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**by**  
**Mattie Kilborn Webster**  
**for**  
**The Two Hundredth Anniversary**  
**of the**  
**Town of Merrimack NH**  
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**EPISODE I - Presented by Reeds Ferry Women's Club**

**Before 1660**

Let us look forward for a moment and picture if we can, the conditions that existed two hundred and more years ago; when the white People first began to creep up these river valleys. No History records the account of any earlier settlers than the Indians and their origin has never quite been determined.

The fanciful imagery of an early writer has left us this bit of tradition:

"Indian legend tells us that the first pine sprang full-fledged from the grave of a noble chieftain, in the days grown misty with secrets.

Certainly for some mysterious reason, the pine has a great influence over these children of Nature.

He may have known that there were better hunting grounds among the oaks, and the chestnuts; better fishing where the graceful birch and the tangled alder fringed the purling stream, but he left all these for the great green tents of the forest pine.

His mood may have been more in harmony with the pine trees song, sighing softly of the mystery of life."

Be that as it may the Souhegan -- "River of Pines" -- found their tents scattered along its banks. What could have been more lovely than these sheltered valleys girt round with hills and waterfalls.

Now, we till our farms on their planting grounds, and we ourselves; as they have taught us, plant our beans, corn, pumpkins and potatoes in true Indian fashion.

The animals have gradually disappeared, and our villages have sprung up on the site of their wig-wams where the dusky Indian maid and her dusky mate pitched their "Lodge," and here before these lodges They held their War Councils.

Our factories have been built around those ancient "fishing places."

In years gone, we have found the hearths of these wigwams and collections of little mounds have told of their burial grounds.

But due to the acts of White man, all these even the pines have vanished, and only tradition, rivers, brooks and the beautiful, musical Indian words are left to remind us of that period, so fringed with fancy, and so barren of fact.

The Indian being a child of Nature, regarded "God" "as a great spirit," who had given to them and to their children the "use" of this wonderful world. They could not conceive of any individual being able to procure or control any part of it for himself alone.

The Indians admired all these beauties around him, but held in awe all unusual

phenomena, that he could not in his simplicity understand.

In government their Confederacy was really a Democracy, and when danger from wild beasts or enemies; or when toil or privations came upon them they shared and shared alike.

Their leaders were distinguished only by their braver daring and greater exertions.

**1685 or 1686**

In 1686 the Indians of this locality were rather a weakened remnant of the Algonquin Nation. They sold out (the use of their lands as they supposed) to Capt. Johnathan Tyng for about \$80(?), nearly all of them going to Maine, and others to St. Francis, Canada; and as far as we know none ever came back to live here again permanently.