y<sup>f</sup> retreat was probably owing to ye long stay y<sup>y</sup> made in y<sup>e</sup> place of y<sup>e</sup> victory S<sup>d</sup> y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>e</sup> [that this] gave time to y<sup>e</sup> indians y<sup>t</sup> were at Deerf<sup>d</sup> cheapside & y<sup>e</sup> Island & up above & on y<sup>e</sup> east side of y<sup>e</sup> River to get together \_ & wn y<sup>y</sup> did make head agst or men y<sup>e</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Hubbard. *A Narrative*, P. 206.

<sup>164</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 18.

<sup>165</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 18.

army drew off in great disorder & confusion yea abt 20 men, y<sup>t</sup> tarrid behind to fire at some indians y<sup>t</sup> were comeing over ye River and were left by y<sup>e</sup> company, and were forcd to dispute y<sup>e</sup> point wth y<sup>e</sup> Enemy a considerable time before y<sup>y</sup> cd recover y<sup>t</sup> horses in y<sup>r</sup> retreat Some Indians followd y<sup>e</sup> Some were before y<sup>e</sup> & Some attackd ye on one side &c.<sup>166</sup>

The number of Native men involved in the counterattacks is difficult to determine. L'Estrange stated "they were six times superior to us in number" indicating a figure of 900 men, presumably including those that were killed during the attack on Peskeompskut.<sup>167</sup> The figure seems a bit high but not impossible, and suggests there were 150 to 175 men in each of the remaining villages. Mather contradicts L'Estrange and states "to the great dishonor of the English, a few Indians pursued our soldiers four or five miles, who [i.e. English] were in number near twice as many as the enemy" indicating only 75 Native men were involved in the counterattacks – a number that seems much too low.<sup>168</sup>

The initial counter attack came from Native men coming across the river in canoes from the village opposite Peskeompskut. Jonathan Wells was with the group of 20 men that "tarried behind" to fire at the Indians coming across the river. It is not clear if the 20 men were purposely left behind as a rear guard or were simply left behind by the main group in their rush to retreat. At this point Turner's command was split between the main body of approximately 110 soldiers who had begun a panicked and disorganized retreat to where their horses were tied a half mile or so away on the west side of the Fall River, and the group of 20 men along the river. It is not clear from the narratives when the main body of men under Turner was initially attacked, but it appears to have been when they crossed the Fall River as suggested by Mather:

A panicked terror fell upon many of them, and they hastened homeward in a confused rout...In the meanwhile, a party of Indians from an island (whose coming on shore might easily have been prevented, and the soldiers before they set out from Hadley were earnestly admonished to take care of that matter) assaulted our men.<sup>169</sup>

In the meantime, Wells' group was beaten back from the river edge by the Native counterattack coming across the river and "were forced to dispute y<sup>e</sup> point w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Enemy a

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<sup>166</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." Pp. 13-15.

<sup>167</sup> L'Estrange. *A New and Further Narrative*, P. 12.

<sup>168</sup> Mather. *A Brief History*. P. 49.

<sup>169</sup> Mather. *A Brief History*. P. 49.

considerable time before y<sup>y</sup> could recover y<sup>t</sup> horses.”<sup>170</sup> A considerable time could indicate that Wells’ group was under continual attack for the entire distance of 0.75 miles from Riverside to the English Assembly / Horse Hitching Area. As discussed in Section VI of this report, there is an almost continuous distribution of musket balls from Riverside to the west side of the Fall River which could be associated solely with the attacks on Wells’ group as they fought their way to their horses.

By the time Tuner’s group arrived at the English Assembly / Horse Hitching Area there may have been complete chaos caused by Native forces attacking from a number of different directions. As Wells’ group appears to have been attacked from the rear the entire way from Riverside to the Fall River and “some of the enemy fell upon the guards that kept the horses, others pursued them in the rear” it suggests two groups of Natives soldiers converged on the English Assembly Area; one following and attacking Wells’ group from the rear and another attacking the group of English soldiers guarding the horses.<sup>171</sup> The latter group probably came up the Fall River just before Wells’ group reached the English Assembly Area.

The main body of soldiers under Turner may have initially come under fire in the English Assembly Area but they were able to beat a hasty retreat on horseback and quickly outdistance the Native attackers. As Well’s group tried to catch up to the main body after they retrieved their horses they were under constant attack. Wells relates he:

...was wounded ab<sup>t</sup> a quarter of a mile where they took y<sup>t</sup> horses being in y<sup>e</sup> rear shot by 3 indians. One bullet struck his thigh bone & one bullet brushd his hair, and y<sup>e</sup> other struck his horse behind, & broke part of y<sup>e</sup> bone which before had been broken by a cart wheel...& kept y<sup>e</sup> indians back by presenting his gun once or twice & when y<sup>y</sup> stopped to charge he got [away] from y<sup>e</sup> & came up to y<sup>e</sup> capt [Turner]: & persuaded him to turn & take care of y<sup>e</sup> men in y<sup>e</sup> rear but he s<sup>d</sup> he had better lose some than lose all & then he fell into the rear again & took wth a Small company y<sup>t</sup> Separatd from others y<sup>t</sup> ran upon a parsell of indians near a Swamp & were most of y<sup>e</sup> killd & then y<sup>y</sup> was Separat<sup>d</sup> again & had ab<sup>t</sup> ten men left with him & his horse failing & himself Spent w<sup>th</sup> bleeding.<sup>172</sup>

This passage reflects the hard fighting and utter chaos that resulted from the multipronged Indian attack as well as a complete breakdown in leadership. It also indicates that Turner and the main body of soldiers were not too far ahead as Wells was able to catch up with

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<sup>170</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 15.

<sup>171</sup> Hubbard. *A Narrative*. P. 206.

<sup>172</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 24.

him even in the midst of all the fighting. It is not clear how the Native attackers could keep up with the English on horseback as there is no indication they were on horses (although a possibility). It may be that the path was very narrow or the terrain was difficult to traverse, or they were slowed because they had to fire and reload.

The beginning of the White Ash Swamp is located approximately one half mile west of Factory Hollow. The battle narratives point to this location as where the Native attacks coalesced from several directions resulted in the near complete disintegration of the English force. As the English came up to the White Ash swamp a contingent of Native men from Cheapside, Deerfield, and elsewhere, laid an ambush from the swamp catching the English completely by surprise. This action, in addition to the attacks from the rear and flanks split the English into several groups; a main body under Turner and at least five or six smaller groups as well as individual soldiers. Few of the soldiers that became separated from the main body made it back to Hatfield alive.

The English forces were now under attack from all directions and their command and cohesion began to break down turning the retreat into an unorganized rout. The various narratives and descriptions of the retreat battle underscore the utter chaos and confusion the English soldiers experienced during the retreat:

...y<sup>e</sup> indians & y<sup>y</sup> [Wells' group] fought for y<sup>t</sup> horses & and recovered y<sup>y</sup> mounted & went after y<sup>t</sup> company, but y<sup>e</sup> indians followed & some came across way & some between y<sup>e</sup> & so y<sup>y</sup> fought upon a retreat being divided into several companies or parties being separated by y<sup>e</sup> Indians.<sup>173</sup>

...the indians that were at Deerfield, Cheapside, and the island in the River & the body of the indians that lay further up the River, and to those that were on the East side of the great River to get together so as to make head [ambush] against our men.<sup>174</sup>

...[Jonathan Wells] took wth a Small company y<sup>t</sup> Separatd from others – y<sup>t</sup> ran upon a parsell of indians near a Swamp & were most of y<sup>e</sup> killed & then he was separated again & had ten men left with him & his horse failing & himself spent with bleeding he was left with one John ]Robert] Jones...but they parted quickly.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P.9.

<sup>174</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P. 20.

<sup>175</sup> Jones survived the battle and made it safely back to Hatfield. Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P. 24.



Most of the English soldiers followed Captain Turner and Lieutenant while two other groups followed the guides Benjamin Wait and Experience Hinsdale who seem to have decided to take alternate routes to the Green River either to avoid anticipated attacks or ambushes or because they were blocked from the main route by contingents of Native attackers “One pilot crying out ‘if you love your lives follow me’; another that was acquainted with ye woods cried ‘if you love your lives follow me’”<sup>176</sup> Benjamin Waite never made it back to Hatfield and presumably all the soldiers that were with him died as well. Smaller groups of soldiers were cut off from the main body in the headlong rush to escape, and several groups were killed or were taken alive and tortured. Native men who fought in the battle gave the following account to Jonathan Wells:

Y<sup>t</sup> Y<sup>e</sup> Monday after the fight 8 men y<sup>t</sup> were lost came to them & offerd to Submit themselves to y<sup>e</sup>, if they would not putt them to death; but whether they promised them quarter yea or not they took them, and burnt y<sup>e</sup>. The method of burning them was covering them with thatch & put fire to it & set them running & when one coat of thatch was burnt up they would putt on another &c. The barbarous creatures that have given this account of their inhumanity & barbarity have in a Scoffing manr: added y<sup>t</sup> the English men would cry out as they were Burning &c Oh dear Oh dear. y<sup>e</sup> Indians acct it very unmanly to moan & make ado under y<sup>e</sup> torments & cruelties from y<sup>r</sup> enemies who put y<sup>e</sup> to death.<sup>177</sup>

William Harris reported:

Four or five men (some say more) the Indians caught alive, and tortured them as follows: They tied their hands up spreading upon the one and the other upon another, and likewise set two stakes at a distance, to which they tied their feet. Then they made a fire under each of them, gashing their thighs and legs with knives, and casting into the gashes hot embers to torment them. This also somewhat stanches the blood so that they do not bleed to death so soon, but remains to torment longer.<sup>178</sup>

Multiple tortures are rarely recorded in any of the primary sources associated with King Philips War. A likely explanation is the Native men were so enraged by the Peskeompskut massacre that they exacted immediate revenge on any English soldier they captured.

Native forces continued to attack the groups of English as they emerged from the vicinity of White Ash Swamp along their route to the Green River Ford. The English were clearly

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<sup>176</sup> Daniel White Wells and Reuben Field Wells, *History of Hatfield, Massachusetts, in three parts*. Springfield, MA: F.C.H. Gibbons. 1910). P. 464.

<sup>177</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 15.

<sup>178</sup> Leach, Ed. *Second William Harris Letter*, P. 80-81.

following a path as Wells mentioned during the retreat “& now they had left the track of ye company...These two men were unacquainted with the woods, & without any track or path.”<sup>179</sup> Wells also mentioned that while he was lost for two days after the battle and wandering around West Mountain and the Green River Plain “he travelled upon y<sup>t</sup> plain till he came to a foot path y<sup>t</sup> led him to y<sup>e</sup> road he went out in”<sup>180</sup>

Perhaps because of the ‘road’ and the fact that none of the English were familiar with the area other than the two guides, they retreated along the same route they travelled to Peskeompskut making it easy for the Native forces to anticipate their route and set up ambushes along the way. There is not much information in the narratives regarding the remainder of the retreat from the White Ash Swamp to the Green River other than a vague reference by Wells that “In their retreat they were surrounded by the Enemy, Some were before them, some were behind them, and some on Each side so y<sup>t</sup> it is wonderfull that so many of them recovr<sup>d</sup> their Home &c.”<sup>181</sup> The fighting was chaotic and the English had to fight hard to escape from the Native attackers who beset them from all sides:

The said Captain Holyoke’s horse was shot down under him, and himself ready to be assaulted by many of the Indians, just coming upon him, but discharging his pistols upon one or two of them, whom he presently dispatched, and a friend coming to his rescue, he was saved.<sup>182</sup>

One bullet struck his [Jonathan Wells] thigh bone & one bullet brushd his hair, and ye other struck his horse behind, & broke part of ye bone which before had been broken by a cart wheel & never set but lapd & shatter part of ye bone & ye other part stuck where it lapd. J fond he had likd to have fallen but catchd hold of ye horse’s main & kept ye indians back by presenting his gun once or twice & when they stopd to charge he got [away] from ye.<sup>183</sup>

There are hints from the battlefield survey that confirm Wells’ statement that the English were under constant attack during the retreat. Mather states “a few Indians pursued our soldiers four or five miles” suggesting attacks from the rear.<sup>184</sup> A small distribution of four musket balls was recovered 580 yards east of the confluence of the Green River and Cherry Run Brook, and

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<sup>179</sup> Wells & Wells. *History of Hatfield*. P. 464.

<sup>180</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 26.

<sup>181</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 20.

<sup>182</sup> Hubbard. *Narrative of the Indian Wars*. P. 207.

<sup>183</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 24.

<sup>184</sup> Mather. *A Brief History*. P. 50.

one was recovered just one hundred yards east of the confluence suggesting the English were under constant attack. It also seems that many of the English horses were killed or wounded leaving some English on foot and others forced to ride double.

Evidence also indicates that the Native forces anticipated the English at various choke points along the route of retreat such as the Green and Deerfield River fords. Turner was killed just west of the Green River Ford based on the testimony from several Native combatants and English forces that found his body near the ford a few days after the battle. Narragansett Indian John Wecopeak told his interrogators at his Court Marshall “that he saw Capt. Turner, and that he was shot in the thigh, and that he knew it was him, for the said Turner said that was his name.”<sup>185</sup> Mather reported that:

...the chief Captain, whose name was Turner, lost his life, he was pursued through a river, received his fatal stroke as he passed through that which is called Green River, & as he came out of the water he fell into the hands of the uncircumscribed, who stripped him, (as some say who say they saw it affirm it) and rode away on his horse...within a few days, Capt. Turner’s dead corpse was found a small distance from the river, it appeared that he had been shot though his thigh and back, of which its judged he dyed speedily, without any great torture from the enemy.<sup>186</sup>

It is interesting that John Wecopeak observed that Turner had been shot in the thigh but did not mention that he had been shot in the back. Whenever Wecopeak saw Turner he was still alive but was probably killed shortly after. Whether the shot that killed him was in the heat of battle or a *coup de gras* cannot be determined, but as Mather points out if he was still alive he would likely have been tortured. Stripping the clothes off dead Englishmen (and women) was a common practice in King Philip’ War intended to humiliate the person and ‘stripping’ them of their cultural values and beliefs. An account describing a Sachem’s actions to humiliate an enemy best conveys this concept:

After he had wronged a sachem and robbed him tooke away his breeches and left him naked, which is accounted amongst them the greatest disgrace that may be and deserves death amongst them and the sachem told them he had rather die than have such a disgrace putt upon himself.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Easton. *A Narrative of the causes*. Pp. 179-180.

<sup>186</sup> Mather. *A Brief History*. P. 50.

<sup>187</sup> John Winthrop. *Winthrop Papers*, Volume 3 (Boston, MA: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1943). P. 44

Turner was killed approximately 2.4 miles from the Green River Ford and we can assume heavy fighting from there to the Deerfield River Ford. Although there is no mention in the battle narratives of any fighting along that portion of the retreat a concentration of musket balls at the Deerfield River Ford indicates the English were still under attack. Mather says, “a few Indians pursued our Souldiers four or five miles” which would fall a mile or so short of the Deerfield River as measured from Factory Hollow. Mather’s estimate is not correct as we know there is evidence of fighting at the Deerfield River Ford. While Mather’s estimate may be a bit short it does suggest that the English may not have been pursued once they crossed the Deerfield River.

English soldiers (including Jonathan Wells) continued to make their way back to Hadley over the next few days and one group was reported to be wandering on West Mountain west of Green River a few days after the battle. One of the more interesting accounts was provided by the Reverend Atherton who served as Chaplain to Turner’s company on the expedition. He like many others became separated from the main body during the retreat and spent several days lost wandering around the battlefield. He related:

In the hurry and confusion of the retreat, I was separated from the army; the night following, I Wandered up and down among the dwelling places of the enemy, but none of them discovered me. The next day, I tendered myself to them a prisoner, for no way of escape appeared, and I had been a long time without food; but notwithstanding I offered myself to them, yet, they accepted not the offer; when I spake they answered not; and when I moved toward them they fled.<sup>188</sup>

Several English sources (corroborated by Native sources) agree that 39 English soldiers died in the battle. Jonathan Wells states that “29 with their wounds came home swiftly on ye same day” and “two died of their wounds.”<sup>189</sup> A total of 41 dead and 29 wounded is a casualty rate of just over 45 percent, which is extremely high by any standard. It is likely the casualty rate would have been far higher if not for the actions of Lieutenant Holyoke who “exhorted them not to be terrified...and reduced his men into close order made a safe and valiant retreat, and preserved the soldiers under him; that there were but few slain.”<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Wells & Wells. *History of Hatfield*. Pp. 86-87.

<sup>189</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 9.

<sup>190</sup> L’Estrange. *A Brief and True Narration*. P. 4.

*The War Ends: May 1676 - 1677*

The English considered the Battle of Great Falls/Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut a victory but remained concerned that there were still hundreds of enemy combatants in the upper valley. Within a day after the battle the upriver settlements sent a request to Connecticut for assistance. In response, Connecticut ordered eighty men under Captain Benjamin Newberry to proceed to Northampton for the defense of the upriver settlements. A few days after the battle English scouts reported that “the enemy abide still in the place where they were on both sides of ye river and in the island; and fires in the same place [Peskeompskut] our men had burnt the wigwams.”<sup>191</sup> The settlers in the upper valley remained fearful of renewed attacks and that the enemy still had ample supplies of fish and corn and were well protected by their forts on the island and Cheapside “y<sup>t</sup> we count them likely to abide a while.”<sup>192</sup> The settlers were so concerned about the prospect of renewed attacks from the Indians along the river they proposed that a large boat be fastened with planks as a protection against musket fire, and be sent up the river to keep the enemy from passing back and forth.<sup>193</sup>

In the meantime, Connecticut and Massachusetts were planning major offensives in the Central and Western theaters and in Narragansett Country. Connecticut had already ended all efforts at peace negotiations with the tribes in the valley and Massachusetts soon followed suit with their negotiations with the Nipmuc and Narragansett. On May 23 Massachusetts informed Connecticut that they had ended all efforts at a treaty with the Indians as they had received no response to their overtures “and therefore thought it meete to prosecute the war in all places.” Massachusetts requested that Connecticut send a force of soldiers and Mohegan and Pequot Indians to Hadley to join with 500 Massachusetts Bay soldiers “to go out against y<sup>e</sup> enemy to destroy them at Squakeag, Deerfield or anywhere thereabouts.”<sup>194</sup> In response, on May 24 Connecticut ordered Major Talcott “to goe forth against the Indians at Pocumtuc and those parts.”<sup>195</sup>

At this point the war, the weary Native coalition began to dissolve. The rapid dissolution of their alliance following the Battle of Great Falls was due to several factors. There were significant disagreements between the tribes regarding the future course of the war, and

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<sup>191</sup> CSL, Colonial Wars, Series I. Doc. 74.

<sup>192</sup> CSL, Colonial Wars, Series I. Doc. 74.

<sup>193</sup> CSL, Colonial Wars, Series I. Doc. 74.

<sup>194</sup> CSL, Colonial Wars, Series I. Doc. 75.

<sup>195</sup> CSL, Colonial Wars, Series I. Doc. 77.



particularly about peace negotiations with the English. Metacom and a few other sachems were vehemently against any peace overtures and ransoming captives. Shortly before Mary Rowlandson was ransomed she related “On Tuesday morning they called their general court (as they call it) to consult and determine, whether I should go home or no. And they all as one man did seemingly consent to it, that I should go home except Philip, who would not come among them.”<sup>196</sup> The rift between the tribes may also have been the result of different strategic goals and interests. For a time, most of the tribes saw the middle Connecticut Valley as their best hope to reestablish their communities in a safe, protected, and defensible landscape with plenty of fish and arable land to grow corn. Shortly after the battle Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay renewed their offensives in the upper valley making it untenable for the tribes to continue there. For the Narragansett, Wampanoag, Nipmuc and Quabaug they made the decision to return to their homelands and try to reestablish their communities. For the Native communities of the middle valley their only option was to continue the war against the English in the valley and hope they could establish a defensive perimeter. Those hopes ended with renewed English offensives designed to sweep the remaining tribes from the valley.

Widespread disease and sickness undoubtedly played a role in the decision to seek peace with the English as the high death rate must have significantly undermined the morale of the tribes. Many of their leaders and fighting men had been killed during the war and increasingly the remaining communities were comprised by growing numbers of women and children making it harder to continue the war effort. The recent battlefield successes of the English armies and their unrelenting pursuit of Native communities kept them constantly on the move and unable to gather food and particularly to plant corn. Unless they surrendered Native people had few options; death in battle, starvation, or being sold into slavery. The Mohawk likely played a significant role in the decision to abandon the middle Connecticut Valley. Mohawk attacks on Native communities in the valley occurred on a regular basis toward the end of the war, and with fewer men to defend them these communities had to seek refuge elsewhere, such as Mahican territory.

Shortly after the Battle of Great Falls, the Narragansett and Wampanoag began to abandon the valley and seek refuge at Watchusett and eventually began to return home. On May

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<sup>196</sup> Rowlandson 20<sup>th</sup> remove Rowlandson. *Narrative of the Captivity*. P. 33.

30 Major Talcott reported intelligence he had received from Wabbaquasset and Pequot allies that:

...its the generall reportef all that the chief place of their women & children is at Watchoosuck, not far off from Quabaug; that they have planted at Quabaug & at Nipsachook, nigh Coweesit; that Philip's men & the Narragansetts are generally come into those abovementioned places, only Pessicus, one of the chief of the Narragansett sachems, did abide up at Pocomptuck with some few of his men.<sup>197</sup>

In an effort to push the English settlements southward, a force of 500 Native men (presumably from the middle valley) attacked Hatfield on May 30. The Natives suffered heavy losses in the attack, and five English settlers were killed and three wounded with several houses burned.<sup>198</sup> Connecticut's forces had not yet arrived and Talcott wrote on May 31 that they would be unable to assist the upriver settlements until they could gather supplies and men.<sup>199</sup> Connecticut troops eventually arrived in Northampton on June 8 with an army of 450 men, including 100 Mohegan and Pequot Indians.

On June 12 a reported force of 250 Indians attacked Hadley, unaware that hundreds of English and Native allies were in the town. As described by Increase Mather, the attack was sophisticated and well planned and may well have succeeded if the Connecticut forces had not been there:

The common enemy who was quickly driven off at the *South end* of the Town whilst our men were pursuing of them there, on a sudden a great Swarm of Indians issued out of the bushes, and made their main assault at the *North end* of the Town, they fired a Barn which was without the Fortifications, and went into an house, where the inhabitants discharged a great Gun upon them, whereupon about fifty Indians were seen running out of the house in great haste, being terribly frightened with the Report and slaughter made amongst them by the great Gun.<sup>200</sup>

The attackers retreated and were pursued two miles when inexplicitly the English gave up the chase "because they had no order to do so. Some in those parts think, that as great an opportunity and advantage as hath been since the war began, was lost at this time."<sup>201</sup> It was reported that while the enemy was assaulting Hadley the "Mohawks came upon their Head-Quarters, and

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<sup>197</sup> Trumbull, *Colony of Connecticut*. P. 2:447.

<sup>198</sup> Trumbull, *Colony of Connecticut*. P. 2:450.

<sup>199</sup> Trumbull, *Colony of Connecticut*. P. 2:450.

<sup>200</sup> Mather. *A Narrative*. P. 53.

<sup>201</sup> Mather. *A Narrative*. P. 53.

smote their women and Children with a great Slaughter, and then returned with much plunder.<sup>202</sup> The defeat at Hadley combined with the loss of their women and children at the hands of the Mohawk so soon after the Battle of Great Falls must have completely disheartened the communities that still remained in the valley. Shortly after, the River Indian communities that began to abandon the valley.

On June 16, 500 Massachusetts Bay soldiers arrived at Hadley to conduct joint operations with the Connecticut forces and seek out and destroy the enemy in the middle Connecticut Valley. The combined Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay expedition was the largest English force sent to the middle Connecticut River Valley in the entire war. The Connecticut forces swept up the west side of the Connecticut River and Massachusetts Bay searched the east side. Connecticut went as far north as Squakeag and Massachusetts as far north as the Great Falls but did not find any evidence of the enemy. Talcott returned to Norwich on June 22 and reported to the Council that his forces had scouted both sides of the river above Pocumtuck with no sign of enemy forces. Talcott reported that his men had been to the:

Falls above Pocumtuck, and scouts being sent up the River on both sides and on the east side as high as Sucquackheag; and not discovering the enemy to be in those parts, but rather they were retired back towards Watchosuck or into the Nipmuc country; and that they were under no engagement of farther conjunction with the Massachusetts forces...<sup>203</sup>

On June 28 it was reported:

About thirty of ours adventured to go up the River towards the Falls at Deerfield, to see what Indians they could espy thereabouts, but coming they found none. They went to an Island where they found an hundred Wigwams, and some English plundered Goods, which they took, and burnt the Wigwams. Also they marched up to a Fort which the Indians had built there, and destroyed it. Digging here and there they found several Indian Barns, where was an abundance of Fish, which they took and spoiled, as also thirty of their Canoos; so that it appears that the Heathen are distressed and scattered, being no more able to continue together in such great Bodyes as formerly.<sup>204</sup>

Many of the Native communities from the middle Connecticut Valley appear to have gone west to Paquiag (open or clear place) in Mahican territory on the west side of the Hudson

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<sup>202</sup> Mather. *A Narrative*. P. 54.

<sup>203</sup> Trumbull. *Colony of Connecticut*. Pp. II:455.

<sup>204</sup> Mather. *A Narrative*. P. 57.

