


History & Culture

eBook

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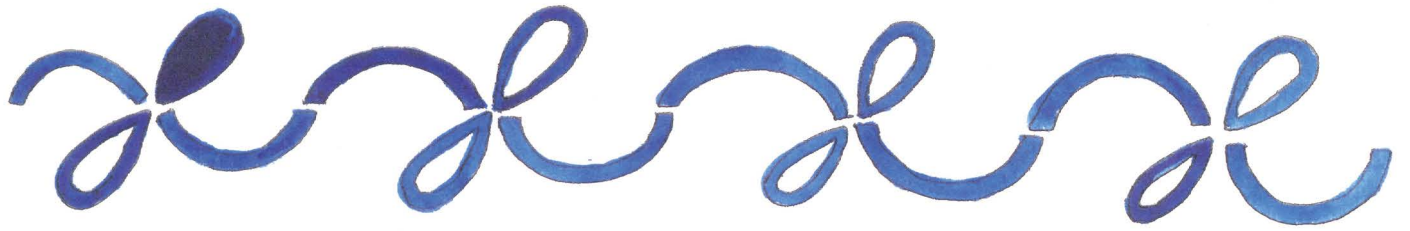
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Table of Contents

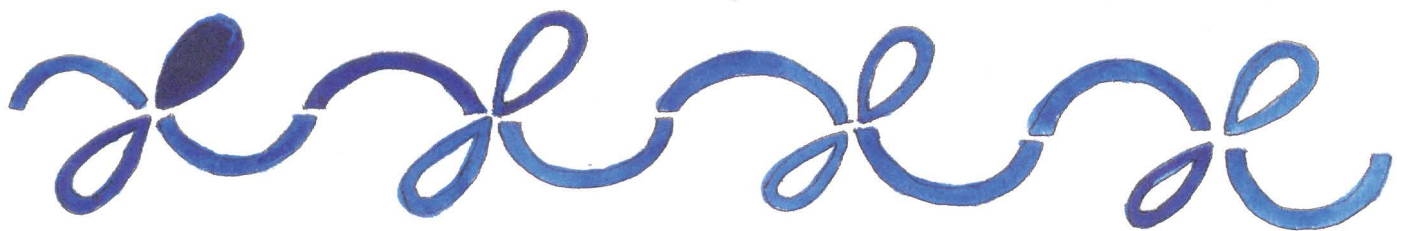
Creation & Other Stories	5
Emergence into the World — A Kiowa Story	6
How the Whale Became Land — An Inupiat Story	7
Sea Monster and Thunderbird — A Kwa-kiulth Story	8
Sky and Earth — A Mojave Story	9
Sky Woman — A Mohawk Story	10
The Great Flood — An Ojibway Story	11
White Corn and Yellow Corn — A Navajo Story	12
Algonquin Language Stories	13
Life Thousands of Years Ago	14
The Landscape 11,000 Years Ago	15
People on the Move 11,000 Years Ago	16
Tools of the Hunt	17
Making Use of the Caribou	18
Fishing Tools & Techniques 4,000 Years Ago	19
Hunting Tools and Techniques 4,000 Years Ago	20
Wild Plant Foods	21
A Look at the Museum’s 16th Century Pequot Village	22
A Fishing Scene	23
Dugout Canoes	24
The Maize Field	25
Harvesting Maize	26
Making a Meal	27
Making Ceramics	28
Making Baskets and Mats	29
Building a Wigwam	31
Making Arrows	32
Hunting Small Game	33
Hunting with a Snare	34
Men’s Leisure Activities	35
A Family Group	36
Repairing the Palisade	37
Clothing	38
Transportation	39
Tumplines	39
European Arrival & the Aftermath	40
Why They Came	41
Cultural Differences between Natives and Europeans	43
Early European Settlements	45
The Early Fur Trade	48
Reasons for the Devastation	49
The Impact of European Diseases	50

Table of Contents

The Pequot War (1636–1638)	51
The Pequot War	52
Life on the Mashantucket Pequot Reservation: The 17th–19th c. Experience	53
From Nameag to Noank	54
The Leadership of Robin Cassacinamon	55
The Mashantucket Land Grant	56
King Philip’s War	57
The Fort at Mashantucket: An Interactive Resource	58
The Land Loss Begins	59
Natives and Christianity	60
Indiantown	61
Introduction to the 19 th Century	62
The 1855 Land Loss	63
Tribal Profile: Peter George, Whaler	64
Pequot Life in the 20th & 21st Centuries	65
Hold on to the Land	66
Working Towards Self Sufficiency	67
Government by the People	68
Children, Health, and Community	69
Foxwoods: The Gaming Enterprise	70
The Mashantucket Post Office	71
The Natural World	72
Introduction to a World of Ice	73
How a Glacier Works	74
Formation of Long Island Sound	75
Early Mammals of the Northeast	77
The Changing Landscape of Mashantucket: 17,000–14,000 years ago	78
The Changing Landscape of Mashantucket: 14,000–12,000 Years Ago	79
The Changing Landscape of Mashantucket: 12,000–10,000 Years Ago	80
The Changing Landscape of Mashantucket: 10,000–8,000 Years Ago	81
The Changing Landscape of Mashantucket: 8,000–4,000 Years Ago	82
The Changing Landscape of Mashantucket: 4,000–350 Years Ago	83
The Changing Landscape of Mashantucket: 350 Years Ago–Present	84
The Changing Landscape of Mashantucket: The Present	85
Woodland Resources: An Interactive Resource	86
Mashantucket Pequot Tribal History Overview	87
Tribal History Overview	88
A Timeline of History & Events	89



Creation & Other Stories



Emergence into the World — A Kiowa Story



Sayn-Day is a culture hero who plays a role in many Kiowa stories. It was Sayn-Day, according to the Kiowas, who helped the Kiowa people into the world.

One day Sayn-Day was walking along in the darkness. He was lonely and curious as he wandered in a land without people and animals. He accidentally bumped into a cottonwood tree. There were strange voices coming from within. Sayn-Day was nosy, so he reached down into an opening in the trunk made by a sawpole, or owl. Sayn-Day grasped the first Kiowa and instructed the rest to make a chain so he could pull them out easily. They came swarming out as ants. But when a pregnant female became stuck in the opening, no more could get through. As a result, the Kiowas have always been a small tribe.

Those who came from the hollow cottonwood tree became the principal people known as Kiowas. The Kiowas first called themselves Kwu'-da or Pulling-out people, and later Tep-da, or Coming-out people.

Vanessa Paukeigope Jennings, Kiowa

To the Kiowa, life is sacred. The panels of this unique cradleboard illustrate different occurrences within the Kiowa origin story. The top panel explains how the Sun married a beautiful young girl who later wanted to return to earth and her people. She escapes by descending down a rope with her infant strapped to a cradleboard. She dies before reaching the ground. Another panel represents Sun Boy being raised by Grandmother Spider. Sun Boy disobeys her when told never to throw his gaming hoop into the air. When he does, it falls and splits him in two parts, creating half boys with special powers. One of the half boys is of the earth, and the other is of the sky. These panels reflect only a small part of the Kiowa story of origin.



How the Whale Became Land — An Inupiat Story



The Inupiat tell a story about the origin of the village Tikigaq, also called Point Hope, Alaska. It was there, in the beginning, that Raven Man lived. Raven Man was talking with his friends about an animal they all had seen in the ocean. No one could catch it. The next day, determined to try again, Raven Man got in his kayak, taking along his harpoon, and paddled north into the darkness.

After a while Raven Man stopped paddling. He could hear an animal breathing – the ocean animal had surfaced from the water. Raven Man went closer and he waited. And when the whale rose its head again to breathe, Raven Man struck it with his harpoon. The whale dived down into the water, but Raven Man sang to make it rise again. The whale float on Raven Man's harpoon line went round and round as he sang, and the mask on the float sang back to Raven Man.

Finally the animal surfaced, but it was no longer a whale. Instead, it came up dry — it was land. Raven Man had harpooned Tikigaq the village, and the line between Raven Man and the whale became the spit of land connecting the mainland and Tikigaq. Where Raven Man's harpoon struck the whale on the head, the first sod house was created, made of whale ribs and earth.

Larry Ulaaq Ahvakana, Inupiat

This sculpture illustrates the story of the origin of the village Tikigaq, the ancestral village of artist Larry Ahvakana and the oldest village of the Inupiat. Raven Man is shown with his harpoon. Raven Man's harpoon struck a mythical whale, which became Tikigaq, the land. Because the land was created from the whale, the land is considered a living being.



Sea Monster and Thunderbird — A Kwa-kiulth Story



The Kwa-kiulth people tell different origin stories in the various villages. According to the people of the village of 'Namgis, the world began with a great flood. As the flood waters receded, Sea Monster emerged. He came onto the land and became the first man.

Sea Monster began to build a house. He put up the posts without any trouble, but the beams were too heavy for him to raise by himself. He saw a bird perched on a nearby rock and wished that the bird were a man who could help him. The bird was Thunderbird, another supernatural being. Thunderbird understood the wish of Sea Monster and lifted his bird face, revealing a human face beneath. Thunderbird picked up the heavy beams in his talons, assisting Sea Monster in finishing the house. When the work was done, Thunderbird took off the rest of his bird clothes and flung them into the air. As they flew away he proclaimed that thunder would occur only when someone died in the village.

Calvin Hunt, Kwa-kiulth

According to the people of Kwaqu't, the world in the beginning was unfinished — for one thing, it was dark. Raven, the cunning bird who is represented in this mask and regalia, gave the world light according to the following story.

The sun, the moon, and the stars were boxed up in the house of a magician. Raven devised a way to get into the house — he transformed himself into a hemlock needle and dropped into the water that the magician's daughter drank. In time, Raven was reborn in the magician's house, in human form, as his grandson. When the infant Raven cried, his grandfather, anxious to please him, took down a box for him that was hanging from the ceiling. Left alone for a moment, Raven opened the box. Inside were the stars, which he tossed out through the smoke hole and into the sky. But the stars were not bright enough to light up the night, and Raven cried some more. His magician grandfather presented him with another box — this one contained the moon. As before, Raven waited until he was alone to open it, and he tossed out the moon to join the stars. By now, he realized that his grandfather's largest box held the sun. Raven wailed again, and his grandfather, fearing that the child would die, gave him his proudest possession. As soon as it was safe, Raven changed himself back to bird form and flew out through the smoke hole with the box containing the sun. Opening the box, he brought light to the world.



Sky and Earth — A Mojave Story



In the tradition of the Mojave, the union of the Sky and the Earth brought forth all beings: people, the Great Spirit, who was named Matavilya, his brother Mastamho, and all the plants and animals. All were born at Spirit Mountain. Matavilya, who was born first, led the rest east to the center of the earth, where he built a house.

But Matavilya fell under witchcraft and soon became deathly ill. As he lay in his house he spat blood, which was gold, and white saliva, which was silver. His sweat was ore. As he was dying Matavilya gave instructions for how he should be cremated. The sand fleas came forth to dig a hole beneath him. Others built a funeral pyre according to his request. But there was no fire; Frog went to search for fire and returned with a burning stick in his mouth from which the pyre was lit.

After the death of Matavilya, his brother, Mastamho, led the people. He created the wind to blow the sand and fill in the grave of Matavilya. He made daylight, the sun, and the moon. He thrust a stick in the ground, and water came forth to form the Colorado River. Mastamho separated the people into six tribes and gave each a language and a place to live; the sixth tribe was the Mojave.

Betty Barrackman, Mojave

When a Mojave potter creates a clay frog, the sculpture always holds a burning stick in its mouth; it is the image of the frog that secured the fire for the cremation of Matavilya. Ceramic dolls are created in the image of both Matavilya and the Mohave people. Matavilya calls the Mohave people "Pipa Aha Macav," meaning "people who live along the water."



Sky Woman — A Mohawk Story



As the Mohawks and other tribes of the Iroquois Nations tell the story, there was no earth in the beginning. Instead, there were two levels: a great ocean that stretched farther than anyone could see, and far above this, the Sky World. In the Sky World lived an ancient chief and his young wife. And in the middle of the Sky World grew a magnificent tree that produced many kinds of fruits and flowers. It had enormous roots that spread north, south, east, and west.

The man and his wife, Sky Woman, were expecting a child. Sky Woman decided that she needed some bark from the root of the tree — perhaps for medicine, perhaps to eat. As the husband dug around the base of the tree to expose a large root, a hole broke through. Curious, Sky Woman leaned over it — she could see the water below. But then she slipped. As she fell down through the hole, she frantically grasped at the tree roots and the seeds on the ground. The birds gathered to rescue Sky Woman, stretching out their broad wings in a raft to catch her and slow her fall. As Sky Woman approached the water, a great sea turtle came up from the ocean floor. The birds let Sky Woman down on the turtle's back.

Sky Woman thought she would die. But the creatures of the ocean came to help her. She asked them to dive down and try to find some earth in which she could plant the seeds and roots that she had clutched in her hand. Only the muskrat succeeded, resurfacing with a small clod of dirt in her paw. The muskrat placed the dirt on the turtle's back, and it began to grow and grow, until it became the whole world. Sky Woman planted the seeds and the roots, and the world became green. In time she gave birth to a girl, who in turn would give birth to twin boys. These twins represent a balance in nature.

John Fadden, Mohawk

John Fadden's drawings illustrate Sky Woman, who is pregnant, falling from the Sky World; the birds that attempt to slow her fall; and the great sea turtle who carries her on his back.



The Great Flood — An Ojibway Story



Nanabozho is central to many stories that the Ojibway people tell about creation. Nanabozho was half-man, half-spirit. He looked like a man and lived like other people, but he was more powerful than any man. He could command the wind and the rain. He sometimes took the form of different animals and he called the animals his brothers. One of the most powerful was the Grizzly Bear, the keeper of the knowledge of the Ojibway people. Nanabozho also interceded between humans and the manitos, or spirits.

In one story, Nanabozho was hunting in winter with a young wolf, his nephew. Nanabozho warned the wolf never to walk across a frozen lake because the water spirits below the ice were Nanabozho's enemies. But the wolf stepped out onto the ice anyway. In the middle of the lake the ice cracked and the wolf fell through and was drowned. Nanabozho vowed revenge and succeeded in killing the spirits who had drowned the wolf.

The remaining underwater spirits, in response, caused a great flood to try and drown Nanabozho. Nanabozho climbed the highest mountain but the water rose to the top. Then he climbed a tall pine tree but the water rose still higher. He commanded the tree to stretch taller. Finally, when the tree could grow no higher and the water reached Nanabozho's neck, the water stopped rising. Nanabozho decided to create a new earth, and he asked the animals to dive down and fetch him a piece of the old earth, from which to make it. The muskrat returned with a paw full of dirt. Nanabozho took this earth in his hand and expanded it to make a new world, on which he put trees, lakes, mountains, and valleys.

Norval Morisseau, Ojibway

Norval Morisseau's painting depicts the re-creation of the Ojibway people after the great flood. Seated in the canoe with other animals of the land and air are Bear, keeper of knowledge; and a Native man, representing the Ojibway people. Below (right) is a merman, who is emerging from the ocean to become the Ojibway people once again.



White Corn and Yellow Corn — A Navajo Story



The world as it exists today is not the first world, according to the Navajo story of creation. The first world was an island, and on it lived the insect people. The insect people were driven out of the first world because they quarreled with each other. They were forced up through the sky of the first world and entered the second world. But here, too, the insect people couldn't get along, and in addition, they offended other inhabitants of the second world. Again, they were forced to flee up to the third world. And yet again, they were driven out.

Finally the insect people came up to the fourth world. The surface of this world was black and white, the sky was mostly blue and black, and there were snow-covered mountains in the directions of north, east, south, and west. After some time, four spirit beings came to visit the insect people. At first the insect people did not understand what they had to say, but eventually one of the spirits explained: they wished to make more people, people who would look like the spirits, with hands and feet. The spirits told the insect people

that they would return in 12 days to do this.

To prepare for the return of the spirits, the insect people cleaned themselves. The women scoured their skin with yellow corn meal, the men with white corn meal. The spirits came carrying two sacred buckskins and two ears of corn, one white and one yellow. They laid one buckskin on the ground, set the ears of corn on it, and covered them with the other buckskin. As the wind blew between the buckskins, they performed a ceremony. When the top buckskin was lifted the corn was gone — the white ear of corn had become First Man, and the yellow ear had become First Woman. The Navaho people descend from these two.

Emmi Whitehorse, Navajo

Emmi Whitehorse's interpretation of the Navajo creation story makes reference to the first people — the insect people — and their emergence to the fourth world. She creates what she imagines it must have been like for the first people to emerge from simple life forms to more complex ones through four levels. Each level is marked by a change in color — red, blue, yellow, and finally black and white.



Algonquin Language Stories

Click on the picture below to explore the interactive in your web browser!

The image shows a digital interface for an interactive story collection. At the top, the title "Algonquian Language Stories" is displayed in a large, serif font. Below the title are four circular icons, each representing a different story. The first icon shows a duck and three fish, labeled "After the Great Flood" and "Ojibwe". The second icon shows a silhouette of a person with a spear and a hat, labeled "Algwimu" and "Micmac". The third icon shows a lightning bolt striking a cloud, labeled "Grandfather Thunder" and "Passamaquoddy". The fourth icon is a dark rectangle with the text "The Storytellers" and a right-pointing arrow. At the bottom left, there is a speaker icon and the text "Be sure your sound is on in order to hear the stories".

Algonquian Language Stories

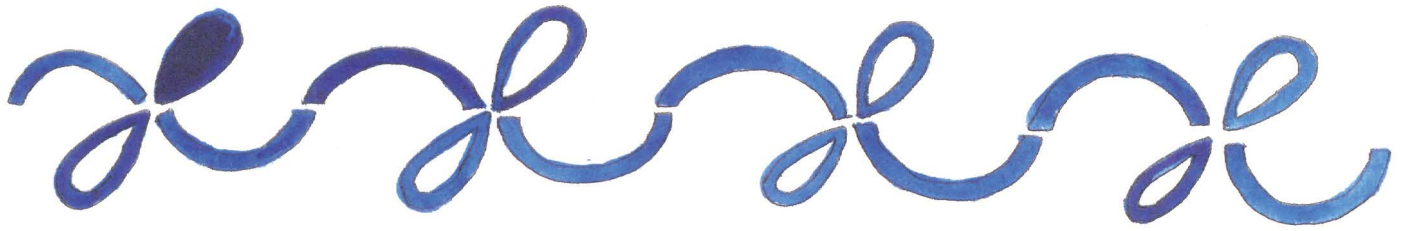
After the Great Flood
Ojibwe

Algwimu
Micmac

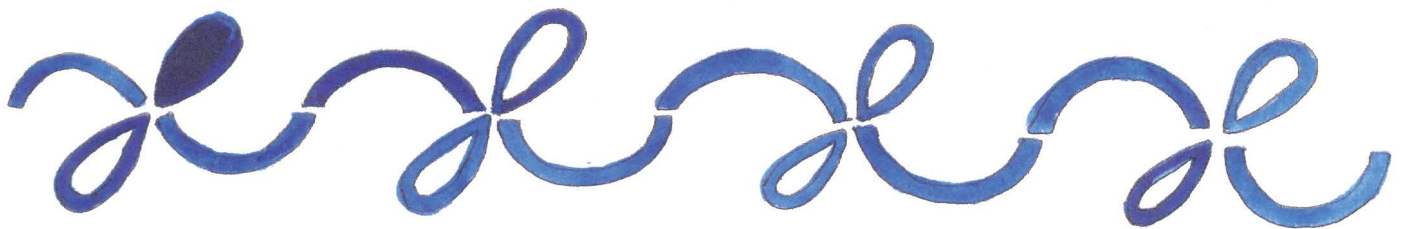
Grandfather Thunder
Passamaquoddy

The Storytellers ▶

Be sure your sound is on in order to hear the stories



Life Thousands of Years Ago



The Landscape 11,000 Years Ago

Dominated by forests of spruce and pine, the territory our ancestors inhabited 11,000 years ago looked very different from Mashantucket today.

The climate was warmer than it had been during the time of the glacier, but winters here were still severely cold. There were many black spruce trees, which thrive only in cool regions, as well as birch and jack pine, which took hold as a result of the warming trend. How did this climate and landscape affect the people who lived in and around what is now southern New England?

The open woodland environment of this region was certainly more hospitable than the rocky, nearly barren landscape left by the receding glacier a few thousand years earlier. But these were not easy times for people who depended on woodland resources. Forests of spruce and pine offer relatively little food for people and do not support a great diversity of animals. Nor was the landscape uniform. Instead, it was more like a mosaic, with some areas relatively rich in resources and others poor.

There were, however, seasonally-abundant sources of food, and the key to survival at this time was knowing where and when to find them. People had to know the movements of the caribou, where to find edible species of plants, and during which weeks of the year the fish would run. Because the landscape was patchy, with resources widely dispersed, people had to be willing to travel in order to survive.

As a result, our ancestors knew the hills, streams, swamps, and waterfalls of the region far better than most of us do today. People remained on the move throughout much of the year, following the herds of large game animals and revisiting the places where they had found other sources of food in past years and seasons. This way of life made the best use of the resources at hand and was probably the typical way of life for people in this region for the next several thousand years.



People on the Move 11,000 Years Ago

The search for food and materials for tools and clothing defined a way of life for our ancestors 11,000 years ago. They made use of all of the food resources they could find, including large animals such as caribou, smaller animals, wild plants, and fish. These resources were widely scattered and could only be found at certain times of the year, so the people did not remain in a single location for any length of time. Instead, they traveled more or less constantly, stopping for days or weeks wherever food was plentiful.

This way of life meant that people did not live in cities or even villages, and they did not maintain a permanent site as “home.” They traveled hundreds of miles a year, taking their few possessions with them.



The most practical group size was large enough to hunt cooperatively but small enough to be self-sufficient and mobile. It was probably an extended family of men, women, and children totaling 10 to 25 people. The human population in this part of the world at that time was low, and the territory that a few dozen groups like this shared may have included hundreds or even thousands of square miles. At times several groups probably gathered together to hunt or fish; to exchange information, goods, and stories; to celebrate, to make friends, to resolve conflicts; and to meet potential spouses. Links were formed among the groups through these activities and through family ties.

One other reason people may have traveled over a large territory was to obtain materials that were not available locally, such as fine-grained stone used for knives, spearpoints, and other tools. High-quality stone has been found in sites hundreds of miles away from where it was quarried, leading archaeologists to believe that people either traveled extensively or traded with others in order to obtain it.

Tools of the Hunt



In the hands of a skilled hunter, the stone-tipped spear was a deadly weapon. Lightweight yet powerful, the spear predated the bow and arrow by thousands of years and enabled just one or two men to kill a caribou weighing as much as 400 pounds.

For hunting large animals such as caribou, our ancestors used stone spearpoints 3 to 4 inches in length. They preferred a fine-grained stone such as chert, flint, or jasper that could be flaked to a razor-sharp edge.

Considerable skill was required to knap, or shape, these points. A good stone point could be sharpened more than once, while chipped or broken ones could be converted to other tools such as knives.

Stone spearpoints from 11,000 years ago were usually fluted, or thinned, at the base to assist in fitting them to a shaft. Pine resin or other sticky substances may have been applied to the point base as glue. The base was attached either directly to a long wooden shaft or to a foreshaft, a thinly carved length of wood or bone. The advantage of the foreshaft was that it easily detached from the shaft, allowing the hunter to thrust his spearpoint into an animal, withdraw the shaft, and quickly attach another foreshaft with the point already affixed to it.

The tendon or sinew of large animals was used to wrap around the base of the spearpoint, providing a firm binding to the shaft or foreshaft. The base of the sharp point was often ground down to prevent the binding from being cut by the sharp edges.

Archaeologists believe that the people may have thrown their spears with the assistance of a device known as an atlatl. Hooked to the end of the spear shaft, the atlatl effectively lengthened the arm of the hunter and thereby provided additional speed and power.

