



# The BATTALION JOURNAL

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Rogers' Rangers*



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## The Origins of the Stockbridge

By Pvt Lou Tramelli, Michigan Company

The Stockbridge Companies that fought as part of Major Rogers Independent Company of Rangers during the French and Indian War were known for both their ranging prowess and as the first entirely indigenous companies to serve under Native Captains in the British military system. Much has been written about their field exploits but how did they live? This article will examine their origin and what is known of their lives prior to their entrance in the British military establishment.

The Stockbridge Companies of the French & Indian War were drawn from the Stockbridge Mahican town of the same name along the Massachusetts – New York border. This town was established as a mission or “praying town” between two preexisting Housatonic Mahican settlements that were approximately ten miles apart. Mahican settlement was first recorded along the Housatonic as early as 1676. The deposition or testimony of a captive Mohegan – Narragansett from that early date describes the Mahican inhabitants of the region as semi nomadic and roaming between the Housatonic and the Catskills of the west of the Hudson River. In fact, many historians describe the Catskill Indians as a remnant Mahican band isolated west of the River post Mohawk-Mahican conflict. (Starna, 180). The commonly accepted southern boundary of Mahican Territory ran along the Roeloff Jansen Kill watercourse in Northern Dutchess County, while the northern boundary is thought to have terminated north of Albany. Recorded land transactions and other primary accounts

reasonably support these approximations.

The most significant primary resource that exists to the study the origin of the Stockbridge is entitled, *Historical Memoirs Relating to the Housatonic Indians*, by Rev Samuel Hopkins. Hopkins work was published in 1758 and is essentially a paraphrased transcription of, and excerpts from, the journal of John Sergeant, the first missionary to the Stockbridge Mahicans.

In 1724, prior to the mission existing, the “Housatonic” Mahicans sold a large section of land to the General Court of Massachusetts. Massachusetts Provincial records show that the Housatonics reserved two areas for themselves, recorded as the communities of “Skatchook” and “Wnahktuhk “by Hopkins. It was between these original settlements that the mission town of Stockbridge was established.

At the time of the mission’s establishment in 1734, the two little communities were believed to consist of approximately five families each and were led by men named Konkapot and Umpachanee, who had been awarded the Massachusetts Provincial commissions of Captain and Lieutenant respectively. Ultimately these Mahican leaders consented to allow a mission house / school to be built between their settlements. Initially, the mission was a seasonal affair, with the Mahicans at services and their children attending school in the winter, only to return to their planting at the separate communities in the spring. Sergeant relates that these Mahicans lived interspersed with some Dutch and English settlers and were already supplied by Dutch traders prior to his arrival. (Hopkins,25)

Sergeant states that in the first year, Stockbridge

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**Battalion Companies' Web Pages**

Schroth's New York Company ... [www.schrothscompany.com](http://www.schrothscompany.com)  
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***From the Print Shop***

By Ensign Thomas Pray, Publisher

This edition and the next edition of the Journal will honor those Mahican Warriors (Stockbridge Companies) who volunteered to serve with the British During the French and Indian War in New York. Largely forgotten, we'd like to tell a Little of their story.

**Mahican also Mohican*****Ma-He'Kan or Mo-He Can***

A Member of a native American confederacy of sub-tribes formerly Inhabiting the upper Hudson River valley, with present day populations in Oklahoma and Wisconsin. Not to be confused with the Mohegan Tribes of Connecticut An Algonkian language dialect of the Mahican

Mahican and Mohican refer to the same tribe from Upper New York State. They, while at the mission town, accepted Wappinger and Manhattens into the group. Stockbridge-Munsee is the name the tribe took after

leaving their along the Hudson River and joining the Mission in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. There is no Mahican or Mohican Tribe in Connecticut. The Stockbridge -Munsees do have a reservation in Shawano County, Wisconsin and recently go by just the name Mahican. They served as Ranger scouts with Shirley, and Rogers during the years 1756, 1758, 1759, and 1760. Their numbers were small, from 37 to 45 men for their company but there were just a little over 200 tribe members.