River 40 miles south of Albany. Hubbard reported that “the River Indians, who have many of them withdrawn themselves and are gone far westward, and whilst they and others that have been in hostility against us, remain unconquered, we cannot enjoy such perfect peace as in the years which are past.”<sup>205</sup> It is not at all clear what the connection was between the Natives of the Connecticut Valley and the Mahicans of Paquiag, but there were several references during the war that the Connecticut Valley Indians acquired their powder from the Dutch with the Mahicans acting as middlemen. In his testimony in August of 1676 Menownienn stated:

...that the Norwottock Springfield Indians and others are gone to a place about Hudson's River called Paquayag, and were encouraged to come there by a great man of those parts, whoe hath allso encouraged them to engage against the English and that they should not be weary of it. He did not Bee the man nor doth not know who it was. He was askt where they had ye ammunition to carry on the warr: he said the Powquiag Indians bought it of y<sup>e</sup> Dutch and sold it them. He was asked how many of the North Indians are gone that way. He saith about 90 men of them and Sucquance [Pessacus] is with them; he was very sick and as like to die as live...What Indians be at Housetanuck? None. They are all gone to Paquiag on ye West side of Hudson's River.<sup>206</sup>

In late July a “great party of those North Indians [Connecticut Valley]” were reported near Westfield travelling to the Hudson River on a southerly track to avoid the Mohawk.<sup>207</sup> On August 11 John Pynchon reported a group of “200 Indians including 50-60 fighting men, 100 women, and the rest children were seen three or four miles from Westfield heading toward Housatonic. He also reported “their tracks come from Nipmuck country.”<sup>208</sup> On August 19 the Connecticut War Council reported to Governor Andros of New York:

Hon" Sir. Your formerly neighbourly professions to secure such of the common barbarous enemies as haue or may fly or retire themselves into your parts, concerning whome o' neighbours of Boston doe say that they haue wrote to your Hon' desireing that they may be sent thither at their charge; this gives us encouragement to giue you farther acco' & inteligence even now come to hand, viz. that upon the persuit of a considerable number of the enemie, about 150, who are now making that way but were overtaken & fought by a party of our neare unto Ousatunick [Housatonic near Great Barrington] ; whereof ours slue 40 & took 15 captives; some others allso were taken neare the same road, who informe that the enemies designe was to goe over Hudson's River to a place called

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<sup>205</sup> Samuel Drake, Ed. *The History of King Philip's War*, P. 204.

<sup>206</sup> Trumbull. *Colony of Connecticut*. Pp. II:471-472.

<sup>207</sup> Trumbull, *Colony of Connecticut*. Vol. 2:466.

<sup>208</sup> Carl Bridenbaugh, Ed. *Pynchon Papers: Volume I Letters of John Pynchon, 1654-1700* (Boston, MA: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1982). P. I:163.

Paquiage where its sayd there is a tbrte, & complices ready to receiue and shelter them, and there they intend refreshment & recruits...<sup>209</sup>

Major Talcott was immediately ordered to Westfield to pursue the group expecting to catch up with them at Housatonic (Great Barrington). He found them at dusk three days later halfway between Westfield and Albany on the west side of the Housatonic River “entirely secure.” In the morning Talcott’s dragoons were split into two divisions:

One was ordered to pass the river below the enemy, and to advance and compass [surround] them in on that side. The other party, creeping silently up to the east bank of the river, were to lie prepared instantly to fire, when they should receive the signal from the other division...[and] discharged upon upon the enemy, as they were rising in surprise, or lay upon the ground, and killed and wounded a great number of them.<sup>210</sup>

William Hubbard reported that the English:

...pursued after them as far as Ausotunnoog [Housatonic] River (in the middle way betwixt Westfield and the Dutch [Hudson] River, and Fort Albany) where he overtook them, and fought with them; killing and taking 45 prisoners, 25 whereof were fighting men. Without the loss of any one of his company save a Mohegan Indian: Many of the rest were badly wounded, as appeared by the bushes being so much besmeared with blood, as was observed by those that followed them further. It is written since from Albany, that there were sundry lost besides the 45 aforementioned, to the number of threescore in all; and also than an hundred and twenty of them are since dead of sickness.<sup>211</sup>

A Narragansett Indian from Connecticut named Choos was at the Housatonic Fight and was captured in September at Stratford, Connecticut. After the battle he hid in Farmington until he was almost starved, and then went to the Stratford coast to collect oysters to eat:

He affirmed that there were above 250 fighting men amongst those Indians that fled westward, besides women, and children; and that near 200 of them passed the great river below Albany, and were sheltered by the Indians of that place, called Moheganders [Mahicans]; but about 80 of them tarried on the hither side of that river, near a Dutch village.”<sup>212</sup>

John Pynchon confirmed the Choos testimony and reported in late August of 1676 that “gathered together at Paquoag on Hudson River about 200 men and having there their wives

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<sup>209</sup> Trumbull, *Colony of Connecticut*. P. II:469.

<sup>210</sup> Benjamin Trumbull. *A Complete History of Connecticut*. (Hartford, CT: Hudson and Goodwin. 1797). P. I:365-366.

<sup>211</sup> Hubbard. *A Narrative*. P. 244.

<sup>212</sup> Hubbard. *A Narrative*. P. 245-246.



and children in a safe and secure place; the men may with freedom and without any clog make inroads upon these towns, doing what they do at a push, and suddenly return again to their headquarters.”<sup>213</sup> The Connecticut War Council was so concerned about the threat the Natives at Paquiog posed that in late August of 1676 they wrote Governor Andros of New York requesting permission “to pass up ye Hudson River with our own vessels to pursue them.”<sup>214</sup> The Connecticut Valley communities at Paquiog continued to be perceived as a threat as late as 1677. In April of that year Major Pynchon wrote to Governor Andros:

There being some principle Indians more deeply engaged in the late mischiefs done upon us, whose we understand are upon your River [Hudson], we judged it necessary to demand them to be delivered to justice; yet weighing what your Honour hath presented, together with our own observations, do not apprehend it convenient at this time to insist farther upon it, but shall represent the same with our sense thereof, to the respective Councils of our Colonies; and in case they still persist therein, that then your Honour would be pleased fully to answer their desire. In the meantime let all be in silence. Their names are Wecjuegan [Agawam], Awassamauge, Pummanequin, Negonump, Apequanas alias John Sagamore and Cochapesen [Agawam].

The anticipated attacks from the River Indians at Poquiog never materialized although refugee River Indians out of Canada attacked Hatfield and Deerfield on September 19, 1677. The group consisted of 24 Pocumtuck and a Narragansett under the command of Aspelon who was probably a Pocumtuck Captain or Sachem. Dozens of settlers were killed or captured which proved to be the final attack on the Connecticut River settlements for decades.<sup>215</sup>

The war in southern New England ended when English soldiers and their Native allies killed Metacom at Mount Hope in present-day Bristol, Rhode Island on August 12, 1676. The war continued in northern New England (primarily on the Maine frontier) until a treaty was signed at Casco Bay in April of 1678. King Philip’s War has been described as the deadliest in American history based on English and Native civilian and military casualties relative to the population.<sup>216</sup> By the time the war had ended, Colonial authorities estimated that 600 English had been killed and 1,200 houses burned. It is impossible to accurately calculate Native casualties but it is estimated that a minimum of 3,000-5,000 Native men, women, and children died in battle

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<sup>213</sup> Bridenbaugh, Ed. *Pynchon Papers*. P. I:163.

<sup>214</sup> Trumbull, *Colony of Connecticut*. P. II:478.

<sup>215</sup> George Sheldon. *History of Deerfield*, Vol. I, P. 180-181. Deerfield. 1895.

<sup>216</sup> Jason W. Warren, *Connecticut Unscathed: Victory in the Great Narragansett War 1675-1676* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014). P. 4.

and disease, starvation, and exposure, and hundreds more were sold into slavery throughout the Atlantic World.<sup>217</sup> The most graphic and horrific description of the impact of the war upon the Native peoples of southern New England was by Puritan minister and historian Cotton Mather:

But God hath consumed them by the Sword, and by Famine and by Sickness, it being no unusual thing for those that traverse the woods to find dead Indians up and down, whom either Famine, or sickness, hath caused to die, and there hath been none to bury them.<sup>218</sup>

## **VI. Battle of Great Falls / Peskeomskut - Battle Related and Domestic Objects**

This section will examine the nature and distribution of recovered battle related and domestic objects across the battlefield. During the project, MPMRC archeologists surveyed 1.5 miles of the Battle of Great Falls which yielded a total of 284 lead musket balls, all of which were considered seventeenth century. An additional 91 objects, both domestic and military in nature were also recovered that were considered Seventeenth or possibly Seventeenth Century objects. These objects were a mix of domestic (e.g. brass scrap, lead bar, molten lead, lead beads, spoon fragments, pewter buttons, iron awl, iron axe fragments, rose head nails) and non-domestic objects such as buckles and horse tack; see Appendix I: Artifacts Inventory). As nearly 5.5 miles of the battlefield remain to be surveyed, it is anticipated that the next phase of the survey will yield hundreds of additional seventeenth century objects.

The ranges of musket ball diameters for this analysis were based on increments of tenths of an inch (e.g., .41” - .50”, .51” - .60”). These ranges are based on the assumption that certain diameter shot was either loaded into specific weaponry (e.g. .50” - 60” diameter ball for carbines and .61” - .70” diameter ball for muskets) or were loaded for a particular tactical situation (e.g., multiple loads of .25” - .40” diameter “small-shot” employed at ranges of less than 40 yards). Musket ball diameters in the .41” – 50” diameter range could have been used in pistols. However, there is considerable overlap in diameters and associated weapon types and musket ball diameters in the low 40” range could be used as small shot and diameters in the high 50” range could be used in muskets. This information is useful in interpreting combat actions on the battlefield landscape. Overall 77 percent of recovered musket balls are in the small shot range

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<sup>217</sup> John Romeyn Brodhead, Ed. *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York* (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons, and Company, 1855). Pp. 3:243-244.

<sup>218</sup> Drake. *History of King Philip's War*. P. 205.

while only 17.7 percent in the carbine/musket range (Figure 51). This pattern strongly indicates that loads of 6 to 8 small diameter musket balls was the preferred load for weapons. There is additional evidence to support the idea of a preference for loading weapons with multiple rounds of small diameter musket balls. Musket balls fired as “buckshot” have characteristic “facets” on several sides or faces of the musket ball that result when the load of small shot is fired which both heats and compresses the balls against each other as they move through the musket barrel (Figure 40).

The purpose of the broader musket ball analysis of the Great Falls battlefield was to establish a baseline to compare against the various musket ball distributions recovered from eight discreet Loci, or battlefield actions, identified within the battlefield. This comparative analysis can help to determine if differences in the frequency and percentage of musket diameters within



**Figure 40.** Small Diameter Musket Balls with Facets.

and between loci were influenced by the tactical decisions of the combatants or perhaps could identify which combatants fired the musket balls based on weapon types. Simply put, can patterns of musket ball diameters be attributed to either Native or English soldiers? For example, does a higher percentage of low diameter musket balls (.25” - .40” diameter; i.e., loading weapons with 6-8 small shot) suggest that Native soldiers were in close proximity to retreating English forces and therefore used small shot loads, or does the higher percentage of small shot

along the retreat indicate the English were running low of “bullets” or larger diameter musket balls (i.e., .50” +). As most of the Native attacking force had not been previously engaged in battle it is assumed that the munitions fired by them was based on a tactical decision, not because of a low supply of a specific musket ball diameters.

Although 284 musket balls were recovered and distributed in a variety of patterns throughout the project area, there are several challenges in interpreting these patterns. First, both Native and English combatants were armed with similar small arms (muzzle loading, black powder muskets, carbines, fowlers, and/or pistols) which adds to the difficulty of determining which side fired the musket balls recovered during the survey. Secondly, as both Native and English soldiers were equipped with similar firearms, both sides also utilized similar ammunition loads (round ball and / or small shot) and therefore lead shot diameters and discharge patterns alone cannot be used to determine which combatants fired the projectiles. Finally, during the Battle of Great Falls, neither Native or English soldiers were equipped with firearms of any standard bore diameter nor was any particular type of firearm exclusively favored by either side. As a result, musket ball diameters are not a reliable signature of either Native or English soldiers. Larger diameter musket balls can be used to generally determine the diameter of the firearm barrel it was fired from but large musket balls were used by both combatants. Similarly, both Native and English soldiers often loaded several smaller diameter musket balls (e.g. in the .30” - .45” diameter range) into their firearms and used as “buckshot.”

We had originally assumed that most of the recovered musket balls were fired by the Native combatants as they were attacking the English from the front, flanks, and rear and because the English retreat was described in contemporary accounts as highly disorganized and a rout. References such as “ye army drew off in great disorder and confusion”, “who in their retreat were a little disordered for want of the help of the eldest Captain,” and “a panicked terror fell upon many of them, and they hastened homewards in a confused route,” testify to the disorganization and panic among the English.<sup>219</sup> On the other hand there are also references to potentially hard fighting by the English and some degree of cohesion later in the battle “about 20 men, y<sup>t</sup> tarried behind to fire at some Indians y<sup>t</sup> were coming over the river and were left by y<sup>e</sup> company, and were forced to dispute y<sup>e</sup> point with y<sup>e</sup> enemy a considerable time before they

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<sup>219</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 9; Hubbard. *Narrative of the Indian Wars*, P. 205; Mather. *Brief History*, P. 49.

could recover their horses,” and “ if Captain Holyoke had not played the man at a more than ordinary rate, sometimes in the front, sometimes in the rear, at a fatal business to the assailants.”<sup>220</sup>

Archeologists and historians have considered the implications of lead shot distribution at Native American sites (villages, burials, battlefields) for years with no clear consensus. The debate is best summed up by Jan Piet Puype of the Nederlands Scheepvaart Museum, author of “Dutch and other Flintlocks from Seventeenth Century Iroquois Sites.”<sup>221</sup> Puype suggested two major observations regarding “lead balls found at various Indian sites” in Iroquois country. First, “one should refrain from making quick judgments about the use of firearms by the Indian, on the basis of a few bullets found on a given site.” His second observation was regarding “the truly baffling variety in the calibers of bullets” recovered from Native sites. Based on the research of Puype and others regarding “extensive historical firearms collections which contain a large number of seventeenth century artifacts,” he concluded that “virtually no barrel bore resembles another, even among pairs of pistols” and therefore the “bullets fired through these barrels undoubtedly had dimensions consistent with this phenomenon.”<sup>222</sup> This translates into the fact that individual Native and English soldiers cast lead musket balls a tenth of an inch or so smaller than the bore diameter of their firearm. Puype’s analysis indicates there was a wide range and variation in firearm types, barrel bore sizes, and lead shot sizes utilized by Native Americans during the seventeenth century.

Conversely, Puype notes that European military sites, including naval contexts and trade companies, exhibit “a strong clustering of calibers...but even there the many differences and inconsistencies are striking.”<sup>223</sup> He again attributes the inconsistencies to the unstandardized bore diameters in seventeenth century arms. Interesting insights regarding English lead shot usage during the war can be derived from two artifact assemblages recovered from English garrison house sites in the present towns of Plymouth and Marshfield, Massachusetts. MPMRC researchers analyzed a sample of 72 musket balls to study English musket ball usage during King

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<sup>220</sup> Hubbard. *Narrative of the Indian Wars*, P. 207

<sup>221</sup> Jan Piet Puype, “Part I: Dutch and other Flintlocks from Seventeenth century Iroquois Sites” in *Proceedings of the 1984 Trade Gun Conference: Research Records No. 18* (Rochester, NY: Rochester Museum & Science Center, 1985).

<sup>222</sup> Puype. “Dutch and other Flintlocks from Seventeenth century Iroquois Sites.” P. 70.

<sup>223</sup> Puype. “Dutch and other Flintlocks from Seventeenth century Iroquois Sites.” P. 70.

Philip's War.<sup>224</sup> Based on the analysis most of the musket balls fell within the "small-shot" diameter range, roughly .22" to .45". Large lead round ball, between .60" and .73" was recovered at a much lower frequency. If these patterns accurately reflect the actual ratio of large to small musket balls it appears that far more small-shot was cast and issued to English troops. The diameters of the large musket balls indicate that the calibers of firearms carried by English forces at these garrisons ranged from .62" to .75" or greater.

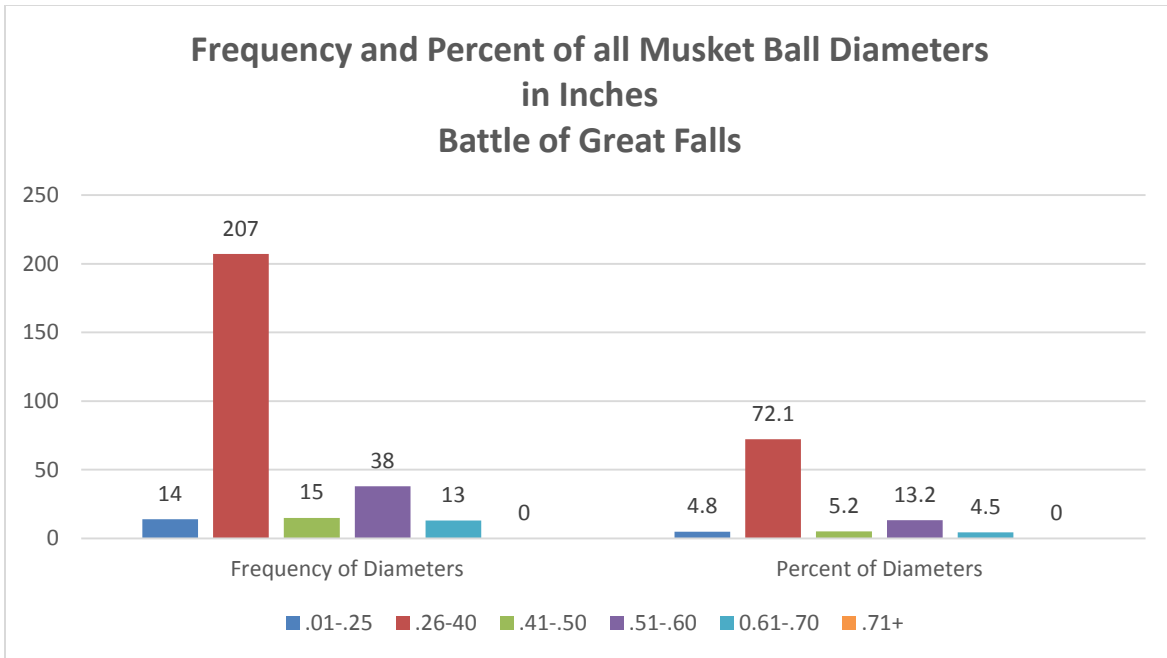
The small-shot assemblage from these two sites falls within three major categories: .39" to .47"; .34" to .38"; and >.22" to .31" diameters. The highest end of the small-shot range could arguably be cast for use in pistols and carbines with bore diameters ranging from .40" to .50" or greater, but that same range could still be fired as small-shot loads from large caliber muskets barrels. The analysis illustrates the dominance, and versatility, of small-shot loads in seventeenth century New England warfare. Musket ball diameters were grouped into six categories based on correlations with diameter ranges and weapon types. Diameters less than .40" diameter were considered "small shot" as multiple rounds can be loaded in any caliber weapon for a buckshot effect. Diameters in the .41" - .50" ranges could be considered small shot in the lower end of the range but may be associated with pistols or carbines at the upper end of the range. Diameters in the .51" - .60" diameter range are considered to be associated with carbines or muskets, while diameters in the .61" -70" range were associated with full muskets.

Figures 41 - 43 illustrate the frequency and percent of musket balls recovered from three seventeenth century battles; the Battle of Mistick Fort and the English Withdrawal (May 26, 1637), the Second Battle at Nipsachuck (July 2, 1676), and the Battle of Great Falls (May 19, 1676). A total of 535 musket balls were recovered from the Mistick battlefields, all of them fired by the English. Although the battle took place almost 40 years before King Philip's War the musket ball distributions provide an interesting comparative context for King Philip's War battlefields. On the Mistick battlefields 58 percent of the musket balls fell into the category of small shot, or less than .40" diameter.

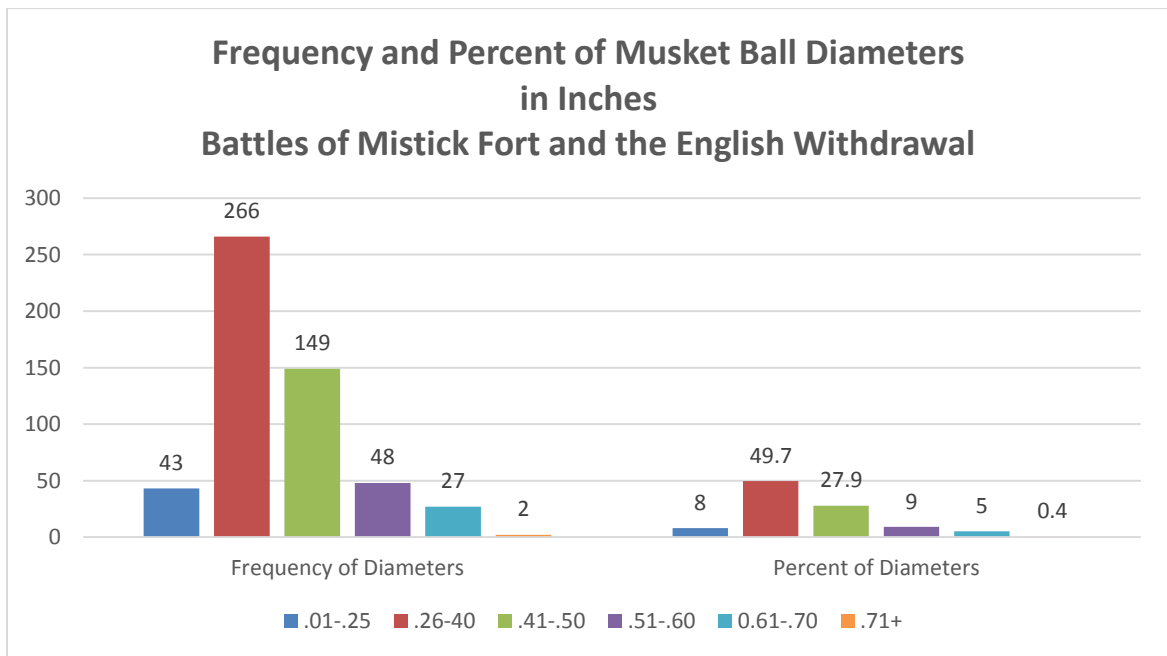
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<sup>224</sup> Conducted by David Naumec and Will Sikorski, 2010. The most common artifacts included in the Garrison House collections at Plimoth Plantation were cast lead shot, lead scrap from casting shot, gunflints, and debitage from gunflint making. Lead shot was roughly organized by diameter which was originally determined through the use of calipers. MPMRC researchers weighed lead shot of the judgment sample using the Sivilich Formula: Diameter in Inches =  $0.2228 \times (\text{Weight in grams})^{1/3}$ .

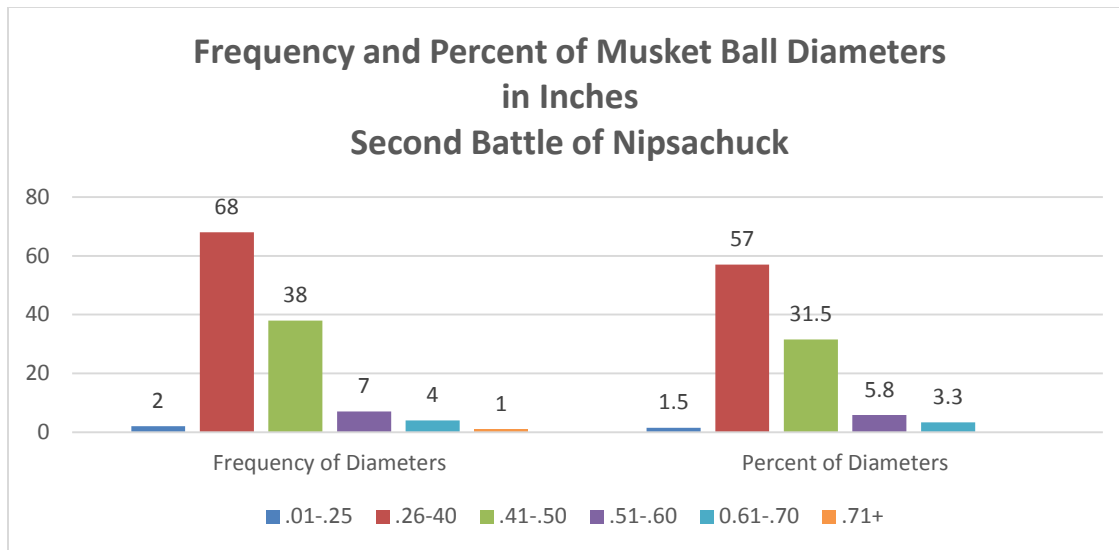




**Figure 41.** Frequency and Percent of Musket Ball Diameters – Battle of Great Falls.



**Figure 42.** Frequency and Percent of Musket Ball Diameters, Battles of Mistick Fort and the English Withdrawal.



**Figure 43.** Frequency and Percent of Musket Ball Diameters, Second Battle of Nipsachuck.

The musket ball assemblage recovered from the Second Battle at Nipsachuck (Site RI-2507) is the most relevant comparison to the Battle of Great Falls as both date to the King Philip’s War. The Second Battle at Nipsachuck was one of the final engagements of King Philip’s War and consisted of a mounted attack by 300 Connecticut dragoons (mounted infantry) and 100 allied Pequot and Mohegan soldiers against the village of the Narragansett Sunk Squaw Quiapan comprised of 140 women and children and 30 Narragansett soldiers. Ironically Quiapan was returning to her homeland from Watchusett carrying letters to present to Massachusetts Bay to negotiate a peace plan.

