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STEPHEN MANCHESTER, THE SLAYER OF  
THE INDIAN CHIEF POLIN, AT NEW  
MARBLEHEAD, NOW WINDHAM,  
MAINE, IN 1756, AND A SOL-  
DIER OF THE REVOLU-  
TION, WITH HIS  
ANCESTRY.

BY NATHAN GOOLD.

When Brown by Polin slain,  
Winship twice scalped was lain,  
    The Indian yell  
Triumphant pierced the air;  
But Manchester was there  
Undaunted by a fear  
    And Polin fell.

THE events of May, 1756, at New Marblehead, now Windham, Maine, were of but small moment in the great progress of the world, but to the early settlers of the outlying towns of what is now Cumberland County they were of the greatest importance. Time has proved that the Indian's deed to these towns of ours was not recorded in heaven, but that this was God's country, and His great plan was that if the savages opposed the progress of civilization they must be banished from the land.

New Marblehead had several settlers before 1740, but the order of their coming will probably never be known. The story of Stephen Manchester, one of the

earliest settlers, must always be interesting and prominent in the town's history. The romance connected with his coming to the town brightens the dry facts of history. He was born and spent his early life in Tiverton, Rhode Island, and when a young man became much interested in a neighbor's daughter, named Grace Farrow. Her parents objected to his attentions to their daughter but were unable to prevent them. At last they decided to emigrate to the District of Maine and settle in the new country where their daughter would soon forget her lover, her parents thinking that the attachment for young Manchester was but a childish fancy. John Farrow, his wife Persis, daughter Grace, and other children came to New Marblehead to make themselves a home, and he is said to have been the third settler, in 1738, on home lot No. 29.

Stephen Manchester was then about twenty-one years of age and probably as resolute as he was in his later life. Tradition does not give what passed after Grace Farrow left Tiverton with her parents, but in two long weeks Stephen Manchester walked into her father's door. It was probably the same old story, of her parents consenting to their marriage, which probably occurred that year. For their home he selected home lot No. 32, next to John Farrow, Jr's., lots (his brother-in-law), cleared the land and built a loghouse.

The situation at this time in the new township was that a bridge had been built over the Presumpscot River in 1736, for communication with Falmouth, and in the winter of 1737-38, a meeting-house was begun,

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but the Indians forbade their building it. In the autumn of 1738, the Indians troubled the men so much in building the mill at Horse Beef Falls, now Mallison Falls, that the proprietors were asked for an extension of time when the mill should be completed. Such was the condition of affairs when young Manchester started life in the new settlement, with a prospect of being obliged to contest with the Indians every right.

Soon it was discovered that the Indian chief Polin was bent on the destruction of their settlement, but resolutely they kept at work improving their land. In times of peace the Indians camped near the settlement and they became well acquainted, but Manchester never liked Polin. In 1739, there were camped on the Presumpscot about twenty-five Indians, besides the squaws and children.

In the summer of 1739, Chief Polin with other Indians went to Boston and held a conference with the governor and council, where they stated their grievances. They wished a fishway kept open in the dam of Col. Westbrook at the Presumpscot Lower Falls, and objected to the further settlement of the land on the river, as they wished the river for their trade. They also wished that some trader might be placed where it would be convenient to buy a small quantity of rum, but not enough to get drunk upon as that was contrary to their religion. They also wanted a drum as their young men wished to have a dance sometimes. They objected to a settlement at New Marblehead, saying that Saccarappa was as far as the English had

a right to settle. In reply the governor ordered a fishway in the dam, and also that the Indians be treated kindly, but he told them that there had been deeds of the land given to Rev. Robert Jordan and others, which had been burned during the Indian war, probably in Jordan's house at Spurwink, in 1675. He then told them that the opportunities for getting rum were sufficient. The Indians at the end of each request laid down a skin saying it was the pledge of the tribe, whom they called the "Pesumpscots."

