

INDIGENOUS VOICES

A Resource Guide for Teachers & Lifelong Learners

Written & compiled by
Jennifer Lee
(Northern Narragansett)



1500's



2021

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Written & compiled by

Jennifer Lee

(Northern Narragansett)

Edited & formatted by

Dorothea Sotiros

This PDF booklet is intended to accompany

INDIGENOUS VOICES

*Stories from the Connecticut River Valley
of Massachusetts*

**A 10-Part Series of Short Videos about
Native Life Past and Present**

Produced by

The Nolumbeka Project

In collaboration with

Turning Tide Films

www.nolumbekaproject.org

"The Nolumbeka Project provides an invaluable resource with this effort. The region at large is long overdue to realize this information. There is so much to learn about what has been missing from U.S. history, and why we have been misinformed for so long."

**Ron Welburn (Accomac Cherokee/Lenape Descendant)
Emeritus Professor, UMass Amherst**

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INTRODUCTION

Native people have been living here in the Connecticut River Valley of western Massachusetts for more than 10,000 years. This is the homeland of many First People, all related to one another.

They are called the Sokoki, Pocumtuck, Nonotuck, Woronoco, and Agawam.

This homeland includes the towns of modern-day Northfield, south to Longmeadow, from Holland in the east, and to Rowe in the west.

There are many other tribes who visited and still visit this Native homeland. Among them are the Abenaki, Nipmuck, Wampanoag, Narragansett, Mohegan, Pequot, Mohican, and Mohawk. These tribes are recognized today by states or the federal government as sovereign nations.

Historically, tribes gathered in this valley to trade, to fish, to plant, to participate in sacred ceremonies, to reunite with family, and perhaps to find a spouse.

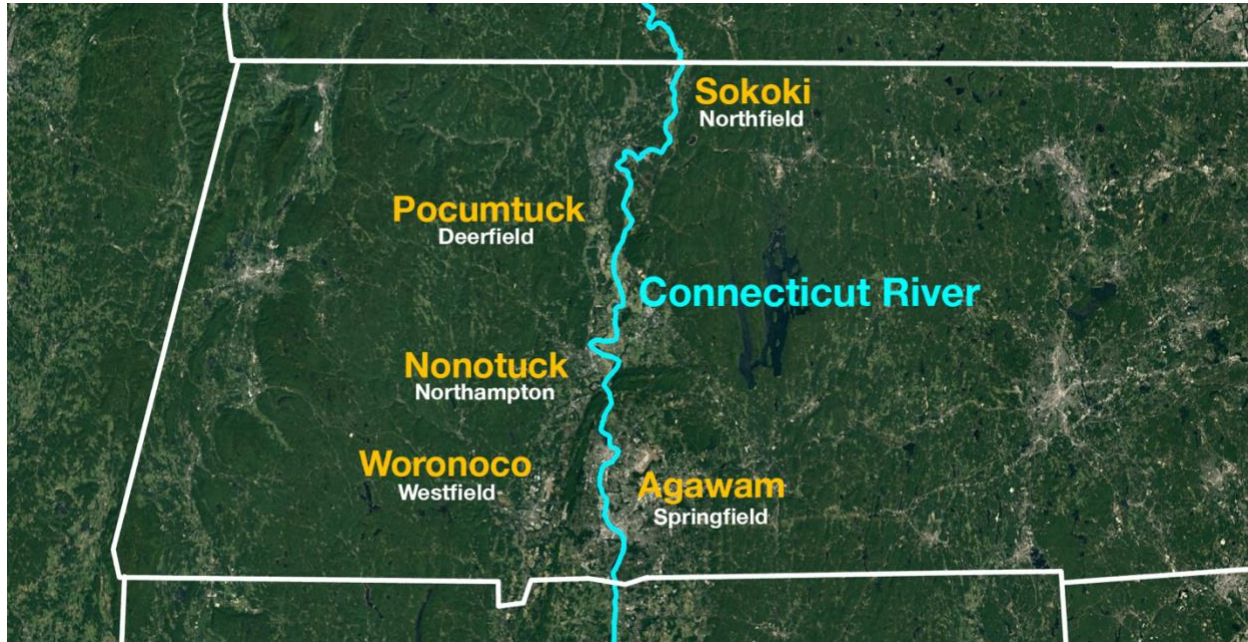
Where are the Pocumtuck, Nonotuck, Woronoco and Agawam peoples today? During the wars waged in the colonial period, they were driven from this valley. They blended into the Abenaki, Nipmuck, and Mohican tribes across the Northeast. When danger passed, some came back to their homeland in the Connecticut River Valley. Often, they integrated into the settler communities. Some were herbal doctors, basket makers, and carvers. They dressed like their European descendant neighbors, but they kept their culture alive.

Much has been written about the last of the Indigenous people in the Northeast....that they are gone and extinct.

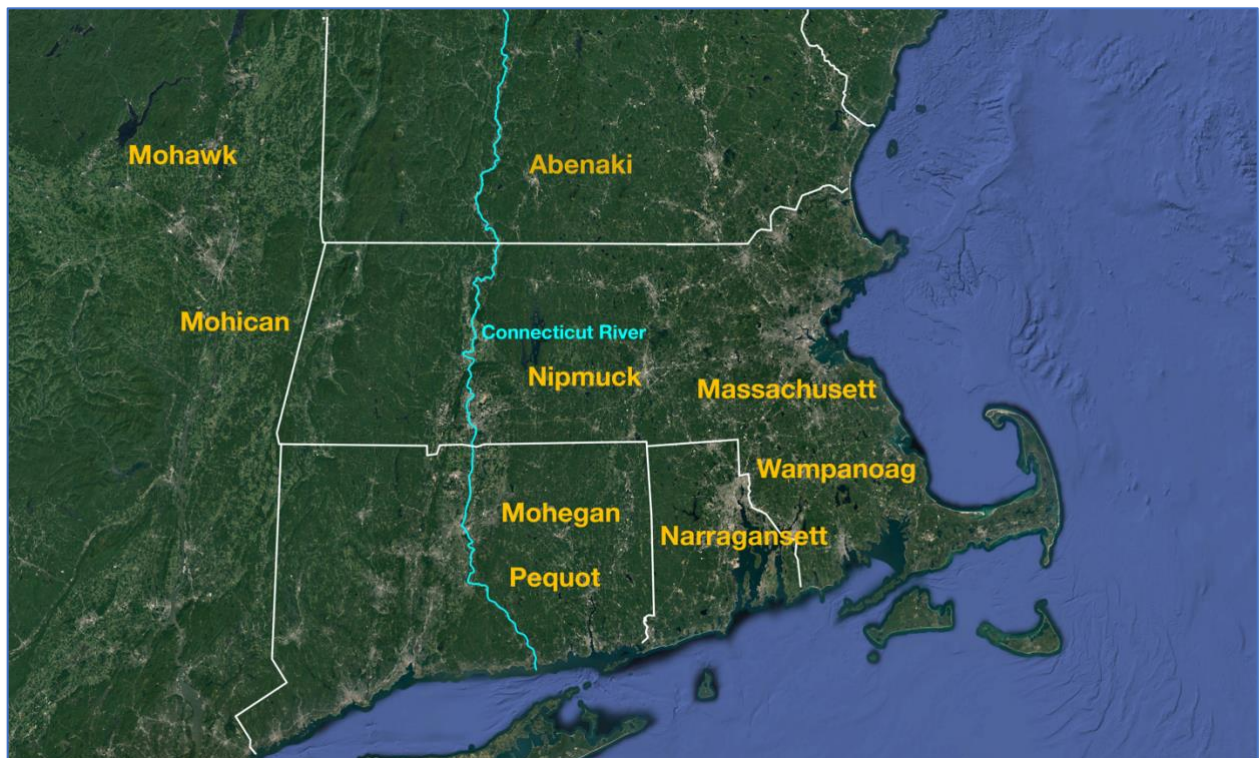
This is not true.

Native people had children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Their spirits, their memory, and their descendants are here living among us.

We invite you to listen to some of their stories



To learn about the Native history of your town, identify whose Tribal homeland your town is in. That Tribe's history is your town's history. Town lines are arbitrary borders that do not reflect traditional Native homeland or land use.



HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES FROM THE WIGWAM

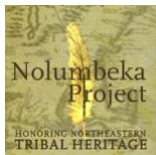
Jennifer Lee, Northern Narragansett, grew up without knowledge of her Native ancestry. She has spent her adult life as an independent researcher learning the true history and culture of the Northeast Woodlands Indigenous Peoples. She has been sharing what she learns at schools, historic sites, and community events for 28 years by holding classes in her eastern conical wigwam. She makes bark baskets, teaches bark basketry, and attends as many powwows and educational events as she can.

Definitions of terms introduced in the film:

- **ABENAKI**--"People of the Dawnland." The Abenaki homeland includes present-day Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, northern Massachusetts, and southern Canada and the Maritime Provinces. The Vermont state-recognized Abenaki tribes are Elnu, Koasek, Nulhegan, and Missisquoi, St. Francis/Sokoki Band. There are also unrecognized bands of Abenaki in Vermont, and there are more Abenaki tribes in Canada.
- **DEER ISLAND**--A concentration camp was established on this island in Boston Harbor during King Philip's War, 1675-1676. Many Nipmuc people--even some who were allied with the English--were imprisoned there without enough food or shelter; many died. To this day, many Nipmuck people go there every year to commemorate their ancestors.
- **GREYLOCK (WAWANOLEWAT)** was born in Woronoco (Westfield). He fought the English in the 1700's to prevent colonial forces from attacking and encroaching on northern Abenaki communities. He moved from the Connecticut River Valley to Missisquoi in northern Vermont but returned frequently to visit his relatives in Woronoco.
- **HOMELAND**--Instead of permanent towns and individually owned house lots, Native people of many tribes used and shared large areas of land seasonally to hunt, fish, plant, harvest, gather medicines and materials, and hold ceremonies, and to bury their dead.
- **INDIGENOUS, FIRST NATIONS, NATIVE, NATIVE AMERICAN** are all terms used to name the Native People of this continent. There are many different opinions about use of the term "Indian." The Natives of this continent are not from India, but the term "Indian" is found in many legal names and documents such as "The Stockbridge Munsee Band of Mohican Indians " and The National Congress of the American Indian. There are a variety of opinions about who is "Indian." Some say you are Indian only if you are enrolled in a federally recognized tribe. Others say you are Indian if you have Indian ancestors. Some tribes are recognized by the federal government. (See [Map of Federally Recognized Tribes in New England](#).) Some tribes are only recognized by various state governments. Some tribes and individuals are not recognized by any U.S. government entity. In 1953, the U.S. government, in violation of prior treaties, terminated recognition of about 100 different tribes by means of the "Indian Termination Act." Some tribes continue to seek federal or state recognition. It is a very difficult, cumbersome process.

What does a Native American look like?

It is impossible to describe what Native Americans look like. Today's "Native Americans" descend from over 300 distinct nations (also known as tribes) spanning the large North American continent. Just as someone from southern Europe can look very different from a northern European individual, so too Native Americans are different. A person with Eastern Woodland heritage will have different physical characteristics than people from the Plains, the



INDIGENOUS VOICES IN THE CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY

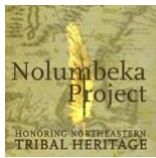
Southwest, or Northwest Coast Regions. Today, most Native American families have intermarried with non-Natives, and even though they may have African, Asian, or European characteristics, they still continue the traditions and spiritual practices of their ancestors.

