Indians · Native Americans

Pangassets

interconnections - arch evidence of little importance.
villages - not tribes in traditional sense

Danbury - grouped as part of Wearstenocks -
(New Milford)
No records

Fanton

A "Peter & Mary" - rock shelter Human Paint - (over NY. border)
1690

B. Kenosia - also on & near airport

Mortar - given to Natural Center

C. Council Oak Trees - of Danbury, Redding, Ridgefield

Other "digs" in area

Indians

on rd. to Brookfield - "Indian Rock"

Elihu Marsh - chief victim Indians - 2 boys escaped - G

Sought revenge - located & killed -

Now in prison for manslaughter -

Dby Turner - Sept 27 1837

Fate of Connecticut Indians shows that man cannot afford to abandon progress—If he does other men will destroy him root and branch.

Those who insist that human societies can abandon progress with safety to themselves may undergo a change of heart if they reflect upon the fate of the populations native to this hemisphere when white men began to arrive in numbers. The fate of the Aztecs in Mexico, of the Incas in Peru is historically present in all memories.

* * *

Connecticut has its own examples in the massacre of the Pequots at Mystic and Southport, and the so called Underhill massacre which is one of the dramatic recollections of Fairfield County. The story has been told here from the standpoint of those who had no sympathy for the redman. The version now to be given was written by the late Rev. E. B. Huntington, who shows us how much provocation the Indians had, and what their fate was at the hands of the Dutch.

* * *

Some of the Dutch traders had stripped an Indian, who had been tempted by them to drink too much, of a valuable dress of beaver skins. On recovering from his drunken fit, the insulted redman revenged himself by killing two Dutchmen, and fled to a distant tribe to boast of his revenge.

* * *

The Dutch governor decided upon reprisals. He caused the Mohawks to descend upon the tribes, scattering them far in a cold winter. The Dutch slew some hundred of the miserable fugitives. A call went out to eleven clans, who assembled some 1,500 warriors. War blazed wherever a Dutch settlement was found.

* * *

Mayanxo, one of the bravest of the Indian sachems, encountered three armed Dutchmen. Two he despatched with bow and arrow, the third killed him. It now became necessary to the safety of the whites to destroy the Indians.

* * *

Capt. John Underhill led the expedition, 130 Dutch soldiers. In February, 1644, on a cold and cloudy morning, he sailed from New Amsterdam to Greenwich Point, where he landed his men. The story from thence is short and terrible. At the end of an hours fighting 500 Indians had been destroyed, some of them by incineration in their own wigwams.

* * *

It is said that this signal chastisement of the Indians secured the perpetual peace of the whites. We may see that a society of humans must keep up with the procession, or extermination may be its fate. Progress is something that can be abandoned only with danger of annihilation.

G. WELLS.

FIND INDIAN CAVE

S. S. Sherwood and Carl Moran Discover Cache.

Starr S. Sherwood, of 220 Greenwood avenue, whose hobby is the collection of antique firearms and Indian curios, recently stumbled upon a cache of about 70 arrowheads, bits of Indian clay pottery, clay pipes, a steel hunting knife, and a bronze knife in a cave about four miles outside of Bethel. Carl Moran, of Danbury, formerly of Bethel and another enthusiastic collector, was with Mr. Sherwood at the time of the discovery.

With the collection of arrowheads, one of which was made of deer horn and is regarded as a rarity, was an English farthing dated 1724. Mr. Sherwood, because of the presence of the British coin, believes the cave may have been occupied as late as 1730 by Indians who may have used it either for a home or as a base for raiding parties in Danbury and vicinity.

The find has attracted considerable attention because of the presence of the metal knives and the coin, and because it was located so near to town without being discovered years ago. Mr. Sherwood and Mr. Moran refuse to divulge the exact location of the cave. Mr. Sherwood is a member of the Connecticut Archeological society.

IDENCES OF MOUND MEN ALONG HOUSATONIC RIVER

Traces of First Cultural Races Seen in Mounds and Fortifications, Arrow Heads in Brewster Area; Rocks Tell Story of Ages.