Making Use of the Caribou



Capturing and killing a caribou were only the first parts of the hunt. Butchering the meat, processing the hide, and preparing other parts for later use were difficult tasks that required specialized skills and knowledge.

Experienced hands and a thorough knowledge of the caribou's anatomy enabled people to butcher the carcasses efficiently. For heavy-duty work such as butchering the ribcage, the people employed large, stone, chopping tools. For skinning and slicing meat, they used razor-sharp flake knives attached to wooden handles.

Once the initial rough butchering was completed, the meat was sliced off the bones and cut into long strips. Some of the strips were roasted over the fire and eaten immediately, along with the head, certain areas

of the fat, and some of the internal organs. The rest of the meat was smoked or dried, which preserved it for later consumption. Even the bones were put to use by cracking them open to remove the edible marrow. Weighing as much as 400 pounds, a caribou killed in the fall with its fat stores intact might feed as many as 10 adults for several days.

Skin and Bones

A caribou hunt 11,000 years ago produced more than food. Skins, bones, antlers, and organs taken from the animals became the raw materials for clothing, tools, containers, and even shelter.

The skin, or hide, of the caribou was prized by the people for its warmth. Women probably took charge of dressing and preparing the hides, an arduous process that included hours of scraping, wetting, drying, and softening it by hand. The resulting pliable material could be used for blankets, sewn into clothing and bags, and probably made into tent coverings. It has been estimated that a hunting group could use as many as 250 skins a year.

What happened to the other parts of the caribou after the hunt? From the bones and antlers, people carved a variety of implements, such as needles, awls, scraping tools, and spearpoints. The caribou's stomach and bladder could be made into containers used to carry water. The sinew was made into sewing thread and cord.



Fishing Tools & Techniques 4,000 Years Ago

Our ancestors were skilled at harvesting the plentiful resources of river and sea. Although spring and summer were the primary fishing seasons, some fishing went on all year. Fishermen traveled among the region's many bays, coves, salt marshes, and tidal pools, and even ventured into deep waters in canoes. They varied their techniques depending on the season and the type of fish they were trying to catch.

Fishing with Weirs

Weirs are underwater fish traps, usually walls of stones or stakes that capture fish as they swim in rivers, brooks, and streams. In this region, weirs were usually constructed out of wooden stakes or lines of stones interwoven with branches or brush. People easily retrieved the trapped fish with dip nets or spears. Some weirs allow fish to swim over the barriers at high tide, leaving them stranded when the water flowed out at low tide. In the spring, people often built weirs at river mouths to trap schools of anadromous fish, such as shad, that swim up rivers from the sea to spawn.



Stone plummet found in Montville, CT. Gift of Roger and Wayne Savluk

Hooks and Lines

Hook-and-line fishing was practiced with stone, bone, or wood fish hooks, hemp lines, and stone plummets, or line weights. Perch, flounder, and pickerel are some of the fish that could be caught with hook and line. In the winter, people fished for pike and perch through holes cut in the ice.

Spears, Harpoons, & Nets

Fish spears or harpoons fitted with stone, bone, or antler points were used to catch fish such as bass in shallow water, or lamprey and salmon at waterfalls as they swam up on their way to spawn. Men also spearfished offshore from dugout canoes. Large nets weighted down with netsinkers could be dragged across rivers or submerged in ponds, streams, and coves, to catch shad and white salmon. Smaller dip nets were used to scoop up fish from weirs. Weaving and repairing plant-fiber nets, often done by women or elder men, were important year-round activities.

Hunting Tools and Techniques 4,000 Years Ago

As the climate stabilized, plant and animal resources became more predictable and people timed their movements to coincide with these sources of food and materials. A family group might return to the same inland winter hunting camp year after year to take advantage of the animals they expected to find there. New varieties of animals began to occupy the woodlands of southeastern New England, and our ancestors refined their hunting tools to take advantage of these resources. The main hunting weapon was still the spear, which could be thrust or thrown at the prey, but projectile points were designed in a new range of sizes and materials.



MPMRC Archaeological Collection

Over time, people began to experiment with different shapes and styles for their points, refining them for different functions. Most points from southern New England share general characteristics, distinguishing them from points from other regions such as the Midwest. However, even within this region, points varied slightly according to the materials that were locally available. Different types of points also had functional differences: triangular forms were intended to pierce an animal and remain lodged within it, while thin-bladed forms could be quickly removed.

Making and using hunting tools was men's work. The bow and arrow was still unknown, but by 5,000 years ago, people had added smaller spearpoints to their tool kits for hunting small game animals and migratory birds. For hunting large animals, the hunter sometimes used an atlatl, or spear-thrower, to gain distance and accuracy in throwing. It is possible that people created snowshoes to aid in hunting in deep snow.

Deer

White-tailed deer were a prominent part of the people's diet 5,000 years ago. Deer were hunted with spears by men who stalked, tracked, or hid and awaited their prey. The meat was roasted over a fire or dried. The internal organs were eaten, or in some cases, used as containers. The bones and antlers were made into tools and the hides used for clothing and blankets.

White-tailed deer, elk, moose, bear, beaver, and muskrat were some of the animals that our ancestors hunted in southern New England during winter months. Although autumn was usually the season when game was most plentiful, winter was a time when some animals could be hunted more easily. Moose were unable to run in deep snow and bears were hibernating.

Wild Plant Foods



In southern New England 3,500 years ago, our ancestors did not have gardens with corn, beans, or squash. Instead, they ate wild plants, some of which were very nutritious.

Today, most plants that grow wild in New England are thought of as weeds. But thousands of years ago people here actually encouraged some of these plants to grow, because the leaves, seeds, stalks, and tubers, or underground stems, were edible.

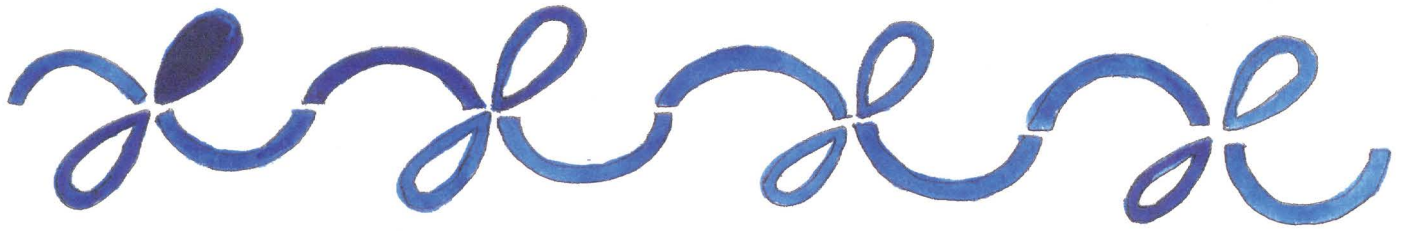
Between 4,000 and 3,000 years ago, people in eastern North America learned to plant and tend a variety of plants: goosefoot, marsh elder, sunflower, and squash. Goosefoot, also known as chenopodium, is a common plant that is found along the banks of rivers and in other disturbed habitats. People gathered the stalks in late summer and early fall, dried them, and then shook them to collect the seeds, which are rich in protein.

Archaeological evidence suggests that people here harvested and stored great quantities of these seeds.

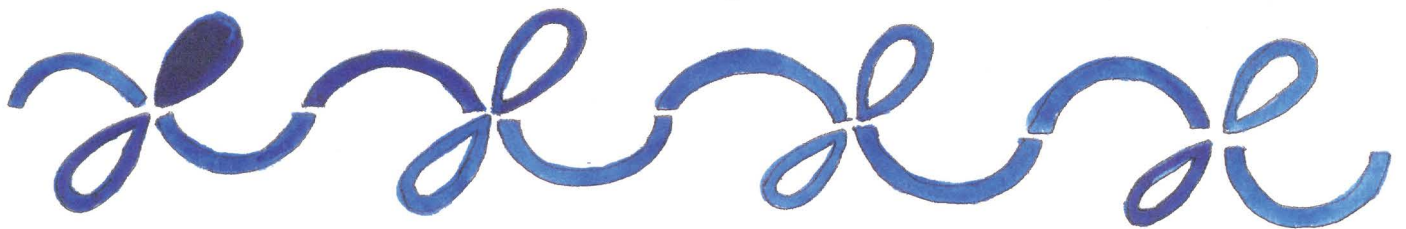
Unlike domesticated plants, which require people to plant them, wild plants reproduce year after year on their own. Some archaeologists believe that our ancestors may have played an active role in encouraging these wild plants to spread, perhaps by weeding out the other plants around them. Although people here would not have domesticated plants like corn for another 2,500 years, this was an early step toward planting and tending gardens.

Did You Know?

Did you know that the domestication of corn began in very much the same way? The ancestor of maize was a variety of teosinte, a wild annual grass that still grows today in Mexico. Thousands of years ago, Native people in Mexico discovered that the kernels of teosinte were edible. At first they simply made use of this plant wherever they found it, but over time they realized that these seeds could be saved and deliberately planted at the start of the next growing season. By selecting and saving the seeds, people began the process of domestication that slowly caused some changes in the plant itself. Over time the plant was bred to have kernels that remain on the cob, as today's corn does.



A Look at the Museum's
16th Century Pequot Village



A Fishing Scene



Fishing is a year-round part of Pequot life, and these cousins in the dugout canoe appear to have had good luck today. The man in front is showing off a tautog, a salt-water fish common in this region; the basket in the center of the canoe is brimming with them. They are bringing their haul to the man's wife on shore, as it is usually the women who prepare and cook the catch. The woman has already gotten out her sharp stone knife to clean two large tautog caught earlier today. After she has gutted, boned, and split the fish, she will add them to the drying rack behind her. We dry and smoke lots of foods to preserve them, and we might not eat this fish until there is snow on the ground.

All around the woman cleaning the fish is evidence of other fishing and shellfishing activities. The woodsplint basket on the ground holds fresh mussels and quahogs, or hard-shelled clams. These can be cooked in the shell and eaten right away, or they can be pried open and dried.

We catch some kinds of deep-water fish, like cod, with hook and line, and we use cone-shaped basket traps for catching eels. In the canoe on the bank you see tools we use to catch large fish — a harpoon

and a three-pronged spear called a leister. We have methods of catching just about every kind of edible fish in this region, because, as a coastal people, we rely on seafood throughout the year.

More information from Museum staff:

The woman is wearing a necklace made from fish vertebrae, the bones from the spinal columns of large fish like striped bass, bluefish, and cod. We know that fish vertebrae were made into beads of some kind, because they have been found archaeologically in two or three shell middens in this region; one on Martha's Vineyard, an island off the coast of Cape Cod, and another on Block Island, off the Rhode Island coast.

It is really easy to make these bones into beads; you can almost push through the centers with a pointed stick, especially when the bones are moist after boiling or cooking. So the woman's necklace is composed of a number of these vertebrae strung together in graduated sizes. Whether or not the beads that were found archaeologically were actually strung together as a necklace is open to speculation. But we do know that Native people wore necklaces, and we have some 17th century written references to people wearing bones as pendants and necklaces.



Dugout Canoes



This is a dugout canoe made from the hollowed-out trunk of a large tree like a pine and chestnut. Dugouts are not like the canoes of people to the north, which are often made of birchbark. In Pequot territory, we do not have the large birch trees necessary to provide big sheets of bark, and the lightweight birchbark canoes are not seaworthy enough to take onto the ocean. So we have a different way to make canoes. Our men fell a large, straight tree and hollow it out by building a fire on top of the log and then chipping away at the charred wood with adzes or gouges. From start to finish, a man can singlehandedly make a small canoe, like the one you see here, in about 10 days.

These small canoes hold one or two people and are used for fishing and local transportation. We also have larger, ocean-going canoes that hold as many as 30 or even 40 people, which can take us to offshore islands. One advantage of living on the coast is speedy transportation, with routes provided by the ocean, rivers, and estuaries, the areas where rivers meet the ocean.

Estuaries provide us with many useful resources. We use plants like bulrushes and cattails for weaving mats and baskets. We harvest many types of edible plants and their underground tubers, including those of the marsh mallow. Estuaries also provide fish and shellfish as well as attract waterfowl, which we hunt. We even have a use for the inedible horseshoe crab; we sometimes make arrow points from the sharp tails of their shells, which often wash up on shore.

More information from Museum staff:

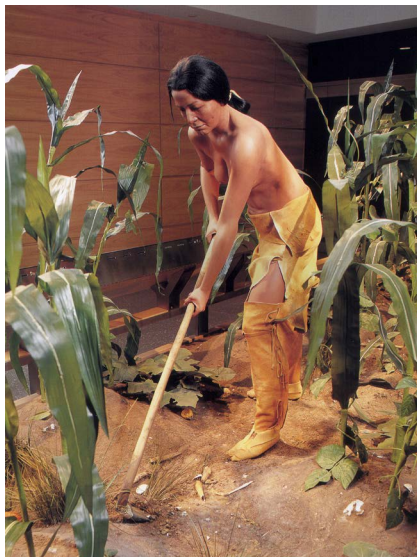
We have several types of evidence that people in southern New England used dugout canoes. There are early European engravings that clearly illustrate dugout canoes, and there are mentions of them in ethnohistorical records or written accounts, both before and after colonization. But the most interesting evidence we have is the canoes themselves, which we occasionally find preserved at the bottoms of ponds.

Native people did not use their canoes in the wintertime, when the small rivers and ponds froze over. But they knew that if they left the canoes above ground, they would rot quickly because they would fill up with snow, then the sun would warm them, and that freeze-thaw cycle is not good for the wood. So in order to preserve the canoes, people used to fill them with heavy rocks and sink them fairly deep, in about 20 feet of water, near the edge of ponds. In the spring, the people would usually dive underwater and take the rocks out, and the canoe would float back up.

This canoe, made of chestnut, was found at the bottom of a Connecticut pond in the late 1980s, and dates to the late 17th century. It was still filled with rocks. Did someone forget they put a canoe under that pond? Did they have to move to another area? Did they die? A lot of conditions have to be just right for the canoes to be preserved, so only two or three have ever been found in Connecticut.



The Maize Field



Our gardens are planted primarily with maize (corn), beans, and squash. We call these plants “The Three Sisters,” because they are compatible, like members of a family. The climbing green beans are planted close to the maize and use the stalks for support. Planted between the tall mounds of maize and beans are squash plants, whose broad leaves create shade that slows weed growth.

We also have some less familiar crops: bright yellow sunflowers, with their edible seeds, and Jerusalem artichokes, with their smaller yellow flowers. The tasty roots of the Jerusalem artichoke can be eaten raw or boiled. Goosefoot, or chenopodium, is a wild plant with tiny edible seeds that ripen later in the season.

It is a lot of work to have a garden a half-acre or more in size. If we need to clear a new field in the spring, the men and women work together. We girdle the large trees by cutting away a band of bark all the way around the trunk, so that the flow of sap is disrupted and the tree slowly dies. Then we cut down the smaller trees, burn the underbrush, and leave the stumps to rot. You can see some stumps still standing here; we just work around them.

More information from Museum staff:

For years archaeologists had read early European descriptions of Native American cornfields, but it took luck, and some very clever thinking, to find one because what does a garden look like archaeologically?

Basically, we found a little hill bumping up in the ground. The different layers of soil did not go up and then back down, as they would have naturally. Instead, the lower parts of the ground layers continued straight along and then on top of that was a built-up hill of very dark topsoil. So we knew it was not a natural occurrence. And after two years of research and excavation, we found a number of other hills, and we learned a lot from that garden.

It was really very small, about an eighth of an acre, a household-size garden. It was situated immediately next to a wigwam, just outside the door. The mounds were about one foot tall, separated from one mound to another by three or four feet, and they were not done in rows. That is because Native people had no reason to clear their fields completely; it was much easier to work around tree stumps and large rocks than it was to remove them.

Harvesting Maize



Late summer is when we begin to harvest maize, or corn, our most important crop. A mother and daughter pick ripe ears of maize and put them into a woodsplint pack basket. The mother makes the job easier by using a woven strap called a tumpline across her forehead, so that her hands are free to pick the maize and the basket is always right where she needs it. Women do most of the work in our gardens, but children, teenagers, and elders help. Families and friends pitch in and work together. Harvesting is not all work, though; it is a time to chat, catch up on news, laugh, and tell stories. It is also an opportunity for adults to teach children about growing crops.

Even before the harvest, we do all of the work in the garden by hand, without the help of domesticated animals. We break up the ground using stone hoes, and make holes for the seeds with a dibble, or digging stick. For weeding, we use a shell hoe or one made from the shoulder bone of a deer. In addition to weeding, we use the hoes to mound up the dirt around the maize several times throughout the growing season. The harvest is also done by hand. It is hard work; but the baskets of maize, beans, and squash make it all worthwhile.

By the end of the harvest, each family will probably have more than 100 basketfuls of maize which is a lot of maize. We have a festival and eat our fill of ears of fresh corn that we roast in the fire or boil, but we do not eat most of the harvest right away. Maize is very important to us because we count on it to last through much of the winter.

In order to prevent our maize from spoiling, we dry it. Sometimes we pull back the husks and braid them, and then we hang the ears from the rafters of our houses. Often, though, we spread the ears out on mats and leave them in the sun for a few days.

After the maize has dried, we remove the kernels and place them in underground storage pits three or more feet deep lined with a special kind of grass that is mold resistant. We keep dried beans in the pits, too. During the months when it is too cold to grow crops, we are glad to eat succotash, stews, breads, and other meals that we make from our summer harvest.

Making a Meal



This woman is scraping dried kernels off the cobs using a deer jaw bone. Every so often she gathers up the piece of deer hide in front of her and empties the kernels into the storage container made from a hollowed-out gourd, another product of our gardens. Our women know dozens of ways to prepare maize or corn. We eat maize on the cob or off, cooked by itself or with fruits, vegetables, nuts, meat, and fish. We eat maize porridge, bread, and dumplings. And because all of these meals require preparation, our women usually spend some time each day processing maize.

Women use a mortar, here a hollowed out section of tree trunk, and a long, slender pounding stone or pestle to pound dried kernels into cornmeal. The finer ground meal rises to the surface and can be scooped out. Before cooking or storing the meal, it probably will put through a sifting basket. The bottom of the basket is carefully woven with gaps, like a sieve, so that the fine meal filters through and any large pieces will be caught and pounded again.

Succotash — maize and beans cooked together with any number of tasty additions and leftovers thrown in — is one of our favorite meals.



Pequot Mortar

Making Ceramics



While also tending to the needs of her children, this Pequot woman is making ceramic pots, which are used for cooking, storing liquids, making dyes, and other tasks. She gathered raw clay from a nearby riverbank, and to this she has added temper — in this case crushed shell — to help keep the pot from cracking when it is fired.

She is pinching a ball of clay into shape to serve as the base of a pot. Then she will roll some clay into long coils, place them one on top of the next, and smooth the walls inside and out with water. She also smooths the new pot with a cord-wrapped paddle.

Sometimes the decorative imprint of the cord can still be seen in the finished pot. The woman might also use other decorating tools, such as scallop shells, antlers, or toothed combs, which she presses into the moist clay. The final step in the process is firing the pots, which is done by placing them in a fire and building a mound of bark or leaves over them. After the fire dies down, the pots are hardened and ready for use.

More information from Museum staff:

One of the most common finds at village archaeological sites is ceramics, although we are rarely lucky enough to find a whole pot. What we usually find are fragments, and sometimes if you are really lucky, you will find almost all the fragments of a complete pot. Then you can piece them back together and see exactly what the pot looked like.

What is interesting to archaeologists is not so much a ceramic pot itself as

the other information that it can provide. Sometimes ceramics can help us figure out when an archaeological site was occupied, because there are certain forms and decorative techniques that only occur at certain time periods. Sometimes ceramics help us establish a group or cultural affiliation, because each group's ceramics are distinctive. And sometimes we can tell what a pot was used for. For example, if we find remains of burned foods inside, it tells us this was a cooking pot. So that is how archaeologists in southern New England tend to use ceramics; not just to see how a pot was put together but to learn more about an archaeological site as a whole.



Courtesy CT State Museum of Natural History, Bull Collection

Making Baskets and Mats



Making mats and baskets are tasks for women, who can often work in and around the village and mind their children at the same time. In this woman's hands is a partially-completed basket made of woodsplints. The woodsplints, like those on the ground beside her, usually come from ash trees. It is a lengthy process to fell the tree, split it into sections, pound each quarter so it splits into strips, soak the strips in water, then thin and trim them until they are precisely the desired size and shape.

We make baskets in all different styles and sizes, depending on their use. The finished basket just next to this woman would be good to use for gathering nuts, for example, since the handle makes for easy carrying over one arm.

Our people also weave two different types of mats. Mats made of bulrushes have a variety of uses: lining the interior walls of houses, covering sleeping platforms, and covering the ground to create seating or work areas. They can also be quite ornamental if the weaver weaves colorful, dyed bulrushes into a pattern. Here a woman is incorporating brown and red rushes; this will be a handsome mat when she is finished.

The other type of mats we make are created by sewing together the stems of the cattail, another plant that grows in our wetlands. Cattail mats are sometimes used instead of bark to cover the outsides of wigwams, like the one you see behind the women here. These mats are not decorative because they help make the houses wind and weather-resistant. They are designed to be portable, so that if the village is moved, the women can simply take down the mats, roll them up, and carry them to the next location.

More information from Museum staff:

One of the reasons a woman is weaving a woodsplint basket in the village is to show that the Pequots were probably making these baskets before the arrival of Europeans. Whether this type of basket was originally made by Native people or whether it was a northern European introduction has been a big topic of discussion among the experts.

Based on our research, we are pretty confident that the Pequots were making these baskets prior to European contact. There are some archaeological remains of splint basketry in the Northeast in the late prehistoric period. Oral history, what the Pequots and other Native people are telling us today about their ancestors, confirms this. In looking at the other kinds of baskets that are being made by Native people, it is obvious that they are pretty sophisticated, so why not woodsplint baskets? All the metal tools that were used later to make splint baskets could easily have a prehistoric counterpart. So it just does not make sense that they would not have made splint baskets, too.



Making Baskets and Mats (cont.)

Making Baskets Now and Then

Mashantucket Pequot elder Alice Brend remembers that in the 19th and early 20th centuries, making woodsplint baskets was a way for tribal members to earn a little money by selling them, door to door. Her mother and father shared the tasks of making the baskets:

“Oh, my mother was so wonderful ... She used to make baskets to sell, and she sold them so cheap, you know. My father used to help her make the baskets by pounding them out. She'd tell him what wood to cut and how to pound them out so that she could chip them off and shave them and make the baskets. She used to make so many baskets”

It was a tough way to make a living. After the baskets were completed, Alice's mother would set out, on foot, and walk for miles:

“Every farmhouse would take them from her, buy them from her. Before the day was out, all the baskets, she'd probably have fifty or sixty baskets that she'd work hard to make, would be all gone, [they'd take them]. [B]ut she'd sell them too cheap, fifty cents and big baskets, I guess they were about half-bushel baskets. It was only a dollar.”



Splint basket made by Alice Brend

Building a Wigwam



These newlyweds are literally setting up house together; they are building a new wigwam, an oval-shaped house made of bent saplings and a protective covering. Everyone in our village lives in this type of house, which is relatively small but perfectly adequate for our needs. This couple has nearly finished building the framework of saplings that is the underpinning of the house. The saplings are driven into the ground on one end, then bent and lashed to one another with tough plant fiber. The framework is then covered, either by sheets of bark or cattail mats, and that covering is held in place by a final layer of smaller saplings lashed on top.

We leave openings for a door and, at the very top of the roof, a smokehole, which vents the smoke from the hearth inside. We do not have any windows; but then, we spend very little time indoors, except to sleep, so we do not need a lot of light. All we need to complete the house is a deerskin to cover the doorway and a sheet of bark or a mat to prevent the wind and rain from coming in the smokehole.

Making Arrows



As a teenage boy looks on, an older uncle demonstrates precisely how to attach the feathers to the shaft of an arrow. The older man is passing on the knowledge of how to select and work with stone or bone, wood, animal sinew, and even feathers in order to produce a single, well-made arrow.