A total of 120 musket balls were recovered from the Second Battle at Nipsachuck battlefield site, the majority fired by the attacking English-allied forces. At Nipsachuck 58.5 percent of the musket balls were in the small shot category, nearly identical to that of the Mistick battles (Figures 43) but unlike the Battle of Great Falls where 77% of the musket balls were in the small shot range. Assuming the majority of the musket balls at the Battle of Great Falls were fired by Native combatants it may reflect the Native preference for multiple loads of small shot and tactics that brought them in close proximity to the English. Certainly, based on the brief accounts of Holyoke and Wells the Native attackers were pressing the attack very close to the English.

A Gross Pattern Analysis of the 284 musket balls recovered from the Battle of Great Falls was used to identify discrete episodes of fighting that occurred within the battlefield. Gross

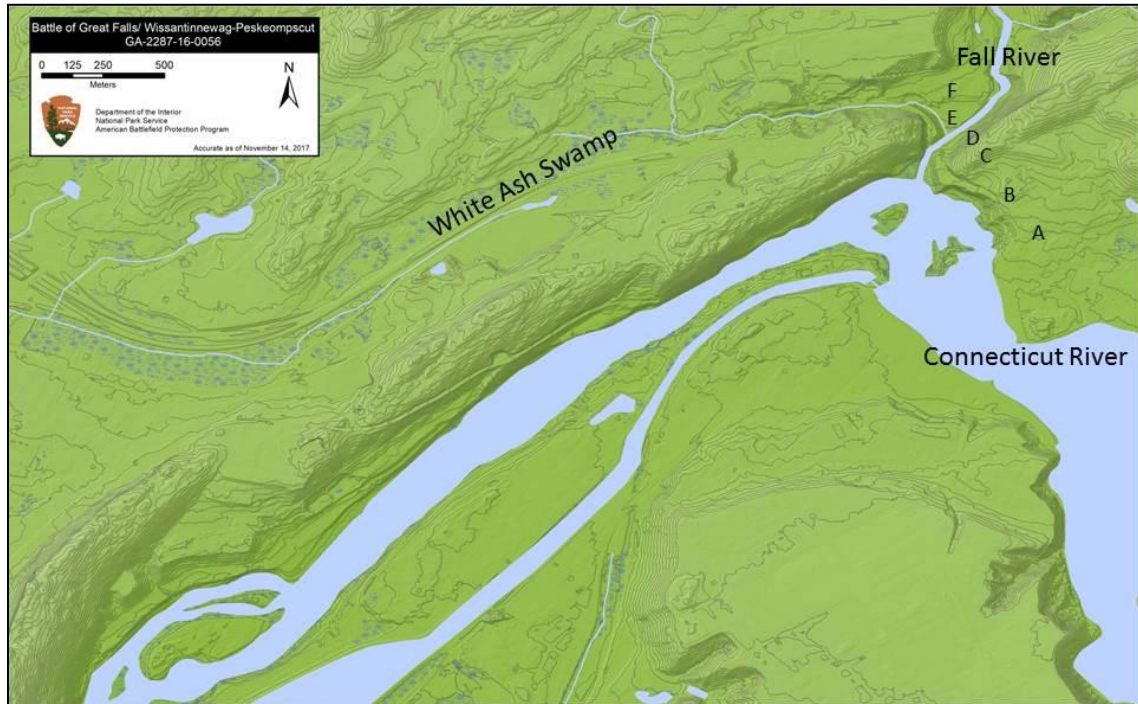
Pattern Analysis focuses solely on the frequency and spatial aspects of artifacts but provides few insights into individual movements, separate battle events, or the evolution of the engagement. The analysis of musket ball diameter frequency and percentages illustrates the majority (77%) of lead shot recovered from the Great Falls battlefield is small shot. It is assumed most of the musket balls were fired by the Native combatants during the battle suggesting a tactical pattern of close combat firing multiple loads of small shot. A Dynamic Pattern Analysis sequencing discrete battle events, actions, and movements adds a temporal dimension to the distribution of battle related objects that the Gross Pattern Analysis lacks. Applying the Dynamic Pattern Analysis to the musket ball distributions at the Battle of Great Falls eight discrete battle events (Loci) were identified that can be reasonably be attributed to either the Native or English combatants and can be sequenced in time.

### *Battle Events*

Eight distinct Loci or discrete battle events were identified within the Battle of Great Falls based on the nature and distribution of musket balls (i.e. diameters, impacted vs. dropped), and other battle related objects and topography. They include: 1) Locus A – Upper Riverside Village; 2) Locus B – English Retreat; 3) Locus C – The Mountain Gap; 4) Locus D – Terraces; 5) Locus E – English Assembly Area; 6) Locus F – Upper Factory Hollow; 7) Locus G – Cherry Rum Brook; and 8) Locus H – Deerfield Ford (Figures 44, 45). Loci A through D are in the town of Gill, Massachusetts while Loci E through H is located in the town of Greenfield, Massachusetts.

No seventeenth century battle related objects were recovered during the survey in the Riverside neighborhood, the reputed site of the Peskeompskut village. As discussed above, the Riverside landscape was heavily impacted by cut and fill episodes, and a dense layer of iron objects distributed throughout the area which made metal detecting very difficult. However, three musket balls and a gunflint were recovered from the Riverside area and assumed to be associated with the battle. Two musket balls and a gunflint are in the collections of the Carnegie Library and were recovered somewhere in the Riverside area in the early twentieth century but their exact provenience is unknown. The musket balls are impacted with .58” and .70” diameters

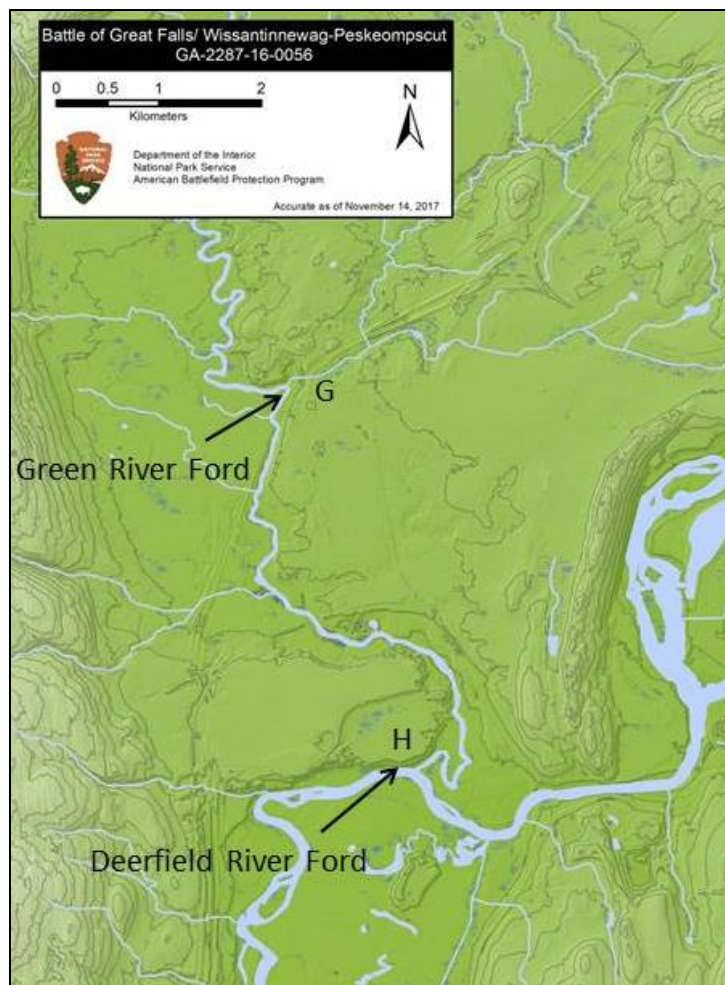
(Figure 46).<sup>225</sup> The gunflint is an English flint blade type likely made in England and shipped to the colonies and could be attributed to either the Native or English combatants. More recently, a landholder in the Riverside neighborhood on Walnut Street recovered a dropped .66” diameter musket ball while gardening (Figure 47).



**Figure 44.** Battlefield Loci A – F.

Although three musket balls and a gunflint is not sufficient evidence to identify the precise location of the Peskeompskut village that was attacked, it does indicate the village was in the Riverside area. It is presumed that the majority of gunfire that occurred during the attack on the Peskeompskut village was discharged by the English. If so there is a high probability that the three large diameter musket balls (.58”, .66”, .70”) were fired by English combatants and indicate the presence of large bore muskets (approximately .60” to .72” caliber). The large diameters of the three musket balls (if fired by the English) may have some relevancy for distinguishing between English and Native fire and can help to interpret actions elsewhere on the battlefield (e.g. Deerfield River Ford, Locus H). However, at this juncture, any inferences would be highly speculative until the battlefield survey has been completed.

<sup>225</sup> The approximate diameter is given as neither musket ball has been weighed using the Sivilich Formula at this time to determine true diameter.



**Figure 45.** Battlefield Loci G – H.



**Figure 46.** (L) Lead Musket Balls, (R) Blade Type Gunflint from Riverside neighborhood, Gill, MA. (Carnegie Library Collection, Montague, MA).



**Figure 47.** Dropped .66” Diameter Musket Ball, Walnut Street Riverside, Gill, MA.

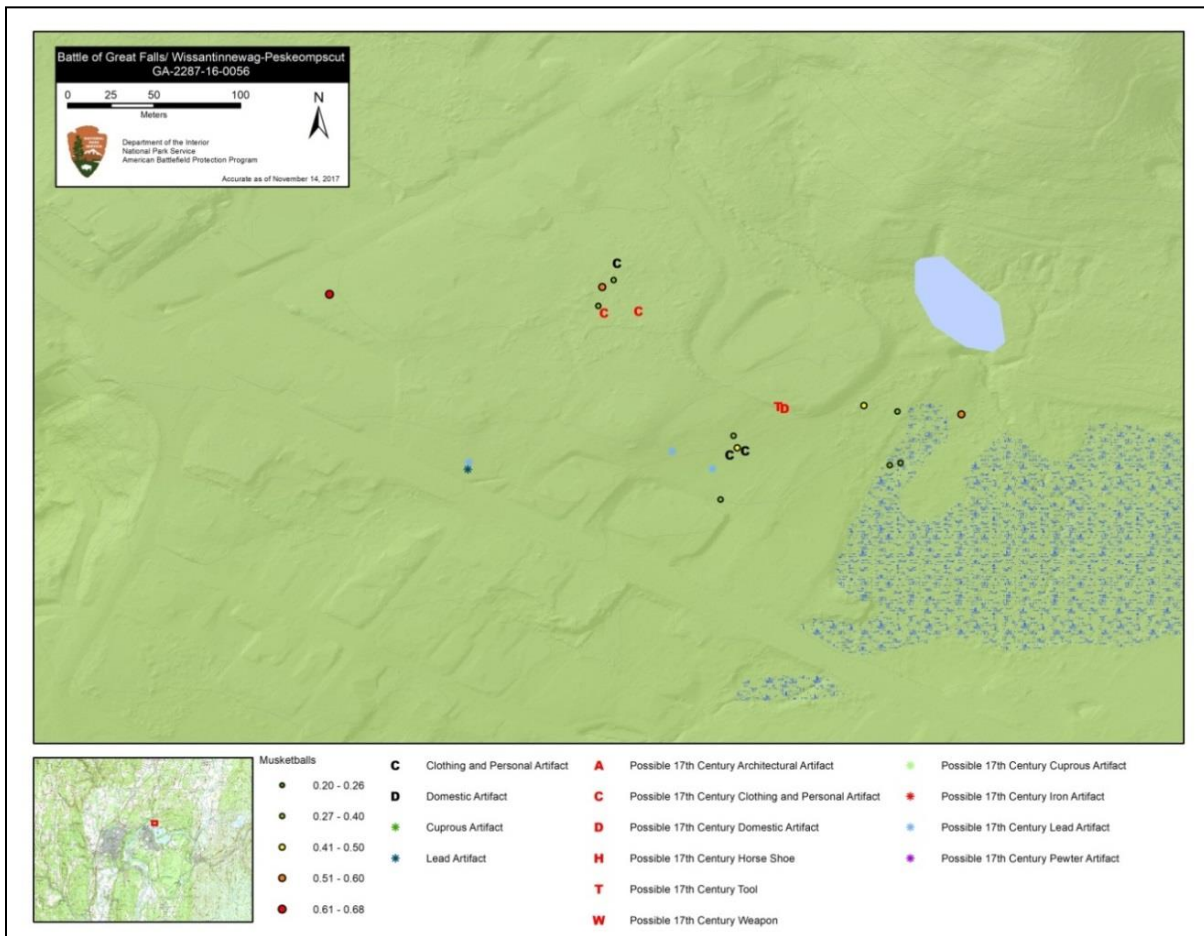
***Locus A: Upper Riverside Village:*** A total of twelve musket balls were recovered from Locus A – Upper Riverside (Figures 44, 48). The locus is approximately 100 yards north of present day Mohawk Trail / Route 2, east of Main Road, and abutting Stoughton Place. Three musket balls are greater than .51”, two were in the .41” to .50” category (.42” and .44” diameter) and seven are considered small shot between .26” and .40” diameter. There are two small concentrations of lead shot, separated by a disturbed area now occupied by a parking lot and residential housing. There is an outlying .64” musket ball on the western edge of Locus A. Little can be inferred from the pattern of musket balls other than it exhibits the expected seventeenth-century Great Falls battlefield signature of a high frequency and percentage of small shot (75 percent) mixed with a smaller percentage of larger diameter musket balls (25 percent).

A small distribution of domestic artifacts including two pieces of brass scrap a dozen or so fragments of lead bar or molten lead, a pewter button, iron blade, possible cast iron kettle fragment, and a lead amulet were recovered from Locus A (Figures 50-52). It is possible this area is either the northern boundary of the Peskeompskut village and/or the location where the English killed seventeen people “being in a wigwam or two higher up than the rest.”<sup>226</sup> A

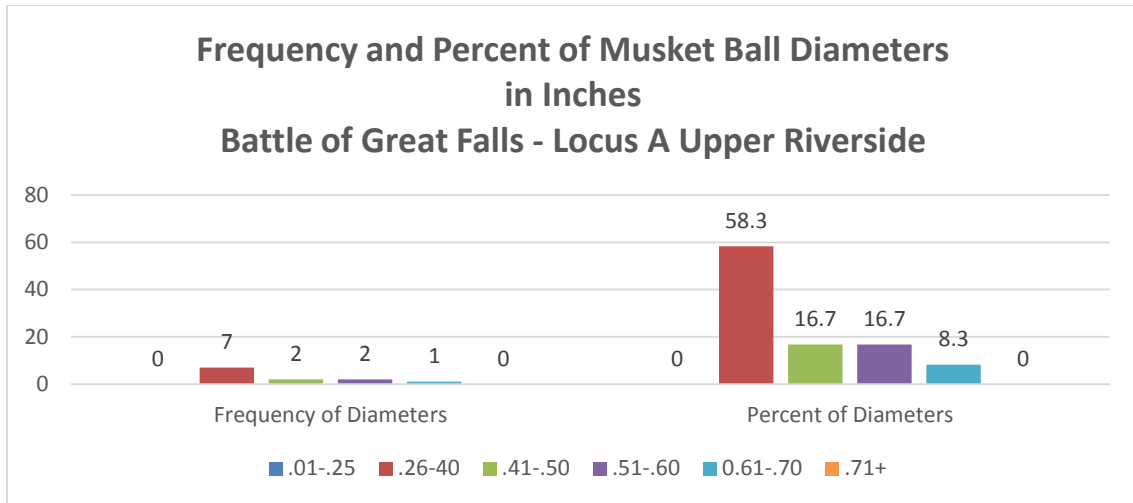
<sup>226</sup> CSL. *Colonial Wars*, Series I. Doc. 74.



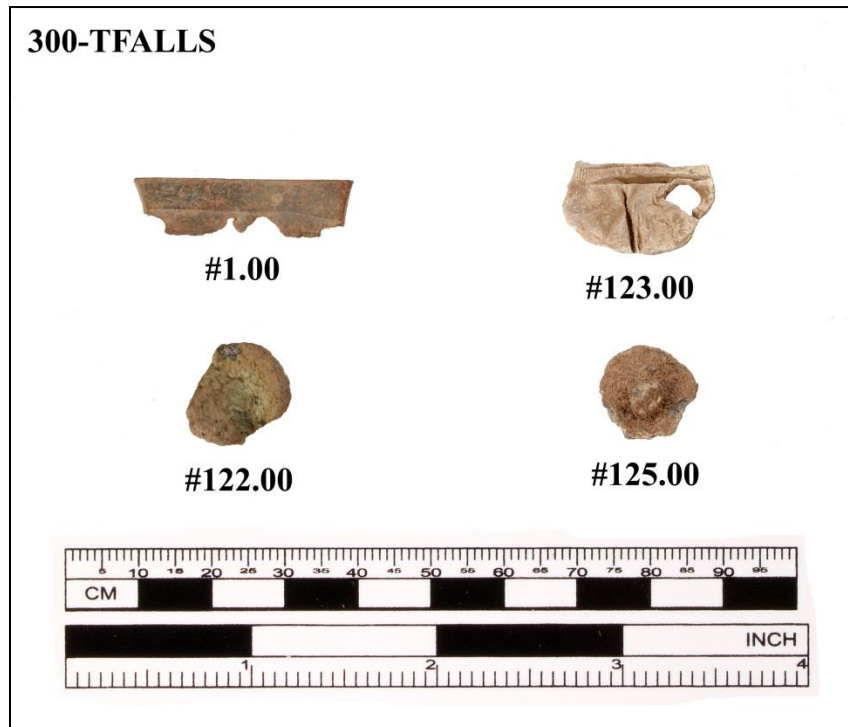
moderate to large amount of brass scrap is usually considered a key signature of seventeenth century Native domestic sites. As only two fragments were recovered it brings into question whether the locus was a Native domestic area or not. The presence of lead bar fragments and molten lead associated with musket ball production would also be a good indicator of a Native domestic area, and more than a dozen were recovered from Locus A. The pewter button and lead amulet could have been dropped by English and Native combatants.



**Figure 48.** Locus A – Upper Riverside. Musket Balls and Domestic Objects



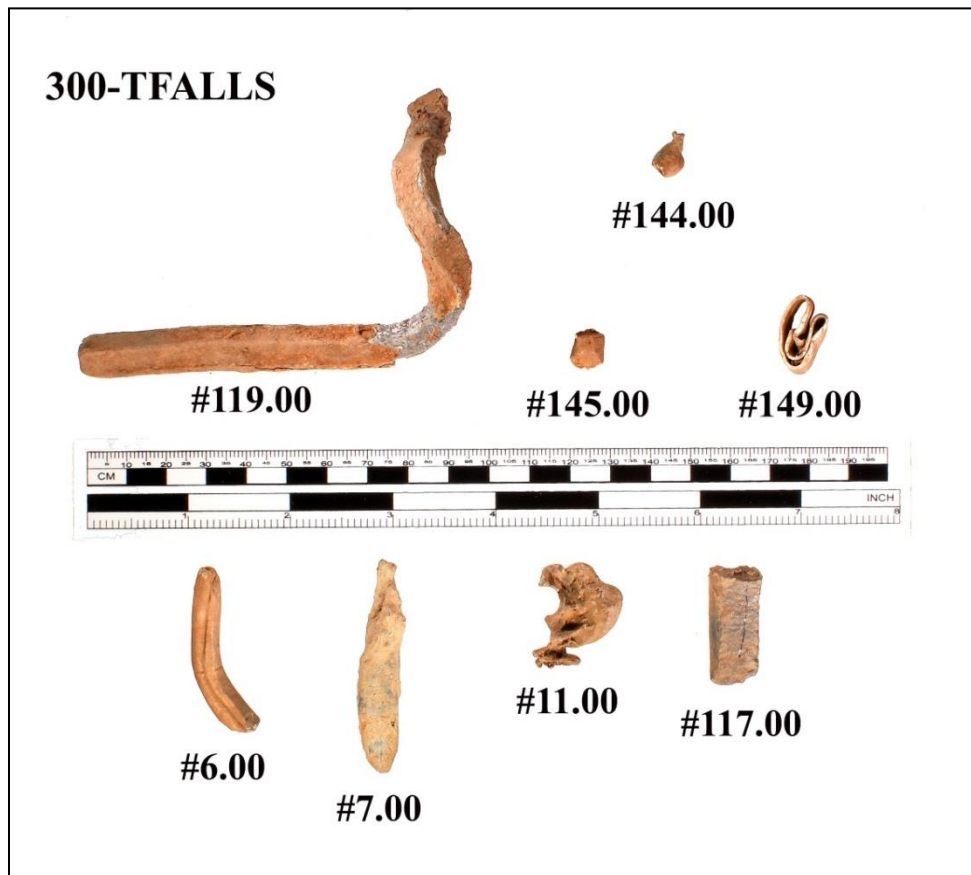
**Figure 49.** Distribution of Musket Ball Diameters – Locus A Upper Riverside.



**Figure 50.** Locus A Domestic Objects. #1 & #122 Brass Scrap, #123 Lead Amulet, #125 Pewter Button.

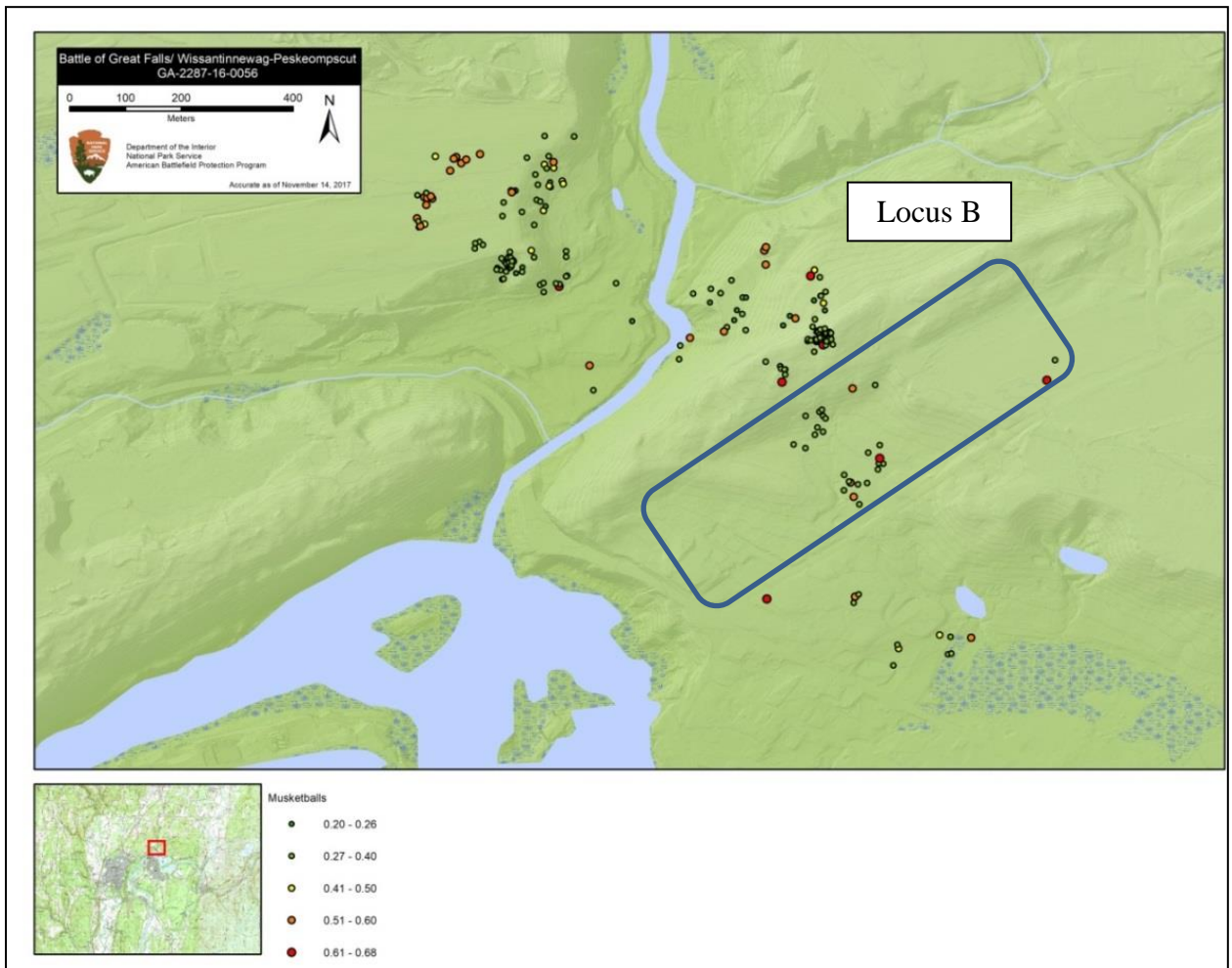


**Figure 51.** Locus A Domestic Objects. #128 Iron Kettle Fragment, #146 Wrought Iron Fragment, #127 Iron Awl, #121 Iron Axe Fragment.