By RAY E. COLTON
Science Writer

(In this, the concluding article of the series dealing with the prehistoric past of what is today the Danbury trade area, the writer closes with the advent of the Mound builders here which, in accordance with archaeological studies made here in Fairfield county, were the first cultural mankind to inhabit what is today western Connecticut. These people are today represented by the Indian races which anthropologists maintain originated from the progeny of the Mound builders. Republishing in whole or in part of this article by any other newspaper in Fairfield, Litchfield or Putnam counties is prohibited by the writer. EDITOR'S NOTE:)

Ancient Man Once Here

Leaving behind the works of nature, the dinosaurs, the three toed pygmy horse and the advent of the mammoth here in what is today the Danbury trading area comprising western Connecticut and eastern New York, we reach that point in the prehistoric past when the first cultural races of mankind were arriving here. In this description we turn to archaeological re-search operations and entering the anthropogical field which deals with mankind, reach a point when the Mound builders who originated from Mongolia by way of the Behring Straits were inhabiting what is today the Housatonic river valley. Primitive man is, of course, divided into many classes, however as the first primitive forms of mankind were little removed from the anthropoid ape, we deal only with the more cultural classes which have left their artifacts in the form of pottery, arrow heads etc., in the area which comprises western Connecticut and eastern New York.

In studying the area along the Housatonic river from a point near Brookfield Center and extending southward to a point near Stevenson, archaeological research operations have disclosed that this entire area was once inhabited by a prehistoric race of mankind which owing to its apparent ability to construct mounds of earth and other artifiical earth tumuli, has been named the "Mound builders." Along the east bank of the Housatonic river near the Indian Well state park, it has been noted that evidence of the one time presence of a fortification mound is to be found in the topography of that section. This earth tumuli appears foreign to the general topography of the section and in the view of archaeologists is a prehistoric work of man. The system of erecting earthworks of earth by the Mound Builders, who are now known to have been the first primitive race to occupy what is today western Connecticut had a dual purpose, namely; flood control and defense. In the event of attack by an alien race the warriors of the Mound Builders battled the enemy from behind these earth bulwarks, and during the spring floods these same works acted as a defense against the ravages of floods. Thus a two-fold purpose was entailed in the construction of this form of earth tumuli.

Leaves Traces

Around the confines of this ancient breastwork there has been found arrow heads, stone axes and other artifacts which tell to archaeologists that in the dim past approximately 10,000 years ago, the Mound Builders fought for the supremacy of what is today western Connecticut. Many battles no doubt raged in the area which is today traversed by a county gravel highway running along the river in the area referred to.

In adjoining Putnam county, New York, archaeologists studying the works of primitive man find evidences of burial mounds, arrow heads and other artifacts which are unmistakably not of Indian origin. Especially does this evidence appear in the area around Brewster, where two distinct burial mounds appear in the topography of the area near the lake. These mounds mean that the Mound builders exemplified a system which was in vogue in Mongolia centuries before the birth of Confucius, namely; the entombing of the dead in artificial earth sarcopoghi. It was later adopted by the ancient Egyptians and finally in the present day Christian burial ceremony. While these mounds have never been entered, yet it is reasonable to assume that skeleton remains lie concealed in these earth tumuli. Near Carmel and West Branch reservoir, other evidence of the onetime presence in this area of the Mound builders is to be seen. Arrow heads found near Pawling, in Duchess county, are unmistakably of the culture of the Mound builders.

Came From Asia

The theory of the advance of primitive man to the North American continent and his ultimate arrival in what is today western Connecticut and eastern New York has been studied throughly by archaeologists. Tracing the route paced by these ancient races, it has been noted that the original migration was from Asia, by way of the Behring Straits to Alaska, thence southeastward across the present Canadian provinces. Taking into consideration climatic conditions, travel conditions, etc., archaeologists who have examined the artifacts which appear in the Danbury area, estimate the arrival of this race here at about 10,000 years ago. They have disappeared forever, leaving only a few mounds, some arrow heads, skeleton remains and some pottery to tell of their once greatness and cultural skill.

