# *The Sokoki and Their World in 1663***

## Introduction

In this presentation about the Sokoki, colloquially known as the Squakheag, I draw on a variety of sources, particularly:

- archaeological research conducted at Native American sites located east of the Mississippi River,
- documentary records, particularly the *Jesuit Relations*, and 17th century letters and other documents from the Connecticut valley,
- the trade ledgers (1647-1665) of John Pynchon -- the chief fur trader in the Connecticut River valley who operated from his trading post in Springfield, and
- archaeological excavations at a fortified Sokoki village (1663-1664) located in present-day Hinsdale, New Hampshire.

I intend to explore the larger world of the Sokoki, and that of Northeastern Native peoples in general. By doing so, I hope this will bring us to an understanding that the Sokoki in the 1660s were active agents in creating their own history in an indigenous world that extended hundreds of miles beyond the Connecticut Valley.

There is no doubt that the Sokoki, or Socoquiois, identified in the J*esuit Relations* and the community of Squakheag ( Wosquakeg, Asquakege or Sowquakeake), and the French Sokoki are identical and are Europeanized versions of the same word, "*Sohkwahki* or *ozokwaki*, plural *ozohwakiak*" –an Abenaki term meaning approximately "the people who separated or broke apart, or the ones who broke up or broke away" (Gordon M. Day, The Identity of the Sokokis. *Ethnohistory* (1965, 12:237-249). The Sokoki spoke a Western Abenaki dialect. The Native community at Squakheag was focused in the area of modern-day Northfield, Massachusetts, and Hinsdale, New Hampshire. Their hunting and trapping territory, as well as one or move villages extended well to the north.

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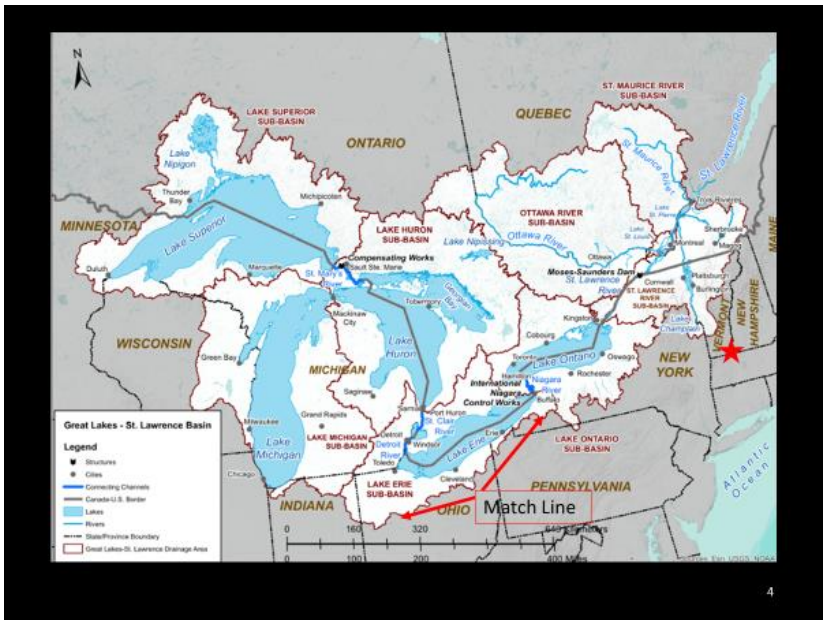
# Part 1. Our Spatial and Temporal Horizons in a world in which European colonialism did not exist.

CONSIDER THE FACT THAT MUCH OF THE EASTERN HALF OF THE COUNTRY – FROM THE CONNECTICUT TO THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER – IS CONTAINED WITHIN ONLY THREE MAJOR WATERSHEDS.


**Mississippi River Basin – once, the Native American Heartland of Eastern North America**




**Great Lakes**

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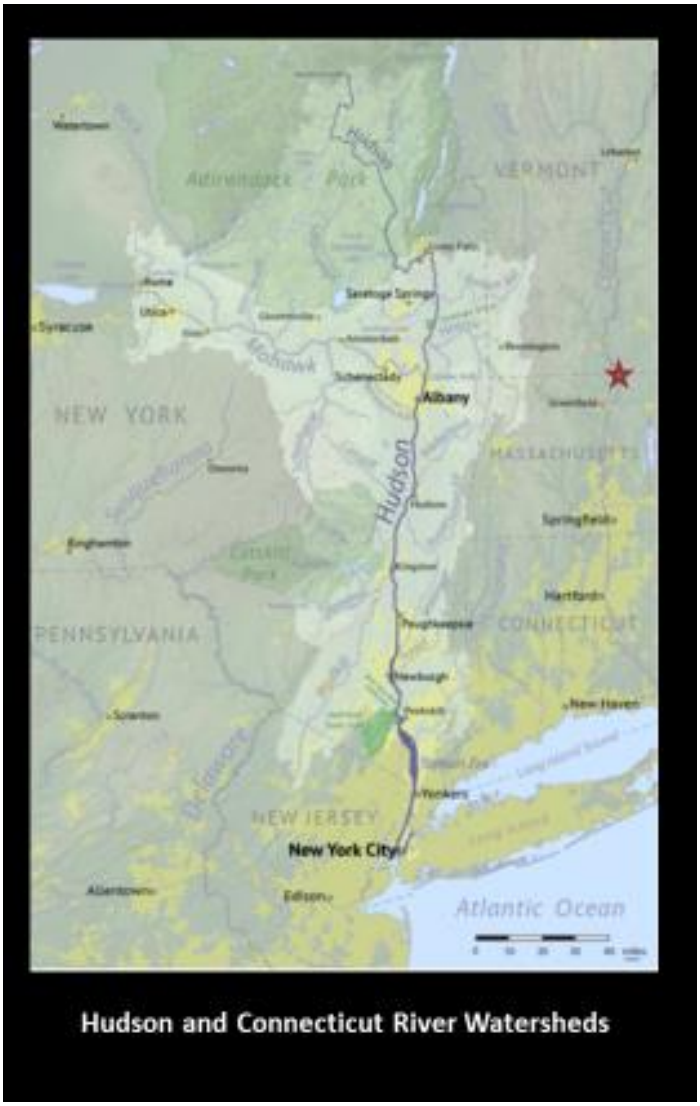


**Smaller Drainages that Flow into the Atlantic, including the Hudson and Connecticut Rivers.**

- RIVER SYSTEMS FACILITATED LONG-DISTANCE TRAVEL.
- CULTURAL INTERACTIONS AMONG NATIVE COMMUNITIES OVER A BROAD REGION AND THROUGH MANY CENTURIES WERE INEVITABLE.
- SUCH CONNECTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES.

Archaeologists have coined the concept of Interaction Spheres, -- areas within which Native peoples exchanged material goods, but also shared ideas.

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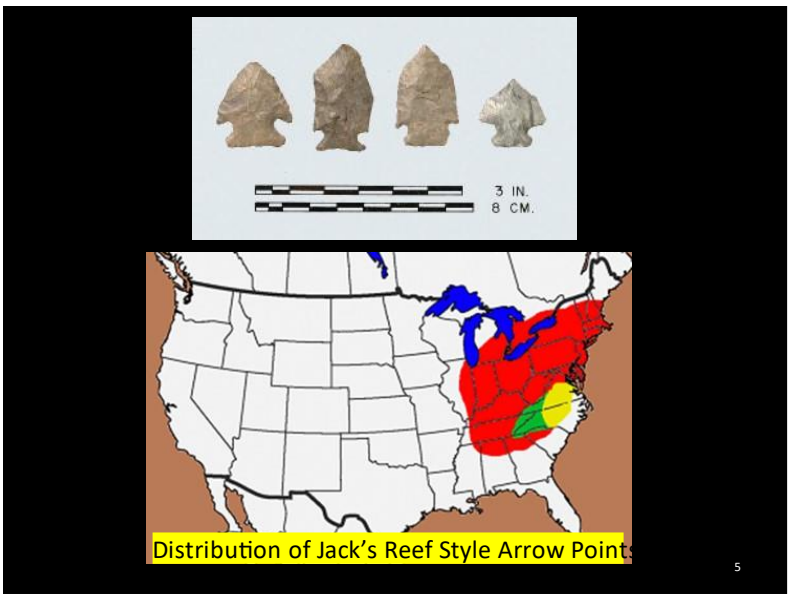


**Example: Styles of Stone Dart or Arrow Points -**
Synchronous across a broad region.

Periodically, such exchanges brought about fundamental shifts in entire cultural systems.


In the Mississippi watershed, one such interaction sphere is exemplified by Hopewell Mortuary Complexes - roughly 100 BC and AD 500.

