

78  
C7  
N26



BABBIDGE LIBRARY, STORRS, CT

# CONNECTICUT

CIRCA 1625

## ITS INDIAN TRAILS VILLAGES AND SACHEMDOMS




PUBLISHED BY  
THE NATIONAL SOCIETY  
OF THE  
COLONIAL DAMES OF AMERICA  
IN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

---

1934

BABBIDGE LIBRARY, STORRS, CT

BABBIDGE LIBRARY, STORRS, CT



Please  
handle this volume  
with care.

The University of Connecticut  
Libraries, Storrs



3 9153 00974904 7

78  
C  
230

# CONNECTICUT

CIRCA 1625

## ITS INDIAN TRAILS VILLAGES AND SACHEMDOMS



PUBLISHED BY  
THE CONNECTICUT SOCIETY  
OF THE  
COLONIAL DAMES OF AMERICA, INC.

*from data collected by*  
MATHIAS SPIESS

Edited by  
ELINOR H. BULKELEY INGERSOLL  
Chairman of Publication Committee

*COPYRIGHT, 1934*  
THE NATIONAL SOCIETY  
of the  
COLONIAL DAMES OF AMERICA  
IN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## FOREWORD

The Connecticut Society of the Colonial Dames of America has for many years been interested in preserving the relics and records of our Colonial times. Much has been written of the early Colonists and their settlements, but little is known or recorded of the Indians who were in Connecticut before the day of the white man and of whom about 150 reside in the state at the present time.

With this in mind, Mrs. Horace Bushnell Cheney, a member of the Society, conceived the idea of making a map which antedated the occupation of Connecticut by the white settlers — in particular a map that would show the Indian habitations and the trails over which they traveled, which in many instances are the very highways in use at the present time. These trails were not hunting paths, but were the means of communication between tribes and localities, and were used chiefly for trade and exchange, and for the payment of tribute. They were also used for warpaths, and, locally, for the transfer from summer to winter quarters, for the Indians varied their residence according to season. Mrs. Cheney was further encouraged in the project by her acquaintance with Mr. Mathias Spiess of South Manchester, Connecticut, who has spent at least twenty-five years in the study of the Connecticut Indians, and has familiarized himself with their various habits and activities. He has, in fact, followed all their trails from end to end, even exploring them on foot where they do not follow roads. He has examined records, transferring land from the Indians to the Whites, and, by deduction and fact, has fixed the boundaries as they appear on the present map. The result is the record of the very earliest period known where there were transfers made.

Mr. Spiess volunteered to contribute his fund of information toward compiling such a map, and Mr. Hayden Griswold, an engineer of South Manchester, made the drawing. The result was that in 1931 Mr. and Mrs. Cheney presented the original map to the Connecticut Society of Colonial Dames, and it is now published, with the following information taken from Mr. Spiess's data.

ELINOR H. BULKELEY INGERSOLL,  
*Chairman of the Publication Committee.*



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2013

<http://archive.org/details/connecticutcirca00nati>



# CONNECTICUT

CIRCA 1625

---

## ITS INDIAN TRAILS VILLAGES AND SACHEMDOMS

---

We cannot know what transpired among the Indians in pre-historic times. The best we can do is to search the records and note the facts as recorded. We must resort to the early manuscripts, letters and books written many years ago by men and women then living in Connecticut, who have brought down to us precious information regarding the past. To some extent, too, we are obliged to depend upon tradition, for not all that we know as historic fact is recorded.

We can rightfully assume that the Indian territories of Connecticut changed, and that boundary lines were altered after the Mohawks of New York practically conquered the Connecticut Indians as far eastward as the Connecticut River, and that the Pequots, originally part of the Mohican tribe, made changes in the eastern part of the state when they invaded Connecticut just a few years previous to the coming of the white man.

That the Tunxis' hunting grounds probably extended farther westward than the map shows can be imagined by what was said by various members of the tribe to the early settlers, regarding their ancient boundaries. The land between Tunxis (now Farmington) and what is now the boundary line between Connecticut and the State of New York was disputed land. The Tunxis tribe claimed it and so did the Mohawks, by their extension of authority over the subdued Mohicans.

Tradition<sup>1</sup> has it that the Mohegans of eastern Connecticut resided originally in New York State—that being ambitious and warlike and possibly desiring more space for hunting and fishing, they descended through southern Massachusetts, through the very center of Connecticut, southward to the coast, occupying most of

---

1. Dr. E. B. O'Callaghan's "History of New Netherlands."

eastern Connecticut and splitting the Nehantic tribe into two divisions — western and eastern Nehantics — pushing the latter into the territory of the Narragansetts in Rhode Island. So it is easily seen that the Mohicans of New York State and the Mohegans of eastern Connecticut were originally the same people, who, having overpowered the river tribes and other small tribes of middle Connecticut, thenceforward held their surrounding positions and exacted tribute and homage from their less powerful neighbors. After this they were known in Connecticut as “Pequots”, meaning “destroyers”.<sup>1</sup> The Pequots and Uncas Band were originally one tribe, but became split through dissension. Uncas was born a Pequot, and had aspirations to the chieftom of that tribe. When he failed in the election after the death of the old chief, he became dissatisfied, and having enough influence with the young warriors, he persuaded some of them to desert their tribe and they set up their own domain. This strip, which divided the Pequot lands, is called “Uncas” on a map known as “The Ancient Map of 1767” belonging to the Massachusetts Historical Society. DeForest speaks of this quarrel and of Uncas setting up a new tribe, in his book “The History of the Indians of Connecticut”. He also tells of Uncas’ tribe being further strengthened by additions from some of the River tribes. After this division of the Pequot land, the strength of the tribe remained in the southern half until, in 1637, the Pequot tribe was practically annihilated by the White Men under Captain John Mason, and from that time on they cease to exist as a tribe. After Chandler’s survey in 1705, the entire territory comprising the land of the Pequots and the strip belonging to Uncas became known as the Mohegan Lands.