Today, the American Indian stands out as the direct descendant of this strange race which is known to have inhabited Connecticut and New York at least 10,000 years before the arrival of the pioneers.

Rocks Tell Story

Leaving behind primitive man, the writer closes with a geological history of some of the rocks which have been picked up in the area around Danbury. In the region around Lake Candlewood, geologists find as fine a collection of rocks as can be obtained at any point in the state of Connecticut. Vitreous formations which owing to their shiny appearance appear in many points especially near New Fairfield. Shales which denote the possible presence of crude oils appear in the area around Brookfield. As this area is known to geologists as having crude oil possibilities at a possible depth of 9,000 feet in the sub strata, the presence of these shales is of vast interest to major oil operators. In the porphyritic rocks which appear in the area around Carmel, N. Y., scientists see a wonderful portrayal of nature's works in a rock where the complete crystals of one mineral appear in a grand mass or matrix of other minerals. These denote the presence of sufficient iron deposits in the makeup to insure the possible establishing of watering places in areas where this form of rock appears.

In the limestone group which appears predominant in the area around Lake Candlewood, geologists find sufficient accumulations to substantiate the theory of the onetime presence here of marine life. The principal mineral contained in these rocks is carbonate of lime.

In the plutonic rocks we see the results of the upheaval which occured here millions of years ago. They are crystalined and appear in the area around Wooster mountain state park. They are of the eruptive type, have cooled slowly, thus giving the elements time to arrange themselves in crystaline form before the mass became rigid. Some forms of granite found here are of that category.

These rocks tell many stories of

Danbury News Times - 1930's after March 1, 1937

Discovering Indian Relics Pastime of New Fairfield Man

(By EDITH M. HATCH)

A most interesting fact concerning Lake Candlewood and environs is the recent discovery of many Indian relics in certain regions. It is a fascinating pastime for Keith Joyce of Joyceland, on the Sherman-Fairfield side of Lake Candlewood today to dig up Indian graves, discover Indian canoes, and the like.

Mr. Joyce became interested in the study of Indian lore through the records handed down by his great-great grandmother, whose maiden name was Conngo, and who was part Indian. The old lady lived to be 101 years of age, dying in 1896, and leaving a rich store of Indian legends and records behind her.

It seems that Chief Squantz, whereby we get the name of Squantz pond, inhabited, with his tribe, the land which is now owned by Mr. Joyce, and when the cellar was dug for the Joyce house in 1927, three Indian burials were discovered, the skeletons of two women and one man. The graves were only three feet deep. The man's grave is thought to be that Chief Squantz, as it was his camping ground, and a number of implements, a tomahawk, pestle, fleshing knife, arrows, hoes, and other implements were found in his grave. Each Indian was buried with his head to the north, face to the east, facing the rising sun, and with hands clasped around the knees. This discovery brought up a professor from the Metropolitan museum in New York city, and when Lake Candlewood was built, the professor spent six weeks with Joyce, studying the land about, and excavating for relics, before the waters flooded the land.

Mr. Joyce has a fine exhibit in the museum at 150th street and Broadday, New York city, where 2200 lbs of arrowheads, and a complete pottery vase discovered by him, may be seen, as well as the skeletons. He and another man found the pottery vase of Iroquois work on a rock ledge on Wanzer mountain, evidently the Indian's panty shelf, and it was assembled by Mr. Joyce.

Mr. Joyce has in his interesting home on the shores of the lake, many arrowheads, tomahawks, as well as a photographic copy of the original deed to the land signed with Indian names, and marked in the interesting characters of the braves themselves. The deed is most interesting, as it is signed by a number of famous Indians. In 1724, when this tribe was living in mud huts and rock shelters in this territory, 12 proprietors purchased the town of New Fairfield, coming up from Fairfield on the shore, and making a bargain with the Indians for the 14 miles of land they occupied. Chief Squantz died that winter, before the deal was completed, and it was five years later when the purchase was completed, in 1729, and the deed is signed by a son of the old chief, whose name may be seen on it. When the white men arrived the Indians moved to what is now known as the Schaghticoke Indian Resrevation, near Kent, and took upon themselves the name of the Schaghticoke Tribe of Indians. New Milford gets her Schaghticoke Trail name from that tribe.

