As if in a Great Darkness:

Native American Refugees of the

Middle Connecticut River Valley

in the Aftermath of King Philip's War

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In the aftermath of King Philip's War (1675-1676), most Native Americans of the middle Connecticut River Valley in Massachusetts fled west to Schaghticoke, in New York, north to the French in Canada, and northeast to the Abenakis of the area that would become known to us as Vermont and New Hampshire. The destruction of the middle Connecticut River Valley native communities was part of a general dispersal of Algonquian-speaking peoples which has recently been termed the "Algonquian Diaspora."[1] For the colonists living during the seventeenth century, and local historians writing during the nineteenth century, 1676 marked the end of Native settlement in the Valley. All later Native American settlements were considered temporary encampments of foreigners. The refugees became known to the colonists and later historians as "Albany Indians," "Eastward

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1. Sylvester Judd, The Judd Manuscript, "Massachusetts," in Forbes Library, Northampton, IV: 238; Eric Mason, "The Pocumtuck Diaspora" (Deerfield Fellowship Essay, Deerfield, Mass., 1992), pp. 21-22 and 31-33; Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, "Wattunamon's World: Personal and Tribal Identity in the Algonquian Diaspora," paper presented at the 25th Algonquian Conference, 1993, p. 1.

Indians," "French Indians," "Penacooks," and "Schaghticokes," representing the names of the people or the places to which they were believed to have fled.[2] But these terms were misleading, because many refugees moved frequently and mixed with other Native Americans living in Maine, New France, New Hampshire, and New York. The Valley refugees' affiliations with other Native peoples, their memories of the topography of their ancestral homelands, and their treatment by the New England colonists made New England a viable alternative to permanent settlement in Canada and New York.[3]

Between 1691 and 1697, refugees residing at Schaghticoke resettled in the Connecticut River Valley, at Hatfield, Massachusetts. While many of these refugees were undoubtedly former Norwottucks, a pre-King Phillip's War community of Native Americans living in the Hadley-Hatfield-Northampton area, others appear to have been Abenakis from northern and eastern New England. The abortive "Hatfield-Schaghticoke" settlement was not merely the rebirth of Norwottuck. It was a new community whose history illustrated the mutual need and suspicion with which the Natives and colonists regarded each other. The history of the settlement necessarily includes the history of the trading and hunting activities of Abenakis, Iroquois, and Schaghticokes, which contributed to its dispersal. This story suggests the depth of

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2. Sylvester Judd, A History of Hadley, Massachusetts (Northampton, 1863), pp. 183-189 and 254-267; George Sheldon, A History of Deerfield, Massachusetts (Deerfield, 1895), I: 212-264; James Russell Trumbull, History of Northampton, Massachusetts (Northampton, 1902), I: 429-445.

3. Daniel K. Richter, Ordeal of the Longhouse (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1992), pp. 136 and 337, note 5; Steven Williams, What Befell Steven Williams in his Captivity, ed. by George Sheldon (Deerfield, 1889), p 9 and 30, note 10. For references to Algonquian memories of ancestral homelands and colonial treatment, and for accounts of mass migrations of Schaghticokes, see Carl Bridenbaugh and Juliette Tomlinson, eds., The Pynchon Papers (Boston, 1982), I: 305-307; Colin G. Calloway, The Western Abenaki of Vermont, 1600-1800 (Norman, Oklahoma, 1990), pp. 32, and 87-88; Gordon Day,, The Identity of the Saint Francis Indians (Ottawa, Canada, 1981), pp. 21-29; Massachusetts Archives, XXX: 408a; Harald E. L. Prins, "Amesokanti: Abortive Tribe Formation on the Colonial Frontier," (November 1988) (paper prepared for the Annual Conference of the American Society for Ethnohistory, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1988); Lawrence H. Leder, The Livingston Indian Records, 1666-1723 (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 1956), pp. 77-79; Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York (Albany, 1853-1887), IV: 744 and 902.

political and social dislocation experienced by the Native American refugees. At the same time, it demonstrates that the Native Americans were still an integral part of life in the Valley, and it defines the significance of the Valley for Native Americans in the aftermath of King Phillip's War.

