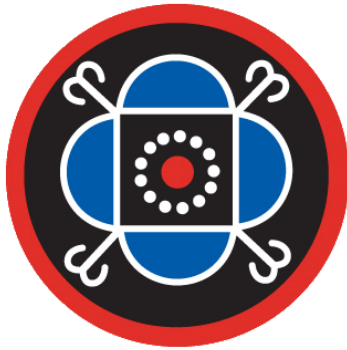


The Mohegan Tribe



The story of the Mohegan Tribe can be told through the history of its remarkable people, origins, connection to the land and waterways, language, and community engagement to the land of what we now call Connecticut. The purpose of this narrative and collection of various student activities is to provide educators with a glimpse into the culture and story of the Mohegan Nation. Resources are to be used for educational purposes only. Teachers are encouraged to modify activities and materials without changing their

context to meet their specific classroom and curriculum needs.

To engage in content and provide students with more in-depth lesson plans and units of study, please visit the Mohegan Tribe's Educators Project. The Educators Project is a growing platform, as we have so much to share past, present, and future.

<https://www.mohegan.nsn.us/resources/educational-resources/educators-project>

Also, visit the Mohegan Tribe's website to explore further about the Mohegan history, values, and culture. www.mohegan.nsn.us



Students visit the **Tantaquidgeon** Museum (left), Outreach Program at a school (right)

The Mohegan Tribe supports educators and students through free educational programming such as Outreach Programs to your school, Field Trips to the Tantaquidgeon Museum in Uncasville, CT, and Professional Development with educators. For more information and scheduling, please email learning@moheganmail.com.

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Gladys Tantaquidgeon in front of a Wigwam,
1935

Student Activity: Before you begin new learning with students, check in with their background knowledge. What do students know about the Mohegan Tribe, past and present? What do students want to learn? (goal setting) Keep checking in throughout lessons and units of study, what have students learned and how did they get to that new learning?

I. Meet the Mohegans
a. Creation Story

This is the first Mohegan Story. It describes how the Great Manitou created all things:

In that place, there was nothing at all times above the earth. At first, forever lost in the space the Great Manitou (or Gunche Mundu) was. Then on the earth was an extended fog and there the Great Manitou was. He made all the land and sky. He made the sun, the moon and the stars. He made them all move evenly. Then the wind blew violently and it cleared and the water flowed off far and strong. And groups of islands grew newly (atop the domed back of a giant turtle whom we call "Grandfather" (Mohegan addition) and there remained. All beings were then friendly. Truly the Great Manitou was active and kindly.

-Recited by Witapanoxwe (Walks with Daylight), Lenni Lenape Medicine man in 1930 to Gladys Tantaquidgeon (Fawcett, 1995, p. 7)

b. Story as a Circle

Storytelling remains a standing tradition in all Tribal communities today. Oral tradition is important because it continues culture and preserves the past through a never-ending story circle. Our oral tradition stories, passed down by word of mouth, have been around since time immemorial and will continue.

To learn a story and its lessons, there are 4 steps to follow along that circle:



1. Listen. Listen and pay attention carefully.
2. Observe. We use our two eyes to see what is both clear but also hidden.
3. Remember. Try to remember as much as possible.
4. Share. If you listen, observe, and remember; then we can share. Then the path around the circle continues.

Story Circle with the 4 Directions: North, East, South, West (above)

c. Mohegan Storytelling and Oral Tradition

Mohegan oral tradition or storytelling serves many meaningful purposes. It is a practice for both perpetuating or continuing culture and preserving the past. Our stories enable us to endure from one generation to another while providing a sense of history and identity. We pass on our knowledge, culture, ceremonies, values and how we have come to be. There are many lessons we teach through our stories. It is a never-ending circle with neither a beginning nor an end. We now share stories both orally and in writing.

In many Tribes, elders are the most important storytellers. Stories are often repeated because different lessons may be understood with each telling. Elders are depended on for their knowledge and wisdom. Elders pass on traditional knowledge and play a significant role in educating children. Respect for elders is extremely important in the community.

American Indians share the cultural trait of oral tradition and storytelling, yet each Tribal Nation has its own oral tradition and history. There are many common central themes in our stories. Here are some examples:

- o Life lessons. Values.
- o Honoring all life- especially the plants and animals we depend on.
- o Honoring our ancestors.
- o Creation. Origins. Beginnings.
- o Deep relationships and connections to Mother Earth and our homelands.
Reverence for the place of our ancestors. A sense of sacred places and a spiritual connection to places.
- o Balance and harmony.
- o A sense of community- we are part of the greater whole.

One of the greatest misconceptions about oral tradition and storytelling is that stories only convey myths or legends. These terms can imply that the content is entirely fictional and that the primary purpose is entertainment. Whereas our stories convey important cultural teachings, origin beliefs, and traditional knowledge. It is a significant part of culture. It is also well known that the written word, especially of those lacking the proper perspective, is not always reliable.

Below, we will share some of our oldest oral tradition stories with you:

i. Makiawisug, The Gift of the Little People



Makiawisug (Little People) Basket- Made by Mohegan Medicine woman Gladys Tantaquidgeon circa 1924. These baskets were filled with gifts such as cornbread or berries and placed deep in the woods for the Makiawisug. This basket is currently on display at the Tantaquidgeon Museum.

Traditional Mohegans believed that both the Giant, Moshup, and the Makiawisug, led by Granny Squannit, still inhabit their Homeland. Granny was negatively referenced by early colonial Christian leaders, like Roger Williams, as “a pagan women’s god.” (Roger Williams, 1827)

Yet, Granny is really an emissary of Mundu, the Great Mystery. Along with her people, the Makiawisug, she walks the borderlands of the Natural World and the Spirit Land. This explains why the Makiawisug are rarely seen. Sacred mounds left by them line the Thames River in Mohegan.

When Mohegans have wishes to be fulfilled, and curing herbs that must be found, they may leave corn, meat, berries, or tobacco for the Makiawisug (Little People) as offerings. (Fawcett, 1995, p. 58)

Student Activity: Extension to Oral Tradition: *The Gift of the Little People*

For the full story of the Little People, visit the Educators Project for the book reading and the movie as well as in-depth lesson plans on Oral Tradition.

<https://www.mohegan.nsn.us/resources/educational-resources/educators-project/lesson-plans/unit-one>

C3 Framework Standards Addressed: D2.Geo.7., D2.His.4.

ii. Chahnameed the Glutton (He Wins the Eating Match)

Chahnameed and another man had a dispute. Each said that he could eat more than the other, so it was decided to hold a contest. But before the time came, Chahnameed went home and got a large bag. He fastened it under his coat with the opening near his throat so that he could pour food into it. He wanted to deceive them, so he did it well.

Now they held the contest. A barrel of soup was brought, and the two began to eat. It was only that other man who ate, because Chahnameed was really

stuffing the soup into the bag. But the people did not know that. He was fooling them. Now the other man could eat no more. He had to give up. But Chahnameed laughed and said: -

‘Come on! Don’t Stop! I am not full yet.’

All the people laughed, but they did not know why. Soon even Chahnameed stopped. The bag was nearly full.

‘Now I will show you. Give me that knife,’ said Chahnameed

‘What will I do?’ he asked the other man.

Then he made ready to stick the knife they gave him into his stomach. But he would only stick it into the bag. The people did not know that. The other man was beaten, but now he said that he would do what Chahnameed said. Then Chahnameed stabbed the bag where his stomach was. And the soup ran out. Everybody thought that he really stabbed himself, but Chahnameed laughed at them all. Then the other man stabbed his stomach. But he died. (Fawcett, 1995, p. 64)

Student Activity: Oral Tradition: Storytelling remains a standing tradition in all Tribal Communities today. Which central themes can be taught while telling *Chahnameed the Glutton (He Wins the Eating Match)* to students?

Revisit **1.b. Story as a Circle** for examples of central themes. Discuss the parts of the story circle to allow the story to live on. Continue this study of oral tradition with other stories in the classroom.

C3 Framework Standards Addressed: D2.Geo.7., D2.His.4.

iii. Chahnameed Squeezes the Stone

Once there was a man who thought he knew more tricks than Chahnameed. He told him so. No Chahnameed said: -

‘Can you squeeze water out of a stone?’

And taking a piece of curd with him he began to climb a tree. Everyone thought that he had a stone in his hand, but he did not. The curd looked just like a white stone. When he got to the top of the tree, he stretched out his hand and squeezed. Water dripped from the curd and fell down on the ground. All the time the people thought he was squeezing water out of a stone. Then he came down. The other man was there.

‘Well! Do that now’, said Chahnameed.