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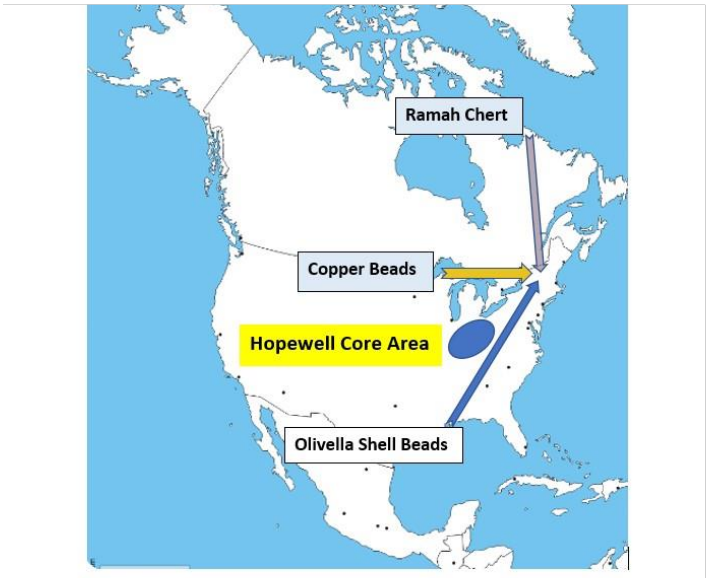
- Surviving elements consist of Effigy and Burial mounds -- extending throughout the Mississippi and Ohio Valleys. Elaborate goods made from exotic materials were buried in associated graves, either in a mound or a burial ground located nearly.

Great Serpent Mound - Ohio

In New England and as far east as Nova Scotia – extensive trade networks allowed people to obtain exotic burial goods, but no burial mounds were constructed.




Hopewell Complex – Imported Burial Items from New England Sites

Mortuary activity is evident at a large number of sites in the Connecticut Valley, including a cemetery containing at least 20 individuals found near Holyoke Depot in 1868. Both children and adults were buried with grave

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goods. Among the artifacts recovered from the cemetery are beads of shell and native copper, and blocked-end tubes, suggestive of contact with the Adena complex of the Midwest . Additional examples of block-ended tubes have been reported from sites in Holyoke, South Hadley Falls, Turners Falls, Wendell Depot (Jordan 1959), and the Riverside District. Another Adena-connected cemetery is reported from Quaboag Pond in Brookfield.

## The Mississippian Cultural Tradition: AD 1000-1350

By roughly A.D. 1000, small horticultural settlements where maize, beans and squash were seasonally grown, were springing up throughout the Mississippi Bottomlands.

By A.D. 1100, populations had expanded and consolidation into larger communities occurred in high resource areas.

Within less than a century, Chiefdoms emerged throughout the Mississippi basin. These were societies in which a ruling class controlled large populations and critical resources, including agriculturally produced foods that could sustain large populations. Warfare was endemic.

Image by Herb Roe

Cahokia is perhaps the best-known example.

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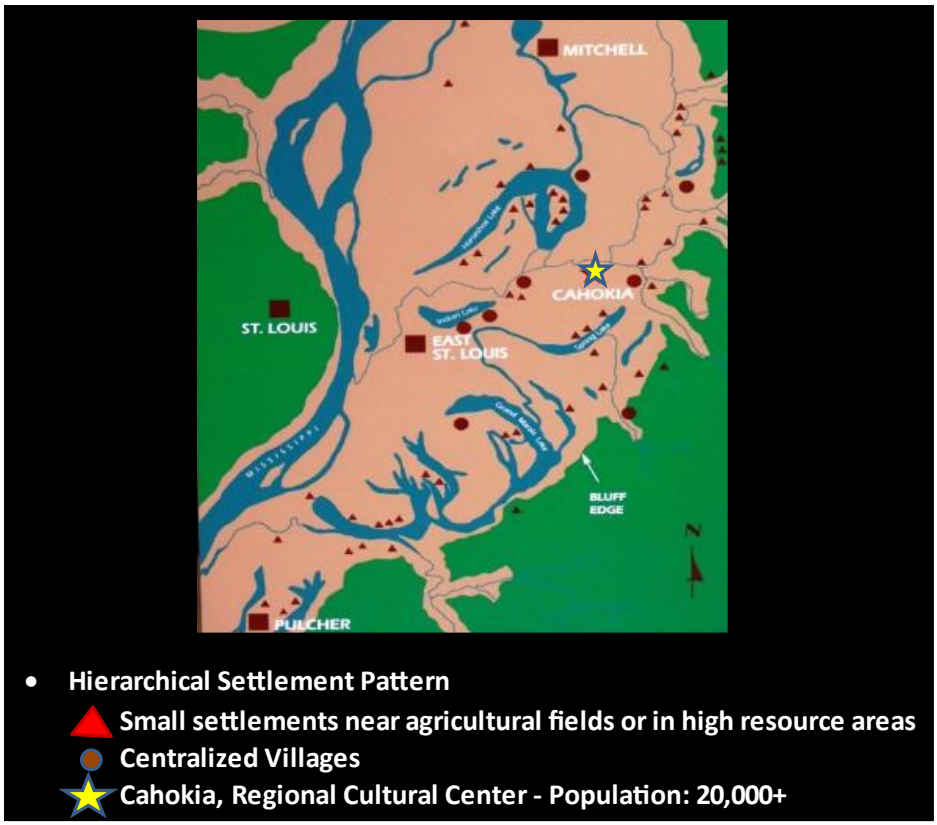


## Hierarchical Settlement Pattern

- **Small settlements near agricultural fields** or in high resource areas
- Centralized **villages with platform mounds**
- **Cahokia, Population: 20,000+**

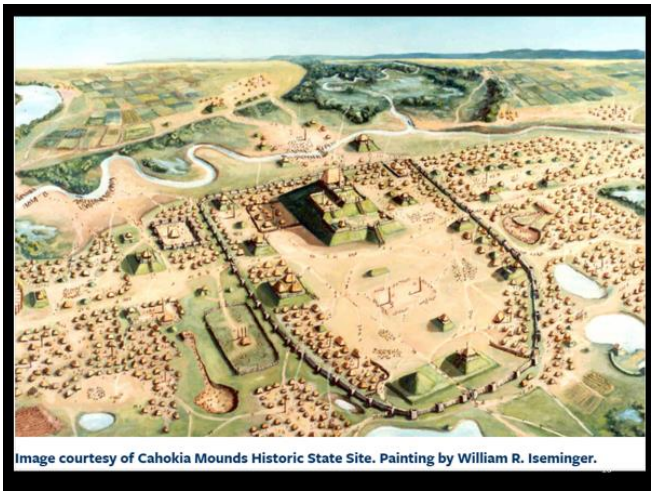
Image courtesy of Cahokia Mounds Historic State Site. Painting by William R. Iseminger.

## Based on the archaeological record, these are artists renditions of Cahokia

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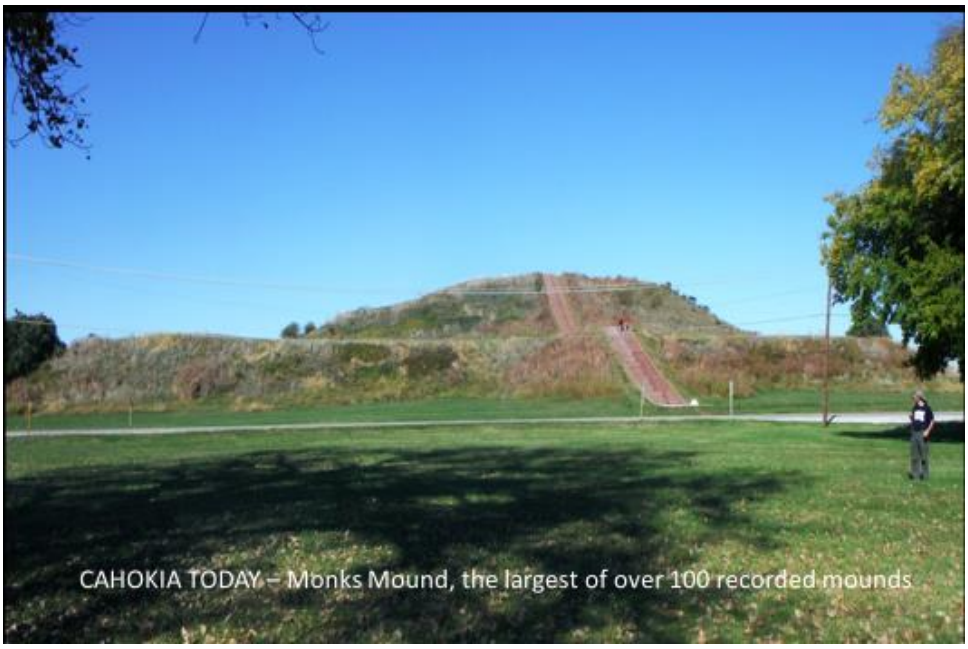


**Monks Mound today – the largest of roughly 100 mounds in the area (est. 150,000 cu yd of earth excavated, carried in baskets, and deposited by hand).**

