

THE WECKQUAESGEEK

Where have they all gone, our earliest inhabitants of Ardsley? Why are there no descendants proudly proclaiming that they had Weckquaesgeek ancestors? By the late sixteen hundreds, only a small remnant of these people remained in our Hudson area and we are the poorer for their tragic banishment. All we have left to remind us that they actually walked our wooded shores and hills are such names as Wicker's Creek (from their tribal name, Weckquaesgeek), Sing Sing (from Sint Sinck), and Pocantico, Mamaroneck, Nepperhan, Muscoot, Katonah, Shenorock and Tuckahoe, to list a few Indian names still in use.

Human population is now known to have existed in our region for more than five thousand years. A cool and moist climate prevailed in the Northeast region since the birth of Christ and our Algonkian Indians' ancestors were probably already residents here by that time. They developed from small nomadic bands who only moved temporarily, seasonally for hunting, fishing and gathering purposes, according to modern archaeologists.

These Algonkian people shared a common language. Our Weckquaesgeek spoke the Munsee dialect. There are thirty spellings of their tribal name on record, from Wyquasquec to Wetquescheck, but I have chosen the most commonly used one by historians, and the most phonetic. The Weckquaesgeek name derives from "son" or "grandson" (of the Delaware) who moved east of the Hudson.

The lower Hudson Valley, where our earliest Indians settled to stay, was a very hospitable terrain. It was rich in fish, shellfish, game and edible plants, with waterways for transportation to aid in fishing and trading. They were a mobile and peaceful people, trading amongst the various Algonkian tribes around them. The land was fertile for planting crops and contained flint, essential to the primitive hunter for projectile points. Chestnuts, oak and hickory trees abounded, along with sweet gum, willow and persimmon. With these necessities of life so easily obtainable, as is true in the Northwest Coastal Indian Culture, these people must have had leisure time for weaving, carving and pottern making, as well as jewelry making for self adornment. It is sad that so little of their artifacts exist today due to their early departure in our history.

In 1600 the Wappinger population, of which by one historical account our Weckquaesgeek were a subtribe, contained three thousand souls. The Connecticut bands contained one thousand seven hundred fifty. After the early wars with the Dutch, these groups were reduced to one thousand six hundred.

The Wappinger Confederacy ran from Manhattan to Poughkeepsie, where it met the Mahican Confederacy. The Mohegans in Connecticut may have been an offshoot from the larger Mahican group. The Wappingers extended from the Hudson River to the lower Connecticut Valley on the East. The Weckquaesgeeks, largest and most prominent of the Wappinger subtribes, made their homes from Manhattan to the Pocantico River on the North, and from the Hudson on the West, to the Bronx River on the East. Their neighbors on the North were the Sint Sinck; on the East the Siwanoy and Apawamis; on the South, the Manhattans; with the Hackensack and Tappan across the Hudson to the West. Their mutual enemy, the Iroquois, were located to the Northwest in the Mohawk River Valley and in Western New York, and came from a different linguistic stock.

The major Weckquaesgeek Village, called Weckquasguck, stood where Mercy College is now in Dobbs Ferry beside the Wysquaqua Stream, now called Wicker's Creek. Further up the Hudson, called Mohicanituck, lay another large village called Alipconck, where Tarrytown is today. There was a village at Ardsley by the Saw Mill River, and the present Ashford Avenue and Old Saw Mill River Road were Indian trails. A known hunting area lies above Sprain Road between Ashford Avenue and the present Salvation Army camp. It was called Thirty Deer Ridge and contained a cave where Arthur Silliman, late Ardsley Historian, found arrowheads and hunting tools as a boy. Artifacts and relics were founded on the Savino Truck Farm and the old Acker Farm, now part of the Ardsley Middle School and close to the reputed hunting ridge.

HOUSES AND SETTLEMENTS

The Indians chose elevated areas and those with good drainage on which to establish their villages. Our Westchester Indians built the round wigwam type structure, some large enough to hold an extended family of twenty-five to thirty people. Only the Canarsie on Long Island seemed to have the long structures similar to the Iroquois Longhouses, but rounded, not pointed, on top. The wigwams were constructed of bent poles lashed together and covered by bark, such as chestnut or ash. In the winter, skins were added and a skin could be used to cover the doorway and smoke hole. The cooking fire was in the center with the smoke hole directly above it.