To go back farther into the past leads one into the darkness of uncertainty.

The boundaries given on the map were found by studying the original land purchases of the Whites from the Indians, which are recorded in the Colonial Records. Some of these may be found in the State Library and others in the local land records of the early townships. Therefore, the boundaries represent those of all the Connecticut tribes as they were when the first white settlements were made and give a picture of the State’s tribal areas as they were about 1625. If we put together all the land purchased from a par-

1. Roger Willams' "A Key Into the American Language."

ticular tribe, we can then know the entire territory that belonged to that tribe at the beginning of written American history. In this way the boundaries were found, excepting the boundaries of the land of the Mohegans.<sup>1</sup> There is a map of this territory drawn by John Chandler in the year 1705, when he was authorized to survey and mark that land, and the boundaries of this section are taken from this map.<sup>2</sup> There are also other ancient maps,<sup>3</sup> which agree with the one made by Chandler regarding the Mohegan Lands, but which do not go into detail concerning the smaller tribes such as the land ruled over by Uncas.<sup>4</sup> One map<sup>5</sup> shows the entire Connecticut Valley as being the land of the River Indians, but the local records tell us that these River Indians were divided into several tribes.

---

1. See map.

2. Connecticut Historical Society Collections, Vol. 5.

3. See DeForest's "Indians of Connecticut," and maps in Connecticut State Library.

4. For Uncas Territory see Ancient Map of 1767, Massachusetts Historical Society.

5. DeForest "Map of Connecticut, 1630" in History of Connecticut Indians.

## VILLAGE SITES

The village sites on the map have been placed as accurately as possible, according to the records found concerning them. These villages represent the permanent or semi-permanent villages of the Connecticut Indians and do not represent their camping sites, of which remains may be found all over the state and which are too numerous to place on this map. (This may also be said of other place names.) The Northwestern Territory never had any permanent settlements at this time, as it was disputed land between the Mohawks of New York and the Connecticut River tribes. They all used the land for hunting and fishing. We find Indian Villages mentioned in the earliest accounts and narratives, and in the papers on "Indian Affairs" on file in the office of the Secretary of State at Hartford. These were carefully gone over by DeForest when he wrote his book "The History of the Indians of Connecticut" in 1850. By personal observation, covering a period of twenty-five years, Mr. Spiess has discovered the sites of many Indian villages. The largest village in the Connecticut River Valley was the Podunk Village just north of East Hartford, in South Windsor. When Adrian Block, the Dutch navigator, discovered the Connecticut River in 1614, he sailed northward and entered in his log book that he had found an Indian "village resembling a fort, for protection against their enemies, and being situated in latitude  $41^{\circ} 48'$ ." J. Hammond Trumbull later wrote that he believed the Podunk village was the village which Block had visited that year. Judging from the campfire stones still to be found, this village extended over about one hundred and fifty acres of land.

## INDIAN NAMES

Nearly all the Indian names on the map are found in the early Colonial Records, but in a few cases names were supplied from traditional reports. The interpretation of nearly all of them can be found in J. Hammond Trumbull's book, "Indian Place Names in Connecticut". One must remember that the Indians had no written language other than the sign or picture language, and that the early settlers often misspelled their words. We find, for example, no less a person than Roger Williams spelling the word "son" in three different ways on one page of his writings. It was difficult for the early settlers to remember these long names in a strange language. All these things will account for the difference of spelling of the same word in different localities. Mr. Spiess has taken the Indian names as commonly known, including corruptions, rather than the early pronunciation and spelling which was different in each English and Indian settlement.

Let us consider some of these changes. For example, the Farmington River is called in the later records "Tunxis", but in an older one we find it written "Tunxisepo" and "Tunckseasapose", but from a knowledge of the Indian language we know that both forms are abbreviations of "Watunkshausepo", which means fast flowing and winding river. We find names that have lost nearly all their Indian syllables, as for example, "Skunkamuck" for "Saukunkamaug", meaning a fishing place where two brooks join. In different parts of the state we find the same word in different dialects. The River Indians' word for "long" is "Conne". We find it in "Connecticut", by the long river. The Quinnipiacs said "Quinne", other tribes said "Kunne", "Kanne", and "Kenne" — all meaning "long". Take the word "Mashapaug", which means "big lake". The Mohegans said "Moshe" for "big"; the Narragansetts, "Massa"; the River Indians, "Mische"; and the Nipmucks, "M'she" — so we get the names of Moshepaug, Massapaug, Mishepaug and M'shepaug — all meaning "Big Lake".

Therefore, the names and spelling on the map are as they appear in the records and as commonly known at the present time, so that they may be easily recognized, remembering that the names we now use were probably never used by the Indians themselves, but are as they were accepted in the early days and as they have been handed down to us by our ancestors.