And the other man picked up a stone that was lying nearby and started up the tree. When he got to the top he held out his hand and squeezed the stone. But no water came. Then he squeezed harder, and soon he squeezed so hard that the sharp edges of the stone cut his hand until it bled. He had to come down. That made the people more afraid of Chahnameed than ever. (Fawcett, 1995, pp. 64-65)

iv. Moshup's Rock



Moshup's Rock/"The Devil's Footprint,"
Mohegan Hill

This site, negatively referenced by Christian missionaries as the "Devil's Footprint," is a rock imbedded with the footprint of the giant named Moshup who roams New England. Gladys Tantaquidgeon explains that early Euro-Christians frequently lend the Devil's name to people and places valued by Mohegans "in order to denigrate them." While Indians taught that bad weather was caused by Moshup and Granny's arguments, white missionaries changed that tale to suggest that bad weather was caused by the Devil (in the form of Moshup), whipping his wife (in the form of Granny Squannit). (Fawcett, 1995, p. 48)

Gladys Tantaquidgeon tells the following story of other footprints that link the traditional tales of Moshup in nearby Moodus, Uncasville, and Old Lyme, Connecticut; Montauk, Long Island in New York and on Martha's Vineyard and Vineyard Sound, Massachusetts:

He [Moshup] was attempting to build a bridge from Gay Head, Martha's Vineyard to the mainland, known as Vineyard Sound. He was so large and powerful that he could pick up a large rock and throw it into the water. Someone interfered with his plans, and he became so angry that his feet turned fiery red and he left that area and stepped from where he lived on that island to the mainland and into parts of Connecticut. The stones where he stepped were called 'Devil's Footprints'... (Fawcett, 1995, pp. 48-49)

Student Activity: As you have learned from some of these oral tradition stories, different variations of these stories also exist in Tribal Nations around Mohegan. Why do you think Tribes may have similarities in their stories and common lessons they teach within their communities? Why do you think there may be differences within their oral tradition and differing lessons?

C3 Framework Standards Addressed: D2.Geo.4.

II. Lands and Environment

a. Migration to Connecticut

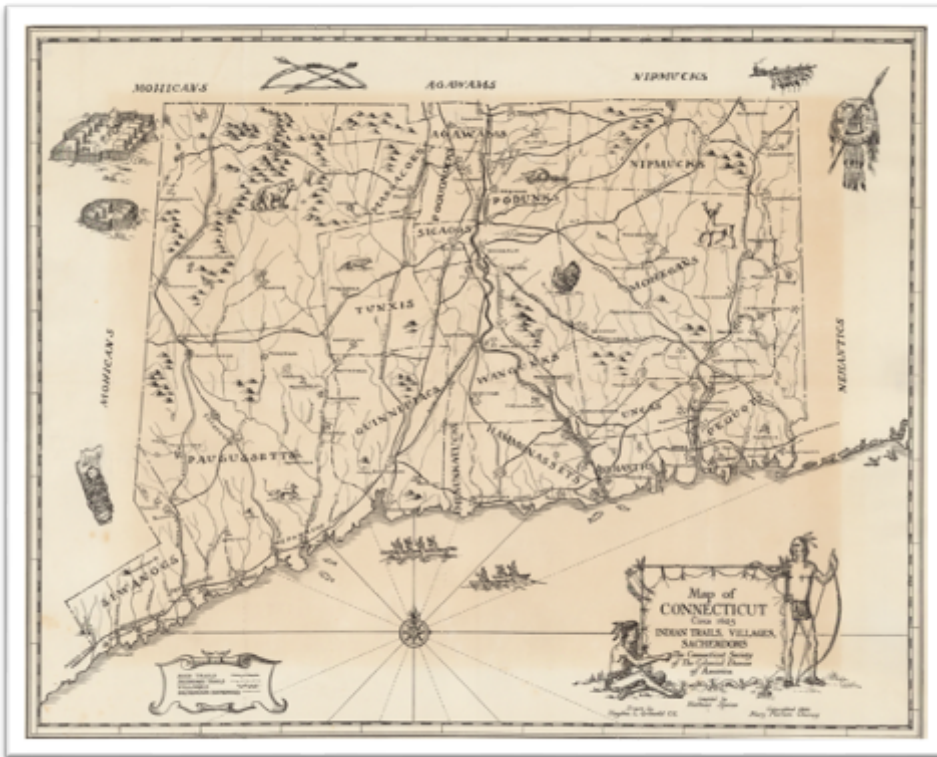
The Mohegans are known as "The Wolf People," as they descend from the ancient Wolf clan of the Lenni Lenape Delaware Indians. Mohegan stories describe the Wolf People's passage eastward over a desert and across a great body of freshwater, before arriving in what is currently Upstate New York. After residing there for a while, rumors of fine hunting and shell fishing are said to have prompted the tribe to leave that area and travel to what is today southeastern Connecticut.

Uncas, who became the first Sachem of the Mohegans, was born a Pequot (1598-1683) in what is currently called Mystic. He was named Poquiam (Oak Tree) and later Wunix/Woks (Uncas) meaning "fox" because he circled enemies like a fox. His lineage of many generations' prior were Pequot, Montauk, Nehantic, and Narragansett. Uncas rose to the rank of Pequot Sagamore but was banished several times for disagreeing with his Sachems, Tatobam (Murdered by Dutch) and then Sassacus (Pequot Sachem) on how to approach the aggressive European newcomers. Uncas chose diplomacy and later friendship and thus broke with the Pequots, taking his followers with him and founded the Mohegan Nation. He took the ancient Lenape clan name- wolf- and moved west of the Thames River.

One old story recalls an Indian prophet predicting that the newcomers would bring grave hardship to the Native people. Gladys Tantaquidgeon recalls the story of the Tribe's initial encounter with the Europeans as follows:

One day we are told, an old Chief, looking out across the Great Water, toward the sunrise, saw a Great White Bird coming toward him. Its great white wings were outspread, and it seemed to be sailing on the surface of the water. The Great Chief hurried back to the village to tell his people. They hurried to the shore to see the Great White Bird. As it came nearer, they could see the figures of strange looking men in its beaks and wings. The Chief was fearful for his people. He sadly told them of the many changes that would take place...so it was that the strangers came to our land of plenty. (Fawcett, 1995 p. 10).

When Europeans first arrived on the shores of North America, the Mohegan people had been living in southern New England for some period. In this early map (below), the Mohegans are depicted as inhabiting lands west of the Thames or Mohegan-Pequot River. Also in the region are the Pequots residing east of the river. Subsisting on hunting, shell fishing, gathering and maize agriculture, the peoples of southern New England had rich and complex cultures, customs, art, technology, and oral traditions.



Map of Connecticut depicting 'Indian trails, villages, and sachedoms' in 1625

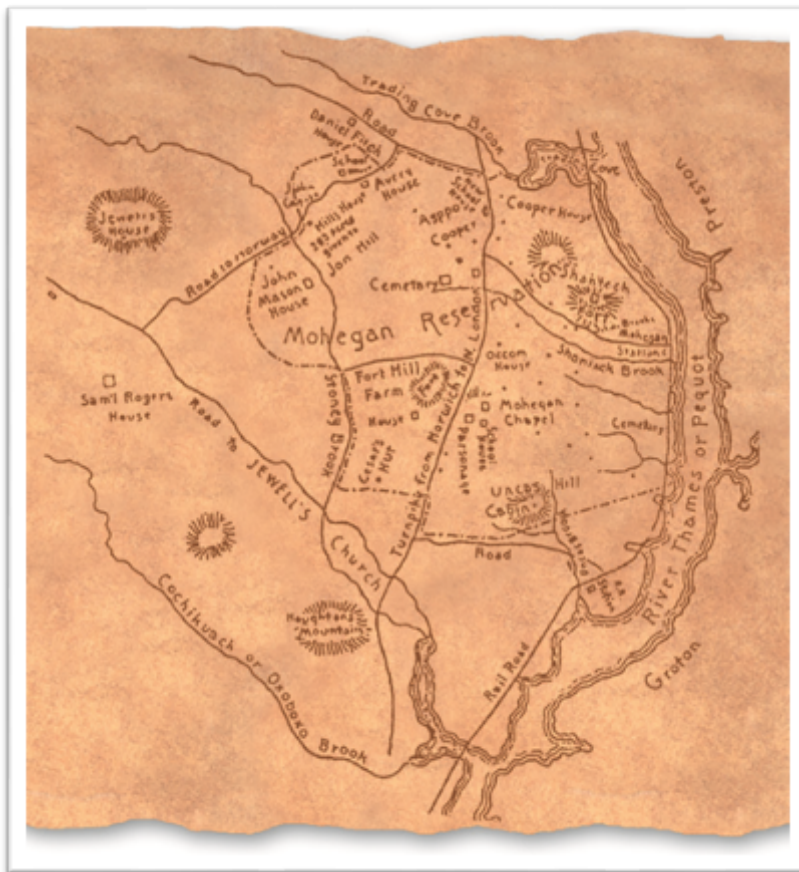
Note: Original version of this map, is housed in the Boston Public Library

Land Allotments: Until 1790, when the State of Connecticut began to allow individually allotted land to be sold by overseers, the Tribe held about 2,700 acres of property. In 1790, President George Washington's Trade and Intercourse Act forbade land sales by overseers without federal permission. Although Washington signed that legislation to thank tribes, like the Mohegans, who joined his wampum belt alliance during the revolution, the State of Connecticut chose to violate that federal law to support its own land interests. By enabling overseers to sell tribal lands, the state bolstered its own land interests in direct violation of federal law.