Mats were often used on the inside walls for insulation and were woven by the women. Pine benches covered with skins, were the only furniture, running around the inside walls and used for sleeping. Baskets and strings of dried foods were hung from the horizontal poles in the roof. The work of building the homes was shared by both sexes, with the men cutting the poles and the women constructing the houses. The men, however, helped to build the larger council houses and their sweat lodges.

Villages varied in size and were near the planting grounds. Natural boundaries, now obliterated, enclosed sources of livelihood and were undoubtedly shared in common by each tribal group, sometimes comprising more than one village, but under the jurisdiction of one chief.

Other types of shelters existed for temporary use, such as at maple sugaring time and for hunting and fishing excursions. After the European incursion when friction arose, frequently over the fur trade which extended up to Fort Orange (Albany), Castles or Pallisade Forts were built in a circle around the villages for protection. They were built of planks nine feet high, braced with heavier planks and dotted with portfoles. Each held up to thirty men. In 1644 there were still three entrenched castles, but in 1663 only one castle remained around a village of four hundred Weckquaesgeeks, headed by Chiefs Tocuvenare and his brother Sonuvenarowe.

APPEARANCE AND ATTIRE

Our Indians were tall and slender waisted, with broad shoulders, and none were ever observed by Europeans to be misformed, fat or with mental problems. Their teeth were snow white and they had good complexions, with dark eyes black hair and a regal bearing.

The earliest written account by Verrazano on 1524, states that; "Among them (the Indians who came aboard his ship Narragansett Bay) were two kings more beautiful in form and stature than can possibly be described; one was forty years old, the other about twenty four, and they were dressed in the following manner: the oldest had a deer's skin around his body, artificially wrought in damask figures (elaborately painted), his head was without covering, his hair was tied back in various knots, around his neck he wore a long chain (necklace) ornamented with many stones of different colors. They exceed us in size, and they are of very fair complexion; some of them incline more to a white, and others to a tawny color; their faces are sharp, their hair long and black, upon

the adorning of which they bestow great pains; their eyes are black and sharp, their expressions mild and pleasant; their women are of the same form and beauty, very graceful of fine countenances and pleasing appearance in manners and modesty; they wear no clothing but a deerskin, ornamented like those of the men; some wear very rich lynx skins on their arms, and various ornaments upon their heads, composed of braids of hair, which also hang down upon their breasts on either side... the older and married people, both men and women, wear many ornaments in their ears, hanging down in the Oriental manner."

Hudson quotes, at first contact with the native near the Narrows; "Many of the people came aboard, some in mantles of feathers, and some in skins of divers sorts of good furs. Some women also came to us with hemp (woven bast, Indian hemp or nettle fiber). They have red copper tobacco pipes and other things of copper they did wear about their necks".

They were good swimmers, and employed bark canoes for long distance travel, instead of their dug-outs. They probably used elm bark like the Iroquois, as birch trees large enough for use in canoes and homes were only accessible to the northern tribes in what is now Canada.

Men plucked their beards and painted their faces for feasts, ceremonies or battles in colors of blue, black, white, yellow or red. They formed their hair in a coxcomb with shaven sides, or a coxcomb in front with long hair in back, often adding feathers or a foxtail hanging down the back. They wore necklaces of shell, copper and wampum. Bear grease was used as protection against cold, sun and mosquitos. Some people tattooed their faces and bodies with lines of black dots.

The men made wampum beads from Quahog clam shells, using them for ornament as well as a medium of exchange in trading. The Weckquaesgeek were big wampum producers since they lived in such close proximity to Long Island beaches from which shells were taken for the making of wampum.

The women had long black hair worn straight or in braids, often tied with strings or shells. They sometimes cut the front of their hair in bangs, and wore headbands or small square caps. Their slim waists were often enclosed by girdles decorated with wampum.