## TERRITORIAL AREAS

---

### 1. NIPMUCK TERRITORY

The greater part of the Nipmuck Territory was in what is now the State of Massachusetts. In prehistoric times their land extended eastward to the lands of the Massachusetts, Wampanog and Narragansett tribes, and on the south it joined the land of the Nehantics.<sup>1</sup> On the west it was bounded by the lands of the Agawam, Podunk and Wangunk tribes. When the Pequots invaded Connecticut they paced out a hunting ground for themselves and for this purpose they took land from the Nipmuck tribe, thus making a new southern boundary for this area.

The boundaries given on the map are:

Eastern boundary — State line, drawn by white men

Southern boundary — Shown by Chandler's Survey of 1705

Western boundary — Shown by land purchases of Whites from Indians in Land Records of Windsor, Enfield, and Springfield, Massachusetts

Northern boundary — Massachusetts State line, drawn by white men.

### 2. MOHEGAN LANDS

When the New York Mohicans invaded Connecticut and became known as Pequots, they paced off a hunting ground for themselves for which they took land belonging to the Nehantic, Wangunk, Nipmuck and Podunk tribes. This new territory was known as the Pequot country until after the annihilation of the Pequots by the whites in 1637, when it became known as the Mohegan Lands. In 1704 Queen Anne appointed a commission which was empowered to survey the original Pequot country. The Commission appointed John Chandler, surveyor, to do this work, and his map drawn in 1705 gives us the boundaries for this territorial area. It should be noted that his line did not extend quite as far eastward as the present Rhode Island State boundary line; also his map did not show the strip on the map marked "Uncas", as this was not a separate division as late as 1705.

---

1. Forty-third Annual Report of Bureau of Ethnology, plate 20, for supposed boundary.

### 3. UNCAS TERRITORY

When Uncas failed to become chief in the election after the death of Chief Wopigwooit of the Pequot tribe, he and a band of dissatisfied warriors moved northward from the Pequot headquarters in the southern part of the Pequot land and set up their own territory on the west side of the Thames River, in what is now Montville, just south of Norwich. In this move they were assisted by the English settlers in Connecticut, who hated the Pequots, and were only too glad to have Uncas lay out his narrow strip of territory which cut the Pequot land in two. There is an ancient Indian map of Connecticut, dated 1767, in possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society (copy in Connecticut State Library), which shows Uncas' domain, and marks the area "Uncas". It is from this map that we get the boundary lines on the present map for the area called "Uncas".

### 4. NEHANTIC DIVISION

When the Pequot invasion divided the Nehantic tribe, a small band remained in Connecticut and these Indians were known as the Western Nehantics. Their name is derived from "Nehant" meaning "narrow" or "point", "ac" meaning "place". Their territory extended from the Connecticut River eastward to a small stream which still bears their name in corrupted form — the Niantic River. The boundaries on the present map were taken from the "Ancient Map of 1767" belonging to the Massachusetts Historical Society, and the records of purchases of land by the Whites from the Indians in the Land Records of Saybrook and New London, Connecticut.

### 5. THE HAMMONASETT DIVISION

The territory of the Hammonasett Tribe covered the land bounded by the land of the Wangunks on the north, by the Connecticut River on the east; by the East River, called by the Indians "Aigicomock" on the west; and by Long Island Sound on the south. Uncas gained control of this territory by his marriage to the daughter of the Hammonasett chief, Sebequanash. Part of their land had been sold to the white settlers of what was later Saybrook, when Uncas sold the remainder to the settlers of Guilford.

For the northern, eastern and western boundaries see Sales of Indian lands to Whites in the Land Records of Saybrook, Guilford and Killingworth.

## 6. MENUNKATUCK DIVISION

The early writers speak of the Menunkatucks as a distinct tribe.<sup>1</sup>

They were governed by a sunk-squaw or queen, named Shaum-pishuh, who was the sister of Momauguin, sachem of the Quinnipiac Tribe. Their female chief soon sold their land to the white settlers and the tribe removed to Branford and East Haven, where they joined the Quinnipiac Tribe. In the Guilford records we read that fourteen men, six women and fourteen children followed their squaw-queen to the sachemdom of Momauguin.

East boundary — Aigicomock, or East River, from Long Island Sound to the land of the Wangunks

North boundary — Land of the Wangunks

South boundary — Long Island Sound

West boundary — Probably ran from the village of Kuttanoo (location doubtful so not given on map), on Long Island Sound due north to the land of the Wangunks<sup>2</sup>

The exact lines may be found in the sales of land from Indians to the Whites in the Land Records of the Towns of Guilford and New Haven.

## 7. THE QUINNIPIAC DIVISION

The original territory of the Quinnipiac tribe was divided into two separate sachemdoms at about the time the earliest white settlements were made in this region. Momauguin was grand sachem in the southern half, and Montowese, son of Sowheag, ruled in the northern part. In the treaty with the English, Montowese states that he obtained his land from his deceased mother, who was the daughter of a Quinnipiac sachem. (See records of New Haven Colony and early records of Wethersfield.) The two original land purchases of the English from the Indians comprise what are now the townships of New Haven, North Haven, Branford, Hamden, Woodbridge, Bethany, part of Prospect, Wallingford, and parts of Cheshire and Meriden. The exact lines of the land purchases may be found in the land records of New Haven and Wallingford.

1. See "History of the Indians of Connecticut," Chapter II, by John W. DeForest.

2. "History of the Indians of Connecticut," Page 167.