I'd also like to thank Gary Zaboly for his generosity in allowing us the use of his great images of Stockbridge Warriors from the period of the French and Indian War. His attention to detail helps us understand the clothing, arms, and appearance of those Mahican Rangers.



*Continued from page 1*

consisted of one dual purpose mission – school building surrounded by winter residence wigwams. He had 30 students, consisting of 25 children and 5 adults. (30). Rather quickly the two Mahican bands decided to abandon the original communities and to resettle at the central Stockbridge location. In short order, they were joined by an influx of additional natives.

A newspaper article printed five years later described the town's dynamic growth:

*I have been to see my Friends at Housatonic (now called Stockbridge) and was well pleased to find the Indians so well improv'd particularly in Husbandry, having good Fields of Indian Corn, and Beans, and other Sort of Grain, as Oats, etc. — They have good Fence about their Field, made with their own Hands. Some of them live in Houses built after the English manner, and Capt. Concapat has built a Barn that is well shingled, etc.—They have several Horses among them, and some cows, Hogs, etc. They are many of them grown industrious and diligent in Business: I observed several young Women sewing Cloth, making Shirts, etc.—But I was in special gratify'd to find them improv'd in Learning, several of them have made good Proficiency, can read in their Testaments and Bibles, and some of them can write a good Hand: The Children are in general as mannerly as you'll find in any Country Town. There are about twenty families of Indians that live there; and now the Great and General Court have taken such effectual Care, and put them in possession of the Land, they have designed for them (which hitherto they have been hindering from possessing) I make no doubt but they will greatly increase in Number: for several Indians have been with them, and manifested a Desire to tarry with them, could they have Land to work upon, There is a Church gather'd and fourteen Indian Communicants; the Number of the Baptized is near Sixty,—While I was at Stockbridge, the Rev. Mfr. Sergeant (the Minister there) was married to Mrs. Abigail Williams, Esq. There were ninety Indians present at the Marriage, who behav'd with great Gravity while the Prayers were made, yea, during the whole Solemnity; and seem'd exceedingly well pleased that their Minister was married; they shew him great Respect, etc. And I hope he may prove yet a great Blessing among them*

*and be instrumental in turning many of them from Darkness to Light."*

—The Boston Newsletter 1739

These accounts clearly indicate the Stockbridge adopted many of the lifestyle norms of their European neighbors more than fifteen years prior to their role in the French & Indian War. In addition to their traditional agricultural, hunting & fishing practices, Native members raised livestock, performed day labor work for European colonials, produced craft items and served in the town offices as “constable, hog reeve, surveyor and selectmen”. (Starna, 188)

With the start of the War, the Stockbridge raised their own company and were added to Shirley's forces for the aborted Niagara campaign. It was only later, that they assigned to Rogers' Rangers.

### Stockbridge Identity: Evidence of Mahican – Munsee Co-mingling

By Pvt Lou Tramelli, Michigan Company

In discussing Stockbridge identity it is common to conceive of them of simply as Mahican. While this is generally a true descriptor of them overall, the two factors that complicate answering this seemingly simple question are the purpose of the town in seeking Native converts, and the intertwined or comingled nature of the of various “River Indians” denominations in the 17th and 18th century Mid Hudson Valley region.

To begin with, the mission town of Stockbridge was undisputedly established among Housatonic Mahican bands, but it remained continually open to other natives convert as well. Hopkins' history of the early mission and the Johnson Paper records members of various tribes to include Iroquois attending the mission, if not permanently resettling there. The historian Robert Grumet, in an article entitled, The Nimhams of the Colonial Hudson Valley, 1667 – 1783 highlights the following records; first that Lord Loudon noted in 1757 that the yet famous Wappinger, Daniel Nimham, already served in the Stockbridge Company “under Captain Jacobs”, and Stockbridge town minutes indicate that the same Daniel Nimham was selected as town Constable in March of

58. (Grumet, 89). Several other Wappingers were recorded as land owners in Stockbridge at this time.