The boy is beginning work on a new arrow by scraping an arrowwood sapling with a piece of sharp flint to remove the bark and smooth the shaft. Next, he will get some animal sinew, or tendon, and fasten a bone or stone point onto one end of the shaft.

The uncle will show the boy how to select good turkey feathers, split them down the center, and cut fine grooves into the wood. Then the boy will attach the feathers to the shaft, using more sinew, as the uncle is doing now. Finally, he will use a hafted beaver tooth to notch one end of the arrow where the bowstring will fit. Maybe this is the arrow he will use to kill his first deer, an important event that is noted by the entire village.

More information from Museum staff:

An arrowhead, or projectile point, can be made out of three different types of stone,

and some are made of bone. But they are all basically the same shape; they are triangular, with a narrow point and a wide triangular base. There are several advantages to this shape.

First, the wider the base is, the longer the distance is between the point and what we call the barb, or the base. That gives the point a longer cutting edge. So when you shoot an animal, you have much more cutting power to penetrate the skin and cause damage. The second advantage is that with a wider barb, it is less likely that the arrow is going to fall out of the animal. The third is that the projectile point does more damage when it is inside the animal.

These points are basically the same shape as today's iron arrowpoints used by bow hunters; the only difference being that modern points have three or four blades. But the shape is the same, and that is because it is the most effective form.



Hunting Small Game



These two teenage boys are hunting small game, one of the tasks that teenage boys often do. Today they have found some squirrels, but it could just as easily have been rabbits or small birds such as grouse. Notice that the arrows they are using do not have the familiar stone or bone points. A stone-tipped arrow is so sharp and powerful that it would destroy the squirrel's pelt, which the boys may want to keep intact — it makes a fine little pouch. So instead, they are using blunt-tipped stunner arrows. These arrows are fine for small game; the impact of the shot will do the job without piercing the skin.

The bows that the boys are using are smaller than those usually used by adult men. Shooting with a full-size bow, five or more feet in length, requires considerable strength and skill. There is no need for a mighty bow to kill a squirrel; even an adult sometimes prefers a smaller bow for small game.

More information from Museum staff:

This scene is a nice example of the division of labor that existed in a Pequot village. Someone has to get the small game, and it is not going to be the adults if they are needed for other things. These boys are perfectly capable of adding to the food supply in the village. In fact, boys and girls probably were snaring and hunting small animals.

We tend to think of men as doing all the hunting and fishing and similar tasks. That may be true for deer drives and deep-water fishing, but there is no reason that women could not do many of the things that we normally associate with men. We think of men as the flintknappers, but women certainly were, too. Surely women did some hunting, trapping, and snaring. Did women go out in the canoes and fish? Of course they did. Elderly women probably also did some line fishing, although perhaps not some of the heavier jobs. It makes sense that everyone did what they could and contributed to life in the village.

Hunting with a Snare



This boy hopes that he is well-hidden; look closely and you will see why. There is a male turkey headed straight for the boy's trap. The bent pole, the most visible part of this trap, is called a springpole snare. The pole is attached to a cord, and there is a loop of cord, about 18 inches long, staked into the ground with pegs.

The turkey does not notice any of this; he sees only the dried corn that is one of his preferred foods. But when he tries to get it, his foot trips the cord and releases it from the pegs. The bent pole then acts like a spring, snapping straight up and pulling with it the loop of cord on the ground, which is actually a noose. Before the turkey has a chance to run or fly, he is caught. The noose has tightened and the bird is dangling in the air. Now all the boy has to do is take the tur-

key home, and his family will have a fine meal. His mother will also save the feathers, which can be used in making arrows, hair ornaments, and even woven-feather capes.

More information from Museum staff:

For the amount of energy you expend, a snare is probably the single most efficient way to hunt. Hunting with a bow and arrow is a very active process. You may spend hours stalking a deer and you get one shot for each opportunity that comes your way. Then, if you wounded the animal, you have to track it. Hunting this way can go on and on.

With a snare, on the other hand, you do not have to be there. You can set up many traps in a one or two square-mile area, and go back the next day to check them. Because you had been doing this all your life, you probably have become very skillful at snaring animals.

Men's Leisure Activities



In late summer, there are not many men in the village. While the weather is good, most of the men are off fishing, hunting, or perhaps travelling some distance to get raw materials like soapstone or high-quality flint. The men who remain behind are just taking it easy. One popular activity is smoking tobacco, which is valued for social, ritual, healing, and spiritual uses. Each man has his own pouch of dried and crumbled tobacco leaves, worn either at the waist or around the neck. Some pouches are made of mink, but more often they are made of squirrel. The tobacco pipes are made either of clay or steatite, a soft stone also called soapstone.

The men in this scene have just played a game of chance called hubbub. As you can see from his smile, the man on the left has won. He will take home the wagers that lie at his feet — the beaver skin, necklace of shell beads, and two hair combs. Hubbub is relatively simple to play. There are five gaming pieces in a bowl, each painted black on one side and white on the other. One man tosses the pieces into the bowl and then receives a score. He gets two points if all five pieces turn up the same color, and one point if he gets four of a kind. Otherwise, he loses his turn to the next man. The score is kept with gaming sticks; one stick is given for each point, and the game ends when one man holds all the sticks. Our men like to play this game for hours. Sometimes you can hear them some distance away when they get excited and shout, "Hub! Hub! Hub!," which gives the game its name.

More information from Museum staff:

European colonists looked at Native gaming and thought what they saw was gambling, a game of the devil, so they believed it was wrong. But for Native people, gaming was for fun and entertainment, and often was part of ceremonies. Hubbub, for example, with its two-sided gaming pieces, black and white, represents a balance; not really of good and evil, but of negative and positive.

Gaming is also about giving and taking. What colonists saw was that Native people were losing their beautiful possessions — their moccasins, sometimes literally the shirts off their backs, and they thought that was terrible. But to Native people, losing teaches you that you should not be so close to material things that you cannot give them up. In fact, you were supposed to bring things that you would not like to lose, because giving was so important. Sharing was so important. This was just one example of the cultural differences between Native and European people.



A Family Group



A family group sits down together to have some succotash, a corn-based stew — the same meal Pequots have eaten for centuries. The arrival of Europeans actually had little effect on most aspects of daily life. But look closely and you will see some new goods and materials here.

We get the sturdy iron cooking pots from the Dutch and the English. They are much better than our ceramic pots which break easily. We like brass kettles, too, like the one in front filled with mussels. In fact, brass is a material that we value just as much for how it looks as how it wears. The girl at the far left is eating with a brass spoon, and her father and mother both wear brass bracelets. The father is wearing two brass rings, one acquired through trade and the other made by our people — probably by cutting up an old kettle that was beyond repair.

The mother's necklace is made of glass trade beads in beautiful colors that are hard for us to make with our plant dyes, and hanging from the necklace are three brass thimbles.

More information from Museum staff:

It is important to realize that because Pequots bought or acquired European trade goods, it does not mean that they bought into European culture. Absolutely not. There is very little that Native people adopted of European technology that did not have some sort of Native precursor. The difference between a stone ax and an iron ax is just the material it is made of, not how or why you use it — they both chop wood. New goods were incorporated into already existing patterns, and so they are not changing people's lives in drastic and dramatic ways.

That does not mean these things did not introduce some changes. For example, brass kettles were very desirable, not only because they were more durable than ceramic pots but also because when they wore out, a hundred other things could be made out of them. Almost all of the brass objects in this scene could have been made from a brass kettle: the bracelets, the spoon, the beads on the man making wampum, and the knife beside him. So over time brass and iron kettles began to replace Native ceramics and the complex skill required to make ceramics was lost, probably by the beginning of the 18th century.



Repairing the Palisade



These men are repairing the palisade, the large fence of wooden posts that now surrounds our village. We started building these fences as a result of problems we have been having with outsiders, problems that started just a little while ago when Europeans began to frequent our territory. These newcomers in Pequot territory have come in the hope of profiting from trade with our people. Primarily, they seek furs which are much in demand in their countries. In exchange, they offer ornamental and useful goods that are popular with our people.

The problem is that the Europeans also bring things we do not want — diseases that our people have never before encountered and serious conflicts. This palisade wall is the result of the conflicts which have flared up between our people and the newcomers, and among

us and our neighbors, the Narragansetts, Mohegans, Niantics, and others.

Our people are eager to trade with the newcomers to get cloth, metal, and other goods that they bring with them. And they want furs and other things that we have, too. But it seems that the more we trade, the more problems arise. Sometimes there are misunderstandings over how to do business or disagreements about how much things are worth. And at other times there are problems between our people and neighboring tribes, because everyone wants to have these new goods, and jealousies arise when there are not enough to go around.

Now we have to build fences around some of our villages, so that someone who has a grievance cannot sneak up and catch us off guard. We place some of our villages on hilltops, where we can keep watch for outsiders. If we have to, we can hide behind this palisade and shoot through the chinks between the posts at anyone who comes to start trouble.

More information from Museum staff:

We have a pretty good idea archaeologically how the Pequots built their palisades. We do not find any posts; they disintegrated a long time ago, but we find the remains of the trenches that the posts were in. These are two or three feet deep, 18 inches wide, and people would place the posts into the trench and then pile earth above them, creating a berm.

We also have some European written sources for palisades, particularly one describing the Pequot fort in Mystic in 1637. That source talks about the timbers being 10 or 12 feet above the ground, rammed three feet into the ground, with earth “being cast up” making the berm. The writer goes on to say that “they pitch, close together as they can, young trees and half trees, as thick as a man’s thigh or the calf of his leg.” That is a good description, but we are not sure how to interpret part of it. Are the half trees, half width, or half height? Based on the remains of a 17th century fort that we found at Mashantucket, the Pequots are building their palisades with the trees as close together as they can to stop a bullet. That leads us to believe that they have filled the gaps between the big trees with saplings or half-width trees, so that is how we have built the palisade here. This is a good example of how we often use archaeology and written sources together to reconstruct the past.

Clothing



Before the arrival of the Europeans, our ancestors' clothing was simple in design yet rich in ornamentation. The everyday clothing of the Pequots, fashioned from animal skins, had little variation in style.

The standard item of attire for men and adolescent boys was a breech clout, or loin cloth, while women and girls of all ages wore a wraparound skirt. Both the breech clout and skirt were ornamented, sometimes elaborately, with painted designs in a variety of colors or with shell. For much of the year, these two articles of clothing were all that was needed. Boys under the age of 12 needed even less — in summer, at least, they simply went naked.

Additional pieces of clothing were added for warmth or protection. A mantle was a loose-fitting robe worn over the shoulder, typically made of a single piece of deer or bear skin, or of numerous small animal pelts sewn together. During the winter, the mantle may have been turned over so that the fur faced the body and shifted to protect the arm that was most exposed to the wind. Leggings of moose or deer skin were worn by both sexes, and moccasins of the same materials protected the feet when necessary.

Making Clothing

Making clothing required skill in a series of tasks, from preparing animal hides to ornamenting the finished garments.

Before animal skins could be stitched into garments, they had to be softened and preserved through a lengthy process known as brain tanning. The flesh and sometimes the hair were cleaned from the skin, and then an oily mixture containing deer brain was kneaded into it. Next, the hide was rinsed, dried, and rubbed with a tool that broke down its fibers and made the skin softer. In a final step, some hides were smoked over a low fire, which turned them a darker color and helped keep them supple.

Preparing hides was usually the work of women. For sewing, Pequot women used a few simple tools: a sharp implement for cutting the hide to shape, an awl to pierce holes in it, and a needle for stitching. Sinew or thin strips of leather served as thread. A variety of techniques, including painting, quilling, dyeing, and sewing on shell or other materials, were used to decorate clothing.



Transportation

Traditional Pequot territory may have been limited to the general vicinity of what is now southeastern Connecticut, but our ancestors were accustomed to traveling great distances both within and beyond our traditional territory, by land and by water.

Transportation by Water



Detail of an ocean-going canoe from Willem & Johannes Blaeu's 1635 map, *Nova Belgica et Anglia Nova*.
MPMRC Archives & Special Collections

Pequots traveled and fished the region's waterways in sturdy dugout canoes designed for journeys on both rivers and coastal waters. Although the popular image of the northeastern Native canoe is one of birchbark, large white birch trees were not commonly found in southern New England. Our ancestors instead used dugout canoes, made from the hollowed-out trunks of pines, chestnuts, or other sizeable trees. Pequot dugouts were round-bottomed, thick-walled crafts that were strong and seaworthy, lasting through years of use.

Most dugouts were between 10 and 14 feet long and could hold 3 to 4 people. These small dugouts, often used for fishing in shallow waters, were wide and flat. Larger ocean-going canoes could reach over 40 feet in length and carry anywhere from 15 to 20 people and their possessions. Designed for more extensive travel, a vessel of this size may have had a beak at either end as well as a sharp prow to help the boat to break the waves encountered in open water.

Dugout canoes require "skill in handling, as they are very liable to upset unless one is well skilled in managing them," as one European observed. Using wooden paddles, the Pequots were able to propel them with speed and successfully navigate the region's waterways.

Because no large, ocean-going Pequot canoes have been preserved, we do not know much about their design. Drawings like this detail from a 1635 European map provide some clues.

Transportation by Land

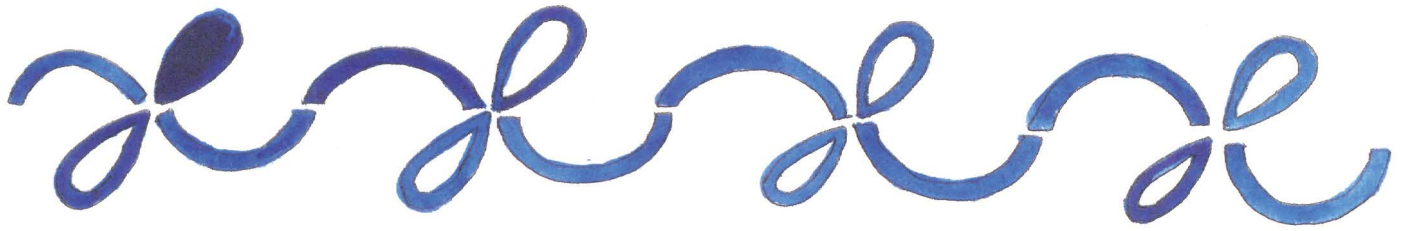
Lacking horses, our ancestors were accustomed to long journeys on foot. Pequot villages were located near the coast for much of the year, but during winter and spring some of the people moved to hunting and fishing camps. These seasonal relocations entailed taking the mats off the wigwams, packing up all of the household and personal goods, and carrying these possessions, as well as infants and small children, for many miles. Women as well as men carried heavy loads.

At other times people travelled light, either using the extensive network of paths that linked one community with another or simply finding their way through the woods. Throughout the year our ancestors crisscrossed their territory, traveling up to 60 miles to their planting fields, hunting grounds, and other resource areas. Native messengers sometimes ran across the countryside to convey information from one village to another. Boys developed their stamina early — a runner could cover as many as 100 miles in a single day. People who travelled great distances to hunt or engage in warfare often took along a small bag of parched corn meal, or *nocake*, which could be mixed with water to provide a simple meal. While Native people usually went barefoot when close to home, a lengthy journey required footwear. Lightweight deerskin moccasins were preferred by the Pequots, and snowshoes might be added in winter.

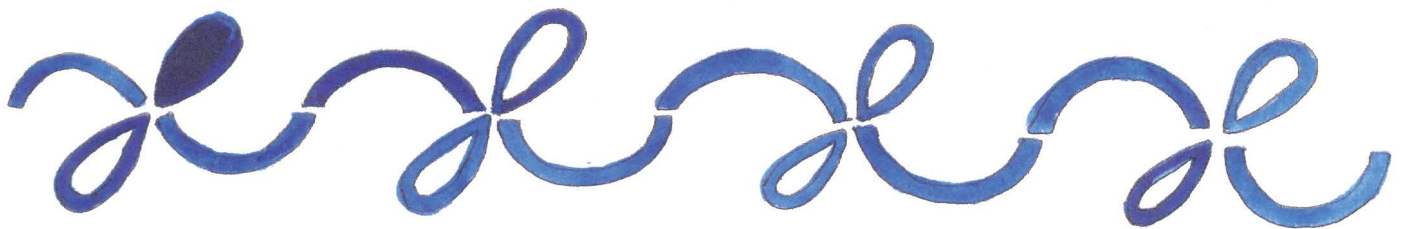
Tumplines

Native people used tumplines, or burden straps, to help transport heavy loads, to carry cradleboards, bags, and baskets on their backs, and to pull toboggans. The thin braided ends tied onto the object to be pulled or carried and the wider middle section was placed across the upper chest or forehead.





European Arrival & the Aftermath



Why They Came



Blaeu Map, 1635
MPMRC Archives & Special Collections

Europeans came to America not intending to discover a new world but to increase the power and resources of an old one. Some came for political reasons, on behalf of powerful European kings and queens who sought to expand their empires. Many came for economic reasons, to reach the silks and spices of China and India or, failing that, to see what resources this continent had to offer. Still others came primarily for religious reasons, either to escape persecution at home or to convert the indigenous people to Christianity.

Changing political and economic conditions in Europe propelled these forays across the Atlantic. Newly powerful monarchs had the resources to finance exploration; a growing class of merchants was eager to expand trade; and the Protestant Reformation sent European society into turmoil. Although early European voyagers to North America had diverse motives, they shared one attitude in common: they had little regard for the beliefs and ways of life of the Native people who lived there.

Economic Incentives

The quest for profit was the primary force behind most early European exploration and colonization. The early Europeans who sailed toward North America hoped to find a sea route to China and India, lands rich in profitable trade goods. When they realized they had not reached the Orient, they turned their attention toward exploiting the natural resources of the Americas.

At first, these voyagers searched for gold. Spanish conquistadors in the 16th century reaped huge fortunes in Mexico as well as Central and South America by looting the silver and gold of the Aztecs and Incas. Voyagers to North America's eastern seaboard, however, were unsuccessful in their hunt for precious metals. Instead, French and English fishermen harvested cod off the coast of Newfoundland and traded with Native people for furs. The Dutch came to North America to profit from the fur trade in present-day New York and Connecticut.

Interest in trade led to the establishment of colonies in North America. In the 17th century, the English founded a number of permanent settlements as commercial ventures that would ostensibly generate profit by continuing to search for gold and silver, exporting raw materials, trading with Native people, and raising crops. These ventures often failed. But investors, who usually remained safely at home, continued to speculate in this new market.

Why They Came (cont.)



Political Pressures

European leaders competed for control of the new lands and resources as part of a struggle for power at home. The rise of new and powerful monarchs in France, Spain, England, and Portugal provided political incentives for overseas exploration. These kings and queens encouraged activities that would further their power and fill their purses. In an effort to expand trade, they sponsored voyages to search for a sea route to China. When these expeditions reached North and South America, European powers ignored Native claims to land and declared the continents for their own.

Voyagers for Spain arrived first, staking claim to vast amounts of territory in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean, as well as North America west of the Mississippi River, and from Florida to present-day Virginia. French explorers followed, still searching for a northwest passage that would lead them to the Orient, while English

monarchs not only sent expeditions, but also encouraged pirates to plunder Spanish ships. By the 17th century, England, France, and the Netherlands claimed territory in northeastern North America. The struggle for supremacy there lasted more than a century.

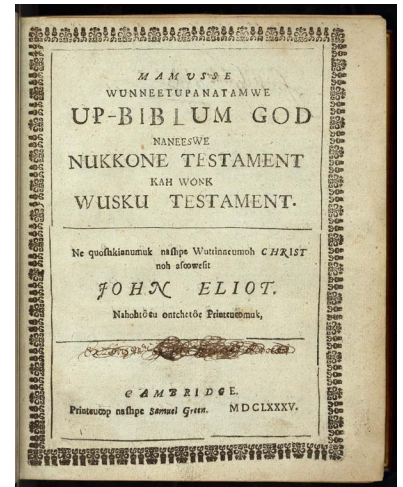
Rivalries between nations were not the only political forces driving voyages across the Atlantic. Colonization was partly a response to social and political upheaval. England was suffering from an increase in population and a shortage of farmland. The promise of land in abundance led some people to come to North America.

Religious Convictions

Religious upheaval and discontent in Europe drove Protestants and Catholics alike across the Atlantic Ocean. The earliest European explorers who ventured to America came from a continent that was almost entirely Catholic. That religious unity came to an end as the Protestant Reformation, set in motion by Martin Luther in 1517, challenged some of the practices and beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church and introduced new doctrines into the Christian world.

Within a century, much of northern Europe broke away from Catholicism, and fierce rivalries developed along religious lines. The most radical of the Protestant groups, who completely rejected Catholicism, often found themselves at odds with their more moderate Protestant neighbors. A few groups who faced both religious persecution and economic discrimination in Europe sought refuge in new communities in North America. At the same time, some Catholics saw America as a place to proselytize. The Jesuits were particularly zealous, sending missionaries across the Atlantic to convert Native people in South and North America alike.

One belief that united Protestants and Catholics, however, was their view of Native people as “godless heathens” who needed Christianizing. Religious conversion was seen as the first step in the process of “civilizing” Native people in the European fashion — and thus eliminating the threat they posed to colonization.



The Eliot Bible
MPMRC Archives & Special Collections

Cultural Differences between Natives and Europeans



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Spirituality

The Europeans who came to North America were all Christians. Whether Catholic or Protestant, they believed that Native people, too, should become Christians. In the European point of view, all non-Christians were inferior. Although Native spirituality was complex, Europeans often tried to understand Native beliefs in Christian terms, assuming, for example, that Native people believed in a god and a devil. They interpreted Native feasts, dances, and other spiritual practices as heathen rituals.

Land

By the beginning of the 17th century, European monarchs had staked claim to the entire east coast of North America, from Labrador to Florida. Arriving European colonists believed they had the right to settle on land that was already inhabited by Native people.

For many colonists who came to New England, a critical component of owning land was improving it: clearing and fencing it and either planting crops or grazing animals. Since the land appeared unoccupied to them — it did not resemble a European farmscape — the colonists believed that no one owned it. But in fact, Native people did improve the landscape in ways that suited their own needs. For example, their controlled burning of underbrush created a habitat that attracted deer for hunting and encouraged berry bushes to grow.

Technology

Native people were impressed by European technology, in particular metal objects such as kettles, knives, guns, and farm tools. They also marveled over European books, and the ability of Europeans to communicate with people far away through written language. Europeans took advantage of this awe to assert their superiority — in the words of one voyager, to make Natives “love and fear” them.

Although Native people made use of many European items, exchange of technology also went from Natives to colonists. Colonists adopted some Native inventions that they deemed useful, such as dugout canoes and snowshoes.

Shelter

Native and English structures differed in an essential way — their permanence on the landscape. Native people moved seasonally or their villages were moved every few years, wigwam coverings could be taken down and transported, and wigwams were only meant to last about 20 years. By contrast, colonists built framed houses with heavy timbers intended to last indefinitely. To Europeans it seemed that Native shelters were not permanent, and they misinterpreted this to mean that Native people did not own the land they occupied.

Cultural Differences between Natives and Europeans (cont.)

Clothing

Natives and Europeans each took careful note of the other's clothing. For Europeans, the quality and design of a person's clothing corresponded to his or her social status, and they assumed this also held true in Native society. They often commented on how Native styles of clothing were specific to men or women, or signified age, marital status, or rank. Similarly, Natives identified Europeans by their clothing — one tribe's name for colonists translated as "coatmen."

Neither Europeans nor Native people, however, wanted to adopt the other's clothing. Europeans considered their own clothing a mark of civilization — a jacket and breeches for men and a bodice and skirt with petticoats for women. Native people, accustomed to breech clouts and skins draped around their shoulders, disliked fitted European clothing because it restricted movement.

Early European Settlements



Profit was the primary goal of most early European settlements — but those that failed to establish good relations with Native people were usually doomed.