Given the brutality and trauma of King Phillip's War, it is not surprising that the first post-war Native and English interactions produced hostilities. On September 22, 1677, a party of forty Norwottucks and a Narragansett, led by a man named Ashpelon, returned from Canada and attacked the colonists at Deerfield and Hatfield. The attack was partly a retaliation against the English colonists of the Valley, and partly inspired by the French, who wanted some indication that the Norwottuck refugees could be effective military allies. Attacks of this sort appear to have become more common after 1688. In that year, five Native Americans were killed at Spectacle Pond, near Springfield, in the area that is now Wilbraham, and several colonists were killed at the town of Northfield. A mixed group of Penacooks (a Western Abenaki community), Quaboags (a Nipmuck community of central Massachusetts, with some ties to the Norwottucks), one Pakantecooke (an alternative spelling for Pocumtuck), and others were immediately suspected of having committed these murders. Like the 1677 party of Norwottucks, this group, led by Penacooks and Quaboags, invaded New England for the bounty offered for each scalp they brought back. Remarkably, a Mahican who had encountered the group as it moved south was able to give a nearly complete list of the names of the individuals, along with their community of origin:

Wampolack, a Pennecooke
Nanauqueseek, a Pennecooke
Walamaqueet, "lived formerly in ye Halfe Moone
Maquewekanpaweet and his son, Pennecookes
Tawawekekeak (alias Minenaet), a Pennekooke
Wawanwejagtack, a Quaboag
Wewagquohaet, a Quaboag
Togpagkamin, a Nassawack
Maghtwaen, a Pakantecooke
Quaetseits, a Wappinger

The diverse composition of the group, the fact that Walamaqueet was from Half Moon, a Mahican/Schaghticoke settlement near Albany, and the fact that a Mahican was able to provide such detail suggests the close ties existing among the peoples of the Hudson River Valley, the Abenakis, and other refugees in Canada.[4]

The practical significance of such ties was demonstrated in an encounter involving this Penacook/Quaboag and a Schaghticoke party along the northern stretches of the Connecticut River. The Penacook/Quaboag party had openly told a group of Mahicans of their intention to attack English and Dutch colonists and Native Americans, and only partially hid this information from the Schaghticokes. The Schaghticokes told the Penacook/Quaboag party that they had recently been in Canada, where they had fought against the French and their Algonquian allies. Despite this fact, the two parties travelled together to Deerfield, without fighting. Wahacoet (Wawagquohaet of Quaboag in the list above), as a leader of the Penacook/Quaboag group, had agreed to go to New England to kill Dutch and English settlers, along with "Indians," but he was specifically credited by the Schaghticokes as being responsible for preventing an attack.[5]

Restraining his party of Penacooks and Quaboags from attacking the Schaghticokes was the closest Wahacoet came to cooperation with the Schaghticokes. After staying one night in Deerfield, the Schaghticokes, who clearly had better and closer relations with the colonists, went briefly to Hatfield, left one man there, and returned to the Hudson Valley, while the Penacook/Quaboag party split into two groups and headed east, toward Penacook.[6]

The growing ties between Hudson Valley communities such as Schaghticoke and western Abenakis communities such as Penacook, and the capacity for these ties to involve kinship-like

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4. Samuel G. Drake, Indian Captivities, or Life in the Wigwam (Auburn, Mass., 1851), p. 63; Sheldon, History of Deerfield, I: 183-186; R. Beth Klopott, The History of the Town of Schaghticoke, New York, 1676-1855 (Albany, 1988), P. 14; Josian H. Temple and George Sheldon, History of the Town of Northfield, Massachusetts (Albany, 1875), pp. 111-112.