Another interesting discovery made by Joyce is that of a complete Indian canoe buried in the ice at Squantz pond. At one time when that land was occupied by the Indians it was covered with water, much as now, and the Indians fished and hunted there. Eight years ago when Robert Chatterton and Keith Joyce were cutting ice in the pond, they hit the canoe, buried deep in the ice, took it out, and found it to be a war canoe, 22 ft. long and 4 ft. wide. This now reposes in a museum at Waterbury.

One thing of interest Mr. Joyce spoke of was that the Indian skull is unlike any other known race, proving that the Indians either originated in southern North America or in South America. The skulls taken from the grave were as hard as rock, unlike the chalky bones of a white man's skeleton after death. Mr. Joyce says he knows there is at least one more Indian grave on his property, and is sometime going to excavate for it—so Connecticut dwellers do not have to go to Egypt for their trophies,—hunt for them around Lake Candlewood.

Danbury News - 1936

Who were Danbury's first peoples? The Pahquioque

Published 4:25 pm, Saturday, March 5, 2011

For too long, the western Connecticut area has been seen as the backwater of scholarly studies.

Indeed, this area was settled later than other areas in Connecticut, namely, in the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

There were no well-known groups like the Pequot, Niantic and Mohegan, "officially" living in the western Connecticut region.

John DeForest who wrote the seminal (and ethnocentric) work on Connecticut's Indians in 1853 regarded the northwest lands as devoid of native inhabitants.

Over the past 25 years, however, thanks to the pioneering work of many archaeologists, the whole western Connecticut area is now the focus for many scholars who are doing a wide variety research.

In the past 10 years I have been scouring the region as an archaeologist and ethnohistorian.

Diane Hassan, a researcher from the Danbury Museum &Historical Society, has been helping me gather materials that address our city's original inhabitants.

The information we are uncovering has a potential, significant bearing on a political battle that is brewing in Danbury.

The Army is proposing to build a campsite on an old farm site that overlooks the old fairgrounds and the Still River lowlands.

This area, as you will read, is exactly where native peoples camped, fished, made their baskets and traveled, even as recently as the early 20th century.

The Dutch Novi Belgii from 1656 and the Mathew Speiss map from 1935 record a village called Pahquioque east of the Hudson and north of the Sound, along a trail that is now known as Route 7.

We don't have a lot of information about this settlement. How far back did it go? Was it one of those large "villages" or was it a much smaller inland habitation, consisting of dispersed farming and fishing hamlets?

What do we know about the indigenous folks of Danbury?

Well, the environment here was remarkably full of resources that native people would have harvested.

The Still River, a tributary of the Housatonic, flows throughout Danbury. Waterfalls and fishing areas were found on many parts of the river.

H.B. Fanton, a collector and historian of ancient Danbury, cited numerous wild foods that were found along the 1901 Still River in western Danbury, from Farrington and Sanford's ponds to Lake Kenosia: small mouth bass, sun fish, perch, pickerel, pike, eel and bullheads (these latter two were caught at night using lanterns to lure the fish to the surface).

He also noted otter, mink, beaver, opossum, weasel, skunk, muskrats, deer, duck, geese, snipe, red and grey fox, rabbits, woodchucks, quails, partridge, woodcocks, raccoons, and copper head snakes.

Because of the extensive wetlands, earliest Anglo inhabitants of the "plantation of Pahquioque" asked that their town be called Swampfield.

The governor, Robert Treat, may have realized that such a name was not marketable and he chose to name the town Danbury after a village in his native Essex County, England.

Danbury was made a town by act of the General Court in 1687.

Archaeological site files in the Office of State Archaeology list numerous sites along this Still River corridor in western Danbury.