As traders and merchants grew rich from the furs, fish, and other goods that were shipped out of northeastern North America, some Europeans believed that it was time to establish permanent settlements there. It was thought that such colonies would provide a more profitable base for trade with the Native people. Additionally, promoters variously hoped that the new colonies would do many things: export crops and natural resources, raid passing Spanish ships, continue the search for gold, and find a shortcut to the Pacific. In England, colonization was also seen as a solution to problems at home of unemployment, overpopulation, religious strife, and a growing shortage of land.

Colonists from England, France, and the Netherlands came to the eastern seaboard beginning in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Their settlements were usually

isolated communities established in locations that investors hoped would prove profitable — or simply wherever the ships landed. There was little thought given to the people who were already there.

The colonists often had no realistic plans for making their enterprises successful, or even for surviving the winter. In some places Native people rescued these fledgling communities by providing information, food, and friendship. In others, where previous contact with Europeans had taught them a lesson, the Native people were hostile. The nature of these early relations often spelled success or failure for the ill-prepared newcomers.

Roanoke, 1587

Hostilities between colonists and the Carolina Algonquians destroyed this early English settlement. With visions of overseas expansion and profits, the Englishman Sir Walter Raleigh sent an exploratory party to the Atlantic coast in 1584. The two ships landed at an island called Roanoke by the local Algonquian-speaking Roanoakes, who were friendly to the Englishmen and exchanged goods with them. Encouraged, Raleigh obtained a royal charter for colonization, and the following year he sponsored a settlement at Roanoke.

The Roanokes gave the group permission to build on the island, but relations got off to a bad start when the English, in retaliation for the apparent theft of a silver cup, attacked and burned a Roanoke village and its cornfields. Relations deteriorated further as the English group insisted that the Native people trade their own dwindling food reserves and as a European disease ravaged the Native population. When the English became convinced that the Natives were planning a conspiracy, the colonists attacked first, killing Wingina, the Roanokes' leader. Ten days later the colonists fled back to England.

Undeterred, in 1587, Raleigh sponsored another expedition of 118 men, women, and children, who planned to settle further north at Chesapeake Bay. But the group ended up at Roanoke and, sometime within the next three years, disappeared. Were they doomed by a famine brought on by severe drought, killed by the Roanokes or Croatoans in a struggle over food, or taken in by friendly Natives some distance away? To this day, the mystery remains unsolved.

Jamestown, 1607

From nearly the moment of their arrival in 1607, the colonists who established Jamestown clashed with the Native people of eastern Virginia known as the Powhatans.

In the spring of 1607, three ships sponsored by a London-based company arrived on the coast of present-day Virginia. About a hundred men had been enlisted to establish a permanent, profitable settlement; a base from which the colonists were to search for gold and export lumber, tar, pitch, and iron. The group chose to settle on a swampy island on the James River, in the territory of the Powhatans — an empire of numerous chiefdoms and thousands of Native people, headed by the powerful leader Powhatan.

Inadequately supplied with food and beset by disease, the English settlement was troubled from the start. The colonists repeatedly offended the Powhatans by neglecting to negotiate for land, failing to understand the complex alliances and

Early European Settlements (cont.)

rivalries among the chiefdoms, and trying to convert Native people to European ways of life. Although Powhatan personally thought the English could be useful as allies, the Native people did not welcome the colonists in their midst, and a large force of men from several chiefdoms attacked two weeks after the colonists landed. Relations may have been particularly strained as the result of a severe drought, which depleted food reserves for Natives and colonists alike. Still, as the Englishmen began to starve, some Powhatans took pity and brought them food.

The tactics of Captain John Smith, who insisted that the Native people trade with the colonists for corn, and resorted to force with those who refused, guaranteed that relations between the newcomers and the Powhatans would remain strained. In 1610, tit-for-tat killings escalated into war. Both sides endured losses of life and property until 1614, when Powhatan allowed his daughter, Pocohontas, to marry a colonist, thus creating an alliance between the groups. Even this peace did not last, and eight years later a Powhatan uprising killed 347 colonists in one day. Intermittent hostilities continued to claim lives on both sides for another two decades until the Powhatans finally were forced to acknowledge that the colonists were too numerous to defeat.

Captain John Smith believed that a show of force was the best way to deal with the Powhatan confederacy. Although the Jamestown colony survived — in part because sympathetic Powhatans supplied the starving colonists with food — it engaged in more than three decades of hostilities with its Native neighbors.

New Amsterdam, ca. 1624

The Dutch settlers at New Amsterdam clashed with local Native people but were careful to maintain good relations with the Mohawks, who provided them with valuable furs.

Under the authority of the Dutch West India Company, colonists from the Netherlands arrived in North America beginning around 1624. One of the several places they settled was the island of Manhattan, where they built a fort, trading post, church, and several houses before deciding to make the occupation legal with the payment of trade goods to the local Native people.

Population remained low, as the primary purpose of the Dutch venture was trade, and initially the small settlement got on well with the local Wappingers and other Native people. As Dutch farms swallowed up greater chunks of forest, though, the Native people became frustrated by the disappearance of hunting territory and took to killing European livestock. The heavy-handed Dutch response, including unreasonable demands for annual payments of corn, furs, and wampum, served to sour the relationship even further. In 1643 New Amsterdam unleashed a massacre on the River Indians in nearby Pavonia, burning the village and killing hundreds, including women and children.

Hostilities with nearby Native people flickered on and off during the entire period of Dutch rule. At the same time, the business-savvy colonists did their best to maintain an alliance with the powerful Mohawks and other Iroquois people of the Five Nations, who lived further inland, and, in exchange for wampum and trade goods, provided the Dutch with vast quantities of furs. When the British gained control of New Amsterdam in 1664, they assumed the Dutch role as the ally of the Mohawks.

Plymouth, 1620

The first successful European settlement in New England benefited from peaceful relations with the neighboring Wampanoags. The 102 passengers who sailed aboard the *Mayflower* in 1620 included the first colonists to come to North America primarily for religious reasons. These Puritans, persecuted in England for their radical views, hoped to create a community where they could worship as they pleased.

The newcomers were ill prepared for their new life. They were in financial debt to the sponsors of their voyage and were woefully low on provisions. They knew little about hunting or fishing. They were fortunate to find an area near Cape Cod, which they named Plymouth, where there were fields already prepared for crops. Unbeknownst to them, this place was the former Native village of Patuxet, recently abandoned after the residents had been wiped out in a plague — a disease brought by European traders.

A stash of about ten bushels of Indian corn and beans, which the settlers stole from Native storage pits on Cape Cod, helped keep them from starvation. Nonetheless, half the group died the first winter.

The survivors' fortunes improved in the spring, when they were befriended by the nearby Pokanokets, including Squanto, a former resident of Patuxet. Squanto's early assistance in teaching colonists how to plant and where to fish in his ancestral territory was invaluable — and the Pokanokets, in turn, used their alliance with the settlement to increase their strength and expand their territory. The experiences of the colonists at Plymouth served as a warning to other Puritans in England, who realized that future settlements would require better financial backing and preparation.

Early European Settlements (cont.)

Massachusetts Bay, 1630

With advice and supplies from their neighbors at Plymouth, this Puritan colony grew rapidly — encroaching more and more into the Massachusetts Indians' land.

The political climate in England made it increasingly difficult for Puritans there to practice their faith, and so a group of Puritan investors bought into a commercial venture and obtained a royal charter to establish a colony in America not far from Plymouth. By the end of 1630, more than 1,000 colonists had settled in the region known as Massachusetts Bay, establishing Boston, the company and colony headquarters, as well as half a dozen towns in the surrounding countryside. Within a decade the number of colonists had increased tenfold, making Massachusetts Bay the hub of settlement and commerce in New England.

Their numbers having been drastically reduced by epidemic diseases, the Native people residing around Massachusetts Bay could do little to prevent the new settlers from moving in. Colonists justified their actions by arguing that because the Natives had not improved their land in the European manner, they did not truly own it. Yet the settlers made great efforts to maintain as much distance from local Native people as possible. In the wake of the Powhatan attack on Jamestown eight years earlier, the Puritans apparently believed that it was best to avoid too much intermingling with the “heathens.”

The Puritans who colonized Massachusetts Bay hoped to establish “a City upon a Hill,” a model Christian settlement that others might emulate. By buying out all the non-Puritan investors in the original commercial venture and bringing the Company's charter with them to Boston, the Puritans ensured that they would be largely free from interference.

Sagadahoc, 1607

These colonists endured for only one harsh winter after alienating their Abenaki trading partners.

The settlement at the mouth of the Sagadahoc River, today called the Kennebec River, was financed by a group of English investors who hoped that the colonization of North America would be profitable. Among the 120 colonists who arrived here in 1607, was Skidwarres, a Pemaquid Abenaki who had been previously kidnapped by an English trader. Having spent two years in England, Skidwarres was pressed into service as the group's interpreter and mediator.

Shortly after arrival, Skidwarres returned to his community. The English failed to establish good relationships with their Abenaki neighbors — in part because of the active efforts of Skidwarres and another Native who had been kidnapped — and they offended those with whom they hoped to trade. Only one of the group's leaders was favored by the local Native people, and after his death, relations deteriorated even further. The colonists repeatedly used violence to turn away the Abenakis who approached the fort, and finally the Natives attacked a group of colonists, killing 11. The colony was abandoned shortly after that in 1608. The Abenakis later said that their powwows had used supernatural powers to drive away the Englishmen who had treated them badly.

Quebec, 1608

The first French settlement in America, Quebec served as a center for two groups: fur traders and missionaries.

The French first attempted to establish a settlement on the banks of the St. Lawrence River as early as 1541, when Jacques Cartier arrived with several hundred colonists, including a few dozen convicts. Cartier had twice previously explored the area, spending a winter near Stadacona, an Iroquois village. But Cartier's attempted colony failed; in part because he had angered the Native people of Stadacona by kidnapping 10 children and adults, including Donnacona, the village leader, and taking them back to France. None ever saw their own territory again.

It was not until 1608, that Samuel de Champlain founded an enduring settlement at Quebec. The nearby village of Stadacona had by that time been abandoned, but scurvy and the harsh weather took their toll on Champlain's colonists. Only eight survived the first winter.

More a trading post than a town, Quebec supported the extensive operations of French fur trappers and traders, who bartered with Native people far inland to obtain the pelts they sent back to France. Like the strategically located Dutch settlement at New Amsterdam which controlled the mouth of the Hudson River, Quebec enabled the French to control the St. Lawrence River which led to the Great Lakes. The settlement remained small for many years — by 1650, its population had reached 675. However, Jesuit priests and missionaries steadily arrived in the land they called New France, propelled by the hope that they would convert the Natives to Christianity.

The Early Fur Trade



As European merchants realized the potential for profits in the fur trade, they began to organize expeditions to southern New England specifically to obtain valuable pelts. The furs brought back by explorers and fishermen from North America in the 16th century suggested to European merchants the possibility of establishing a lucrative transatlantic fur trade. There was a steady market for American pelts in Europe; not only were the luxurious garments of the rich trimmed with fox, marten, otter, and other small animal furs, but toward the end of the 16th century, broad-brimmed felt hats made from beaver fur became the fashion among the middle class.

The Dutch appear to have been the first group to engage in systematic, regular fur trade in southern New England, but the French and English participated as well. Realizing the potential for trade in southern

New England, Dutch voyager Adriaen Block explored Long Island Sound and the Connecticut River Valley in the first decades of the 17th century, trading with Pequots and other local Native people. Meetings aboard ships and on the shoreline eventually gave way to permanent trading posts, so that the trade could take place even after the ships returned to Europe.

Both Europeans and Natives drove the expansion of the fur trade. As southern New England Natives became more familiar with European goods and more experienced in getting what they wanted, they demanded specific items, especially utilitarian goods such as metal tools, brass kettles, and woolen cloth. They learned how to play one group of traders off another, holding out for the best merchandise — in short, they became accustomed to the European way of doing business.



European Views of Trade with Native People

“They are not delighted in baubles, but in usefull things.”

—Thomas Morton, 1632

“I have only 30 pieces of cloth in colors that are in demand, that is, blues and standard gray; the rest which I have are all red, whereof I can hardly sell a yard, because the Indians say it hinders them in hunting, being visible too far off.”

—Isaak de Rasieres, 1626

“They are marvailous subtle in their Bargaines to save a penny: And very suspicious that English men labour to deceive them: Therefore they will beate all markets and try all places, and runne twenty, yea forty mile, and more, and lodge in the Woods, to save six pence.”

—Roger Williams, 1643

Reasons for the Devastation



From the Florentine Codex, 16th century

Mexico very early on, and during the 16th century, thousands of settlers traveled across the Atlantic to these settlements — including many children, the main carriers of the disease. The presence of European children greatly increased the chances of infecting the Native populations in Mexico. In New England prior to the 17th century, however, Native people came in contact mainly with European ship crews, which were small and comprised almost entirely of adult men. It was not until the 17th century, when large numbers of Europeans migrated to New England to establish colonies, that the conditions existed to spread smallpox to the Native people of the region.

Once smallpox and other infectious diseases took hold among the Native populations of southern New England, there was very little that could be done to prevent the devastation that followed. Not only did Natives lack immunity to the diseases, but there were no effective treatments at the time among Natives or among Europeans. The best that Pequots and other Native people could do when the diseases reached their area was to abandon their wigwams and leave their place of residence. Deserted wigwams dotted the landscape of southern New England in the early 17th century, testament to disease's tragic effects on Native lifeways.

For the Native people of southern New England, the consequences of contact with the first European settlers of the region were dramatic and lethal. The colonists brought with them European diseases that spread rapidly through Native communities. Having never come in contact with diseases such as smallpox, measles, and influenza, Native people had no immunity to them.

Densely-packed urban settlements in Europe — many with large numbers of domesticated animals — were perfect environments to host infectious diseases such as smallpox, measles, bubonic plague, and tuberculosis. These diseases had been present in Europe for so long that European populations were somewhat immune to them. New England Native people, in contrast, had never before encountered such epidemics and were particularly susceptible.

Smallpox epidemics occurred in Mexico and other regions of the Americas decades before they struck in New England. Why? The Spanish established large, permanent settlements in

Why? The Spanish established large, permanent settlements in

The Impact of European Diseases



Deserted wigwams and abandoned villages dotted the landscape of southern New England in the early 17th century — a grim testament to the tragic effects of European colonization on Native society and culture. When the first Europeans settled in New England, they brought with them more than just strange customs and novel goods; they also carried European diseases that spread rapidly through Native communities. Within 20 years of the founding of Plymouth Colony, the Pequots and other southern New England Native groups had been decimated by virgin soil epidemics — outbreaks of European diseases that Native people had never before encountered.

The Course of the Epidemics

Two major epidemics occurred in southern New England in the early 17th century. The first, possibly an outbreak of bubonic plague, took place during the years 1616 through 1619. The second and more widespread case was the smallpox epidemic of 1633 and 1634, which swept across the entire Northeast.

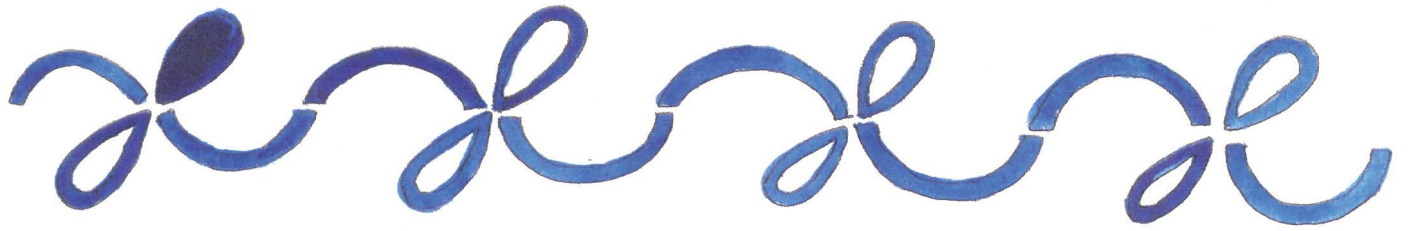
Smallpox and the other diseases brought over by Europeans killed entire families, but the young were particularly vulnerable. The loss of so many children and young people made it difficult for the Pequot population to rebound even after the epidemics had run their course.

Native population in New England plummeted by more than 70% as a result of these epidemics, and some Native groups lost up to 95% of their members. Like other Native tribes in southern New England, the Pequots suffered extremely high

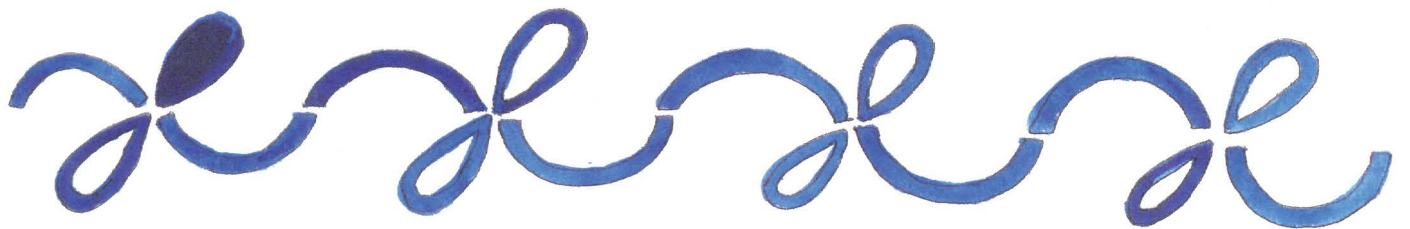
mortality rates during this period, leaving behind a population in 1636 of an estimated 4,000 people — a small fraction of the tribe's population prior to European contact.

Those who survived the disease faced political and social upheaval. The loss of sachems and other leaders often left a political vacuum and disrupted alliances between groups. When many of the elders died, generations of wisdom and knowledge went with them.

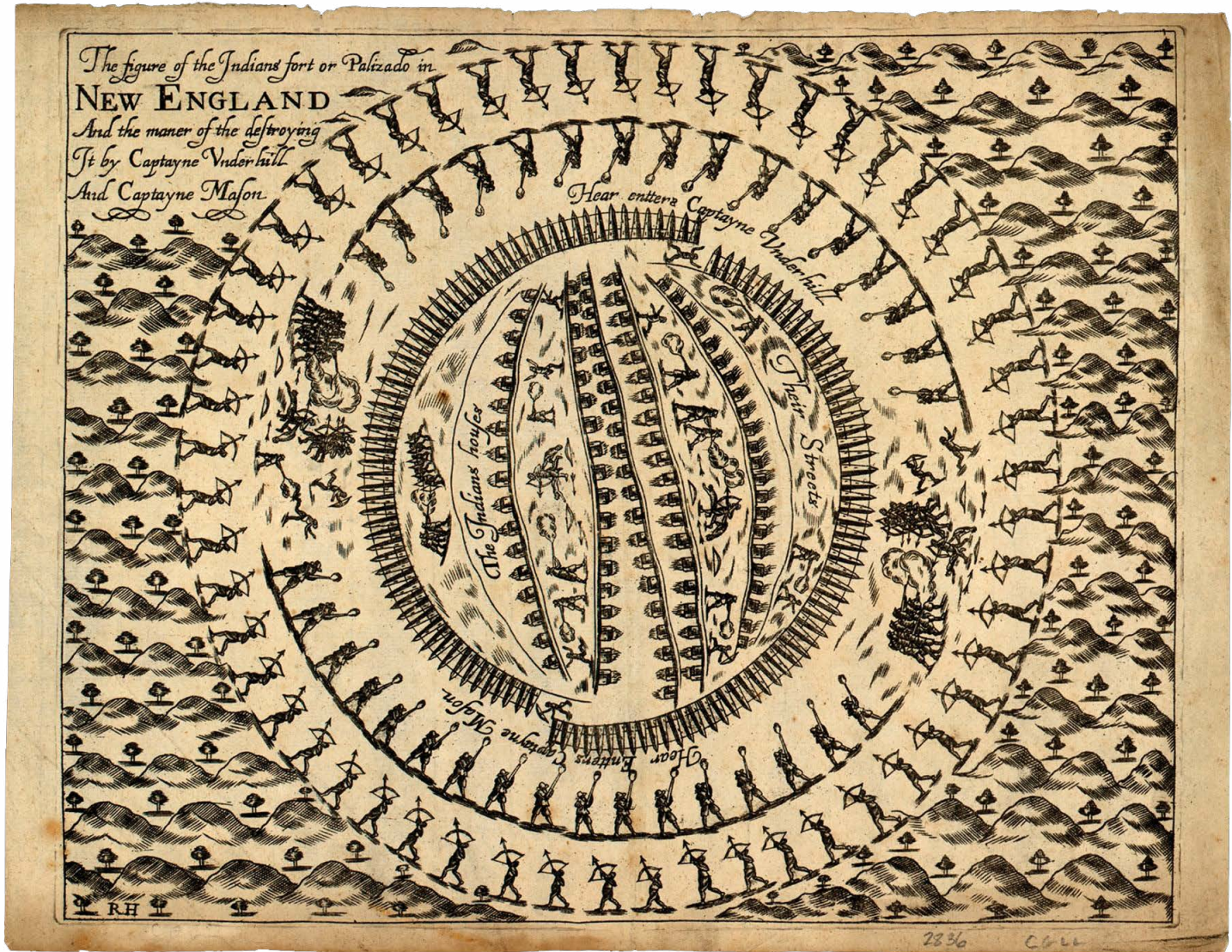
As disease diminished Native population and forced survivors to abandon their villages, Europeans quickly moved into the depopulated land. One 17th century Englishman observed that the English planted especially on land where “a great mortality” had claimed the lives of Native occupants. Many Europeans interpreted the catastrophic diseases that killed so many Native people as God's will — clearing the New England countryside to make room for their settlement.



The Pequot War (1636–1638)



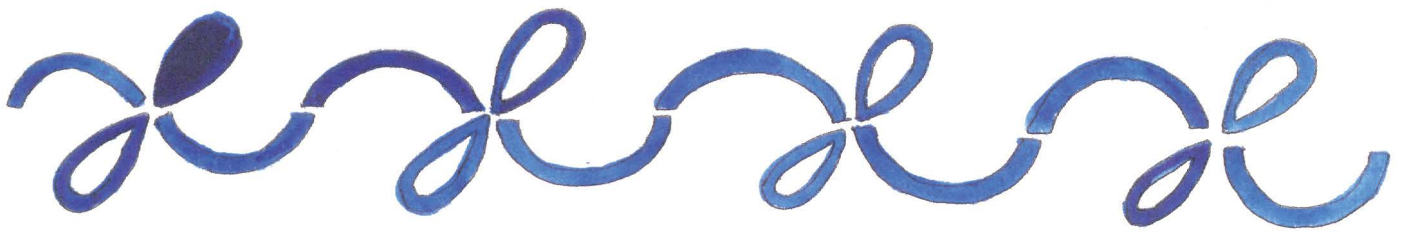
The Pequot War



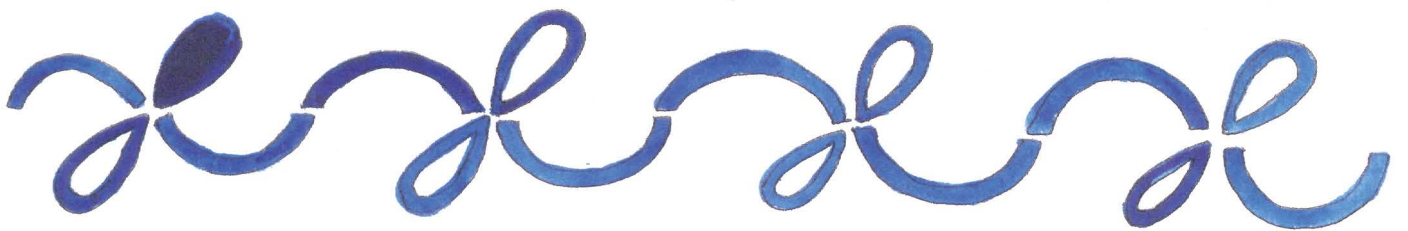
Engraving published with Underhill's account of the Pequot War, 1638.
MPMRC Archives & Special Collections

The Pequot War (1636–1637) remains one of the most controversial and significant events in colonial and Native American history. It consisted of far more than the single attack by the English and their Native allies on the Pequot's fortified village at Mystic, Connecticut, in May 1637.