For generations thereafter, Non-Indians violated this 1790 Trade and Intercourse Act regarding Mohegan land rights. The Mohegan Tribal archives contain numerous petitions reflecting the continuous illegal taking of Mohegan lands. (Fawcett, 1995 p. 20)

Over the years, desecration and theft of tribal land was allowed by the Mohegan overseers. Their corrupt actions motivated Mohegans to petition for freedom from their supervision through the partial termination of their reservation in 1861. All tribal properties, except Mohegan Church and the Tribes' burial grounds, were removed from reservation roles by 1872. In that year, Mohegan land properties became taxable and Mohegan males, 21 or over, received voting rights. Tribal records show two Mohegans, Moses Fielding and Edwin Fowler, were thus sworn as American electors in 1874.

Mohegan land was then divided into simple parcels and taxed. Tribespeople who remained at Mohegan during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century worked mainly in mills, the military, whaling, or in domestic service. (Fawcett, 1995, p. 22)



Illustrated Map of the Mohegan Reservation

b. Mohegan Locations

Many important Mohegan locations and historic sites are discussed below.

Student Activity: Students can learn further about important Mohegan locations and historic sites. More information can be found on the Educators Project through the [Interactive Map](#). Students can observe, ask questions, and learn about important places both past and present to the Mohegan Tribe through photographs and stories.

<https://www.mohegan.nsn.us/resources/educational-resources/educators-project/lesson-plans/interactive-map>

C3 Framework Standards Addressed: D2.Geo.2., D2. Geo.3., D2. Geo.8., D2. Geo.9.

i. Royal Mohegan Burial Grounds

When Uncas allowed the English settlers to establish themselves in the nine-mile square, he reserved a condition to which the English agreed: that the sixteen acres on the plateau be kept in perpetuity as the “royal” Mohegan Burial Ground, for the family of Uncas.

Yet those sixteen acres disappeared bit by bit over the years, through property encroachment. In 1842 a young Mohegan woman, Emma Baker, accompanied her mother and grandmother to the Mohegan Burial Ground in Norwich only to find that cabbages were growing there. In an 1897 legal deposition she said, “We then went across to the ravine and on the edge of it someone made a pit and had a piece of pipe in it for the smoke to escape and they were burning some of the bones and bodies which they had dug up...She [her mother] said that the burial ground went beyond that and they had commenced to build on some of the land. From Yantic Street clear round to the [Uncas] Monument they were as thick as could be. I heard Mr. Fitch (the State overseer for the Tribe), my grandmother and mother talking about the graveyard, and they asked him to go and stop their building. ‘Oh,’ he said, ‘I did not know you cared about it.’” The overseer did nothing to stop this. “He was the Agent or Overseer at that time and that was all he did was talk about it. December 14, 1897.” (Fawcett, 1995, p. 45)



In 1999, the Tribe repurchased some of the land and repatriated and reburied bodies taken from their graves. Today, the site is a memorial park to sanctify desecrated graves. The land where this memorial stands, is called the Royal Mohegan Burial Ground. (pictured left)

More information about this location can be learned through words from the Mohegan Tribe in the [following video](#) with help from the Norwich Historical Society.

ii. Uncas Leap



Uncas Leap (pictured left), also known as Indian Leap or Yantic Falls is in Norwich, Connecticut. At this site, seventeenth century Mohegan Sachem Uncas jumped the Yantic Falls during a battle with the Narragansett Tribe. He survived that enormous jump, after which his runner, Tantaquidgeon, captured the Narragansett Sachem, Miantonomo.

More information about this event can be learned through words from the Mohegan Tribe in the [following video](#) with help from the Norwich Historical Society.

Student Activity: Visitors can connect to the Heritage Trail at Uncas Leap, which is a part of the Walk Norwich Trail system. This site is free of charge and open to the public. (In 2023-2024, renovations will update the site to better the community.)

- www.norwichct.org/853/Uncas-Leap-Heritage-Park
- www.ctvisit.com/listings/uncas-leap
- www.wtnh.com/news/connecticut/new-london/uncas-leap-site-in-norwich-turning-into-heritage-park/
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xb0HdIF1Dnk>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzpqfNC0_6o

Students can also learn more about Uncas and the Battle of Sachem's Plain and Indian Leap 1643, on the Educators Project in the **Two Sachems** unit of study.

www.mohegan.nsn.us/resources/educational-resources/educators-project/lesson-plans/two-sachems

C3 Framework Standards Addressed: D2.Geo.5., D2.Geo.8., D2.Geo.10. D2.Hist.16.

iii. Fort Shantok

After leaving the Pequots with his followers to found his own tribal nation, in the 17th century Mohegan Sachem Uncas created a fortified village at Shantok on the west bank of the Massapequotuck (Thames River). These brackish waters produced quahog clams and oysters, the former also being used by the Mohegans to make purple wampum, a sacred item used for reciprocal exchanges like treaties, marriages, criminal penance. It was not money, but a spiritual cleanser.

State Land Theft- Shantok was encroached upon by the state's Norwich-New London Road which bisected Shantok on its western border and later their Connecticut Route 32

which impacted more land on both sides. In the 19th century, state overseers gave the Central Vermont Railroad a portion of the tribe's Shantok lands. Then in 1926, the State took the remaining Shantok acreage through an act of condemnation. That land included Mohegan's traditional burial grounds and suffered the relocation of burials and desecration of memorials. In 1993, Fort Shantok was designated as a National Historic Landmark (as the Fort Shantok Archaeological District), possessing national significance in commemorating the history of the United States of America. The state of Connecticut returned their remaining public lands at Shantok to the Mohegans in 1995. Mohegan Gatherings there today include the annual Tribal Homecoming, Cultural Week and Wigwam Festival, and funerals.



Land of Fort Shantok Park (pictured left)

iv. Thames River (also known as the Massapequotuck River or Mohegan-Pequot River)



River banks of the Thames River (pictured above)

The English renamed this body of water after the famous river in London. From the 1500's on, the Mohegans settled and remained along its banks despite pressure from

English incursion. As a source of food, water, and transportation, the river fostered the Tribe, both dividing and connecting it with the surrounding area.

Video Resource: www.mohegan.nsn.us/explore/mohegan-moments-video-series [Thames (Massapequotuck) River, The Great Water]

v. Cohegan Rock

The largest free-standing boulder in New England, Cohegan Rock, is known as the place where Sachem Uncas met with his council in the 1600s. When it was last measured in 1986, Cohegan Rock was 54 feet long, 50 feet high, 58 feet wide, and weighed 7,000 tons. Large stones on top were used as Council seats, though now removed. There, they made the difficult and strategic decision that would ultimately preserve the Tribe through the struggle with the exploding European population. The Tribe decided to make an alliance with the 'pale strangers.' By sacrificing some of its dwindling independence, the Tribe preserved enough autonomy to maintain its identity. The decision meant that the Tribe survived through the wars, theft of land, and broken promises that wiped out our neighboring tribes.

It is not known how the Tribe lost ownership of the site, later owned by the Connecticut Rivers Council of the Boy Scouts of America since it was deeded to them by a local family in the 1960s. In 2007, the Tribe reacquired the sacred site.



Cohegan Rock (pictured left)

vi. Mohegan Church

Mohegan Church was founded in 1831 by Lucy Tantaquidgeon Teecomwas and her granddaughter Cynthia Teecomwas Hoscott.

Lucy's mother, Lucy Occum Tantaquidgeon, was the sister of famed Mohegan minister Rev. Samson Occom who created the Brothertown Movement an 18th century Christian

Indian utopian exodus to Upstate New York, in opposition to the corruption of Christianity through greed by local ministers. Samson's sister, Lucy chose to remain in Mohegan territory.



Mohegan Church (pictured left)

Federal Indian Removal- President Andrew Jackson supported the removal of southeastern tribes out West, for states to freely seize their land, as was the case with the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee-Creek, Seminole, and Cherokee. Lucy and Cynthia met with well-connected Norwich missionary Sarah Huntington, who sought support from her cousin Jabez Huntington and Secretary of War Lewis Cass. This support helped with the building of a Mohegan Church, to show Mohegan to be more “civilized” and therefore worthy of remaining on their land. The Mohegans agreed to this plan but kept the eagle feather above the cross. It was insisted that the church land could never leave the Tribe as long as there was one Mohegan living.

Video Resource: www.mohegan.nsn.us/explore/mohegan-moments-video-series [Mohegan Church]

vii. Tantaquidgeon Museum and Mohegan Village

The Mohegan People believe that every object or writing holds within it the spirits of its maker.