5. Temple and Sheldon, History of the Town of Northfield, pp. 111-116.

6. Ibid.

military obligations became clear when King Williams' War broke out in 1689.

King Williams' War combined the hostilities of the "beaver wars" between the Iroquois and the New England Algonquians over fur-trapping rights, the Imperial competition between the French and the English, and hostilities which lingered in the aftermath of King Phillip's War. Montreal, Albany, and the Atlantic Coast bounded a triangular region of conflict, which encompassed Deerfield and the northern end of the middle Connecticut River Valley. While the Western Abenakis became an integral part of the French strategy against the English, recent historians have argued that French backing has been exaggerated as a cause of Abenaki hostility. The Western Abenaki had their own historical quarrels with the English, and they drew their support from diverse sources, including Schaghticoke.[7]

The first major assault of King William's War occurred on June 27, 1689, when Kancagamus led about thirty young Penacook warriors, an unknown number of Saco River Abenakis, and at least two Schaghticokes, in an attack on Cohecho (Dover, New Hampshire). They destroyed the settlement, killed twenty-three people, and took twenty-nine captives, while retaliating against Major Richard Waldron for his actions during King Phillip's War. During the waning months of that war, large groups of southern New England Native Americans had hidden in the woods along the upper Merrimac River. In the summer of 1676, Major Richard Waldron persuaded some of these people to come to Dover, New Hampshire, to participate in peace talks and games. Wanaloncet, his Penacooks, some Nipmucks, and some "strange Indians," four hundred in all, accepted Waldron's offer. Waldron then tricked them into disarming themselves, and he had them seized and taken prisoner. The Nipmucks and others were separated from the Penacooks, and sent to Boston. Some were hanged by the Massachusetts authorities, and some were sold into slavery in the West Indies. The Penacooks and their allies retaliated in 1689, by killing Waldron and taking his granddaughter, Sarah Gillet, captive.[8]

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7. Kenneth Morrison, The Embattled Northeast: The Elusive Ideal of Alliance in Abenaki-Euramerican Relations (Berkeley, California, 1984), pp. 125-128; Richter, Ordeal of the Longhouse, p. 163.

8. Colin G. Calloway, "Wanalancet and Kancagamus: Indian Strategy and Leadership on the New Hampshire Frontier," in The Western Abenaki of Vermont, pp. 275 and

Among the Penacooks and Sacos were two Schaghticokes, including one named Chepasson, and a third Native man named John Humphry. Two letters written by the fur trader John Pynchon and dated June 19 and 27, 1690, provide insight into the backgrounds of Chepasson and Humphry, and their actions following the Cohecho attack.[9]

John Humphry was identified as an "Eastern Indian," or an Abenaki. He spoke "very good English," and later stated that he had lived with a "Gold of Topsfield, until [1686]." That apparently was John Gould (1613-1710), a prominent Topsfield resident who had fought in King Phillip's War. Gould served under Captain Hutchinson in Narragansett country in July of 1675, when the colonists demanded that the Narragansetts turn over Wampanoag refugees. Gould also served under Captain Wheeler at Brookfield in August of 1675, fighting the Nipmucks.[10])

Either of these campaigns could have yielded captives which, on November 5, 1675, the Massachusetts General Court temporarily sent to prison. Among the prisoners was an "Umphry," his wife, and a child. The decision to imprison Umphry's family was termed temporary, and John Gould may have acquired custody of the family. In 1676, neighbors of his in

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283; Emma L. Coleman, New England Captives Carried to Canada Between 1677 and 1760 during the French and Indian Wars (Portland, Maine, 1925), I: 145; Warren Fisher Daniell, Colonial New Hampshire: A History (Millwood, New York, 1981), p. 11; Richard Melvoin, "New England Outpost," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1983, pp. 160-161.