Of course as a "praying town" attracting converts, Stockbridge wasn't unique. Shekomeko, approximately 35 miles to the southeast was a mixed Mahican – Munsee community and Moravian mission town in the 1740s. But did the comingling of tribes predate the arrival of the mission? Evidence seems to suggest it might. One such example was the Mahican – Munsee community of Tachkanick recorded in the land transaction that became part of the original Livingston Manor in 1685. Another mid 18th century example is the mixed remnant community at the Fish Kilns (Fishkill NY).

While modern historians dismiss the idea of a Mahican or Wappinger confederacy offered by Rutenber, it seems evident that co-mingled Mahican – Munsee communities existed were not uncommon in the Hudson Valley. Many 17th and 18th century sources seem to treat the often nebulous delineation of tribal affiliation by lumping differing mid Hudson Valley tribes and subgroups into the category or "River Indians". Consider the following colonial perspectives recorded in the Johnson Papers:

1. Fort Johnson April 1757: Many of these Mohikanders or River Indians, are yet scattered about these Provinces, and as they seem now determined to congregate and fix themselves at Otsiningo. (WJ Papers v9 pg 700)
2. Fort Johnson 1 June 1756: Sr William Johnson having sent for the River Indians who lived lately about Esopus in this Province & are now incorporated with the lower Mohock Castle, 17 of them came whom he fully cloathed, Armed & gave them Amunition with Pipes & Tobacco. (WJ Papers v9 pg470)
3. The king or chief of the Delawares, settled on the Susquehanna and its branches & a great number of Mahicander or River Indians whom I lately have drawn up from the frontiers of this Province & New Jersey to settle near to & under the protection of

our faithful allies the Mohawks. These Indians were originally Delaware & are still regarded as Brethren by them. -William Johnson July 17 1756 (DH vol2, pg731)

4. You are doubtless sensible that the Indians who formerly possessed Long Island and the rest of this Province below Albany are now reduced to a small number, and that they are for the most part so scattered & dispersed & so much addicted to wandering that no certain Acct can be obtained of them. It will be therefore sufficient to observe that they are Remnants of the following Tribes, Montocks & others of Long Island, Wappingers of Dutchess County, Those of Esopus Papagonk &ca in Ulster County, and a few Skachticokes, All these last have generally been denominated River Indians, and may make Three Hundred fighting Men they speak a Language radically the same, and are understood by the Delawares, being originally of the same race, most of these people at present profess Christianity, & adapt as far as they can our Customs, and the greater part of them attended our Armies during the late War, tho'not with the same reputation with those who are still Hunters.

-Sir William Johnson Oct 1773  
(DRCHNY v8 pg 458)

Finally, when contemplating the possible co-mingled nature of various Mahican and Munsee subsets, it is important to consider the Native perspective though it was rarely recorded. The Livingston Indian Records record one such instance that took place in February 1675 in Albany. In a "proposal by the Chiefs of the Mahikanders", they are recorded as declaring

*Say the English and Dutch are now one and the Dutch are now English. Thus we Mahikanders, the Highland Indians (Wappingers) and the west-corner (Connecticut Valley) Indians are now one also. (Pg31)*

Whether this intertribal cooperative affinity re-

mained widespread throughout the century is unknowable, but the scattered mixed Mahican-Munsee communities cited above seem to suggest the practice remained prevalent in some quarters.