**Figure 52.** Locus A, Lead Bar and Molten Lead.

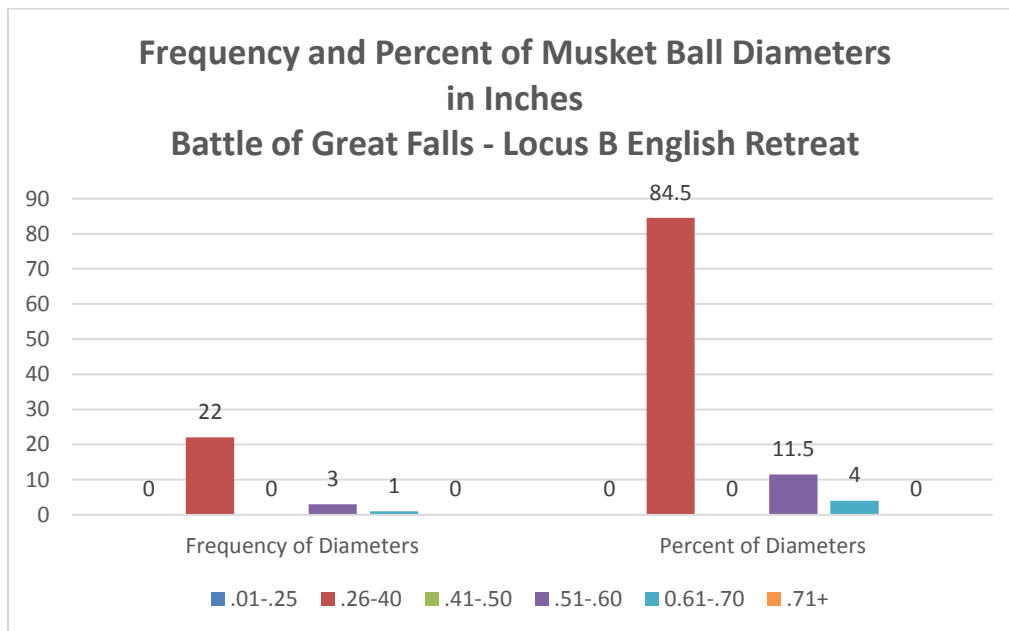
**Locus B: English Retreat:** A total of 26 musket balls were recovered from Locus B extending 250 yards east from Main Road to an overhead electrical power liner (Figures 44, 53). The terrain is relatively flat in the eastern area and begins to rise steeply 200 yards west of Main Road. Four impacted musket balls were recovered on the east face of the slope and provided an opportunity to determine direction of fire from southeast to northwest in all four instances. This direction likely indicates Native fire behind the English as they retreated west. One musket ball was in the .61” - .70” diameter range (4 percent), three in the .51” and .60” diameter range (11 percent), and 22 were in the .26” - .40” diameter range (84.5 percent; Figure 54). The ratio of large to small diameter musket balls is consistent with most of the combat actions identified within the battlefield in that small shot is the most frequently recovered ammunition type. At this



**Figure 53.** Locus B: English Retreat.

stage of the battle the approximately 20 English soldiers who lagged behind at the Connecticut River to fire at Natives crossing the river to Peskeompskut, were separated from the main body who had already withdrew. These 20 soldiers quickly beat a hasty fighting retreat to where they tied their horses in Lower Factory Hollow on the west side of the Fall River.

There appears to be three distinct sets of musket ball distributions in Locus B. The first is a group of fourteen musket balls recovered just west of Main Road, which extends for approximately 85 yards to the northwest. This group consists of three large diameter musket balls (.56", .58", and .62" diameter), along with eleven small diameter musket balls ranging between .27" - .40" diameter. The musket balls in this group were recovered from a flat plain with no topographic relief so the direction of fire could not be determined. This first grouping of musket balls likely represents gunfire by Native soldiers firing at the fleeing English at 40 yards or less (at least in the case of the small diameter musket balls). The second group of musket balls begins 75 yards northwest from the first group and was recovered from the foot of a steep hill or on the east facing slope of the hill. One .59" diameter musket ball and eleven small diameter musket balls were recovered ranging between .27" - .40" diameter. All the musket balls were impacted and four were fired from southeast to northwest. The concentration of small shot and one large ball, separated by 75 yards indicates a second volley of Native gunfire as the English attempted to ascend the steep slope.



**Figure 54.** Musket Ball Diameters Locus B English Retreat.

It is likely these actions are associated with the group of 20 English who stayed behind at the Peskeompskut village and became separated from the main body of 100 or so soldiers:

...ab<sup>t</sup> 20 men, y<sup>t</sup> tarrid behind to fire at some indians y<sup>t</sup> were comeing over y<sup>e</sup> River and were left by y<sup>e</sup> company, and were forced to dispute y<sup>e</sup> point wth y<sup>e</sup> Enemy a considerable time before y<sup>y</sup> cd recover y<sup>t</sup> horses.<sup>227</sup>

Some of this gunfire could possibly be from English soldiers firing at a group of Native soldiers to their front, but the battle narratives give no indication of Native combatants to the front of the English until they crossed the Fall River. The musket ball distribution may extend further to the west/northwest but the presence of the power lines precluded any metal detector survey in the immediate vicinity.



**Figure 55.** Locus B: Possible Lead Flint Wrap.

The final group of two musket balls was located approximately 300 yards east of the first two groups of musket balls and consists of one impacted .66” diameter and one impacted .40” diameter musket ball. A possible unused lead flint wrap was also recovered in the immediate vicinity of the musket balls (Figure 55). This small assemblage is difficult to interpret but could

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<sup>227</sup> Thomas. “Rev. Stephen Williams’s Notebook.” P. 15.



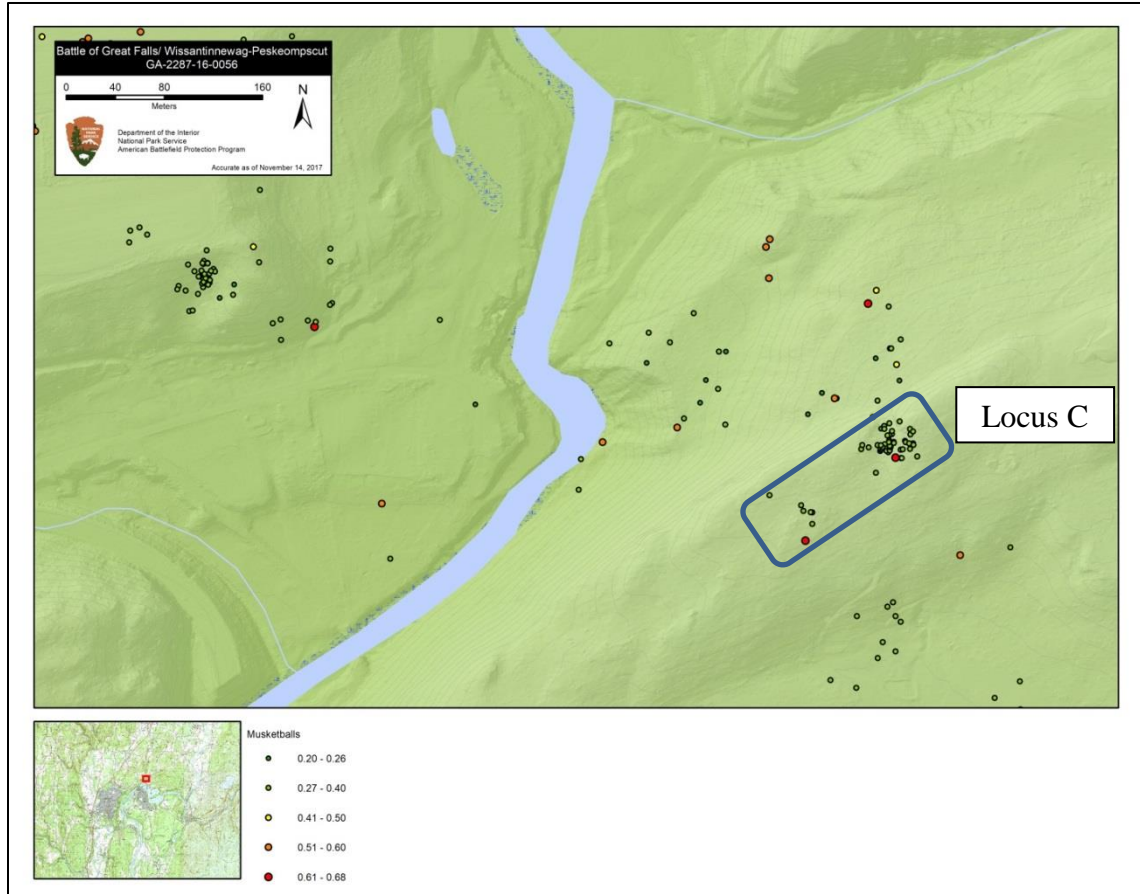
have been the result of an English soldier who was separated from the main body to the south and then fired upon by Native combatants.

Several possible domestic objects were recovered from the eastern section of Locus B including nine pieces of lead sheet and molten lead, a pewter button, a lead bead, two lead cloth/bale seals, a brass escutcheon, an unidentified wrought iron object, a rose head nail, and an eyelet from a reprocessed iron hoe (Figure 56). The lead and eyelet suggest the possibility of a Native domestic area at this location but the absence of scrap brass would suggest otherwise. The pewter button and lead bead could have been dropped by the English or Native combatants. In any event this distribution of domestic objects is not believed to be contemporaneous with the battle.



**Figure 56.** Locus B: Possible Domestic Objects: Molten Lead #'s 188, 137, 197, 199, 157; 111; Lead Bale/Cloth Seals #156; Pewter Button # 115; Lead Bead # 171; Brass Escutcheon With Crude Punched Holes # 108; Rose Head Nail #189; Lead Sheet Scrap #'s 162, 170, 149; Iron Hoe Eyelet #94; Unidentified Wrought Iron Object # 290.

***Locus C: Mountain Gap:*** Fifty-five musket balls were recovered from Locus C including one .62” diameter musket ball, one .64” diameter musket ball, and 52 small diameter musket balls ranging between .27” and .40” which constituted 96.5 percent of the assemblage (Figures 44, 57). All of the musket balls were recovered between the 360 and 390-foot contour intervals, the highest elevations where fighting occurred. The “mountain” is a southwest-northeast trending bedrock ridge that parallels the Fall River 160 yards to the west and runs for 0.6 miles in a northeasterly direction from the Connecticut River. The ridge is characterized by extremely steep, sheer cliff faces that drop to a series of terraces leading to the Fall River. The only way to cross the ridge and descend to the Fall River is through a single gap, or notch, through the bedrock which allows passage for someone on foot. The “Mountain Gap” is only about 15 yards wide and 30 yards long significantly restricting movement through it to the terraces immediately to the west. Nearly 96 percent of the recovered lead musket balls were small diameter which indicates that the gunfire occurred at a range of 40 yards or less. The narrow gap suggests that fleeing English forces were forced into a relatively tight formation. A direction of fire from south to north could be determined for 23 musket balls that impacted against the steep northern edge of the gap.



**Figure 57.** Locus C: Mountain Gap.

During the English retreat from Peskeompskut Village two groups of English soldiers had to pass through the gap on foot and then descend the western slope of the ridge to reach their horses tied on the west side of the Fall River. The first group was comprised of the main body of English (approximately 100 men) under the command of Captain's Turner and Lieutenant Holyoke. It does not appear that this group of men was attacked until they reached the English Assembly Area on the west side of the Fall River. Based on wartime narratives, Turner's company beat a hasty retreat from Peskeompskut when a rumor spread that Philip was coming with 1,000 men:

...for an *English* Captive Lad, who was found in the Wigwams, spake as if *Philip* were coming with a thousand *Indians*: which false report being famed (*Famâ bella stant*) among the Souldiers, a pannick terror fell upon many of them, and they hasted homewards in a confused rout.<sup>228</sup>

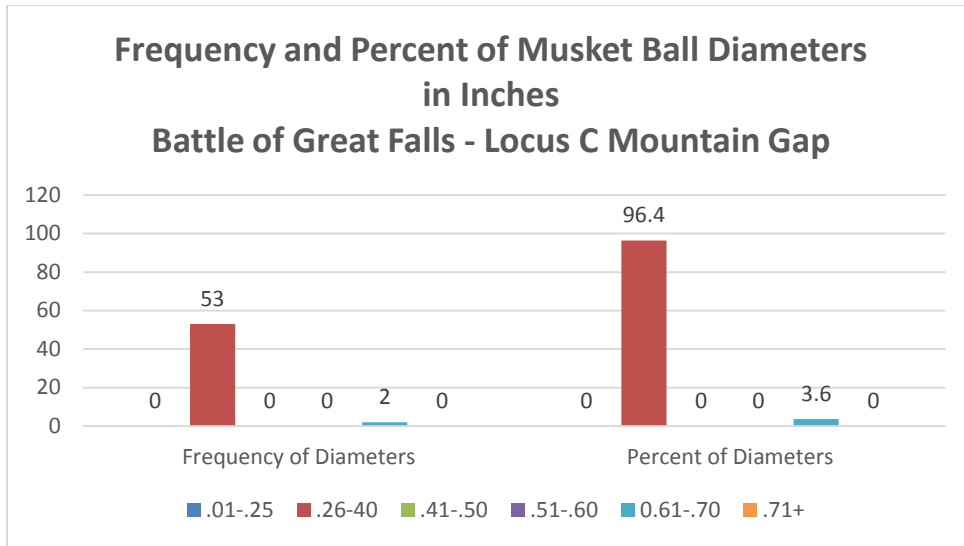
<sup>228</sup> Mather. Brief History, P. 49.,

The second group of English soldiers consisted of approximately twenty soldiers, including Jonathan Wells, who had positioned themselves near the Connecticut River shoreline where they exchanged fire with Native soldiers crossing the river by canoe.<sup>229</sup> They may have been unaware that Turner's group had already retreated from Peskeompskut. At some point Wells' group disengaged from fighting and retreated as well, the entire time being pursued by Native soldiers. According to Wells' account his company of twenty men was forced to fight their way to their horses. It appears that the contingent of Native soldiers that was pursuing the 20 English through Locus B separated, with one group continuing to pursue the English from the rear and a second group moving to the south, west and then north to flank the English as they moved through the gap.

There are two concentrations of musket balls within Locus C. The first and largest grouping is located within the natural gap, or notch, through the bedrock ridge. A second, smaller concentration is located approximately 75 yards to the southwest of the gap. The first concentration of musket balls consists of one .63" round ball and forty-five small shot in the .27" to .40" diameter range (Figure 58). The musket ball pattern is distributed over 30 yards in a southeasterly to northwesterly direction beginning about 10 yards southeast of the eastern edge of the gap, and through the gap exiting the gap onto a series of terraces defined as Locus D – Terraces.

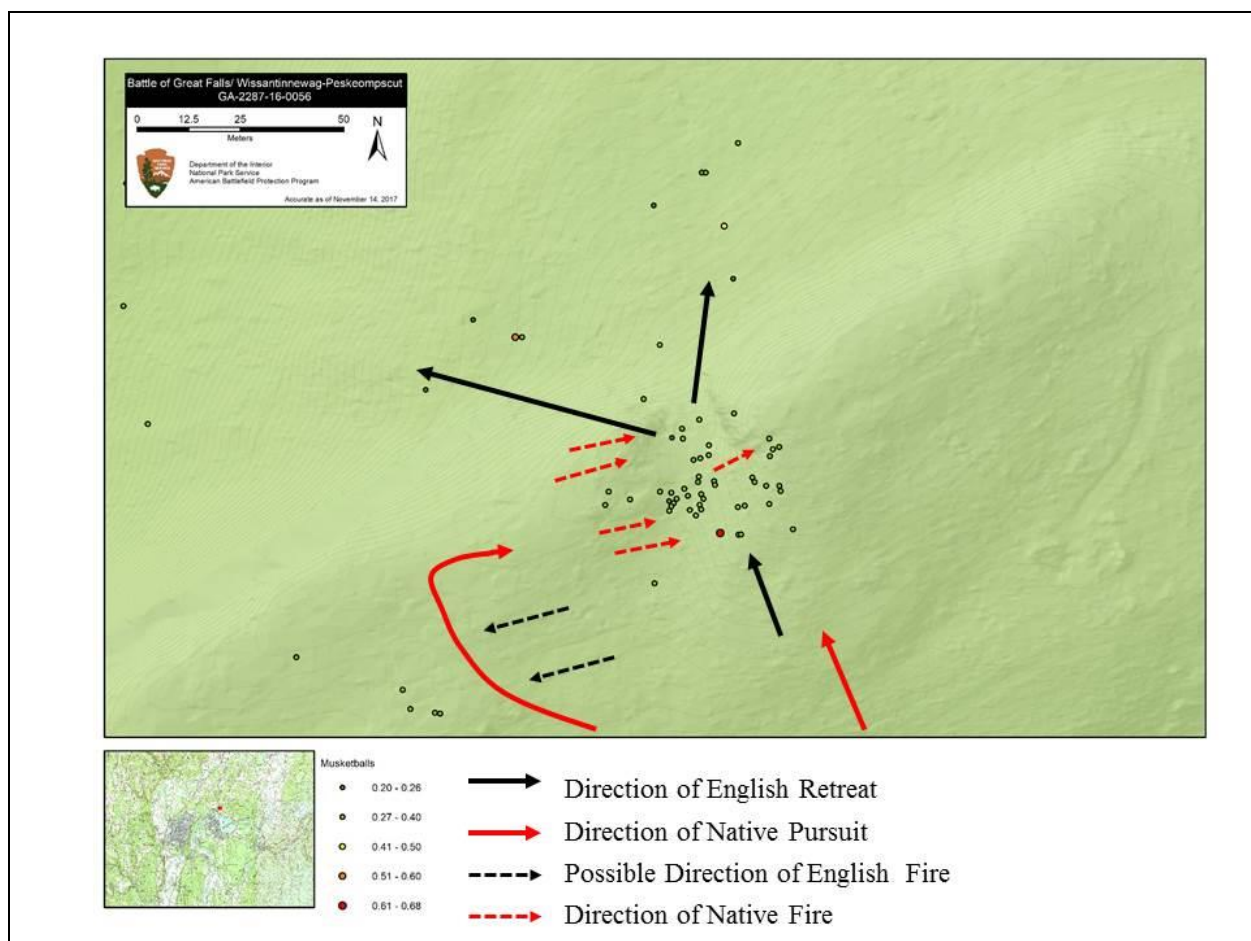
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<sup>229</sup> Jonathan Wells relayed his account of the Battle of Great Falls to the Reverend Stephen Wilson in his later years, circa 1730. Wells was a private soldier from Hadley, MA who was part of the 20 man company which stayed in the village when the majority of the company retreated. Wells' company was nearly cut off in their retreat. He was wounded during his retreat but survived the encounter. See: Daniel White **Wells** and Reuben Field Wells, *History of Hatfield, Massachusetts, in three parts* (Springfield, MA: F.C.H. Gibbons, 1910); Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook."



**Figure 58.** Locus C: Frequency and Percentage of Musket Ball Diameters.

A flanking attack scenario at the Mountain Gap is supported by the lack of musket balls between the western edge of Locus B and the 100 yards to the southeastern edge of Locus C. The lack of musket balls indicates a lull in the fighting until English forces reached the gap and as Native soldiers moved to intercept them in a flanking movement from the west. The overall pattern suggests that Native soldiers gained the higher ground on the southern edge of the gap and poured volleys of small shot into the English soldiers as they moved through the gap (Figure 59). There is no doubt the English must have taken casualties as they moved through the Mountain Gap.



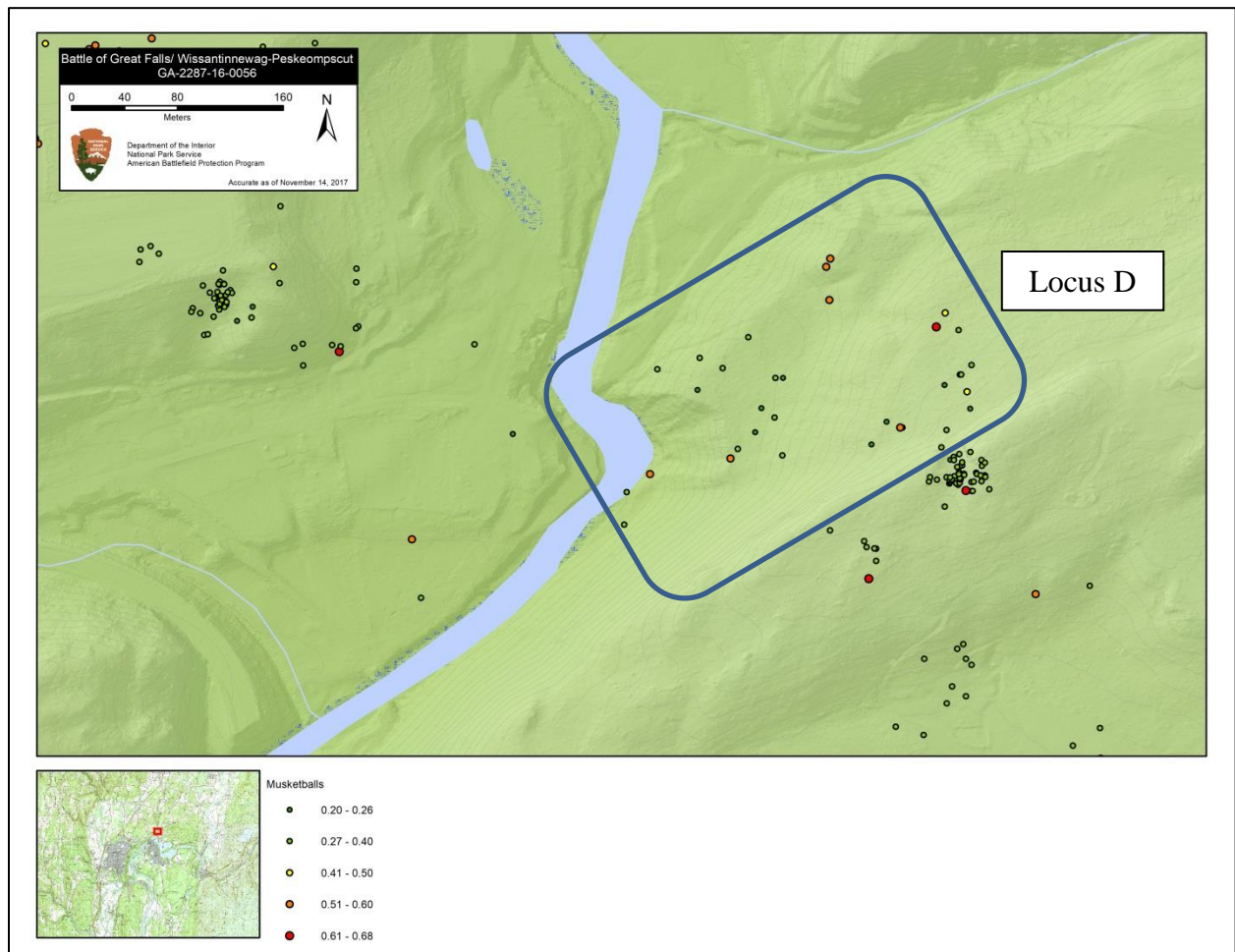
**Figure 59.** Locus C: Direction of Musket Ball Fire.

The second, smaller concentration of musket balls is located approximately 25 yards to the southwest of the gap and consists of one .62” round ball and six small shot in the .27” to .40” diameter range (Figure 58). This pattern suggests that English forces may have fired upon the group of Natives initiating the flanking movement.

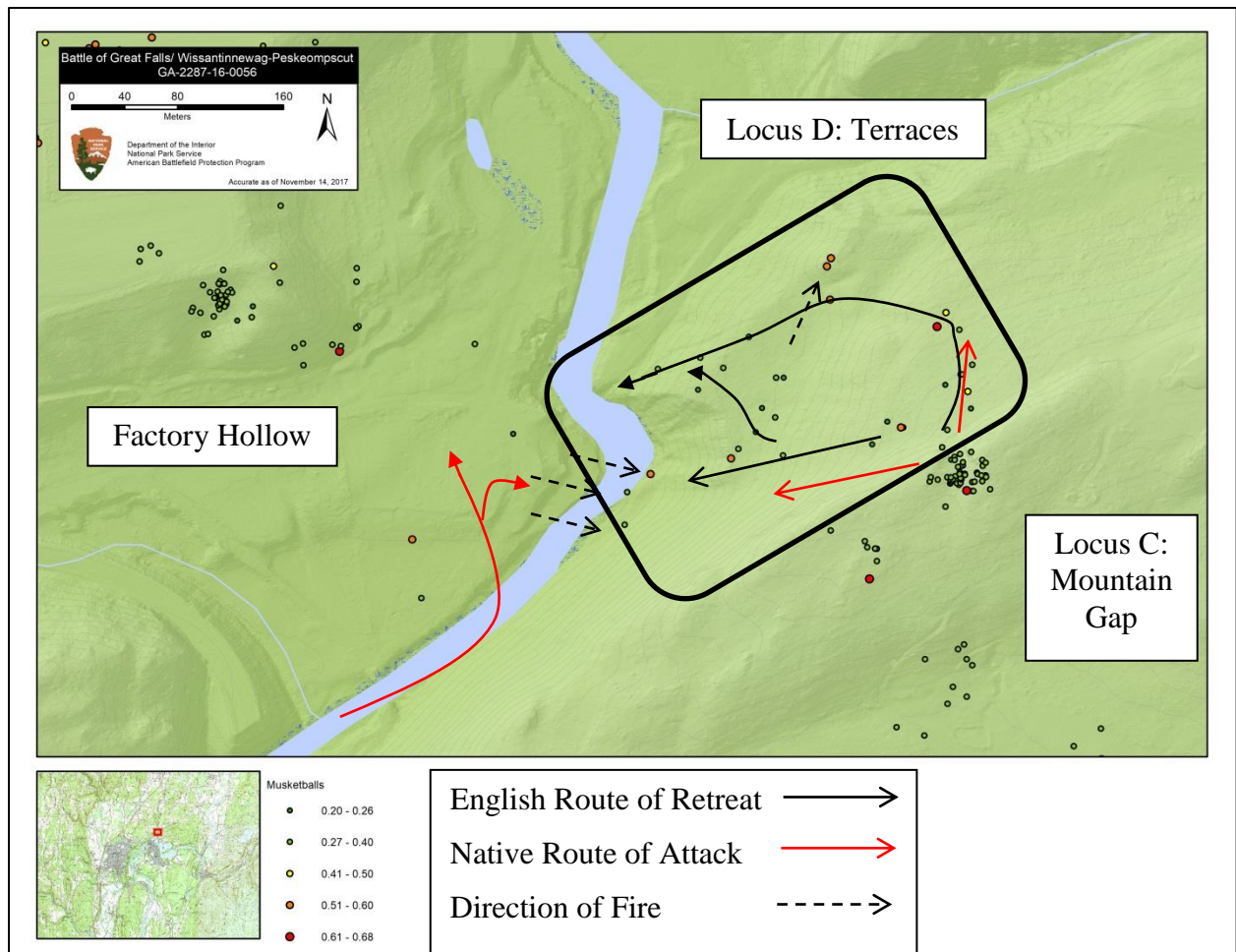
**Locus D: Terraces:** A total of 33 musket balls were recovered from Locus D the Terraces beginning at the western end of the Mountain Gap and extending 150 yards and eight acres west to the Fall River (Figures 44, 60). The Terraces are composed of three separate terraces interspersed by severe slopes as the topography descends to the Fall River. It is believed that most of the musket balls were fired by Native soldiers at the retreating 20 English soldiers. The recovered musket balls ranged from .22” to .64” diameter, of which 26 (79%) fell within the small shot category and seven were larger than .50” and were likely single shot musket balls.