The settlers kept on in the work of the settlement, but for their protection they were obliged to build a fort, which was on home lot No. 33. It is described as fifty feet square, two stories high, with walls one one foot thick of hewn hemlock timber, the upper story jutting out over the lower, with a tier of portholes. There were two watch-boxes placed at diagonal corners, two stories high, twelve feet square, with walls one foot thick, each watch-box having a swivel gun, furnished by the proprietors, and so placed as to defend two sides of the fort. The fort surrounded with a stockade about twenty-five or thirty feet from it, made by setting posts ten or twelve inches in diameter, twelve feet long, perpendicularly in the ground so near together that the Indians could not pass between them. This fort was built during the spring of 1744, and was paid for by the state appropriating one hundred pounds for the purpose. An iron nine-pounder was placed before the fort for firing alarms, and the proprietors provided fifty pounds of powder. This preparation was made because of the



declaration of war between England and France that year. During that war the settlers were obliged to live in the fort for protection against the Indians, who destroyed their crops and reduced them almost to beggary.

Smith in his history of Windham says : —

The first settlers of this town commenced their settlement under the most discouraging circumstances. No succor or supplies could be obtained without traveling six or eight miles through the trackless woods. Yet they persevered with untiring zeal, displayed a fortitude that does honor to human nature, turned the barren wilderness into the fruitful field, and ultimately taught the savage Indians, by whom they were surrounded, to know by sad experience, that the first settlers were a class of men who would not suffer them to take life with impunity.

The story of the years to 1756 has been told by others, but that was an important year in Stephen Manchester's life. Let us now turn to his origin, the events of his life in the township, now Windham, Maine, and the story of his ancestors.

Stephen Manchester was born in Tiverton, Rhode Island, May 23, 1717, and was the son of Gershom and Anna Manchester. He married, probably in 1738, Grace Farrow, a daughter of John and Persis Farrow. Her father had cleared twelve acres of land on home lot No. 29, built a log house, which had rotted down, and he had died before April 26, 1759. Her mother died May 12, 1758. Stephen Manchester cleared twelve acres on lot No. 32, built a house, which stood about twenty rods from the river before 1759. From a report of a committee discovered by Rev. George M. Bodge, a native of Windham, it seems

that Manchester did not settle on lot No. 32 until 1742. Where he lived before that time is not known, but perhaps with her father on lot No. 29. Manchester's lot is now owned by the heirs of Col. Edward Anderson.

Stephen Manchester's son Thomas was the first child born in the township in 1739. He was a lad of seventeen in the fight in 1756, and married, December 6, 1764, Hannah Bailey. He bought of John Farrow, probably his uncle, ten acres of home lot No. 31 with a convenient landing-place on the Presumpscot River, March 12, 1766, also twenty-five acres of lot No. 21, second division. Before the Revolutionary war he moved to Haverhill, New Hampshire, and January 31, 1776, enlisted in Capt. Samuel Young's company of Col. Timothy Bedel's New Hampshire rangers. They marched to the St. Lawrence River and joined the Northern army, and were in the affair at the "Cedars," forty-three miles above Montreal, in May, and Col. Bedel was cashiered in August for cowardice and incapacitated from holding office under the government.

Stephen Manchester's wife, Grace, died about 1745, and was buried on their lot. She was about twenty-six years of age. He married his second wife, Seafair Mayberry, December 21, 1749. She was a daughter of William Mayberry, the second settler of the town, and was born on the passage from Ireland to Marblehead, Massachusetts, about 1730. Her name was given her for the fact that she was born at sea. By her he had Stephen Jr., born August 9, 1751, who never married but enlisted for three years, January 1, 1777,

in Col. Joseph Vose's 1st Massachusetts regiment, took part in the Saratoga campaign and surrender of Burgoyne, went to Valley Forge, where he was taken sick, carried to Reading, Pennsylvania, where he died, January 5, 1778, aged twenty-six years. The next child was Abigail, born November 9, 1753, who married, January 28, 1773, Davis Thurrel and moved to Poland, Maine. Soon after the birth of Abigail, his wife Seafair died, December 12, 1753, aged about twenty-three years.