Drawn from Life by G. Catlin  
The Mohegan, Psalm Book in hand

### Of Stockbridge Hospitality & Charity

Submitted by Pvt Lou Tramelli, Michigan Company

*When we were come to the Captains (Konkapot's) house, there were several of our Indians there, as well as from below as those that belong d there. After we had been there for some time two men appointed for the service took a deer down that hung up in the Wigwam,*

*which was to be offer d, and laid the four quarters upon a bark in the middle of the house (the rest sitting round very serious) the skin was taken off with the entire head and neck to the shoulders; the four quarters were laid one upon another, and the skin doubled lengthwise was laid upon them, so as to make it look as much like a whole deer as might be. When this was done an elderly man appointed for that purpose stood up over it, and with a pretty loud voice spake to the following purpose: \*O great God, pity us, grant us food to eat, afford us good and comfortable sleep, preserve us from being devoured by the fowls that fly in the air. This deer is given in token that we acknowledge thee the giver of all things. Then he halloooed pretty loud, that God might hear and take notice of what they were doing. Then he that made the offering gave the pro tempore Priest (for they have no stated one) a string of Wompum which was to pay him for his service; after which he halloo d again. After these ceremonies were ended the two men before mentioned cut the deer in pieces and boil d it; and when it was made ready a piece was given to everyone, of which they all eat except he that offer d it (for he eats none of it), which is to signify it is a gift, and therefore free, and he desires none of it back again. While they were eating one of the waiters gave the skin with the feet, and some of the inwards, to an old Widow woman, which is a deed of charity they always practice upon such occasions.*

-Journal of John Sergeant (Hopkins, 25)

### Stockbridge Cairns, or Stone Markers.

Submitted by Pvt. Lou Tramelli, Michigan Company

*There is a large heap of stones, I suppose ten cart-loads, in the Way to Wnahtukook, which the Indians have thrown together as they have passed by the place; for it us d to be their custom, every time any one pass d by, to throw a stone upon it. But what was the end of it they cannot tell; only they say their fathers us d to do so, and they do it because it was the custom of their fathers.*

-The Journal of John Sergeant (Hopkins, 24)



*Gary Zaboly Paintings of the Stockbridge Company*



*Excellent marksmanship, aside from scoutcraft and daring, is what made the best Rangers. Former hunters and trappers most of them, they understood how a single well-aimed shot might alter the course of a skirmish or battle in the forest. Robert Rogers instructed his companies to practice firing at marks so frequently that at least one British commander, Lieutenant-Colonel William Haviland, scolded him, considering it an "extravagance in Ammunition."*  
 Image credit: Gary Zaboly/Osprey Publishing.

Robert Rogers and Captain Jacob Checksaunkun scout ahead of Amerherst's advanced guard. Painting done by Gary Zaboly



## Stockbridge Natives take Scalps.

Below are some Journal entries submitted to the Battalion Journal about the Stockbridge Natives taking scalps when on patrol.

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 From Major George Bray III  
 Muzzle Loader Volume 13, Nr. 2 1986

**Albany, May 18, 1758**

*Capt. Jacob, head of a Company of Stockbridge Indians, brought to Sir William's lodgings four French scalps, which his cousin, chief of another company of said Indians, had taken from the enemy some days before. These four scalps were offered to Johnson to replace some dead Indians, one being for the Mohawk chief King Hendrick who was killed at the Battle of Lake George in September, 1755.*

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 Submitted by Ensign Thomas Pray  
 Schroth's New York Company

**August 4th, 1756**

*"This day (Capt.) Jacob with a Party of Stockbridge Indians returned from their Scout. They had been to Ticonderoga, where they said there were more men than all our army. About half a mile from the Fort they saw Three frenchmen, whom they fired at and killed two and brought home their scalps".*

Lt. George Bartman

**September 6th, 1756**

*"A part of the Indian Company were sent to the East-side of Lake Champlain to alarm the enemy at Ticonderoga, whilst I with a detachment of my own, and Captain Richard's company, was ordered on another party down Lake George....Capt. Jacon, who commanded the Indian party before-*