The Tantaquidgeon Museum is the oldest Native American owned and operated museum in the United States. The original stone structure made of native granite was built in 1931 at the height of the Great Depression by John Tantaquidgeon. Along with his children Harold and Gladys, John founded this museum on his premise that it is harder to hate someone that you know a lot about. So, they created a place that introduces visitors to the Mohegan people. This museum strives to meet its mission to share the Mohegan culture with the community and visitors that wish to experience and learn about the history of the Mohegan people from the Mohegan perspective.



Tantaquidgeon Museum (left), Wigwam in Mohegan Village (right)

The unique three-room stone structure sits upon a hill surrounded by a stockade fence where you will find a dugout canoe, garden mounds, and two bark covered wigwams on land that is locally known as 'Mohegan Hill'. Inside are artifacts that date to the seventeenth century. These authentic treasures give a visual narration to Native people in New England. For generations, local visitors have learned about Mohegan and other New England tribes through visual displays of native made goods, walking through a traditional village, and listening to Mohegan members tell stories about their history.

The Tantaquidgeon Museum, operated by the Mohegan Tribe, offers free admission and tours conducted by Mohegan tribal members. Groups of six or more are by appointment. For more information or to schedule a visit, email museum@moheganmail.com.

Video Resource: www.mohegan.nsn.us/explore/mohegan-moments-video-series [Wigwam]

Student Activity: Where the Tantaquidgeon Museum and Mohegan Church stand today, on Mohegan Hill, explain the abundance of resources the land offered because of this location. Using maps, knowledge of geography, and resources from both the forest and the Thames River, students can develop claims to support their thinking.

C3 Framework Standards Addressed: D2.Geo.2, D2.Geo.3

c. Cultural Ways of Our Land and River

Mohegans used natural resources around them from both the land and the river. Growing a Three Sisters mound, telling stories through wampum, traveling by dugout canoe, and various cultural practices have been passed down from Mohegan ancestors to this day.

i. Three Sisters



Three Sisters Mound Illustration by a member of the Mohegan Tribe, 2022

The Three Sisters- Corn, Bean, and Squash are planted in a mound to protect each other from weather and environmental elements. The sisters support each other in many ways as they grow. Corn provides the pole for beans to grow up. Beans provide nutrients to corn. Squash produces large leaves that provide shade, retain moisture in the soil and block unwanted weeds.

Teachings and practices have been passed down over many generations by Mohegan Elders. Many stories and lessons are told encompassing the Three Sisters.

Corn, if properly processed, can sustain a person for months. Beans provide an abundance of nitrogen that the soil needs. Corn and beans can be dried and preserved to eat year-round. Squash is a crop that can provide nutrients from the flesh as well as the seeds. Gourds themselves, once dried out, are also used as containers.

“We hold in reverence the Spirit of Corn.” -Gladys Tantaquidgeon

Student Activity: Students can learn more about the Three Sisters and how to grow a Three Sisters Mound on the Educators Project in the Mohegan Village: A Day in the Life unit of study. www.mohegan.nsn.us/resources/educational-resources/educators-project/lesson-plans/mohegan-village

C3 Framework Standards Addressed: D2.Hist.2., D2.Geo.4.

ii. Wampum



Wampum Beadwork and Quahog Shell by
a Member of the Mohegan Tribe, 2023

Wampum is exchanged for a different kind of reciprocity, one of promise and honor. Wampum is given as agreements between groups, weddings, and as a gift to assuage wrongdoing, show respect, or offer spiritual protection. Wampum also connects with the health of our rivers, as it takes much time to develop the pure dark purple shell seen in artifacts like Uncas's wampum collar.

The term Wampum is derived from Indigenous language meaning 'white shell beads'. Wampum is fashioned from quahog clam shells (*Mercenaria mercenaria*) providing purple beads, and the central columns of whelk shells (*Neptunea lyrata*) providing the white beads. (Bruchac, 2014) The species name for the quahog clam, *Mercenaria*, is related to the Latin word for commerce reflecting wampum's use in trade during the colonial period leading to the common misconception that wampum was used as money. It is particularly inaccurate to associate wampum with money since European money was disparaged by Mohegans. (Fawcett, 1995, p. 59)

The intricately woven patterns and symbols of the wampum belts contained meaning and in the absence of a written language, could be used to pass down important information to following generations. The Mohegan minister Samson Occom was known to be able to read these wampum belts. A bowl with wampum inlay belonging to Lucy Occum, Samson's sister, is currently on display at the Tantaquidgeon Museum. Lucy, her daughter, and granddaughter would be instrumental in the founding of the Mohegan Church in 1831. Lucy Occum (1731-1830) would ensure that the ancient wampum collar attributed to Mohegan Sachem Uncas would stay within the Tribe. Through Lucy's efforts to preserve and keep this item of cultural patrimony, along with the continued effort by her daughter Lucy Tantaquidgeon and granddaughter Cynthia Hoscott, this wampum collar is the only wampum in all New England to continuously be held by Native Americans. (Bruchac, 2014)



The Uncas wampum collar (above) features small cylindrical wampum beads arranged into two white triangles against a purple background, with the warp and weft made of hemp. The white triangles represent the Mohegan and Pequot villages while the purple background indicates the trouble caused by the separation of Mohegan from the Pequot Nation in 1635. This collar belonged to Mohegan Sachem Uncas (1598-1683), a “friend of the English.” Uncas’s collar is perhaps the most valuable and treasured item of the Mohegan people.

Student Activity: Students can learn more about Sachem Uncas on the Educators Project in the Two Sachems unit of study. The collar and bowl discussed can also be viewed within this document as well as when visiting the Tantaquidgeon Museum.

www.mohegan.nsn.us/resources/educational-resources/educators-project/lesson-plans/two-sachems

C3 Framework Standards Addressed: D2.Hist.14., D2.Hist.16.

iii. Annual Canoe Journey



Mohegan Canoe Journey, 2018 (left)



Mohegan Canoe Journey, 2022 (above)

Members of the Mohegan Tribe launch canoes annually during Cultural Week in August from Norwich Harbor and paddle to the Mohegan reservation. The Canoe Journey began to pay tribute to ancestors. The event is open to Mohegans of all ages.

The dugout canoe was the traditional common means of transportation for the Mohegan people living near rivers, lakes, and oceans. A dugout could be used to move a person from one place to another, for fishing, for travel to trade, or to gain resources for food in or around the water. They are made from a single log of a tree, through the process of burning and scraping with wood, shell, or stone tools, giving the inside of the canoe a flat bottom and straight sides. Paddles were used to navigate and move the canoe along the waves and through the tides of the rivers or Long Island Sound.



Students (pictured left) learn more about dugout canoes while visiting the Tantaquidgeon Museum.

Video Resource: www.mohegan.nsn.us/explore/mohegan-moments-video-series [Garden, Thames (Massapequotuck) River, The Great Water]

Student Activity: Students can analyze the importance of the land and the river to the Mohegan Tribe and the resources it provided in the early 1600's prior to European settlement in the Mohegan Village: A Day in the Life unit on the Educators Project.

www.mohegan.nsn.us/resources/educational-resources/educators-project/lesson-plans/mohegan-village

C3 Framework Standards Addressed: D2.Geo.2., D2. Geo.4., D2. Geo.6., D2.Hist.2., D2.Hist.3., D2.Hist.10.

d. Tribal Sovereignty

As a Sovereign Nation, the Mohegan Tribe independently determines its own fate and governs its own people and affairs. That means there is the responsibility to provide for Mohegan people and to work within the Mohegan governmental, legal, and cultural systems to preserve our independence.

Over the years, the United States and Connecticut governments have also defined their relationships to the Mohegan Tribal Nation. While these definitions do not change the fundamental independence of the Tribe, they have become part of the provisions that other political entities use as the basis for their interactions with us. Thereby establishing the legitimacy of our Nation.

The Mohegan Tribe is self-governing with an elected Tribal Council and Council of Elders. Additionally, the Tribe is served by its Chief and many administrative departments that oversee the everyday function of the reservation and provide for Tribal members.

Video Resource: www.mohegan.nsn.us/explore/mohegan-moments-video-series [Mohegan Chiefs & Self Governance]

Student Activity: Students can define Tribal Sovereignty as well as review the Mohegan Constitution to analyze the scope, structure, and procedures for governance of the Mohegan Tribe. The Constitution outlines the rights and responsibilities of our members and governing bodies. Students can also learn more about how the Mohegan Nation's Tribal Constitution provides that the Tribe shall be governed by a Tribal Council, consisting of nine tribal members, and a Council of Elders, consisting of seven tribal members, all of which are elected by the membership.

www.mohegan.nsn.us/about/government/tribal-sovereignty

www.mohegan.nsn.us/about/government

C3 Framework Standards Addressed: D2.Civ.1., D2. Civ.4., D2. Civ.6.