Stephen Manchester married for his third wife, Mary Bailey, April 9, 1758. She was born at Marblehead, Massachusetts, November 4, 1726, and was a daughter of John and Rachel Bailey, who were at Newbury, Massachusetts, in 1722, at Marblehead in 1726 and at Falmouth in 1728. Her brother was probably the selectman of Windham in 1765-66, and her father's family may have lived there as the heirs of John Bailey were taxed for lot No. 23 in 1759. This was the lot settled by Seth Webb in 1744. Mary (Bailey) Manchester owned the covenant in the Windham church May 21, 1762. Her children were Gershom, born May 10, 1761; married, July 23, 1787, Anne Bunker who died in 1842, aged eighty-two years. She was a woman respected by those who knew her. Gershom enlisted at eighteen, in Capt. William Harris company in 1779 and served twenty-six days on Falmouth Neck. He lived near his father at East Windham, then moved to North Windham where he died in 1853, aged ninety-two years. He was erect and active until after he was ninety years of age.

The next child was Annah, born February 13, 1765; married in 1785, William Fields of Falmouth and died February 10, 1857, aged almost ninety-two years. She had twelve children. They lived at Windham in the Ireland school district, and the farm is occupied by their descendants. She was much loved by her family and left a good name to her posterity.

The youngest child was John, born about 1767; married, February 8, 1795, Mary Hannaford. They had a large family. He lived near his father at East Windham and afterwards moved to the West Gray road, where he died about September, 1839, aged about seventy-two years.

Stephen Manchester was an Indian scout. He was in Capt. George Berry's company of scouts, May 19, 1746, to January 19, 1747, and was also in Capt. Daniel Hill's company from March to December, 1748. In 1749, in a deposition, he states that in 1748 he went on a ten days' march from Gorhamtown up to the head of Sebago Pond and back into the woods eighty miles. They went across the pond in whale-boats and returned home by the same route. He also states that it was a common practise to watch, guard and scout around about New Marblehead. In these scouting expeditions he became familiar with the whole region and the Indian methods. It is a tradition that for many years he resolved to kill the chief Polin at the first opportunity.

In the early spring of 1756, the settlers noticed that the Indians were uneasy and they expected when the snow went off that there would be trouble, and May

fourteenth their fears were verified. Joseph Knights had been captured at New Marblehead in February and escaped in time to alarm the inhabitants at Falmouth, May fifteenth, four days before Polin was killed. The following account of the events of that day, written by Thomas L. Smith, Esq., seems to be the accepted one as he must have known in his earlier life some of those alive at that time and received the story from their lips :

On the morning of May 14, 1756, Ezra Brown and Ephraim Winship left the fort for the purpose of laboring on Brown's lot, which was about one mile to the rear, or northeast of the fort. They were accompanied by a guard, consisting of four men and four boys ; the names of the men were Stephen Manchester, Abraham Anderson, Joseph Starling and John Farrow, the names of the boys, Timothy Cloudman, Gershom Winship, Stephen Tripp and Thomas Manchester. In going to Brown's lot they had to go through a piece of woods, Brown and Winship being about sixty rods in advance, and in the thickest part of the woods were fired upon by a body of fifteen or twenty Indians, who lay in ambush. The Indians were of the Rockameecook tribe commanded by Polin their king. Brown was shot dead upon the spot, Winship received two balls, one in the eye and another in the arm and fell to the ground where both were scalped by the Indians. Upon hearing the report of the guns part of the guard went back to the fort. The residue, Abraham Anderson, Stephen Manchester, Timothy Cloudman and Gershom Winship determined to pursue the Indians and avenge the blood of their fallen companions or perish in the attempt. Polin the Indian chief, who was concealed behind a tree, was the first to begin the bloody combat. He discharged his musket at Anderson without taking effect. In his eagerness to reload his piece the body of Polin became uncovered and exposed to the view of Manchester, who was about thirty feet on Anderson's right, when Manchester instantly leveled his musket, took deadly aim and fired ; swift as

lightning the fatal ball sped its way and Polin, the warrior king of the Rockameecooks, fell to rise no more.