*mentioned returned two days before me with four French Scalps, which they took opposite to Ticonderoga on the East-side.*

Captain. Robert Rogers

**September 8th, 1756**

*"This evening Captain Jacobs returned from his Scout. He had been at the Narrows of Ticonderoga and brought away two Scalps, one an officer's. His party brought advice that there were not then at that Fort half the number of tents that there were some time before when he was there".*

Lt. George Bartman

## An Account of a Mohegan and a Stockbridge

By Pvt. Lou Tramelli, Michigan Company

**New-London, March 2.**

*Saturday last arrived here a Vessel from Monto Christo, in which came Passengers two Indians, one of the Stockbridge, the other of the Mohegan Tribe; they give the following Account, viz. That they were under the Command of Capt. Jacob, and taken by a Party of Canada Indians, near South Bay, last Spring; and by them sold on board a French Man of War of 24 Guns, at Quebeck; and from thence sent to Cape Francois, where they were again sold, and kept to extream hard Labour and slender Diet, with the Negroes; but happening to discourse with an honest Spaniard, who spoke English, they communicated their Story to him, whereupon the Spaniard advised them to make their Escape to Monto Christo, where he did not doubt they might get a Passage home in some English Vessel; which Advice they put in Execution, after stealing a Gun, Ammunition and two large Knives, and made off to the Woods, and after 13 Days Travel they arrived at Monto Christo. They further say there was such a Frost in Canada, in June last, as killed all the Corn, after which the Indians planted the Ground with Beans which the Frost also destroyed, so that the Indians gave four Pounds of Fur for one of Bread.*

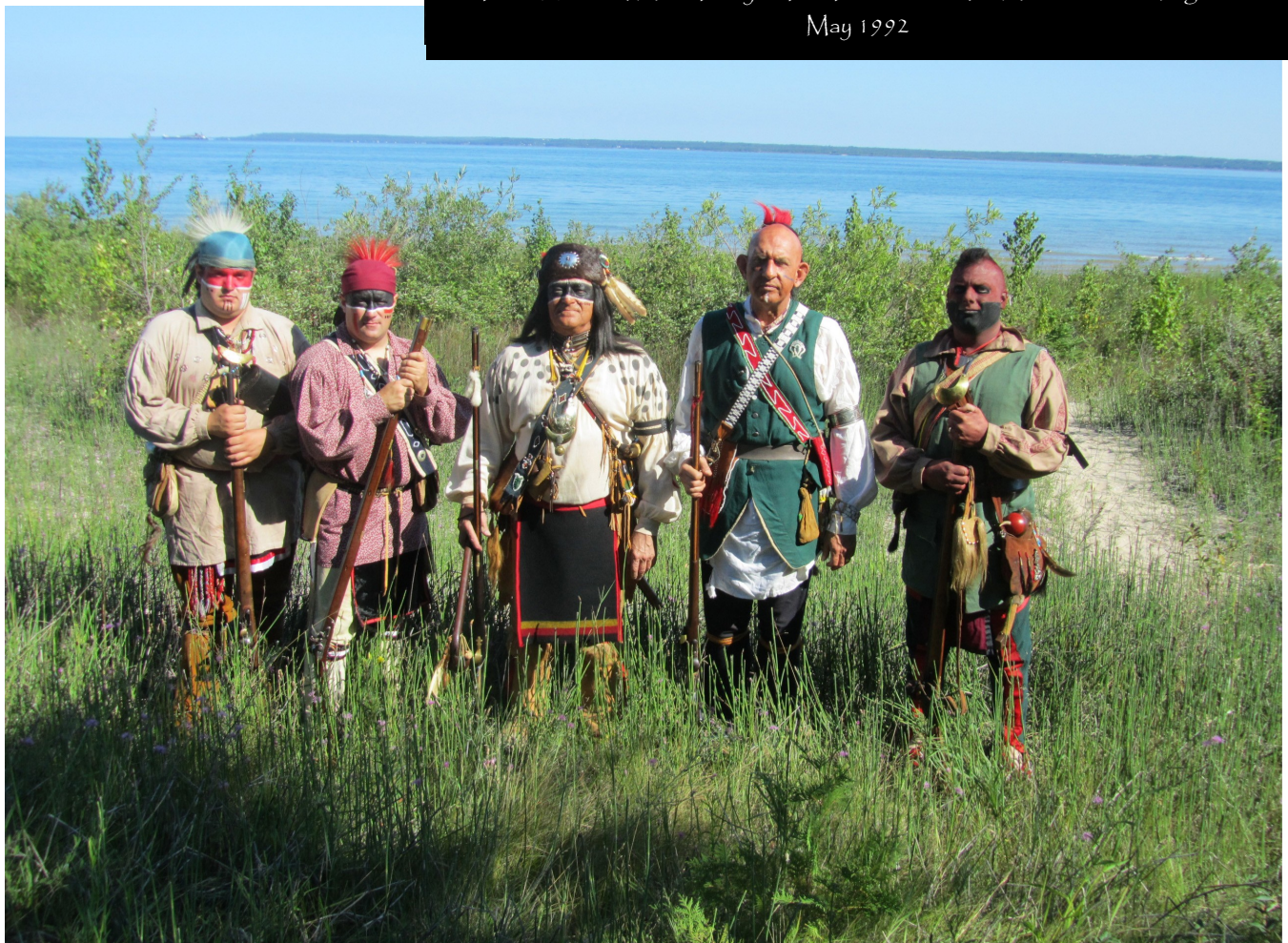
-The Boston Evening-Post, March 12, 1759.