### 8. PAUGUSETT DIVISION

The Paugussets were one of the largest tribes in Connecticut. The early records of Stratford and Milford prove that all the clans that inhabited what are now the towns of Bridgewater, Roxbury, Woodbury, Middlebury and Waterbury, southward to the coast, were members of this tribe. These clans appear in the later records under such names as Wepawaug, Unkawas, Potatucks, Pomerang, Naugatuck and others, but it is plainly evident that all these people called themselves Paugussets until the white settlers began to call them by local names.

Their territory had no exact northern boundary, as none of the Connecticut Indians would venture to live in what is now Litchfield County, because the Mohawks of New York claimed it as hunting territory, and they were the enemies of all the Connecticut Indians except the Pequots. We draw our northern boundary from their most northerly land sales, such as those of Waterbury, Middlebury, Woodbury and Fairfield, which can be found in the records of those towns. Long Island Sound forms the southern line. Their east line went to the lands of the Tunxis and Quinnipiac Tribes, and the west line to the land of the Siwanogs.

See sales from Indians to Whites in the towns of New Haven, Wallingford, Milford, Stratford and Fairfield; Ancient Map of 1767 of Massachusetts Historical Society; Ethnological Map, 43d Annual Report, Bureau of Ethnology, plate 20; New York State Boundary Line.

### 9. SIWANOG DIVISION

The Indians known as Siwanogs, by the Dutch of New Netherlands, can hardly be called a distinct tribe, nor can the southwest corner of the state be classed as a territorial area of the Connecticut Indians. This tract of land was claimed by the Dutch, until they ceded what are now the towns of Greenwich and Stamford to the State of Connecticut in 1662. There is little doubt that the small clans that lived in this territory, such as the Petuquapaen and Ramapoo clans, were subjects of what was known as the Wappinger Confederacy, which had headquarters in New York State, east of the Hudson River and south of Poughkeepsie.

The boundary lines on our present map were found as follows: east line from Ancient Map of 1767 in possession of Massachusetts

Historical Society; northwest and west lines are the State boundary lines drawn by the English in 1662; south, Long Island Sound.

Four sachems of this tribe mentioned in the early records are Mayn Mayano, Ponus, Wascussue, and Mahackeno.<sup>1</sup>

#### 10. WANGUNK DIVISION

This territory of the Wangunk tribe was inhabited by three clans known by the local historians as the Wangunk, Mattabesec and the Machamoodus clans. However, they were really one tribe. At one time their grand sachem was Sowheag, sometimes called Sequin. Their headquarters were originally at Pyquaug (now Wethersfield) and later at Middletown. The present towns that were in their territory are Wethersfield, Newington, Rocky Hill, Cromwell, Middletown, Middlefield, Durham, Haddam, East Haddam, East Hampton, Portland, parts of Glastonbury, Marlborough, and Colchester.

The boundary lines were found as follows:

East line — Chandler's survey of the Mohegan Lands.

North Line — Colonial Records, Volume 2, page 41; also Chandler's survey and Wethersfield and Hartford Land Records.

West line — Sales of Indians to Whites in the town records of Farmington, Middletown, and Wethersfield.

South line — Sales of land from Indians to Whites in the town records of Saybrook, Guilford, and Killingworth.

#### 11. SICAOG OR SAUKI OG DIVISION

The territory of the Sicaogs covered the present city of Hartford and the town of West Hartford. The Tunxis Indians were a sub-tribe of the Sicaogs, for Sequassen was the grand sachem of both territories. Later his sister, Warwarme, took control of the Sicaogs. These two Indians were children of the grand sachem Sequin.

The boundary lines were found as follows:

North line — Sales from Indians to Whites in the land records of Hartford and Windsor.

East line — Connecticut River. Hartford Records.

West line — Hartford and Farmington Records.

South line — Hartford and Wethersfield Records.

1. History of South Norwalk by Edwin Hall.

## 12. TUNXIS DIVISION

This division was occupied by the tribe originally known as Tunckseasapose and later known by the abbreviated name of Tunxis. They were a sub-tribe of the Sicaogs. Their land included the land of the present towns of Farmington, Plainville, Bristol, Berlin, Southington, part of Wolcott, Burlington, Avon, and the city of New Britain.

The boundary lines were found as follows:

East line — Sales of Indians to Whites, Land Records of Hartford and Farmington.

South line — Wallingford and Farmington Records.

West line — touched the disputed Northwest Territory and, therefore, was not established until the Whites had advanced into the State and made their bargains with the Indians. The line on the map is the original land sale of the town of Farmington. (See Farmington Records.)

North line — Simsbury Land Records.

## 13. MASSACO DIVISION

The transfer of this Indian division of land to the Whites took place in the following manner, according to the ancient records. Manahanoose, a Massaco Indian, "did wittingly kindle a fire," which consumed a large quantity of tar belonging to John Griffin. The Indian was arrested and fined five hundred fathoms of wampum, and in default of payment the sachem gave to Griffin a deed of all the land of the Massaco Division.<sup>1</sup> The original transfer of land covers what are now the towns of Simsbury, Canton, and part of Granby. The exact lines as found on our map may be found in the Land Records of the towns of Simsbury, Canton and Granby.

## 14. POQUONOCK DIVISION

The entire territory occupied by the Poquonock Tribe was sold to the white settlers by the Indians in several parcels. Within this division are the present towns of Windsor, Windsor Locks, Bloomfield, and part of East Granby. The exact boundaries as given on the map may be found in the sales of land from Indians to Whites in the Land Records of the Town of Windsor.

