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*Pageant          June 30, 1946*  
*Compiled and Narrated*  
*by*  
*Mattie Kilborn Webster*  
*for*  
*The Two Hundredth Anniversary*  
*of the*  
*Town of Merrimack NH*

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**EPISODE 2 - Presented by Jebb and Jesse Metcalf**

**1650 - 1665?          Settlement and burning of the first home by the Indians**

**1652**                    In 1652 the valley of the Merrimack had been surveyed as far north as the Winnepesaukee. The Indians had planted fields all along the Merrimack and Souhegan Rivers; and they (the fields) were much desired by the "Whites."

1656                    In 1656 the south part of the Town of about 8,000 acres was granted to Brenton, by Billerica the surveyor; and was known as Brenton's Farms. It embraced a part of Litchfield.

1662                    By 1662 the banks of the Merrimack had been carefully explored by Mr. Baden, a miner who was sent here from England with the hopes of finding lead ore.

1650 to 1607            Probably before 1650 John Cromwell, a noted man of his day, had built a trading post about 2 miles below Thornton's Ferry, and this place became known as Cromwell's Falls. He may never have lived in the house, but at least he made frequent trips there from his home in Tyngsboro, for trading purposes.

He got on well with the Indians for a time, but they claimed he was not 'honest,' that he used his foot for a weight when weighing furs, and as a result he frightened and disappeared and there is no record of his ever coming back.

He was warned by a messenger; that the Indians were coming to murder him, and he buried his gains and ran away. The Indians arriving and finding him gone set fire to his trading house, burning it.

This date was accepted by "Fox" in the early Historian of Dunstable; of which this section was then a part, as 1665. A later Historian claims that the burning took place previous to 1651 -- for these reasons: In 1656 when the grant was made to Brenton, on a chart made previously the Cromwell house is shown, and also according to records. John Cromwell the fur trader on the "Merrimaucke," died in Tyngsboro in 1661. The inventory of his estate is dated January 16, 1662, signed by John Parker, William Fletcher and Jacob Parker. In this inventory is a large list of Indian trading goods, household furnishings, cattle and horses, hogs and furs valued at a great price. His house, broken up lands and other things amounted to over 100 pounds.

January 1662            "In January 1662, Seaborne Cromwell, widow of the late John Cromwell of the late trading house on the Merrimaucke," conveyed a mortgage of this property to John Hull of Boston. Being unable to write she made her mark on the deed. Hull foreclosed and deed it, to Lieut. Wheeler, Wheeler to

Waldo, Waldo to Coburn, Coburn to Farwell who really owned it, and on this farm he lived and died. He or some one before him, built a house probably on the old cellarhole.

It was on this land on which the early "Trading Post" stood.

1674                      A large sum of money was found by Farewell, another by Bancroft in 1674. Other valuables were later found in the old well.

This does not prove that these articles were hidden by Cromwell as the fur-trading had grown to such an extent by this time as to be regulated by Eng. laws and licenses given only to certain parties to trade in furs with the Indians.

This site was the place where a house stood in which a meeting of the "Proprietors" was held in 1674.