

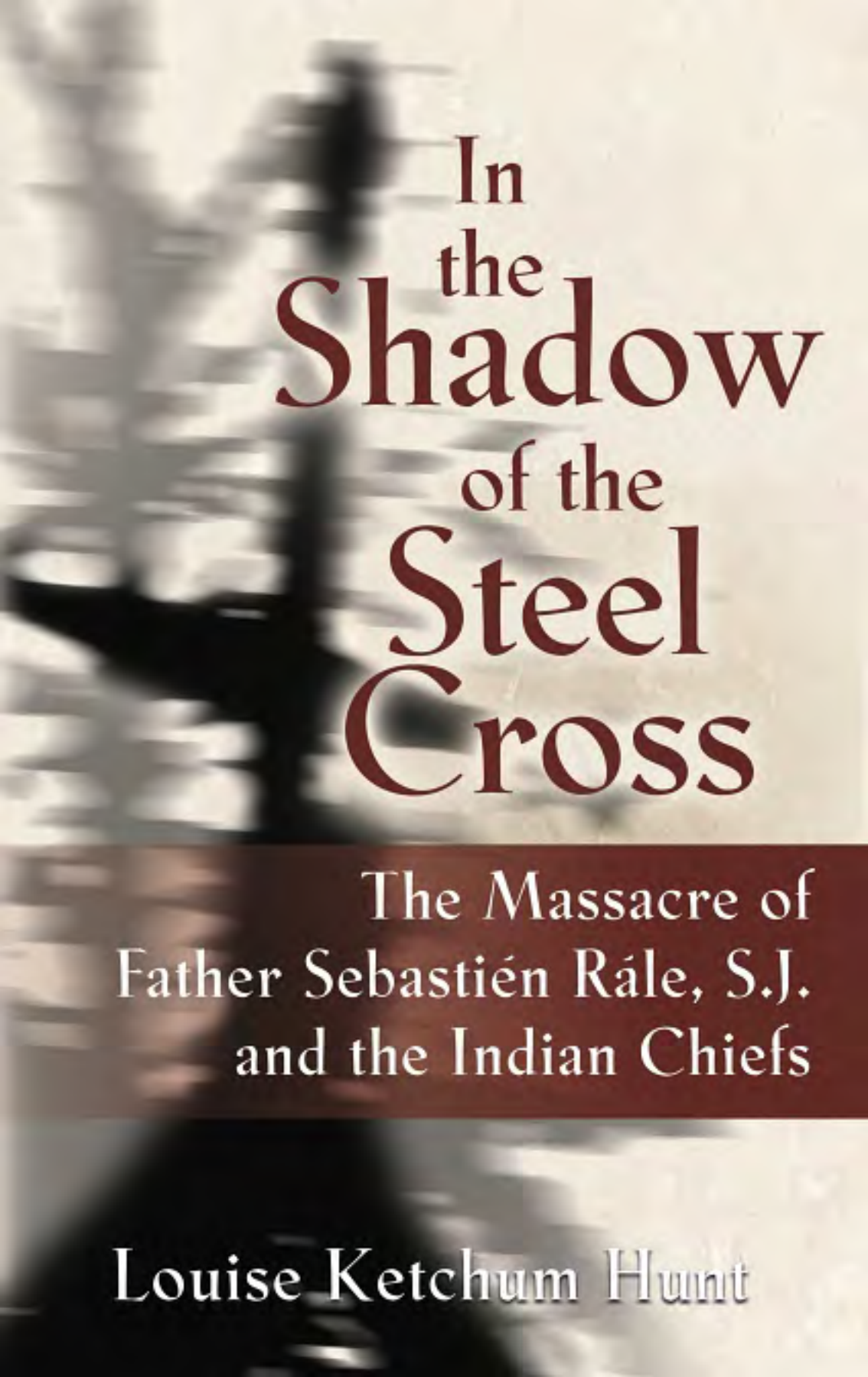
Many are not aware that American indigenous people lived in the Northeast of what is called America today. This story is about early 1600 and 1700 when French Jesuit priest Sebastien Rale meets the Wabanaki in Maine.

