

# **“Tophet Swamp”**

**Presented by Daniel Boudillion**

## **A Program of the Carlisle Historical Society**

**Gleason Public Library - Hollis Room**

**Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup>**

**7:00PM to 9:00PM**

**Open to the Public – No Charge**

There will be a brief Annual Meeting for the members of the Carlisle Historical Society, followed by a talk which is open to the public by Daniel Boudillion on “Tophet Swamps: Devils and Indians in Colonial Massachusetts.”

Dan is a noted local historian who lives in Littleton. He describes his program as follows:

“There are a number of Tophet Swamps, and with very few exceptions, all are unique to Massachusetts.

Tophet means “an extremely unpleasant or painful condition or place; i.e., hell, and Carlisle is itself home to one such swamp.

My question is: why Tophet, and why did these Massachusetts swamps in particular merit the name?

To answer this we will explore the relationship between swamps and Indians, and between Indians and devils in the Colonial mind. Also, we will have a look at how extensively devil-named the Colonial landscape was, taking examples from my collection of over 100 devil-related place-names in Massachusetts.

To cap it off, we’ll explore the possibility of an Indian underground railroad of sorts that may have utilized a network of Tophet Swamps in the King Philips war era.”