9. Sylvester Judd, "Miscellaneous Massachusetts and Long Island," mss. in Forbes Library, Northampton, VIII: 219-224. Two local historians, George Sheldon and Josiah Temple, do not appear to have known about these letters. Sheldon's history of Deerfield, and his history of Northfield, contain no references to the events described in the letters. However, Sylvester Judd and James R. Trumbull, authors of histories of Hadley and Northampton respectively, both make reference to the incidents the letters describe, but give virtually no details. See Judd, Hadley, I: 259 and Trumbull, Northampton, I: 431.

10. Benjamin Apthorp Gould, The Family of Zacheus Gould of Topsfield (Lynn, 1895), pp. 2-7 and 36-46; Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, "Revisiting the Redeemed Captive: New Perspectives on the 1704 Attack on Deerfield," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d series, Vol. LII (January, 1995); Judd, "Miscellaneous Massachusetts and Long Island," VIII: 219-224; Douglas Leach, Flintlock and Tomahawk (New York, 1966), pp. 61 and 78-84. Humphry's identifying Penacook feature was his haircut, which as Haefeli and Sweeney have observed, was probably "one side long and the other short." Steven Williams' hair was cut in this fashion when he was a captive of the Penacook.

Topsfield were concerned and angered that he failed to control Native Americans living "about" his house. Thus, John Humphry may have been a Nipmuck or Wampanoag child who was raised at Topsfield, leaving that town when Gould was imprisoned for treason and sedition in the summer of 1686.[11]

Chepasson was identified simply as a Schaghticoke, but his apparent knowledge of individual Deerfield residents may have arisen from previous trade with them. Chepasson was already acquainted with Simon Beamon, a resident of Deerfield, and he was apparently indebted to Beamon. This fact may indicate that he had been among the group of Schaghticokes and Penacooks who in 1688 and earlier were living at Sokoki for the purpose of trading. After Cohecho, Humphry, and Chepasson probably travelled to Cowasuck (Newberry, Vermont), via Penacook (Concord, New Hampshire). They stayed with the Penacooks, who appear to have camped at Cowasuck with their captives, including Major Waldron's granddaughter. By June of 1690, Chepasson and Humphry left Cowasuck and travelled down river to Deerfield.[12]

Upon their arrival, Chepasson rapidly became involved in a series of disputes with the English inhabitants and authorities of Deerfield. The colonists seized both men within a couple of days of their arrival. Chepasson was accused of bragging to Mary Evans about Cohecho, and of threatening to kill Goodman Nimms. They claimed that Chepasson had insulted them by insisting that the settlers could not defend themselves, but were like children who would cry like Dutchmen when the French came. Chepasson's claim that he "saw the Dutchmen cry" suggests that he may have participated in the French attack on Schenactady in February of 1690. Imprisoned, Chepasson attempted to escape twice; the second time, the colonists reported, Chepasson was shot and killed.[13]

Shortly after Chepasson's death, two mixed groups of Mohawks and Schaghticokes arrived at Deerfield. In contrast to Chepasson's apparent hostility, these Mohawks and Schaghticokes presented themselves as allies of the English, although they had some interaction with Native American enemies of the English.

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11. Gould, Family of Zacheus Gould of Topsfield, pp. 40-42, 44; Massachusetts Archives, XXX: 184a.

12. Judd, "Miscellaneous Massachusetts and Long Island," VIII: 219-224.

13. Ibid.

The first group left New York in mid-April of 1690, attacked Trois Rivieres (Three Rivers) and arrived in Deerfield on June 2, with two French scalps. They avoided the Penacooks at Cowasuck, permitted the colonists to interrogate their French captive, and were not arrested or detained by the colonists. The second group left New York about May first and consisted of thirteen Schaghticokes, with two Mohawk leaders. About May thirty-first, they surprised a small French hamlet across the river from the main fort at Trois Rivieres. They took many captives, but kept alive only five young men whom they brought to Deerfield; they did not permit the colonists to interrogate them.[14]