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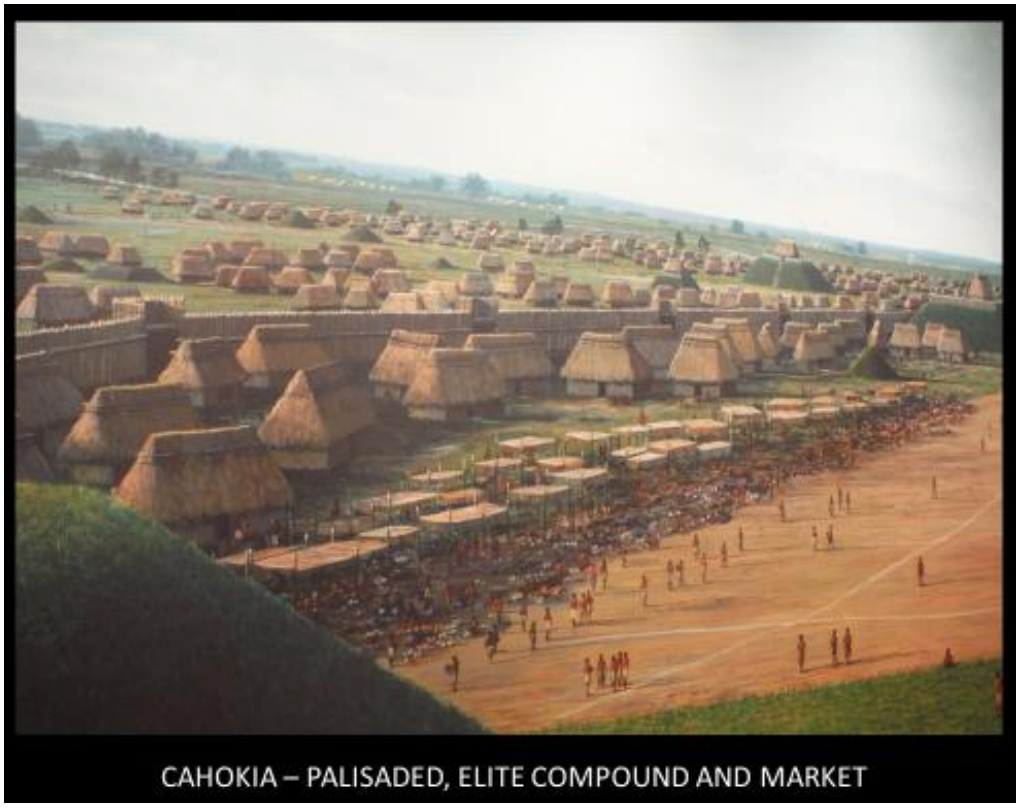



## Elaborate Artistic Expression – Stone Sculptures, Copper Relief

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**Ceramics – both functional and decorative**


**Incised Shell (spider motif), Etched Ground Stone (Bird Man), Flaked Points and Knives, Decorative Ceramic Vessels**

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Cahokia's decline began about A.D. 1200. By A.D. 1350-1400, Cahokia had been abandoned, but not before the culture had spread throughout the Southeast.

Many factors may have contributed to its demise:

- continent-wide drought affecting crops,
- soil exhaustion,
- depletion of regional resources,
- internal or political unrest,
- loss of control by elites,
- external conflict.

## RECENT HYPOTHESIS

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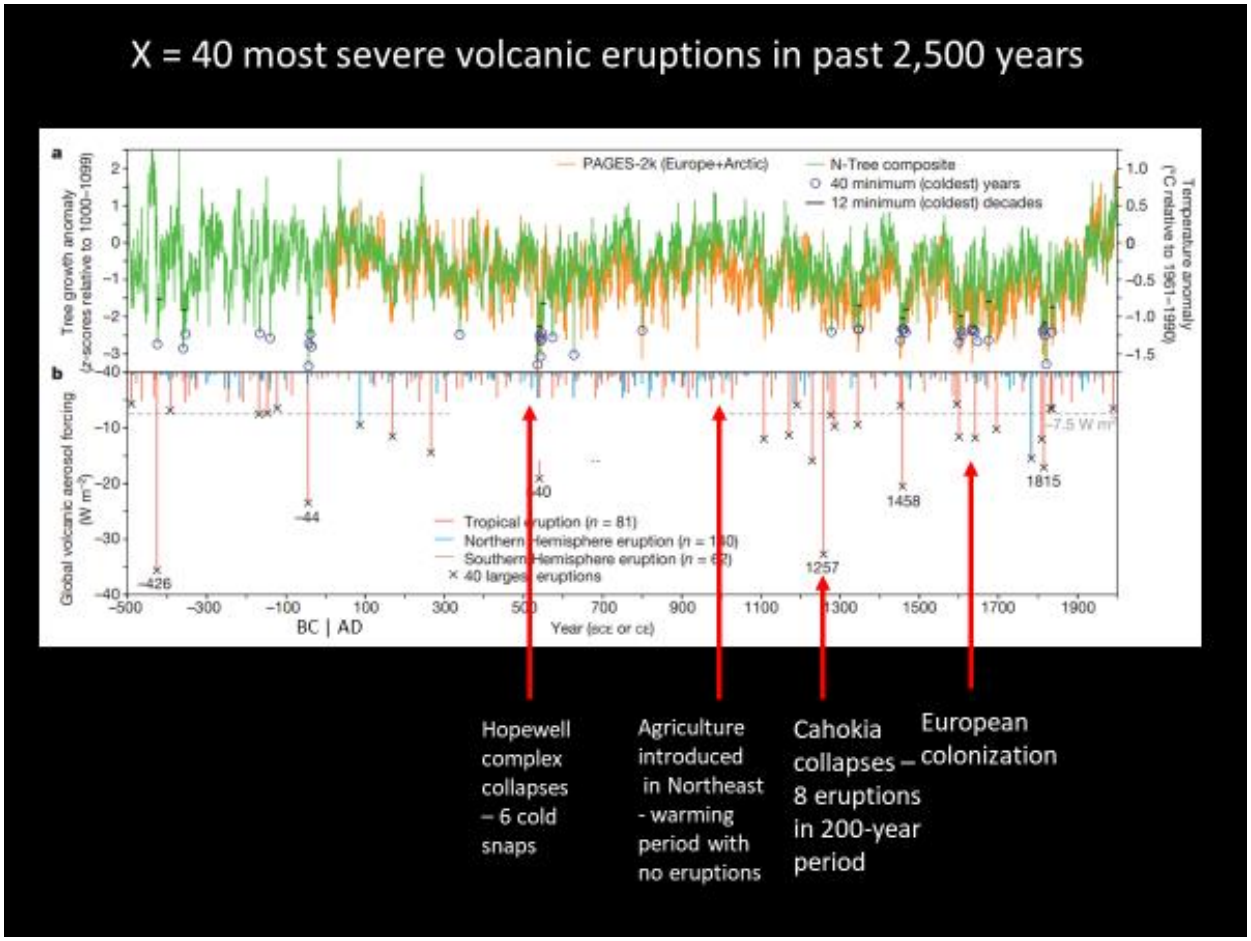
Large magnitude, **volcanic eruptions**, that turned summers into winters, may have also contributed to socio-economic disruption. GRAPH

How would communities of horticulturalists who had come to rely on stored maize, beans, and squash to get them through the winter react when massive crop failures occurred?




Following the abandonment of Cahokia, recent studies reveal a complex series of migrations, warfare, and ecological changes in the Mississippi Bottomlands, extending into the 1500s.

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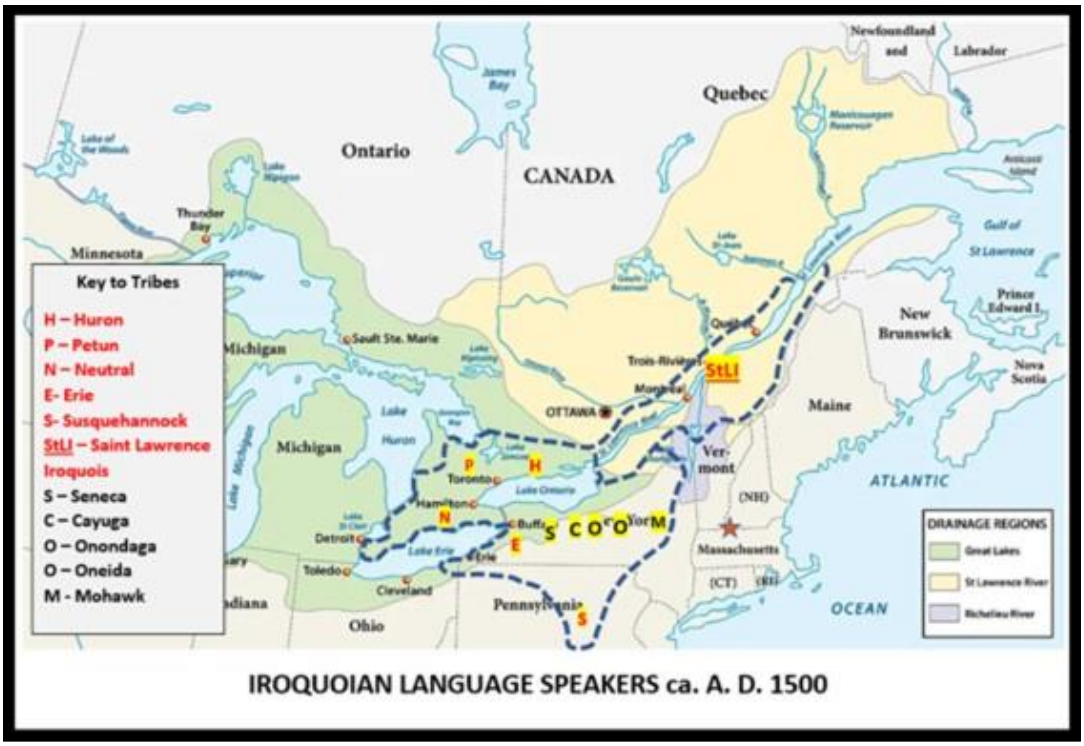
**What was happening on the periphery – in the Eastern Farming Cultures located in the Great Lakes and Atlantic watersheds?**


Let's explore two areas adjacent to the Sokoki homeland that will help set the stage for later events.