--courtesy of Institute for American Indian studies, Washington, CT

- **INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES**--At various times in the past, Native people were punished for speaking their Native language. Today, many tribes are working to revitalize their traditional languages. Yet in 1789 it was illegal, and punishable by death, for anyone, Native or settler, to teach Mashpee Wampanoag people to read or write in the English language.
- **MASSASOIT**--A great sachem of the Wampanoag people. One translation of his name is, "He speaks our hearts." He was a peaceful ally of the English at Plimoth Colony. His oldest son Wamsutta was believed to have been poisoned by the English. His son Metacomet (a.k.a. King Philip) was the primary leader of Metacom's rebellion (a.k.a. King Philip's War), 1675-1676.
- **NONOTUCK or NORWOTTUCK**--"Land in the middle of the river" or "Lands around the mid-point of the river" are names for present-day Northampton, Amherst, Hadley, and Hatfield. The Nonotuck were closely allied with the Pocumtuck, and many members of those two tribes moved to the refugee village of Schaghticoke (pronounced SKA-ti-coke) in New York during King Philip's War, 1675-1676.
- **PESKEOMPSKUT** was the site of an Intertribal village stewarded by the Pocumtuck People and shared by northeastern tribes who gathered there seasonally for abundant fish harvests and to renew kinship ties. It includes parts of present-day Montague, Gill, and Greenfield. Indigenous people continue to gather there to this day. One translation is "where the salmon jump at the split rocks." in the Nipmuck language it means "where the rock splits the river."
- **POCUMTUCK**--Present-day Greenfield and Deerfield. The Pocumtuck were closely related to the Nonotuck, Agawam, Quaboag, and Woronoco Peoples. Many fled as refugees to Northern Abenaki lands and Schaghticoke (pronounced SKA-ti-coke) during colonial wars.
- **SACHEM**--a Native leader or family head.
- **SCHAGHTICOKE** (pronounced SKA-ti-coke) is the name of a refugee village on the Hoosic River in New York State. A tribe in Northwest Connecticut bears the same name, as does a Mohican Village occupied before 1676.
- **WESTERN ABENAKI** traditional homeland includes present day Vermont, New Hampshire, northern Massachusetts, and southern Quebec.
- **WIGWAM**--a bark-covered dwelling, dome or cone shaped.
- **WORONOCO**--A tribe that lived near present-day Westfield, closely allied with the Agawam, Nonotuck, and Pocumtuck Peoples.

Suggested questions for students:

- Can you find your town on the map of Massachusetts?
- Can you find what Tribe's original homeland is located where your town is now? To learn about the Native history of your town, identify whose Tribal homelands your town is in. That Tribe's history is your town's history. Town lines are arbitrary borders that do not reflect traditional Native homeland or land use.
- What river is closest to your town? What is the name of that river in Algonkian language? (See *Northeast Native History* by Jennifer Lee for a list of native place names.)



INDIGENOUS VOICES IN THE CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY

- If you lived in the homeland model of shared land today, rather than individually owned house lots, where do you think you would go to fish, hunt, gather berries, plant, or have a gathering?
- Where do you go in the summer? Where do you think the tribe, whose original homeland included your town, would go in the summer?
- What year did your town become an official town? How did it get its name? What was it called before its present name? How long has your town been called its present name?
- How did Native people from the land that is now your town get to the Deerfield Conference in 1735? What rivers and what Indian trails did they use?
- What Tribes can you name in Massachusetts? in New England? in New York? in the U.S.?

Highly recommended, brief, easily accessible resources:

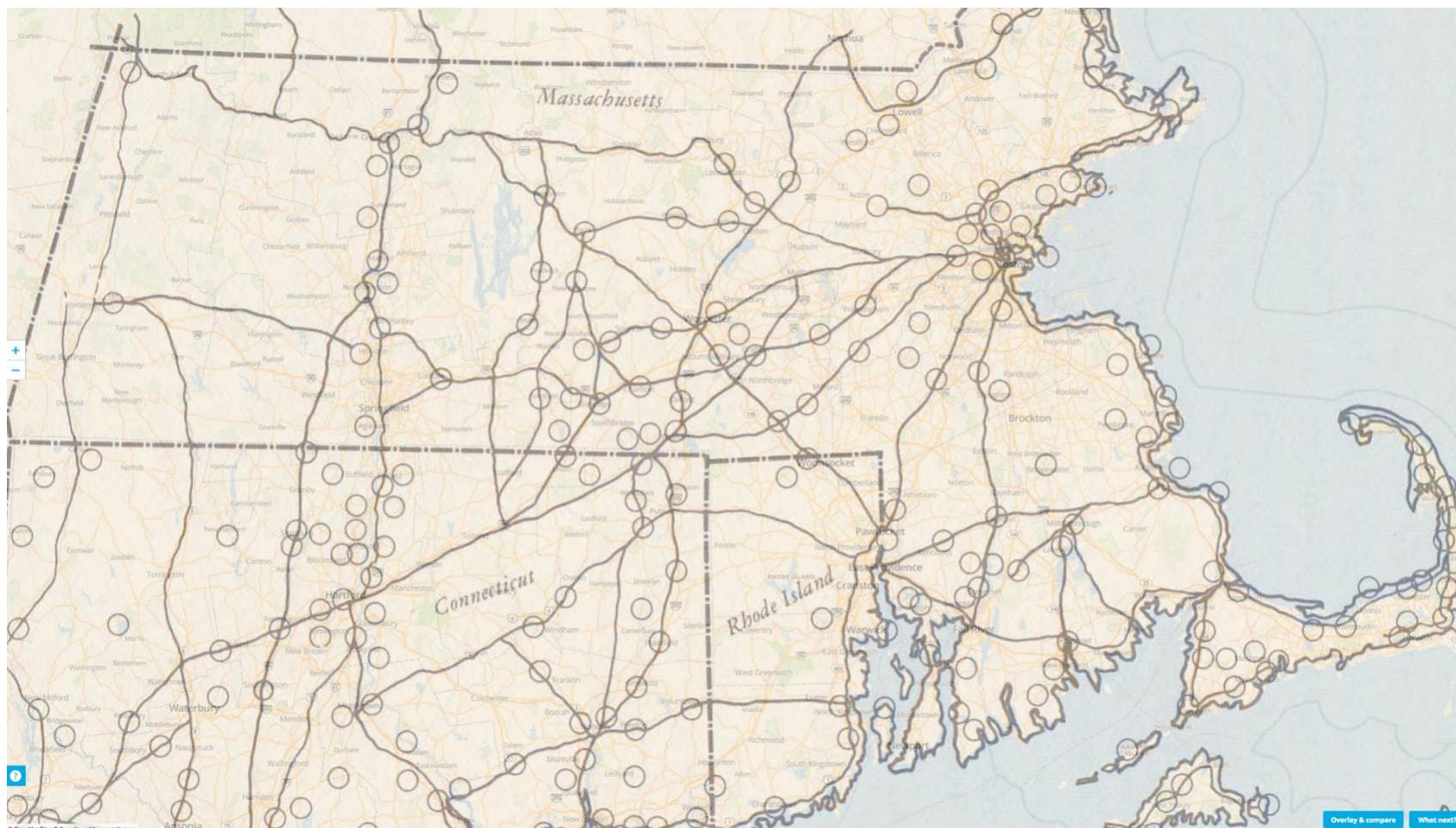
- [Northeast Native History](#) by Jennifer Lee. A 17-page overview including some information about pre-contact lifeways, differing world views at the time of contact, historic events, and landmark decisions relevant to Northeast Native history.
- ["An Exploration of Pre-Contact Native History in the Connecticut River Valley,"](#) with Jennifer Lee (one-hour video that you can listen to without watching)
- [Abenaki Missisquoi History and Chronology](#) (approximately 8 pages)
- [A Brief History of the Mohican Nation Stockbridge-Munsee Band](#) (An online 10-page booklet of Mohican history from pre-contact to the present day)
- [A Brief Look at Nipmuc History](#) (approximately 5 pages)

SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND TRIBES

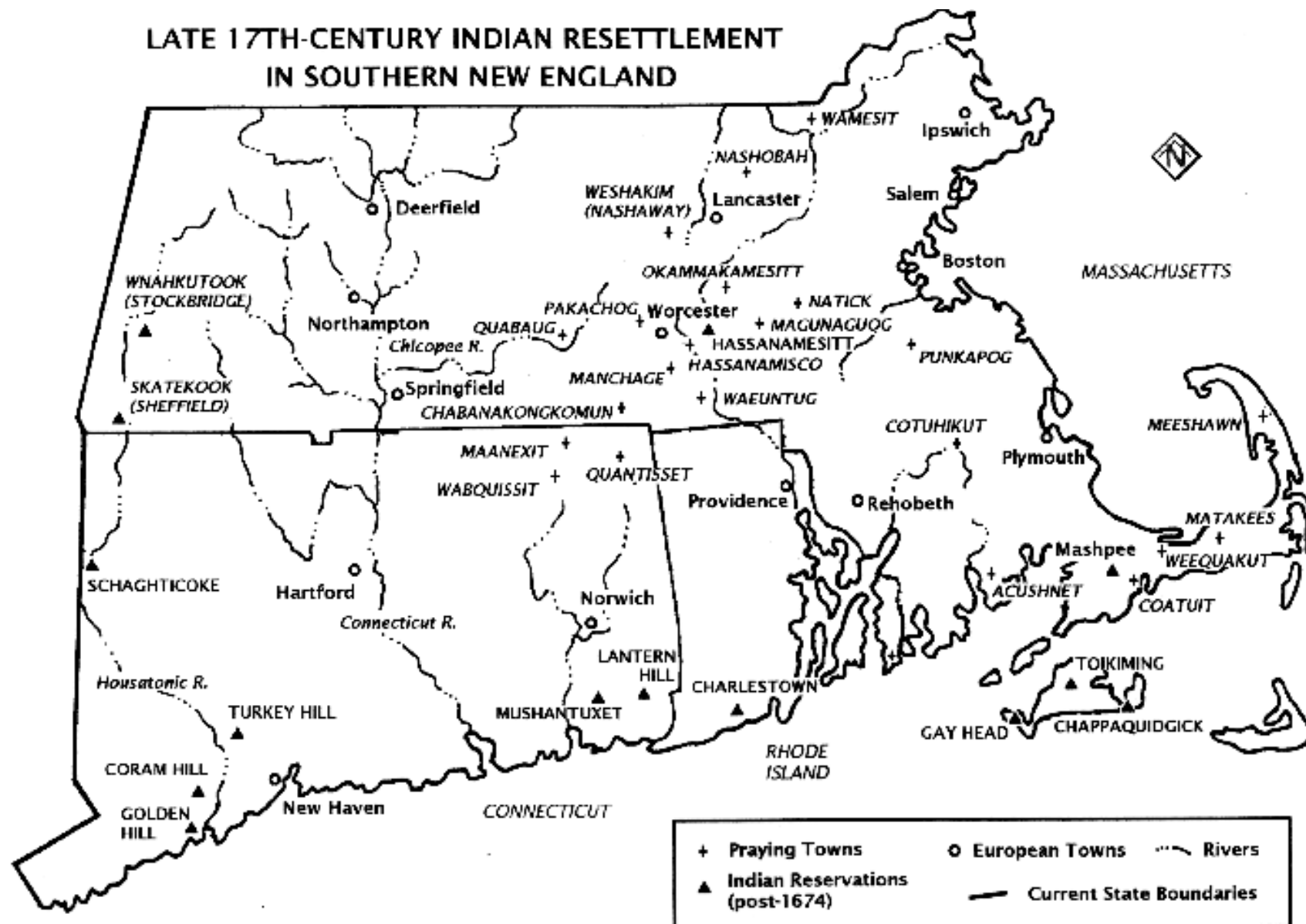


NATIVE SETTLEMENTS AND TRAILS

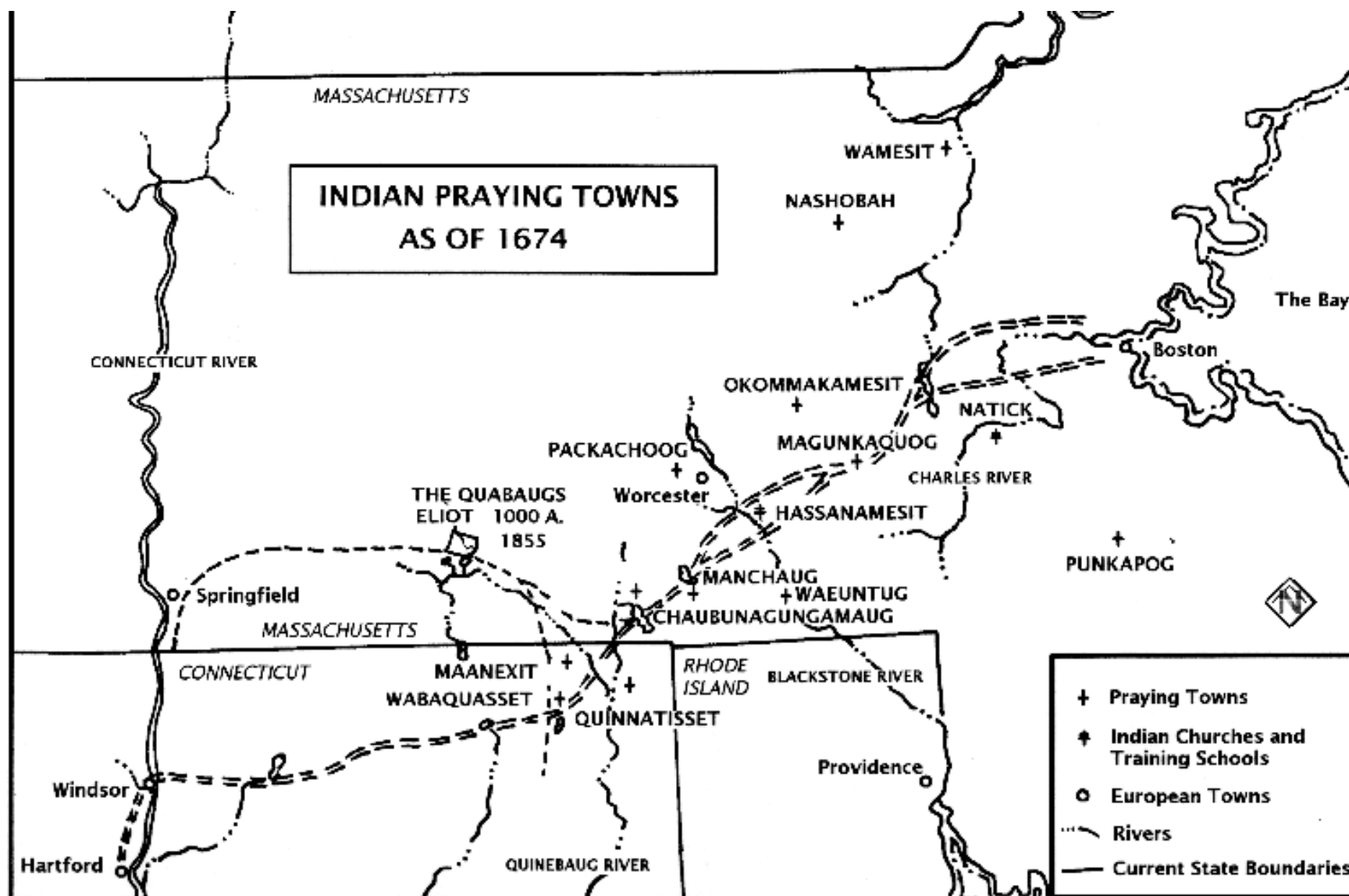
Circa 1600 - 1650



LATE 17TH-CENTURY INDIAN RESETTLEMENT IN SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND



INDIGENOUS VOICES IN THE CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY



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DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

For thousands of years, Indigenous peoples from all around the Northeast gathered seasonally to fish and celebrate at Peskeompskut on the shores of the Connecticut River--part of present-day Montague, Gill, and Greenfield. On May 19, 1676, over 300 Native people--mostly women, children, and elders who were refugees from King Philip's War--were killed in an attack by armed English settlers. This was among the largest massacres of Indigenous people in colonial U.S. history, and a turning point in King Philip's War. On May 19, 2004, representatives of the Narragansett Tribe and representatives of the Town of Montague signed a Reconciliation Agreement to acknowledge the tragic events of May 19, 1676, and to begin to put the traumatic echoes of the past to rest. On May 15, 2021, Native and nonnative people gathered to affirm Indigenous resilience and the healing of the past, and to honor and remember those who died 345 years ago. This film records that event.

Definitions of terms introduced in the film:

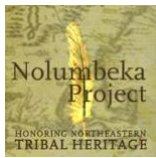
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--courtesy of *Institute for American Indian studies, Washington, CT*

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INDIGENOUS VOICES IN THE CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY

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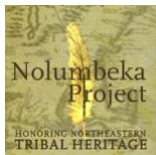
- **PESKEOMPSKUT** was the site of an Intertribal village stewarded by the Pocumtuck People and shared by northeastern tribes who gathered there seasonally for abundant fish harvests and to renew kinship ties. It includes parts of present-day Montague, Gill, and Greenfield. Indigenous people continue to gather there to this day. One translation is "where the salmon jump at the split rocks." in the Nipmuck language it means "where the rock splits the river."
- **WESTERN ABENAKI** traditional homeland includes present day Vermont, New Hampshire, northern Massachusetts, and southern Quebec.

Suggested questions for students:

- Why was it illegal and punishable by death for anyone, Native or settler, to teach Mashpee Wampanoag people to read or write in English in 1789 when at other times, it was illegal for Native people to speak one's Native language?

Highly recommended, brief, easily accessible resources:

- [Abenaki Missisquoi History and-Chronology](#)
- [Abenaki Indian Fact Sheet](#)
- [Elnu Abenaki Tribe Website](#)
- [A Brief Look at Nipmuc History](#) (approximately 5 pages)



TOM PORTER
MOHAWK BEAR CLAN SPIRITUAL ELDER

Tom Porter's Mohawk name is Sakokwenionkwas, meaning "the one who wins." He is a recognized figure in Indian Country and is greatly loved by many. He co-founded the White Roots of Peace, a traveling multi-media communications group designed to revitalize Native traditions in North America. He has been the founder, spokesperson, and spiritual leader of the Mohawk Community of Kanatsiohareke (pronounced gah-nah-joe-hah-lay-geh) located in the Mohawk Valley near Fonda, New York since 1993. In this video (which is recommended for grades 6 to 12), he offers thoughts for the young people of today.

Definitions of terms introduced in the film:

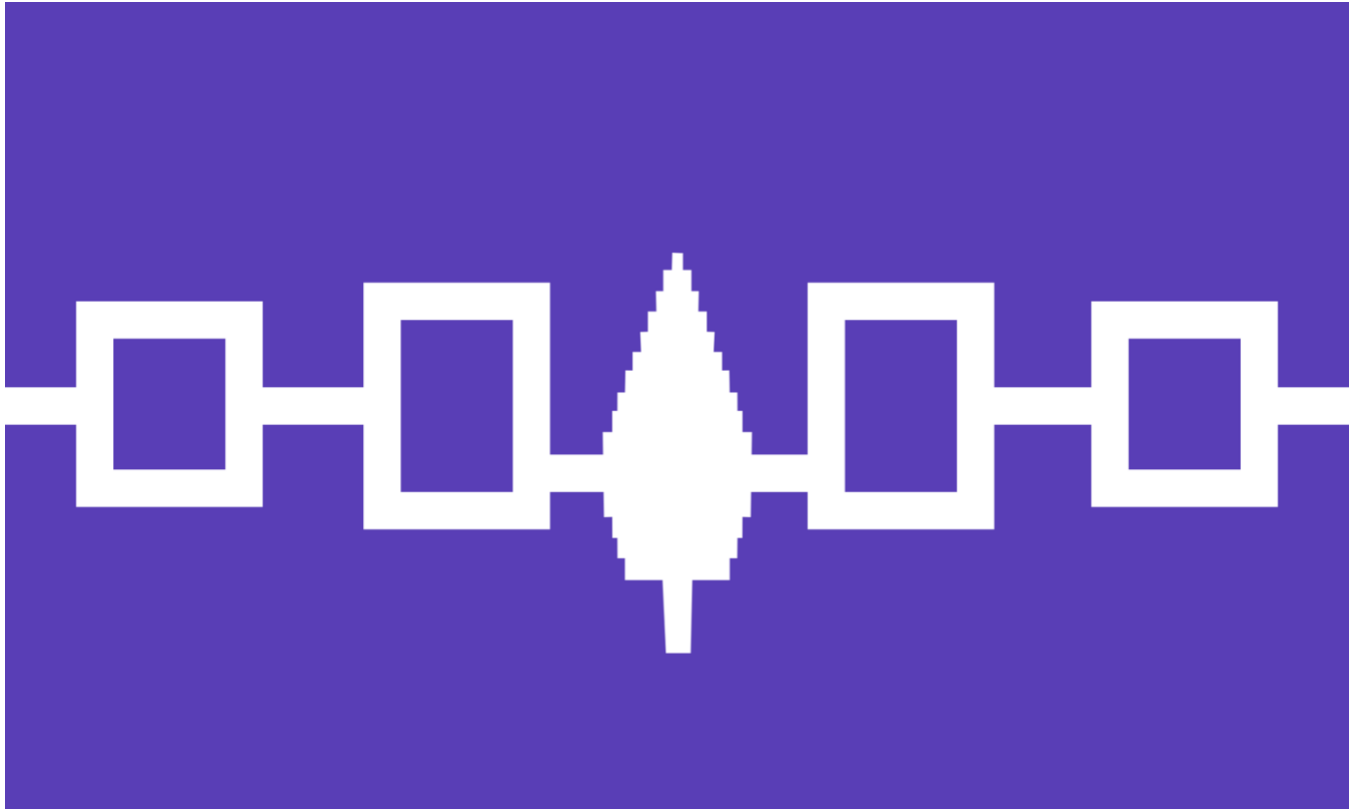
- **CLAN** is a kinship grouping. People's clans go very far back in time.
- **CONSTITUTION OF THE IROQUOIS NATION** includes a mindset to consider the health of the next seven generations when making decisions. The framers of the United States Constitution were inspired by the Iroquois Constitution. The women's suffrage movement was also inspired by it and by the leadership roles women occupy in Native communities.
- **HAUDENOSAUNEE** (pronounced hoe-de-no-SHOW-nee) are also known as Iroquois. They are the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca Peoples. Haudenosaunee means "People of the longhouse."
- **MOHAWK** are one of the Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy--the Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, and Seneca. They were later joined by the Tuscarora and are sometimes referred to as the Six Nations. There are 30,000 Mohawk People in Canada and New York.

Suggested questions for students:

- Where is the Mohawk traditional homeland? Where are the Mohawk people now?
- What if the makers of lead paint or aerosol spray cans that damaged the ozone layer--or the fossil fuel industry leaders who knew about climate change--had Tom's kind of forward thinking?
- Tom speaks of the importance of water and how important it is to our health. What percentage of your body is water?

Highly recommended, brief, easily accessible resources:

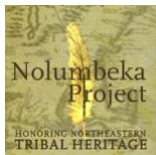
- [Haudenosaunee Confederacy](#)
- [Thanksgiving Address](#) is an expression of gratitude for all creation. It acknowledges and gives thanks for the people, earth, waters, plants, animals, birds, bushes, trees, winds, sun, moon, and stars, as well as for unseen spiritual forces. It is spoken at the opening and closing of ceremonies.
- [Dr. Masaru Emoto and Water Consciousness](#) to learn about water's sensitivity to thoughts and emotions.



IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY FLAG



Source of map: Native Languages of the Americas: Preserving and promoting American Indian languages



INDIGENOUS VOICES IN THE CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY

LIZ COLDWIND SANTANA KISER CHAUBUNAGUNGAMAUG NIPMUCK ELDER AND EDUCATOR

Liz ColdWind Santana-Kiser is an Elder, a Council Woman, and currently serves as Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Chaubunagungamaug Band of Nipmuck Indians. As preservation officer, she works to secure tribal artifacts and protect ancestral burial sites throughout New England. She currently serves on the 1676 Battle of Great Falls Advisory Board. She also serves on the Stolen Relations Recovering Stories of Indigenous Enslavement in the Americas Project at Brown University. Through her years of work, she has earned her Eagle Feather. She is married with six children and 25 grandchildren. For more than two decades, Liz ColdWind Santana-Kiser has been working at the forefront of improving the health and wellbeing of the Nipmuck people through clinics, healthcare conferences, and community-based education initiatives.

Definitions of terms introduced in the film:

- **DEER ISLAND**--A concentration camp was established on this island in Boston Harbor during King Philip's War, 1675-1676. Many Nipmuck people--even some who were allied with the English--were imprisoned there without enough food or shelter; many died. To this day, many Nipmuck people go there every year to commemorate their ancestors.
- **NIPMUCK/NIPMUC**--There are many bands of Nipmuck People, among them the Chaubunagungamaug, Hassanamisco, Wabbaquasset, Natick, and Quaboag.