III. Important Mohegan Concepts, People and Events

a. Trail of Life



The Mohegan Trail of Life (pictured above) is as old as memory. In each generation, elders pass on the knowledge of its ancient design. Gladys Tantaquidgeon, Mohegan Medicine Woman, lived to be 106 years old. Her life story reflects the essence of the trail's spirit and meaning.

The Trail of Life pattern decorates her ceremonial regalia because life's journey is itself a circle. Her ancestors painted it onto baskets, the oldest that she cared for at the Tantaquidgeon Museum, because Mohegans record their life trails on their handiwork. There are many ups and downs in the trail design, reflecting the rolling hills of New England and the bumpy challenges of life itself. Dots beside the trail signify people met along life's journey; leaves symbolize the healing medicine plants of eastern woodlands.

Gladys teaches that we also call this trail the Path of the Sun, for it follows life's circle from birth and sunrise (in the east) to death and passage into the spirit world (in the west)- then on again to rebirth and the dawn of the next generation. (Fawcett, 2000, p. 3)

Video Resource: www.mohegan.nsn.us/explore/mohegan-moments-video-series [Baskets]

Student Activity: Students can reflect on their own path through life showing the ups and downs of their story, the people along the way, and how their paths may cross with others. An activity focused on this task can be found in the 4 Notable Mohegan Women unit on the Educators Project.

www.mohegan.nsn.us/resources/educational-resources/educators-project/lesson-plans/4-notable-women

C3 Framework Standards Addressed: D2.His.1., D2.His.3

b. Important Mohegan People and Events through the Centuries

There are many Mohegans and notable events through the centuries that have carved our path to where we are today as a Nation. Many people can be studied for students to learn about perspectives through time; struggles that were overcome or successes to be celebrated. Mohegans with an enormous influence on our cultural history through the centuries are listed in this section.



(Left) Flying Bird Belt (c. 1770's) was worn by 4 Mohegan women and is now preserved in the Tantaquidgeon Museum.

Student Activity: How can the impact of conflicts or successes in one's Trail of Life affect the life of the person, those around them, and the future of a Tribe?

Resources for students to dig deeper into this compelling question are located within the culminating experience task of the 4 Notable Mohegan Women unit on the Educators Project.

This unit can be expanded upon while learning about the following Mohegans below.

www.mohegan.nsn.us/resources/educational-resources/educators-project/lesson-plans/4-notable-women

C3 Framework Standards Addressed: History- D2.His.1., D2.His.3, D2.His.4., D2.His.5.

i. Uncas, Sachem and Statesman (1590-1683)

The early 1600's was a critical time of change for Tribes that resided in what is now called Connecticut today. The pressure from rapidly expanding European settlements created competition for land and resources, while disease was decimating Indian populations at an alarming rate. Within the Pequot Tribe at that time, a dispute erupted between the Pequot Sachem (head chief) Sassacus and Sagamore (sub chief) Uncas.

Uncas's followers eventually left the main Pequot village on the east side of the Thames River (Massapequotuck, Mohegan-Pequot River). Uncas asserted independence by reassuming the less commonly used old clan name of "Mohegan" and settled on its western bank at a place now called Shantok.

Each tribe had its own idea of how to deal with European conflicts. Uncas (1598-1683) became Sachem of the Mohegan Tribe, which favored collaboration with the English.

The Pequots under Sassacus chose to fight them. Seeing the loss brought on by continued fighting, Uncas befriended the European invaders. This controversial decision left Uncas and the Mohegans in an uneasy alliance with the English in an ensuing war with the Pequots. But staying true to their word to the English, and with the survival of his people at stake, Uncas helped the English defeat the Pequots, with other local tribes taking sides. Uncas settled his people in a village at Shantok, which the Tribe defended from a Narragansett invasion sparked by European as well as Indian conflicts. Finally, the Mohegan Tribe's affiliation with the English kept its people relatively safe during King Philip's war and beyond.



Illustration of Sachem Uncas
(left)

ii. Owaneco (1640-1712)

Oldest son of Uncas represents the first generation of Mohegans who would have not experienced life before the Dutch and English set up regular trading - and who had to deal with the settlers on their terms and not his own. He would also be used and misled into granting away a major portion of Mohegan Lands before his demise. "Owaneco fought for Mohegan autonomy from colonial control." (Native Northeast Portal) Owaneco would institute a legal action for their return that would not be resolved for almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of a century. The generation he represents would not have old values and skills to fall back on. In acclimating to this new world that continued to constrict Indian choices while offering few other opportunities, the Indians became more dependent upon goods that they could not manufacture. For not only status in their communities, but for their very livelihood. Bone fishhooks and awls, as well as stone tools, rapidly gave way to those made of metal, and metal goods in most forms had to be purchased or traded from the Europeans. (Mohegan Tribe Library and Archives)

In a letter to Queen Anne in 1704, Owaneco writes, "But of late I meet with great discouragements and know not what will become of my people by reason of oppression. The Court of Hartford, understand, has given all my planting and hunting land away to Colchester and New London, so that if I obtain no relief from the Great

Queen's Majesty, my People will be in temptation to scatter from me and fall to the Eastward Indians, the friends of the French and enemies of the English. Pray sir, remember my love and service to the great Queen Anne and her Noble Council." (Mohegan Tribe Library and Archives) By the mid 1700's, the balance of power among Eastern Algonquian tribes and later with the colonists was destroyed. Native populations dramatically declined through disease, enslavement, and warfare. Tribal lands were isolated islands, threatened by encroaching English towns and farms. (The Mohegan Tribe, 2002, p. 27)

iii. Samson Occom (1723-1792)

This excerpt describes the different choices a Mohegan man (Samson Occom) and woman (Lucy Occum) made to hold on to their tribal identity:



Mohegan, Samson Occom (illustrated to the left) was born in a wigwam in 1723.

His mother worked as a servant to the Reverend Eleazor Wheelock, who operated a charity school in Columbia, Connecticut. Wheelock took an interest in Occom and believed he could benefit from a Christian education.

Occom far exceeded Wheelock's expectations. He was one of the first formally trained and ordained Indian ministers, and he possessed an extraordinary gift of speech. He soon became the church's minister to the Indians. He also preached to white congregations to raise money for the education of Indian children. Occom's preaching was so highly valued that the church sent him to England and Europe to raise money for a school to serve New England's tribes. (The Mohegan Tribe, 2002, p. 27)

Occom would deliver more than 300 sermons in England, Scotland, and Wales from 1766-1768 and would raise £12,000 (approximately \$2.4 million today) in private donations from numerous dignitaries including William Legge, 2nd Earl of Dartmouth. When Occom returned to Connecticut, he found his family, whom he had left in the church's care, destitute. Lord Dartmouth's gift had been used to build a college for the young gentlemen of the colonies, not for Indian children. Embittered by his own

experiences and the growing corruption of the Native tribes through colonial money, Occum determined it was impossible to maintain the values of traditional Native life among the English colonists. He persuaded a number of Mohegans, Pequots and members of other Native tribes to join him in an exodus to Brothertown, New York, where his followers settled with the Oneida tribe. There he hoped they could live free of colonial influences.

Eventually, Occum's group moved further west to present-day Wisconsin, still searching for a place where they could practice traditional Native values without the harassment and influence of white settlers. Samson's sister, Lucy Occum, considered a different path. Should she leave with some members of her tribe for a more remote region in the Western territory where they might continue their tribal practices without interference from the English, or should she remain with those who would hold on to the Mohegan tribal lands in Connecticut and find a way to move forward? (The Mohegan Tribe, 2002, p. 28)

Video Resource: www.mohegan.nsn.us/explore/mohegan-moments-video-series [Samson Occum]

iv. Lucy Occum (1731-1830)



Lucy Occum's bowl (pictured left) is on display in the Tantaquidgeon Museum. You will notice on the top, there are white wampum beads in the shape of an "L" within the handle.

Lucy Tantaquidgeon (Occum) (1731-1830) or Great Lucy taught her daughter, Lucy Teecomwas, and her granddaughter, Cynthia Hoscott, how to cope with the realities of an Indian/non-Indian society, and to protect tribal identity and culture in ways that would not draw the attention of the non-Indian government.

Great Lucy's decision continued to be the way most Mohegan people survived as a Tribe into the 21st century. In the 1830's, the Mohegan Tribe was threatened with the Federal policy of "Indian Removal." This policy dictated that Native tribes that had not been Christianized and assimilated into the dominant Euro-American culture were to be removed from their lands to the Western territories. To avoid removal, Lucy's family

advocated for the creation of the Mohegan Church and School. Built in 1831, this facility fostered tribal culture within the façade of a congregational church. By creating this institution, the Mohegan people were able to remain in their homeland and receive the kind of education that would enable them to succeed in both the Mohegan and non-Indian world. Under the guise of women's church groups, Mohegan women sustained tribal life and cultural memory. Within these sanctioned societies, they passed on to their daughters (who would take what they had learned back to their families) the history of the Tribe, healing medicines, tribal rituals, and ceremonies. (The Mohegan Tribe, 2002, p. 28)

The Disappearing Land - Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, English colonists and later U.S. citizens continued to intrude on the Mohegan Tribe's land base. In 1767, descendants of John Mason laid claim to lands that had been put in trust to the family by the Mohegans. The Colonial Court decided for the Mason family, which denied any compensation to the Mohegans for the land sales.

