

“The Last Of The Mohicans” is an adventure and romance set in 1757 during the third year of the war raging between England and France in the American colonies (The French and Indian War/Seven Years War). The colonial powers have forged alliances with native peoples in the area surrounding Albany, New York. The Huron have allied themselves with the French, while the Mohicans are fighting for the British. Moving through this frontier is Hawk-eye (also known as Nathaniel), adopted son of the Mohican Chingachgook, and adopted brother of his son, Uncas.

The Mohicans are threatened with extinction, and these three men are heading west to winter with the Delaware in their towns on the Ohio, where Uncas will find a wife and perpetuate their line. Also living on this land are frontier families and single men (some of them former indentured servants from England) who are expected by the British to serve as a colonial militia, but who are torn between loyalty to the Crown and surviving the harsh conditions of the frontier. Arriving in Albany are Cora and Alice Munro, daughters of a British officer, who, under the guidance of Major Duncan Heyward, set off to meet their father, Colonel Munro, at Fort William Henry. Magua, a Huron disguised as a Mohawk, has tricked the British into entrusting the British into his care. In addition to military motives, Magua has sworn to avenge himself personally upon the entire Munro family for a past injury to his own family. En route to the fort, the Hurons attack the British party, but the ambush is broken by Hawk-eye, Chingachgook and Uncas, who agree to guide the Munro sisters and Heyward to the safety of Fort William Henry. On the way to Fort William Henry they intend to stay at the frontier cabin of friends, but find the cabin burned and the family murdered by a Huron war party. Cora misunderstands Hawk-eye’s decision to leave the dead unburied, which precipitates a conversation between the two about his past and life on the frontier.

Upon arrival outside Fort William Henry they discover the fort under siege by a massive French and Indian army. The surrounding territory is alive with roving war parties. Colonel Munro is indebted to the men who guided his children to safety. Gratitude turns to conflict when Hawkeye and Uncas report that frontier homes are being raided by Huron war parties allied with the French, and support the colonial militia’s demand to be released to protect their homes. Munro, obedient to British military self-interest, denies their story. Hawk-eye is arrested and condemned to hang when he facilitates the colonials’ escape from the fort. Cora, who has never met anyone like the independent and candid Hawk-eye, comes to realize she is in a new world with new ideas which challenge British assumptions. While Hawk-eye is in the stockade, the French launch their final mortar bombardment.

Fort William Henry falls to Montcalm, the French commander, who offers generous terms of surrender and safe passage out of French-occupied territory. Behind Montcalm's generosity, however, is deceit as the retreating English column, including Hawk-eye in chains, is attacked by Magua and an army of warriors. Cora, Alice, Heyward, some British militia, and the Mohicans escape. Realizing that they will be imminently captured, the Mohicans and Hawk-eye retreat. The British are captured by Magua and brought to the Huron camp. Magua hopes to improve his standing with the tribe by offering his captives to the leader (Sachem). As he presents his prisoners to the Huron leader, Hawk-eye arrives on the scene to bargain for the lives of the captives and both Heyward and Hawk-eye offer themselves in exchange for the women’s lives. A discussion ensues between the Huron leader, Magua, and Hawk-eye about the values and fate of Native Americans and their culture in the face of destruction by the Europeans.

The Huron leader decides to spare Cora and Hawk-eye, burn Duncan at the stake, and offer Alice to appease Magua's anger. Duncan dies as Cora and Hawk-eye flee, but they follow Magua and attempt to rescue Alice with the help of Chingachgook and Uncas. Uncas dies in hand-to-hand combat with Magua, and Alice, face to face with Magua, throws herself from the cliff. Chingachgook kills Magua. The final scene pictures Chingachgook, Hawk-eye and Cora as they perform a ceremony in honor of Uncas. Chingachgook declares himself the last of the Mohicans and the three look westward.