The war lasted more than a year with major battles in Rhode Island and Connecticut. Indigenous people, including the Sasqua of Fairfield, the Quinnipiac of New Haven, the Western Niantic, the Mohegan, the Narragansett, the Nipmuck, the Wangunk, and the Podunk, fought both with and against the Europeans and the Pequot. With funding from the [National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program](#), the Museum is identifying and preserving battlefields and historical sites associated with the Pequot War. To learn more about the war and recent research, visit: <http://pequotwar.org/>



Life on the Mashantucket
Pequot Reservation:
The 17th–19th c. Experience



From Nameag to Noank

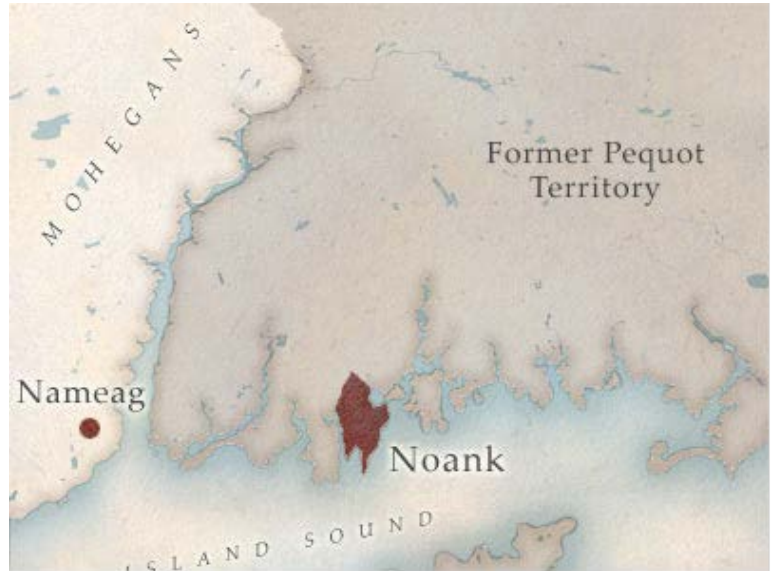
The Road to Mashantucket

By 1638, two years of war had stripped the Pequots of their former power. The tribe was utterly defeated, but some two thousand Pequots survived. Still fearful of the potential military power of the Pequots, the English banished all surviving Pequots from their traditional territory and placed them under the control of tribes friendly to the English cause. For some survivors, this meant submitting to the authority of a tribe they once dominated — the Mohegans, whose leader Uncas was a sworn enemy of the Pequots.

Pequots under Mohegan Control

The Mohegans played a vital role in the English victory against the Pequots, and as a reward for his service, Uncas was given control of nearly 1,000 Pequot survivors. Some were incorporated directly into the Mohegan tribe and lost their identity as Pequots. Another group lived separately, but under Uncas's control in a place called Nameag, just outside their former territory, near the site of present-day New London.

"They answered to Uncas, they paid tribute to Uncas, and they provided warriors to Uncas if called upon," says Dr. Kevin McBride, director of Research at the MPMRC and professor of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut, "but the entire history of the Nameag Pequots indicates constant efforts to maintain their separateness."



The Surviving Pequots Find an Ally

Under the leadership of Uncas, the Mohegans were becoming the dominant Native power in the Connecticut. "Uncas was accumulating warriors, he was making war upon his neighbors and some colonial leaders feared that he would grow very powerful," explains McBride.

Connecticut Governor John Winthrop, Jr. was among the most concerned. He chose Nameag as the site for his new plantation in 1646, in part to be near a group of Indian people he felt he could trust. "Winthrop didn't trust Uncas," says McBride, "and he saw the Nameag Pequots as a way of gaining intelligence about Mohegan intentions."

Years earlier, the leader of the Nameag Pequots, Robin Cassacinamon, had been a servant of the Winthrop family in Massachusetts. By serving the governor's interests now, Cassacinamon and the Nameag Pequots hoped to turn their acquaintance with Winthrop into a close alliance.

"I don't think they were ever thinking they could get out of colonial authority," says McBride. "But I believe that they felt that they were better off answering directly to the colonial authorities than to Uncas."

The Alliance Pays Off

In 1651, the Pequots at Nameag achieved their goal when Governor Winthrop freed them from Uncas's control and granted them land of their own at a place called Noank. The move was a direct blow to the Mohegans and to their leader Uncas.

As McBride explains, "For the Pequots, land of their own was the key to independence. They wanted land that was far away from Uncas, and land that was near the sea. The Pequots are coastal people — most of their livelihood and power came from the sea, and Noank gave them access to the resources they required. But the most significant thing about the Pequots being allowed to move to Noank, was that this piece of land was in Pequot territory — completely contrary to the Treaty of Hartford."

Noank was in the heart of land that the tribe was banished from by the treaty that ended the Pequot War. Now, just 12 years later, after being stripped of their identity and pushed to the brink of extinction, the Pequots had returned to their traditional lands and were once again a tribe.

The Leadership of Robin Cassacinamon



Following the Pequot War, the English attempted an act of genocide by declaring in the 1638 Treaty of Hartford that, “The Pequots will no longer be called Pequots, but, instead, will take on the names of either Mohegan or Narragansett ... the Pequots will no longer live in their homelands” Seventeenth-century Pequot sachem Robin Cassacinamon was the first post-war leader to reassert Pequot sovereignty and he oversaw the tribe’s return to its former homeland and the creation of the continent’s first Indian “reserved lands” or reservations.

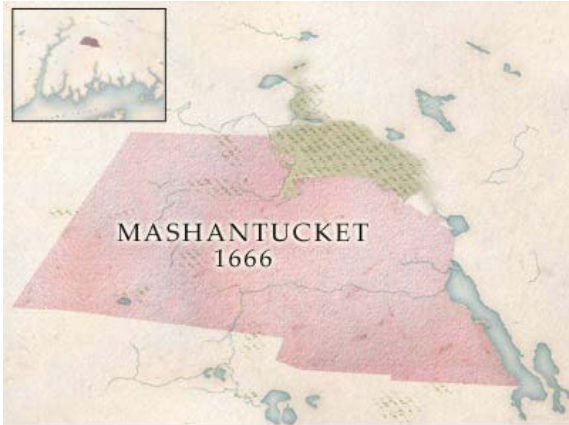
Under his leadership, the Pequots regained a significant degree of political strength. In the 1640s he was recognized as the sachem of one group of Pequots who had been forced to live under the rule of the Mohegans in an area called Nameag, near present-day New London.

Cassacinamon’s success hinged on his ability to gain the friendship and protection of English colonists at Nameag. For this task, Cassacinamon was uniquely qualified. He had been a trusted associate of the colony’s leader, John Winthrop, Jr., since spending time as a servant in Winthrop’s father’s house. In fact, Governor Winthrop chose Nameag as a site for his colony on Cassacinamon’s advice.

By enlisting the support of John Winthrop, Jr., Cassacinamon was able to gain Pequot independence from the Mohegans. In 1651, the Pequots were granted land at Noank, and additionally, in 1666, they were granted rights at Mashantucket.

The sachems of other tribes in New England, and even beyond, came to recognize Cassacinamon as an influential leader. His legacy remains important to the Pequots today.

The Mashantucket Land Grant



In 1666, Connecticut colony granted the Mashantucket Pequot tribe the piece of land from which it takes its name. Mashantucket was a 2,500-acre parcel of unspoiled woodland in the late 1600s — rich in natural resources and many miles from the nearest colonial settlement. However, it was also rocky and uneven land which was difficult to farm.

Dr. Kevin McBride, director of Research at the MPMRC and professor of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut, explains the significance of the land grant: “The irony is that during this time when most Native lands in New England were being reduced, the Mashantucket Pequot land holdings are actually increasing. Compared to what happened the previous 30 years and what happens later, I think the 50-year period beginning in 1666 is probably a relatively prosperous time for the Pequots.”

It was peace with the English that made the Pequots’ good fortune possible. In the 30 years since the Pequot War, the tribe had become a close ally of the Connecticut colony, and Pequot daily life had begun to reflect a significant English influence.

“When we excavate sites from the late 1600s,” says McBride, “we find an enormous amount of European trade goods. Kettles, pot hooks, knives, gun parts, beads, tobacco pipes, and a variety of other goods. And on the surface that would appear to reflect a high degree of assimilation into European culture. But underlying those artifacts and material culture is a very traditional Pequot way of life. They’re still making ceramics. Their foods are still the same. They’re hunting, they’re fishing, they’re planting. Their houses look the same as they’ve always looked. The way they dress, and they’re maintaining their language. They are maintaining themselves in a lifestyle that they are choosing. And I think if you were to look at it objectively, you would come away saying they’re maintaining cultural integrity.”

But difficult times lay ahead for the Mashantucket Pequots. The colonies were entering a period of unprecedented growth as the 17th century ended, and the Pequots were soon to discover that everything their English allies had given was very easily taken away.



King Philip's War

In 1675, conflict between the Wampanoag and Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts touched off years of violent warfare throughout New England. Hundreds of English and untold thousands of Natives would lose their lives in King Philip's War — a desperate campaign by dozens of Native tribes to destroy the expanding English colonies. "This was a war of significant proportions," explains Dr. Kevin McBride, director of Research at the MPMRC and professor of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut, "It probably, in terms of its material costs and population costs, was the most devastating war proportionally to the population in American history."



Taking Sides

The war did not involve the Pequots at the start, but it had the English seeing every Native as a potential threat. "I strongly suspect that there was no way for the Pequots or any other Native group to sit out this conflict," says McBride. "You either had to be with the English or against the English."

For the Pequots, the choice was clear. They had been with the English and subject to their authority since the end of the Pequot War. It was the Pequots' longtime enemies, the Narragansetts, who now posed the greatest threat to the colonial settlements of Connecticut.

The Pequots' Strategic Role

"The Pequots were situated along the eastern frontier of Connecticut Colony," says McBride, "and Connecticut was at war against the Narragansetts, the Nipmucs, and the Wampanoags. All those groups lay to the north and east of Mashantucket. So to get to the English in Connecticut, you had to go through the Mashantucket reservation."

Connecticut Colony would depend on Pequot assistance throughout King Philip's War. Companies of Pequot warriors fought in every major campaign, and the Connecticut militia were quick to draw on their expertise in the techniques of Native warfare.

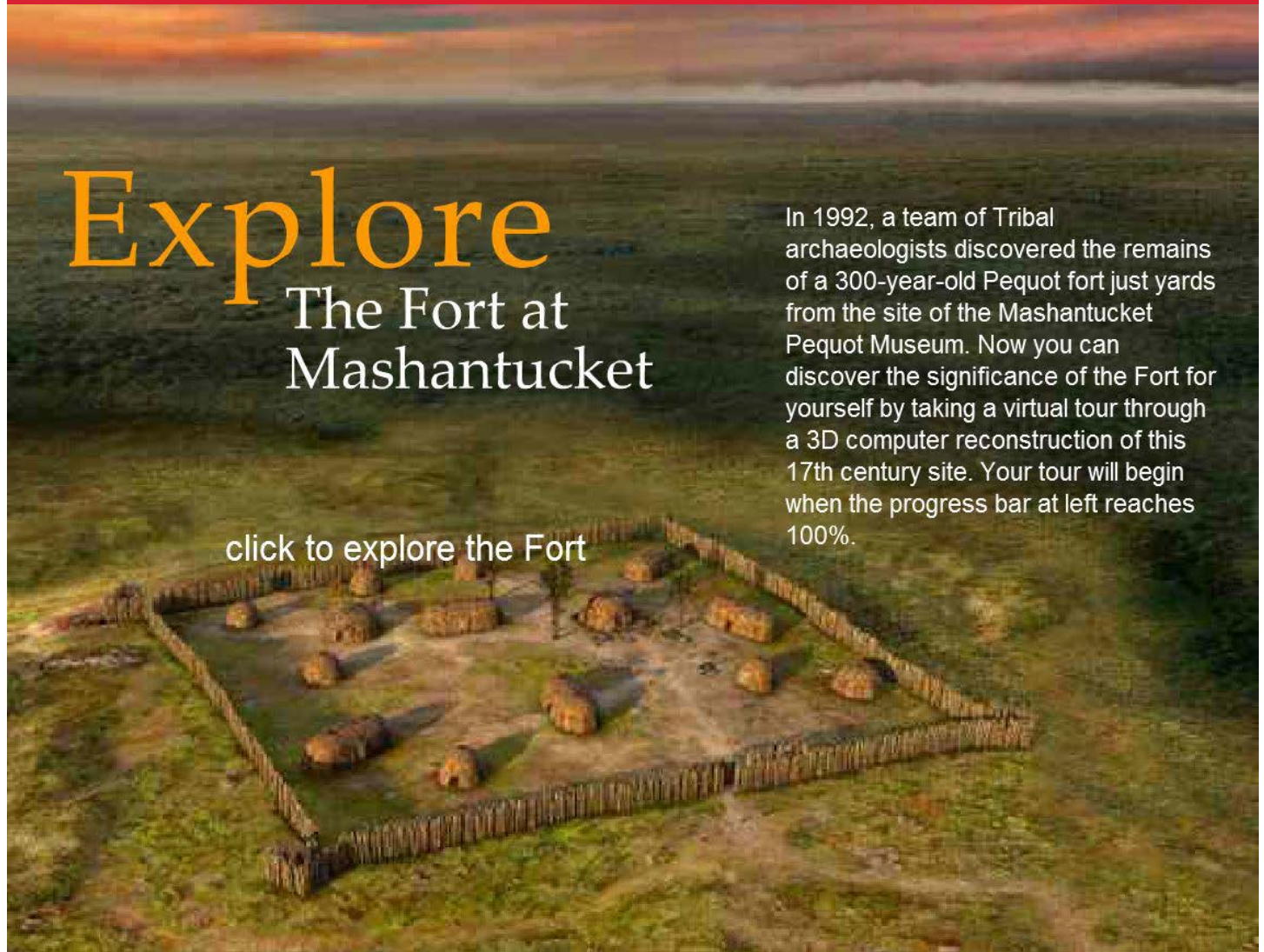
"Throughout the war, Connecticut militias suffered the lowest casualty rates, they were never ambushed, and they were regarded as the most effective of the colonial forces," says McBride. "It was quite clear that without Pequot and Mohegan participation the Connecticut war effort would have been dramatically different."

King Philip's War cemented the Pequots' alliance with the colonial powers, but it wiped some defeated Native communities off the map of New England forever. Groups like the Pequots who survived King Philip's War would face less violent but equally serious threats to their own existence in the years and decades to come.

The Fort at Mashantucket: An Interactive Resource

In 1992, archaeologists working for the Pequots discovered the remains of a 17th century Pequot fort several hundred yards from the site of the Mashantucket Pequot Museum. The *Explore the Fort at Mashantucket* interactive provides a guided tour of the site with the help of 3D computer animation.

Click on the picture below to explore the interactive in your web browser!



The Land Loss Begins

In the early 1700s, a colonial population boom drove English settlers by the thousands into the Connecticut interior. Their arrival and their appetite for land would change the lives of the Mashantucket Pequots dramatically.

“When the Mashantucket reservation was first established in 1666, there were few, if any European farms in the area,” says Dr. Kevin McBride, director of Research at the MPMRC and professor of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut, “By the early 1700s, we see evidence of just a few. But that appears to change dramatically in the next 10 to 20 years, and by 1730 and 1740, for example, the Pequot reservation is essentially surrounded by European farmsteads.”

For the hundreds of farmers settling near Mashantucket, the boundaries of the Pequot reservation were easy to ignore. “We’re literally seeing English building farms on Pequot lands,” says McBride. “They’re building houses, they’re building barns, they’re building root cellars, they’re fencing, they are plowing. The majority of the English couldn’t care less about Pequot rights — they viewed the Pequots as temporary squatters and the Mashantucket reservation as English common land by right of conquest, and by right of use.”

The Pequots Defend Their Rights

The Pequots tried to defend their rights to the land at Mashantucket in formal grievances brought through colonial legal channels. “And the English courts often found in their favor,” says McBride. “But the bottom line was that English settlers and the demands of the English for land took precedent over any of the Pequot concerns. And ultimately the Pequots always lost.”

For example, the Pequot land at Noank was divided and allotted to English residents in Groton in 1712 and 1713. In 1721, the same thing began occurring at Mashantucket, when the Pequots were forced to quitclaim South Hill, a sizeable portion of the reservation. Like Noank, this parcel was divided and granted to Groton residents, leaving the Pequots with only 1,789 acres.

During the late 1720s, English residents of Groton began building houses and improving land on the West Half section of Mashantucket. Beginning in October 1732, a longstanding dispute over this area arose when the English residents of Mashantucket began challenging Pequot title to the land, indicating that they only had the right for living, planting, and cutting firewood. In land deeds, they even labeled portions of the Pequot boundary as “the pretended Division line of the Indian or Mashantucket Land.” They further stated that Pequot lands were actually town commons because the Indians had surrendered grazing rights to the English, and by extension, the “fee” or absolute title to the land.

After an initial victory by the Pequot “attorney,” Joseph Wyaugs, in 1751, the case was appealed. The English neighbors raised concerns about who were the principal families at Mashantucket, according to Mashantucket residents: “The Socks belong to Mohegan. The Quocheets belong to Mohegan. The Chonks belong to Mohegan. The Woquandom belong to Stonington (Eastern Pequot). The Nimrods belong to Mohegan. The Toby belong to Mohegan. The Charles belong to Long Island (Montauk). The Shantup belong to Mohegan.” By focusing attention on the male members of the community who had married Pequot women, the English highlighted aspects of intercommunity marriage and what appear to be matrilineal residency patterns. This tactic proved especially useful as the neighbors successfully impugned Pequot rights to nearly 800 acres of reserved lands, which were permanently lost in 1762.

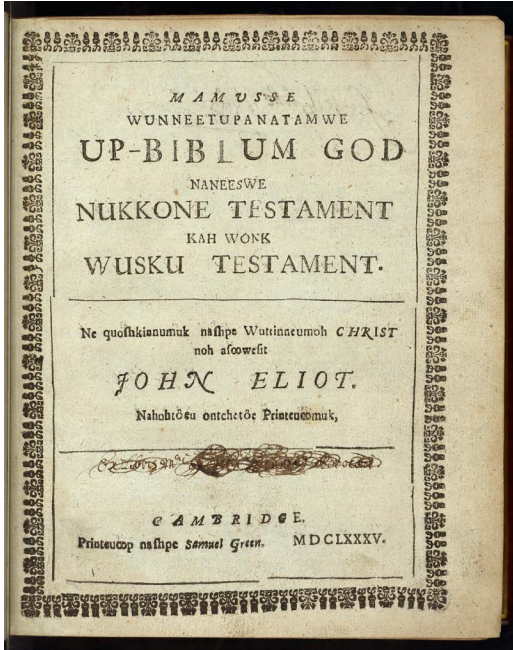
A New Way of Life

By 1762, the Pequots had lost close to 2,000 acres of their best reservation land. This loss coupled with the transformation of New England’s environment from forest to farmland, precipitated important changes among Pequot and other Indian communities. Just to hunt deer, they would have to travel more than a hundred miles away from their homelands. As a result, many began to intensify land use and live in the English manner.

“There’s less opportunity to practice traditional horticultural techniques and less opportunity for hunting and gathering,” explains McBride. “Your land base is being reduced, so the only option you have in that kind of situation is either to adopt European farming practices — which the Pequots didn’t necessarily have the means or the desire to do — or you go to work as a laborer on a local colonist’s farm.” By mid-century, Native labor was indispensable to most Connecticut farmers, and it was the only way that many Pequots could survive.

It is easy to think that framed houses, stonewalls, and English clothing marked the death of Indian culture, but a closer look reveals the different ways that Indians maintained and adapted their cultural traditions.

Natives and Christianity



The Eliot Bible was the first bible printed in America and translated into the Natick dialect of the Massachusetts language.

MPMRC Archives & Special Collections

After the arrival of Europeans, many Native people adopted Christianity in different ways and for different reasons.

In the mid-1600s, many Indian communities in Massachusetts Bay Colony established Praying Towns. In Connecticut and Rhode Island, however, most Native people resisted the advances of Christian missionaries until the 18th century.

Although missionaries visited the Pequots and other Natives in Connecticut in the 17th century, few Native people gave up their traditional ways of life and converted. For Puritan missionaries, teaching religious ideas was just one step in Christianizing Native people. In addition to giving up Native spiritual beliefs, missionaries also insisted that Native people adopt European ways of life — including cutting their hair, wearing European-style clothing, living in framed houses, and farming by European methods.

Native people in Connecticut resisted the efforts of missionaries; sometimes refusing even to meet with them until land disputes with colonial authorities were settled. To Native people it seemed plain that most Europeans were not good Christians — so why should Natives convert?

Not until the middle of the 18th century, when a movement for religious revivalism known as the Great Awakening came to America, did the Pequots and other Native people in southern New England, many of whom were raised in English households as indentured servants, begin converting to Christianity. In contrast to Puritanism, this movement emphasized an emotional style of preaching, as well as the importance of a person's internal calling to Christianity. The new evangelical Christianity of the Great Awakening

appealed in particular to the poor and powerless white people and African Americans as well as to Native people.

Another important factor in the spreading of Christianity among New England Natives in the mid-18th century was the work of Eleazar Wheelock. Wheelock was a Yale-educated minister who established a school for Native men in Connecticut in 1754. His hope was that his students would not only be converted to Christianity and learn European ways of life, but that they would then return as missionaries to their tribes.

The Mohegan preacher Samson Occum was one of the young Native men educated by Eleazar Wheelock. A convert to Christianity, he became a principal fundraiser for an Indian school that would be called Dartmouth College. After a falling out with Wheelock, Occum went on to lead the Brotherton Indian Movement among southern New England Natives. The goal was to preserve Native people and culture by establishing a Christian Indian farming community far away from English settlements and to live by Christian principles, including temperance and a strong work ethic. After an initial effort to migrate in 1775 was suspended by the outbreak of the American Revolution, a number of Occum's followers began leaving their homelands in the 1780s to move west — to land that was given to them by the Oneida Indians of central New York State. In a 20-year span from 1784 to 1804, dozens of Native families including Mashantucket and Pawcatuck Pequots, Narragansetts, Eastern and Western Niantics, Mohegans, Montauks, and Tunxis removed to New York during the Brotherton Migration. Individuals and families from these communities sometimes sold what little lands they had or leased their share of communal lands to white farmers.

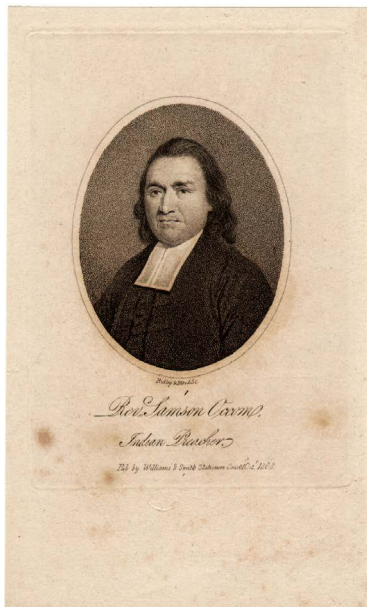
While the small and weakened Pequot tribe struggled to hold on at Mashantucket in the decades ahead, even the inhabitants of Brotherton, hundreds of miles to the west, could not escape the demand of whites for Indian land. Forced to migrate yet again by a growing wave of American settlers, the Brotherton Indians moved west to Wisconsin in the 1830s, where their descendants still live today.

The Native couple to the right, Jacob Fowler and Esther Poquiantup, portrays how many New England Natives adopted Christianity during a time known as the Great Awakening.