The Northampton "committee of militia," in a letter to the Mohawks about these incidents, expressed confusion and frustration. The committee wrote that "some Indians come among us under a pretense of being friends and Albany [Schaghticoke] Indians, whom we have great reason to suspect for foes." The colonists were suspicious about the Schaghticokes, not only because of Chepasson's belligerence, and the second Mohawk-Schaghticoke party's intransigence, but because they realized that some Schaghticokes maintained cooperative relations with the Penacooks. And while many of the refugees in New York developed close economic and military relationships with the English, others sought to retaliate against the British for injustices associated with their defeat in King Phillip's War. By 1690, this fact was clear to the English colonists of the Connecticut River Valley, and it raised questions about the reliability of Schaghticokes and Mohawks as allies.[15]

Late in 1691, approximately 150 Schaghticoke men, women, and children arrived in the Valley and moved into this wartime atmosphere of suspicion and uncertainty. They probably left Schaghticoke because of its dangerous location along the corridor between Albany and French Canada, and because of shortages of food in the Albany area. They also had permission to go to Massachusetts, from the mayor of Albany, and they may have believed that they had been invited by John Pynchon. By

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14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.; for other evidence and discussion of the developing alliance between the Abenakis and Hudson Valley, see Bridenbaugh and Tomlinson, Pynchon Papers, I: 211-216; Haefeli and Sweeney, "Revisiting the Redeemed Captive;" and Peter A. Thomas, "In the Maelstrom of Change," (Anthropology dissertation, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1979)

June of 1690, Pynchon had added his own comments to the Northampton militia's letter demanding that any Native Americans from New York who wished to come to the Valley should bring identification of themselves as "friend Indians."[16]

The Schaghticokes may have been coming to join other Schaghticokes who already lived in the area. Several documentary references indicate the presence of Schaghticokes in the Valley and at Hatfield in the late 1680s. In a 1687 letter, John Pynchon referred to Native Americans "up the River," and claimed that others were coming in from the Albany area. Although he did not indicate where that group was located, it was probably either at Hatfield or Sokoki (Northfield). In 1688, all twelve Schaghticokes who came to Deerfield with the Penacook-Quaboag party went to Hatfield, and they left one man there. It was a former "Albany Indian," who had lived in Hatfield "for a long time," who positively identified John Humphry in 1690 as not being from the Albany area.[17]

By 1691, this "long" and apparently peaceful coexistence did not make the colonists willing to accept the possibility that this latest, and largest, group of Schaghticokes might settle in the area. In a message brought to them by an unnamed translator, the Schaghticokes were informed of several conditions with which they would have to comply. The colonial authorities informed them that their arrival constituted an intrusion, and that they would be permitted to stay only until the spring. The frequency of their hunts and the size of their hunting parties were to be strictly limited. Furthermore, the English colonists urged them to communicate any information they had, or would acquire in the future, concerning the approach of the French or their Native American allies from Canada.[18]

The Schaghticokes agreed to all the colonists' conditions, promised to give the British intelligence of the French and their Native American allies, and asked only that their families be protected while they hunted. But by late February, a number of

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16. Bridenbaugh and Tomlinson, Pynchon Papers, I: 236-239; Judd, "Miscellaneous Massachusetts and Long Island," VIII: 219-224.

17. Sylvester Judd, "Massachusetts," (Forbes Library, Northampton), I: 138; Judd, "Miscellaneous Massachusetts and Long Island," VIII: 219-224; Temple and Sheldon, Northfield, p. 112.