Suggested questions for students:

- What do people miss out on when they disparage people of different backgrounds?
- Why would anyone bully another person about their ethnic heritage?
- Why are Native people depicted as savages when their culture is highly sophisticated?
- Why were Nipmuck people deported to Deer Island, even if they were allies of the English settlers?
- Where are the Nipmuck traditional homelands?
- Why do you think we have been taught so much about European history and so little about the people who lived here first?

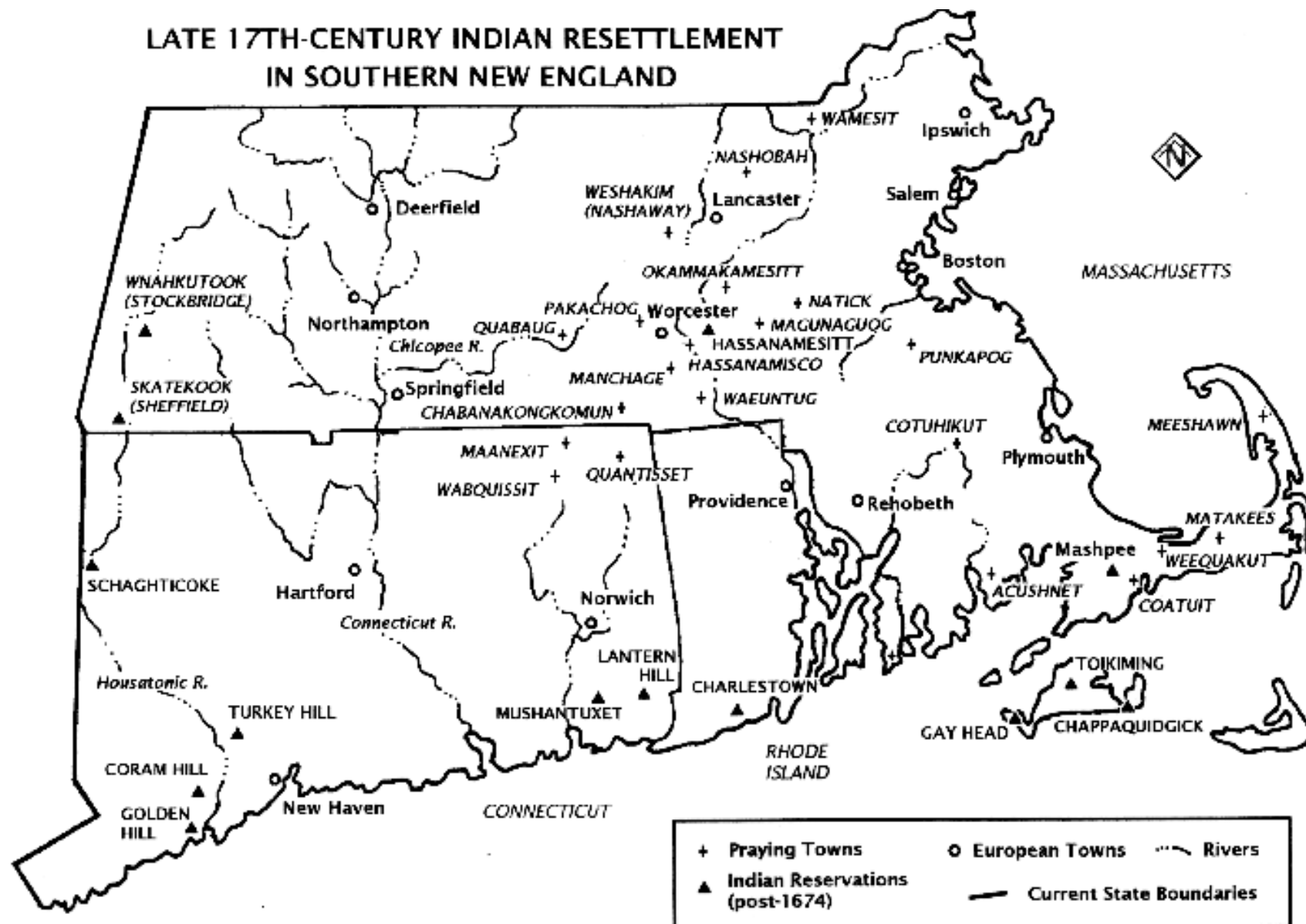
Resources:

- [A Brief Look at Nipmuc History](#) (approximately 5 pages)
- *The Indians of the Nipmuck Country in Southern New England 1630-1750*, a book by Dennis A. Connoles

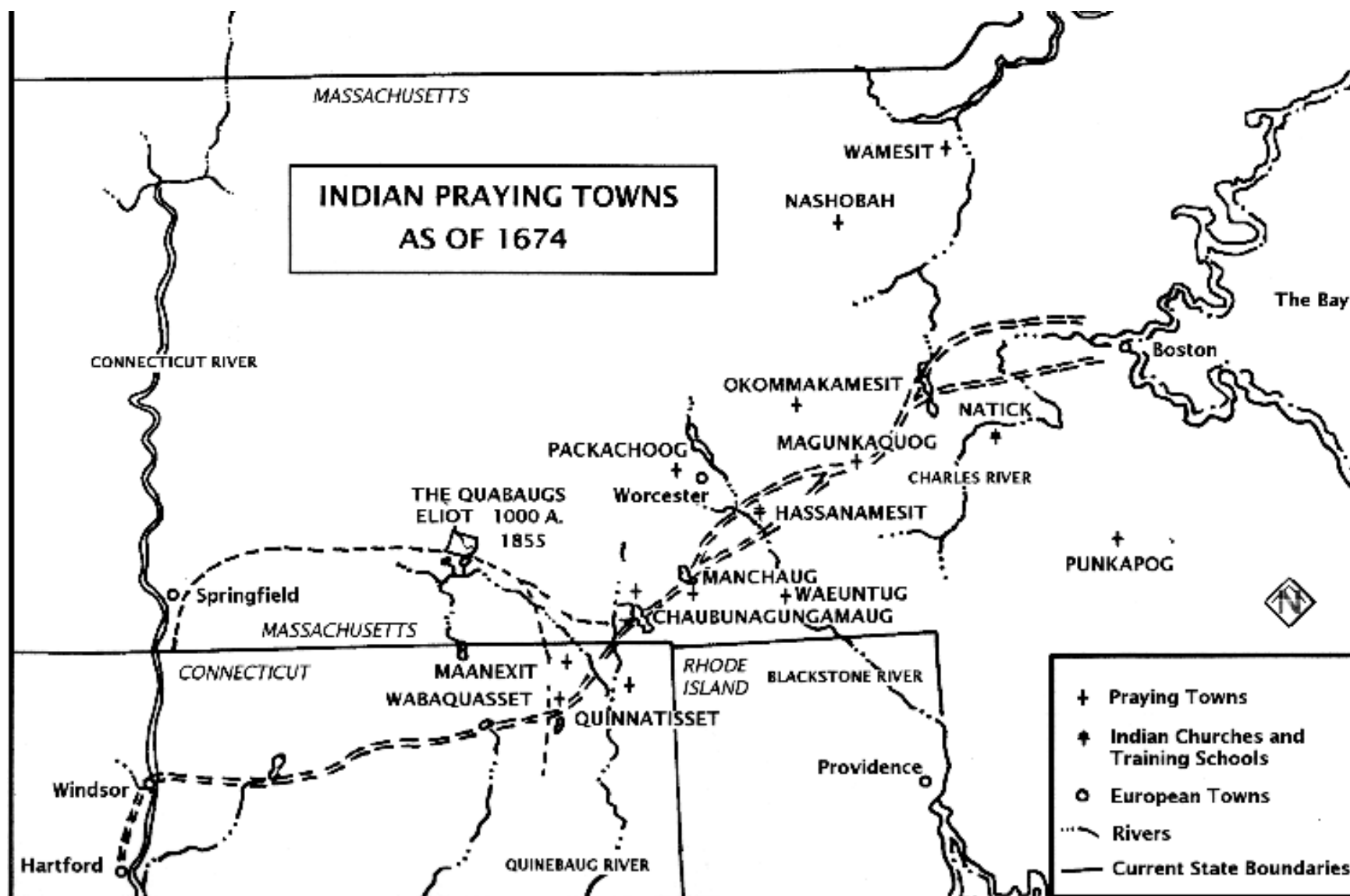


CHAUBUNAGUNGAMAUG BAND OF NIPMUCK INDIANS

LATE 17TH-CENTURY INDIAN RESETTLEMENT IN SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND

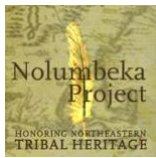


INDIGENOUS VOICES IN THE CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY



SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND TRIBES





INDIGENOUS VOICES IN THE CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY

WES PECOR MASSACHUSETT TRIBAL DESCENDANT, WOOD CARVER

Definitions of terms introduced in the film:

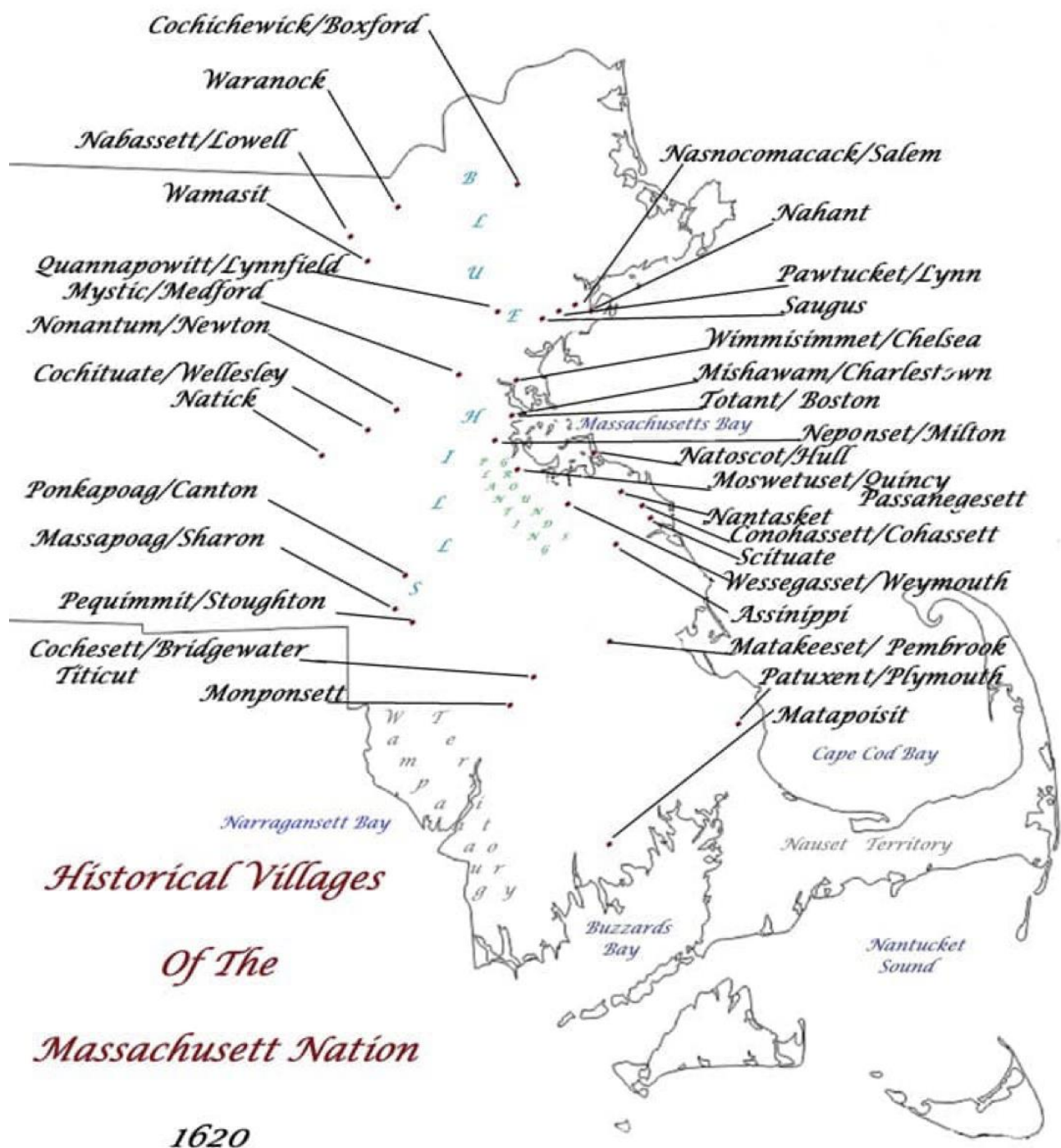
- **MASSACHUSETT** means "at the big little hills" or "at the blue hills"--the tribe whose traditional homeland includes the Boston area.