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## 1. Iroquoian speaking settlements were located both north and south of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario

No extensive Mississippian communities ever existed in the Northeast, but similar patterns of socio-economic disruption did occur among the Iroquoian speaking settlements both north and south of Lakes Erie and Ontario.

[EXPLAIN GRAPHIC – tribal names – subsistence strategy

**Iroquois Confederacy – return to them in a minute]**

About A.D. 1000 extended families began to experiment with swidden horticulture. Raising the "Three Sisters" -- maize, beans, and squash -- soon became an integral part of their culture. Small seasonal settlements were established near fertile soils in the valley bottoms.

By A.D. 1200, once dispersed clusters of households had coalesced into nucleated, well-planned villages.

By A.D. 1350, villages had grown increasingly larger and were heavily fortified with palisade walls.


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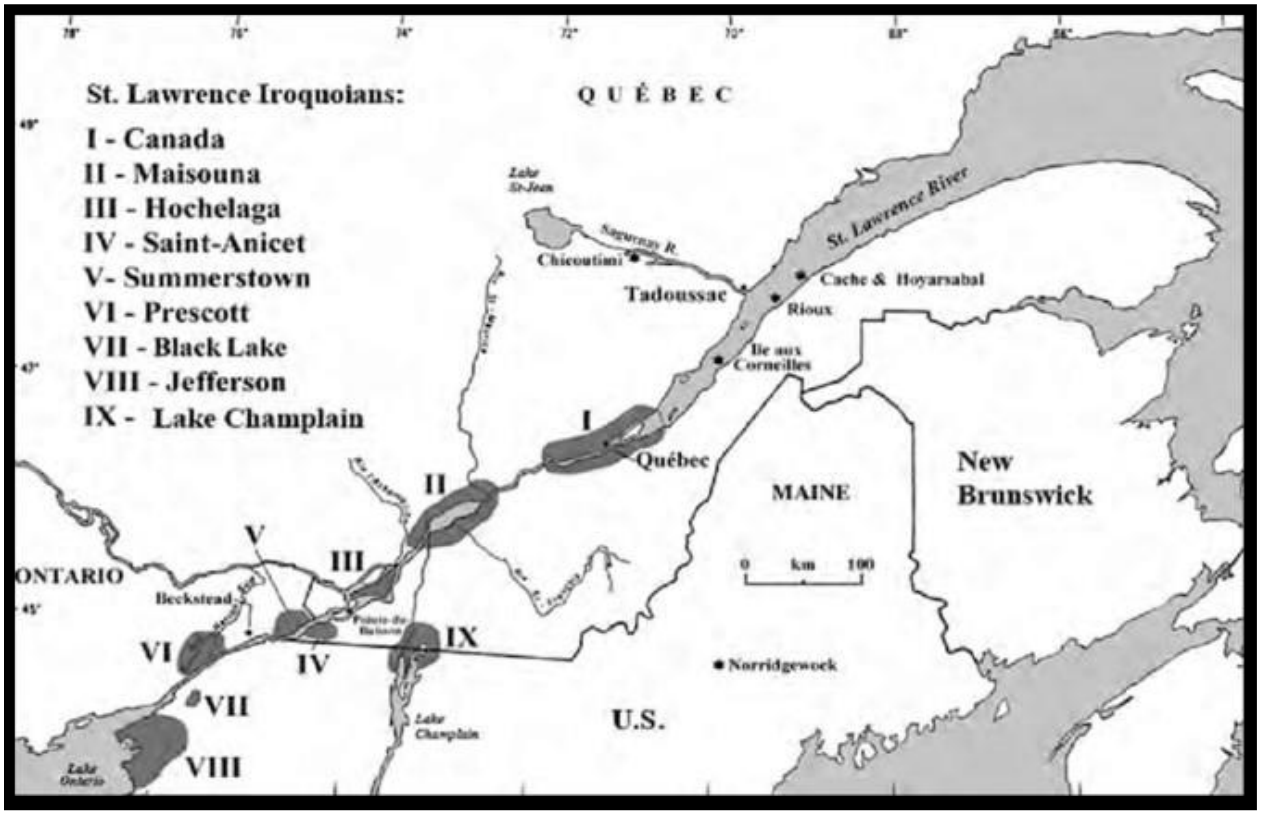
For example, the Draper site (picture), occupied by a Huron community, expanded at least five times over some thirty years beginning around A.D. 1525. At its largest, it had a total of 35 longhouses that held up to 2,000 people. The site covers ten acres of land, and the settlement was fortified with four rows of wooden palisades.

## 2. THE SAINT LAWRENCE IROQUOIS

When Jacques Cartier first explored the St. Lawrence in 1535, there were Iroquoian-speaking peoples living in at least eleven villages between Stadacona (Quebec) and Hochelaga (Montreal).




Hochelaga was a large, fortified village surrounded by extensive corn fields and a population over 3,000.

It was still there during Cartier's second visit (1541-42), but when the French returned to the area in 1603, Hochelaga and the other Iroquois villages

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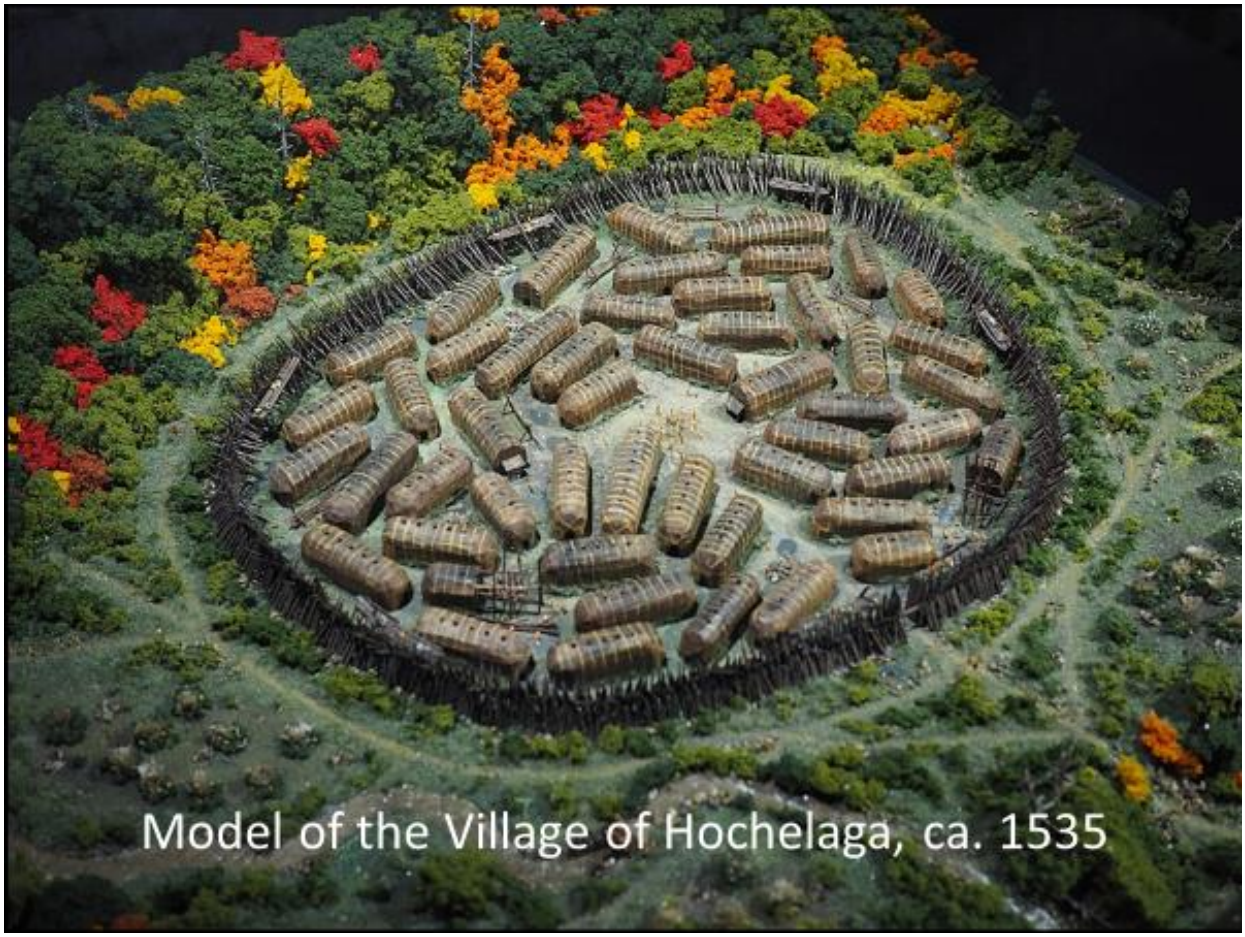
on the St. Lawrence had disappeared. In their place were Montagnais and Algonquin settlements.