The State of Connecticut allowed tribal lands allotted to individual members of the Mohegan Tribe to be sold by state overseers of the Tribe. In 1790, the Mohegan Tribe held about 2,700 acres of land. In that year, President George Washington forbade further sales without Federal approval. The State of Connecticut ignored Washington's order and continued to sell Mohegan Tribal lands. (The Mohegan Tribe, 2002, p.28)

In addition, as the press for land increased in Connecticut, the English colonists began to interfere in the internal social and cultural affairs of the Mohegan Tribe. There was increased pressure to abandon traditional beliefs for Christianity, and the colonists attempted to install tribal leaders who would act as their puppets in acquiring tribal lands. The Federal Indian Removal Act of the 1830's provided a final rationale for the state to gain total control of tribal lands in Connecticut. To maintain their diminishing hold on their lands, the Mohegans built a church and school to comply with Federal requirements that Indians be Christianized and civilized. (The Mohegan Tribe, 2002, p.28)

The 19th and 20th centuries can be explained through the words of Mohegans. Note the inherent values demonstrated in their words as well as the connection to homeland and place that is honored.

v. Martha Uncas (1761-1859)

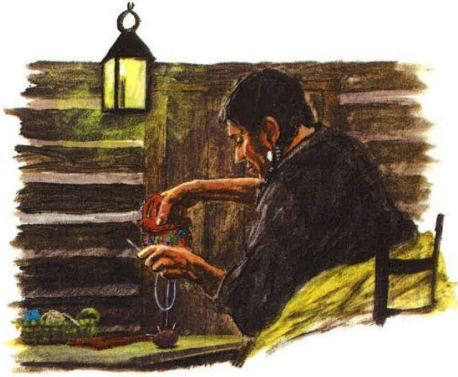


Illustration (on the left) of Martha Uncas from the book *Makiawisug, The Gift of the Little People* by Melissa Jayne Fawcett and Joseph Bruchac.

Martha Uncas passed on traditional tribal lifeways to selected Mohegans. Martha also taught Fidelia “Flying Bird” Fielding the Mohegan language, becoming a fluent speaker. She was both into a difficult era following a tribal plague in 1755 and fought for the demographic survival of her nation.

Video Resource: [Freedom / Unfreedom for Mohegan Women in the American Revolution – Unfinished \(unfinished250.org\)](https://www.unfinished250.org)

The formal title of Medicine Woman was restored by the first modern Mohegan Elders Council in 1991. To become a Medicine Person, an individual must be trained and well-versed in Tribal customs. They must possess a combination of exceptional powers and abilities to be truly “good medicine” for the people.

For centuries, Mohegan healing and medicine traditions were passed down through a determined line of women, including Lucy Occum, Martha Uncas, Emma Baker, and Gladys Tantaquidgeon. Although Medicine titles had been denounced by early Christian missionaries, these women were keepers of tradition and knowledge ensuring that Mohegan beliefs were learned from one another--generation to generation.

Student Activity: Students can learn more about the role of a Medicine Person, more about Martha Uncas, as well as dig deeper into Mohegan culture through the story, *The Gift of the Little People*. On the Educators Project within Oral Traditions, students can view to the book version as well as watch the Claymation of the story.

www.mohegan.nsn.us/resources/educational-resources/educators-project/lesson-plans/unit-one
C3 Framework Standards Addressed: D2.Geo.7., D2.His.4.

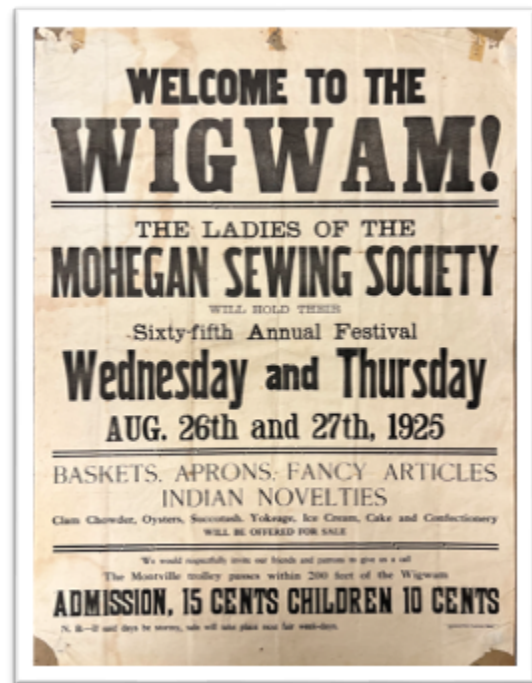
vi. Emma Baker (1828-1916)



Emma Baker (pictured left) is credited with revitalizing the Green Corn Festival, or Wigwam Festival.

She was a major force in celebrating and preserving Tribal culture in the late 1800's. Emma incorporated preservation and celebration into the goals of the Mohegan Church Ladies' Sewing Society in 1860, just before the break-up of the Mohegan reservation. The festival helped galvanize Tribal solidarity during a time of fragmentation.

Wigwam Festival Poster (pictured on the right) was hosted by the Ladies of the Mohegan Sewing Society in 1925.



It was Emma who recorded the desecration of the Norwich Royal Mohegan Burial Ground. She led the Mohegan Church Ladies Sewing Society in their matriarchal role considering new chiefs and discussing land claims. She also chaired the Tribal Council and represented the Tribe before the Connecticut legislature. She gained and passed on a knowledge of traditional herbal medicine that she learned from Martha Uncas.

Student Activity: Students can learn further and analyze the lives of 4 Notable Mohegan Women (Martha Uncas, Fidelia Fielding, Emma Baker, and Gladys Tantaquidgeon). Students will examine the roles, struggles, and successes through unique non-fiction readings and primary sources. Learners will engage through inquiry in the time each woman lived.

www.mohegan.nsn.us/resources/educational-resources/educators-project/lesson-plans/4-notable-women

C3 Framework Standards Addressed: D2.Hist.1., D2.His.2., D2.His.3., D2. His.4., D2.His.5., D2.His.6.

vii. Gladys Tantaquidgeon (1899-2005)

Trained by these three "grandmothers" in traditional herbal lore, Gladys Tantaquidgeon (1899-2005) is credited with preserving much of Mohegan history and culture as a living part of Tribal life and heritage. Her long life spanned the last days of those who lived traditionally to federal recognition and the Tribe's revival. She passed on a rich oral history from previous medicine women who spoke the Mohegan language and had heard the stories of another time.

From the century's early Chiefs and Elders, she learned of a culture that was nearly extinguished. Her understanding was deepened from her studies in ethnobotany and anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania under Dr. Frank Speck, a noted anthropologist who studied Indian culture. She herself studied other tribes and learned of the many connections and differences among them.



In 1931, Gladys co-founded Tantaquidgeon Museum along with her brother, Harold and father, John. In the 1930's she served as a community worker for the Bureau of Indian Affairs among western tribes and lived for years among the Lakota Sioux, helping them deal with unbearable poverty and cultural oppression.

Gladys Tantaquidgeon (pictured above)

During the 1940's she worked as a specialist for the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. When she returned to her own tribe in 1947, she spent the next years expanding her knowledge of Mohegan history and culture. All of this helped the Tribe prove its inherent sovereignty and unbroken heritage and gain federal recognition in 1994.

viii. Melissa Tantaquidgeon Zobel, Medicine Woman (2008-2022) and Tribal Historian (1960-)



Melissa Tantaquidgeon Zobel (pictured left) has taken a continually active role in the cultural and historical concerns of the Mohegan Tribe since her childhood in Uncasville, Connecticut, and was appointed Mohegan Medicine Woman in April 2008. Her great-aunt, Medicine Woman Gladys Tantaquidgeon, trained her in Tribal oral traditions, traditional lifeways and spiritual beliefs.

After graduating from The Williams School in New London, Connecticut, Zobel earned a B.S.F.S. in history/diplomacy from Georgetown University, an M.A. in history from the University of Connecticut, and an M.F.A. from Fairfield University in creative writing.