Birth was unattended in a shelter of mats prepared by the mother-to-be. Babies were quickly immersed in a stream following birth, then swaddled in a soft skin bag enclosure that was attached to a cradleboard. Many of the Mohawks, as well as the Navajo, Apache and Cree still use these cradleboards today and decorate them with carving, painting and beadwork, claiming that they

give the baby a sense of security. Moss was used in lieu of diapers. A baby could be safely carried, propped against a tree or hung on a branch while the mother did her work nearby. A baby usually outgrows the board at nine months of age.

Children were kindly treated but discipline was carefully observed and they shared in many of the work responsibilities of family living.

Herbs were used with great success, including red cedar-berries following childbirth; witch hazel to cool fevers; goldenrod to cure colds; raspberry plant for upset stomach, and yarrow for toothache, to name just a few. The Indians bathed daily in the lakes and streams right into cold weather, much to the horror of the Europeans who considered it unhealthy and preferred perfumes.

The tanning of hides was an essential laborious process carried out by the women. The skin was first stretched flat and the flesh scraped clean with a sharpened deer shin bone. It was then washed and soaked for several days, then smoothed out flat again and the hair scraped off. The brain of a large animal such as a deer, cooked with fat and moss, was rubbed into the hide to soften it and it was left to soak overnight. After more rubbing with a stone or bone tool, it was smoked over a smudge fire to a yellow-brown or darker brown, by timing, for the desired color. Very simple sewing was used to make the garments. Holes were made with a bone awl, and bone or thorn needles were used with thread from plant fiber.

Mocassin making and designs distinguished one group or tribe from another and were all of the soft sole variety in the Northeast.

Bearskins were used for blankets in cold weather with the hair left intact.

SUSTENANCE, TOOLS AND METHODS OF USE

The Hudson area abounded in fish and shellfish, as well as wild game, edible plants and berries and fertile soil. Oyster shells were found in heaps near former Weckquasgeek Villages along the river and further inland, some in rectangular patterns clearly delineating the perimeters of villages. The oysters were eaten cooked, we know, since isotopes of carbon were found in piles at one site, one remnant found to be five thousand eight hundred fifty years old in a Yale Geochronometric Laboratory report. This was the oldest known campfire in New York State and one of the oldest in the Northeast.

Fish nets, weirs, and hook and lines were used for fishing, usually in the dugout canoes of sycamore, manipulated with short scoop-like paddles. These boats carried up to twenty men.

The Westchester woods had plentiful game such as deer, wildcat, bear, elk, turkey, fox, snakes, frogs, skunks and beaver, (prize peltry of the fur trade in later years). Spears, javelins, and bows and arrows were used for hunting, with finely chipped triangular arrowheads of flint and bone. In warfare, club type weapons were also used.

The women did the planting and harvesting with the help of the children, according to the phases of the moon, while the men did the hunting. Corn, beans, squash and pumpkins were the major crops. Egg, berry and acorn gathering as well as maple sugar, supplemented the diet. The earliest Indians used stone and bark bowls for eating as well as cooking. Later gourds, shell spoons and pottery were employed. The Iroquois and Algonquins fashioned the same shaped round bottom, square topped cooking pots of clay, suspended over the fire, when in use. They drank only water which they kept scrupulously clean. Big bowls of marble (from Tuckahoe), retained heat longer for cooking tougher meats and boiling maple syrup.

A wooden drill was spun in dry leaves and bark to start the fires. The suspended pot full of stew was left to simmer for hours with food added now and then as gathered and when fresh meat arrived. Family members could help themselves whenever hungry as there was no set time for meals on average days. The Indians had a reputation for hospitality to guests and were known to be very generous by custom and nature. A typical meal might consist of a meat or corn stew, bread, eggs and water, or shellfish and baked beans with water and bread. Breads were made from cornmeal or acorns, boiled or baked. Shellfish and pots of beans were cooked by placing them overnight in a pit in which a fire had been made. Meat and fish were smoked for preserving over corncob fires. Parched corn, pounded into flour, was made after browning the kernels, first, and with the addition of berries, chopped meat and maple sugar, this mixture could be used to take along traveling. A little water was added when it was eaten. Baskets were used to store food, some course and some woven with a design in black.

Women did the cooking and sewing, as well as the harvesting and owned and transported all the domestic family possessions when moving camp.