Based on the musket ball distributions it appears that the English soldiers followed two routes of retreat as they descended the slope (Figure 61). The first distribution follows an east to west path directly downhill from the mountain gap, across the three terraces before dropping to the Fall River below. The second pattern follows a northeasterly then southwesterly arc to the terrace edge before descending along a slope to the Fall River below.



**Figure 60.** Locus D: Terraces, Musket Ball Distributions.



**Figure 61.** Locus D: Terraces, Routes of Retreat.

It is difficult to determine the direction of fire for most of the recovered musket balls and who fired them. One and perhaps two .56” diameter musket balls appear to have been fired from the southwest to northeast along the northern route of retreat, although it is unclear who fired them. It is tempting to infer it was fired by a Native soldier but there is no evidence to support this inference. It is also possible they were fired by the English at Natives on their flanks. There were two other musket balls recovered in the immediate vicinity; an impacted .54” and .56” diameter whose direction of fire could not be determined but it is suspected they too were fired from the southwest. All three musket balls may have been fired from the same firearm, or firearms of a similar bore size (approximately .56” to .58” caliber). A .60”, .31” and .37” diameter impacted musket balls were recovered at the bottom of the steep slope to the Fall River and could only have been fired from west to east from the west side of the Fall River. The

question is whether Turner's or Wells' group fired at the Native combatants descending the slope when they arrived at the English Assembly Area or were they fired by Native attackers who had already ascended the Fall River from the island.<sup>230</sup>

**Locus E: English Assembly/Horse Hitching Area:** Locus E is divided into two sections; a lower area consisting of two broad flat terraces at the 160 and 180-foot contour interval extending 100 to 200 yards west from the Fall River to the base of a steep incline at the 200-foot contour. This area is referred to as "Lower Factory Hollow" (Figures 44, 62). The incline rises quickly to the 260-foot contour interval at the terrace edge and then opens into a broad flat plain identified as Upper Factory Hollow (Figure 63). The incline would have been difficult for men on horseback to ascend or descend, particularly at speed, but the slope contain several east-west trending swales (areas of a depression or hollow) of significantly less slope that mounted soldiers could easily negotiate (Figures 62, 63, 64). Eighty-nine musket balls were recovered from the swales clearly indicating they were used by the English to exit the Lower Factory Hollow Area after retrieving their horses.

Locus E consists of two actions; where the English dismounted to begin their march to the village at Peskeompskut and where the English tied their horses to some small trees one quarter mile from where they dismounted. All historians who wrote about the Battle of Great Falls (including the MPMRC) drew their information about the battle in one form or another from the Reverend Stephen Williams' notebook.<sup>231</sup> Williams states:

y<sup>e</sup> English allightd from y<sup>r</sup> horses at a quarter of a mile distance from the Enemy, & tyd y<sup>r</sup> horses to Some young trees; and when it grew so light as y<sup>t</sup> y<sup>y</sup> were able to distinguish between y<sup>r</sup> friend & Enemies y<sup>y</sup> marchd up to ye wigwams, & fird into them."<sup>232</sup>

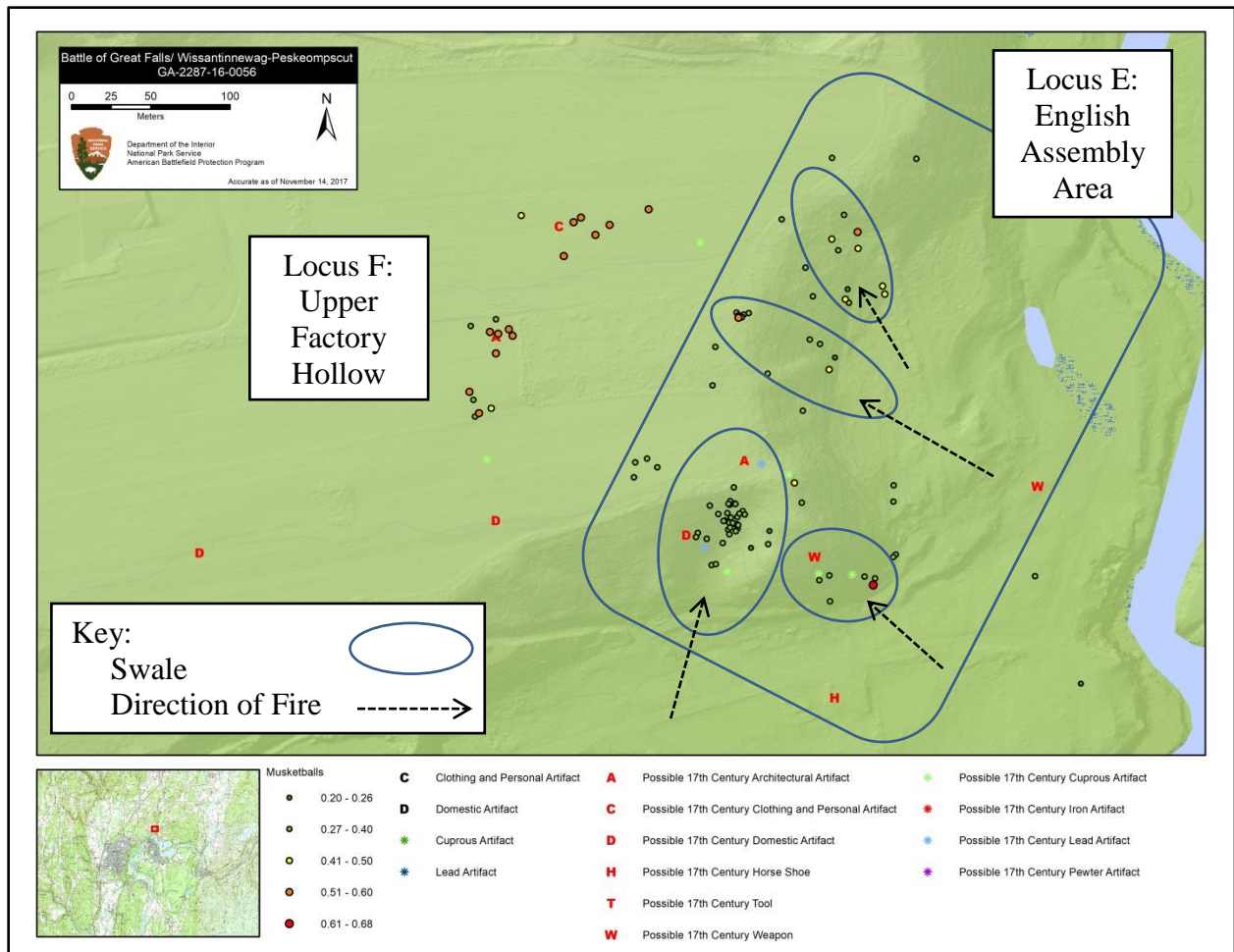
In this statement Williams clearly conveys the erroneous idea that the English tied their horses to some young trees one half mile from the Peskeompskut village. Although Williams took most of his material from interviews or manuscripts (primarily from Jonathan Wells) he also obtained some information from William Hubbard such as the reference to where the horses were tied.

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<sup>230</sup> The Native combatants would have come up from the river from Smead Island.

<sup>231</sup> James Russell Trumbull and Seth Pomeroy. *History of Northampton*, Vol. 1 (Northampton, MA: Press of Gazette Printing, Co., 1898), Pp. 333-336; George Sheldon. *History of Deerfield*, Vol. 1, Pp. 161-166.

<sup>232</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P. 13.



**Figure 62.** Locus E – Lower Factory Hollow.

Hubbard was the only seventeenth century historian to make mention of the English dismounting and tying their horses to some young trees. However, what Hubbard said was

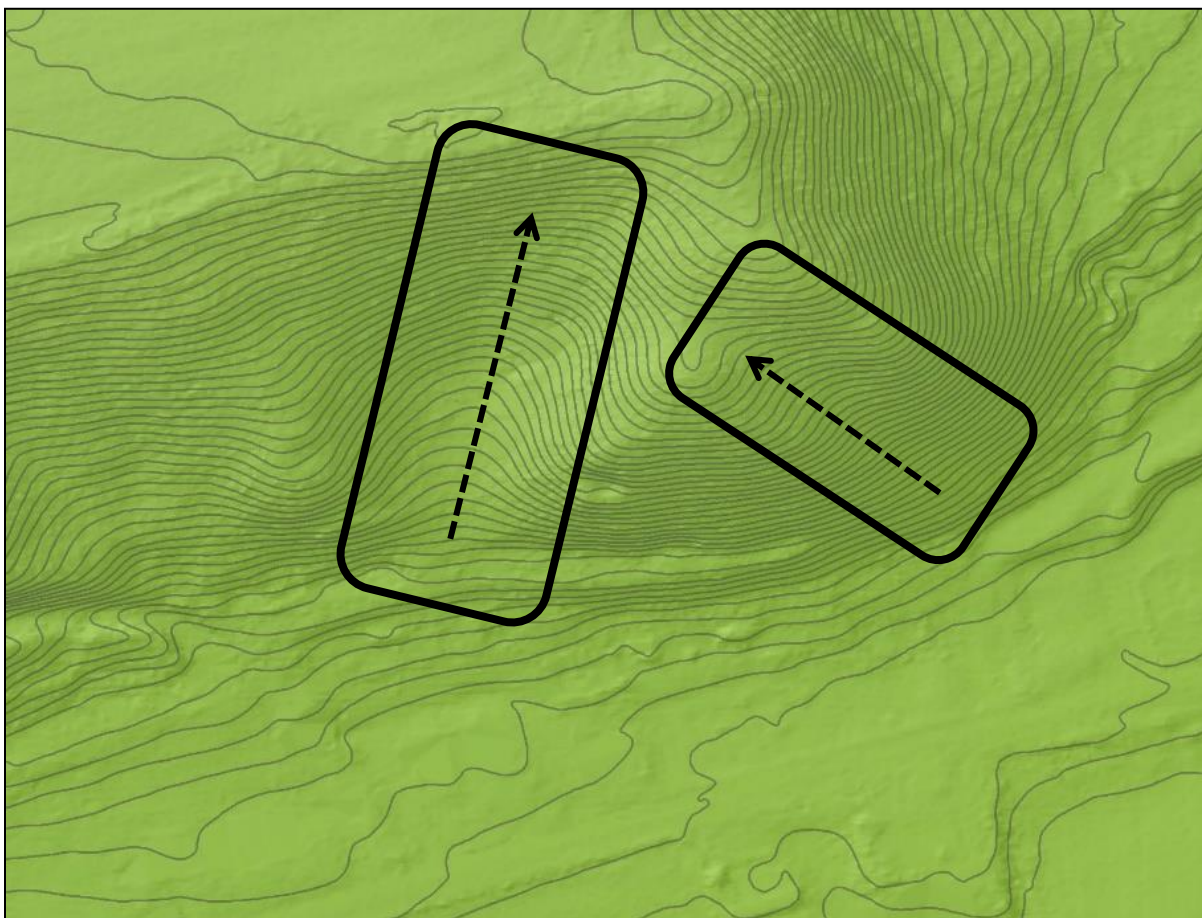
When they came near the Indians rendezvous, they alighted off their horses, and tied them to some young trees at a quarter of a mile distance, so marching up, they fired briskly into their wigwams.<sup>233</sup>

Hubbard clearly states that the sequence of events was; 1) the English dismounted, 2) they tied their horses to some young trees one quarter mile from where they dismounted, and 3) then made their way to the village. He did not say the English dismounted one quarter mile from the village. What Hubbard meant by “near the Indians rendezvous” is not clear. The Lower Factory Hollow Area is 0.6 miles from Riverside and typically a company of dragoons would dismount between

<sup>233</sup> Hubbard. *A Narrative*. P. 204.



one half to one mile from where they intended to attack. Hubbard does not indicate where the horses were tied and therefore the location could in theory be anywhere on the east or west side of the Fall River, as the one quarter mile note references the location of the trees, not the village. Presumably the English dismounted at or near where they intended to proceed on foot to the village. The young trees (saplings) provided a convenient way to tie the horses off even though they were located a quarter mile away from where the English dismounted. The English probably sent 15-20 men with the horses to keep watch on them (approximately 8 to 10 horses per man). Assuming the English force was 150, this would have reduced the attacking force to 135 to 130 soldiers.



**Figure 63.** Swales.

One final consideration regarding the possible location of the English Assembly Area is that the terrain on the east side of the Fall River would be very challenging for horses to negotiate. It would prove even more difficult if mounted English forces attempted to descend the steep slopes during a hasty retreat. In addition, the distribution of musket balls leading from

Lower to Upper Factory Hollow is confined to the swales. If the English were on foot and under attack they would have simply have gone up any part of the slope and not confined themselves to the swales. Another piece of evidence that suggests the English Assembly Area is in Lower Factory Hollow and that the English were mounted when they reached Upper Factory Hollow is the pattern of musket balls recovered in Upper Factory Hollow. The distribution of musket balls in Upper Factory Hollow ends very abruptly just 100 yards from the edge of the terrace leading down to Lower Factory Hollow suggesting the English were already mounted and quickly outpaced their Native pursuers. Although limited physical evidence was found that directly supports the hypothesis that the Lower Factory Hollow area is where the English tied their horses (where they dismounted is not at all clear), it is the most reasonable inference based on the battle narratives and the musket ball distributions discussed above.



**Figure 64.** Swale. View Downslope West to East. Pink Flags Denote Musket Ball Locations.

No horseshoes or possible tack was recovered east of the Fall River that could potentially be dated to the seventeenth century. Ironically, two horse bits were recovered in Locus C (the Mountain Gap), but X-rays clearly indicated they were modern as they did not contain any hand



wrought components (Figure 65). One horse shoe was recovered from the Terraces but an X-ray indicated it was cast and not hand wrought. Two horseshoes were recovered in the Lower Factory Hollow Area, one of which was modern, but the second was hand wrought suggesting the possibility it could be seventeenth century (Figure 66). Seventeenth century horseshoes are highly variable with respect to shape and width, and are often (but not always) wider than later eighteenth-century horseshoes. Figures 67 – 69 depict several horseshoes from solid late seventeenth century contexts. Figure 67 are two metal detected horseshoes from the Wheeler’s Surprise ambush site (August 2-4, 1675) in New Braintree, Massachusetts. The site is the location where 100 Quabaug and Nipmuck Indians ambushed a mounted contingent of 22 English and Praying Indians sent to negotiate with the Quabaug at the beginning of Philip’s War. The group was attacked as they were passing along a narrow trail between a steep hill and a swamp. Eight English and several horses were killed trying to escape up the hill. Both Horseshoes (and several musket balls and a shoe buckle) were metal detected from the hillside and are on display in the New Braintree Historical Society. Figure 68 depicts two horseshoe fragments from Brookfield, Massachusetts which was attacked in a three day siege just hours after Wheeler’s Surprise.



**Figure 65.** Modern Horse Bit.



**Figure 66.** Hand Wrought Horseshoe (L) and Modern Horseshoe (R) From Lower Factory Hollow.



**Figure 67.** Horseshoes from the Wheeler's Surprise Site, New Braintree, MA.

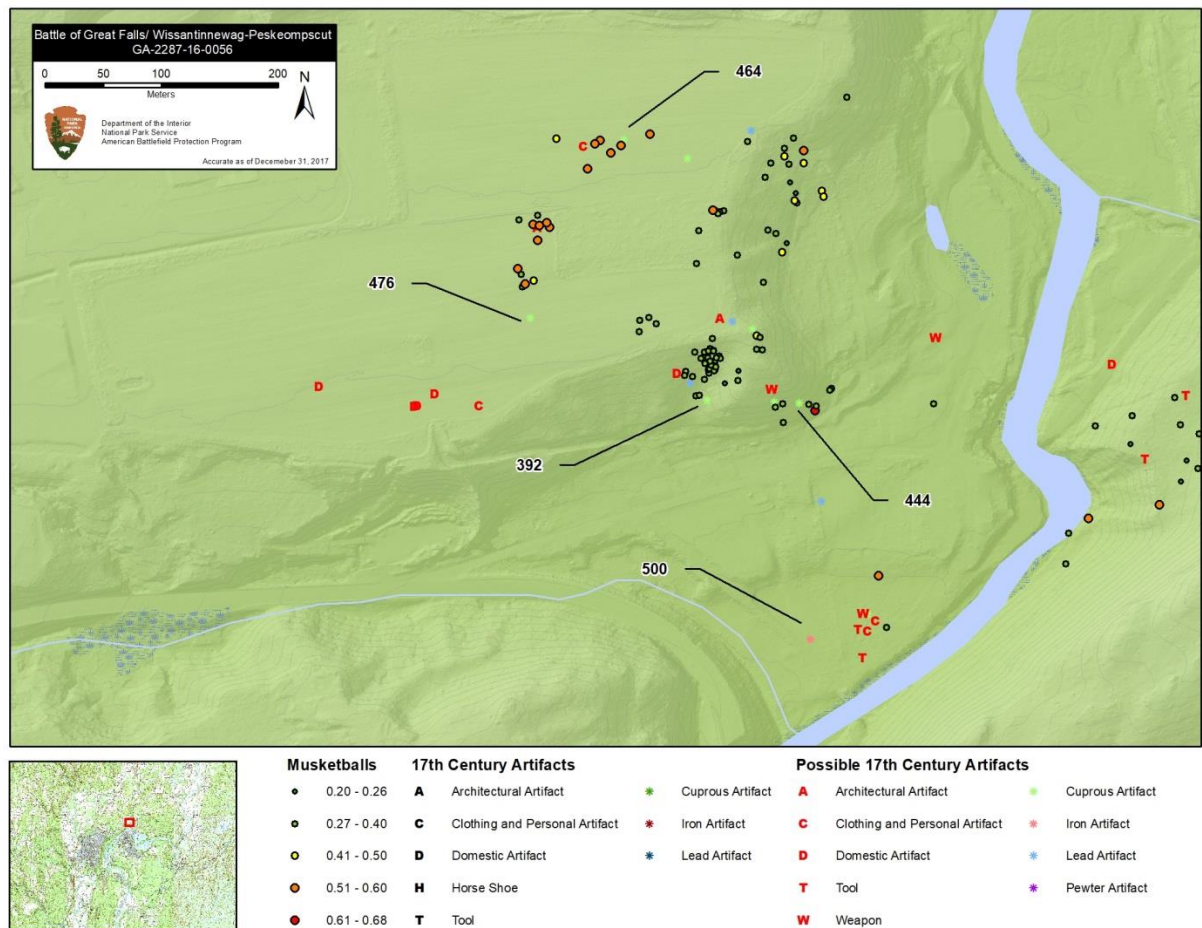


**Figure 68.** Horseshoes from Brookfield, MA.

The hand wrought horseshoe recovered from Lower Factory Hollow is not very wide but it is similar to one of the shoes recovered from Wheeler’s Surprise, suggesting it could date to the late seventeenth century. Several other objects were recovered in Lower Factory Hollow that could be horse tack. Two hand wrought iron buckles were recovered from the lower terrace adjacent to the Fall River in the Lower Factory Hollow Area, but unfortunately it is not possible to distinguish between late seventh, eighteenth, or early nineteenth century hand wrought buckles (Figure 69). Several wrought iron and brass rings were recovered from Lower and Upper factory Hollow that could be from saddles or other equipment (Figures 70, 75).



**Figure 69.** Hand Wrought Iron Buckles.



**Figure 70.** Locations of Brass and Hand Wrought Rings.

There are a few clues in the historic record as to what transpired when the English reached the Assembly Area:

...for some of the enemy fell upon the guards that kept the horses.<sup>234</sup>

In the meanwhile, a party of Indians from an Island (whose coming on shore might easily have been prevented, and the Souldiers before they set out from Hadley were earnestly admonished to take care about that matter) assaulted our men.<sup>235</sup>

<sup>234</sup> Hubbard. *Narrative of the Indian Wars*. P. 206.

<sup>235</sup> Mather. *Brief History*. P. 49

...ab<sup>t</sup> 20 men, y<sup>t</sup> tarried behind to fire at some indians yt were comeing over y<sup>e</sup> River and were left by y<sup>e</sup> company, and were forcd to dispute ye point wth y<sup>e</sup> Enemy a considerable time before y<sup>y</sup> cd recover y<sup>t</sup> horses.<sup>236</sup>

...but y<sup>e</sup> Indians followd y<sup>e</sup> & some came across way & some betwe y<sup>e</sup> & so y<sup>y</sup> fought upon a retreat being dividd into severall companies or parties being separatd by y<sup>e</sup> Indians.<sup>237</sup>

Turner's force of 110-120 men (not including Wells group or the horse guard) may have come under attack by the group of Natives from the island as they were making for their horses. Alternatively Turner's force may have already retrieved their horses and were on their way south to White Ash Swamp when the Native group from Smead Island came up the Fall River and split the English Force between Turner's and Wells' groups. It appears that by the time Wells' group reached their horses the guards were under attack, and Wells' group had to fight their way to the horses. At this point Wells' group faced attacks from their front as well the rear.

There should be a very recognizable signature of musket balls to mark the location where the English tied their horses. While there was a very high concentration of musket balls on the slopes (swales) leading from Lower to Upper Factory Hollow, only three were recovered on the terraces in Lower Factory Hollow (Figure 62). This could be interpreted as evidence that the horse tie down area is located elsewhere, or the lack of musket balls could be because there is so much iron from industrial activity in lower Factory Hollow that it masked the lead musket balls. We believe it is the latter.

A total of 92 musket balls were recovered from Locus E: English Assembly Area, 89 from the incline (mostly from the swales) leading up to Upper Factory Hollow and three from the terraces in Lower Factory Hollow. Of the 89 musket balls recovered from the swales, 89 percent (n= 85) fell within the small shot range (Figure 71). A high percentage of low diameter musket balls recovered from the swales exhibited two or more facets indicating they were fired as multiple loads of shot.

One scenario that presents itself to interpret the concentration of musket balls within the swales is that groups of 10-15 English horses were strung out over a relatively long distance in the terraces of Lower Factory Hollow (perhaps 200+ yards) to prevent kicking and biting. The

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<sup>236</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P. 15.

<sup>237</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P. 9.

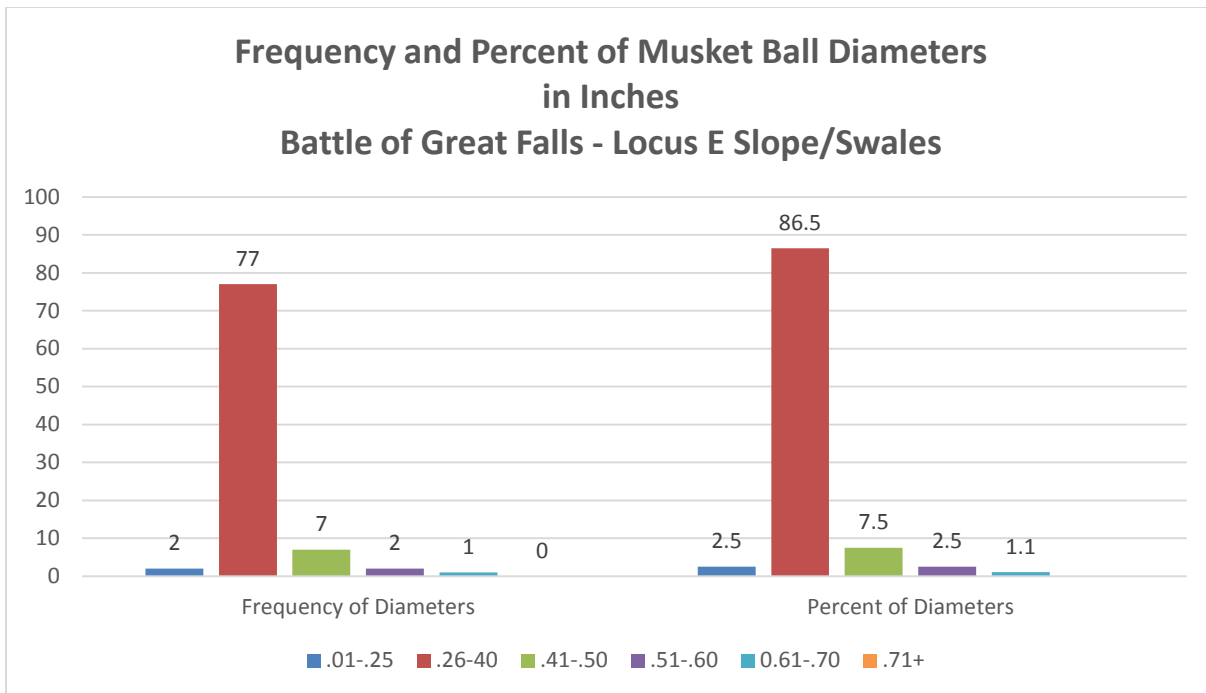
swales are distributed over 260 yards, and all the swales but the one furthest to the south were used to escape Lower Factory Hollow based on the heavy concentrations of musket balls within each swale. If the horses were tied in small groups or clusters (approximately 7 to 10, or 15), as the soldiers retrieved them they may have headed for the swale nearest them. It may also suggest the horses were tied no further south than the most southern swale used as an escape route.