Zobel's writing on Native issues has been a constant in her life. In 1992, she won the first annual Non-Fiction Award of the Native Writer's Circle of the Americas, for her manuscript *The Lasting of the Mohegans* (Mohegan: Little People Publications, 1995). Shortly after that, Zobel became the first American Indian appointed by Governor Weicker to the Connecticut Historical Commission. In 1996, she received the first annual Chief Little Hatchet Award, granted for contributions to the success and survival of the Mohegan people. Zobel has authored several other books under the name Melissa Jayne Fawcett, including *Medicine Trail: The Life and Lessons of Gladys Tantaquidgeon* (University of Arizona Press, 2000) and a traditional Mohegan children's story co-authored with Joseph Bruchac, entitled *Makiawisug: The Gift of the Little People* (Mohegan: Little People Publications, 1997). Zobel has also authored novels involving mystery and supernatural elements in a Native context, including *Oracles*, (University of New Mexico Press, 2004) *Fire Hollow* (Raven's Wing Books, 2010), *Wabanaki Blues* (Poisoned Pen Press, 2015) and *Snowy Strangeways* (Urban Farmhouse Press, 2018). In 2018, Zobel won the Los Angeles Film Award for her feature fantasy screenplay for *Snowy Strangeways*. Her other feature screenplay, *Flying Bird's Diary*, about the life of Fidelia Fielding, the preserver of the Mohegan language, has won numerous screenplay awards in New York, Los Angeles, England, and Italy. Zobel is also working on a television version of *Wabanaki Blues*.

Melissa Tantaquidgeon Zobel is an integral part of the Mohegan Tribe. Her personal

and professional projects as an artist, a writer and Mohegan Historian, preserve the past and continue teachings of Tribal culture for future generations to come.

c. Path to Federal Recognition

After the Mohegan reservation was broken up in the 1860's and 1870's, the church remained tribally owned, per its original deed. Maintaining that sovereign land helped the Mohegans receive federal recognition of our sovereignty in 1994 and began the restoration of our reservation, along with the building of Tribal Elder housing, our community and government center, our cultural preservation center, and our businesses. A federally recognized tribe is a sovereign nation.



Article from the Norwich Bulletin, March 5, 1994

The Mohegan Tribe is a federally recognized tribe. Federally recognized tribes have a political relationship with the federal government that acknowledges the federal responsibility with native peoples. *The United States Congress established seven criteria for determining the eligibility of an American Indian Tribe for federal recognition. The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs administers all relationships between American Indian Tribes and the federal government. The Bureau makes the determination whether an American Indian tribe meets the criteria and if a tribe will be recognized.*

The Mohegan Tribe is one of a few tribes that have been able to meet the most rigorous 1978 Bureau of Indian Affairs standards for recognition as a sovereign Indian tribe. While the fairness of these standards is being debated, the Mohegan Tribe is proud of the vast proof of its continuous existence.

BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) Criteria for Federal Recognition- Under the BIA's regulations, a tribe may petition the interior secretary for recognition. The petition must meet seven criteria. It must contain:

1. A statement of facts establishing that the tribe has been identified from historical times until the present on a substantially continuous basis as "American Indian" or "aboriginal"
2. Evidence that a substantial portion of the group inhabits a specific area or lives in a community viewed as American Indian and distinct from other populations in the area, and that its members are descendants of an Indian tribe which historically inhabited a specific area
3. Evidence that the tribe has maintained tribal political authority or influence over its members as an autonomous entity throughout history until the present
4. A copy of the tribe's governing document, including membership criteria, or, if it does not have a formal governing document, a description of its membership criteria and governing procedures
5. An official membership list, any available former lists, and evidence that current members descend from a historic tribe or tribes that combined into a single autonomous political entity
6. Evidence that the tribe consists mainly of people who are not members of an acknowledged North American Indian tribe
7. A statement that the tribe is not the subject of the congressional legislation that has terminated or forbidden the federal trust relationship (per 25 CFR Part 83.7a-g)*.

*These were the standards in place in 1994, when the Mohegan Tribe was recognized. They have since changed.

Mohegan Tribal Chief, G'tinemong/Ralph W. Sturges, delivered the following words at the tribe's March 20, 1994, Federal Recognition Party at Ocean Beach's Port and Starboard in New London: "We are no longer the little tribe that lives upon the hill. We are now the nation that lives upon the hill."

Meeting federal standards meant providing historical documentation of our collective identity as a tribe. Much of Mohegan history is handed down through oral tradition, so finding the right documents might have been a big challenge.

There was no lack of documentation, with 20,000 pages of documents submitted as part of the process. Collecting this took years of work by many tribal members.

Because of our rich and living history, evidence of Mohegan existence and identity as a tribe is abundant even to the casual observer today in local place names, family names, historic sites, story trails, artifacts and living culture.

Native Americans choose to pursue, or not pursue, federal recognition as it relates to the best interests of their respective tribal communities. The Mohegan Tribe chose this path to secure the benefits of a government-to-government relationship with the United States of America. Those benefits include, among others, the ability to govern our own affairs, access to federal programs and federal protection for tribal lands, including graves. This protected status extends archaeological protection and sovereignty over those properties as well. With new empowerment, the Mohegan Nation is realizing its vision.

Student Activity: Students can analyze the criteria for federal recognition as well as the path to providing proof to the federal government from the Mohegan Tribe.

www.mohegan.nsn.us/about/government/tribal-sovereignty/federal-recognition

C3 Framework Standards Addressed: D2.Civ.1., D2. Civ.4., D2. Civ.6.

d. Mohegan Chiefs of the 20th Century

Throughout the 20th century, the Mohegan Tribe looked to its succession of chiefs for guidance during this challenging time of increasing pressure on Tribal customs and traditions. An appointment of Chief was a tradition held pre 20th century times as well.

A Mohegan Chief is a tribal member who, as a result of outstanding character, diplomacy, and leadership of the tribe, has earned great veneration within the tribe and has become preeminently qualified to represent the tribe as its honorary Sachem.

Video Resource: www.mohegan.nsn.us/explore/mohegan-moments-video-series [Mohegan Chiefs & Self Governance]



Chief Wegun / Henry Mathews (1902-1903)

A renowned basket maker, from a long line of basket makers, Mathews' style remains one of the most admired. Utilizing extremely narrow natural and verdigris ash splints he created baskets for sale, ceremony, and display.



Chief Occum / Lemuel Fielding (1903-1928)

A peace chief born in 1859, Lemuel was active in the Boy Scouts, Mohegan Church and the Wigwam Committee. In 1921, he traveled to Washington, D.C. to reclaim the Royal Mohegan Burial Ground. He also served on the Algonquian Indian Council.



Chief Everett Fielding (1929-1935)

Everett was the son of Lemuel and Alice Fielding. He was born in 1887 and served as Assistant Chief of the Mohegan Indian Association before becoming Tribal Chief. Fielding was also active on the Wigwam Committee. He had one daughter, Elsie Lucille Fielding Eichelberg.



Chief Peegee Uncas / Julian Harris (1935-1937)

Born in 1872 to Gertrude and Gerry Harris, Chief Peegee was an avid hunter. His contributions include representing the Tribe before the state legislature in 1941, serving on the Tribal Council and Wigwam Committee and on the Algonquian Indian Council. He married Elizabeth Burniston and they had one child, Raymond Norton Harris.



Chief Matahga / Burrill Fielding (1937-1952)

Burrill was a War Chief, born to Eliphalet and Lydia Fielding in 1862. He married Annie L. Teevan and worked hard to keep the tribe together and maintain the traditions of the Wigwam Festival, both in construction of the arbor and in making clam chowder, oyster stew and yokeag. Matahga also fought for

land claims in Hartford, including the return of the Royal Mohegan Burial Ground. Burrill was also president of the Mohegan Tribal social club.



**Chief Harold Albert Tantaquidgeon
(1952-1970)**

In 1904, Harold was born to Harriet and John W. Tantaquidgeon. Along with his father and sister, Gladys, he co-founded the Tantaquidgeon Museum, where he practiced woodworking, lectured on Algonquian Indian lore, and built a longhouse and a wigwam. Also active in the restoration of the Mohegan Church, he was a hero in World War II and opened the Mohegan-Pequot Bridge with Governor Dempsey in 1967.

He was known for his involvement with outside activities and teaching children about Mohegan traditions, reasoning, "One day, when some of them grow up to become congressmen and senators voting on Indian issues, maybe their visit here will guide them to vote the right way."



**Chief Little Hatchet / Courtland Fowler
(1970-1991)**

The son of Edwin Fowler and Elizabeth Northdruff, he was born in 1905. Courtland married Hope Holder. He was responsible for the repair of the Mohegan Church and the addition of the Sunday School in the 1950s. He fought to preserve Tribal burial grounds, keeping Ashbow burial ground from being absorbed by neighboring property owners and opposing vandalism at Shantok, as well as advocating for its return.



**Chief G'tinemong / Ralph W. Sturges
(1992-2007)**

Ralph Sturges, born in 1918, is one of a long line of Mohegan chiefs since Uncas who have followed his example as a friend of the non-Indian and man of his word. Those values enabled him to serve successfully as a security and intelligence officer in World War II. Ralph became a marble sculptor, a lifelong passion that places him in an extensive line of great Mohegan carvers who were also chiefs. His local artistic

contributions include a donation of a whale sculpture to the late Governor Ella Grasso and the presentation of a relief carving of Uncas's mark to Uncas Elementary School in Norwich, Connecticut.