Sadly, much of the area was urbanized; so, much of the ancient history is buried under concrete.

The Interstate was built in the 1960s, the mall replaced the fairgrounds in the 1980s, and strip malls, the airport, and industry have claimed other huge tracts of land.

Fanton's diaries, however, reveal some of the secrets about Danbury's past.

Fanton was a well-known collector who excavated sites and purchased and sold artifacts widely in New England. He was connected to other collectors and various museums in the area, such as the University of Connecticut.

With the help of state archaeologist Nick Bellantoni, we are trying to track down where his vast collection of artifacts went after he died.

We've discovered that there were a lot of people digging throughout western Danbury in search of campsites in the early 20th century. It's anyone's guess about where those artifacts are now located.

Of special interest to us are Fanton's hand-drawn maps of ancient village sites.

Fanton, as well as living old timers, discuss native people who lived in this western area of Danbury even into the 20th century, and included people like Indian Betty, Indian Jane and Peter, and Indian Mary.

Danbury's natives lived throughout the region and were not restricted to the town's western edge.

However, that said, figuring out the names of these people, was and is often problematic.

They were people who slipped through the usual documentary records that covered the dominant Anglo society, and they were nearly invisible.

So, where were the Indians?

Given all the logistical problems with knowing who and where these people were, we have come up with some concrete data that help make the invisible visible.

We discuss natives according to geographic sections, below:

Beaver Brook and Brookfield

Fanton's notes in his "Geologic History of Danbury" that there was a large Indian rockshelter on the "mountain" -- he cites all kinds of materials from jasper to quartz tools, from soapstone to clay pottery.

The whole area from Beaver Brook Mountain to Whisconier in Brookfield boasts the largest collection of artifacts, he says, this side of New Milford.

I personally had heard about the Beaverbrook Mountain area from locals as a particularly rich area, at least until strip malls, housing developments, and roads destroyed many of the sites.

An unpublished manuscript at the Danbury Historical Society also mentions how everyone knows about the old Indian Rock or Cave at Beaver Brook Mountain where an Indian family once lived.

The author (Henry Betts) goes on to talk about a number of natives who lived in the area: "The writer saw some of them there in 1885." (Henry Betts, papers, n.d.).

The manuscript also mentions how the region near where the Danbury, Brookfield and Bethel lines are filled with native artifacts.

Neversink Pond and Candlewood Lake

Neversink Pond became a part of Candlewood Lake. It is now long gone.

Candlewood Lake was created in the 1920s to help generate power in a then, state-of-the-art technology that pumps water through huge turbines to create electricity.

With the building of this lake, thousands of acres of farmland were flooded. Fanton, as well as captions from old photos of the pond, suggest that native peoples had been camping on the edge of this pond too.

One photo caption read: "Piles of wood for lumber and firewood removed from the Neversink Swamp. Shepard's had a sawmill there. Foundations of two or three Indian houses were disclosed along the road after the wood was cut down."

Bailey mentions a "family of Indians" who were living here as late as 1850.

Fanton did some "digging" and collecting here and noted "many relics have been plowed here together with charcoal, bones and broken fragments of arrowheads and pottery."

Besides these data are various stories about native peoples in the Danbury area who were well-known in the local lore.

Indians Peter and Jane were two such people.

Danbury resident Chris Rotello remembers her great-grandmother's house on Long Ridge Road and the stories her great-grandmother would tell her about the Indians.

Peter and Jane lived in a wigwam (circular with a fire pit in the middle) behind the house and along the creek in the 1870s and 1880s.

The couple would move to the seashore in the winter because it was warmer along the coast, and then return to Long Ridge in the spring to take up their quarters again.

Fanton talks about them too. He said they lived under a rock ledge at Haines Pond on the New York state line in the 1880s.

They made baskets of ash and willow and were often seen coming into Danbury with backloads of baskets in the morning.

At sundown they came back on Lake Avenue with the "squaw carrying a feedbag on her shoulders." He reminisces that it was a sight that the boys and girls and old timers never forgot.