Men made the tools and weapons as well as the canoes, and carried them when moving camp. Men also made the wampum from the purple and white portions of the oyster shells, and went on trading expeditions with it.

An English account of 1670 stated that tents were used when tribes moved to their hunting, fishing and corn planting grounds, two to three times a year.

When alcohol was introduced, it changed the native way of life, gradually breaking it down dramatically and making them more and more dependent on the Europeans as their craving grew, in spite of protests by Dutch and English Governors and their own tribal chiefs. The "Medical Tribune" XIV, No. 36 of September 26, 1973, states, following an experiment of intravenously infusing Europeans, Indians and Eskimos with alcohol, that "Indians and Eskimos are significantly slower at metabolising the alcohol" and that genetic reasons must be the cause.

FAMILY AND TRIBAL ORGANIZATION

The basic Algonkian social unit was the biological family composed of parents and children in one wigwam, and often housing married children and their offspring, with an elderly man as family head. A village contained many such wigwams with a chief or sachem as head, an office usually dependent on heredity. Next in order, a principal or tribal sachem was in authority over a group of chieftaincies, helped by a tribal council of lesser sachems, picked to advise him in a democratic atmosphere. This also encompassed the special tribal war chiefs when needed for organized warfare. A great warrior could become a military chief but not attain supreme leadership unless born with a proper degree of kinship to the paramount chief in office at that time.

These tribes and subtribes were organized into larger Confederations, our Weckquaesgeek being the strongest tribe under the Wappinger Confederacy, with the Mahican to their North and Mohegan on the East. Wappinger means "Easterner." The powerful Mohawks often came down and exacted tribute.

Weckquaesgeek sachems listed in grantors' land records are: Ponupahowhelbshelen, 1649; Ackhough, 1660; Souvenera, 1663; Weskora and Goharius, his brother, 1680; and Wessickenaiuw and Conahanded, his brother.

A chief called Mamaroneck or "Limping Will" or Mahmoanuck, which last means, "he assembles the people," lived in Dobbs Ferry or Weckquasguck, until that village was destroyed by the Dutch in January, 1644 under Lt. Baxter and Sgt. Cook. He later resided at Kicktawanc or Croton River and appeared in Fort Amsterdam in April, 1644 to sue for peace for his people. He sold some land in 1661 and in his last recorded action that we have, he helped sell Senasqua Point in Croton in 1682 to Cornelius Van Burgum.

What is believed to be his remains were found by a Croton woman gardening in 1935 in her yard, and now repose in a glass case in the Tarrytown Historical Society. His skeleton was found buried in the traditional flexed position with a shell ornament around his neck. A beautifully shaped pottery bowl, charred corn, shell ornaments, arrowheads, and a tomahawk head are with his skeleton, as originally buried. One leg bone is deformed and there is a groove in his skull. His bottom teeth are intact and show the flat edged incisors that help identify him as an Indian.

Clan information seems very loose and weak and is perhaps partially lost with the passing of time. Unlike the Iroquois, Tlingit of the Northwest, and many other tribes who still adhere to the clan system today and who must always marry outside their own clan, the Algonkians seem to have lost the importance of this tradition, perhaps due to assimilation and adopting the Christian Religion. While the Iroquois have the bear, eel, snipe, eagle and deer, to name a few clan symbols, we know of the turkey, the turtle and the wolf among other animal clan symbols. Our Weckquaesgeek probably belonged to the Wolf Clan, according to Pullenlier.

The marriage ceremony was simple, sealed by a gift of presents given by the groom to the bride's parents. Chastity in wedlock was obligatory with punishment meted out for violation by either party. Wife lending was acceptable if agreeable to the woman, and unmarried people had complete sexual freedom. Divorce was accepted and simple with the children staying with the mother. Children were always treated with great affection.

There was no special apparatus for law enforcement as we know it, before the European incursion. Principal chiefs of the tribes sometimes inflicted corporal punishment on criminals personally. A strong sense of family responsibility and the threat of vengeance sanctioned by custom, were usually effective deterrents and later proved to work better than European style criminal justice procedure. To quote early Dutch lawyer Adriaen Van der Donck; "how uncommon crimes were among the Hudson River Indians;" and "With us a watchful police is supported and crimes are more frequent than among them."

