

# Raid on Deerfield



We can sometimes forget that long before the American colonists fought for their independence, other nations were battling to gain dominance in this new land. Throughout Queen Anne's War, English and French forces fought each other to gain control of North America. On February 29, 1704, fifty French troops, allied with two hundred native Americans savagely attacked the British settlement of Deerfield Massachusetts. Forty-eight villagers were killed and one hundred twelve were captured.

The prisoners were then forced to march a three hundred mile journey to Canada. Winter had set in and they faced deep snow and bitterly cold conditions. Those who could not keep up were killed. Of the one hundred twelve prisoners, only eighty-nine survived the journey. Some were ransomed and returned to America, while others stayed in Canada, assimilating into the Indian or French communities. My wife had relatives who had settled in Deerfield and were a part of this nightmare scenario.

61 year old John Caitlin (9th great-grandfather) was killed in the village attack.

47 year old Thomas French (8th great-grandfather) was captured and ransomed in 1706.

40 year old Mary Caitlin French (8th great-grandmother) was captured and killed en route to Canada.

20 year old Ruth Catlin (8th great-grandaunt) was captured and ransomed in 1707.

18 year old Mary French (7th great-grandaunt) was captured and ransomed in 1706.

17 year old Joseph Caitlin (8th great-granduncle) was captured but killed in the meadow outside the compound during a militia rescue attempt.

17 year old Thomas French (7th great-grandfather) was captured and ransomed in 1706.

12 year old Freedom French (7th great-grandaunt) was captured and remained in Canada as Marie Francoise French.

9 year old Martha French (7th great-grandaunt) was captured and remained in Canada where she married a Frenchman.

7 year old Abigail French (7th great-grandaunt) was captured and remained in Canada with the Indians.

1 year old John French (7th great-granduncle) was killed in the village attack.

“The Redeemed Captive: Returning to Zion, ” a first-hand account of the raid on Deerfield and the march to Canada was published in 1707 by John Williams, Deerfield’s religious leader, who survived the experience.

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