Suggested questions for students:

- Wes Pecor says that nature inspires him. Where do you go for inspiration?
- Wes Pecor says, "Imagination is a terrible thing to waste." How do you use your imagination? How do you wish you could use your imagination?

Highly recommended, brief, easily accessible resources:

- [The Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag Tribal Website](#)



**MONICA ALEXANDER
MI' KMAQ DESCENDANT
MULTIMEDIA ARTISAN**

Definitions of terms introduced in the film:

- **MICMAC**--The preferred spelling is MI' KMAQ--can be pronounced "MEE-ga-maw"
- **WABANAKI** means "place of the dawn" or "People of the Dawnland." The Wabanaki homeland includes Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, northern Maine, and more.

Highly recommended, brief, easily accessible resources:

- [Website of the Aroostook Band of Micmacs](#)
- "My people will sleep for one hundred years, but when they awake, it will be the artists who give them their spirit back," oral tradition attributed to [Louis Riel](#), Métis (pronounced MAY tee) Leader, 1844-1885.



**ANDRE STRONGBEARHEART GAINES, JR.
NIPMUC CULTURAL STEWARD**

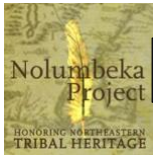
Andre Strongbearheart Gaines, Jr. is a citizen of the Nipmuc people. He serves as a cultural steward for his Tribe and as Resident Artist at Ohketeau Cultural Centre in Ashfield, Massachusetts. He is a father, public speaker, traditional dancer, activist for Indigenous rights, educator, and carpenter by trade. With over a decade in recovery from drugs and alcohol, Andre is a recovery sponsor and integrated life coach for those in need. Andre's work is focused on cultural preservation and revitalization. He focuses on restoring traditional knowledge to Indigenous Peoples including how to flesh and brain tan hides to make items such as drums, buckskin, and blankets. He works to restore balance between everyday life and traditional values while navigating the colonial systems we live in. He considers family, culture, and traditions to be the three most important aspects in his life.

Definitions of terms introduced in the film:

- **MOHICAN/MAHICAN**--Their traditional homeland is the Hudson River Valley from Vermont to New York, but they are now in Wisconsin. They have a tribal preservation office in Williamstown, MA. They are a different tribe from the Mohegan tribe of Connecticut.

Highly recommended, brief, easily accessible resources:

- [A Brief Look at Nipmuc History](#) (approximately 5 pages)
- ["A Brief History of the Mohican Nation Stockbridge-Munsee Band"](#) (An online 10-page booklet of Mohican history from pre-contact to the present day)
- *The Mourning Road to Thanksgiving* by Larry Mann (recommended for older students)



INDIGENOUS VOICES IN THE CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY

KINGFISHER SINGERS AND DANCERS WAMPANOAG NARRAGANSETT CULTURAL EDUCATORS

Definitions of terms introduced in the film:

- **ALGONKIAN/ALGONQUIAN** refers to the cultural and language group of Native People in New England, the Great Lakes, Hudson River Valley, most of Canada, and parts of the upper Great Plains. Their lifeways include seasonal and shared use of a broad homeland, male and female Sachems, and many intertribal councils and alliances.
- **ALGONQUIN** is a tribe in Canada.
- **INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES**--At various times in the past, Native people were punished for speaking their Native language. Today, many tribes are working to revitalize their traditional languages. Yet in 1789 it was illegal, and punishable by death, for anyone, Native or settler, to teach Mashpee Wampanoag people to read or write in the English language.
- **WAMPANOAG** Tribe is made up of many different bands. These include Aquinnah, Assonet, Herring Pond, Mashpee, Pocasset, Pokonoket, and Seekonk/Seakonk.

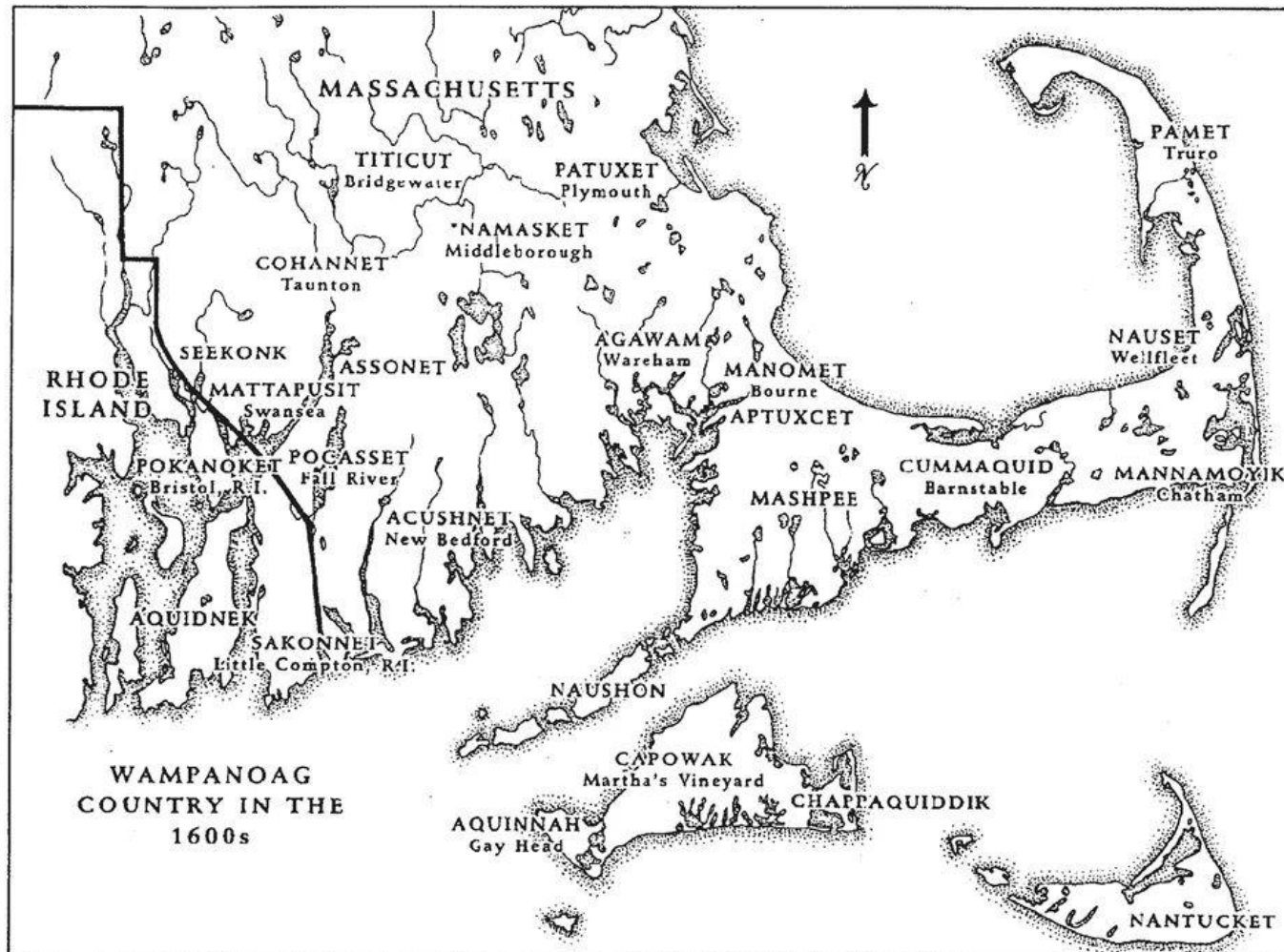
Suggested Questions for Students:

- Where are the traditional homelands of the Wampanoag People?
- Where are the traditional homelands of the Narragansett/Niantic People?

Highly recommended, brief, easily accessible resources:

- [Who are the Wampanoag?](#)
- [Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe](#)
- [Narragansett Indian Tribe](#)
- ["A Brief History of the Mohican Nation Stockbridge-Munsee Band"](#) An online 10-page booklet of Mohican history from pre-contact to the present day.
- *The Lasting of The Mohegans*, by Melissa Jayne Fawcett (A highly recommended easy-to-read short booklet reviewing Mohegan history from early times to the present--currently out of print).

Nanepashemet's Map of Wampanoag Country in the 1600s



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Definitions of terms introduced in all the videos:

- **ABENAKI**--"People of the Dawnland." The Abenaki homeland includes present-day Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, northern Massachusetts, and southern Canada and the Maritime Provinces. The Vermont state-recognized Abenaki tribes are Elnu, Koasek, Nulhegan, and Missisquoi, St. Francis/Sokoki Band. There are also unrecognized bands of Abenaki in Vermont, and there are more Abenaki tribes in Canada.
- **ALGONKIAN/ALGONQUIAN** refers to the cultural and language group of Native People in New England, the Great Lakes, Hudson River Valley, most of Canada, and parts of the upper Great Plains. Their lifeways include seasonal and shared use of a broad homeland, male and female Sachems, and many intertribal councils and alliances.
- **ALGONQUIN** is a tribe in Canada.
- **CLAN** is a kinship grouping. People's clans go very far back in time.
- **CONSTITUTION OF THE IROQUOIS NATION** includes a mindset to consider the health of the next seven generations when making decisions. The framers of the United States Constitution were inspired by the Iroquois Constitution. The women's suffrage movement was also inspired by it and by the leadership roles women occupy in Native communities.
- **DEER ISLAND**--A concentration camp was established on this island in Boston Harbor during King Philip's War, 1675-1676. Many Nipmuck people--even some who were allied with the English--were imprisoned there without enough food or shelter; many died. To this day, many Nipmuck people go there every year to commemorate their ancestors.
- **GREYLOCK (WAWANOLEWAT)** was born in Woronoco (Westfield). He fought the English in the 1700's to prevent colonial forces from attacking and encroaching on northern Abenaki communities. He moved from the Connecticut River Valley to Missisquoi in northern Vermont but returned frequently to visit his relatives in Woronoco.
- **HAUDENOSAUNEE** (pronounced hoe-de-no-SHOW-nee) are also known as Iroquois. They are the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca Peoples. Haudenosaunee means "People of the longhouse."
- **HOMELAND**--Instead of permanent towns and individually owned house lots, Native people of many tribes used and shared large areas of land seasonally to hunt, fish, plant, harvest, gather medicines and materials, hold ceremonies, and to bury their dead.
- **INDIGENOUS, FIRST NATIONS, NATIVE, NATIVE AMERICAN** are all terms used to name the Native People of this continent. There are many different opinions about use of the term "Indian." The Natives of this continent are not from India, but the term "Indian" is found in many legal names and documents such as "The Stockbridge Munsee Band of Mohican Indians " and The National Congress of the American Indian. There are a variety of opinions about who is "Indian." Some say you are Indian only if you are enrolled in a federally recognized tribe. Others say you are Indian if you have Indian ancestors. Some tribes are recognized by the federal government. (See [Map of Federally Recognized Tribes in New England.](#)) Some tribes are only recognized by various state governments. Some tribes and individuals are not recognized by any U.S. government entity. In 1953, the U.S. government, in violation of prior treaties, terminated recognition of about 100

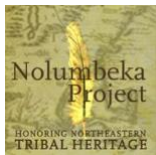
different tribes by means of the "Indian Termination Act." Some tribes continue to seek federal or state recognition. It is a very difficult, cumbersome process.

What does a Native American look like?

It is impossible to describe what Native Americans look like. Today's "Native Americans" descend from over 300 distinct nations (also known as tribes) spanning the large North American continent. Just as someone from southern Europe can look very different from a northern European individual, so too Native Americans are different. A person with Eastern Woodland heritage will have different physical characteristics than people from the Plains, the Southwest, or Northwest Coast Regions. Today, most Native American families have intermarried with non-Natives, and even though they may have African, Asian, or European characteristics, they still continue the traditions and spiritual practices of their ancestors.