Their only recorded language was in graphs or pictures which rendered the passing on of history in traditional stories very essential. These were handed down through generations, often told by the fire at night, sometimes with strings of wampum held by the teller to refresh his memory. A seventy-one year old Mohawk lady recently told me with great nostalgia, how much the children in her family enjoyed hearing her father tell the old legends on cold winter nights in this manner.

They had no radio, electricity or plumbing and he could neither read nor write, when she was a girl in a large reservation family upstate at St. Regis-Akwesasne.

RELIGION AND CEREMONIES

Religion among all our Native People was combined with their respect and reliance on the gifts that the earth and the elements provided. Spirits identified with Thunder, Lightening, Winds, Sun and Fire, and "manitos" who were both kind and evil spirits, were a daily part of their cultural beliefs. Yotoanit was their fire god; Paumagussit was the sea god; and the moon was called Nanepaishot.

Healing rites by a Shaman or Medicine Man was done by both herbal and spiritual means in the belief that illness was caused very often by evil spirits that required a magical exorcism. Like the Iroquois, some of whom still practice these ancient rites within the Longhouse Religion today, wooden masks with spiritual powers were worn. These were used for curing ceremonies and also at the Corn Harvest Festival to honor Mother Corn, and at the Big House Ceremony, where a masked dancer represented a guardian spirit who controlled both sickness and the deer hunt.

Again like the Iroquois, boys fasted in an initiation rite around puberty, waiting for a vision that would be their personal power or guide throughout their lives. These visions usually appeared as a particular animal, bird or other symbol of nature after a time of preparation and seclusion.

Omens were much sought after and heeded, and charms or amulets were worn to control supernatural powers, particularly at crucial times.

The following ceremonies are from the Delaware and almost certainly the same ones our Hudson River Algonkian group observed:

In January the new moon began the year and was celebrated by a ten to twelve day festival. A feast with bear meat was eaten in a rite thought to be ordained by the Creator. Prayers and sermons were followed by a tug-of-war game between the men and the women. Next came dancing and a recounting of visions and dreams.

In March the Festival of the Hungry Moon started with a prayer for good sap, followed by the Maple Sugar Dance. Maple sugar goodies, saved from the previous year, were distributed amidst chants, dances and the hoop-and-pole game.

May ushered in the ceremony of the Planting Time Moon.

June brought the Strawberry Moon Festival starting with a prayer by the chief and followed by the drinking of strawberry juice. Later wampum beads were tossed on the floor for the children to scramble after and gather up. This ceremony ended with a recital of visions and a sermon.

In September came the Corn Beginning to Ripen Moon Ceremony, and later the Green Corn Ceremony, which lasted seven days and seven nights. Corn husk masks and wooden false faces were worn by the men while the women carried cakes of corn while dancing. A sermon closed this major event.

Late in the Fall, after the hunters slew and brought home a bear, a family purification feast was held. This Bear Feast took place in the Big House, a long wigwam constructed for ceremonies. It was a representation of the sky come down to earth and Ursa Major was projected on the floor. The dancers rotated in imitation of Ursa Major's rotation path in the sky, thus renewing the eternal relationship of earth beings and sky beings.

Among the beliefs of these Algonkian people was an acceptance of many other spirits such as those who govern the four corners of the earth; Grandfather who lives where daylight begins; Grandmother who dwells where it is warm; Grandfather who dwells where the sun goes down; and Grandfather where it is winter cold.

The Sun and Moon were called elder brothers, and the Thunders were Elder Brothers with wings. Our Mother the Earth cared for and fed the people, while a Masked Being had charge of the wild animals. The Corn Spirit controlled vegetation, plus many other lesser spirits like Small People, Doll Being and Snow Boy.

The Algonquins believed in immortality and were carefully and mournfully interred in bark lined graves facing Southwest, the Manito Kitan's resting place. The Westchester Heritage Map marks four Weckquaesgeek burial grounds, one located in present day Ardsley by the Weckquaesgeek village by the Saw Mill River, about where Saw Mill River Road and Dobbs Ferry Road join.