A tradition in Manchester's family is, that Polin and Manchester fired at each other without effect, and in the race to get loaded again Manchester was too quick for the Indian by his gun priming itself, when he fired and killed the chief.

Parson Smith states, May 10, 1756, that the Indians were coming on the frontier from Brunswick to Saco, and the next day says that Capt. Milk's, Capt. Ilsley's, Capt. Smith's and Capt. Berry's companies have gone scouting after Indians. The Indians captured a young woman and killed Thomas Means at Flying Point (Freeport) a few days before. He speaks May fourteenth, of the killing of Polin by Manchester, and gives particulars, also says "The Indians fled affrighted and left five packs, a bow and a bunch of arrows and several other things." He says "Manchester was the hero of the action, but Anderson behaved gallantly calling, 'Follow on my lads,' or the English, perhaps all of them, would have been killed."

The death of Polin brought peace and happiness to the border settlements, and of course the settlers felt grateful to Manchester for killing him. A tradition is that Manchester was offered a township for his reward but declined the offer saying it was "reward enough to have killed the skunk."

In a petition of the inhabitants of New Marblehead to Lieut. Gov. Phips and the government at Boston for relief, dated April 4, 1757, signed, with others, by Stephen Manchester, his son Thomas, his father

Gershom and his brother John, they state that the settlers have been confined in the garrison fourteen or fifteen years, and that they had raised little corn and that many fields of several acres had been destroyed by "ye wild varmounds" (Indians). They said they had "no credit because they had nothing to pay with and then their creditors did not know how soon they might be destroyed by the Indians."

After the retirement of the Indians, settlers went to the township and it rapidly filled up. Then it became a prosperous settlement. The town voted, March 30, 1768, that a good handy pair of bars shall be kept by Stephen Manchester's and Widow Chute's across the road leading down to the river, probably to a landing place.

At the beginning of the Revolutionary war one of the first, and perhaps the first, to enlist in the army from Windham was Stephen Manchester, then fifty-eight years of age. He enlisted, in Capt. John Brackett's Company, in Col. Edmund Phinney's 31st Regiment of Foot, May 12, 1775, and marched to Cambridge July third, where he served under Washington to December thirty-first. He enlisted, January 1, 1776, in Capt. Jonathan Sawyer's Company, in Col. Edmund Phinney's 18th Continental Regiment and served through the siege of Boston and was discharged August 20, 1776. He was a soldier in Capt. George Smith's Company in Col Joseph Vose's 1st Massachusetts Regiment and served three years, probably from early in the year 1777. He took part in the Saratoga campaign, was at surrender of Burgoyne,

spent the winter at Valley Forge, was in the battles in Rhode Island, and returned home after the expiration of his term of service.

When the locality where he settled, at South Windham, became a prosperous community he longed to go further into the forest to pass the last years of his life as near nature as he had begun it, and February 7, 1788, he bought the lot No. 79, second division of one hundred acres, situated at East Windham, where he moved, being then in his seventy-second year. Here on a steep and rugged hill, at least two hundred and fifty feet above the surrounding country, he built a small one-story house and cleared himself a farm. He built here in the forest on this hill for the same reason that the eagle builds its nest in the highest tree overlooking the country — a natural love of freedom. His old home had become too tame for him. This hill where he established his new home has always been known as Manchester's Hill and from the front of his house on the hill looking northwest, he had a fine view of at least eight miles along Pleasant River valley, and in the distance on a clear day the White Mountains loom up, about sixty miles away. It is a beautiful view now, and was on such a spot, as such a man as he would be likely to locate.