Only three musket balls were recovered from the terrace in Lower Factory Hollow: one impacted .34” and one .56” diameter from the lower terrace, and one dropped .20” diameter from the upper terrace. It is difficult to interpret the pattern of musket balls recovered from the terraces in Lower Factory Hollow. Does it mean that little combat occurred in the area and the Horse Hitching Area is located elsewhere? Or is the lack of musket balls the result of extremely reduced visibility of lead against the thousands of iron objects in Lower Factory Hollow. It is clear from the distribution of musket balls in the Terraces leading down to the Fall River that the English (probably Wells’ group) were under heavy attack and the Natives were likely pursuing them across the Fall River so it’s odd that so few musket balls were recovered from the terraces in Lower Factory Hollow. Additional surveys of the Lower Factory Hollow Area will be conducted during the next phase of research to hopefully clarify these issues.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Commonly recovered non-battle related artifacts included nails, chain links, ox shoes, domestic architectural hardware, and a wide range of iron scrap and unidentifiable fragments. These iron objects were roughly contemporary with the Factory Hollow community which developed between early 1800’s through the early twentieth century corresponding with the operation of Fall’s Mill (ca. 1820’s – 1920’s).





**Figure 71.** Distribution of Musket Balls Locus E Slope/Swales.

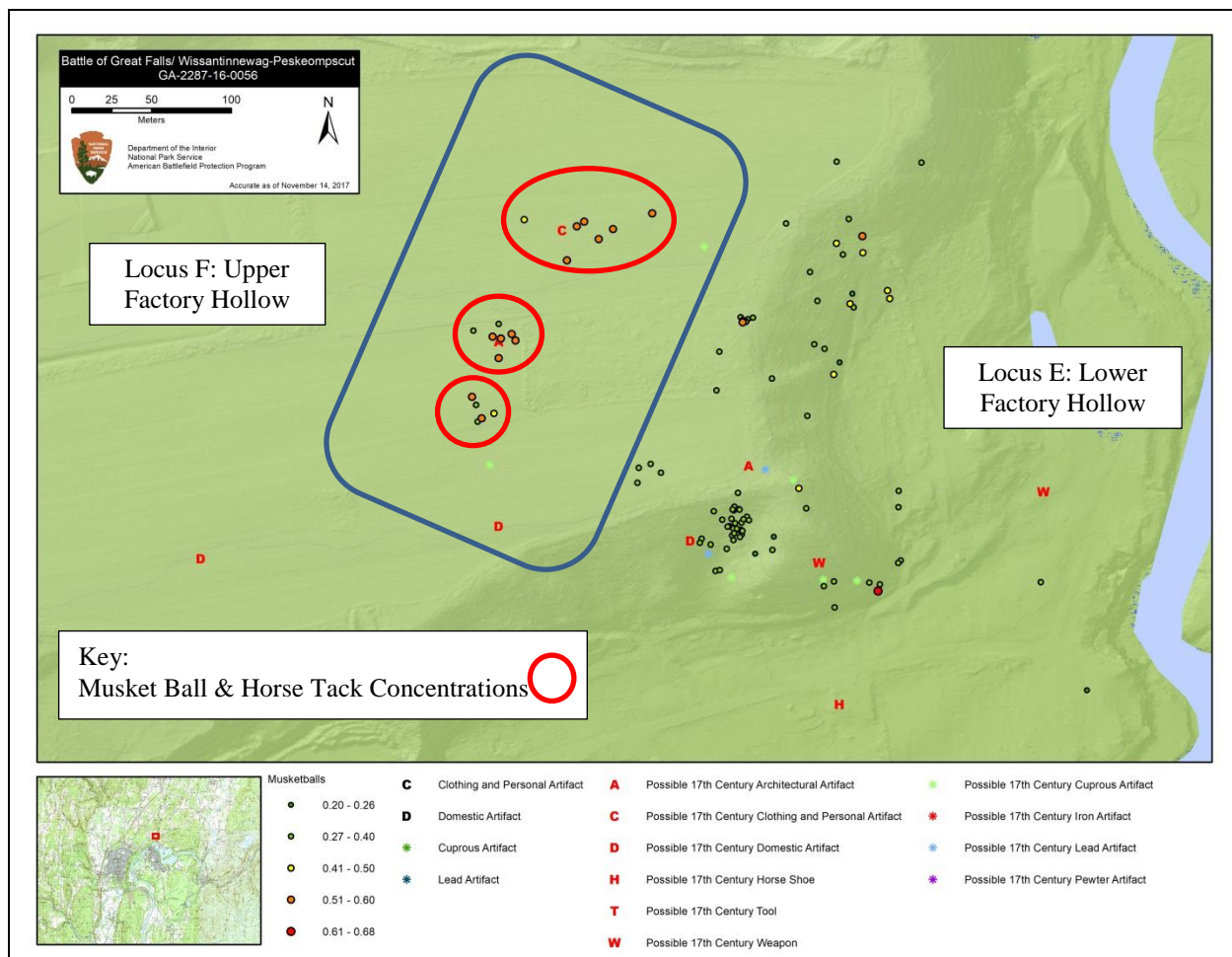
A direction of fire from west to east (upslope) could be determined for many of the musket balls recovered from the swales. The vast majority of the musket balls are believed to have been fired by the Native combatants as it is unlikely that the mounted English would have had time to fire and reload as they rushed up the slope. If so the Native attackers were initially close enough to the English to discharge multiple loads of small shot as they ascended the swales suggesting they had only recently mounted their horses and did not yet have the time to outdistance the Native soldiers. This situation changed dramatically when the English reached the Upper Factory Hollow Area as the pattern of musket balls ends abruptly suggesting the English were able to quickly outdistance their Native pursuers.

***Locus F: Upper Factory Hollow:*** Locus F Upper Factory Hollow is bounded to the east and north by a very steep incline slope rising from 200 to 260 foot interval, which is the boundary with Locus E. The western and southern boundary is determined by the distribution of musket balls.<sup>239</sup> A total of 19 musket balls and possible seventeenth century horse tack

<sup>239</sup> All of Locus F – Upper Factory Hollow, is located in one parcel of land, 24 Factory Hollow, which is currently used as a squash field.

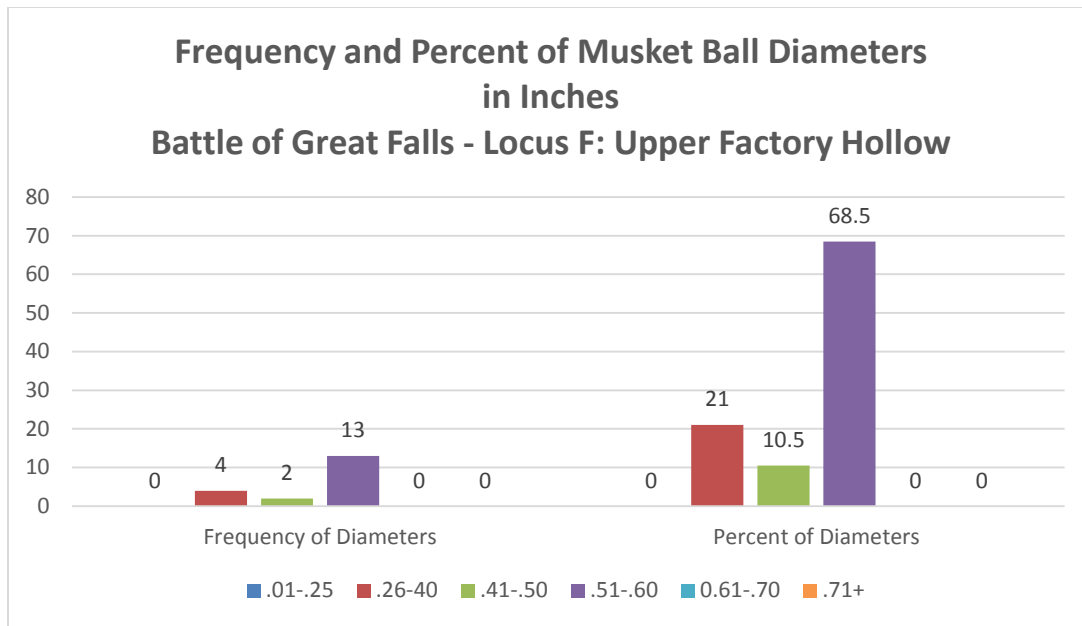
components were recovered from Locus F in three distinct concentrations spread over 160 yards and 50 and 80 yards apart (Figures 44, 72). The three concentrations contain predominately large diameter musket balls (.52" - .53"), brass and iron rings believed to be parts of a saddle, and an iron buckle that could either be related to horse tack or a personal item (Figure 75). This concentration of musket balls differs from others patterns encountered on the battlefield in several regards. Thirteen (68.5%) of the musket balls were .52" (n=1) or .53" (n=12) diameter and several exhibited evidence of a firing hemisphere indicating that they were singly discharged. The majority of musket balls within each concentration were large round ball with only a few small shot (Figure 73). There is a distance of 100 yards of ground with no artifacts between the three concentrations and the rim of the slope leading to Locus E - English Assembly Area (Figure 74).

There are several scenarios which could account for this pattern of musket balls. During this phase of the battle, mounted English soldiers ascended the steep slope from Lower Factory Hollow using the swales to escape the Native soldiers in close pursuit. Upon reaching the flat plateau at the top of the slope the English soldiers rode as rapidly as possible to put distance between them and their attackers, who reached the top of the slope soon after and opened fire on the English while they were still within musket range. The distribution of eleven small shot and one .59" musket ball along the rim of the slope immediately adjacent to the swales may be the result of either Native soldiers firing on English soldiers in the rear of Turner's company who were the last to scale the slope to the plateau at Locus F, or English soldiers firing on Native soldiers who pursued them up the slope, or some combination of both.



**Figure 72.** Locus F: Upper Factory Hollow Musket Ball Concentrations.

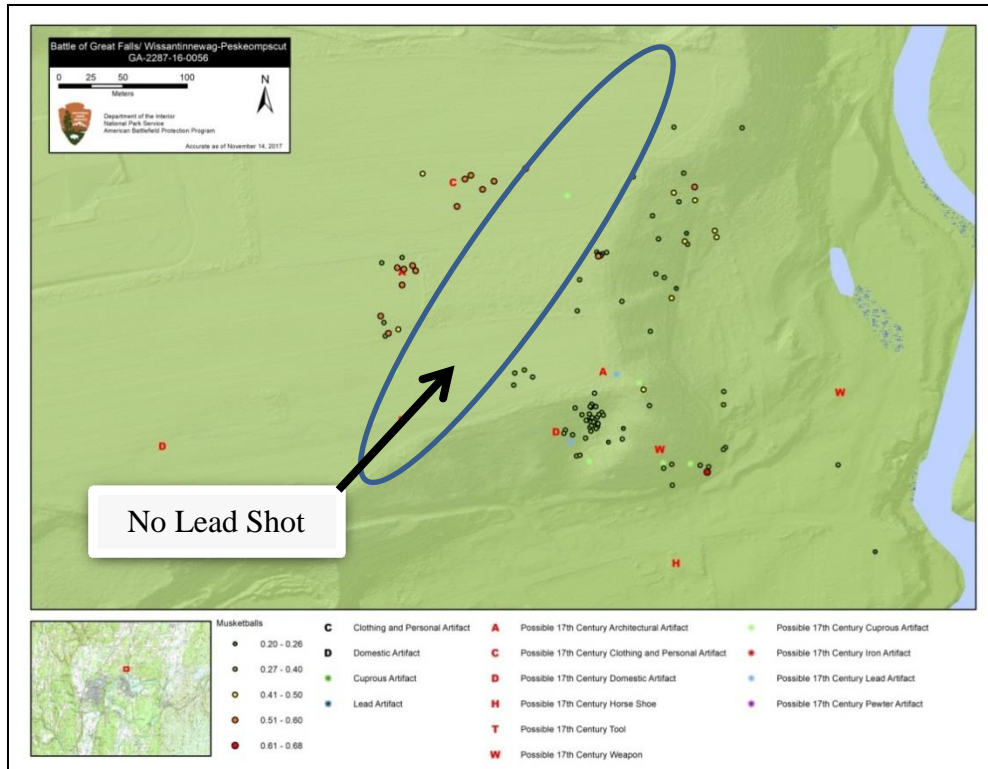
The three concentrations of larger musket balls with horse tack located 100 yards to the west of the ridge appears to be the result of longer range musket fire likely originating from Native soldiers who were now positioned along the edge of the slope leading down to Lower Factory Hollow and firing east to west (Figure 72). The three concentrations of large musket balls is interesting as it likely indicates separate and stationary targets, otherwise the musket balls would be distributed in a wider pattern across the area. The location of the musket balls 100 yards west of the terrace edge, and the lack of any musket balls recovered in the 100 yard interval between the shot concentrations and the terrace edge indicates that there were no targets fired upon between the terrace edge and the musket ball concentrations (Figure 74).



**Figure 69.** Locus F – Upper Factory Hollow, Frequency and Percent of Musket Ball Diameters.

The general lack of small-shot among the several concentrations is also significant as small-shot loads are generally ineffective beyond 40 or 50 yards as the shot patterns spreads so far at those distances it would be hard to hit a target and do any damage. This again reinforces the argument that the concentrations of large musket balls indicate that the shots were fired at some distance at stationary targets.

If small shot were fired at any distance beyond 20 feet it would be spread over a large area. The presence of the small shot within the concentrated areas suggests they were fired at close range. The English may have been initially fired upon with larger diameter ball from the terrace edge and then when they were disabled the Natives fired upon them at close range. One explanation for the concentrations of musket balls and horse tack is that several English soldiers and/or their horses were hit and fell which drew Native gunfire to their positions, resulting in the several musket ball concentrations approximately 100 yards west of the ridge. The combination of concentrations of large musket balls, horse tack remains, and a seventeenth century iron buckle fragment suggest a distinct battlefield event in which Native soldiers positioned to the east near the ridgeline concentrated fire on at least three English soldiers who may have been taking cover behind their downed horses.



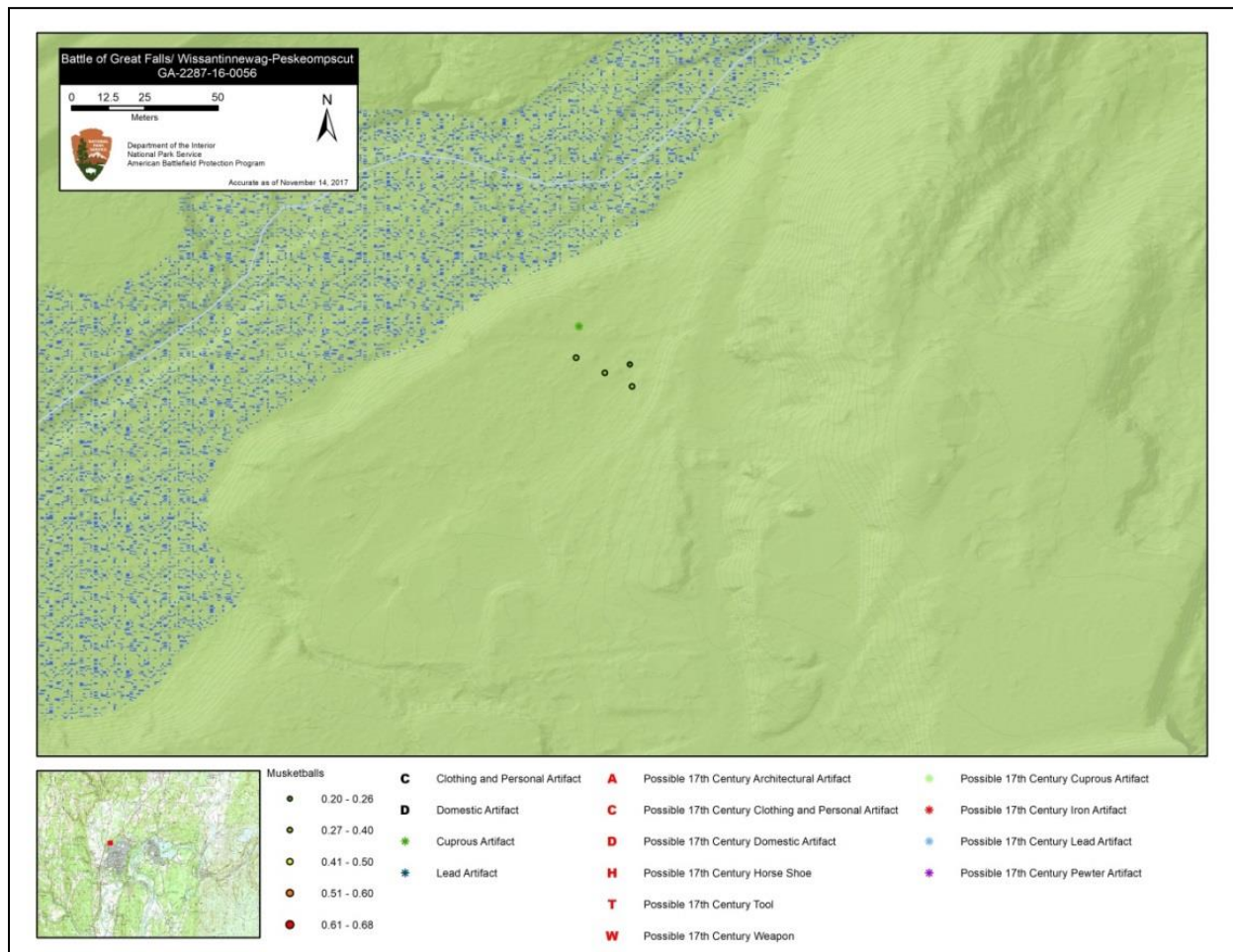
**Figure 70.** Locus F – Upper Factory Hollow Detailing Area Where No Lead Shot Was Recovered.



**Figure 71.** Possible Horse Tack Components.

**Locus G: Cherry Rum Brook:** A total of four small-shot was recovered from Locus G – Cherry Rum Brook, ranging from .22” to .35” diameter. Locus G was only surveyed for a few hours resulting in the four pieces of lead shot and one cuprous scrap (Figure 44, 76). It is

presumed that future survey work would result in additional battle related artifacts. This area was surveyed on the last day of fieldwork to try and determine which side of the Cherry Rum Brook was used by the English during the retreat. The musket balls were recovered on the south bank of the brook indicating that at least in this area the English used the south side. It remains to be seen if this pattern will continue three miles east to the beginning of the White Ash Swamp.



**Figure 72.** Locus G – Cherry Rum Brook Artifact Distributions.

Little can be discerned from this small concentration of musket balls, other than it is consistent with small-shot patterns encountered elsewhere on the battlefield and is likely evidence of combat during the English retreat toward the Green River 550 yards to the west. It is unclear if the small shot was fired by English or Native forces. During the English approach to Peskeompskut, Turner’s company crossed the Green River, continued on an easterly march following Cherry Rum Brook, which eventually led them to White Ash Swamp Brook, and Fall



Brook which empties into the Fall River. Most of the English forces likely followed this same route back towards the Green River as they did not know the area very well.

**Locus H: Deerfield Ford:** Locus H – Deerfield Ford is bounded on the north by a deep ravine that would have prevented movement across or through it by horse. The English would have had to swing to the west and then back easterly in their approach to the Deerfield Ford. The locus is bounded on the east and south by a terrace edge overlooking the Green and Deerfield Rivers and steep slope that drops 50 feet from the terrace to the Green and Deerfield Rivers. The secondary ford used by the English in their approach and retreat is located just below Locus H. After Captain Turner was killed at the Green River Ford, the remnants of the company commanded by Lieutenant Holyoke continued to retreat 2.4 miles to the Deerfield River Ford along a broad flat plain bordered on the west by Deerfield Mountain and on the east by the Green River. As the English may not have been familiar with the landscape they probably kept the Green River in view on their left as they retreated to the Deerfield River.

Locus H yielded a total of 34 musket balls, 32 were recovered from a flat plain overlooking the Green and Deerfield Rivers and two on the slope leading to the secondary ford over the Deerfield River. The majority of the musket balls recovered from the plain were recovered within an area of approximately 0.5 acres. The main ford was just east of the confluence of the Green and Deerfield Rivers and fairly close to Cheapside where a Native village (and possibly a fort) was located at the time of the battle. The secondary ford was located 500 feet west of the primary ford (Figures 44, 77):

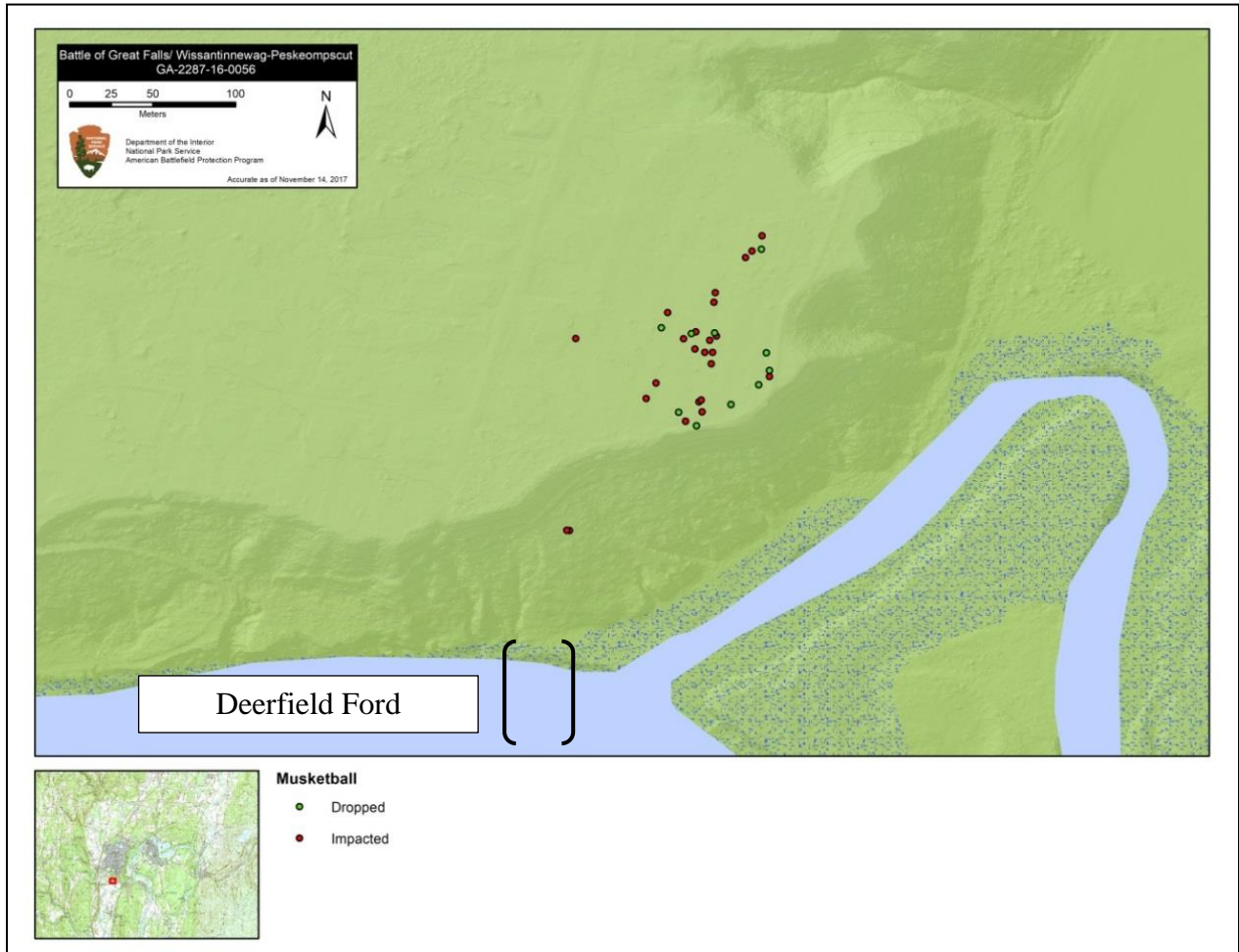
...[The English] marched y<sup>e</sup> dead of y<sup>e</sup> night, by Deerfd and passd by y<sup>e</sup> indians y<sup>t</sup> dwelt \_ at cheapside & ye noise was heard by the indian watchman, who informd y<sup>e</sup> Indians y<sup>t</sup> he heard horses pass along, upon which y<sup>e</sup> indians went (wth a lightd torch) to y<sup>e</sup> usuall path y<sup>t</sup> crossd Green River (but the army had missd y<sup>e</sup> usuall path & crossd y<sup>e</sup> river abt 30 rods [500 ft] higher) & not observing any tracks concluded y<sup>e</sup> watchman was mistaken and y<sup>t</sup> it was moose y<sup>t</sup> he heard & so continu'd quiet & did not send \_ to inform y<sup>e</sup> indians above wch they cd easily have done.<sup>240</sup>

Unlike other actions identified on the battlefield, an almost equal amount of small-shot (n=15) and large diameter musket balls (i.e. over .45" diameter, n=19) were recovered from

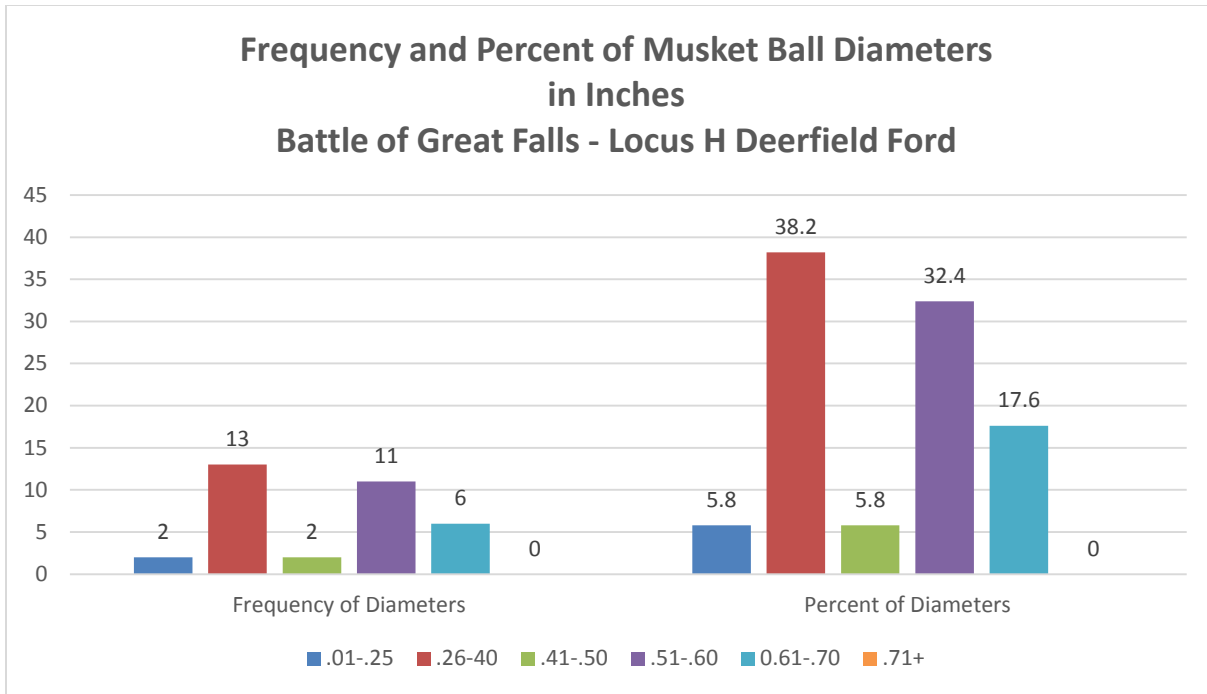
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<sup>240</sup> Thomas. "Rev. Stephen Williams's Notebook." P. 13.