1. "The Memorial History of Hartford County, Connecticut," Vol. II, p. 341, J. Hammond Trumbull.

See also "Ancient Windsor", Chapter VI, "Indian Land Purchases" by Henry R. Stiles.

### 15. AGAWAM DIVISION

The tribe known in Connecticut as the Agawam Tribe was in reality a sub-tribe of the Pocumtuck Confederacy, which had its headquarters near Deerfield, Massachusetts. The part of their territory which is within the State of Connecticut comprises the present towns of Enfield, Suffield, Granby, Hartland, Somers, and part of East Granby. The south and east boundary lines, as given on the map, may be found from the land purchases of Whites from Indians in the Land Records of Windsor, Suffield and Enfield. The north line is the Connecticut State Line made by the white settlers after years of dispute. The west line in the early days was uncertain, as it was against the disputed Northwest Territory. It was later drawn by agreements between Indians and Whites. See Simsbury and Hartland Records.

### 16. PODUNK DIVISION

The Podunk territory was bounded on the west by the Connecticut River and extended eastward to the Pequot-Mohegan country. On the north it touched the Agawams' lands and on the south it was bounded by Pautapaug (now Keeney Cove), then southeasterly along a footpath or trail called the "path to Hockanum" on John Chandler's Map of 1705. Within this territory are the present towns of East and South Windsor, East Hartford, Manchester and parts of Ellington, Vernon, Bolton, Glastonbury and Marlborough.

The exact lines as found on the map are:

North boundary — Windsor Land Records.

West line — Connecticut River.

East line — Chandler's Map of 1705, also Tolland and Springfield Records.

South boundary — Chandler's Map of 1705 and Colonial Records, Volume II, page 41.

In this division was the largest known Indian Village in Connecticut.

## 17. THE NORTHWEST WILDERNESS

As far back as our knowledge of the Connecticut Indians goes, the northwest section of the State was always disputed land between the Mohawk Tribe of New York and the Indians of Connecticut. For this reason it was not safe for anyone to live in and was simply used as a hunting ground when the Indians dared to enter it.

In the early part of the eighteenth century the power of the Pequots was broken, Uncas was dead, and the white settlers were becoming daily more powerful, so that the Mohawks no longer dared to offend them. With these changed conditions, bands of Indians began to settle in this unbroken wilderness. They came from all parts of Connecticut and although they became numerous, they cannot be classed as distinct tribes. Among them were the New Milford band, the Sharon and the Naugatuck aggregations, which later were all known as the Scatacocks. It must be remembered that this tract of land cannot be considered as a distinct Indian territory. The north and west boundaries are state lines made by the white men of Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York and the east and south lines indicate only the farthest approach into the wilderness, in the early years, by the organized tribes of the east and south.

## INDIAN TRAILS

The remains of the old Indian trails cross the State of Connecticut in every direction. In many places our main highways still follow these ancient footpaths, while in other spots the highways have branched off and the trails may only be followed on foot through the woods and fields.

Roger Williams, referring to Indian trails, said: "It is admirable to see what paths their naked, hardened feet have made in the wilderness in most stony and rocky places".

There are maps which show these paths in sections. We find them mentioned in land records, the Colonial Records, and local histories.

On this map all the threads of information have been connected and we can show, at least, the through trails or main thoroughfares over which the Indians traveled. There were many smaller footpaths leading from one Indian village to another throughout the State, some of which are also mentioned in the records, but these are difficult to trace and are of little importance, except to the localities in which they occur.

It is our hope that many people who enjoy tramping and are historically minded may be interested to follow these trails.

## THE SHORE PATH

One of the most important Indian trails crossing Connecticut was "The Shore Path" which started at Shawmut (now Boston) and led to Manhattan. It was known from the time of the earliest settlements, and has been mentioned by many of the early writers. Perhaps the most delightful way to trace this path is to read Madame Sarah Kemble Knight's Private Journal, kept while she traveled on horseback through the wilderness on a journey from Boston to New York, where she was obliged to go to settle an estate. She mentions the places along the path as they were in that year of 1704. She speaks of crossing rivers in birch-bark canoes and of the many Indians she saw. Her guide for a part of the journey was an Indian, and although the path was already used by post coach and ox cart, we can still feel, when we read her description of the journey, that no improvements had been made in the path itself and that the white man was following

the ancient trails of the red. Already settlements had been made along the path. Small villages consisting chiefly of log cabins were rising, and here and there clearings were being made in the primeval forest. The fact that she mentions such places as Boston and Dedham, Massachusetts; Kingston, Rhode Island; Stonington, Groton, New London, Saybrook, Killingworth, Guilford, New Haven, Milford, Stratford, Fairfield, Norwalk, and Stamford in Connecticut; and Rye, New Rochelle, Mamaroneck, and New York in New York State; show that these places were on the early Indian path and give us its course, in addition to what we can learn from local histories and early manuscripts, such as *Ye History of Ye Town of Greenwich* by Spencer P. Mead, *History of New London* by Frances M. Caulkins and *History of the Town of Stonington* by Richard Anson Wheeler.