A few months after Manchester located his new home, John Akers Knight bought land at the foot of the hill, built a log house and they soon became fast friends. Knight went from Quaker Lane, now in Deering, and a few years later built the two-story house now occupied by his grandson Albert M. Knight. He



was the son of Moses and Hannah (Akers) Knight who came from Newbury, Massachusetts and settled on what is called the "Hart Place" on Quaker Lane, in Deering, in 1737. John A. Knight built the first mill at Huston Falls near his home at Windham. He had eighteen children and died July 10, 1834, aged eighty-five years. His wife was Keziah Morrell, a daughter of John and Sarah (Winslow) Morrell, and was married April 16, 1778.

Stephen Manchester lived in his little house on the hill until he was unable to carry on his farm, when he first moved to his son Gershom's and afterwards to his son John's at the foot of the hill on the road, where he died June 24, 1807, aged ninety years. He was buried in his friend and neighbor Knight's graveyard, where now lay these two old pioneers, near each other, awaiting their final summons. Manchester's grave is marked only by two iron rods, one at the head and the other at the foot, placed there by his neighbor Knight's family, so that the grave might not be forgotten. Some monument should mark that grave, so inscribed that every generation would know where Stephen Manchester, the slayer of Polin, was buried. His last wife Mary, died May 15, 1815, aged eighty-eight years.

Stephen Manchester hated the Indians to his dying day, and always noticed the fourteenth of May as the anniversary of the day on which, as he said, he "sent the devil a present." He, in his later years is described as a man of full six feet in height, sinewy and compactly built, very erect, with dark curling hair, a

somewhat swarthy complexion, keen eyes and he probably weighed over one hundred and eighty pounds. He was calm and collected under all circumstances, a man of resolute courage and an adept in all manner of woodcraft.

The only signs now of his last home on Manchester Hill, are a small mound where the chimney stood, three of his apple trees, scraggy and partly dead, and a few piles of rocks now well sunken into the earth, gathered by his hands from the farm. The juniper and pine trees have taken possession of his land and his farm is now a pasture.

For one hundred and forty years the name of Stephen Manchester has been one of the best known in Windham. The mothers of the town for many generations have told their children at their knees the story of the killing of the Indian chief Polin, and how that act freed their forefathers from the savages' depredations, leaving the impression that to Manchester the town owed a debt of gratitude which they never could discharge.

Whenever our country has needed defenders the family of Stephen Manchester have stood ready and willing to stand shoulder to shoulder with the bravest. Five generations of the family have served their country from Windham.

Stephen Manchester, his father Gershom and brother John, also his son Thomas, served in the French and Indian wars. He, his brother John, and his three sons, Thomas, Stephen Jr., and Gershom, served in the Revolutionary war, Stephen Jr. dying in the service.

His grandson, Stephen Manchester 3d, served in the Windham company in the war of 1812, and several great-grandsons entered the army to restore the Union that their ancestor fought to establish, two of whom went from Windham, and gave their lives that we might have a new birth of freedom for the nation, "and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, should not perish from the earth."

The tradition and stories of Old Windham, the land of our fathers, will always be of interest to the sons and daughters of that town. Their preservation for posterity is the result of the affection for the town that those fathers loved and where they lie buried. The place where Chief Polin fell has been marked by such loving hands, to whom those interested in the town's history are indebted for their thoughtfulness in placing there a granite marker before the location was forgotten. It was in lot No. 21, first division of one hundred acre lots, which is off the old River Road on the road to Duck Pond village, and is not far from the Westbrook line. The lot was owned at the time by Ezra Brown, whose heirs sold it to Abraham Anderson in whose family it has since remained.

The public spirited citizens, through whose efforts the marker was located and dedicated November 16, 1895, were Samuel T. Dole, William M. Smith, Frank Cobb, Edwin and Charles Hunnewell, Abraham Cloudman and John Webb.

The name of Manchester  
His numerous children hear  
Among the brave.