Locus H (Figure 78). Another interesting pattern is that nearly a third of the musket balls (n=10) were dropped, 90% (n=9) were .45” diameter or greater indicating a fair amount of firing and reloading at targets some distance away (Figures 77, 79, 80).

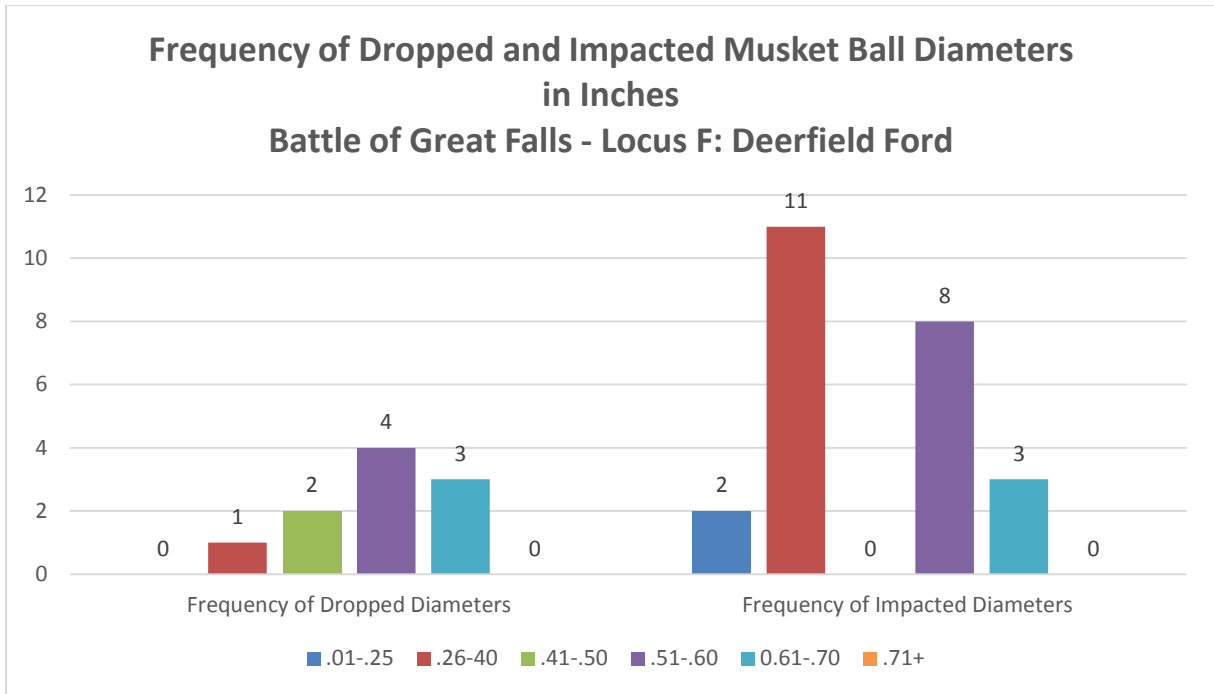


**Figure 73.** Locus H: Deerfield Ford, Distribution of Dropped and Impacted Musket Balls.



**Figure 78.** Locus H – Deerfield Ford, Frequency and Percent of Musket Ball Diameters

The large and small musket balls were fairly evenly distributed throughout Locus H. The distribution of musket balls is fairly concentrated and indicates that a group of English was bottlenecked and giving and receiving fire as they were waiting to descend a narrow trail to the slope leading down to the ford. The English may have been firing at a contingent of Natives who had pursued them from the Green River Ford. If so, there should be large diameter impacted musket balls to the west and north of the locus resulting from English counter fire. Of the ten dropped musket balls six were located immediately adjacent to the terrace edge. This pattern may indicate the English were firing and reloading at Natives below the terrace edge (perhaps from Cheapside) along the Green River or at the Deerfield River Ford. The impacted musket balls indicate that whoever held the position on the terrace was taking heavy fire and the high percentage of dropped and impacted large diameter musket balls indicates that the two sets of combatants were some distance from each other.



**Figure 74.** Frequency of Dropped and Impacted Musket Ball Diameters.

300-TFALLS

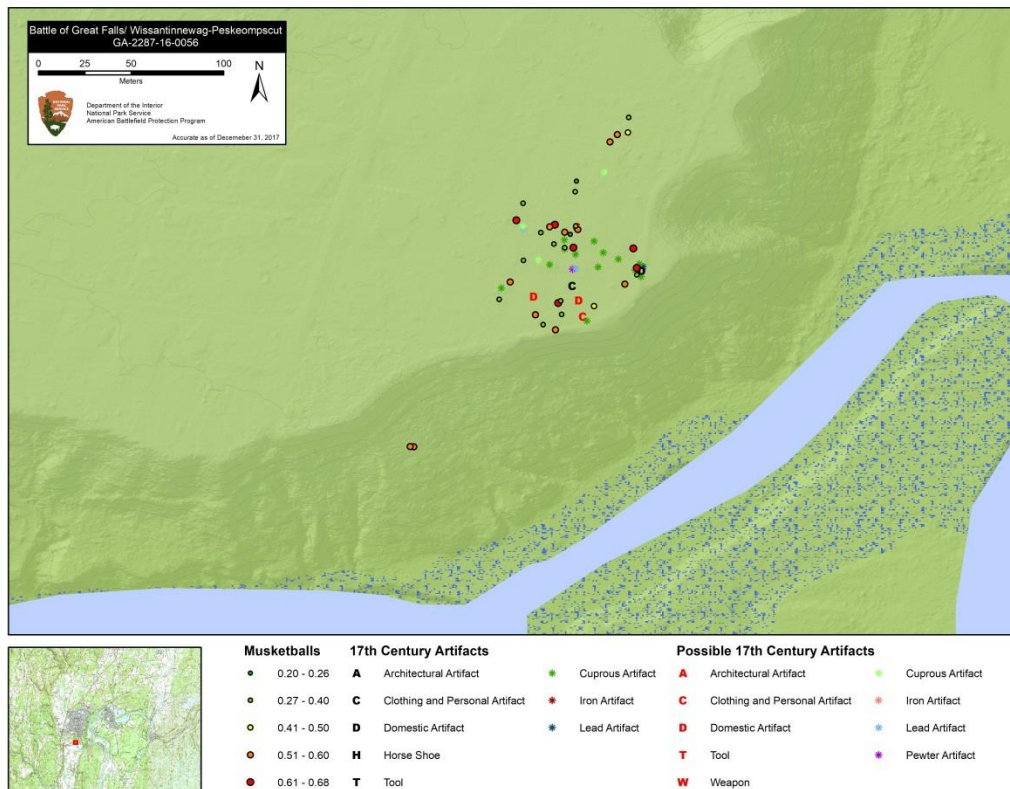


**Figure 80.** Locus H Dropped and Impacted Large Diameter Musket Balls.

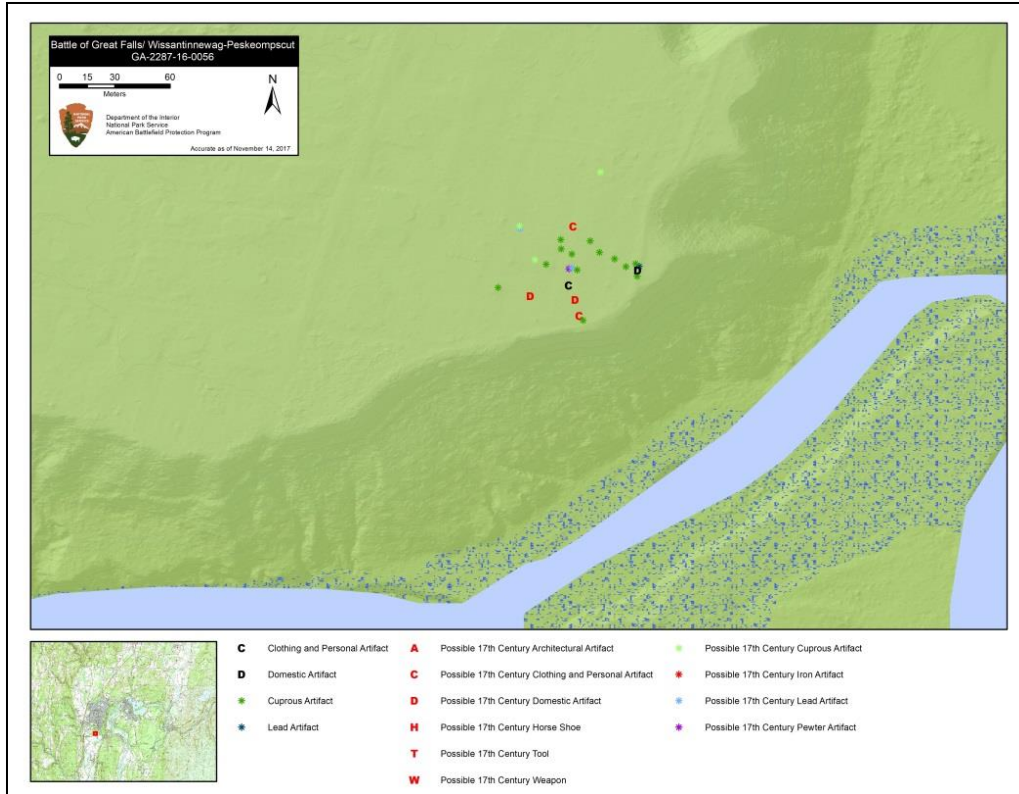
A seventeenth century domestic site was also identified at Locus H based on a concentration of domestic objects. There is a high degree of spatial overlap between the battle

related and domestic objects but the domestic site is not believed to have been occupied at the time of the battle or the English would have encountered the inhabitants as they made their way up the plain from the Deerfield River Ford (Figure 81). No sufficiently diagnostic objects were recovered to narrow the time period beyond seventeenth century.

A total of 30 objects were recovered from an area of approximately 0.6 acres. The objects consisted of 13 pieces of brass scrap from reprocessing brass trade kettles (Figures 84, 85). The presence of brass scrap is generally considered to be a good indicator of a seventeenth century Native domestic site. Three of the brass scrap exhibit cut or chisel marks indicative of reprocessing (Figures 84, 85). Other objects included a lead bale/cloth seal, brass and pewter spoon fragments, a lead bead, brass ring, lead stud or cufflink, lead scrap, and unidentified wrought Iron (Figures 83, 86).



**Figure 81.** Locus H - Battle Related and Domestic Objects.



**Figure 82.** Locus H Distribution of Domestic Objects.



**Figure 83.** Locus H Domestic Objects; #516 Pewter Spoon Bowl, #520 Brass Ring, #514 Lead Bead, #521 Lead Stud, #538 lead scrap, #546 Brass Spoon, #565 Lead Bale/Cloth Seal, #568 Unidentified Brass Object, #528 Unidentified Lead Object, #549 Wrought Iron Fragment, #557 Unidentified Brass Object.





**Figure 84.** Locus H Brass Scrap Fragments.



**Figure 85.** Locus H Brass Scrap with Score Mark.



**Figure 86.** Lead Bead.

## **VII. Summary and Conclusion**

The Battle of Great Falls/Peskeompskut is best conceived of as two separate battles; the English attack on the Peskeompskut Village and the battle that took place as the English retreated 6.5 miles to the Deerfield River. Although only 1.25 miles (20 percent) of the English route of retreat has been surveyed, the results have proven to be significant in a number of ways. The integration of the historical and archeological records has provided many new insights into the battle that turned out to be far more complex and nuanced than originally anticipated. Where the historical record was lacking in many details of the battle, the archeological record provided significant information documenting the hotly contested and continuous fighting along the English route of retreat which was interspersed with “pulses” of intense fighting at specific locales. The recovery of 246 musket balls along the first 0.75 miles of the retreat clearly indicates that there was heavy fighting as the English approached the White Ash Swamp where the historical sources indicate the battle intensified even more as the English were attacked on all sides. The brief surveys along the Cherry Rum Brook and on the terrace overlooking the Deerfield River Ford also indicates the fighting may have been continuous along the route of retreat and intensified at certain chokepoints or bottle necks such as the White Ash Swamp, and Green and Deerfield River Fords. The identification of battle events along the south bank of

Cherry Run Brook and at the Green (evidenced in historical battle narratives) and Deerfield River Fords is significant as the results help to conceptualize the remainder of the battle and plan the next phase of the battlefield survey.

The archeology of the battle event has added an important perspective that is lacking in the battle narratives – evidence of a series of well-planned counterattacks that led to a Native victory in the final phase of the battle. The continuous and intense fighting along the first 0.75 miles of the battle is certainly not reflected in the battle narratives nor is the Native flanking and other movements that are only reflected in the distribution of battle related objects recovered from the mountain gap, terraces, and swales. The counterattacks by the Coalition forces proved to be far more sophisticated than previously believed, and our understanding of Native warfare and leadership on the battlefield is anticipated to continue to evolve with the next phase of the battlefield survey.

As successful as the first phase of the battlefield survey was, the survey of the remaining portions of the battlefield will be extremely challenging. In hindsight, the survey of the first 0.75 miles of the battlefield was relatively easy as there was a single trail of musket balls that was relatively easy to follow. Once the English were attacked from all directions at the White Ash Swamp they split into a number of groups, perhaps as many as six, not counting individual efforts to escape from the Native attacks. It is clear from the battle narratives that these groups went in a number of different directions due to sheer panic or blocking actions by Native forces. Some groups made it back to Hatfield, but it appears many did not. The challenge will be to track the many routes of retreat taken by these groups based solely on the distribution of battle related objects, as there is little or no historical evidence that provide any clues to the various routes of retreat.

It is not hyperbole to argue that the Battle of Great Falls / Peskeompskut was one of the most significant battles of King Philip's War. While the English were certainly the victors at the attack on the Peskeompskut Village, killing hundreds of Native people and destroying critical food stores and supplies, the attack did not significantly reduce the military strength of coalition forces nor seriously degrade their military leadership. The ability of coalition forces to effectively and efficiently mount a series of well-planned and well-coordinated counterattacks against the English is reflected in a casualty rate of over 45% 60 percent among the English forces. At the end of the day, Native Coalition forces controlled the battlefield and had exacted a

steep price from the English for their attack on Peskeompskut. Nonetheless the battle was the beginning of a process that resulted in the dissolution of the Native Coalition and ultimately the piecemeal defeat of all the tribes in the coalition. In the weeks and months following the battle, Native peoples abandoned the middle Connecticut River valley to seek refuge in Mahican territory or among the Abenaki to the north, or returned to their homelands in central and eastern Massachusetts or Narragansett country.

Most historians have portrayed the Battle of Great Falls / Peskeompskut as resulting from local English efforts to avenge themselves on the Native people gathering in the Great Falls area in retaliation for attacks against English settlements and stealing English cattle a few days before the battle. In fact the battle was part of much broader competing strategy on the part of the English and the Native coalition to control the rich agricultural lands of the middle Connecticut Valley. For Native peoples the corn and fish harvests were the key to sustaining themselves and the war effort by forcing the English to abandon the valley.

For the English, control of the agricultural lands in the middle Connecticut Valley was the key to maintaining their settlements, livelihood, and way of life. In response to the tactical Native victory at the Battle of Great Falls, Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay raised the largest army to operate in the middle Connecticut Valley during the entire course of the war. At that juncture Native leaders realized that there was little hope of forcing the English from the valley and probably saw no chance that they would be able to resettle the valley. The Battle of Great Falls did turn out to be a significant victory for the English as it directly and indirectly led to the dissolution of the Native coalition and the eventual abandonment of the valley by indigenous tribes.

### **VIII National Register Considerations**

The Battle of Great Falls / Peskeompskut Archeological District is considered to meet the criteria for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. The district includes a non-continuous distribution of 375 battle related artifacts distributed over 1.25 miles within a Battlefield Boundary of approximately 70 acres. The Battle of Great Falls encompass the area where continuous fighting occurred within approximately a 6 to 8 hour span punctuated by episodes of more intense fighting and small unit actions. In addition to the linear and continuous distribution of battle related objects several small engagements or actions were identified within

the Battlefield Boundary. Furthermore, two potential seventeenth century Native domestic areas were identified that may be associated with the battle. One seventeenth century Native domestic site was identified that is definitely not associated with the battle.

The Battlefield Boundary, Core Area(s), and National Register Boundary are completely congruent with one another. The battlefield district is discontinuous as sections of the battlefield have not been surveyed and modern roads and areas that lack integrity separate sections of the battlefield. Modern development occurs in several sections of the battlefield and while these areas have been impacted to some degree, previous battlefield surveys in residential areas have proven that battlefields in suburban areas still retain a degree of integrity and can yield additional information. The much of the Battle of Peskeompskut that has been surveyed still retains physical elements that convey a sense of the historic scene. Since the 1676 battle, houses and roads have impacted portions of the battlefield and the nature of the vegetation has certainly changed (it was likely a more open forest based), but the original terrain and geomorphology are largely unchanged and still provide a sense of the visual setting and key terrain features. The most significant impacts to the battlefield are those resulting from 340 years of land use after the battle. Post-battle artifacts recovered from the battlefield include hundreds of lead bullets, horse and ox shoes, quarry tools such as feathers and plugs, chain links, and personal items such as coins, buttons and harmonicas. While these activities resulted in thousands of objects deposited on the battlefield landscape and made the identification of battle and non-battle related objects more challenging, they do not significantly affect the integrity of the battlefield.

### *Historic Context*

The following historic contexts for the Battle of Great Falls/Peskeompskut (May 19, 1676) Archeological District are organized thematically and chronologically in order to convey the cultural and historical environments, as well as the varied perspectives associated with this period in American history. King Philip's War (June 1675 – August 1676), which includes the Battle of Great Falls, was the culmination of years of underlying tensions between Indians and the English in the middle Connecticut River Valley that had been smoldering for over 40 years over competing land claims, disputes over the grazing of colonial livestock, impacts on Native hunting, and fishing grounds, and agricultural fields, interracial insensitivities, and English cultural encroachment on Native lifeways. Therefore, the prelude and setting of the King Philip's

War (and its associated battles) in the Connecticut River Valley spans nearly four decades (1635 - 1675) and stretches from Springfield (Agawam) to Northfield (Squaqueag) Massachusetts. This time frame and geographic extent corresponds to the arrival of Dutch and English traders and English settlers until the conclusion of King Philip's War.

The historical contexts include: I) Contact and Trade in the Middle Connecticut River Valley (1635-1675); II) English settlement of the Middle Connecticut River Valley (1636-1673); III) Inter-tribal and Native-colonial politics pursued by Native villages in the middle Connecticut River Valley (1635-1676); IV) King Philip's War 1675-1676; V) Battle of Great Falls / Peskeompskut (May 19, 1676).

### *Associated Property Types*

#### Introduction

The associated property types for the Battle of the Great Falls / Peskeompskut Archeological District are categorized by the historic contexts outlined above. For the purpose of this Archeological District nomination a property type is a resource (or group of resources) with similar cultural and archeological elements that relate to the same historic context. The property types have been defined and identified based on the historical and archeological records and battle-related artifacts, and they incorporate elements of battlefield and historic landscapes as well as key terrain features extant during the Battle of Great Falls. It is anticipated that when the battlefield surveys of the remaining 5.5 miles the Great Falls battle have been completed additional properties and sites will be incorporated into the district.

The Battle of Great Falls property types includes: 1) Peskeompskut Village; 2) Ancillary Native villages that contributed men to the battle; 3) a linear running battle as defined by the continuous distribution of battle related objects along the English route of retreat; 4) large engagements as defined by an increase in the density and area of battle related objects within the linear route of withdrawal; 5) small unit actions as defined by battle related objects distributed over a smaller area and reflect discrete actions such as flanking attacks and frontal ambushes; and 6) seventeenth century Native domestic sites that are contemporaneous with the battle but provide information on the settlement history of the valley.

The four criteria for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places are: A) association "with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our



history,” B) association “with the lives of persons significant in our past,” C) properties that “embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction,” and D) properties “that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.” The Battle of Great Falls/Peskeompskut Archeological District is considered to meet the criteria for nomination under Criteria A and D. The battlefield district is considered significant at the local and state level for its association with King Philip’s War.

*NAME OF PROPERTY TYPE: Historic Battlefield Archeological District*

The Battle of Great Falls / Peskeompskut Archeological District contains a variety of contributing resources distributed over 7 miles (including the location of the Peskeompskut Village) and hundreds of acres. The district possesses a significant concentration of a physically proximate group of cultural resources which were historically significant to or were part of the landscape on the day of the Battle of the Great Falls/Peskeompskut (May 19, 1676). The boundaries of the Archeological District are defined by terrain features and the distribution of battle related and domestic objects. The Battlefield Archeological District contains a discontinuous distribution of battle-related artifacts, (sometimes as long as 0.5 miles) including musket balls, broken and discarded weapons and weapon parts, equipment, and personal items associated with the English and Native combatants. Within the distribution of battle related objects a number of spatially and temporally (only by hours) discrete associations of battle-related artifacts can be identified that can be attributed to individual engagements or battle events (e.g., small and large engagements) within the broader battlefield landscape. In addition to the Peskeompskut Village (yet to be located with demonstrated integrity) the district also contains at least one Native domestic archeological site which was not demonstrated to be contemporaneous with the battle.

The battlefield district retains physical integrity, and integrity of setting, location, feeling, and association with the historic battlefield landscape and key terrain features within the district. The battlefield district retains a majority of the historic and battlefield landscape elements, and key terrain features which were present during their period of significance. Intrusions such as post King Philip’s War land use activities, buildings, structures, and roadways are present but

their impacts to the battlefield district vary to high impact to low or no impact. In many areas of the battlefield post King Philip's War land use has not impacted the visual setting and key terrain features associated with the battle. The physical landscape within the boundaries of the battlefield district can be demonstrated to be similar enough to its late seventeenth century appearance to allow one to envision the scene of the actions and movements of the English and Coalition forces on the day of the battle. While the Historic Battlefield Archeological District and contributing properties contained within them have experienced post King Philip's War alterations, these impacts have not significantly altered the historic appearance of the battlefield district or the contributing properties. The archeologically investigated sites and properties within the district contain features and artifacts related to the battle.

### Statement of Significance

The Battle of Great Falls / Peskeompskut was one of the most significant battles of King Philip's War. While the English were certainly the victors at the attack on the Peskeompskut Village, killing hundreds of Native people and destroying critical food stores and supplies, the attack did not significantly reduce the military strength of coalition forces nor seriously degrade their military leadership. The ability of coalition forces to effectively and efficiently mount a series of seemingly well-planned counterattacks against the English is reflected in a casualty rate of 60 percent among the English forces. At the end of the day Native Coalition forces controlled the battlefield and had exacted a steep price from the English for their attack on Peskeompskut. Nonetheless the battle was the beginning of a process that resulted in the dissolution of the Native Coalition and ultimately the piecemeal defeat of all the tribes in the coalition. In the weeks and months following the battle, Native peoples abandoned the middle Connecticut River valley to seek refuge in Mahican territory or among the Abenaki to the north, or returned home to their homelands in central and eastern Massachusetts or Narragansett country.