18. Bridenbaugh and Tomlinson, Pynchon Papers, I: 243-250.

the Schaghticokes talked not of leaving, but of staying, renting land from the English, and planting fields for the summer months. The Norwottucks had also rented or requested land from the colonists in the years just before King Phillip's War, and it was a practice which had become common at Schaghticoke too. The group which had moved closer to Hatfield stayed, and became known to the colonists as the "Hatfield Indians." At least one member of this community, and possibly more, appears to have been descended from the Norwottucks. In 1695, an eighteen year-old named Pemaquanasett was referred to as "sometime residing in Hatfield." He also bore the name "Umpanchela," and he may have been of the same family or clan as a former Norwottuck sachem of the same name.[19]

Conveying information about the French and their Native American allies was a part of Schaghticoke's role in the Hudson River Valley, and must have seemed to the English of the Connecticut River Valley as the most valuable aspect of such a large Native American presence at Hatfield and Deerfield. As late as 1682, the colonists of the Valley lacked sufficient knowledge of the land to create a new road to Connecticut. But, as two attacks in 1693 and 1695 indicated, local Schaghticokes, perhaps part of the Hatfield community, were not likely to be effective buffers against Native American attacks from Canada. On June 6, 1693, a number of colonists were killed at Deerfield. Some survived long enough to identify two men as the killers. At least one was a Mohawk; the other may have also been a Mohawk, but some, including John Pynchon, identified him as a Schaghticoke. Incredibly, Ashpelon, the leader of the 1677 Norwottuck raiding party that struck Deerfield and Hatfield, entered Deerfield and testified on behalf of the accused men. Ashpelon was apparently in the area with a mixed group of Schaghticokes and others, almost certainly Western Abenaki, who were trading with the colonists, and his presence in the vicinity would seem to support the possibility that other Norwottucks were in the area too. Despite such testimony, and the denials of the accused men, John Pynchon and the authorities in the Connecticut River Valley

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19. Ibid., I: 243-253; according to Gordon Day, in The Identity of the Saint Francis Indians, Algonquian children were frequently named for famous or prominent ancestors; Massachusetts Archives, XXX: 386 and 400; Sylvester Judd, "Miscellaneous Massachusetts and Long Island," VIII: 187-188.

believed that they were the killers, based on the testimony of two of the victims, both of whom who died shortly afterwards.[20]

The involvement of Schaghticoke itself in the controversy following the murders suggests that the Hatfield Schaghticoke community maintained close ties with the Hudson River Valley. The Schaghticoke sachems spoke of the seizures at a meeting with Governor Benjamin Fletcher's representatives on June 15, at Albany. Appealing to the Governor's authority, they stated, "several of our people are detained Prisoners in New England under Suspicion to have killed some of their People at Deerfield[.] wee submit the whole matter to the judicious Consideration of his Excel[lency]." The Schaghticokes' association with the Mohawks, however, and not their plea to the Governor, proved to be the most useful for obtaining the release of the two. Concerned with maintaining New York's alliance with the Mohawks in the war against the French, Johannes Schuyler and two of his political allies were instrumental in getting the charges proven false, and dismissed, on July 26th. But before orders to release the two men could reach Springfield, both escaped from the jail on the twenty-seventh, aided by "Dutchmen."[21]

A second incident, in 1695, demonstrated that the Hatfield Schaghticokes could be a target for Native Americans who were allied with the French. On August 12, 1695, forty or fifty Native Americans from Canada, travelling in canoes, surprised and attacked a group of Schaghticoke hunters from Hatfield, possibly killing ten of them. Attacked near Northfield, only Mahquolos, alias Strawberry's Son, apparently survived and, despite severe injuries, he managed to reach Deerfield. The incident created a panic among the colonists of the Connecticut River Valley, but no general attack occurred.[22]

While the Hatfield Schaghticoke community was unlikely to be effective for reconnaissance, there was probably some friendly trade between the Native American and English

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20. Judd, "Massachusetts," I: 92-93; R. Beth Klopott, History of the Town of Schaghticoke, pp. 14-15; Sheldon, Deerfield, pp. 230-233.