## STEPHEN MANCHESTER'S ANCESTRY.

Stephen Manchester's earliest known ancestor was Thomas Manchester, who had a grant of land at Portsmouth, Rhode Island, December 10, 1657. He married Margaret Wood, daughter of John Wood of Portsmouth. She died in 1693, and he was alive in 1691. The following were the names of his children: John, Thomas Jr., William, Stephen, Mary and Elizabeth. Stephen married first, September 13, 1684, Elizabeth Wodell, daughter of Gershom Wodell of Portsmouth, whose wife was a daughter of John Tripp of that town. Gershom Wodell was the son of William and Mary Wodell of Warwick, Rhode Island. William Wodell was one of a company taken at Gorton and imprisoned by the government of Massachusetts, and after he was liberated went to Portsmouth, Rhode Island. Stephen Manchester's wife Elizabeth died in 1719, and he married Demaris, her last name unknown. He was a freeman in 1684, and was an inhabitant of Tiverton, Rhode Island, at the organization of that town, March 2, 1692. His children were Gershom, born about 1687, and Ruth, born May 27, 1690.

Gershom Manchester, son of Stephen and Elizabeth (Wodell) Manchester and father of Stephen of New Marblehead, resided at Tiverton, Rhode Island, and his wife was named Anne, married about 1707. They had the following children: —

Elizabeth, born Sept. 28, 1709 and married John Tripp, April 28, 1730.

Hannah, born Feb. 4, 1711 and married Othneal Tripp, Feb. 4, 1732.

Stephen, born May 23, 1717, went to New Marblehead, Maine.

Alex and Ober, twins, born April 14, 1721.

Gershom Manchester married for his second wife Mary Farrow of Portsmouth, Rhode Island, December 16, 1731, and had one child, John born November 4, 1732. Probably soon after his son Stephen came to New Marblehead, Gershom Manchester came to the same township with his wife Mary and at least some of his children and settled on home lot No. 15, built himself a house and cleared eight acres of land. His wife was admitted to full communion in the New Marblehead church October 7, 1744. He and his sons were living in the fort in April, 1746, and he was an Indian scout in Capt. George Berry's Company in 1746. He died at New Marblehead March 15, 1749, aged sixty-two years.

John Manchester son of Gershom and Mary (Farrow) Manchester, and half brother to Stephen, was a small boy when his father came to New Marblehead. In 1752 he took up home lot No. 16 and before 1759 had cleared nine acres of land and built a house. In 1756 he married Comfort Bunker of North Yarmouth, Maine, but the tradition is that she came from Mount Desert. A few months after his marriage he joined the church, being then twenty-three years of age. He also owned home lots No. 14 and 15. His first child the record says died "about a fortnight old," and he had daughters Mary and Hannah, probably other children. He was a garrison soldier in 1757, under Sergt. Thomas Chute. In 1761, he sold his land and probably went then or the next year to

Mount Desert. The probable cause of his leaving the town was the extraordinary drought of those years in the state west of the Kennebec River, which was preceded by "a wasting disease." In 1761, the drought was followed by forest fires which were not checked until the heavy rains of August nineteenth and twentieth. The year 1762, was also a year of drought and many valuable fields and much valuable timber land was destroyed by fire. Many cattle were burned to death. The farmers were obliged to go to the "Eastward" for hay to keep their cattle from starving. Many families moved to the eastern part of the state where no drought existed.

John Manchester, no doubt, took part in the capture of the *Margaretta*, at Machias, June 12, 1775, as he was one of the petitioners to the General Court from that settlement May twenty-fifth. He served at Machias almost four months, in 1776, in Capt. Stephen Smith's Company and twenty-four days in Capt. John Scott's Company, also thirteen days in Capt. Daniel Sullivan's Company, in Col. Benjamin Foster's Regiment in 1777. He was at Mount Desert in 1790 and is probably the ancestor of those of that name in that locality.





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