The Battle of Great Falls Historic Battlefield Archeological District may be nominated under Criteria A and D for its significance in the areas of Native and Colonial history, military history, and historic archeology. The Battle of Great Falls Peskeompskut Archeological District is associated with actions and engagements of varying degrees of strategic importance as part of the campaigns by Coalition and English forces in the middle Connecticut valley during King Philip's War. The contributing properties within the district have, and will continue to provide

information important for understanding and reconstructing the actions, movements, and engagements associated with the Battle of Great Falls during King Philip's War.

The Battle of Great Falls / Peskeompskut Archeological District is significant under Criteria A, for its association with a major event and period of significance in American history – King Philip's War (1675-1676) and the Battle of Great Falls/Peskeompskut Mistick Fort (May 19, 1676). The Battle of Great Falls/Peskeompskut Mistick Campaign was one of the pivotal battle of King Philip's War, and the that took place during the battle campaign are emblematic of the nature of weapons, tactics, and battlefield strategies employed by the English and Coalition forces during King Philip's War.

The battlefield survey has added an important perspective that is lacking in the battle narratives – evidence of a series of well-planned counterattacks that led to a Native victory in the final phase of the battle. The continuous and intense fighting along the first 0.75 miles of the battle is certainly not reflected in the battle narratives nor is the Native flanking and other movements that are only reflected in the distribution of battle related objects recovered from the mountain gap, terraces, and swales. These series of counterattacks by the Native coalition forces proved to be far more sophisticated than previously believed, and has increased our knowledge and understanding of Native warfare and leadership on the.

The battlefield district is considered significant under Criteria D as it has yielded and will continue to yield important information for understanding the course and outcome of King Philip's War and the Battle of Great Falls. Battle related objects associated with the Battle of Great Falls recovered from systematic metal detector and archeological surveys and excavations funded by the National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program provide important information on munitions, weapons, equipment, and personal items associated with the European and Native combatants. Their distribution and associations provide important insights on Native and Colonial military and political organization and tactics during the early seventeenth century.

Categories of battle related and domestic objects associated with the Battle of the English Withdrawal Archeological District include:

1. Military artifacts such as musket balls of various diameters, firearms of various types (e.g., pistols, carbines, full muskets) and ignition systems (e.g., matchlocks, flintlocks, wheellocks), swords, knives, pikes, brass tipped arrows, and iron hatchets associated with the English and Native combatants.

2. Domestic and personal artifacts carried by English and Natives into battle including buttons, aglets, buckles, folding knives, straight knives, jaw harps, clay and brass pipes, brass and lead amulets, eating utensils, gaming pieces, bracelets and miscellaneous personal items.
3. Domestic artifacts associated with Native villages/sites including brass scrap, brass and glass beads, European and Pequot pottery and pipes, iron tools such as hoes/mattocks, axes, sedges, and chisels, and food remains such as animal bone, maize, and shellfish, and features such as refuse pits, hearths, and post molds. Encampment sites associated with pre- or post-battle activity with associated battle-related objects such as broken and discarded equipment, hearths and trash pits.

### Registration Requirements

The Battle of Great Falls / Peskeompskut Archeological District possesses a significant concentration of a physically proximate group of cultural resources which were historically significant to the battle or were part of the landscape on the day of the battle (May 19, 1676). The boundaries of these groups of cultural resources are defined by historic sources, battlefield terrain, and the distribution of period battle related and domestic objects. The Historic Battlefield Archeological District contains a nearly continuous distribution of period battle related objects, and/or individual archeological sites (e.g., Native domestic sites) and groupings of spatially and temporally distinct battle-related objects that can be identified and associated with individual events (i.e., encampments, battlefield loci). Routes of approach and retreat/withdrawal are also considered contributing resources within the period of significance, limited to the day of the battle. Properties, sites, and artifacts associated with events following the day of the battle are not considered in the context of this district nomination.

Contributing properties to the Historic Battlefield Archeological District retain physical integrity, and integrity of setting, location, feeling, and association with the historic and battlefield landscape and key terrain features within the district. The Historic Battlefield Archeological District retains a majority of the historic landscape elements, battlefield landscape, and key terrain features which were present during their period of significance. Intrusions such as post King Philip's War land use activities, buildings, structures and roadways are present but are few in number and can be demonstrated not to have a significant impact to the battlefield and have not impacted the visual setting and key terrain features associated with the battle. The physical landscape within the boundaries of the battlefield district is similar enough to its early

seventeenth century appearance to allow one to envision the scene of the actions and movements of the English-allied forces and Pequot combatants on the day of the battle.

The following evaluations of integrity were applied when assessing eligible cultural resources within the battlefield district.

*Location* – The Historic Battlefield Archeological District retains integrity of location as is the place where the Battle of the Great Falls took place and whose boundaries can be justified by historical and archeological research. The Battle of Great Falls utilized historical research and archeological investigations to identify the locations where the actual battles and engagements occurred and where sites were located.

*Association* – The Historic Battlefield Archeological District retains integrity of association as the district is the place where the battle or engagement occurred, and the district possesses a significant and continuous concentration of a physically proximate group(s) of battle related objects from the day of the battle. The boundaries of the battlefield district are defined by historic sources and/or the distribution of period battle-related objects. Historical research, including battle narratives and distributions of battle-related objects overlaid across the modern and historic landscapes identify the landscape as a battlefield. The documented battlefield locations and actions within the district have been confirmed to be associated with the Battle of Great Falls through archeological and historical analyses.

*Setting* – The Historic Battlefield Archeological Districts retains integrity of setting as the physical environment of the battlefield landscape and key terrain features associated with the battlefield district have been demonstrated to be largely intact. The battlefield landscape has changed in the 340 years since the battle in terms of vegetation, infrastructure, and impacts from residential construction and industrial activity and. However, the key terrain features and visual settings and perspectives associated with the battlefield remain largely intact. The Historic Battlefield Archeological District associated with the Battle of Great Falls retains integral physical landscape components and visual settings associated with actions, engagements, and sites such as glaciated landscapes, wetlands, streams, locations of Native domestic sites, and key terrain features.

*Feeling* – The landscape within the battlefield district still conveys a sense of time and place associated with the period of significance during the Battle of Great Falls. Modern intrusions such as artifacts from post King Philip’s War, buildings and structures, and road systems are present but they do not substantially affect the overall battlefield landscape and Core Area of the battlefield and have not substantially affected the battlefield terrain, key terrain features, visual setting, or archeological integrity of the battlefield.

### Criteria A Requirements

The Historic Battlefield Archeological District is directly associated with engagements associated with the Battle of Great Falls. The Historic Battlefield Archeological District’s period of significance is within the beginning and end of the Battle of the Great Falls (May 18, 1767, 6:00 AM to 6:00 P.M.). The Historic Battlefield Archeological District has a strong association with the Battle of Great Falls and King Philip’s War, and exemplifies notable actions or engagements which had a direct bearing on the evolution and course of the Battle of Great Falls and King Philip’s War.

The Key Terrain Features within the Historic Battlefield Archeological District are eligible under Criteria A as they existed at the time and place of the battle, influenced movements, tactics, or actions, or were utilized militarily by one or both forces. These resources may include rivers, brooks, elevated bedrock ridges, Native villages and fortifications, swamps, and ravines. The Historic Battlefield Archeological District retains integrity of setting, location, feeling, and association of its historic landscape features. The historic landscape within the district must possess sufficient integrity of these qualities to provide a sense of time and place from the Pequot War and the Battle of the English Withdrawal. The battlefield districts retains a majority of the landscape elements, which were present during their period of significance such as topography, key terrain, streams, river banks, and swamps and wetlands. Intrusions from post King Philip’s War buildings, structures, and roadways are present but they do not substantially impact the battlefield terrain or key terrain features associated with the battlefield district.



## Criteria D Requirements

The Historic Battlefield Archeological District is directly associated with engagements, battles, and sites from the Battle of Great Falls. The Historic Battlefield Archeological District contains surface or potential subsurface cultural or archeological deposits that are likely to yield information important to understanding the engagement, battle, and Pequot domestic sites.

The Historic Battlefield Archeological District retains integrity of setting, location, feeling, and association of the historic landscape features within the district. The historic landscape within the battlefield district possesses sufficient integrity of these qualities to provide a sense of time and place from the period of King Philip's War. The battlefield districts retains a majority of the historic landscape features which were present during their period of significance such as battlefield terrain, key terrain features, swamps, wetlands, and trails.

Intrusions such as post King Philip's War buildings, structures and roadways are present but do not substantially affect the battlefield landscape associated with the battle and have not substantially impacted the battlefield terrain and battle-related objects associated with the battlefield.

*NAME OF PROPERTY TYPE: Battlefield*

### Description

A Battlefield is a defined and bounded area on and across the landscape where an engagement between the opposing Coalition and English forces took place. A Battlefield possesses a significant concentration of a physically proximate group of battle related objects which were historically significant to the Battle Great (May 19, 1637). The boundaries of the battlefield are defined by historic sources, terrain features, and the distribution of period battle-related objects. The battlefield contains a largely continuous distribution of battle related objects and may contain groupings of spatially and temporally distinct battle-related objects that can be identified and associated with individual battle actions. Two subcategories of Battlefields identified within the district include Small Engagements and Large Engagements.

#### *Small Engagement*

A Small Engagement is defined as short term combat (less than one hour) between relatively small numbers of combatants (less than 50). A Small Engagement can either be a

distinct area of fighting outside the bounds of a larger battlefield or a spatially and temporally distinct assemblage of battle-related objects within the bounds of a larger battlefield, associated either with a specific battle event (e.g. flanking attack or ambush) or related to the actions of smaller military units on the battlefield. Small Engagements may be considered seemingly insignificant due to the abbreviated duration of the combat and the fewer number of combatants and casualties, but they are often important in terms of the evolving nature of military strategies, and battlefield tactics. The Battle of Great Falls contains evidence of several small unit engagements; including Loci B – English Retreat, Loci C – Mountain Gap, Loci D – Terraces, Loci E – Swales, Loci F Upper Factory Hollow, Locus G – Cherry Run Brook, and Locus F – Deerfield River Ford.

### *Large Engagement*

A large engagement within the broader withdrawal is defined as a sustained combat action (greater than one hour in duration) involving more than 50 combatants. The attack on the village at Peskeompskut would be an example of a large engagement. The 6.5 running battle of the English Retreat could also be considered a large engagement which includes a series of small engagements.

### Statement of Significance

Small and Large Engagement Actions and Battlefields are significant under Criteria A and D for their significance in the areas of military history and historic archeology. Small and Large Engagement Battlefields are associated with actions and engagements of varying degrees of strategic importance. These battlefield sites provide information important for understanding and reconstructing the actions, movements, and engagements associated with King Philip's War (1675-1676) and the Battle of Great Falls (May 19, 1676).

Small and Large Engagement Battlefields associated with the Battle of Great Falls are significant under Criteria A, for their association with a major period of significance in American history – King Philip's War. The Battle of Great Falls Mistick Campaign is considered a pivotal military operation of King Philip's War as it led directly and indirectly to the dissolution of Coalition forces, and the actions and which occurred during the battle are emblematic of the

nature of weapons, tactics, and battlefield strategies employed by the English and Coalition forces during the war

Under Criteria D, Small and Large Engagement Battlefields within the Great Falls Battlefield District are significant for their information potential in understanding the course and outcome of the Battle of the Great Falls and King Philip's War. Battle related objects associated with the Battle of Great Falls recovered from systematic metal detector and archeological surveys and excavations funded by the National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program provide important information on munitions, weapons, equipment, and personal items associated with the European and Native combatants. Their distribution and associations provide important information about Native and Colonial military and political organization and tactics during the early seventeenth century.

Given the nature of seventeenth century battlefields and associated historical sources, the archeological and historical records on their own cannot reconstruct the nature and sequence of events. Each source contributes equally to the battlefield reconstruction if properly integrated into a battlefield timeline. The Battle of Great Falls is significant because the reconstruction of events, movements, and tactics which resulted from the integration of the historical and archeological records has rarely been achieved for a seventeenth century battlefield in North America. The conclusive results and documentation associated with the Battle of Great Falls Archeological District demonstrates that a thoughtful integration of both the historical and archeological records has the potential to yield important information on seventeenth century warfare in northeastern North America. The detailed integration of both the historical and archeological records attributed to Battle of the Great Falls is significant because the reconstruction of events, movements, and tactics associated with Native combatants is rarely achieved in colonial military history, let alone a Native-associated seventeenth century battlefield of North America.

*NAME OF PROPERTY TYPE: Native Domestic Sites*

#### Description

One Native domestic site has been identified archeologically within the Battle of Great Falls Archeological District but is not associated with the battle event. The Peskeompskut Village is directly associated with the battle but has yet to be identified nor has its integrity been

demonstrated. Five other Native villages were occupied at the time of the battle in the area of Great Falls. The locations of these villages are generally known but have not yet been identified. Native domestic sites located within the battlefield boundaries are considered contributing battlefield resources as they provide men for the coalition counterattacks. These villages may vary in size from a few wigwams to several dozen.

Native domestic sites contain military objects such as brass arrow points, trade hatchets, and stone club heads, and domestic artifacts such as Native and European ceramics, firearm parts, lead bar and scrap, knives, buttons, musket balls, brass kettle fragments, brass scrap from recycling brass kettles, iron objects such as hoes/mattocks, pot hooks, kettles, axes, and chisel, iron scrap from recycling iron objects, brass beads, glass beads, clay and stone pipes, glass bottles, and domestic features such as hearths, storage and refuse pits, and middens.

#### Statement of Significance

Native domestic sites are significant under Criteria A for their strong association with the history of the King Philip's War and the Battle of Great Falls. Native domestic sites are significant under Criteria D as they contain a physically proximal group of military and domestic objects and features historically significant to the Battle of Great Falls and/or were part of the historic landscape on the day of the battle, and retain integrity of location, setting, feeling, and associations with the historic events and actions that occurred during the periods of significance, the Battle of the Great Falls and King Philip's War. Under Criteria D, Native domestic sites are significant for their information potential in understanding trade and interaction between the Natives in the Middle Connecticut River Valley and Europeans at the time of the war.

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## **X Appendices**

### **Appendix I – Artifact Descriptions & Artifact Inventory**

#### **Appendix I Artifact Inventory**

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During the course of the project, MPMRC archeologists surveyed 1.5 miles of the Battle of Great Falls / Peskeompskut Core Area which yielded a total of 284 lead musket balls, all of which were considered seventeenth century. An additional 91 objects of a domestic or equipment nature were recovered that were considered seventeenth or possibly 17<sup>th</sup> century. These objects were a mix of domestic (e.g. brass scrap, lead bar, molten lead, lead beads, spoon fragments, pewter buttons, iron awl, iron axe fragments, rose head nails) and non-domestic objects (e.g. buckles, horse tack). Lead shot was by far the most commonly encountered battle related artifact of a total of 375 seventeenth or possible seventeenth century objects recovered.

In most cases, the military equipment, ammunition, and personal items recovered from the surveyed portions of the Battle of Great Falls / Peskeompskut Core Area (Site 300-TFALLS) could have been feasibly carried by either English or Native combatants. Examples include pewter buttons or buckle fragments (Figure 86). In some cases, some personal items were determined to be of Native origin based on their archeological context and as a result of comparative research. This includes several lead beads, a punched cuprous disk, and a lead ornamental object (Figure 87). Several pieces of Seventeenth Century horse tack are likely associated with English forces who were mounted during their approach and retreat from the Falls River. Since both English and Native soldiers were armed with similar firearm weaponry and therefore it is difficult to determine which firearm-related objects (lead shot, firearms parts, accoutrements) were originated from Native or English combatants (Figure 88). Ultimately, the context in which artifacts appear is the most important factor in attributing the object to either side. Comparing the physical landscape where the artifacts were located to the historical record, through the lenses of KOCO analysis, many of the artifacts can be reasonably associated with Native or English combatants.<sup>241</sup> Although Native and English objects undoubtedly overlap on the battlefield, great efforts are made to deconstruct recovered battlefield objects in order to attribute to proper artifact to the appropriate combatant.

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<sup>241</sup> See Section VII. Battlefield Reconstruction.



**Figure 75.** European or Native Personal Items



**Figure 76.** Native personal items



**Figure 77.** Impacted musket balls

[Insert Artifact Inventory List Here?]

## Appendix II – Order of Battle

ORDER of BATTLE: Battle of Great Falls / Peskeompskut<sup>242</sup>

Army: Native Allied Forces

Location: Pocumtuck Territory,  
Peskeompskut

Commanding Officer: Metacom

Date: May 19, 1676

Units	Troop Strength	Casualties
Peskeompskut Village	Approximately 60-80	Unknown
East Side of CT River Village	Approximately 60-80	Unknown
Smead Island Village	Approximately 60-80	Unknown
Cheapside Village	Approximately 60-80	Unknown
Soldiers from Northern Villages	Approximately 100	Unknown
Total:	Approximately 340-420	Approximately 60-80

Army: Captain Turner’s Company

Location: Pocumtuck Territory,  
Peskeompskut

Commanding Officer: Captain William Turner  
Lieutenant Samuel Holyoke

Date: May 19, 1676

Units	Troop Strength	Casualties
CPT Turner’s Detachment	Approximately 60	Unknown
Militia Detachment - Holyoke	Approximately 88	Unknown
Springfield – LT Holyoke	Unknown	Unknown
Northampton – ENS Lyman	Unknown	Unknown
Hatfield – SGT Dickinson	Unknown	Unknown
Hadley – SGT Kellogg	Unknown	Unknown
Guides – Wait & Hinsdale	2	1
Reverand - Atherton	1	0
Total:	Approximately 151	Approximately 39 Killed, 29+ Wounded

<sup>242</sup> The troops strengths and casualties reflected in the Order of Battle were largely derived from the Notebook of Stephen Williams (Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library Archives) as transcribed by Dr. Peter A. Thomas (2016) and research conducted by Mr. John S. Wilson in his unpublished manuscript “The Probable Composition Of Captain William Turner’s Forces: February 20 – May 19, 1676” (2017).

## Appendix III – KOCOA Analysis

Battlefield landscapes consist of natural features (hills, streams, valleys, etc.) and cultural features (trails, fortifications, villages, etc.) that define the original battlefield landscape and also reflect the evolution of these features over time and their impacts to the original landscape. In order to identify, document, survey and map a battlefield, historians and archeologists must research all available and relevant historical accounts and identify the historic landscape that defined the battlefield in the field through terrain analysis and identification of natural and cultural features associated with the battlefield (Table 2).

### Terrain Analysis

Terrain analysis is a critical aspect of battlefield surveys, so much so that the NPS ABPP requires all grant recipients to use KOCOA (Key terrain, Observation, Cover and concealment, Obstacles, Avenues of approach), a military terrain model the U.S. Army developed to evaluate the military significance of terrain associated with a battlefield. By studying the military applications of the terrain using KOCOA, a battlefield historian or archaeologist can identify the landscape of the battlefield and develop a basis for judging the merits and flaws of battle accounts. The components of Terrain Analysis (KOCOA) include:

*Observation and Fields of Fire:* Observation is the condition of weather and terrain that allows a force to see friendly and enemy forces, and key aspects of the terrain. Fields of Fire is an area that a weapon or group of weapons may cover and fire into from a given position.

*Avenues of Approach and Withdrawal:* An avenue of approach is the route taken by a force that leads to its objective or to key terrain in its path. An Avenue of Withdrawal is the route taken by a force to withdraw from an objective or key terrain.

*Key Terrain and Decisive Terrain:* Key Terrain is any ground which, when controlled, affords a marked advantage to either combatant. Two factors can make terrain key: how a commander wants to use it, and whether his enemy can use it to defeat the commander's

forces. Decisive Terrain is ground that must be controlled in order to successfully accomplish the mission.

*Obstacles:* Obstacles are any features that prevent, restrict, or delay troop movements. Obstacles can be natural, manmade, or a combination of both and fall into two categories: existing (such as swamps, rivers, dense wood, town or village) and reinforcing (placed on a battlefield through military effort).

*Cover and Concealment:* Cover is protection from enemy's fire (e.g. palisade, stone wall, brow of a hill, wooded swamp), and Concealment is protection from observation and surveillance (e.g. ravines, swamps, intervening hill or wood).

The four steps in this process include: 1) identify battlefield landscapes; 2) conduct battlefield terrain analysis with KOCOAA (**K**ey terrain, **O**bservation, **C**over and concealment, **O**bstacles, **A**venues of approach); 3) conduct battlefield survey (research, documentation, analysis, field visits, archeological survey and 4) define Study and Core Area, assess integrity and threats related to battlefield sites and map all relevant cultural and physical features on GIS base maps. The battlefield survey methods focused on the identification of relevant physical and cultural features using USGS 7.5" series Topographic Maps, aerial photographs, historic maps, and archeology – all of which are used to identify site locations and positions of combatants.



**Table 2. Critical Defining Features  
Battle of Great Falls / Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut: ABPP Phase I**

Name	Location	Relevance to Battle	Field Comment	KOCSA Analysis	Integrity Assessment	Remarks
<b>Terrain and Topographic Features</b>						
Connecticut River	The CT River runs south from the border with Quebec, Canada and discharges at Old Saybrook, CT. The portion relevant to the battle begins: Lat/Long Points: South <u>42.563015</u> , <u>-72.556390</u> ; North <u>42.601187</u> , <u>-72.545404</u>	The portion of the CT River beginning south at Deerfield and running north to Gill served as a major obstacle to English and Native forces	Substantial Industrial development around the towns of Gill and Montague, Open Space, Wooded	Key Terrain, Obstacle (English & Native), Avenue of retreat & approach (Native)	Location, setting, feeling, association, material	Battle of Great Falls Study Area & Core Area
Deerfield Plains	Western side of the Connecticut River, approx. 2.5 miles.	English forces traveled north through Deerfield Plains on their approach to the Deerfield River	Moderate Residential Development, Open Space, Wooded, Public Roads	Key Terrain, Avenue of Approach & Retreat (English & Native)	Location, setting, feeling, association, material	Battle of Great Falls Study Area
Deerfield River	Forms a boundary between present-day Deerfield and Greenfield. It is a tributary of the Connecticut River.	English forces need to cross the Deerfield River to proceed north to Wissantinnewag-Peskeompskut. There were at least two fords across the river.	Moderate Residential Development, Open Space, Wooded	Key Terrain, Obstacles, Avenue of Approach & Retreat (English & Native)	Location, setting, feeling, association, material	Battle of Great Falls Study Area
Cheapside Neighborhood	A neck of land on the north bank of the Deerfield River abutted by the CT River to the east and the Green River to the west.	A Native observation outpost and possible fortification was established on this neck of land which forced the English to cross the Deerfield River further to the west. Native forces were alerted to the noise of horses and mobilized on the early morning of May 19, 1676 but did not encounter English forces.	Moderate Residential Development, Wooded, Public Roads	Key Terrain, Observation (Native), Obstacles, Fortified Place	Location, setting, feeling, association, material culture	Battle of Great Falls Study Area
Petty Plain	Located north of the Deerfield River and west of the Green River	English forces forded the Deerfield River and crossed Petty Plain towards the Green	Moderate Residential Development,	Key Terrain, Avenue of Approach & Retreat (English & Native)	Location, setting, feeling,	Battle of Great Falls Study Area

		River.	Open Space, Wooded, Public Roads		association, material culture	
Green River	A tributary of the Deerfield River that runs north through the Town of Greenfield, MA.	English forces forded the Green River south of Smead Brook. Captain Turner would later be killed in action during the English retreat while leading his men back across the Green River.	Moderate Residential Development, Open Space, Wooded	Key Terrain, Obstacles, Avenue of Approach & Retreat (English & Native)	Location, setting, feeling, association, material culture	Battle of Great Falls Study Area
White Ash Swamp	White Ash Swamp is fed by Cherry Rum Brook and runs contiguous to Route 2. It is approx.5 mile northwest of the Connecticut River.	English forces likely maneuvered north of White Ash Swamp before dismounting from their horses before Fall River. During the English retreat Native forces held the swamp and decimated fleeing English. One group of English attempted to cut through the swamp and were killed or captured.	Low Residential Development, Open Space, Wooded, Public Roads	Key Terrain, Obstacles, Avenue of Approach & Retreat (English & Native), Cover & Concealment (Native)	Location, setting, feeling, association, material culture	Battle of Great Falls Study Area & Core Area
Fall River	A tributary of the Connecticut River which empties just below the Great Falls.	English forces dismounted and left their horses and a small guard west of Fall River. The main force crossed Fall River and continued east.	Moderate Residential Development, Open Space, Wooded, Public Roads	Key Terrain, Obstacles, Avenue of Approach & Retreat (English & Native)	Location, setting, feeling, association, material culture	Battle of Great Falls Study Area & Core Area
Pisgah Mountain, SW Slope	Dominant landform in the area rising 715' (218 m) above the surrounding landscape.	English forces gathered on the southwestern slope of Pisgah Mountain within site of the Peskeompskut encampment.	Moderate Residential Development, Open Space, Wooded, Public Roads	Key Terrain, Observation (English), Obstacles, Avenue of Approach & Retreat (English & Native)	Location, setting, feeling, association, material culture	Battle of Great Falls Study Area & Core Area
Peskeompskut	A small neck of land immediately east of the Great Falls.	The site of the Native encampment attacked and destroyed by English forces on the morning of May 19. 1676.	Moderate Residential & Industrial Development, Open Space, Wooded, Public Roads	Key Terrain, Obstacles, Avenue of Approach & Retreat (English & Native), Cover & Concealment (Native)	Location, setting, feeling, association, material culture	Battle of Great Falls Study Area & Core Area