Ralph also carved an Indian head logo (designed by the late Michael Cooney, son of Tribal Nonner Roberta Schultz Cooney) for Montville High School in 1986 and the base for the repatriated Samuel Uncas gravestone in 1992.

During the 1980s, Ralph served on the Mohegan Tribal Council and chaired the Burial Committee. Following the death of Courtland Fowler, Ralph was elected Lifetime Chief in 1992. His greatest accomplishment was leading the Mohegans to successfully complete the federal recognition process. Following federal recognition in 1994, Ralph Sturges became the first Mohegan Chief legally acknowledged by the United States government.

IV. Mohegan Ways Today
a. Reclaiming our Language



Welcome Sign (pictured left): Mohegan Language Project Collaboration with the Mohegan Sun Pautipaug Golf Course, 2023

The Mohegan Tribe has prioritized the reclamation of our spoken and written Mohegan-Pequot language through cultural classes and programming for all Mohegan Tribal members. To reclaim a language, one must understand who we are, commit to moving forward while healing, learn throughout our homes and

community, and address the negative aspects and change colonization has had on our community. Through youth summer camp and immersion classes of many levels, the language is growing and thriving.

Fidelia “Flying Bird” Fielding (1827-1908), a Mohegan, was once known as the last fluent speaker of the Mohegan-Pequot language. Now that the Mohegan Tribe is reclaiming our language, that is not the case anymore. Using Fidelia’s Mohegan written diaries and other sister languages in the area, the Mohegan Language Project can rebuild the missing elements from our language.

“The language is called Mohegan-Pequot by linguists because it is the same language used by both tribes.” (Mohegan Language Department, 2023) The Mohegan-Pequot language is still seen in many place names today around Connecticut.

Student Activity: Students can discuss place names around where they live or where their school is located. Do the place names show a connection to the importance of the land? Are the place names Indigenous words to the people who lived here before your school was built? What is the Native American history of the land your school sits on today?

C3 Framework Standards Addressed: Geography- D2.Geo.1., D2.Geo.2., D2.Geo.7., D2.His.3.

b. Mohegan Government

The Mohegan Tribe is a sovereign, federally recognized Indian Nation, with its own constitution and government. Not only does the Tribe govern itself, but many Tribal administrative departments oversee the everyday function of the reservation and provide for Tribal members. While the best-known Tribal enterprise may be Mohegan Sun, the Mohegan Tribe also owns and operates other enterprises that benefit the Tribe and the community.

Chief Mutáwi Mutáhash “Many Hearts” Lynn Malerba



"Our goal is to make sure that all of our Tribal Nations thrive, survive, and celebrate who they are. There is a lot of restoration that has to happen. We are up to the challenge. Many times, we hear about intergenerational depression. I believe that we have intergenerational resilience." -Chief Lynn Malerba (pictured left)

Chief Lynn Malerba became the 18th Chief of the Mohegan Tribe on August 15, 2010, and is the first female Chief in the Tribe's modern history. The position is a lifetime appointment made by the Tribe's Council of Elders. Lynn follows in the footsteps of many strong female role models in the Mohegan Tribe, including her mother, Loretta Roberge, who held the position of Tribal Nonner (elder female of respect) as well as her great-grandfather Chief Matagha (Burrill Fielding).

Prior to becoming Chief, she served as Chairwoman of the Tribal Council, and served in Tribal Government as Executive Director of Health and Human Services. Preceding her work for the Mohegan Tribe, Lynn had a lengthy career as a registered nurse as the Director of Cardiology and Pulmonary Services at Lawrence & Memorial Hospital. She earned a Doctor of Nursing Practice at Yale University, named a Jonas Scholar. She was awarded an honorary Doctoral degree in Science from Eastern Connecticut State University and an honorary Doctoral Degree in Humane Letters from the University of St. Joseph in West Hartford, CT. She earned a master's degree in public administration from the University of Connecticut and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the College of St. Joseph.

She is Chairwoman of the Tribal Self-Governance Advisory Committee of the Federal Indian Health Service (IHS), a member of the Justice Department's Tribal Nations Leadership Council, a member of the Tribal Advisory Committee for the National Institute of Health, and a member of the Treasury Tribal Advisory Committee. She serves as the United South and Eastern Tribes Board of Directors Secretary.

Locally she serves as a Trustee for Chelsea Groton Bank, Board Member for the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, and on the Provost's Advisory Committee Member for the Harvard University Native American Program

She published "The Effects of Sequestration on Indian Health Funding" in the Hastings Center Report, Nov-Dec. 2013 and authored two chapters in "American Indian Health and Nursing" Ed. Margaret P. Moss, Springer Publishing Company.



Lynn Malerba (pictured left), chief of the Mohegan Tribe, is the first Native American to serve as U.S. treasurer. She said her appointment is a commitment to having Native voices heard at the highest levels of government. On September 12, 2022, Chief Malerba was sworn into that role. For a transcript of her remarks, please visit:

home.treasury.gov/

Video Resource:

www.mohegan.nsn.us/resources/media/press-releases/2022/09/13/chief-malerba-sworn-in-as-u.s.-treasurer

Student Activity: Students can learn more about Chief Lynn Malerba’s leadership and responsibilities as well as her mark (pictured to the right). How does Chief Malerba’s mark (pictured right) represent both her life’s work as well as the Mohegan Tribe’s history? Visit the 2 Sachems unit of the Educators Project for extended student readings and activities.



www.mohegan.nsn.us/resources/educational-resources/educators-project/lesson-plans/two-sachems

C3 Framework Standards Addressed: D2.Civ.1., D2.Civ.4., D2.Civ.10., D2.His.3.

As a sovereign Nation, the Mohegan Tribe has its own governmental structure and the power to govern itself within guidelines set by the U.S. Constitution. The Mohegan Nation's Tribal Constitution provides that the Tribe shall be governed by a **Tribal Council**, consisting of nine tribal members, and a **Council of Elders**, consisting of seven tribal members.

All legislative and executive powers of the Tribe not granted to the Council of Elders are vested with the Tribal Council. The Council of Elders oversees judicial matters and the Tribe's cultural integrity. The Council of Elders also exercises legislative powers with respect to tribal membership and enrollment. The **Tribal Court** adjudicates on all non-gaming matters.



The Mohegan Constitution defines the scope, structure and procedures for governance of the Mohegan Tribal Nation. This Constitution outlines the rights and responsibilities of our members and governing bodies. **[View the Mohegan Tribe Constitution.](#)**

The Chief’s Garden (pictured above) is located in front of the Mohegan Tribe’s Community and Government Center. The statues in this garden represent Chiefs of the Mohegan Tribe who made sure that our Tribal sovereignty was represented.

c. Mohegan Constitution Preamble

We, The Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut answerable to our ancestors, in order to secure to ourselves and our descendants the management of our own affairs as a sovereign American Indian Nation, to ensure the maintenance of our basic human rights, to exercise our sovereign rights as a federally recognized Indian tribe, including the right of self-determination and self-governance, and to promote the general welfare of The Mohegan People, do hereby establish, adopt and proclaim this Constitution.

Video Resource: www.mohegan.nsn.us/explore/mohegan-moments-video-series [Mohegan Chiefs & Self Governance]

Student Activity: Students can dig deeper into Tribal Sovereignty as well as view the Mohegan Constitution to learn about the scope, structure, and procedures for governance of the Mohegan Tribe. The Constitution outlines the rights and responsibilities of our members and governing bodies. Students can also learn more about how the Mohegan Nation's Tribal Constitution provides that the Tribe shall be governed by a Tribal Council, consisting of nine tribal members, and a Council of Elders, consisting of seven tribal members.

www.mohegan.nsn.us/about/government/tribal-sovereignty

www.mohegan.nsn.us/about/government

C3 Framework Standards Addressed: D2.Civ.1., D2. Civ.4., D2. Civ.6.

d. Mohegan Vision Statement

We are the Wolf People, children of Mundo, a part of the Tree of Life. our ancestors form our roots, our living Tribe is the trunk, our grandchildren are the buds of our future. We remember and teach the stories of our ancestors. We watch. We listen. We learn. We respect Mother Earth, our Elders, and all that comes with Mundo. We are willing to break arrows of peace to heal old and new wounds. We acknowledge and learn from our mistakes. We walk as a single spirit on the Trail of Life. We are guided by thirteen generations past and responsible for thirteen generations to come. We survive as a nation guided by the wisdom of our past. Our circular trail returns us to wholeness as a people. Ni Ya Yo.

-The vision statement was developed by the Mohegan Strategic Planning Committee and adopted by the Council of Elders in 1997.



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