Within a half century, a demographic change of regional proportions had occurred – a transformation that would have significant implications for French settlement in Canada and where traditional rivalries between the Iroquois and their Algonquin adversaries would mushroom into protracted campaigns of mass slaughter to control the fur trade with foreign intruders.

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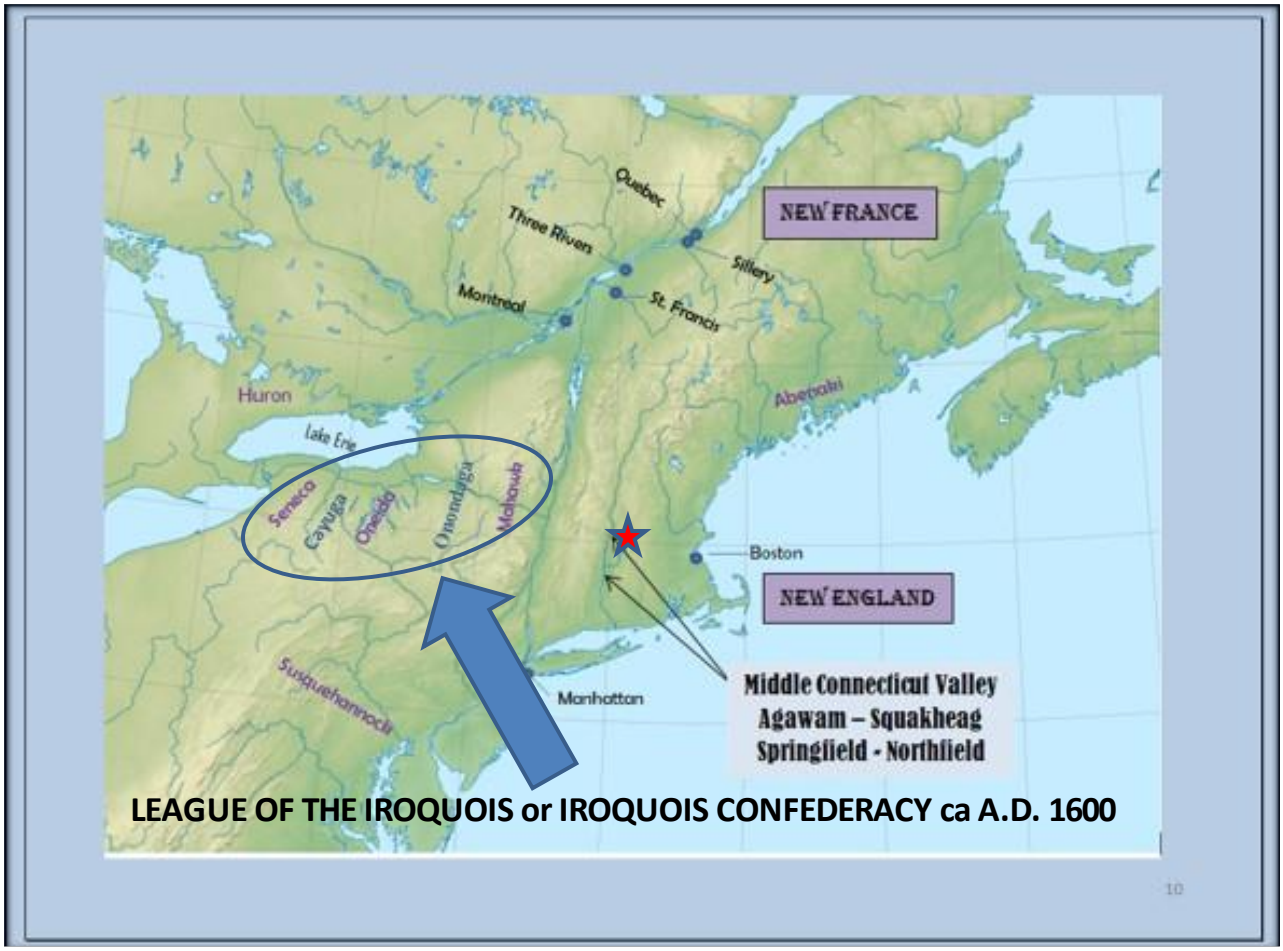
## League of the Iroquois or the Iroquois Confederacy

By 1600, the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca controlled the territory south of Lake Ontaria, to the west of New England.




The exact date of the founding of the Iroquois League is unclear, with estimates ranging from A.D. 1451-1570. There is little disagreement as to why this occurred. Based on their traditions, the greatest danger to the Iroquois was the Iroquois themselves. Relationships between the five tribes had deteriorated into constant war, blood feuds, and revenge killings.

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In danger of self-destruction, the Iroquois were saved by the appearance of a Huron holy man. " Deganawida" received a vision of peace and cooperation among all Iroquois. Deganawida eventually won the support of Hiawatha, an Onondaga who had become a Mohawk war chief. With considerable effort, they were able to convince the other Iroquois tribes to end their fighting and join together in a league.

The formation of the League did end warfare among its members. Eventually, it brought political unity and military power. Unfortunately, Deganawida's "Great Peace" extended only to the five Iroquois League members themselves. For outsiders, whether Iroquois or Algonquian speakers, it was a military alliance.

For any people with whom the Iroquois League had a dispute, living under the "Tree of Great Peace" was anything but peaceful. Iroquois efforts to extend the tree's roots in all directions soon led to wars of outright conquest – not in the European sense of acquiring territory for expanded occupation, but to create subordinate tribes from whom they could demand resources or military support.

During the first 130 years of the League's existence, there were very few tribes who managed to avoid a conflict, including the Sokoki and their friends and neighbors. – More about this below.

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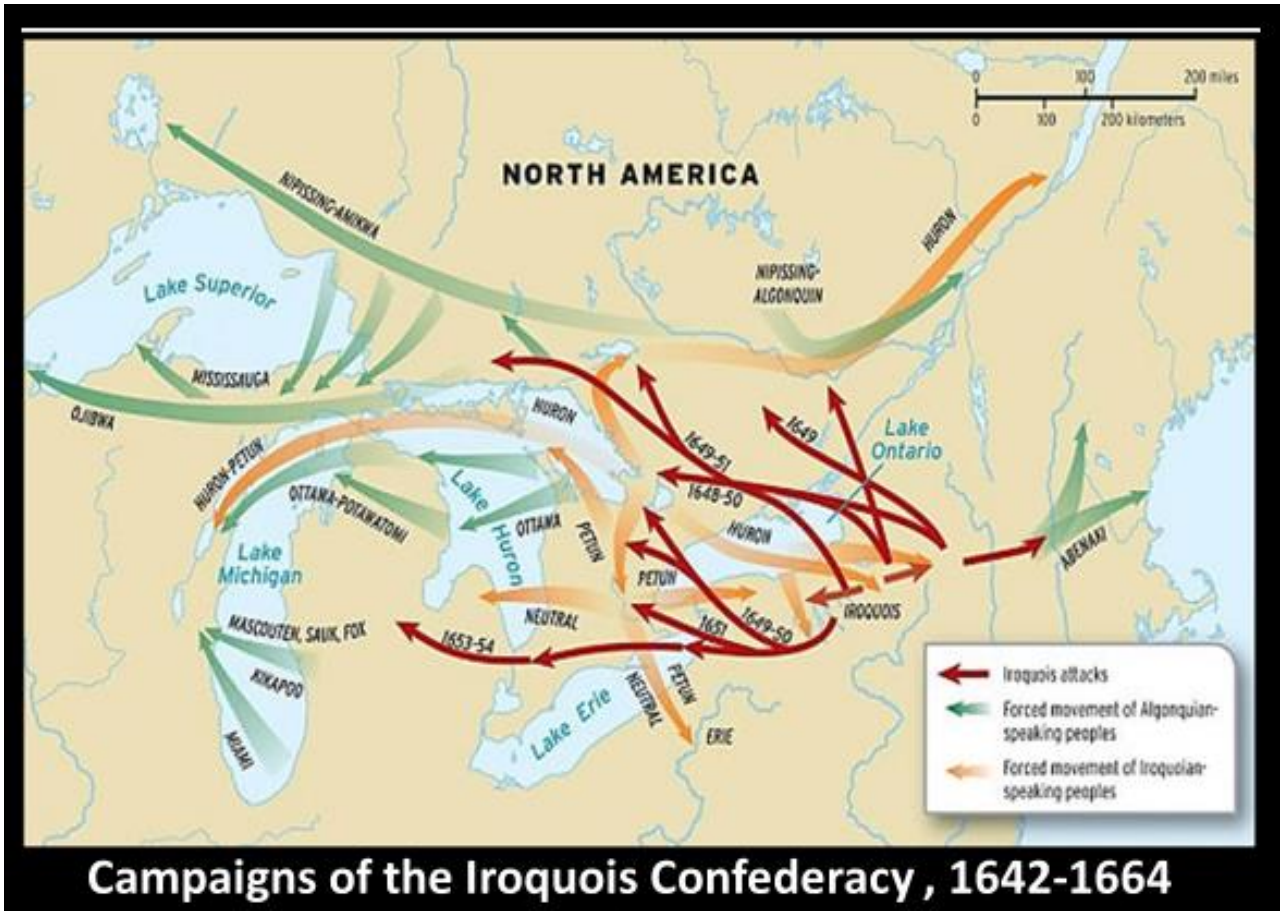