Indiantown

A Community of Christian Pequots



MPMRC Archives & Special Collections

A community called Indiantown was established at Mashantucket in the 1760s, on the western edge of the Great Cedar Swamp. Indiantown was modeled after the villages of European colonists, with framed houses clustered together at the town center and surrounded by barns, root cellars, and wells. Evidence suggests that domesticated animals were common at Indiantown, and that some of the settlement's pasture land and cultivated fields were enclosed with stone walls. Significantly, the community also had a meeting house used for worship and a cemetery.

The Pequots who lived at Indiantown were Christian converts, followers of the Native missionary Samson Occum. In response to the mounting impact of land loss and poverty, the Reverend Occum set forth a formula for the salvation and preservation of his fellow New England Natives. "What Occum was advocating was the establishment of Christian Indian farming communities," says Dr. Kevin McBride, director of Research at the MPMRC and professor of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut. "He advocated the best of European culture — sobriety, work ethic, farming — and the best of Native society, including the values inherent in family and the land. The irony was that he was advocating adoption of European-style farming, architecture, clothing, and form of government in an effort to maintain Native identity."

Before its abandonment in the Brotherton Migration, Indiantown was the perfect reflection of Samson Occum's model. Faced with a diminishing land base, the Christian Pequots living there had adopted the agricultural methods of European colonists, which allowed them to farm a smaller area of land more intensively than the traditional practice of clearing new fields every few years.

"This is one of the few Native communities of its kind that was internally generated," says McBride. "It wasn't imposed on the outside by Europeans, as we see in previous efforts to Christianize Natives. That's a very old idea by the English, that if you're going to civilize Natives, you've got to first Christianize them. And if you're going to Christianize them, you first have to make them live after the European manner — you have to make them work like Europeans, you have to make them look like Europeans, you have to make them live like Europeans. In the case of the Indiantown Pequots, this was a Native decision to do that."

Indiantown was abandoned at about the same time that Occum's followers moved west to establish a new community called Brothertown, around 1795. Presumably, the residents of Indiantown joined this migration.

Indiantown Today

What stands today on the site of Indiantown are the remains of a Native village whose occupants had embraced an entirely new way of life. The remains of house foundations, stonewalls, and outbuildings can still be seen at Indiantown, where a group of Christian Pequots adopted many European ways of life before leaving Mashantucket in the Brotherton Migration.

Introduction to the 19th Century



Tribal member Ephraim Williams III worked as a day laborer on nearby farms in the mid-late 19th century.

By the early 19th century, several Pequot leaders and their families had removed to New York during the Brotherton Migration. In these early years, the remaining Pequot leaders at Mashantucket were forced to sell more than 100 acres of land to pay for a 1793 land survey. In fact, the survey had been requested by the Pequots after the 1762 decision that dispossessed them of the West Half portion of reservation. The Pequots demanded full title for the remaining reservation; however, the survey took 30 years to complete.

Left with only about 880 acres of land on the reservation, many Pequots continued a pattern of working off the reservation on local white farms. Increasingly, men went to sea. One white overseer noted in an 1804 visit to Mashantucket that "... a Considerable Number of Aged & a Number of Females & some Males (sic) Invalids" remained on the Indian reservation and "a great part of their able & Smart Men are gone"

Pequot overseers who, throughout most of the 18th century, had assisted the tribe in navigating legal issues of dispossession and other forms of encroachment, began to take on a new role. As tribal leaders were increasingly absent, the overseer system became even more paternalistic, and by the 1810s, overseers were managing and renting out tribal lands to white farmers, controlling tribal financial affairs, distributing food and clothing as well as funerary, plowing, and home maintenance services — all at the overseer's discretion. Pequots

complained often about corrupt overseers and requested honorable men. This system was codified in the early 1820s and required overseers to maintain an annual accounting of revenues and expenses, a list of real estate assets and reservation acreage, and a list of tribal members.

In the 1820s, Pequots were confronted with the impact of popular narratives such as James Fenimore Cooper's book, *The Last of the Mohicans*. Mixed ancestry contributed to the perception that Pequots and other Indians had vanished from New England and that somehow they were less than "real" Indians. Pequots, who along with all Indians, had been excluded from the Federal Census since 1790, began to appear in the 1830 and 1840 censuses because they were considered "colored" and not "Indian." Local and state histories continued to note the "last pure Pequot." After tribal members complained to state authorities about a corrupt overseer in 1855, they found themselves under investigation. A report written by a committee appointed by the Connecticut General Assembly, recommended that tribal lands would be more profitably used if they were sold. In early 1856, 700 acres of Mashantucket were sold at public auction without the tribe's knowledge or consent. They were left with 179 acres of rocky, swampy, snake-infested land.

Members of the Pequot tribe moved back and forth between Mashantucket and their jobs on local farms, nearby towns, or in urban places like Westerly, Rhode Island. Some settled off the reservation for good, and by 1910, fewer than 30 tribal members remained at Mashantucket. The conditions that had forced so many to depart showed no signs of improving in the years ahead.

The 1855 Land Loss

Mashantucket was already a small and extremely poor reservation in the middle of the 19th century, when state authorities took steps to make the reservation even smaller.

“The reservation in 1855 consisted of 989 acres,” according to Dr. Kevin McBride, director of Research at the MPMRC and professor of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut. “On that reservation there were probably about 50 people, and I believe about 5 houses. And in 1855, the Connecticut General Assembly passed a law the result of which was that the Pequots were forced to auction off all but about 179 acres of land.”



Mashantucket ca. 1855

The reservation consisted of 989 acres; enough land to support roughly 50 Pequots year round.



Mashantucket ca. 1856

All but 179 rocky acres are sold off by the state of Connecticut, forcing many Pequots to leave the reservation.

The loss was devastating to the tribe, but in the eyes of the state, the land sale was meant to work to the Pequots' benefit.

“The rationale,” says McBride, “was that it’s becoming increasingly difficult for us, the Connecticut government, to help to maintain these Pequots. We’ve really got to do something to help them raise some money, so let’s sell this land off, and we’ll use the money that remains for their benefit. In fact, they established a bank account at a local bank in Norwich, and the money in that account was used by the state overseers to help maintain the Pequots.”

But with so little land left, it would be impossible for more than a handful of families to remain at Mashantucket. The state was determined to improve the tribe’s economic condition, even if it meant forcing many Pequots off the reservation and into the American mainstream.

“I think in the 19th century the state of Connecticut, like other states in New England, saw Indians as an anachronism,” says Dr. Jack Campisi, formerly of the MPMRC and Wellesley College. “Their attitude was, ‘Let’s improve the condition of the Indians by making them non-Indians.’ So, from the state’s point of view, the sale of the Pequots’ land advanced that cause.”

But what the state did not know was that it had sold the land in violation of federal law. This illegal land sale forced most of the tribe to leave their tiny reservation, but 120 years later, the Mashantucket Pequots would sue for the return of their land and take a crucial step in their dramatic recovery.

Tribal Profile: Peter George, Whaler



As Native people across the region contended with the impact of land dispossession, one important and largely unseen shift involved the movement of hundreds of Indian men toward the region's seaports. By the end of the 18th century and through the 19th century, it is evident that Native men had formed social networks in port and at sea through shipbuilding, naval service, commerce, and whaling. In local ports like New London, Stonington, and Mystic, it was not uncommon to see Pequots, Mohegans, and Narragansetts working together in groups of three to six or more men.

As global commerce and whaling exploded in the 19th century, these social networks began to include Cape Verdean, Hawaiian, Tahitian, and other mariners, some of whom married or partnered with Indian women here in New England. Some Native women operated boarding houses for seamen and others acquired property off the reservations with income originating from maritime labor.

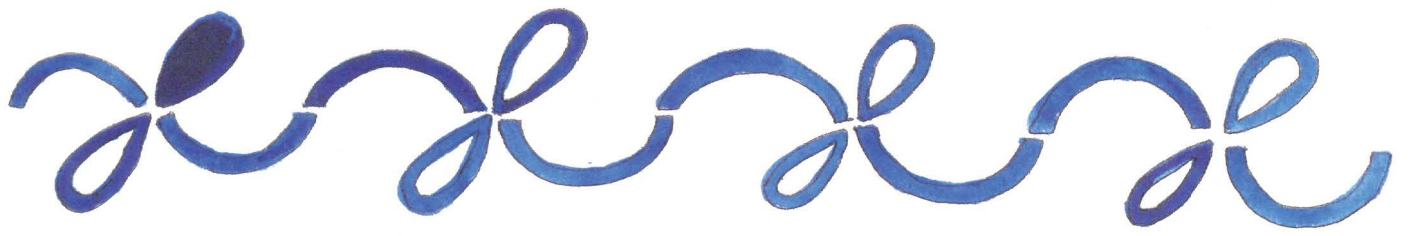
After 1820, when whaling dominated the local economy, every known Pequot man between the age of 15 and 40, sometimes younger and sometimes older, spent some time at sea. In some Pequot families, such as the George family, generations of men were mariners.

Peter George was a Pequot who spent his life at sea. He was born in 1804, and by his early 20s, he was on the first of six known whaling voyages he made aboard these ships: *Friends* (1827), *Palladium* (1832), *Neptune* (1834), *Flora* (1836), *Jason* (1837), and *North America* (1839).

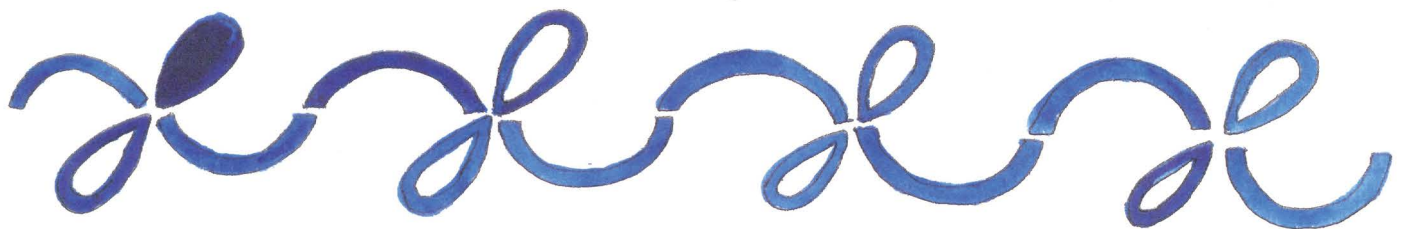
No records exist to tell us exactly what tasks Peter George performed at sea, but all mariners had basic seamanship skills that included ropework, sailwork, and sewing. Some Native people were harpooners, a job that required both skill and bravery. Nearly all hands participated in processing the catch. After a whale was killed, the crew brought it alongside the ship, stripped off its foot-thick layer of fat, and hoisted the blubber aboard. On deck the blubber was cut into pieces and boiled to render it into oil. This was done in the tryworks — huge iron pots set over wood fires in a kind of brick oven on deck. Stirring the smoky pots, on a deck smeared with oil and blood, was exhausting, greasy work. It could take three days to “try out” the blubber of a large whale, during which crew members stood at the tryworks in six-hour shifts. The oil was then cooled in a metal tank and bailed into barrels, where it was stored for the remainder of the voyage. Peter's brother, Peleg George, was the cooper, or barrel maker, aboard the *Caledonia* in 1837. It was a specialized trade and one necessary to ensure the safe and secure transit of whale oil back to port.

Back home after a long voyage, whalers recounted their adventures at sea to family and friends. The whalers' rough ways and tall tales sometimes frightened small children. According to a story handed down in one Pequot family, the trembling children took refuge from the men under their mother's billowing hoop skirt.

To learn more about Native American mariners, please visit: <http://indianmarinersproject.com>



Pequot Life in the
20th & 21st Centuries



Hold on to the Land

By the 1960s, generations of poverty had forced most of the Mashantucket Pequot tribe to leave their 214-acre reservation in search of adequate jobs and housing. For the handful of Pequots who remained at Mashantucket, the land was an important part of tribal identity. Yet the threat of losing that land was very real; Connecticut authorities in the 1960s were making plans to turn the reservation into a state park.

Only one thing stood between the state of Connecticut and its plan to take over the last piece of reservation land: the determination of three elderly women not to let go. Alice Brend, Martha Langevin, and Elizabeth George were sisters, born and raised at Mashantucket early in the century. They had no political or economic power, but as long as they were alive, these three women could frustrate every outside effort to assert authority over Pequot tribal rights.

"They were going to fight to hold onto the land," recalls tribal member Bruce Kirchner. "They were proud of their heritage, they were very knowledgeable of the history of the tribe, and I think they were well aware of what they had to do."



Alice Brend, as a child.
MPMRC Archives & Special Collections



Martha Langevin, left, next to her father and niece Regina.
MPMRC Archives & Special Collections



Elizabeth George
MPMRC Archives & Special Collections

Alice Brend

Alice Brend left the reservation as an adult to raise her family in better circumstances, but she returned to Mashantucket in her later years. Alice's attempt to move a trailer onto tribal land brought her in conflict with local authorities, and her refusal to accept their jurisdiction centered on a critical question: did local authorities have the legal right to decide what the Pequots could do on their own land? "She had to get a lawyer, she had to go to the papers," says grandson Bruce Kirchner. "She won that battle, and I think that was very important to the tribe at that time."

Martha Langevin

Martha Langevin spent most of her life at Mashantucket, and those who were close to her remember a woman who was as rugged as the backwoods she called home. "She was a feisty thing when she got upset," recalls Martha's grand-niece Charlene Jones. "She used to carry around a shotgun, and she wasn't afraid to use it." Along with her sister Elizabeth, Martha lived mostly off the land, growing fruits and vegetables, and gathering wild berries, nuts, and other edible plants. Both women also supplemented their incomes by working in the neighboring community. But in her old age, it became more difficult for Martha to manage on her own. Unable to keep up with repairs, she was forced to abandon her old house for a second-hand trailer with a leaky roof. "I worked with her to re-cover her trailer so it wouldn't leak," recalls grand-nephew and future Tribal Chairman Skip Hayward. "I remember the state overseer coming by and scolding this old woman like she was a child for doing any of this without their permission. It was one of the most humiliating things that I've ever seen anybody put through, and right then it just set off a fire inside of me." This incident struck a deep chord in the young man who would later lead the Pequots to federal recognition and to the return of lost tribal lands.

Elizabeth George

Elizabeth George was the hub of the extended family and the most active in resisting attempts by state authorities to encroach on what she passionately believed was sovereign Indian land. "She always said, 'Hold on to your land, and get our land back,'" remembers granddaughter Theresa Hayward Bell. "People would be surveying our land, and she'd send me up the road to rip out all the surveying stakes. And she did go down there when they brought in bulldozers, and stood right in the road. Men stopped working because she said, 'You're not going to plow up this ground. This is mine.'" In the last years of her own life, Elizabeth George saw how urgent it was that a younger generation carry on the struggle. "She urged all of us to come home," says Charlene Jones, another of Elizabeth's granddaughters. "She didn't care what it took for us to get home, to get home and stay there because once she was gone there would be no more land ... and without your land, you lost your identity." "If it hadn't been for my grandmother's tenacity," says Skip Hayward, "and her perseverance living here on the reservation — I don't think it would be here for us today."

Working Towards Self Sufficiency

In the mid-1970s, the Mashantucket Pequots were a long way from achieving their goal of economic self-sufficiency. As tribal member John Holder remembers, “We had zero income. There wasn’t something going on that provided income, and we were kind of in a situation where you were forced to use what you have.”



Sugar Shack
MPMRC Archives & Special Collections

The Maple Sugar Project

One of the few things Mashantucket did have was an abundance of maple trees. Tribal member Charlene Jones remembers: “My Grandmother used to boil sap into syrup right on her stove. Small quantities for just their household, but we wanted to do it for market. We were young kids — some of us were seven, eight years old. Skip Hayward [former tribal chairman] was really involved in tapping the trees and teaching us children how to follow the veins of the tree. It was labor intensive to say the least.”

“It sold very well,” recalls tribal member and former MPMRC Executive Director Theresa Hayward Bell. “We could not make enough syrup and keep it in house. But it was also a seasonal endeavor, and the tribe knew that we still had to do something a lot different for the tribe to be able to become economically self-supporting.”

The Swine Project

“We used to sit down in meetings and talk about different ways to make money, different ways to develop,” recalls tribal member Bruce Kirchner. “We talked about everything from bake sales to community gardens, and it must have come up at that time to raise pigs.”

Tribal Elder Loretta Libby recalls that “They would get loose and they’d run all over town here.” “And we’d be out — all of us — out chasing the pigs. There was times we were buying grain out of our own pockets.”

“There was no money,” says Charlene Jones, “and it was like you were constantly feeding them. Everyone became attached to these original eighteen pigs, and they never went to market. Eventually they all had names — they became pets.”

Garden and Greenhouse

“When we all started moving back up to the reservation,” recalls Theresa Bell, “we wanted to do community things to bring the community together on the reservation.”

“The Community Garden was one of the first things we started,” says former Tribal Chairman Richard “Skip” Hayward. “But trying to get this land tillable was almost impossible. So we said, ‘Let’s try greenhouses.’ We raised money from all different sources — state, federal, local, private, churches — to build a hydroponic greenhouse. I mean, I went around knocking on everybody’s door.”

The tribe ended up building a state-of-the-art greenhouse facility, and for the first time, a Pequot enterprise was able to hire full-time employees. They started the project with plenty of enthusiasm, but no experience in the commercial produce industry.

Theresa Bell recalls: “I was coming to work for the reservation, I was excited, I’m going to grow lettuce! I never thought about marketing, I just had to grow it! And we grew plenty of it — ten thousand heads a week! And we went to the New York food market, and it was scary to see a business of that size and how huge it was. And we tried to sell this lettuce, but we could not get access to the food market.”

Without access to commercial buyers, their business could not survive. After a promising start and a huge investment of time and energy, the tribe was forced to close down the most ambitious project they had ever undertaken.



MPMRC Archives & Special Collections

Government by the People



MPTN Community Center

At Mashantucket, many hands make government work. The Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation is governed by a seven-member Tribal Council, led by a council chairman, and an Elders Council, which consists of all tribal members 55 years or older and representing all families of the tribe. The chairman and all council members are elected at a general tribal meeting, for three-year terms. Registered tribal members 18 years of age or older are eligible to vote.

The Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council

The decision-making powers of tribal government are divided between the Tribal Council and the Elders Council. In general, the Tribal Council makes laws governing the tribe and its properties, manages its natural resources, and maintains relationships with local, state, and federal governments as well as with other tribal nations. The Elders Council, in addition to providing advice and

recommendations to the Tribal Council and membership, determines questions of membership and has the power to deny any person, including a tribal member, access to tribal properties. The Elders Council also hears matters referred to it by the Tribal Council and proposes amendments to the Tribal Constitution. The Tribal Court has jurisdiction to handle civil matters arising on the reservation or as a result of contractual obligations.

Children, Health, and Community



Tooyupáhsuk (The Place of the Turtle)
The Child Development Center

The Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation cares for the nurturing of its children, and the health, education, and well-being of all tribal members. Recognizing a growing need for comprehensive child care for the community’s children, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council approved the creation of the Child Development Center. In addition to teaching general development skills, the center teaches tribal children to know and respect their cultural history and the history of Native America. The center stresses the learning of traditional stories and activities related to an ongoing sense of being young Mashantucket Pequots. Elders, parents, and students are often invited to give cultural classes.

The Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation actively encourages higher education for tribal members of all ages. Opportunities range from specialized and general training at MPTN’s Pequot Academy, to programs supporting the pursuit of lifelong higher education.

The Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Health service maintains a clinic staffed with health care professionals and provides comprehensive health care services to Mashantucket Pequot tribal members and other Native Americans in New London County. The health service also coordinates with the tribe’s environmental health program, safeguarding healthy working conditions for tribal members and employees.

Foxwoods: The Gaming Enterprise



The Indian Gaming Rights Act (IGRA), signed into federal law on October 17, 1988, allows the operation of specific types of gaming on the reservations of federally recognized Indian tribes. The passage of IGRA provided new opportunities for tribes across the continent, and in February of 1992, the Mashantucket Pequots were planning to open Foxwoods casino as a small addition to their existing bingo operation.

Many industry and financial experts felt Mashantucket was too remote to support even a small casino. Wall Street turned the Pequots down in their search for financial backing, and the tribe had to find investors in Malaysia to fund the construction of Foxwoods. Even the Pequots' optimism at the time was somewhat guarded.

"We weren't sure how successful the casino would be," recalls tribal member Bruce Kirchner. "It was hard to say — gaming had never been

in this area before, Atlantic City was the closest area. We didn't plan to have slot machines in the original casino — it was all table games — so even the people with experience weren't quite sure what was going to happen."

"I think everybody felt it would be somewhat successful," remembers Kirchner. "I like to put it this way: we knew it would be a home run, but we didn't know it would be a grand slam."

No one was really prepared for the crowds that mobbed the grand opening of Foxwoods. "The lines of cars were backed up for miles down Route 2," says Kirchner. "People were parking on the street, and I recall that some people who were frustrated with not being able to get on the property just shut off their cars in the middle of the street, jumped out and walked to the casino. We initially planned to open 8 hours a day or 12 hours a day, but realized the first day that we couldn't shut down. The crowds were just too much. We asked people to work overtime, and we quickly started hiring new people. And we haven't shut the door since."

The Mashantucket Post Office



The Mashantucket Pequot Tribe is now the largest private employer in the state of Connecticut, and the boom in economic activity has given many tribal members career opportunities they'd never had before.

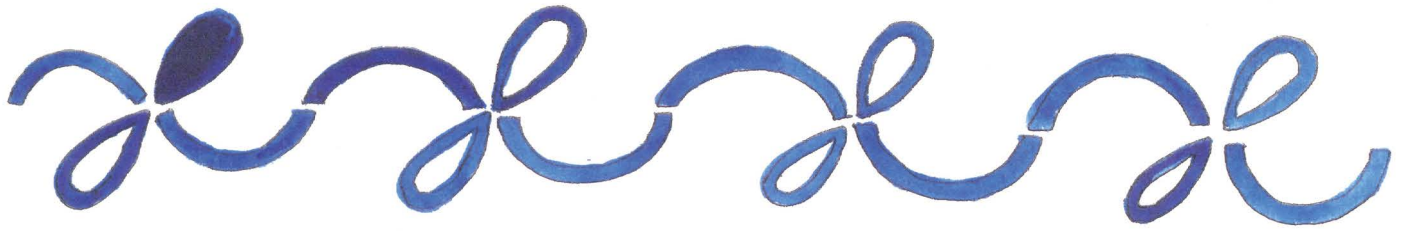
"I always wanted to work in the post office, from the time I was a teenager in Atlantic City," says Tribal Member Denise Anderson, former postmaster for the Mashantucket branch of the United States Postal Service. "I was very excited when I got the job working for my own people."

In March 1993, the United States Postal Service opened a postal unit at Mashantucket. The unit performed all the standard post office activities: selling stamps and money orders, providing national and international services, and maintaining post office boxes.

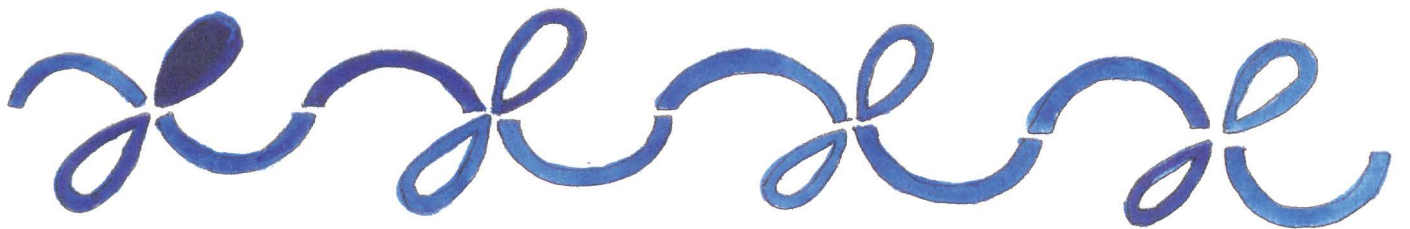
This was another service that Skip Hayward [former tribal chairman] wanted to provide to his people," says Ms. Anderson, "a place where they could walk out of their office and come right around the corner and do all their mailing of packages, buy a money order, get a single stamp, pick up their tax forms, and also have a friendly conversation with the people that work there. Skip Hayward wanted Mashantucket to be a real city, and we are."