--courtesy of Institute for American Indian studies, Washington, CT

- **INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES**--At various times in the past, Native people were punished for speaking their Native language. Today, many tribes are working to revitalize their traditional languages. Yet in 1789 it was illegal, and punishable by death, for anyone, Native or settler, to teach Mashpee Wampanoag people to read or write in the English language.
- **MASSACHUSETT** means "at the big little hills" or "at the blue hills"--the tribe whose traditional homeland includes the Boston area.
- **MASSASOIT**--A great Sachem of the Wampanoag people. One translation of his name is, "He speaks our hearts." He was a peaceful ally of the English at Plimoth Colony. His oldest son Wamsutta was believed to have been poisoned by the English. His son Metacomet (a.k.a. King Philip) was the primary leader of Metacom's rebellion (a.k.a. King Philip's War), 1675-1676.
- **MOHAWK** are one of the Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy--the Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga, and Seneca. They were later joined by the Tuscarora and are sometimes referred to as the Six Nations. They are also called Haudenosaunee (pronounced hoe-de-no-SHOW-nee)--"People building the longhouse."
- **MOHICAN/MAHICAN**--Their traditional homeland is the Hudson River Valley from Vermont to New York. They are now in Wisconsin. They have a tribal preservation office in Williamstown, MA. They are a different tribe from the Mohegan tribe of Connecticut.
- **NIPMUCK/NIPMUC**--There are many bands of Nipmuck People, among them the Chaubunagungamaug, Hassanamisco, Wabbaquasset, Natick, and Quaboag.
- **NONOTUCK or NORWOTTUCK**--"Land in the middle of the river" or "Lands around the mid-point of the river" are names for present-day Northampton, Amherst, Hadley, and Hatfield. The Nonotuck were closely allied with the Pocumtuck, and many members of those two tribes moved to the refugee village of Schaghticoke (pronounced SKA-ti-coke) in New York during King Philip's War, 1675-1676.
- **PESKEOMPSKUT** was the site of an Intertribal village stewarded by the Pocumtuck People and shared by northeastern tribes who gathered there seasonally for abundant fish harvests and to renew kinship ties. It includes parts of present-day Montague, Gill, and Greenfield. Indigenous people continue to gather there to this day. One translation is "where the salmon jump at the split rocks." in the Nipmuck language it means "where the rock splits the river."



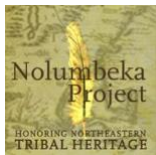
INDIGENOUS VOICES IN THE CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY

- **POCUMTUCK**--present-day Greenfield and Deerfield. The Pocumtuck were closely related to the Nonotuck, Agawam, Quaboag, and Woronoco Peoples. Many fled as refugees to Northern Abenaki lands and Schaghticoke (pronounced SKA-ti-coke) during colonial wars.
- **SACHEM**--a Native leader or family head.
- **SCHAGHTICOKE** (pronounced SKA-ti-coke) is the name of a refugee village on the Hoosic River in New York State. A tribe in Northwest Connecticut bears the same name, as does a Mohican Village occupied before 1676.
- **WABANAKI** means place of the dawn or People of the Dawnland. The Wabanaki homeland includes Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, and northern Maine and more.
- **WAMPANOAG** Tribe is made up of many different bands. These include Aquinnah, Assonet, Herring Pond, Mashpee, Pocasset, Pokonoket, and Seekonk/Seakonk.
- **WESTERN ABENAKI** traditional homeland includes present day Vermont, New Hampshire, northern Massachusetts, and southern Quebec.
- **WIGWAM**--a bark-covered dwelling, dome or cone shaped.
- **WORONOCO**--A tribe that lived near present-day Westfield, closely allied with the Agawam, Nonotuck, and Pocumtuck Peoples.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Web-Based Resources

- ["These Walls are my Reservation,"](#) video by Troy Phillips (Nipmuc). In this five-minute video, Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs member Troy W. Phillips talks about his journey to cultural survival beginning with his early years in Springfield, Massachusetts.
- The Great Beaver. Marge Bruchac (Abenaki) tells the traditional story of Mount Sugarloaf and the Pocumtuck Range.
 - [Wôbanakiak: Amiskwôlowôkoia--the People of the Beaver-tail Hill](#) (5-minute audio recording)
 - http://1704.deerfield.history.museum/voices/transcripts/wob_creation.html (transcript of the story)
- [The Geology and Cultural History of the Beaver Hill Story](#), by Marge Bruchac.
- [A Brief Look at Nipmuc History](#) (approximately 5 pages)
- ["Teaching Respect for Native Peoples"](#) by Cynthia Leitich Smith (a two-page list of suggestions)
- [Stories and Poems for Northeastern Native Tribal Families from A Circle Tied to Mother Earth](#), a free downloadable booklet of Native stories and guidance to promote health and prevent substance misuse.
- [Northeast Native History](#) by Jennifer Lee. A 17-age overview including some information about pre-contact lifeways, differing world views at the time of contact, historic events, and landmark decisions relevant to Northeast Native history.
- ["An Exploration of Pre-Contact Native History in the Connecticut River Valley,"](#) with Jennifer Lee (one-hour video that you can listen to without watching)
- IllumiNative is a nonprofit initiative (created and led by Native peoples) designed to increase the visibility of--and challenge the negative narrative about--Native Nations and peoples in American society. Their resources include age-based curriculum.



INDIGENOUS VOICES IN THE CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY

- [Illuminative/Native Education for All](#)
- [Changing the Narrative about Native Americans, a Guide for Allies](#)
- [Becoming Visible](#)
- [Hidden Landscapes](#) is a multi-part film series that tells the story of early Eastern Native American sea cultures and offers a radical perspective on the Indigenous history of northeastern North America. All four films in the series are available for rent or purchase at <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/hiddenlandscapes>.
 - *The Great Falls, Discovery, Destruction, and Preservation in a Massachusetts Town* (also available as a DVD at <http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/print/gfalls.html>)
 - *Before the Lake was Champlain, an Untold Story of Ice Age America*
 - *The New Antiquarians, Working Together to Unlock the Mysterious Stone Ruins*
 - *The Devil's Footstep, a New Vision of Early Native Life*

Print Resources

- *The Indians of the Nipmuck Country in Southern New England, 1630-1750*, by Dennis Connole
- *In Search of New England's Native Past*, by Gordon M. Day
- *A History of the Town of Northfield Massachusetts for 150 Years, with an Account of the Prior Occupation of the Territory by the Squakheags: and with Family Genealogies*, by George Sheldon, Mary T. Stratton, and J. H. Temple.
- *All the Real Indians Died Off, and 20 Other Myths About Native Americans*, by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz & Dina Gilio-Whitaker who tackle a wide range of myths about Native American culture and history that have misinformed generations. Drawing from history, the authors disrupt long held and enduring myths such as:
 - "Columbus Discovered America"
 - "Thanksgiving Proves the Indians Welcomed Pilgrims"
 - "Indians Were Savage and Warlike"
 - "Europeans Brought Civilization to Backward Indians"
 - "The United States Did Not Have a Policy of Genocide"
 - "Sports Mascots Honor Native Americans"
 - "Indian Casinos Make Them All Rich"
 - "Indians Are Naturally Predisposed to Alcohol"
- *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People*, by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz
- *After King Phillip's War*, by Colin G. Calloway
- *The Wampum Belts Told Us*, by Basil Johnston
- *Children of the Seventh Fire, an Ancient Prophecy for Modern Times*, by Lisa A. Hart

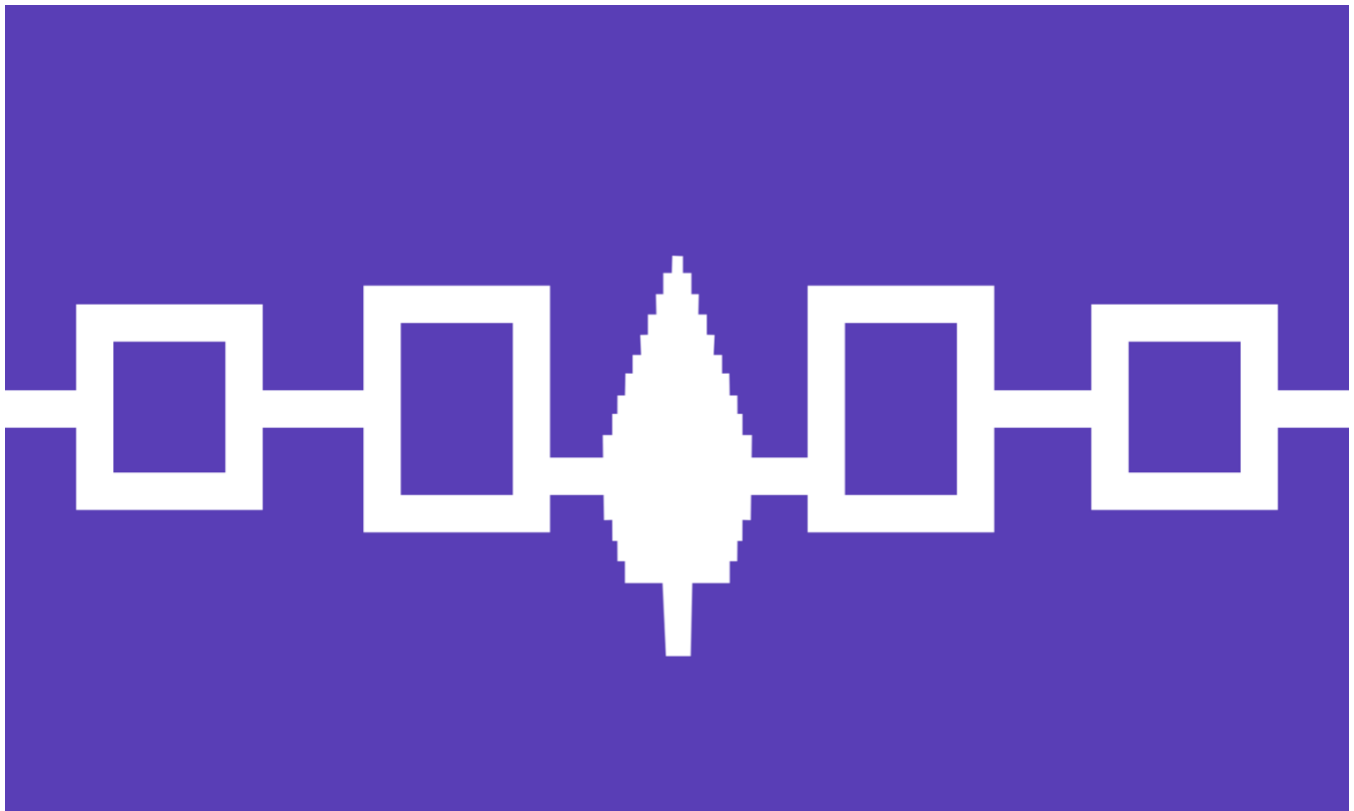
Comprehensive Bibliography

Dolan, Jessica; Ron Welburn; and the Decolonizing Curricula Working Group, 2021. "Decolonizing Curricular Resources: A Bibliography for Teaching and Learning Native American and Indigenous Studies in New England." Karuna Center for Peacebuilding, Amherst, Massachusetts. Found online at: <https://www.karunacenter.org/decolonizing-curriculum/>

The Nolumbeka Project is grateful to Dr. Jessica Dolan and Dr. Ron Welburn, Co-Chairs of the Decolonizing Curriculum Working Group, all the members of the Working Group, and the Karuna Center for Peacebuilding, for the tremendous knowledge and labor they dedicated to creating this resource.