#### THE OLD CONNECTICUT PATH

Perhaps the most interesting path running east and west through the State is what is known in the records as the "Olde Connecticut Path", which led from Shawmut (now Boston) to Hartford, and then west to the Hudson River. According to historians, and as the records prove, it was the main thoroughfare leading through the State from east to west. It started at Boston and from there went to Cambridge, Waltham, Weston, Wayland, then southerly to Framingham, Hopkinton, Grafton, Oxford and Dudley. It entered Connecticut at Woodstock, then led to Mansfield, Coventry, Bolton Notch, Manchester, to the banks of the Connecticut River at East Hartford. From Hartford it led westward through Farmington, Bristol, Watertown, and New Milford, leaving the State at Sherman and eventually leading to the villages of the Wappinger Confederacy in New York State.

The section of this trail within the eastern part of Connecticut is shown on the map made in 1705 by John Chandler. Mr. James Forbes of Burnside, Connecticut, has among his old manuscripts an ancient map of Indian trails which shows the section of the "Olde Path" which ran through East Hartford and which is now known as Silver Lane.

The "Olde Path" is mentioned and described by Susan Benedict Hill in her *History of Danbury* and by Katherine M. Abbott in *Old*

Paths and Legends of New England, also by Alice Morse Earle in Customs and Fashions. The "Olde Path" was known by different names in different sections of the State, although Henry Bronson, the historian of Waterbury, tells us that in the records it was known as "the olde path". West of Hartford it was known as "the path to Tunxis".

It is interesting to note that this is probably the path over which the Reverend Thomas Hooker and his party traveled when they emigrated from Massachusetts to Connecticut and settled Hartford in 1636. For many years it was thought that the Hooker party traveled through Massachusetts over what was later known as the "Bay Path" to the Chicopee River, then south down the east bank of the Connecticut River, but according to John Winthrop's journal, an entry in 1648 reads — "This year a new way was found out to Connecticut by Nashaway, which avoided much of the hilly way." This undoubtedly refers to the "Bay Path", so that in 1636 the Reverend Thomas Hooker must have come to Connecticut over the "Olde Connecticut Path".

In 1674 the settlement of Woodbury was made and in 1680 Waterbury was founded. Both these towns were known to be on the "Olde Path". The historian of Woodbury, in the History of Litchfield County, says "the settlers laid out their home lots . . . which they arranged on both sides of Main Street or Indian trail", but since those early days alterations have been made so the exact course of the "Olde Path" cannot be given. In Roxbury and New Milford short sections of the path have been abandoned but can still be traced through fields and woods.

For further information regarding the "Olde Connecticut Path", see ancient map on file with the records of Woodstock, Connecticut, called "North half of Town". A reproduction of this is in "History of Woodstock" by Clarence Winthrop Bowen, Ph.D., LL.D.

#### THE PAUGUSETT OR BERKSHIRE PATH

The Paugusett or Berkshire Path began at Norwalk and led northward to Canaan, leaving the State at North Canaan and leading through the Mohican villages of New York to the Mohawk Valley.

The Town of Norwalk was originally settled in 1649 and in 1713 a highway from Norwalk to Ridgefield was laid out. According



to the Norwalk records this road followed the ancient Indian path and this same trail is mentioned in the Indian deed of land for the Town of Ridgefield where it speaks of one of the boundaries "where the Danbury path crosseth the river".

The Salisbury historian, Samuel Church, says "there was upon the arrival of the first Dutch settlers here, a well defined Indian trail or path, leading from the Stockbridge Indian tribe, along the valley of the Housatonic, to the Scatacook settlement of Indians in Kent".

In the History of New Milford by Samuel Orcutt, and also on file in the State Library, there are reproductions of an old Indian map of Indian lands in the present town of New Milford, which it is claimed was originally drawn by the Indians themselves. Near their fishing place and fields, it shows two paths, one leading north and south, the other east and west.

The City of Danbury, settled in 1685, was on the east and west path and much later, in 1738, when the Scatacook Indians sold their lands to the white men to form the present town of Kent, several villages — among them Canaan, Kent, New Milford, Danbury, Ridgefield and Norwalk — were connected by a highway that followed the old trail laid out by the Indians.

An old Scatacook Indian named Cogswell, who was living in 1905 and claimed to be nearly 100 years old, and Thomas Stone, a farmer in the vicinity of New Milford, could still point out short sections of this old path that had been discontinued. However, even with these missing sections the general course of this important trail is not changed.

#### THE NORTHWEST PATH

The Northwest Path originally led from Massaco (now Simsbury) to Canaan, where it joined the Paugusett Trail. In the records it is known as "The Northwestern Woods Path", "The Green Woods Path", "The Path to the Western Lands", "The South Road", or "South Bridle Path", and "The Path to Litchfield".

William Hallock, a Town Clerk of Canton, said in a lecture he gave many years ago that the present highway from Canton to Canaan nearly follows the old Indian trail. This he learned from the old Town Records that were later destroyed by fire.

John Boyd, the historian of Winchester, says "the first road through this Town was the trail followed by the settlers en route to the lands of Goshen, Norfolk and Canaan . . . for a long time it continued to be the traveled path to the West".

There is another highway leading through Winchester called in the records "The North Road". It was built by order of the legislature and was used as a military road during the American Revolution and has since been abandoned. It was never an Indian trail, although it is frequently confused with the old trail by the present inhabitants.

The road south of Canton leading to Avon was built and incorporated in 1798 by the Talcott Mountain Turnpike Company. It later became a post road and is still known as Albany Avenue in Hartford and the Albany Post Road. It joins the "Northwest Path" at Canton.