HISTORY OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF OUR HUDSON RIVER INDIANS WITH THE DUTCH AND THE ENGLISH

When explorer Henry Hudson sailed up the Mohicanituck River, later named for him, on September 14, 1609, his first acquaintance with the Indians proved a portent of things to come betwixt the Natives and the Europeans.

The natives were at first afraid of this vast ship with its billowing sails and strange men with long hair and white skin. Two who ventured aboard, at Hudson's invitation, quickly jumped overboard and swam to shore. While the Half Moon lay becalmed, some curious Indians finally came aboard, and in the childlike way of these simple natives excited by European goods, one of them stole a pillow, two shirts and a bandolier from a sailor's chest. The mate shot and killed him and in the course of flight, one of the others had his hand cut off by a sword while trying to snatch the pilfered items, and he drowned. Later two canoes full of Indians attacked in retribution at Spuyten Duyvil and several were shot by the Dutch sailors, causing the rest to flee. One more canoe appeared and an Indian was killed by buckshot. Thus began the first Dutch contact.

As New Netherlands grew and thrived, the Dutch established a flourishing fur trade with the Indians starting with a post at Castle Island, Albany, in 1614. Beaver were greatly sought after in Europe and were used for hats, coats and other apparel, bringing very high prices. Our Weckquaesgeek lived in direct line of the major fur trade routed within New Netherlands from New Amsterdam (New York City) to Fort Orange (Albany), and took an active part in it.

The Dutch were more commercially minded than conversion minded. Dutch ministers had little luck converting the Indians with the Colonists setting such a bad example with their greed, hypocrisy and covert selling of brandy, long after it was found to cause serious problems and was forbidden.

The English attitude surfaced later in a statement that it was "God's Will" that so many Indians died from contracting their diseases. Both European groups felt decidedly superior.

With trade increasing, the Natives adopted tools and household articles from the settlers into their culture and became dependent on them. These peaceful people, who so often saved the earliest settlers from starvation, learned too late that their growing desire for guns and liquor led to an addiction that would destroy them as the greedy newcomers pressed them for more and more land. Laws were finally passed prohibiting the sale of liquor to Indians, but were consistently broken, and it was clandestinely sold up and down the Hudson Valley.

Many Dutch men married Indian women and many Dutch women captives preferred to remain with the Indians due to their superior status in the matriarchal society.

The first recorded bloody incident I found concerning an aged Weckquaesgeek warrior, took place in September 1626, on his way to Fort Orange to trade his beaver skins, accompanied by a young warrior and his still younger nephew, he was robbed

and murdered by men in the employ of Minuit, the Dutch Director. This incident led to series of retaliations between the Indians and the Dutch, one being the death of Ann Hutchinson and her family who had fled to New Rochelle and settled to escape religious persecution in New England. Our Hutchinson River is named after her.

The slain warrior's nephew later took revenge on Klaes Smit, killing him with an ax and escaping. Since this was just repayment by Indian law, the tribe refused to yield him up for Dutch punishment and trouble between the two cultures continued.

In February 1643, the Dutch decided to take vengeance on the Weckquaesgeek in full force, directed by Gov. Kieft, probably unknown to most of the public who were divided in opinion on how to deal with the Indians at this tumultuous time. After an invasion on the Indians, the Weckquaesgeek fled. The Dutch employed hostile Indians who killed seventeen and carried off many women and children. The frightened Indians asked for asylum at Corlaer's Hook on Manhattan Island and across the Hudson at Pavonia, where Dutch settlers at first protected and helped them.

One attempted attack led by Hendrick Van Dyck at the Weckquaesgeek Village where Ardsley now stands, came to naught and the village narrowly escaped massacre and burning, when a guide lost the trail in the dark and wound up far to the east.

On February 24, 1643, the soldiers, about eighty in number, crossed the Hudson to Pavonia to attack the several hundred Weckquaesgeek who had fled there for safety. They struck at midnight and an account by David Pieters de Vries is worded thus:

"Young children, some of them snatched from their mothers were cut in pieces before the eyes of their parents, and the pieces were thrown into the fire or into the water; other babes were bound on planks and then cut through, stabbed and miserably massacred, so that it would break a heart of stone; some were thrown into the river and when the fathers and mothers sought to save them, the soldiers would not suffer them to come to shore but caused both old and young to be drowned. Some children five or six years of age, as also some old infirm persons, who had managed to hide themselves in the bushes and reeds, came out in the morning to beg for a piece of bread and permission to warm themselves, but were all murdered in cold blood and thrown into the fire or water. A few escaped to our settlers, some with the loss of a hand, others a leg, others again holding in their bowels with their hands, and so cut and hacked and maimed, that worse cannot be imagined; they were in such a state that our people supposed that they had been surprised by their enemies the tribe of Maquaes (Mohawks)."