For the Mashantucket Pequots, the name of the post office was a symbol of sovereign identity, but when the post office first opened, there was one thing missing — a Mashantucket address. All mail addressed to reservation residents and businesses had to be addressed not to Mashantucket, but instead to the neighboring town of Ledyard, Connecticut.

The Pequots believed that the post office should reflect the tribe's identity as a sovereign nation. In February 1995, the U.S. Postal Service granted their request to have its own postal branch, designated Mashantucket, Connecticut, 06339-3180. The designation was a victory for the tribal nation, but it was not the end of the story. The 06339 ZIP code was still shared by Ledyard and Mashantucket, and the Pequots were hopeful that as its volume of mail continued to increase, the U.S. Postal Service would grant Mashantucket a ZIP code all its own. That final symbolic victory took place in the summer of 2002, when the Mashantucket Pequot reservation was granted its own ZIP code, 06338.



The Natural World



Introduction to a World of Ice



Courtesy NASA Goddard Photo and Video

Over the past two million years, glacial ice has repeatedly buried much of North America, including all of present-day New England, during a series of ice ages. The most recent glacier blanketed the land in ice thousands of feet thick, from about 70,000 to 20,000 years ago.

At the peak of the last ice age, some 20,000 years ago, glaciers covered nearly a third of the world's land. The area that is now New England was buried underneath glacial ice up to a mile thick. As the ice advanced and retreated, it created landforms such as Long Island and Cape Cod.

As it flowed over North America, glacial ice sculpted the land. It ground down bedrock, scattered boulders, and mounded up sand and gravel. When the climate began warming, the glaciers' edges melted back toward the North Pole, leaving behind landscape features that have endured to the present.

As the glacier slowly advanced and retreated, it scoured and scarred hills of bedrock, pushed up mounds of sand and till, dislodged boulders, left behind lakes and streams of melted ice, and created the basic features of Pequot territory that are still visible today.

The ice has long since melted away from Mashantucket, but glaciers still cover a significant amount of the earth. At the north and south poles, and on mountain tops, glaciers continue to grind away rock, deposit sand and gravel, and otherwise sculpt the landscape.

How a Glacier Works

How a Glacier Works

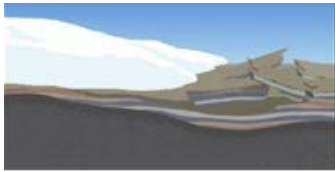
What is a glacier? In places where the summers are not warm enough to melt the snow that falls each winter, the snow can accumulate year after year, eventually forming huge sheets of ice called glaciers. When the ice becomes thick enough — about 150 feet — pressure at the bottom becomes so great that this ice deforms and flows plastically.

What can glaciers do?



Lower Sea Level

Glaciers lock up tremendous amounts of water, keeping it from returning to the sea and thereby causing the sea level to fall.



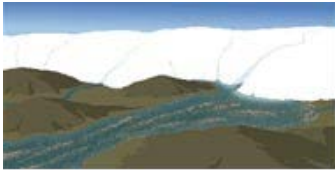
Sculpt the Landscape

Massive and slow-moving, glaciers are capable of pushing millions of tons of earth before them as they flow.



Carry Rocks and Boulders

As glaciers flow, they pick up rock and sediment by the ton, carrying it sometimes hundreds of miles from its original source.



Deposit Sand and Gravel

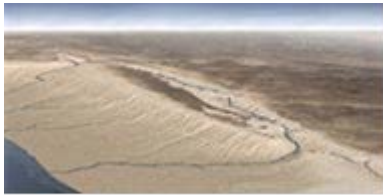
Flowing glacial meltwater carries with it huge amounts of sand and gravel previously trapped within the glacier.

Twenty-one thousand years ago, a glacier thousands of miles wide and more than a mile thick in places covered much of the North American continent. As they grew and spread, these continental ice sheets flowed slowly under their own immense weight, moving anywhere from a few inches to a few feet in a given year, many hundreds of miles over thousands of years. As they moved, they dramatically altered the landscape beneath and around them. They sculpted the sides of mountains and picked up and carried millions of tons of rock and earth frozen into the ice.

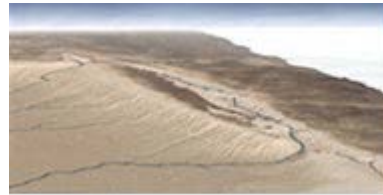
As the ice sheets melted, this material was carried away in rivers of glacial meltwater, depositing tons of earth, sand, and gravel in glacial lakes and stream beds. The glaciers also dramatically affected coastlines, lowering the sea level as they trapped huge quantities of the earth's water on land. As they melted, the glaciers released this water into the oceans, raising sea level, submerging land, and leaving the familiar coastlines of today.

Formation of Long Island Sound

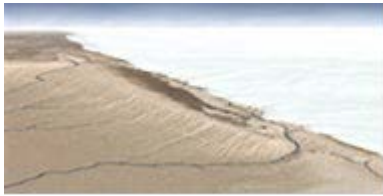
Tens of millions of years ago, at a time when the sea level was much lower than it is today, an ancient river carved out the basin that would later become Long Island Sound. When the glaciers of the last ice age advanced on southern New England, they flowed through this basin, carving it out even deeper before coming to a halt some 21,000 years ago. See steps 1–4.



Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



Step 4

At this point, the glacier's rate of advance was in equilibrium with its rate of melting, and for perhaps a thousand years, the ice remained in this position, constantly discharging melt water along with millions of tons of rock, sand, and gravel. This sediment built up a ridge called a moraine, which formed the south fork of Long Island. See steps 5–6.



Step 5



Step 6

As the climate began to warm around 21,000 years ago, the ice margin began to retreat, then paused again forming a second moraine in line with Long Island's north fork. As the ice retreated further, this second moraine acted as a dam for glacial runoff. The Long Island Sound basin became a massive glacial lake, which persisted for centuries, depositing tons of sediment at its bottom, before draining rapidly around 15,000 years ago. See steps 7–10.



Step 7



Step 8



Step 9

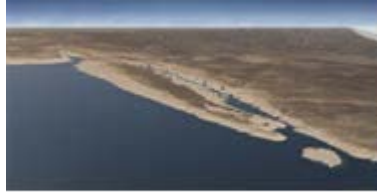


Step 10

At around the same time, the massive ice sheets that covered the North American continent were beginning to melt rapidly, and the huge volume of water they were releasing began returning to the oceans. As the sea rose to the level of present-day Long Island Sound, the recently drained glacial lake filled with salt water, and the Sound as it is today began to take shape. See steps 11–14.



Step 11



Step 12



Step 13



Step 14

Early Mammals of the Northeast

Although today it is hard to imagine seeing mastodons in Connecticut, they were one of the most common species of large mammals or megafauna that lived here over a period of several thousand years.

By about 9,000 years ago, these and more than 30 other species of mammals and birds disappeared from North America. Was their extinction the result of changes in the climate or the work of human hunters? The answer is unknown, but today many scientists agree that a combination of environmental and human factors is the most likely explanation.



Mastodon (*Mammut americanum*)

Standing up to 10 feet tall at the shoulder, with long tusks and a hairy coat, the American mastodon is an extinct relative of today's elephant. The mastodon could be found from Alaska to Florida and into South America until its disappearance about 10,000 years ago. Mastodons were widespread in New England at the same time as large-game hunters, but no undisputed mastodon kill sites have been found in this region. Did the people here hunt these mighty creatures? The answer is unknown.

Did You Know?

In the Northeast, much of our knowledge about the mastodon's presence has come unexpectedly from the trawling nets of fishermen. Mastodon and mammoth teeth have been

dredged up in numerous locations off the Atlantic coast, providing evidence that these animals were indeed here at a time when sea levels were lower and the coast extended out farther.

Giant Beaver (*Castoroides ohioensis*)

As their name implies, giant beavers were quite large — six to seven times the size of modern beavers and they weighed about 300 pounds. Giant beavers were the largest rodents in North America during the Ice Age. While probably clumsy on land, the animals had short legs and webbed feet, suggesting that they were skilled and powerful swimmers. They lived in large, shallow lakes and ponds bordered by marshes and swamps. Fossil remains of giant beavers have been identified at hundreds of North American sites extending from Alaska to Florida. They were probably most common in the region south of the Great Lakes. With the final retreat of the glacial front, the giant beaver's habitat disappeared and the animals became extinct approximately 9,000 years ago.

Dire Wolf (*Canis dirus*)

Larger and more powerfully built than the modern gray wolf, the dire wolf was one of the most common carnivores, or flesh-eaters, during the last Ice Age. Although the geographic origin of dire wolves is unknown, fossils show they covered an extraordinary range in North and South America — from southern Canada to Peru, until they became extinct between 9,000 and 10,000 years ago. Dire wolves preyed on large plant-eating animals, including mastodons, horses, and camels. Certain adaptations, such as large teeth and powerful jaws, indicate that these wolves were hunter/scavengers and often fed on carrion, or the remains of dead animals. Packs of dire wolves probably lurked near kill sites in order to take advantage of carcasses abandoned by human hunters.

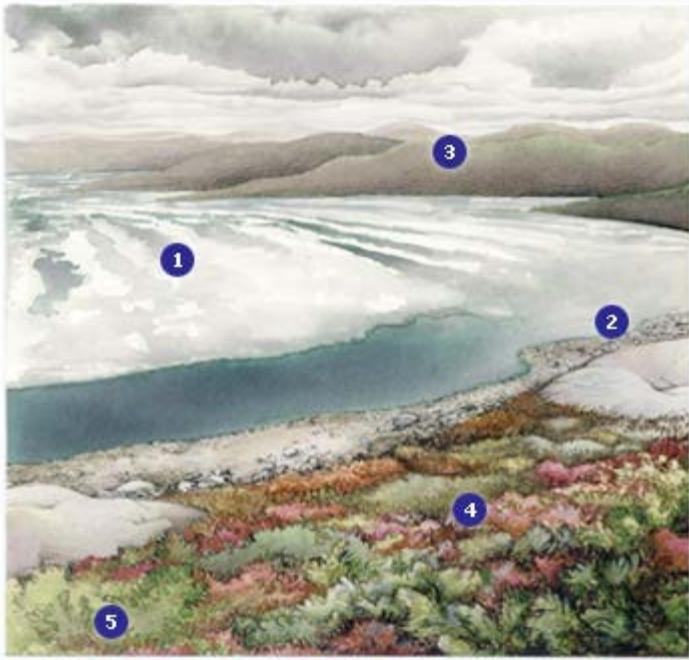


Gray wolves and dire wolves coexisted for thousands of years. However, the extinction of the dire wolf coincided with an increase in the population of the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) and may have been due to competition. The gray wolf was better adapted to pursuing the smaller, swifter game that populated North America after the demise of the Ice Age megafauna and probably out hunted its rival.

The Changing Landscape of Mashantucket: 17,000–14,000 years ago

A Glacial Lake

Thousands of years before Cedar Swamp existed, a massive glacial ice sheet covered the land. As the ice moved, it picked up rocks and sediment and gradually sculpted the basin now occupied by Cedar Swamp. When the glacier receded from Mashantucket approximately 17,000 years ago, an enormous piece of ice broke off. This block of ice slowly melted and created a cold, muddy glacial lake in the basin — thus beginning the long and fascinating history of Cedar Swamp.



1. Block of Ice Surrounded by Glacial Lake Plain

During its retreat, part of the glacier broke off and remained in Cedar Swamp basin. As this ice melted, it created a glacial lake.

2. Sand and Gravel Damming Lake at the North End

Tons of sand and gravel, seen in the core sample at this horizon, flowed in with streams carrying glacial melt water and remained here as deltas, or sedimentary deposits.

3. Bleak Landscape

When the ice retreated, cold winds blew continually over the bleak rocky landscape. There is no evidence that people lived at Mashantucket at this time.

4. Dispersed Plants

Dispersed plants began to appear on the land surrounding the lake.

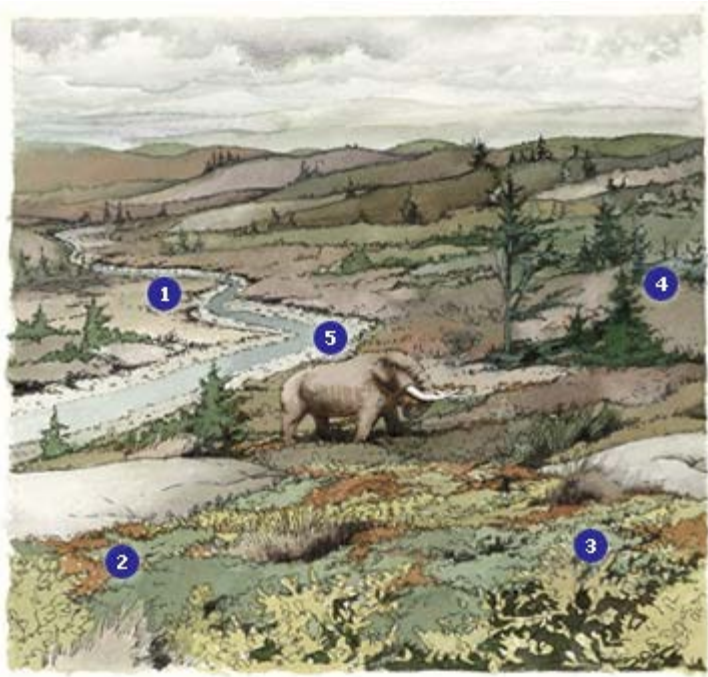
5. Dwarf Willow

Dwarf willow (*Salix herbacia*) is a plant often found in tundra environments. Fragments of this species were found in the Cedar Swamp core.

The Changing Landscape of Mashantucket: 14,000–12,000 Years Ago

The Disappearing Lake

Scientists were surprised to find a layer of gravel in the core sample. How could this gravel have reached the middle of the lake basin? The best explanation is that the gravel was carried there by streams that flowed into the basin and that at that time, the lake was dry. Why did the lake disappear? And how did it come back? Scientists looked to the receding glacier for the answer.



1. Drained Lake

Why did the lake disappear? It was probably too chilly for it to evaporate, so scientists believe that the sediment which had built up at the north end and acted like a dam, probably eroded, allowing most of the lake to drain away.

2. Grasses and Sedges

Pollen grains in the core from tundra grasses and other grass-like herbs known as sedges reveal that these were some of the early groundcover plants.

3. Flowering Heaths

Flowering heaths were part of the upland vegetation, as indicated by macrofossil evidence.

4. Spruces and Pines

Spruce and pine pollen in the core points to the presence of those trees, probably growing in patches around the basin.

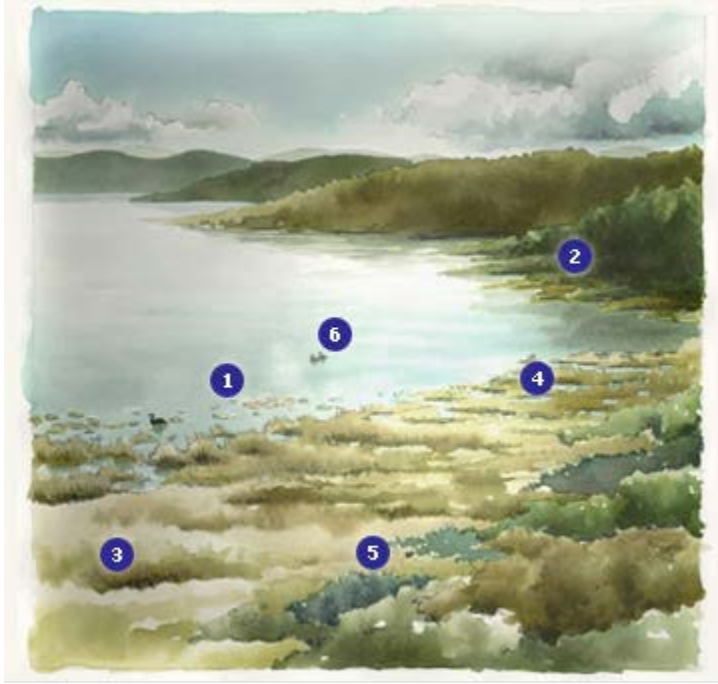
5 Mastodon

This open spruce parkland environment — a patchy environment of conifer trees with open spaces containing tundra-type plants — would have been a favorite grazing ground of the American mastodon. There is, however, no evidence of people at Mashantucket at this time.

The Changing Landscape of Mashantucket: 12,000–10,000 Years Ago

An Open Pond

A rise in water level and an increase in temperature approximately 12,500 years ago transformed Cedar Swamp basin from a shallow muddy lake to a deeper pond. As the climate became milder, spruce, larch, fir, and white pine trees as well as deciduous trees spread over the upland. These trees anchored the soil in the watershed, or land above the pond, slowing the sediment erosion and allowing many new plants to take root at the pond's edge.



1. Pondweed, Water Lily, and Naiad

In the core, seeds of water lily and naiad, freshwater plants, as well as macrofossils of pondweed indicate open water conditions and warmer temperatures.

2. Alder

Shrubs such as alder at the pond's edge helped to stabilize the shoreline.

3. Sedges and Rushes

Sedges and rushes sunk their roots into the pond's newly stabilized shoreline.

4. Plants Encroaching on Pond

Over time, debris from the plants such as water willow growing on the shore began to fill in the pond's edges, reducing the amount of open water in the basin.

5. Leatherleaf

Leatherleaf and other heaths such as blueberries probably formed a floating mat on the surface of the water.

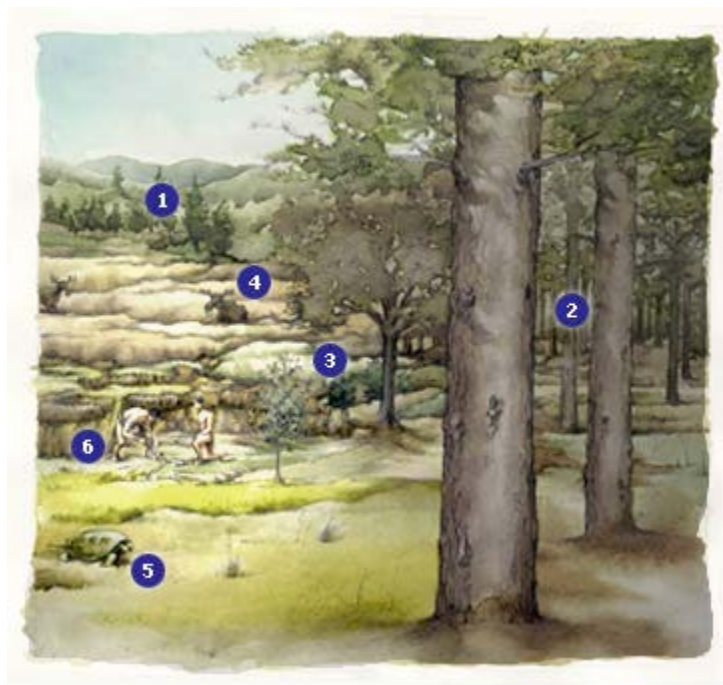
6. Ducks and Geese

Water fowl thrive in this environment.

The Changing Landscape of Mashantucket: 10,000–8,000 Years Ago

The Pond Becomes a Swamp

In the core sample, the accumulation of plant matter preserved by stagnant water reveals that the pond was undergoing a major transformation. The open water was gradually replaced by vegetation, and the pond finally became so shallow that it ceased to exist. A forested wetland, or swamp, formed in its place.



1. Upland Pine

Drier conditions in upland areas encouraged the growth of white pines and gray birch. The high percentage of pine pollen in the core indicates that the pine was the dominant pollen producer in the area during this period.

2. Trees Surrounding the Basin

The land around the pond became forested with white pines, hemlocks, oaks, and birches. Plant debris from the watershed washed into the pond basin and accumulated.

3. Marsh Filling in with Trees

The margin of the basin became increasingly dominated by shrubs and mosses, creating a bog mat. Finally, when trees began to take hold, the basin formed a swamp, a forested wetland.

4. Moose

The filled-in swamp provided an ideal habitat for moose and deer.

5. Snapping Turtle

Turtles and other reptiles and amphibians, as well as small mammals and birds, made their home in the swamp.

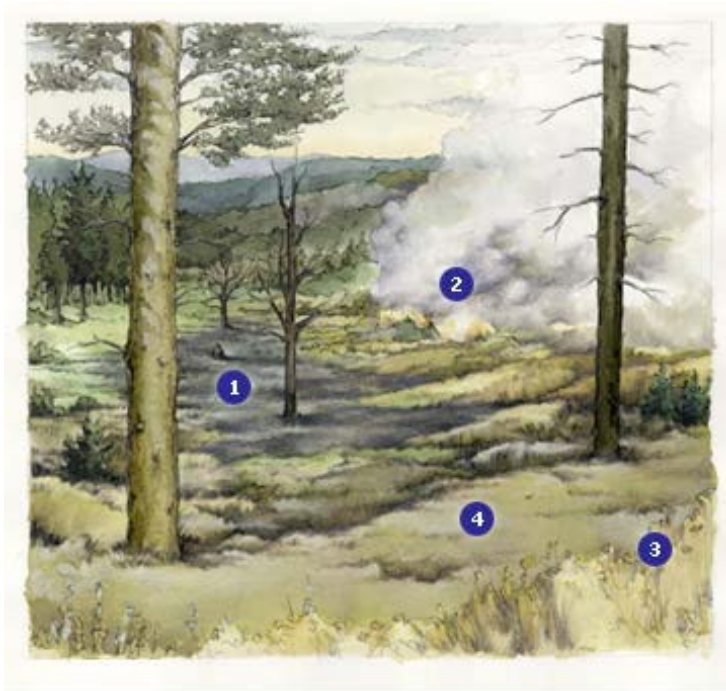
6. People Gathering Sedges and Bulrushes

Several campsites from this time period have been discovered within a 5-mile radius of Cedar Swamp, indicating that people living in the region made widespread use of these wetlands.

The Changing Landscape of Mashantucket: 8,000–4,000 Years Ago

The Swamp Becomes Drier

Between 8,000 and 4,000 years ago, evidence from the core sample suggests a curious interruption in Cedar Swamp's development. The water level in the basin dropped and the swamp became drier, probably as the result of numerous lengthy dry spells that occurred throughout the region. Drier conditions caused the vegetation to decay more completely, creating woody peat that is black and firm. Charcoal further accounts for the peat's color. The dense swamp had been transformed into a patchwork of dry, burned areas and deciduous forest. This change had a dramatic impact on plant and animal life, which in turn affected how people used the swamp.



1. Drier, More Open Swamp

A long regional dry spell caused the inlet stream to dry up and the water level in the Cedar Swamp basin to fall. The swamp became much drier, especially during the summers.

2. Fire

The amount of charcoal in the core sample increases dramatically in this horizon, suggesting that fires burned repeatedly across the dry surface of Cedar Swamp.

3. Grasses

The first colonizers of this dry, burned landscape were probably grasses, as well as scattered white pine trees, which flourish after a fire.