#### THE MOHEGAN NORTH TRAIL

The Mohegan North Trail led from Mohegan Hill in Montville, northward to Woodstock, where it joined several paths leading in different directions. The course of this path was traced out by the Chamber of Commerce of Norwich a few years ago, and is indicated today by metal arrow signs. To the Mohegans it was the path to Wabaquasset or the Nipmuck country, and before this must have been a Pequot trail, for on both sides of the Thames River were Pequot Paths that joined this trail leading northward through the Pequot territory, which later became the Mohegan country.

#### THE HOCKANUM PATH

The Hockanum Path led from Mohegan Hill in Montville to Colchester, Glastonbury, and through Hockanum (where it joined the Podunk Trail) to East Hartford. Its ancient course was well known among the older members of the Mohegan tribe living in 1920, among whom was Lemuel Fielding, a direct descendant of Uncas. He was especially interested in this trail and other paths leading out of the Mohegan headquarters at Montville. Part of this path is shown on John Chandler's map of the Mohegan country in 1705.

### THE LEBANON PATH

The Lebanon Path branched from the Mohegan trail at Norwich and went through Lebanon, Columbia, Andover, Bolton Notch and Manchester to Hockanum. The original trail led right through what is now Columbia Lake, for this lake was later made by white men damming up a stream and flooding this section. Just west of Columbia a narrow cart path leading through the woods to the present highway is still called "the Indian Trail". Another section of the original path which has been abandoned is just east of Bolton Notch.

During the American Revolution the section of this trail from Lebanon to Manchester Green was used as a military road, and over it the French soldiers traveled after their stay at the home of Governor Trumbull in Lebanon.

In her History of Norwich, Frances M. Caulkins speaks of this path as a military road, although the early Norwich records show that it had previously been an Indian trail.

### THE PODUNK TRAIL

The Podunk Trail branched off from a path between Mohegan Hill, Montville, and the Hammonasett village at Killingworth and ran northward through Portland, Glastonbury, East Hartford and South Windsor to Agawam.

In the Glastonbury records this trail is called "the path running over Red Hill". The late John Tryon of Glastonbury, who was born in 1818, informed Mr. Spiess that the original Indian path followed what is now known as the River Road between Portland and the center of South Glastonbury. This was corroborated by others living in the vicinity, including Joseph O. Goodwin, Town Clerk and historian of East Hartford, who said the old Indian path through Hockanum and Silver Lane was near the river bank. He showed Mr. Spiess several cellar holes of ancient houses that were among the first to be built on the east side of the Connecticut River and that were known to be on the old trail. This section of the path has been abandoned as a road, but one can still see, in certain places, traces of the old road which followed the course of the path.

Doctor Stiles, in the Massachusetts Historical Collections, mentions this path as running through the Podunk Indian village in coming from Massachusetts, then turning east for a short distance,

then south to East Hartford. He says "this path is now known as King Street". In Colonial days it was called the King's Highway and part of it is now Main Street in East Hartford. In South Windsor it is still called King Street.

#### THE NAMEROKE PATH

The Nameroke Path led from the Podunk Trail, eastward to Broad Brook and Union and joined the old Connecticut Path at Woodstock. The Nameroke or Scanticook Indians were a clan of the Podunk tribe and their main village was at the intersection of the Podunk and Nameroke Paths, which is now known as Phelps' Corner in East Windsor. These Indians also had a winter village northeast of Broad Brook on a steep bank of the Scantic River. Their chief, Poxen or Foxen, was a friend of Uncas, and about the time Hartford was settled Foxen and his people joined the Mohegan tribe.

The Nameroke Path is shown on the old Enfield map and on a map of 1641 in the Massachusetts Historical Collections. It is also referred to by James T. Adams in his *Founding of New England*, page 20.

#### THE NIPMUCK PATH

From the fording place at the Connecticut River just north of the present Hartford bridge, where the old Connecticut Path led across the meadows, another trail, known as The Nipmuck Path, branched due east to the winter village of the Podunk Indians on the north bank of the Hockanum River. Leaving the Podunk village the path ran in a northeasterly direction to Moshe-nup-suck (Snipsic Lake) to Union, which was the country inhabited by the Nipmuck Indians. This path is shown on an ancient map owned by Mr. James Forbes of Burnside, Connecticut. The path today is known as the Tolland Turnpike, and as far as can be learned, practically no changes have been made in its course. The ancient records of 1678 and of December 19, 1721, where it is mentioned as a highway, have been compared with the modern surveys by Town Engineer Bowen of Manchester and have been found to be almost identical in direction.

### THE MOHEGAN-STONINGTON PATH

The Mohegan-Stonington Path was a continuation of the Hockanum Path and started at Montville, where the Hockanum Path ended and led in a southeasterly direction, finally joining the Shore Path at the west bank of the Paucatuck River. Today it is a modern highway which we can all ride over, with the exception of a short section of about two miles outside of Norwich, which can be traced through the fields and pastures, according to Lemuel Fielding, a Mohegan Indian. The path is shown on the map made by John Chandler in 1705 when he surveyed the Mohegan lands.

Frances M. Caulkins, in her history of Norwich, claims that it was over this path that Miantonomo and his six hundred warriors traveled in 1643 when they went to fight Uncas and the Mohegans, and were defeated.

Thomas Bicknell, in his *Trails of the Narragansetts*, calls this path "the trail to Pequot and Mohegan".