21. Bridenbaugh and Tomlinson, Pynchon Papers, I: 268, 273-279; Richter, Ordeal of the Longhouse, p. 177; Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York (Albany, 1853-1887), IV: 38; Sheldon, Deerfield, pp. 230-233.

22. Bridenbaugh and Tomlinson, Pynchon Papers, I: 293-295.

communities. There are several references to Schaghticokes trading with colonists around Northfield and Deerfield. But if the colonists at Hatfield prohibited its residents from renting land to Native Americans, as Springfield had done in 1685, then access to hunting grounds would have become that much more vital to the community. By 1696, tensions between the Native American community and the colonists, over hunting rights, became acute. The English had ordered the Native Americans not to hunt in the woods east of the Connecticut River, around Hadley, a stipulation which had not been part of the 1691 agreement. About October first, Mahquolos and three other Native Americans from Hatfield, Wenepuck, Mahweness, and Pemaquanasett, alias Umpanchela, went into the northern woods of Hadley to hunt.[23]

Near sunset on the fifth of October, the four came across Richard Church of Hadley, who also was hunting. Mahquolos and Mahweness, with Nenepuck and Pemaquanasett watching at a considerable distance, shot Church once in the head above the upper lip, and once with an arrow to the body, killing him. Wenepuck and Pemaquanasett, who was only eighteen years-old, ran in fear from the scene. It was not until midnight, and after Mahquolos and Mahweness had scalped and removed parts of Church's clothing, that the four regrouped in a small hut or wigwam on the western side of Mount Toby.[24]

Another Englishman from Hadley had been hunting nearby. Hearing the shot, he discovered Church's body and returned to Hadley with the news. A search party was organized, and the four men were found at Mount Toby late on the sixth of October. The four men attempted to flee; Mahquolos was wounded in the thigh by a gunshot, but only Pemaquanasett was captured at the scene. The others were captured later that evening, when they returned to Hatfield. Gathered together at Deerfield, they were interrogated by Samuel Partrigg, Joseph Hawley, and others, in the presence of Reverend Solomon Stoddard and Reverend John Williams. All four men denied the charges, at first. Eventually, all except Mahweness, whom the

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23. Henry M. Burt, First Century of the History of Springfield; the Official Records from 1636 to 1736 (Springfield, 1898-1899), II: 189; Judd, "Massachusetts," I: 351; Massachusetts Archives, XXX: 390a.

24. Judd, "Massachusetts," I: 348-349.

others had implicated as the actual shooter, admitted to a part in the murder.[25]

As in the incidents involving Chepasson in 1690 and Ashpelon in 1693, a crisis with Schaghticoke developed, which was resolved by an uneasy compromise that did not conform with either the expectations of the English or the Native Americans. Furthermore, as in the earlier incidents, compromise was inspired by concern over the English alliance with the Mohawks. At a court of Oyer and Terminer held at Northampton, Mahweness, still claiming his innocence, and Mahquolos, were found guilty. Some men of the Native American community at Hatfield, who were invited to argue against the execution of the defendants, responded that they were convinced that the sentence was fair, and both Mahweness and Mahquolos were executed by a firing squad on October 23, 1696.[26] But in Albany, on May 4, 1697, Soquons stated that he and other Schaghticokes in New York were not convinced that the four were guilty. Another man had admitted to the murder, and the Schaghticokes believed that Pemaquanasett and Wenepuck had been tortured to extract their confessions. The Connecticut River Valley colonists compromised by sparing Pemaquanasett and Wenepuck from execution, and releasing them from captivity. But the murder of Richard Church became the excuse for local residents to suggest that the entire Hatfield Schaghticoke community be forced to return to the Albany area. In 1697, with prominent colonists like John Pynchon and Samuel Partrigg convinced that they could not be trusted, and after the Massachusetts General Court ordered that all Native Americans found in the colony north of the Springfield-Boston path be considered enemies, the Hatfield Schaghticoke community was forced to disband. At that time, it had a population of about forty.[27]

Soquons accurately described the confusion and uncertainty created by the diaspora when he stated in 1693 that he

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25. Ibid., I: 352 and 354.