**In the Shadow of the Steel Cross**  
**The Massacre of Father Sebastién Râle, S.J. and the Indian Chiefs**  
**~SPECIAL EDITION~**

by Louise Ketchum Hunt

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In  
the  
**Shadow**  
of the  
**Steel**  
**Cross**

The *Massacre of*  
Father Sebastián Rále, S.J.  
and the Indian Chiefs

Louise Ketchum Hunt

“The death of this most famous Jesuit in Colonial New England caused his enemies throughout the region to rejoice in their triumph. This is the inspiring story of Maine’s first, early Roman Catholics, the Wabanaki tribes, and their saintly leader which Louise Ketchum Hunt has wonderfully captured in this comprehensive little volume.”

---*Fr. Vincent Lapomarda, S.J., PhD. Professor Emeritus, Holy Cross College, Worcester, MA*

“This early history of our country is important. Louise Hunt’s book should be in every school library.”

---*Brigadier General John Zierdt, US Army, Retired*

“This book is fantastic!”

---*Mark Theil, (CA), Archivist at Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI*

“Louise makes an important contribution to the story of early indigenous people living on the east coast of the United States and Canada, as she blends her ancestral stories with solid historical data. She does this as she tells us a beautiful love story of God’s love and her Catholic faith.”

---*Fr. Robert Hater, Ph.D., Cincinnati, Ohio*

“What emerges from this narrative of heroic fidelity to Christ and His Church is a message for our own time. We are reminded that in days of darkness and of light, this world is not our home. Father Rale gave his life to serve a people for thirty years, living among them as friend, fellow laborer, teacher, spiritual leader and giver of the Sacraments.”

---*Onalee McGraw, Ph.D., Director, Educational Guidance Institute, Front Royal, VA*

*In the Shadow of the Steel Cross*

“While her service in the U.S. military did not compare to the brutality of the massacre of the Indian Chiefs and Father Rale, it did provide a poignant backdrop for storytelling and the depiction of war.”

---Michael Conley, *Publicist, Hollywood, CA*

“My mother, Louise Ketchum Hunt, wrote this story. Her work is fiction based on historical data. In the spirit of Maxmillian Kolbe and other saints like him, Fr. Sebastien Rale gave his life for the Norridgewock tribal people and the Chiefs gave their lives to protect the one who embodied Jesus Christ.”

--- Sister Marie James Hunt, FSP, Boston, MA

Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

--- George Santayana (1863-1952)

We are not makers of history. We are made by history.

--- Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1868)

The lack of a sense of history is the damnation of the modern world.

---Robert Penn Warren (1905-1989)

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Penobscot design and map sketches by Louise Ketchum Hunt. The Penobscot design was created with eight crosses in memory of Father Rale and the seven Chiefs who lost their lives at the Norridgewock Village massacre of August 23, 1724.

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pails, and blankets, they went off laughing and talking. Clara and Gabe were on a canoe trip further north with their uncle and his family.

## 2. The Killing of the Tribe

Around 5 pm Anna finished her meal. She walked along the path through the village on her way to church to say evening prayers with the ladies. The skies were cloudy. Darkness would soon come over the village. All of a sudden, Agnes heard a gunshot. Then she saw the Chiefs running with guns towards the stockade opening. Quickly, Agnes turned around towards grandmother's cabin. She would need help if there is danger. Across the way, she saw Joanne gathering women, children and other parents to get out of the stockade by way of the back gate near the river bank. Noise and confusion was making it difficult to get to grandmother's cabin.

"Help me! Help me!" Agnes cried out, but panic took hold of her neighbors and many were running to make their escape to the river. *How will they all get out?* she wondered. Then she saw black smoke rising over the stockade.

When she got to grandmother, Agnes couldn't make her leave the cabin. The gunshots were louder now. Just then, young Lola and Nicolas ran by the cabin calling out, "Père Râle is dead!"

"No!" They cried out. They were filled with fear. Others were crying as they tried to get their elders and children out of the cabins to the safety of the river.

Agnes called out, "Wait, help us. Please take the babies!" She could see the path to the river crowded with many of her friends running into the water. The little toddlers were screaming in fear. Then, loud gunshots were heard in the cabins nearby. The smell of smoke filled the air. Agnes and grandmother were choking as



they put blankets over their heads before trying to move outside to escape the burning village.

Torches hit the wooden cabins and they went up in flames. Soon the stockade and the enclosure was one huge fire. Screams and crying of children were heard as they tried to escape from the flames. Later the survivors would count 120 escaping to safety across the river. When the attack started, fifty warriors were in the village. Many of them were among the eighty men, women, and children who lost their lives along with Père Râle and the seven chiefs who defended their priest on that infamous day of August 23, 1724.