Mill Plain Road and Fairgrounds

Haines Pond is adjacent to Sanford and Farrington Ponds which are connected to the Still River.

Many native peoples lived in this area as well as traveled through it throughout the 19th century, and certainly before.

"Indian Mary" lived near current St. Peter's cemetery on land owned by a Mr. Lowry. Fanton called her "the last living Indian" (of course, right?); she did not know her age, which he estimated to be about 90.

Fanton said he spent "many happy hours sitting on the roadside under the trees talking to her as a boy. She told me many things about the tribe that lived around Mill Plain Pond, now Lake Kenosia."

There was also an "Indian Betty" who lived near the junction of current day Ridgebury and Mill Plain roads. In fact, her homestead was called "Betty's Corner."

She allegedly walked through the Harlem Valley to the great meadows of Bedford selling her wares for a roundtrip of 60 miles.

Joe's Hill and Mill Plain Pond (Lake Kenosia) were two great areas of native habitation. Fanton's maps demark these areas in great detail.

Indeed, Fanton did a lot of collecting here and suggests that villages, burial sites, along with fish weirs, waterfalls and campsites, were all to be found here.

As mentioned, Indians' Mary, Peter and Jane all traveled along this route, as did another fellow by the name of Scuppo.

The road to Danbury eastward was known as Old Scuppo Road in the late 18th century -- it started off as a trail, then an ox cart road that led into Danbury.

Scuppo was reportedly one of the "few Indians who chose to remain in Danbury and live on his land as approved by the town."

Many natives still lived on Joe's Hill, above current Mill Plain Road, even after Danbury was incorporated as a town in 1687.

An important feature of ancient Lake Kenosia was the fish weir that natives constructed at the outlet to the Still River.

According to a local 20th century historian Lydia Potter, "A relic of this remained up to the advent of the railway in the 1850's, in a beautiful glen whose rushing waters and cool shade made the spot a favorite resort for Danburians."

Fish Weir Bridge (now gone but near where the mall stands today) was a name associated with this site.

As all of these data show, there were native peoples living in Danbury well into the late 19th century.

They lived in scattered communities which could be found in the west side of town (Mill Plain Road and Lake Kenosia), in the north by Neversink Pond, and in the north and east in Great Plain and Beaver Brook Mountain.

Various roads, bridges and topographic areas are named after them, like Fish Weir Bridge, Betty's corner, Arrowhead Point, Pocono Bridge, and so on.

Who were these Indians of Danbury?

Native Peoples lived in Danbury for thousands of years, as the archaeological finds suggest.

Indians were in Danbury in late historic times too, as the personal memories and other documents suggest as well.

The Pahquioque were most likely related to the Paugussett -- we use this term as a general term to describe culturally similar Indians who lived up and down the Housatonic River, and included from north to south: Weantinock, Pootatuck, Paugussett, and Pequannock.

Just north of the Danbury border, Poconos signed some of the earliest deeds for land that became New Milford and stretched south to the current northern boundary of Danbury.

Pocono is listed as a Pootatuck who signed some of the Weantinock deeds.

The "early deeds to lands on both sides of the Still River at Brookfield, extending well into Stony Hill and Whisconier Hill, are described as being in Pocono (see, for instance, Emily Hawley, Annals of Brookfield 1929).

The Danbury Indians lived within the Housatonic Watershed; this watershed was home to the Paugussett peoples.

Groups of interrelated tribes were tied to watershed basins.

The historical stories about Indian Jane and Peter traveling down to the shore suggest that the ancient ties of kinship were alive and well, well into the 19th century.

We continue to track the names of natives in Danbury and create linkages between them and other native folks who lived throughout the western Connecticut region.

If any readers have records or oral histories about Danbury's Native Peoples, they are encouraged to contact Dr. Weinstein at weinsteinl@wcsu.edu.

Laurie Weinstein is a professor of anthropology at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury and is the general editor of Native Peoples of the Americas, University of Arizona Press.

Diane Hassan is a research specialist at the Danbury Museum & Historical Society in Danbury.