Battalion Archive



Todd Harburn, Mike Tracy & Tim Todish at the Ft. Michilimackinac Pageant  
May 1992



The Indian Company at Fort Michilimackinac: (Left to right) Evan Thomppson, Bryce Tracy (Company Adjutant), Capt. Lt. Mike Tracy (company commander), Jan Burdzinski, Jason Reese  
(2012)



## Duly Noted

Fort Johnson January 23. 1757.

*Captain Jacob of Stockbridge with two more of that Tribe of Indians arrived here & laid the List or Roll of his Company before Sir Wm. Johnson at the same time telling him, that there were three or four of his Men not paid & that his Clerk (for not being duly qualified) had received but 10 Dollars instead of £24 Curry. He further added that several of the Stockbridge Indians who inlisted last year in the New York Regiment for 5 Months & served 7 Months were not paid a penny, if this be the way (said he) that we are served by our Brethren we have no reason to join them anymore. He then asked Sir William what was to be the fate of the River Indians who were in Jail at Albany whether to be hanged or not.*

*Sir William Told them that as Lord Loudoun's Secretary (who had the original Roll of his Company & the several payments made to them) was not here, there could be nothing done in it, but that he might depend upon his examining into the Affair as soon as Mr. Appy' came to Albany, and that he would. also enquire into that Affair of the 5 Indians who were enlisted into the New York Reg t. & if they would find who the Captain was Sir William would speak to him about it & did not doubt obliging him to pay them if they had Justice on their side. That as to the Fate of the Two Indians of theirs who were committed on Suspicion of Murder he would not tell. The Law must take its course if they were not guilty of the murder they would be acquitted. Sir William added, that he would be a Friend to them & their Tribe in general as long as he found them deserving.*

*The Captain returned thanks for what Sir William said & promised them & assured him he*

*would in return be ready at his Call whenever he wanted them, for which kind offer Sir William thanked them. gave him & his Party some Trifles & a Keg of Rum on their Journey & parted.*

-William Johnson Papers vol9 pg 590

Mahican Captain Jacob Cheekasaun's ill fated scout towards Tyconderoga as recorded in journals. Captain Jacob would be captured with four Mahican privates and carried to Montreal. The four Privates would be slaughtered. Captain Jacobs would be tossed into jail in irons.