### THE QUINNIPIAC TRAIL

The route of the Quinnipiac Trail has recently been traced out by interested citizens of New Haven. Two paths originally went northward to Quinnipiac — one from New Haven and the other from East Haven. Here they again separated, the eastern branch leading through Durham, Middlefield, and Wethersfield to Hartford, and being called in the Hartford and Wethersfield records "the Path to Mattabasc". The western branch ran due north to Canada, going through Hamden, Cheshire, Southington and Farmington. From Farmington northward this path is known in the Hartford records as the "path to Warranoke" (now Westfield, Massachusetts). It is also mentioned in the records of Simsbury, Granby and Suffield as the Hampton and Westfield Path. It was over this path, according to the records, that Chief Sachem Sequasson traveled to Westfield to engage a Warranoke Indian to murder Governor Haynes and others in 1646.

There was a trail leading out of Hartford and known as "the path to New Haven" and "the path to Great Swamp". It connected with the Western Quinnipiac trail by a short path between Cheshire and Meriden. From the connecting path foot paths led off to the

Hanging Hills, where the Indians found suitable long traprock pieces from which to make their pestles, hoes and axes.

### THE BAY PATH

The Bay Path was not a Connecticut Indian path. It led entirely through Massachusetts and is simply mentioned here because it connected with the Connecticut trails and was mentioned so often in the early records as "the path to the Bay" and "the way to the Bay".

John Eliot, speaking of Windsor when he was there in 1647, says "It lies in the way to the Bay and all comers here and to towns southward come this way".<sup>1</sup> This route to the Bay was first mentioned in the Springfield records in 1646, but was not generally used till about 1648 because of the difficulties in crossing a large swamp near Springfield. In that year John Winthrop wrote "This year a new way was found to Connecticut". In 1650 Roger Williams wrote "Springfield, overland from the Bay, layeth 80 or 90 myles southwest, and is the roadway to all the towns upon this river, and that lye more southward". This shows that by 1650 the "Bay Path" or "New way to Connecticut" had now become the common road from Boston to Connecticut and westward points, and shows that the earliest settlers, including the Reverend Thomas Hooker, must have used the "Olde Connecticut Path" in their migrations from Massachusetts before 1646.

---

1. "New England Register," Vol. 55, page 154.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- History of the Pequot War*, Charles Orr  
*A Key into the Language of America*, Roger Williams  
*A Description of New England by Captain John Smith*, Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, Series 3, Vol. VI  
*Historical Collections of the Indians of New England* by Daniel Gookin, Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, Series 1, Vol. I  
*Indian Wars of New England*, Sylvester Herbert Milton  
*History of New England*, John Winthrop  
*Journal of John Winthrop*  
*Book of the Indians*, Samuel G. Drake  
*Connecticut Historical Collections*, J. W. Barber  
*History of the Indians of Connecticut*, John W. DeForest  
*The Works of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft*  
*Indian Races of North and South America*, Charles deWolf Brownell  
*Massasoit of the Wamponogs*, Alvin G. Weeks  
*Popular History of the United States*, William Cullen Bryant  
*Once Upon a Time in Connecticut*, Caroline Clifford Newton  
*The Founding of New England*, James T. Adams  
*Ye History of Ye Town of Greenwich*, Spencer P. Mead  
*History of New London*, Frances M. Caulkins  
*History of the Town of Stonington*, Richard Anson Wheeler  
*History of New Netherlands*, Dr. E. B. O'Callaghan  
*Natick Dictionary*, J. Hammond Trumbull  
*Indian Place Names in Connecticut*, J. Hammond Trumbull  
*The Memorial History of Hartford County, Connecticut*, J. Hammond Trumbull  
*History of South Norwalk*, Edwin Hall  
*Ancient Windsor*, Henry R. Stiles  
*Private Journal of Madame Sarah Kemble Knight*  
*History of Danbury*, Susan Benedict Hill  
*Customs and Fashions*, Alice Morse Earle

*Old Paths and Legends of New England*, Katherine M. Abbott  
*History of Salisbury*, Samuel Church  
*History of New Milford*, Samuel Orcutt  
*History of Norwich*, Frances M. Caulkins  
*Trails of the Narragansetts*, Thomas Bicknell  
*Native Tribes and Dialects of Connecticut*, Frank G. Speck  
(Extract from the Forty-Third Annual Report of the Bureau of  
American Ethnology)  
*Travels in New England and New York*, Timothy Dwight  
*Itinerary of Doctor Ezra Stiles*  
*The Colonial Records*, Vol. I-XI



## REFERENCE MAPS

- Woodward and Saffery Map of 1642, in New England Historical and Genealogical Register, Vol. 55, page 154
- Boundaries of Connecticut, in Connecticut State Library contains copy of Woodward and Saffery map
- Scatacook Indian Map of New Milford, Connecticut, in New Milford Land Records
- Map of the Mohegan Country by John Chandler, 1705
- Map of Indian Paths of East Hartford, South Windsor and Manchester, drawn by James Forbes of Burnside, Connecticut, from his memory of an ancient map that was handed down in the Forbes family from 1680
- Map of "North Half of Town" in Woodstock Records (Showing Connecticut Indian Paths)
- Ancient Map of 1767 in Massachusetts Historical Society Building
- Map of Connecticut in 1630 in "History of the Connecticut Indians" by DeForest
- Map of Indian lands in New Milford in "History of New Milford" by Samuel Orcutt
- Map of Enfield, Massachusetts Historical Collections
- Map of 1641, Massachusetts Historical Collections













University of  
Connecticut  
Libraries

---



39153028738088

