

Hananiah Ordway, Pioneer and Indian Fighter

Hananiah Ordway settled in the back of beyond at Indian Hill. Essex deeds indicate that he would have arrived there in the early 1700's in the time of [Queen Anne's War](#). The site was in the vicinity of Ash Swamp, where [Indians were living](#).

The Ordway family home was a [garrison house](#). Built as a neighborhood shelter against Indian attacks, these distinctive structures were heavily fortified and featured second story overhangs or "jetties" containing trap doors that provided a prospect for shooting down at attackers. Hananiah Ordway also appears in [history](#) among Captain Marsh's [elite "snow shoe" militia company](#), which engaged in a vigorous winter campaign against the Indians in 1709.

The story of the unnamed Indian shot and killed by Hananiah Ordway comes by way of an Ordway descendant, as retold in Joshua Coffin's [A Sketch of the History of Newbury, Newburyport, and West Newbury, from 1635 to 1845](#): "Mr. Hananiah Ordway, who was born December second, 1665, was one of the first settlers in the westerly part of Newbury, near Indian hill. . . . [O]n one occasion, in the early part of his residence in that part of the town, he saw, in the evening, an Indian creep in by the gate that led to the house. He immediately seized his musket, and fired at the spot where he had seen him enter. On examination, he could find no trace of the Indian, who had left his gun, and his powder horn filled with rum, and which had been shot off from the belt by which it had been fastened to his body. Some weeks after, the body of an Indian was found dead in the woods, who Mr. Ordway supposed was the one at whom he fired and wounded. The gun and horn

are now in possession of his descendants, from whom I obtained this information."

Mr. Coffin offered an upbeat ending reflected on the marker: "This was perhaps the only Indian ever killed in Newbury by any of the inhabitants, but continual caution was necessary for many years after seventeen hundred, to guard against attack, which the natives might be disposed to make on the white inhabitants." The positive angle may have been key to the thinking of [those who decided over a century ago to include this among West Newbury's historic markers](#).

Because Indians did not have much if any say in writing history, we have no real idea whether in all of the Newburys, settlers killed only one Indian throughout all of the punishing decades of Indian wars. It is undeniable, however, that looking back with today's eyes makes one recognize regrettable happenings, and so perhaps seek out and seize upon a brighter side.

Wishful thinking certainly surfaced in our [historians'](#) treatment of slavery, which lasted here [until the 1780s](#). Joshua Coffin acknowledged the practice of enslaving Africans and Indians in the tale of a [meddler from New Jersey](#) who in 1690 plotted unsuccessfully to invade via the Indian River and on to Achelaus Hill, "to entice Indians and negroes to leave their masters," and thence proceed to maraud about the countryside. Mr. Coffin reasoned, however, that slavery could not have been widespread because in 1680 the whole of Massachusetts counted only about 120 African slaves imported from Barbados—the numbers of local and deported (often *to* Barbados) [Indian slaves being unacknowledged](#) in this accounting.

Hananiah Ordway, Pioneer and Indian Fighter



Ordway to (continued)

1773 Apr. 8,	Benjamin	Edward Ordway	131	172	Haverhill
		* * * *			
1694 Oct. 18,	Hananiah	James Ordway	10	57	Newbury
1702 Apr. 10,	" (Hananiah)	Stephen Greenleaf	16	19	"
" 18,	"	Thomas Brown et al.	"	12	"
1707 Mar. 2	"	John Webster jr	19	200	"
1708 Sept. 28	"	William Sawyer	21	103	"
1718 June 24	" (Hananiah)	Joseph More	32	287	"
" " "	" (")	"	"	288	"
1734 Sept. 25	" (")	Joshua Sawyer et al	67	85	"
1725 July 1	Hananah et al.	John Bartlett et al.	44	225	"
" Sept. 30	" (see John) et al.	"	49	38	"
	Hananiah see Hananiah				
	(see next page)				

Image from Essex County Deeds

<http://salemdeeds.com/salemdeeds/Default2.aspx>



Marker Location: 57 Indian Hill St., West Newbury, MA Latitude: 42.788044 Longitude: -70.949329