Earlier that day, Josh was heading down the river road to a farm where he worked for his room and board. The day started when he left the farm early to go to morning Mass with his friend Michel. Josh's life wasn't easy. His mother was an Irish Catholic brought over from Ireland with promises of a good life in the Colony. However, she and other Irish girls were sold as slaves. They were not allowed to practice their faith. His mother got pregnant by one of the sailors aboard the ship. Hopes for marriage disappeared when she was bought by one of the Puritan families. She hid her condition and gave birth to Josh. These children were accepted as future slaves. At twelve years old Josh was big for his age. He was in town when he met a farmer bringing his produce to market. The farmer had a place about three days travel north of Boston. He escaped with the farmer who saw him as cheap labor on his farm.

As a little child Josh learned to pray with his good mother. She said that she baptized him herself since there was no priest available. Later, Josh heard about the Catholic priest at Norridgewock. He decided to visit the priest. When he first came to the church, Père Râle greeted him and said that he was welcome there. Josh was fifteen years old at the time of his death.

After morning Mass Josh began his walk back to the farm. Around noon, Josh was on his way home when he saw soldiers advancing towards him. He ran towards higher ground and hid in the bushes. He clearly saw more than two hundred soldiers with Mohawk scouts moving north towards Norridgewock. Josh knew that he had to turn back and warn his friends at the village. He ran fast to get ahead of the soldiers. He prayed to not be seen. He had about two hours of running if he was to arrive before the soldiers. However, as he got near the village, he wasn't fast enough because he spotted the Indian scouts already hiding outside of the village. To avoid being seen, Josh had to turn away and come into the church from the north which took more time. The Mohawk scouts were waiting for the soldiers to get in place. Once they arrived, the soldiers quickly set up a perimeter at the edge of the village. Josh felt his heart pounding when he knew the attack would start soon.

Josh sprinted across the back of the stockade to the church to warn the priest. His first stop was to ring the church bell to signal danger. Children playing by the river spotted the Mohawk scouts and ran to tell their parents. Inside the church Josh found Michel and his friends telling Père Râle to run to the river with them. The priest was eating the sacred hosts taken from the tabernacle before the soldiers would storm into the church and desecrate the holy altar of God. Josh and Michel were ready to pick him up and carry him off. Michel said that his parents were getting families into the river to swim to safety. More gunshots were heard. Then Père Râle said, "I will go outside to speak to the soldiers. That will give more time to get the people away. Maybe I can reason with them."

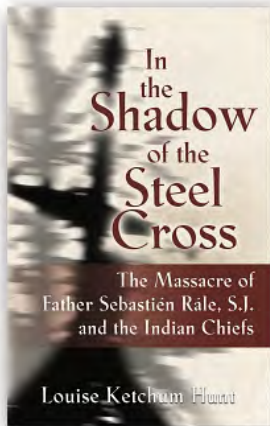
Josh pleaded with Père Râle, "No! No! There are too many out there. I saw them. The Mohawks are with them." They were unable to stop the elderly priest, so they followed him outside the church door as he made his way to stand before the steel cross. The priest raised his arms to get the attention of the attackers. Josh

and Michel stood in front of their beloved priest. Seven Chiefs including Bomazeen and Wiwurna heard the church bell ringing. Something was wrong! As they ran out of the stockade, they quickly assessed the situation. Seeing that Père Râle was opening the church door, they ran to protect him from the advancing line of redcoat soldiers. The Chiefs stood with their priest as the line of soldiers marched towards them with muskets directed to the front of the church. Within seconds the roar and blaze of gunfire echoed across the village. The brave men fell to the ground at the foot of the steel cross. Chiefs Bomazeen, Mog, Carrabessett, Paugus, Wiwurna, Job, and Wissememet fell by the body of Père Râle. To the side lay the altar servers, Michel and Josh.<sup>22</sup>

Half of the soldiers continued to advance to the stockade to kill all of the Norridgewock men, women, and children in their way. They put their torches to the dry stockade, cabins and wigwams. The rest of the soldiers ran to the edge of the river firing shots at those trying to swim across the river. By then, the sky was dark except for the huge fire that lit up the river where bodies were seen floating in the water. Besides Père Râle many Norridgewocks were scalped by the soldiers and their Mohawk scouts. They carried those scalps to Boston where silver was given to them for bounty. The colonists rejoiced over the fall of Norridgewock and the Jesuit priest who lived there.

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<sup>22</sup> Wikipedia, Battle for Norridgewock, 1.



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