This map reflects the geo-political picture of Indian communities living in **southern** New England at the turn of the 17th century. For those of you who read colonial New England history, the tribal names - Massachusetts, Narragansett, Niantic, Wampanoag, Pequot, Mohegan, and others - are familiar.

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After years of reading English, as well as some French and Dutch documents, it seems clear that, until the early 1660s, the focus of Sokoki politics and alliance building was clearly to the east, north and west. They apparently avoided getting embroiled in southern disputes. For example, while I can find accounts of the Pocumtuck (of latter-day Deerfield) attacking Mohegan villages in Connecticut led by Uncas or joining the Narragansetts to raid Indian communities on Long Island, I have not encountered any mention of the Sokoki operating in these quarters.

## *Part 2. Bringing the Sokoki into focus.*

I hope to provide you with a more intimate view by relating a story involving one prominent Sokoki that played out over a decade.

On November 9, 1642, a band of northern Algonquins brought in a "Socoquiois" prisoner named Messabitout whom they had found hunting just south of the St. Lawrence River (see map). Before reaching the French settlement at Sillery, he had been severely tortured. As related in the Jesuit Relations:

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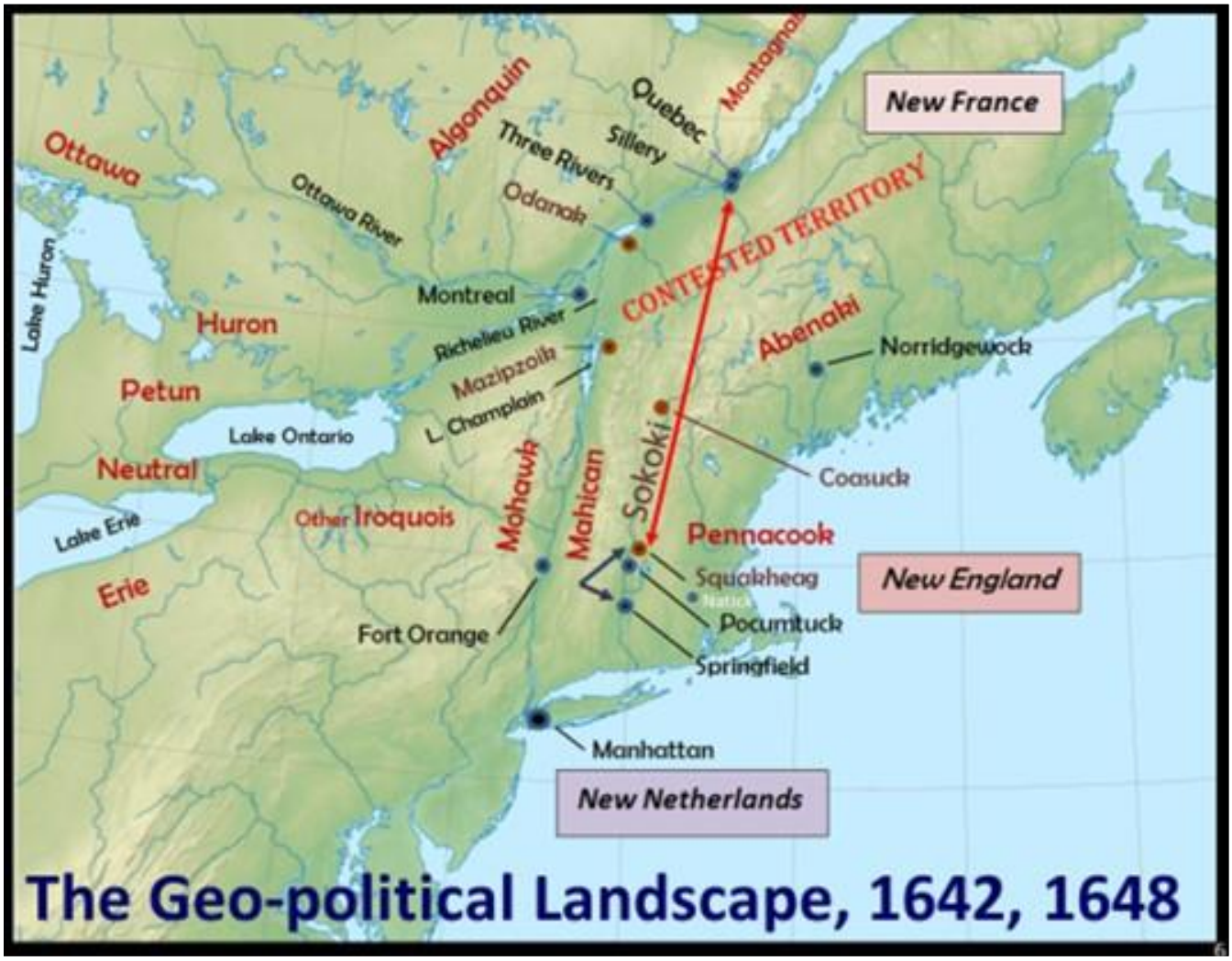


> He had all his nails torn out; matter was issuing from three fingers, quite recently cut, and the worms were swarming therein; he had one foot pierced through and through with a stick; he had both wrists of his hands tied, even to the bone, with cords; and his body was burned, and pierced with awls in sundry places ...

Notably, communication with the prisoner was possible through an "Abnaquiois [Abenaki] who well understood Socoquiois [Sokoki]." The French authorities managed to secure the prisoner's release and sent him homeward in the spring after his recovery.

This humanitarian act at Sillery had an unexpected consequence. In April of the following year (1643), Messabitout, who was a Sokoki war chief, sent a

present of wampum to the Mohawks to try to secure the release of a Jesuit priest, Father Isaac Jogues, and two others then being held as captives. Messabitout was unsuccessful, but his capture, rescue and attempted diplomacy mark the beginning of friendly relations between the Sokoki and the French.

There are multiple accounts of Sokoki interacting with the French and their Algonquin and Montagnais allies along the St. Lawrence during the 1640s. But, following the trail of Massabitout, I will jump forward to 1650.

By this point, the Iroquois had been raiding French settlements for years and had decimated many Native allies of the French. In desperation over the loss of the fur trade to the Iroquois, the French governor ultimately sent a Jesuit priest, Father Druillettes, to the Massachusetts Bay Colony to try to persuade the English governor and Council to allow the French passage through the colony so that they could invade Mohawk territory. Druillettes failed in his negotiations, but while French-English talks were proceeding, French representatives were also speaking with New England Native leaders.

On November 18, 1650, Druillettes first met with a delegation of Sokokis on the Kennebec River in Maine to consolidate an alliance.

Ceremony of the Wampum Belts, after Lafitau

The Abenaki, having already agreed to join the French, followed diplomatic protocols, and presented the Sokoki with 15 belts and 10-12 bracelets of

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wampum, valued at seven or eight bundles of beaver skins, to induce them to join in a united front. Druillettes further told the Sokoki envoy that if he would return to Quebec with the French in the spring, a good present of guns would be given to the Sokoki captains. Druillettes was given to believe that Massabitout, the Sokoki war chief whom the French had rescued eight years before, might also travel to Quebec for the negotiations.



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For three months during the winter of 1650-1651, the Sokokis held an extensive council with three other communities to decide whether or not to join the French. On April 24, 1651, a Sokoki delegation arrived at Quebec bringing a message on behalf of the Sokoki, Pocumtuck, Pennacook and Mahican. They had resolved to risk an attack on the Iroquois, whether or not the English colony granted the French request for assistance.