**July 3, 1759**

*Capt. Jacobs with his Indians sat out with three whale boats in the night for Ticonderoga.*

General Jeffrey Amherst

**July 4th, 1759**

*Yesterday Captain Jacobs went out on a scout with thirty men a discovered a party and sent to the Lake for more men and there went about 100 men to help him.*

Sergeant Robert Webster

**July 7th, 1759**

Lake George Camp

*" This evening a Party of Rangers returned from a scout to Crown Point; say that very few of the enemy are to be seen at that place; but there is a great number of tents at Ticonderoga; that they saw Jacobs and his party closely pursued ashore by the enemy in birch canoes, and that they fired on Jacob's party before they were able to get ashore, and they heard a firing for some time".*

Captain-Lieutenant Henry Skinner

**July 7th, 1759**

*We had the news that Capt Jacobs was cut off by the enemy.*

Sergeant Rufus Putnam

**July 8th, 1759**

*Lt. Holmes of the Rangers came in from a*

scouting party; he had been at Crown Point and Ticonderoga but could not take any prisoners. By his accounts the French must be in full force and have not yet the news of M. Genl. Wolfe being in the River; they are encamped to defend the lines. As he returned he saw six canoes pursuing three whale boats, which must be Capt. Jacobs and his 30 men. He, Lt. Holmes, thought they'd get on shore before they could be overtaken; he saw them fire from the canoes.

General Jeffrey Amherst

July 9th, 1759

"Part of Captain Jacobs men that had been out (on) a scout came in and they said (they) had been chased by the Indians and the Captain and about 20 men were either killed or taken. Joseph Fisk was out in the about scout was killed or taken".

Private Lemuel Wood

July 10th, 1759

Yesterday a part of Captain Jacobs men came in from off a scout and seven or eight of them were killed or taken.

Sergeant Robert Webster

July 10th, 1759

Two men of Captain Jacobs Scout return'd to camp by the East side of the lake. They had escaped capture after leaving their battos and hiding. They had no victuals but ate berries and mushrooms.

Private Howard Reede

July 10, 1759

About ten of Capt. Jacobs people came in; they all deserved to have been taken for setting out in their boats in the daytime instead of the night.

General Jeffrey Amherst

July 11th, 1759

I sent out two Partys one on each side the Lake, of Light Infantry and Rangers and some boats to fish to try to draw the enemy in. They picked up one man of Jacobs party who was returning to

camp; staid out all day and saw nothing of the enemy.

General Jeffrey Amherst

July 11th, 1759

" This day another man of Captain Jacobs' Company came in almost starved". "He said they had a brush with the French and Indians but could not tell what had become of Captain Jacobs or his men. WE heard that the French had come up to the Narrows"

Private Lemuel Wood

July 12, 1759

Capt. Jacobs went out a week ago with about 30 men. Was surrounded at ye narrows with birch cannoos, fired upon by ye enemy. Capt. Jacobs and 10 of them are not yet come in.

Rev. Henry True

July 12, 1759

Two men of Jacob's party were found killed and scalped on the shore near ware the battoes had been attack'd. One with his Heart cut out.

Private Jonathon Roberts

July 14th, 1759

Thair came into camp today two men that was with Capt Jacobs. They said they had been chaised but hid in a swamp until dark. They was hungry having nott had provisins.

Private John Bayley



Major Rogers (Tim Todish) giving orders to Captain Jacobs (Mike Tracey) for a scout.

## Sources of Stockbridge Information

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## Online Resources

Guide to the Stockbridge Indian Papers, 1739 - 1915. Collection # 9185 Cornell University Library.

<http://rnc.library.cornell.edu/EAD/htmldocs/RMM09185.html>

Yale Indian Papers Project. <http://www.library.yale.edu/yipp/>

Internet Archive. <http://www.archive.org>





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