Maryn Adriaensen led a similar attack at Corlaers Hook on a smaller scale. Between eighty and one hundred twenty Weckquaesgeek were killed altogether and thirty taken prisoner. Kieft thanked his soldiers. These attacks precipitated further burnings, looting and killing by the Indians all around New Amsterdam.

Quite a few Dutch colonists emigrated back to Holland amidst this unrest and few new ones came as replacements until Gov. Kieft was replaced by Peter Stuyvesant in 1647. Close to one thousand Indians lost their lives between 1640 and 1645 in New Netherlands and were never replenished.

The Dutch got aid from the English under Capt. John Underhill who first burned two empty Weckquaesgeek "Castles", but could find few Indians. In the Winter of 1644 occurred a last cruel massacre usually attributed to a site near Bedford, though Muscote area seems to meet the topographical description according to a local curator's knowledge, or at Pound Ridge according to another written source. Capt. Underhill with Kieft and Dutch and English soldiers, started in Greenwich and marched northwest in the snow for a full day. That night they came to a village with three rows of wigwams, near two hills. These were probably Tankiteke and Siwanoy, with Wappingers visiting to celebrate a festival and numbering about five hundred in all. The soldiers surrounded the village and opened fire with their muskets. When close enough they set fire to the wigwams, where many women and children ran back in, preferring to die in the flames rather than at the hands of the Dutch and English soldiers. According to the Indians, only eight men escaped, three badly wounded. Kieft and the French Jan De la Monagne encouraged the soldiers to mutilate a wounded Indian man. The Indian women, twenty four or thirty alive at that point, were heard to cry, "for shame, for shame, such unheard cruelty was never heard among us."

Indians who asked for peace thereafter included one Mongockonone, a Weckquaesgeek.

The last known battle including Wappinger Indians occurred in 1655 and a treaty was concluded with the Dutch on March 6, 1655. In the winter of 1664 the Wappingers considered helping the English oust the Dutch but reconsidered and remained peaceful.

On September 8, 1664 New Amsterdam became New York and Fort Orange became Albany after Stuyvesant surrendered to the English under Col. Richard Nicolls.

By 1669 and 1670 the Wappingers Bands fade from the records except for an occasional sachem's visit to New York for courtesy calls on the Governor.

In 1680 Frederick Philips bought the lands in present Dobbs Ferry where Mercy College now stands, from a few remaining Indians.

By 1756 the few remnants of our Weckquaesgeek who survived had dispersed to join the Nanticokes at Chenango in Broome County, New York, the Moravian and Stockbridge Brotherton group in Massachusetts and traces of them are found in Ontario, Wisconsin and Oklahoma today.

It is recorded that a few of our Indians fought the British at Bunker Hill. At the Battle of White Plains they fought with Chief Nimham under Gen. George Washington and at Tibbetts Brook on the Van Cortland Estate, losing forty warriors which equalled one half of their men. Nimham was ridden down and killed by Col. Simcoe's orderly while fighting Simcoe. Twenty were honorably discharged from the Colonial Army but no provision was made for them in the Treaty of Paris at the end of the Revolutionary War.

In concluding this report on our Weckquaesgeek, I will reaffirm a quote from Phiny that Mercy College's Sister Mary Agnes Parrell uses in her "Profile of Dobbs Ferry"---we "hold it a noble task to rescue from oblivion those who deserve to be eternally remembered."

Let us pause to remember the heritage of those Native People who walked these Westchester paths first, and listen to the very heartbeat of the Earth they revered, to comprehend what the European settlers too often failed to appreciate in this culture they smothered, when they silenced the last Indian drum. The echoes still have much to tell us if we care to learn from the past.

Doris Darlington Cohen

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