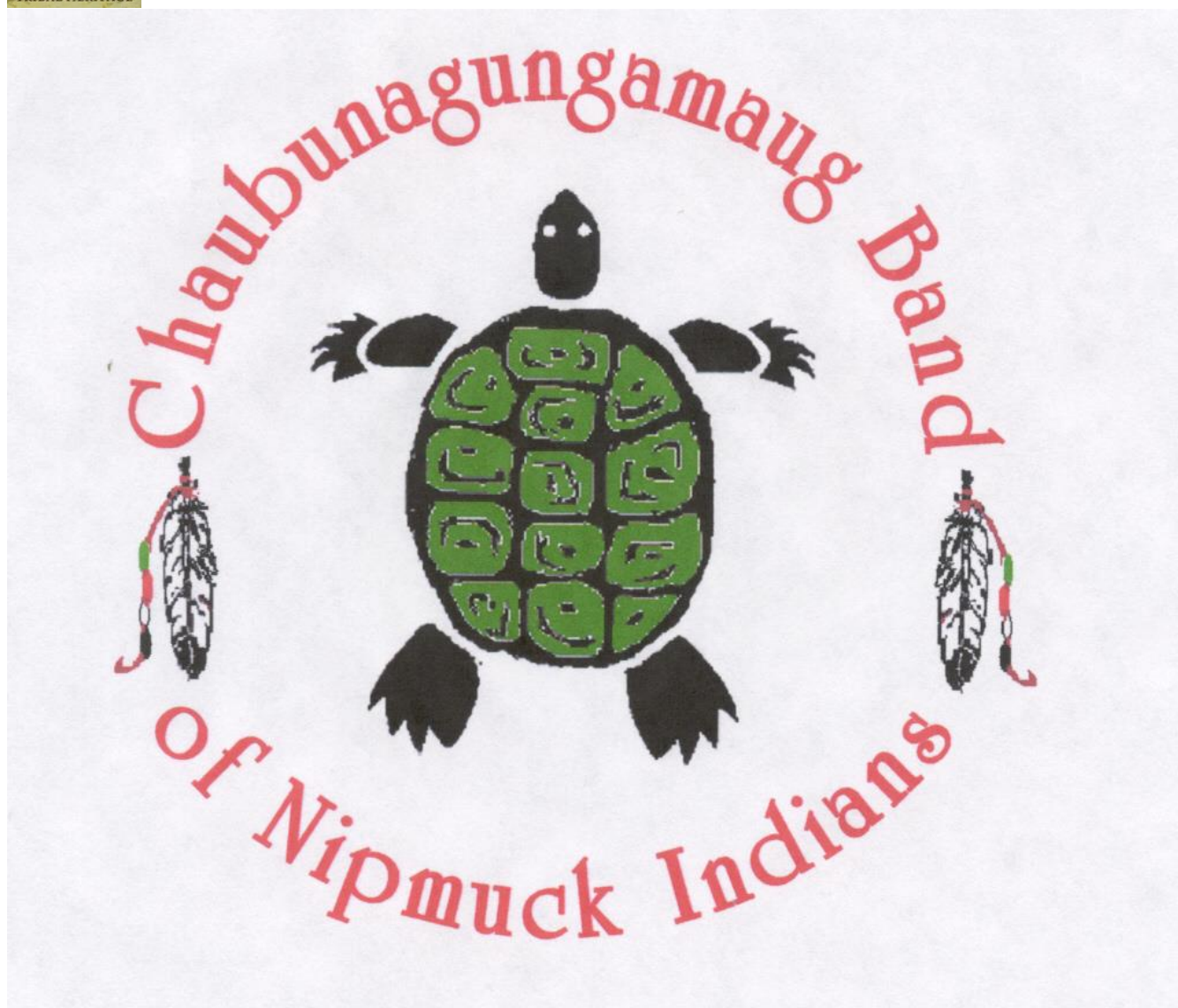
**ST. FRANCIS-SOKOKI BAND OF THE MISSISQUOI ABENAKI, VT
FLAG**



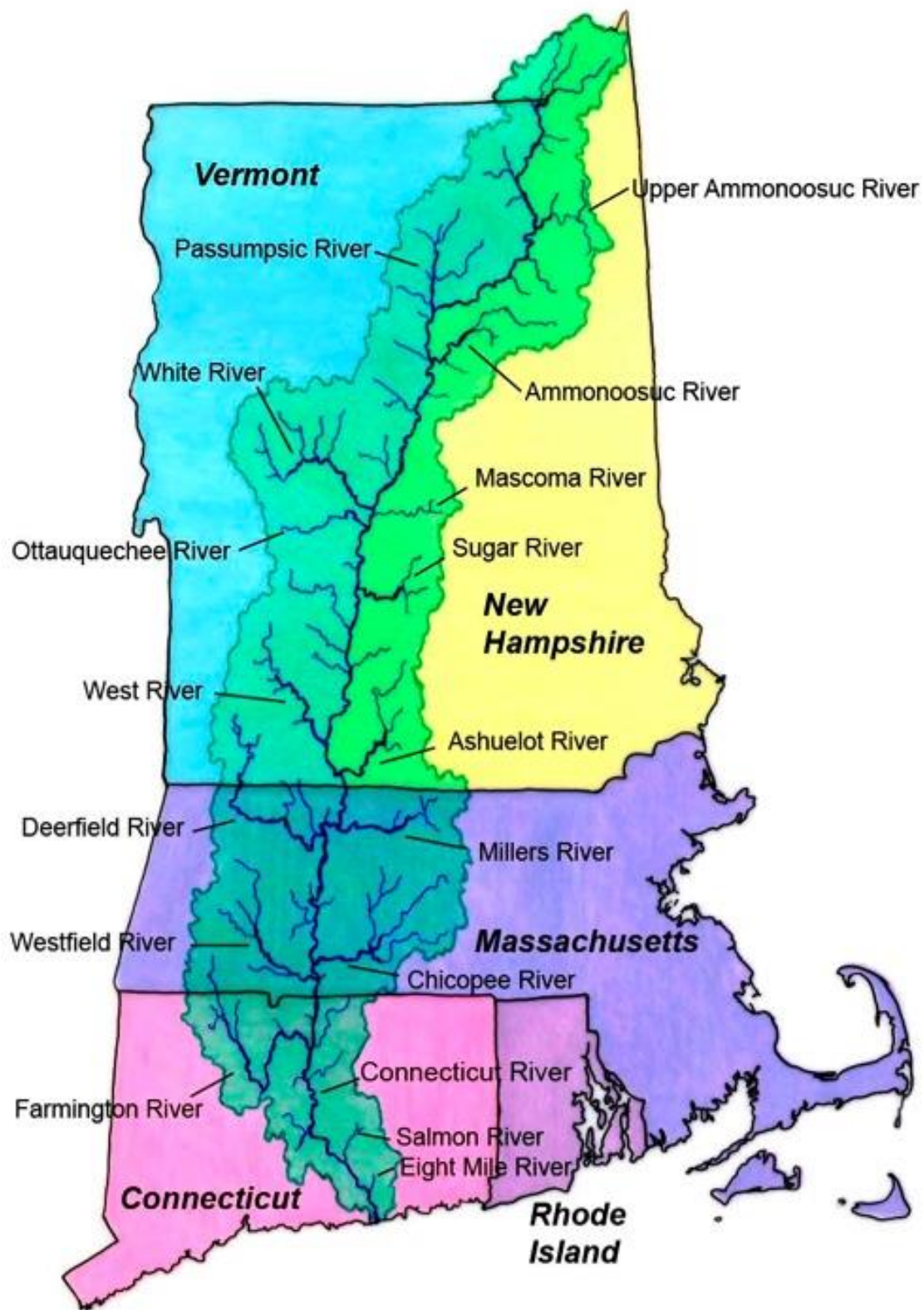
IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY FLAG



**MOHEGAN TRIBE OF CONNECTICUT
FLAG**



CHAUBUNAGUNGAMAUG BAND OF NIPMUCK INDIANS



CONNECTICUT RIVER WATERSHED

CONNECTICUT RIVER
View from Mount Sugarloaf
Present Day



CONNECTICUT RIVER

View from Mount Sugarloaf

Early May 1638



50 Mishoon (Canoes) on the Connecticut River
by Deborah Spears Moorehead, Seaconke Wampanoag

In the winter of 1637-38, the English settlers in Connecticut were suffering for lack of food. No corn was to be found at Agawam, Woronoco, or Nonotuck. But the Pocumtuck, in what is now Deerfield, had plenty of food to sell. They delivered 500 bushels of corn to the English settlers in a fleet of 50 canoes down the Connecticut River. This large store of surplus corn at that time of year, early May, teaches us that the Pocumtuck were agricultural people who were industrious and planned ahead, and is evidence of a large population at Pocumtuck.

"50 Mishoon on the Connecticut River" is the work of Deborah Spears Moorehead of the Seaconke Wampanoag Tribal Nation. Deborah is both artist and historian. She has been drawing since she can remember and takes great care to provide accurate detail in her work. Her goal is to create pieces that collectively validate all forms of Eastern Woodland Native identity--past, present, and future.



Suggested questions for students:

- Can you identify the dugout canoes in the mural? Did you know that some dugout canoes could hold 80 people?
- Can you identify the birch bark canoes? (See Resources below)
- There is an account of Pocumtuck paddlers paddling all the way down the Connecticut River into Long Island Sound where they were seen at Fishers Island. Can you trace their route on the map? How many miles?
- Can you find a clay pot in this picture?
- Do you notice that some wigwams are cone shaped and some are dome shaped? They are both called wigwams because they are made of bark, not buffalo like the tipis of the western plains tribes like the Lakota People.
- Can you find the fiddleheads in the picture?
- Where did the Pocumtuck store all that extra corn?
- Can you recognize the big tree on the right side of the mural? It's still in Sunderland on Route 47!
- The contract to deliver the corn was agreed to on March 9, 1638. Why wasn't it delivered until Early May?

Definitions and Resources:

- The word "Connecticut" is derived from a Native American word meaning "the long river" which is spelled several different ways including *Quonektakut* in Nipmuck and *Kwinitekw* in Abenaki.
- "Mishoon" means canoe.
- The inner bark of the white birch tree is the waterproof side. It is tan in color. It grows next to the inner wood of the tree, not on the outside. Birchbark canoes are tan on the outside, unless they are trinkets made for the tourist trade and not for canoeing.
- A dugout canoe is made from a one single log and the center is burned out to make the shape. A birch bark canoe has a wooden frame and is covered with the bark of a birch tree.
- Storage pits were used to store food for the winter. They were usually dug on sandy slopes because sand doesn't freeze. Some storage pits were 20 feet in diameter and 12 feet deep and lined with clay that fire-hardened in place.
- For an account of the 500 bushels of corn delivered to Connecticut by the Pocumtuck People in 50 canoes, see "The Pocumtuck Indians 1886" by George Sheldon.

PESKEOMPSKUT (Turners Falls)

Present Day



Photo: Vincent Hogan

PESKEOMPSKUT

1830



<http://www.americancenturies.mass.edu/collection/itempage.jsp?itemid=7473&img=0&level=beginner&transcription=0>

Courtesy of Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association's Memorial Hall Museum, Deerfield, MA

PESKEOMPSKUT

Pre-Contact



By Robert Peters, Mashpee Wampanoag

*An annual migration of
People coming from all over Turtle Island*

*gathering, laughing
Loving their lives
Loving life*

*Geese migrate from the northeast
Salmon migrate from the south
Flashing like fire as they leap
up torrents of water falling
through that gap
where the rock splits*

*This is the spot where the traveling spirit intermingles
where each thing makes the next thing
more complete, more relevant
more in sync with*

*The spot where water flows
From the north,
from the east,
from the north
and downward
carrying these blessings
to unknown waters
everywhere*

Aho

For thousands of years, Indigenous peoples from all around the Northeast gathered seasonally to fish and celebrate at Peskeompskut--now called Turners Falls. Before contact, the fish were so abundant, "It is said one could walk across the river on the backs of the fish without getting your feet wet."

Robert Peters is a Mashpee Wampanoag artist, writer, and poet. He works to promote understanding and healing among Indigenous people everywhere. He works with the Massachusetts Bureau of Substance Abuse and Services developing Native youth drug prevention booklets and curriculum.

THE CROSSING

Present Day



THE CROSSING

1676



by Pat Morris, Podunk Descendant

On August 11, 1676, about 250 refugees from King Phillips War--Narragansett, Nipmuck and Quaboag families--were fleeing their lands, moving west towards the Berkshires just ahead of the Connecticut militia. They crossed the Connecticut River on rafts at what is now Chicopee and passed through Woronoco (Westfield). At that time there were no English settlements west of Westfield. In Great Barrington, the militia attacked these refugees. Survivors fled to Schaghticoke (in New York) where they were protected by the Governor of New York and assisted by the Mohicans.

