William Apess

1798  31 Jan., b., Colrain, MA; father, William Apes (mixed ancestry, possibly descendent of Metacom/“King Philip”); mother, Candace (mixed ancestry, Pequot, with possible African ancestry as well; might have, in fact, been a slave who was eventually given her freedom in 1805)

1801 parents separate; Apess and siblings go to live with maternal grandparents, who suffer from alcoholism and are abusive; Apess seriously injured and rescued by an uncle; siblings taken from them and made indentured servants; Apess, too young for indenture, is a town ward.

c1802 goes to live with the Furmans (Methodists) as an indentured servant; begins schooling and attending Methodist church services

1809 at the urging of friend, plans to run away to New London, CT; Furman find out and decide he should go live with someone else; sell his indenture to Judge William Hillhouse, who becomes abusive; runs away, visiting his father; returns; Hillhouse sells indenture to Gen. William Williams, in New London, CT

1812 runs away from the Williams’
War of 1812 begins; joins the U. S. Army, lying about his age to do so;

1813 begins drinking

1814 invasion of Canada; Apess fights in Battle of Montreal and Battle of Plattsburgh, NY

1815 deserts (?) military; apparently remains in Canada

1817 alcoholism leads him to return to Pequot nation to be with family; begins attending Methodist meetings again, and is baptized

1821 marries Mary Wood (mixed ancestry); they have three daughters and a son (sources vary on the number)
Apess become itinerant preacher of the Methodist Church
1829 A Son of the Forest: The Experience of William Apes, A Native of the Forest, Comprising a Notice of the Pequot Tribe of Indians, Written by Himself published; one of the first self-authored autobiography by a Native American Apess fully ordained as a Methodist minister

1830 Congress passes the Indian Removal Act; which is signed into law by President Andrew Jackson; act offers native nations in the south lands set aside west of the Mississippi River; 27 Sept., Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek signed by the Mississippi Choctaws

1831 The Increase of the Kingdom of Christ, a Sermon

1833 The Experiences of Five Christian Indians of the Pequot Tribe, which includes “An Indian’s Looking-Glass for the White Man”

“Mashpee Revolt”: Apess becomes involved in Mashpee nation’s attempt to secure control of land, resource, and other rights, including self-governance for their township from the state of Massachusetts; Governor threatens to send in troops

1834 Massachusetts legislature grants self-governance to the Mashpee

1835 Indian Nullification of the Unconstitutional Laws of Massachusetts, Relative to the Marshpee Tribe; or, The Pretended Riot Explained

Treaty of New Echota signed by a faction of the Cherokee leadership, leading to removal from Georgia to the west; beginning of the Trail of Tears Seminole Nation resists removal, leading to Second Seminole War (-1842)

1836 Eulogy on King Philip, as Pronounced at the Odeon, in Federal Street, Boston, by the Rev. William Apes, an Indian

sometime after Apess leaves Mary (or perhaps she dies); Apess remarries (?) (Elizabeth), at some point moves to New York City, disappearing from public record, until inquest into his death

1837 financial panic breaks out; economy collapses, leading to a depression (-1843)

1839 Apr., dies, New York City boarding house, stroke, most likely a result of alcoholism; location of burial unknown

1992 On Our Own Ground: The Complete Writings of William Apess, a Pequot