In his narratives, Druillettes offers a convincing explanation of why the New England Indians, including the Sokoki, were willing to join with the French. Druillettes wrote:

"It is certain that all the Nations of Savages which are in New England hate the Iroquois, and fear lest, after the Hurons and the Algonquins, the Iroquois will exterminate them. Indeed, the Iroquois have broken the heads of many of their men, finding them hunting Beaver, without making satisfaction. Moreover, it is certain that the Sokokis have been closely allied to the Algonquin and are very glad to deliver themselves from the annual tribute of wampum which the Iroquois exact. [The Sokoki also wanted to] revenge themselves for the death of many of their fellow-countrymen, killed by the Iroquois. Besides that, they hope for the beaver hunt about Quebec, after the destruction of the Iroquois."

It is clear that these were very volatile times. As we have seen, alliance building, at which Sokoki leaders were certainly adept, was critical for survival. Records of such Council meetings are non-existent among the English colonial records of this period. The geographical distances at which alliances were established would likely have been met with incredulity if English settlers had been made aware. All conflicts had regional implications.

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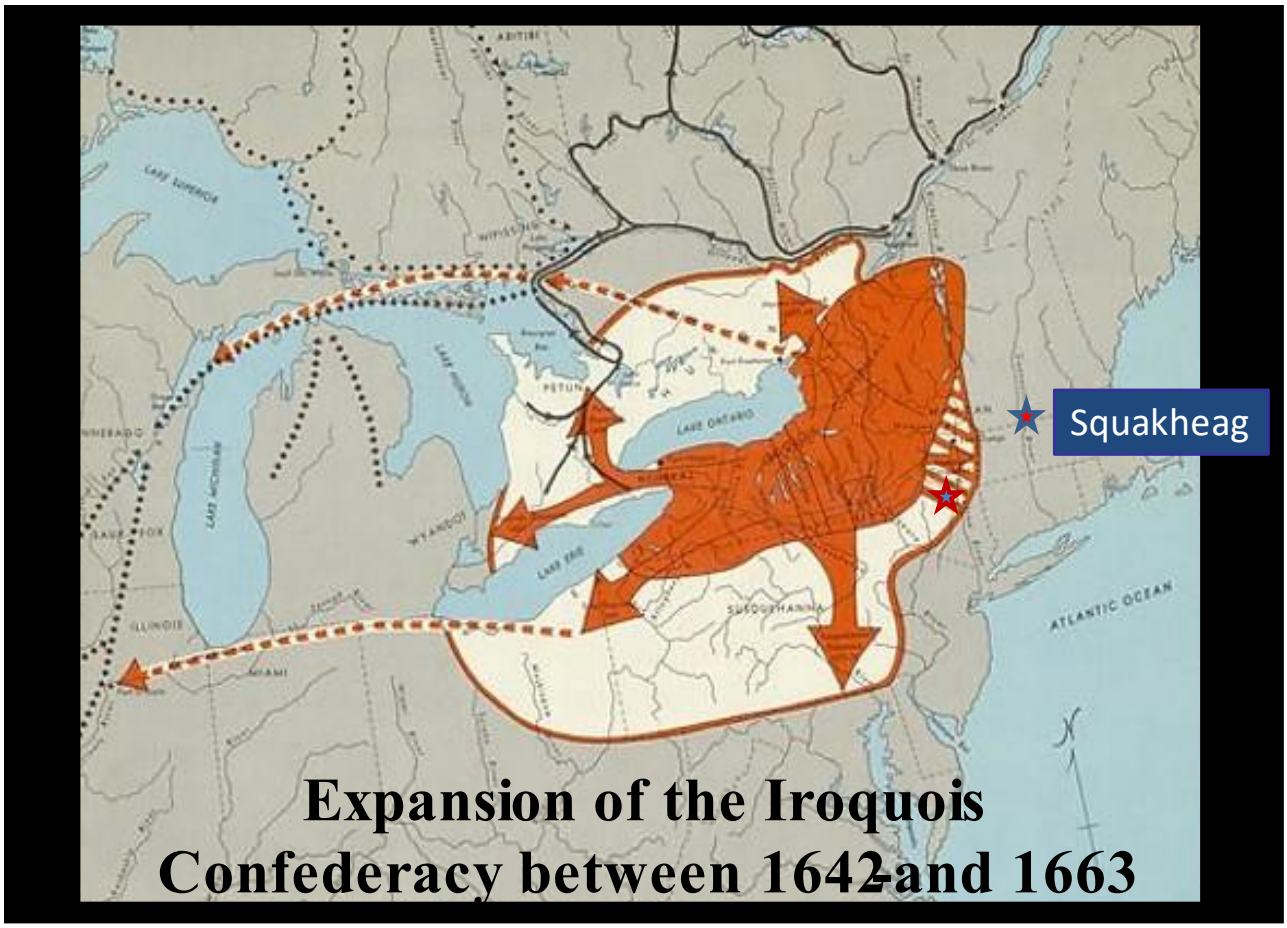


It is worth a reminder that since the 1640s, the Iroquois Confederacy had been expanding its territories around the Great Lakes (*MAP*) By mid-century, tens of thousands of Hurons, Petun, Neutral and Erie had either been killed, absorbed into Iroquois villages, or fled from their former homelands. By mid-century, the Mohawk and other members of the Iroquois Confederacy were on the Sokokis' doorstep.

Fortunately, throughout the 1650s, Iroquois military efforts were focused elsewhere, and in 1662, a number of families from Squakheag even traveled to the French outpost at Montreal and visited the Jesuit mission there.

**Their lives were about to change.**

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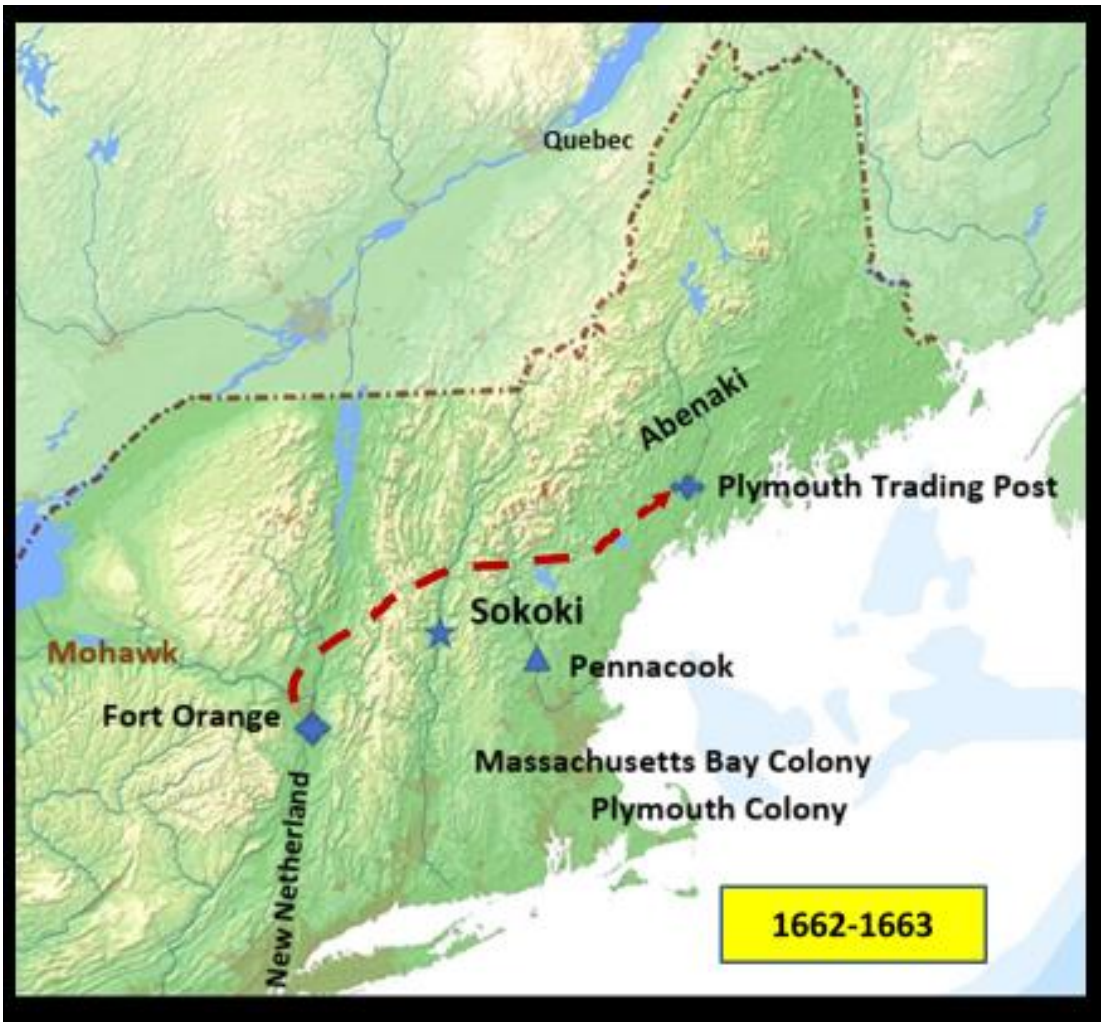


While the Sokoki were away, a large party of Iroquois had raided a Plymouth Colony trading post on the Kennebec River, some 400 miles from their homeland, stole some trade goods and killed English cattle. They then attacked a camp of Abenaki nearby. The Abenaki killed all but one Mohawk, cut off his lips and sent him home with a message.