Pat Morris is a native of Connecticut and a wildlife artist. She began her art career in the 1970's. By 1980, she was painting wildlife, in particular the wolves that she had come to know in her association with a wolf ambassador program. Her inspiration is drawn upon a lifetime of observation in the woods and natural areas of the world, where she has been fortunate enough to catch glimpses of the wildlife that find their way into her paintings. She says that the balance and harmony of the natural world bring more 'rhyme and reason' to her world, and that the expression of these experiences and observations is a lifelong challenge.

MONOCACY FISHING WEIR



courtesy of artist Richard Schledt and the Monocacy National Park Service, Frederick, MD

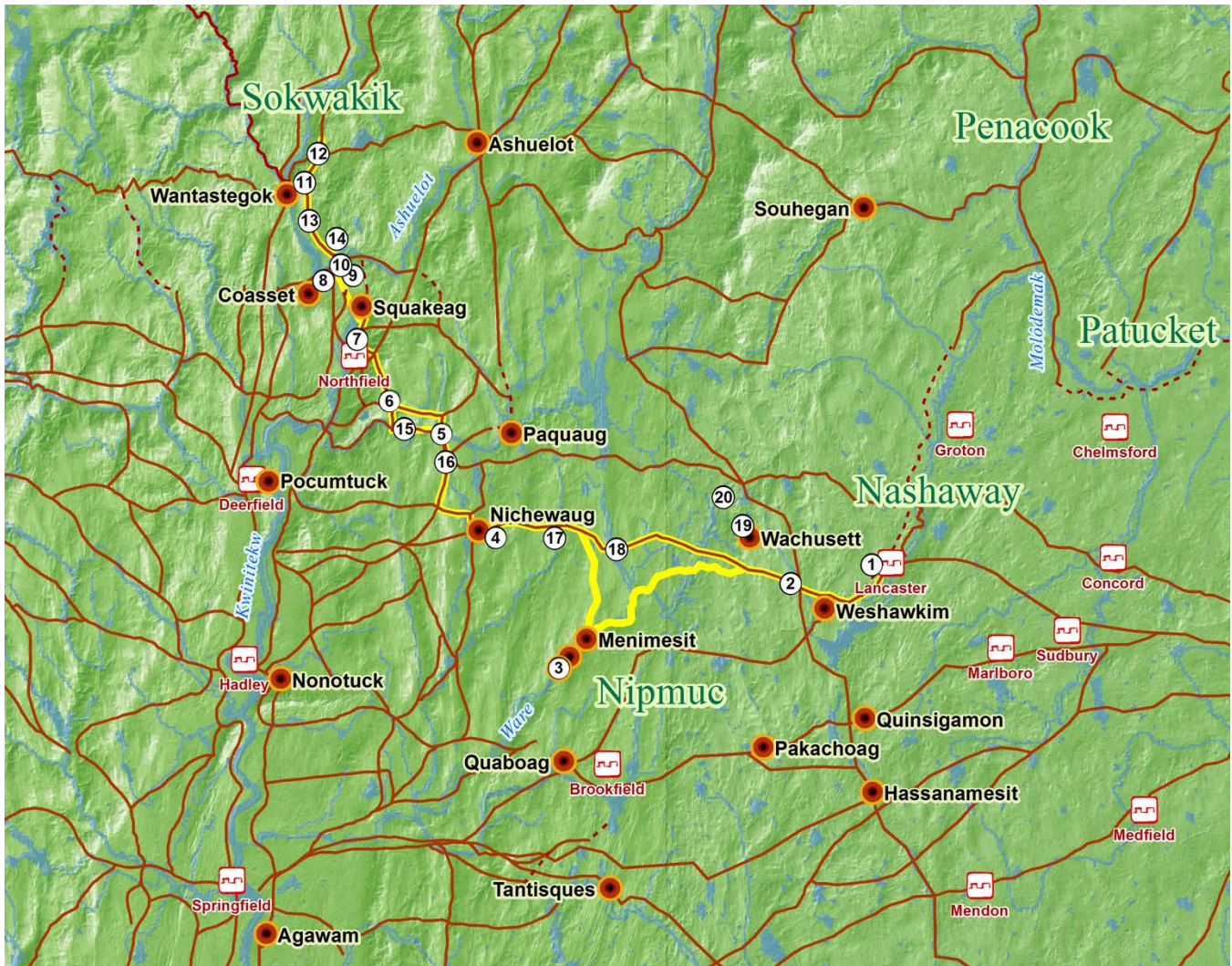


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Drawing by Robert Eaton (courtesy of Lisa Blair Eaton)

Robert Eaton (Mi' kmaq Descendant, d. 1993) was an artist and folklorist who lived in Hatfield and taught at the Bement School. He spent his spare time searching historical records to learn the look and ways of the Native people of the Connecticut River Valley to create historically accurate graphic novels. Many of his drawings were used to illustrate our video "Historical Perspectives from the Wigwam."

TRAVELS OF WEETAMOO



This map is shared courtesy of Lisa Brooks from her book [*“Our Beloved Kin: Remapping A New History of King Philip's War”*](#) which features maps that decolonize the space of the colonial northeast, rare seventeenth century documents, and digital storytelling designed to open paths of inquiry.

The map highlights the Native trails, waterways, towns and territories through which the [*Wampanoag leader Weetamoo*](#) and the English captive Mary Rowlandson traveled in the winter and spring of 1676, as described in [*The Sovereignty and Goodness of God: A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*](#). In the northwest quadrant of this map, "Squakeag" is the colonial English name for what is now Northfield, MA--placed firmly within what is labeled "Sokwakik," which in Abenaki means "the separated land." This is the homeland of the Sokoki Abenaki People.

February 1676. Two women made their way along the Paguag/Millers River through the wilds of present-day Athol, Orange, and Erving. They were not alone; they were moving northward with a group of at least 2000 Nipmuck, Narragansett, and Wampanog people. Monoco, the Nipmuck war sachem, had led the successful attack on Lancaster on February 10, 1676, and along with the Pocasset woman sachem Weetamoo, was escaping ahead of the pursuing English forces led by Major Thomas Savage. Among the roughly 25 captives was Goodwife Mary Rowlandson, termed a “Puritan mistress” by her captor Weetamoo. Rowlandson was later to write an account of her three-month captivity entitled *“The Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson.”*

During their “removes” as Rowlandson called them, she traveled through lands that she termed a vast and howling wilderness. However, Weetamoo and her husband Narragansett sachem Quinnapin, knew exactly where they were and moved their people along familiar, well-worn trails leading to Squakeag (Northfield).

In present-day Athol, with the English close behind, they crossed the swift-running Paquag River on quickly built rafts cushioned with evergreen branches, transporting all, including elders, wounded, women with children. A small group of warriors remained behind to hold the English at bay, while the larger group escaped to the north. The English halted at the river’s edge, much to the “disgust and dismay” of Rowlandson. The fleeing Natives followed the river until they came to present-day Keyup Brook in Erving Center and moved northward, camping by the Great Swamp below “an exceeding high and steep hill” (Crag Mountain), before arriving at the great multi-tribal camp at Sokwakik, where she met Metacomet, King Philip.

Rowlandson was to be redeemed at Redemption Rock in Princeton, Massachusetts on May 2, 1676. The two women never apparently developed a mutual respect, coming from widely differing cultural perspectives of the role of women of those times. Rowlandson in her Narrative describes her final portrayal of Weetamoo preparing for “the great dance” at Wachusett in 1676: *“She was covered with girdles of wampum from the loins upward, her arms from her elbows to her hands were covered with bracelets. There were handfuls of necklaces about her neck, and several sorts of jewels in her ears. She had fine red stockings, and white shoes, her hair powdered and face painted red.”*

Rowlandson was redeemed and returned to her husband in May. Weetamoo returned to her homelands at Pocasset, where she was killed in August 1676.

Compiled by David Brule

Circa Late 1600'S



Artwork courtesy of Pamela Patrick White/ www.whitehistoricart.com

This is a picture of Mashalisk--a leader of the Pocumtuck People--at a trading house in Springfield. A trading house was a place where Natives brought beaver pelts to trade for European goods. At one of these trading houses, Umpachela, a Pocumtuck Sachem, arranged to receive guns and wool coats from a trader, on credit. The trader wrote, "I trusted Umpachela with one red coat and two knives. If I'm not paid in beaver when he comes back from [Sokoki/Northfield] all his land is to be mine."

[More information on Mashalisk](#)

At that time, a trade might consist of three large beaver pelts for one coat. Can you find the trade items in this picture?

- beaver pelts
- beaver pelts strung into a circle
- wool cloth
- brass buckets
- glass bottles
- wampum strands--wampum beads are made from shells. A wampum belt is shells made into a belt that is living record of agreements. Traditionally wampum was not money. [More information on wampum](#)

Many deeds reserved the rights of Native people to hunt, fish, set-up wigwams, and gather nuts and firewood. Here is an example of the text of a deed from Mashalisk's son Chauk alias Chaque:

Chauk - North Side of Pacomtuck 24 February 1666

These presents Testifie that Chauk alias Chaque the Sachem of Pacomtuck for good and valuable Considerations him thereunto moveing, hat Given, Granted, Bargained & sold, & by these presents Doth (for himself and his brother Wapahoale,) fully, clearly & absolutely Give, Grant, Bargaine & sell unto Capt John Pynchon of Springfield for ye use & behoofe of Major Eleazar Lusher, & Ensigne Danl Fisher, & other English of Dedham, theire Associates, & successours & to them, & theire heires for ever, Certain parsells of Land at Pacomtuck on ye North side of Pacomtuck River...wch are called Nayyocossick Tomholissick Masquomcossick Ussowwack Wusquiawwag & so to Sunsick hill, or by whatever other names it may be called. ...Only the sd Chauk alias Chaque doth reserve Liberty of fishing for ye Indians in ye Rivers or waters & free Liberty to hunt deere or other wild creatures, & to gather walnuts chestnuts & other nuts things on ye Commons.

--Harry Andrew Wright, *Indian Deeds of Hampden County, Springfield, MA 1905*, p 61

NATIVE BASKETRY

Most cultures have a basket making tradition that goes back many years. Think about a time before paper bags, plastic bags, or buckets--baskets were a necessity! Woven basket fragments dating as far back as A.D.1500 have been found by archaeologists in New York and Pennsylvania.

circa 1700's



This is an image of three Maliseet (Eastern Abenaki) women who peddled baskets, brooms, and bark containers. They accommodated themselves to the market economy brought by the European settlers by selling work baskets to farmers for harvesting and fancy baskets to tourists at resort areas. Note the top hat, the sled, the moccasins, and the 18th century clothing--European fabric in a Native style.

2010



courtesy of NH State Council on the Arts

Sherry Gould, Abenaki Basketmaker

circa 1930



courtesy of Melissa Lafond

Ben Higgins of Chesterfield learned ash splint basketry from his father Charles Higgins. Charles had been taught by the Bartlett Family of Worthington, and the Bartlett Family had learned the skill from Micmac families.

circa 1940-2011



courtesy of Melissa Lafond

Ben Higgins sold baskets in Chesterfield from his old shop on Route 143. His son-in-law Milton Lafond continued the tradition until 2011.

See "[Maine Indian Basketmakers Alliance](#)" to learn more about today's basketmakers.

WE ARE STILL HERE



As a student at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in the 1990's, Justin Beatty helped fight to increase visibility, support, and respect for Native students and community. Native students today are still fighting many of the same battles over visibility and respect. Despite attempts to assimilate or destroy our cultures, sovereignty, and self-respect--We Are Still Here!

SPONSORS

This program is supported by Mass Humanities, The Irene E. and George A Davis Foundation, River Valley Co-op, and by grants from the local cultural councils of 50 towns in western Massachusetts, which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.



Participating towns include:

Agawam, Amherst, Ashfield, Bernardston, Brimfield, Buckland, Charlemont-Hawley, Chester, Chesterfield, Chicopee, Colrain, Conway, Deerfield, Erving, Gill, Goshen, Greenfield, Hampden, Hatfield, Heath, Holland, Holyoke, Leyden, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Montague, Montgomery, New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Palmer, Plainfield, Rowe, Russell, Shelburne, Shutesbury, South Hadley, Southwick, Springfield, Sunderland, Tolland, Warwick, Wendell, Westfield, Westhampton, West Springfield, Whately, Williamsburg, and Worthington.



The Nolumbeka Project is grateful to our sponsors. Their generosity has made this project possible.