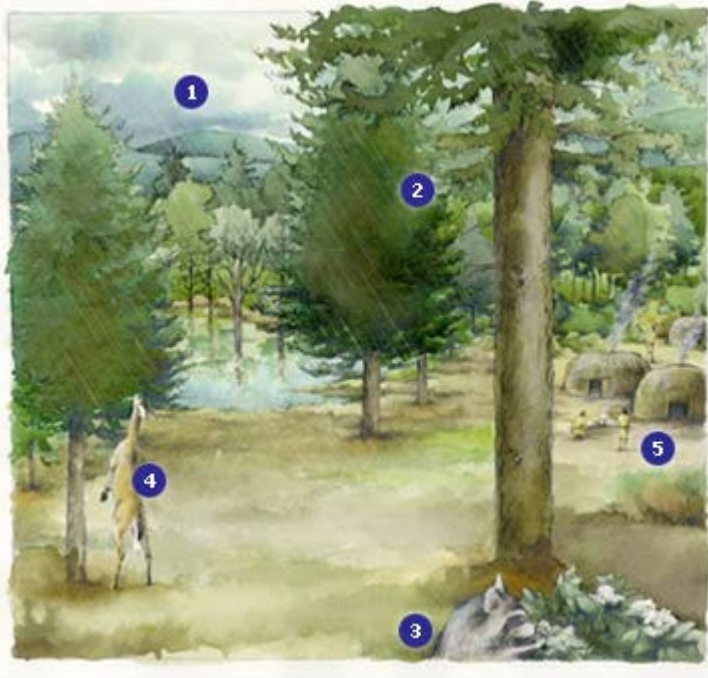
4. Absence of People

From 6,000 to 4,000 years ago, there is less evidence of human activity at Cedar Swamp than during earlier and later time periods. People apparently found that conditions at this time were not good for hunting or settlement, perhaps because the swamp was too dry.

The Changing Landscape of Mashantucket: 4,000–350 Years Ago

The Return of the Swamp

The top layer of peat in the core indicates that by 4,000 years ago, the unusual dry period in Cedar Swamp's history had ended. The water table in the basin rose and wetland species again flourished. Cedar Swamp was, once again, a swamp, a dense mosaic of mossy and shrubby vegetation.



1. Storm Clouds and Rain Falling on Surface of Water

Throughout southern New England at this time there was a change in climate, resulting in moister and slightly cooler conditions. Water tables rose, and Cedar Swamp was transformed from an open deciduous forest to a forested wetland.

2. Atlantic White Cedar, White Pine, Hemlock, and Red Maple Trees

As water tables rose and the climate became slightly cooler, Atlantic white cedar, white pine, and hemlock trees became more numerous. Pollen from the core shows that red maple trees were also present at this time.

3. Raccoon

Small mammals and birds ate the fruits of elderberry and other shrubs.

4. White-Tailed Deer Eating Atlantic White Cedar

White-tailed deer, which browse on the twigs and buds of Atlantic white cedar trees, were drawn to the swamp.

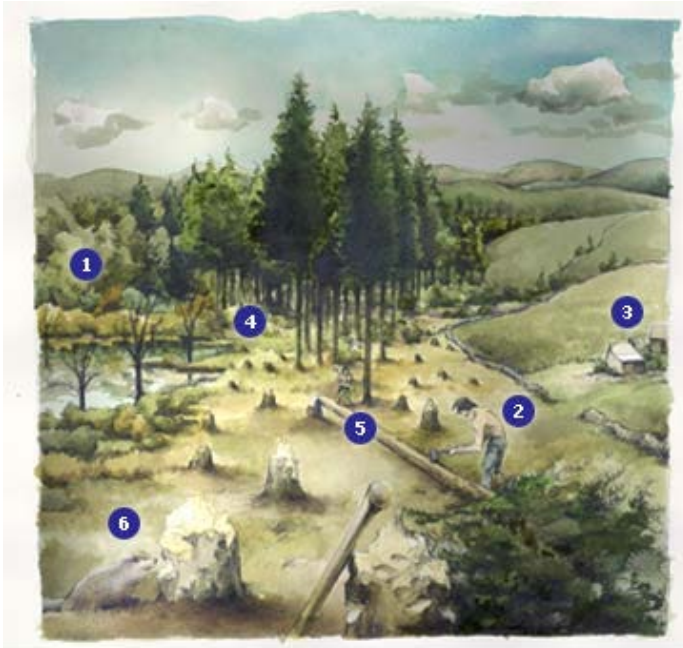
5. Group of People and Wigwams at Shore of Cedar Swamp

Archaeological sites from the first half of this period are large and complex, indicating that sizable groups of people were using the wetlands on a regular basis from 4,000 to 2,000 years ago. Thereafter, increased use of marine resources along the coast, several miles from the swamp, may account for evidence of fewer and smaller habitation sites found near Cedar Swamp from 2,000–350 years ago.

The Changing Landscape of Mashantucket: 350 Years Ago–Present

A Period of Dramatic Change

Beginning about 350 years ago, the character of the swamp was profoundly changed by the arrival of new local inhabitants — European colonists. When the colonists first arrived, they found the swamp covered with a mixed forest of cedar, red maple, and white pine trees, as it had been for several thousand years. Soon the colonists transformed the swamp and the land around it through logging, farming, hunting, and flooding.



1. Dense Swamp Vegetation

Cedar Swamp, called Cuppacommock or place of refuge by the Pequots, was always considered a safe place during times of conflict such as the Pequot War.

2. Colonial Logging

Colonists saw Cedar Swamp as a plentiful source of timber. Towering white pines were ideal for ships' masts while Atlantic white cedar was useful for house shingles and clapboards.

3. Colonial Farm with Cleared Fields

Much of the upland around Cedar Swamp was cleared as the colonial population grew and as Pequots established European-style farms. A layer of silt visible in the core is the result of erosion caused by clearing lands in and around Cedar Swamp.

4. Dam for Water Regulation

A stone foundation with attached iron plates and gears was discovered in Indiantown Brook, which drains Cedar Swamp from the north. The gears were part of a dam that raised and lowered the water level of a portion of the swamp, perhaps damming water in order to power mills located downstream.

5. Ash Trees

Ash and oak trees abundant in and around Cedar Swamp provided the Pequots with materials to make woodsplint baskets.

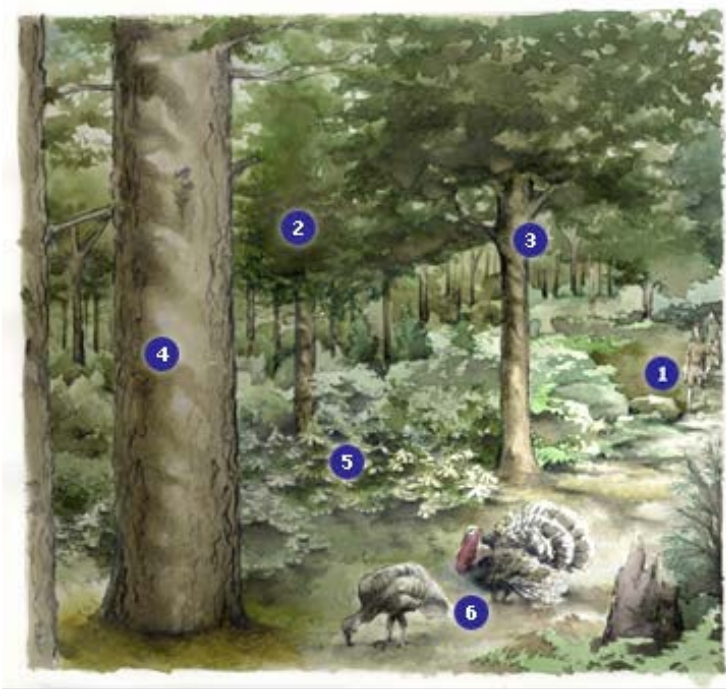
6. Beaver

Beavers were among the swamp's animal inhabitants until extensive hunting led to the animal's virtual extinction in this region by the early 18th century.

The Changing Landscape of Mashantucket: The Present

Preserving the Swamp for the Future

Today, the 500-acre Cedar Swamp is a refuge for wildlife, a place of traditional and spiritual significance to the Pequots, and a unique natural resource that the Pequot tribe will protect for generations to come.



1. Trail Walkers

Today the Mashantucket Pequots appreciate the natural beauty of Cedar Swamp. "It's a quiet, tranquil place to be," says Charlene Jones, a tribal member who often goes for walks there.

2. Atlantic White Cedar in Center of Swamp

The Atlantic white cedar for which the swamp is named has almost vanished because the swamp's hydrology was changed by colonial agriculture and intensive logging.

3. Red Maple

Today the dominant tree species in Cedar Swamp is the red maple. Hemlock, red and white oak, and yellow birch are important associates, and shrubs include alder, high bush blueberry, sweet pepper bush, winterberry elderberry and mountain laurel.

4. Eastern White Pine

The most conspicuous tree at Mashantucket is the eastern white pine, which became established after agricultural lands were abandoned near the end of the 19th century. Just outside the Cedar Swamp, white pines up to 90 feet tall form the backdrop for this museum.

5. Rhododendrons in Bloom

The tall shrub *Rhododendron maximum* forms a prominent evergreen fringe around much of Cedar Swamp. The unusual red-centered flower of this wild rhododendron is said to symbolize the blood shed during the massacre of the Pequots in 1637.

6. Wild Turkeys

The swamp is home to a rich diversity of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians including the fox, deer, bobcat, coyote, wild turkey, garter snake, and red-backed salamander.

Woodland Resources: An Interactive Resource

Did you ever wonder how Native people found their food, medicine, and materials before the arrival of Europeans? In the Woodland Resources interactive exhibit, you can explore how Native people made use of the plants and animals of the Northeast woodlands.

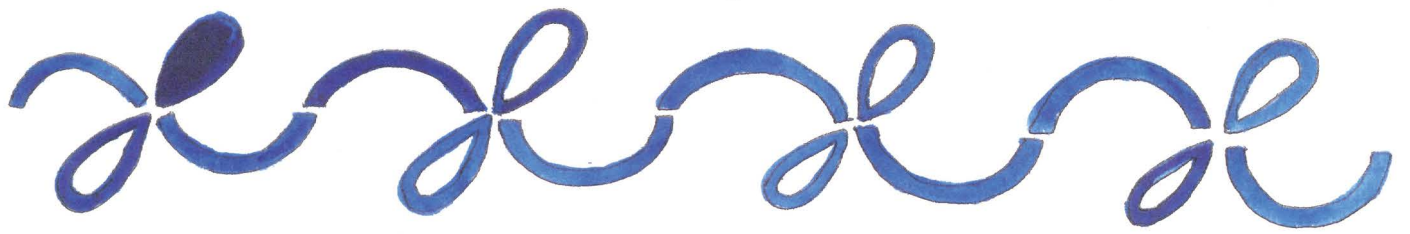
Click on the picture below to explore the interactive in your web browser!

The graphic features a dark green background with a faint image of a Native American person in traditional dress standing in a forest. The title 'Woodland Resources' is written in a large, elegant, light-colored serif font. To the right of the title is a block of white text. At the bottom right of the graphic is a 'NEXT >>' button.

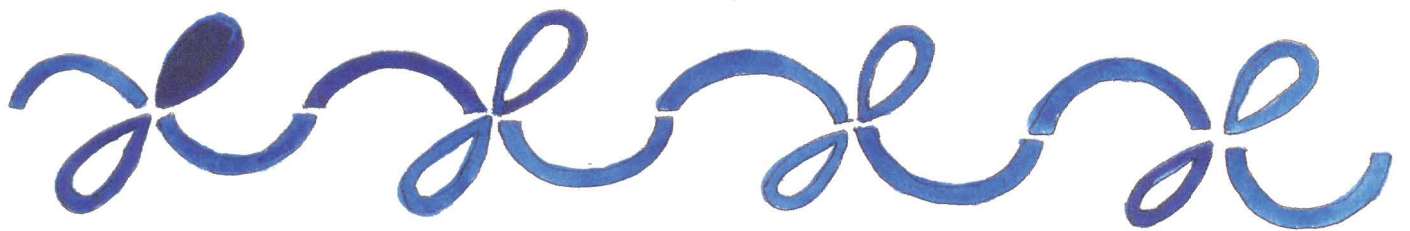
Woodland Resources

For thousands of years before the arrival of Europeans, the Native people of the Eastern Woodlands depended on the plants and animals of the forest for food, medicine and materials, and traditional uses of many woodland resources continued into modern times. This interactive program will let you explore the uses of these plants and animals for yourself.

NEXT >>



Mashantucket Pequot Tribal History Overview



Tribal History Overview



The history of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation is one of dramatically changing fortunes. Native peoples have continuously occupied Mashantucket in southeastern Connecticut for more than 11,000 years. By the early 17th century, just prior to European contact, the Pequots had approximately 8,000 members and inhabited 250 square miles. However, the Pequot War (1636–1638), the first major conflict between colonists and an indigenous New England people, had a devastating impact on the tribe.

When the Pequot War formally ended, many tribal members had been killed and others placed in slavery or under the control of other tribes. Those placed under the rule of the Mohegans eventually became known as the Mashantucket (Western) Pequots and were given land at Noank in 1651, which they held until 1713. In 1666, the tribe was granted rights at Mashantucket, a rocky place that continues to be the tribe's homeland.

In the ensuing decades, Pequots battled to keep their land, while at the same time losing reservation members to outside forces. By 1774, a Colonial census indicated that there were 151 tribal members in residence at Mashantucket. By the early 1800s, there were only between 30 and 40 members, as people moved away from the reservation seeking work. Others joined the Brotherton Movement, a Christian-Indian movement that attracted Native people from New England to a settlement in upstate New York and later, to Wisconsin. By 1856, illegal land sales had reduced the 989-acre Mashantucket reservation to 179 acres.

In the early 1970s, tribal members began moving back to the Mashantucket reservation, hoping to restore their land base and community, to develop economic self-sufficiency, and to revitalize tribal culture. By the mid-1970s, tribal members had embarked on a series of economic ventures, in addition to instituting legal action to recover illegally seized land.

With the assistance of the Native American Rights Fund and the Indian Rights Association, in 1976 the tribe filed suit against neighboring landowners to recover land that had been sold by the state of Connecticut in 1856. Seven years later the Pequots reached a settlement with the landowners, who agreed that the 1856 sale was illegal, and who joined the tribe in seeking the state government's support. The state responded, and the Connecticut Legislature unanimously passed legislation to petition the federal government to grant tribal recognition to the Mashantucket Pequots and settle the claim. With help from the Connecticut delegation, the Mashantucket Pequot Indian Land Claims Settlement Act was enacted by the U.S. Congress and signed by President Reagan on Oct. 18, 1983. It granted the tribe federal recognition, enabling it to repurchase and place in trust the land covered in the Settlement Act. Currently, the reservation is 1,400 acres.

As the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation sought to settle its land claims, it also actively engaged in a number of economic enterprises, including the sale of cord wood, maple syrup, and garden vegetables, a swine project, and the opening of a hydroponic greenhouse. Once the land claims were settled, the tribe purchased and operated a restaurant and established a sand and gravel business. In 1986 the Pequots opened a bingo operation, followed, in 1992, by the establishment of the first phase of Foxwoods Resort Casino.

The ceremonial groundbreaking for the Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center took place on Oct. 20, 1993, in a ceremony marking the 10th anniversary of federal recognition of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation. The new facility, opened on Aug. 11, 1998, is located on the Mashantucket Pequot Reservation, where many members of the Mashantucket Pequot tribal members continue to live. It is one of the oldest, continuously occupied Indian reservations in North America.

A Timeline of History & Events

11,000 B.C.

Earliest evidence of human occupation at Mashantucket.

7,000–6,000 B.C.

Earliest evidence for extensive exploitation of plant resources and semi-permanent occupation at Mashantucket. Semi-permanent pit houses built at Sandy Hill Site at Mashantucket adjacent to the Great Cedar swamp are earliest found on the east coast. The Cedar Swamp develops into a large open water wetland with extensive stands of plant resources.

6,000–1,000 B.C.

Mashantucket was used on a limited and seasonal basis by Native people in the region as water levels in the Cedar Swamp drop and plant resources are more limited. Archaic Period 3,500–2,000 B.C. occupation sites at nearby Preston Plains indicates extensive occupation of areas immediately adjacent to the Cedar Swamp which contain areas of large open water wetlands.

1,000 B.C.–1600 A.D.

Pequots and their ancestors focus their settlement and subsistence strategies along coastal areas where there are extensive tidal and estuarine resources. They establish permanent villages along the coast. Pequot use of Mashantucket and the Cedar Swamp continues, but on a limited and short-term basis for hunting and plant collecting.

1000 A.D.

Maize is introduced into southern New England. Pequot develop subsistence strategy focused on maize horticulture and exploitation of coastal/maritime resources.

1614

First encounter between the Pequot and Europeans (Dutch). The Pequots are referred to as “Pequatoos” by the Dutch which translates as “People of the Shallow Water.”

1614-1633

Pequots and Dutch develop exclusive trading relationship. Pequots force many tribes along coast and interior into a tributary status in order to control fur and wampum trade. By 1630, the Pequot are the most powerful Native group in southern New England; they numbered approximately 8,000 people distributed in 26 villages over a 250 square-mile area of southeastern Connecticut.

Fall 1633–Summer 1634

Smallpox epidemic devastates Native American population throughout the northeast, including the Pequot. Mortality estimates among Native people range between 50%–90%. As many as 4,000 Pequot may have died in the epidemic.

1633–1636

Dutch, English, and Pequot vie for control over trade in the Connecticut valley and tensions increase. Pequots in brief war with the Dutch who kill Pequot sachem Tattobam. Tattobam’s son Sassacus succeeds him.

1634

Pequot implicated in the death of Captain Stone and his crew in Connecticut valley. This incident leads to the Pequot War, the first major conflict between colonists and Indians in New England.

September 1636

Massachusetts Bay sends military expedition to the Pequots and demands recompense for Captain Stone’s murder. Pequots refuse and English attack and burn Pequot villages and kill several Pequot. Pequot War begins.

October 1636–June 1637

Pequot lay siege to English settlements along the Connecticut River and engage in diplomatic efforts to make peace with the Narragansett and gain Native allies in war with the English.

May 26, 1637

Following a Pequot attack on English settlement at Wethersfield, the English and their Narragansett and Mohegan allies attack the Pequot fortified village at Mystic. The village is burned and more than 400 Pequot men, women, and children are massacred. Remaining Pequot from other villages flee their country and seek refuge with other tribes.

1637–1638

The English and their Native allies pursue Pequot survivors, systematically executing warriors and leaders and enslaving women and children.

September 1638

The Pequot War ends with the signing of the Treaty of Hartford. By the end of the war more than 1,500 Pequot were killed or enslaved. Most of the Pequot captured by the English were enslaved in New England, but woman and children of high status were sold into slavery in the Puritan colonies in the Isle of Nevis, Bermuda, and Providence Island. The approximately 2,000 Pequot who remained were placed under the control of the neighboring Mohegan and Narragansett and not allowed to occupy their homeland or be called Pequot.

1645–1650

Robin Cassacinamon emerges as the first post-Pequot War sachem for the Mashantucket group. Through diplomacy, negotiation, and building relationships with prominent

English leaders, he convinces colonial government to let the Pequots have their own reservation at Noank, in traditional Pequot country and outside of Mohegan control.

1651

The Mashantucket Pequots were granted a 500-acre reservation in their former homeland at Noank by the government of Connecticut.

1666

The Pequots establish a reservation of approximately 2,500 acres at Mashantucket, at the headwaters of the Mystic River while still maintaining rights to Noank.

1675

The Pequot join the English as allies during King Philip's War, a region-wide conflict between the English and all other Native groups outside Connecticut. It has been referred to as the most devastating war in colonial history. The Pequot build a fortified village at Monhantic on the Mashantucket Reservation as protection from attack from the Narragansett and Nipmuc.

1692

Pequot Sachem Robin Cassacinamon dies.

1714–1730

English settlers encroach on Pequot lands at Noank and Mashantucket. Pequot land base is reduced by 70%. Approximately one-half the population leaves the reservation as a result of the land reductions. The location(s) of the émigrés is unclear, but they appear to stay in the region and maintain contact with the reservation population.

1721

After decades of constant dispute with English settlers over the Pequot lands at Noank, the Pequots formally give up their planting rights there but retain their fishing, fowling, and clamming rights in exchange for clear title to Mashantucket.

1740s

Many Pequot and other Native people in southern New England convert to Christianity ; many during the Great Awakening – a religious revival movement among the English, Native, and African populations which reflected a growing dissatisfaction with existing political, social, and religious order.

1754–1763

Pequots fight in large numbers, proportionally, in French and Indian Wars as they have in all previous and subsequent colonial and American conflicts. Their participation results in very high mortality among the male population and results in inter-marriage among Pequot women and non-natives.

1762

Reservation land is reduced to 989 acres by the colony of Connecticut.

1774–1810

Brotherton/Christian Indian Movement. Mohegan minister Samson Occum advocates adoption of Euro-American farming and Christianity among Native communities. Pequots adopt European domestic animals and farming techniques, European architectural forms, and Christianity in rapid succession. Many Christian Indians remove to Oneida Territory between 1785–1810 to establish Christian Indian farming communities away from the influence of European society. A number of the remaining families at Mashantucket emigrate to Brothertown, New York, 1793–1810.

1775–1783

Pequot men serve throughout the Revolutionary War as soldiers and sailors. Casualties are proportionally higher than among Euro-Americans.

1790

The first of the Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts is enacted, prohibiting anyone, including state or local governments, from purchasing Indian land without federal approval.

1796–1860

Many Pequot become intensely involved in New London's maritime industry; some were farm laborers or domestic servants; others left in a religious migration to Brothertown, New York. Women continue to anchor the Pequot community to the reservation.

Early to mid–1800s

Tribal members submit the first in a series of petitions to the legislature and county courts against their government-appointed overseers for neglect of tribal matters and improper sale or lease of land.

1820–1850

Population at Mashantucket continues to decline as tribal members are forced to leave the reservation to seek employment.

1855

The Connecticut General Assembly passes an act that provides for the sale of the majority of the reservation without tribal consent.

1856

Pequots perceived as “vanishing” and “doomed to extinction.” Illegal land sale reduced the 989-acre reservation to 179 acres. Pequots continue to fight for their land.

1935

A state commission reports the population of the tribe on the reservation to be 42.

Mid–1970s

Mashantucket Pequot Tribe begins a series of projects in order to attain economic self-sufficiency. They include the sale of firewood, maple syrup and garden vegetables, a swine project, and the opening of a hydroponic greenhouse.

1976

Tribal members approve a constitution. The first constitution had been drafted by a group of tribal members, including Elizabeth and Amos George, in the late 1960s. The tribe sues property owners in Ledyard to recover the land that had been sold by the state of Connecticut in 1856.

1978

Mashantucket Pequot tribe recognized as unit of government by Governor Ella Grasso. Tribe initiates process to acquire federal recognition and a land claim.

Jan. 15, 1979

A petition is filed by tribe for federal recognition.

Late 1970s through 1980s

Tribal members return to Mashantucket, joining those who remained on the reservation.

1981

Fifteen new homes are completed on Mashantucket Pequot Reservation with assistance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

1982

U.S. Congress unanimously passes legislation recognizing the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation and settles the tribe's land claims. The legislation is vetoed by President Reagan.

1983

An amended Mashantucket Pequot Indian Land Claims Settlement Act is signed into law by President Reagan. It establishes the tribe's land claim, provides federal recognition, and paves the way for economic revival. A \$900,000 trust fund is created, with \$600,000 designated for land acquisition, and \$300,000 for economic development. Two-thousand acres of former reservation lands are identified in the settlement act.

Mid 1980s–current

The Mashantucket ethnohistory project begins.

1986

Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation opens high-stakes bingo.

1992

Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation opens Foxwoods Resort Casino. The site of a Pequot fort from 1675 is discovered on the Mashantucket Pequot Reservation.

1993–present

Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation continues to build community infrastructure. Roads are built, along with a public safety complex and additional housing. Various businesses are acquired, including hotels and golf courses.

October 20, 1993

Ceremonial groundbreaking occurs for the Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center.

August 11, 1998

The Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center opens to the public on the Mashantucket Pequot Reservation.

June 2003

MPTN opens Tooyupáhsuk (the Place of the Turtle), a building in the shape of a snapping turtle as part of the Child Development Center. Tooyupáhsuk serves as a cultural classroom to teach and share Pequot traditions with tribal children.

May 2005

The tribe opens Lake of Isles, a 36-hole, Rees Jones-designed golf club located in North Stonington, Connecticut, across the street from Foxwoods Resort Casino.

October 2008–present

The Pequot War Battlefield project begins with support from the National Park Service. The goal is to better understand and locate the important battles that took place during this 17th century war.

**Mashantucket Pequot
Museum & Research Center**

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