While living with his family in Worcester, Mass. (near Plymouth and Bridgewater), Samuel Leonard aged 12 was kidnapped by Indians in the fall of 1665. For a year and half his family and friends could find no trace of him, and it is written that his mother died, probably of grief before his return which took place in the following way:

In 1697 some Indians attacked the white settlers at Haverhill, Massachusetts and took as captive two women. One, named Hannah Duston, was in bed following the birth of an infant, which was killed before his mothers eyes. The other woman was a neighbor, Mary Neff, who was caring for Hannah. The Indians compelled Hannah to rise and go with them, partially dressed and with only one shoe. They drove the two women before them seventy two miles, to Contoocook Island, at the Junction of the Merrimac and Contoocook rivers. Here they found the fourteen year old boy, Samuel Leonardson, or Leonard, a captive, but sufficiently habituated to the Indian life so that he understood there talk. He thus learned that the Indians were planning to take them all to Canada, and make them “run the gauntlet” in which the victims were compelled to run, partially or wholly stripped, between two lines of there enemies, who struck at them with whips from both sides as they passed. Rather than suffer such horrors and indignities, the prisoners decided to attempt and escape, and as a preliminary step young Samuel induced an Indian to show him how they killed their prisoners. The boy was looked on as one of themselves, and the information was given. One night shortly after, when the Indians were in a drunken sleep, the two women and boy simultaneously each killed an Indian with a tomahawk, then attacked others killing ten in all. They scuttled all the canoes but one, and then paddled to Haverhill, where they arrived safely, to the great relief of all the white settlers. The Massachusetts Court gave all three a reward for there bravery, and a fine monument to commemorate this exploit has been erected in Haverhill. Young Samuel was taken by his father in to Norwich, Connecticut and kept there in seclusion for fear of Indian revenge.

Samuel is a fifth generation from our Mayflower ancestor James Chilton. This story was found by Nedra Lunt MacLay while doing research at the Mayflower Society in Plymouth.