26. Ibid., I: 352-354; Massachusetts Archives, XXX: 409.

27. New York Colonial Manuscripts, in New York State Archives, Albany, vol. XLI, folio 62; Massachusetts Archives, XXX: 400 and 417-418; Steven Williams, What Befell Steven Williams in his Captivity, p. 17.

and his community were living "as if in a Great Darkness."[28] Soquons' insecurity about the future of his community was shared by the refugees residing with him at Schaghticoke. Ashpelon, Chepasson, Pemaquanasett, Wahacoet, John Humphry, and Mahquolos all lived with the memory of destroyed communities and unanswered injustices. They also lived with the challenges of far-flung kinship ties, persistent warfare, shortages of English trade goods, and poor hunting. The Hatfield Schaghticoke settlement, and the frequent movements and shifts in colonial loyalties of men such as Ashpelon, Chepasson, Mahquolos, and John Humphry were efforts to overcome these difficulties. But they were also autonomous acts, contrary to the general wishes of the colonial authorities in New York and Massachusetts.

New England was developing the characteristics of what has been termed a "middle ground." As a geographical location, the middle ground was a region where the empires of France and England met the non-state world of Native American communities, kinship alliance, and refugees. As a cultural process, the middle ground demanded flexibility in the political expectations of both Native Americans and Europeans. This flexibility and the alliances between Native Americans and Europeans depended on mutual need and what the historian Richard White has called "creative mid-understandings." Native American and European perceptions of each other were creative, even when they were inaccurate, if they supported the spirit of compromise which characterized the middle ground.[29]

The migrations and vacillations of the refugees determined the nature of the Valley's role on the middle ground. The Connecticut River Valley served alternately as a way-station, a target for attacks, a hunting ground or trading center, and a place of residence for Native American refugees travelling the paths and river systems of the northeast. In short, in the aftermath of King Phillip's War, the Valley became a region where Native American activities were carried out, not where they were planned. The one main exception was the Hatfield Schaghticoke settlement. But the common political or economic

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28. O'Callaghan, Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, IV: 38.

29. Colin G. Calloway, "Native American History and the Search for Common Ground," Reviews in American History, XX (1992): 448; Richard White, The Common Ground (New York, 1991), pp. 48, 50-53, 80-81, 90, 93, 112-114.

interest which makes the middle ground's "creative misunderstandings" possible did not develop. The Hatfield Schaghticokes needed hunting privileges and protection that the colonists were unwilling to give, and they promised in return to exchange military information which their community could not effectively provide. Lacking an effective basis for accommodation, the misunderstandings and disagreements between the Hatfield Schaghticoke community and the colonists resulted in violence, and the re-dispersal of the Native Americans.

In 1704, the presence in Hatfield of a Native American man named Kindness suggests that individuals may have remained in the area after the community was dispersed. Schaghticoke trading settlements apparently existed at Sokoki until 1714, but those settlements were on the periphery of the colonial towns, not within them as the Hatfield settlement was. There was also a residential settlement near Springfield around 1718, but documentary records do not link Schaghticoke or Valley refugees with this or any other residential settlements in the area.[30]

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30. Day, Identity of the Saint Francis Indians, pp. 31-61, 98-100, and 114; Mason, "The Pocumtuck Diaspora," p. 34; Grace Greylock Niles, The Hoosac Valley (New York, 1912), pp. 94, 97, and 102-104; Steven Williams diaries, on microfilm, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Library, Deerfield, reel 1, I: 160. By 1726, Schaghticoke itself practically ceased to exist, and many of the Schaghticokes and the Native American refugees from the Valley went to Odanak, in Canada. Odanak gradually developed into a more stable community during the eighteenth century, creating durable social bonds among the many formerly disparate Algonquian peoples who settled there.