In September 1663, an English delegation met with the Dutch commander and Saheda, Chief of the Mohawk, at Fort Orange to demand reparations for Iroquois damages at the Plymouth trading post the year before.

Saheda's reply made the Mohawk's position clear:

First, he told the English envoy to leave him, and his people alone and not trouble himself with the Sokoki.

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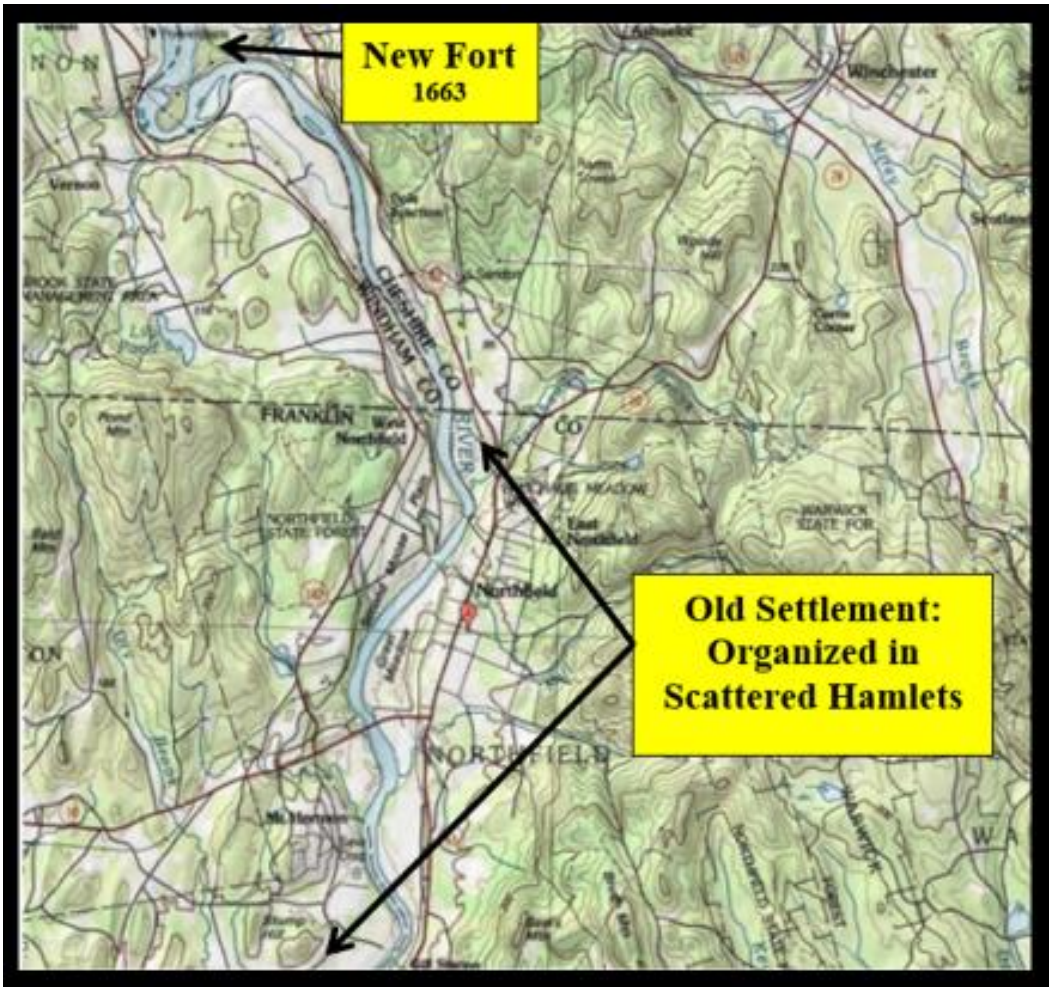
Secondly, some Abenaki had fled to the Sokoki; therefore, Saheda requested that they be allowed to make war on the Sokoki and their adherents,

Finally, they complained that they could not travel over their roads without fear and that they must provide themselves with arms, for the English savages lie upon the roads and paths and attack them and have already beaten some of them.... besides this... the Sokoki have built a castle in their neighborhood about one-or-two-day's travel from here.

In the Fall of 1663, the Sokoki community had indeed moved their scattered settlements on the Connecticut River up-stream to a fortified village (castle) in what is now Hinsdale, NH.




Within a month after the English-Dutch-Mohawk talks, the Iroquois commenced an offensive campaign. On November 24, 1663, a letter from Fort Orange (Albany) informed Director Stuyvesant in Manhattan that a large Mohawk-Oneida-Seneca-war party had secretly left the area by a circuitous

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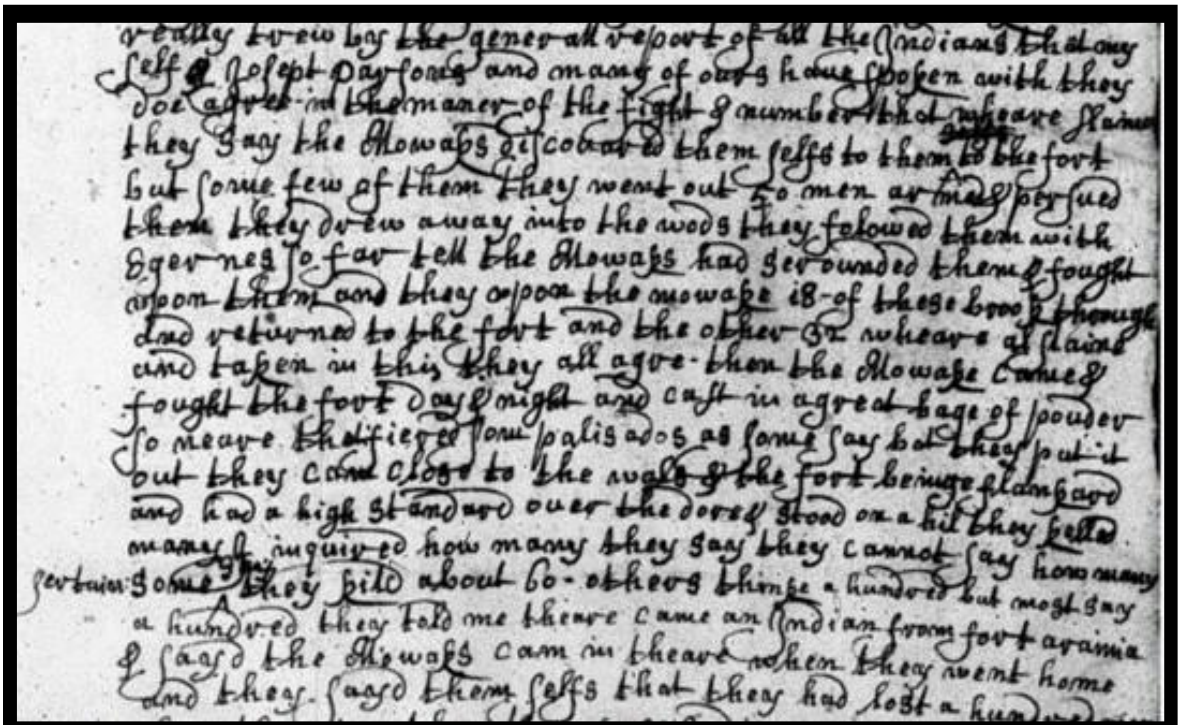
route to avoid detection by either the Dutch or the Mahicans. This force was headed towards the Connecticut valley.



Letter to Gov. John Winthrop, Jr of Connecticut from David Wilton, Indian Trader
North Hampton 25 -(10) – 1663 [December 25, 1663]

Two unpublished letters currently residing in the archives of the Massachusetts Historical Society sent by David Wilton, a prominent settler and Indian fur trader living in Northampton, to John Winthrop, Jr., governor of Connecticut, provide a vivid account of the scene and what transpired.

The fort was well conceived. Its high position above the Connecticut River allowed observation for several miles upstream and downstream. Fortifications consisted of a palisade of logs held in place by a V-shaped trench and mounded with earth on the inner wall.

This defensive network had flanking structures, a "high standard" over the entrance, and was further guarded by steep, 55-60-foot-high slopes on three sides. The fort area was connected to a lake bottom terrace across a slight saddleback, which the residents additionally protected using a wide, four-foot-

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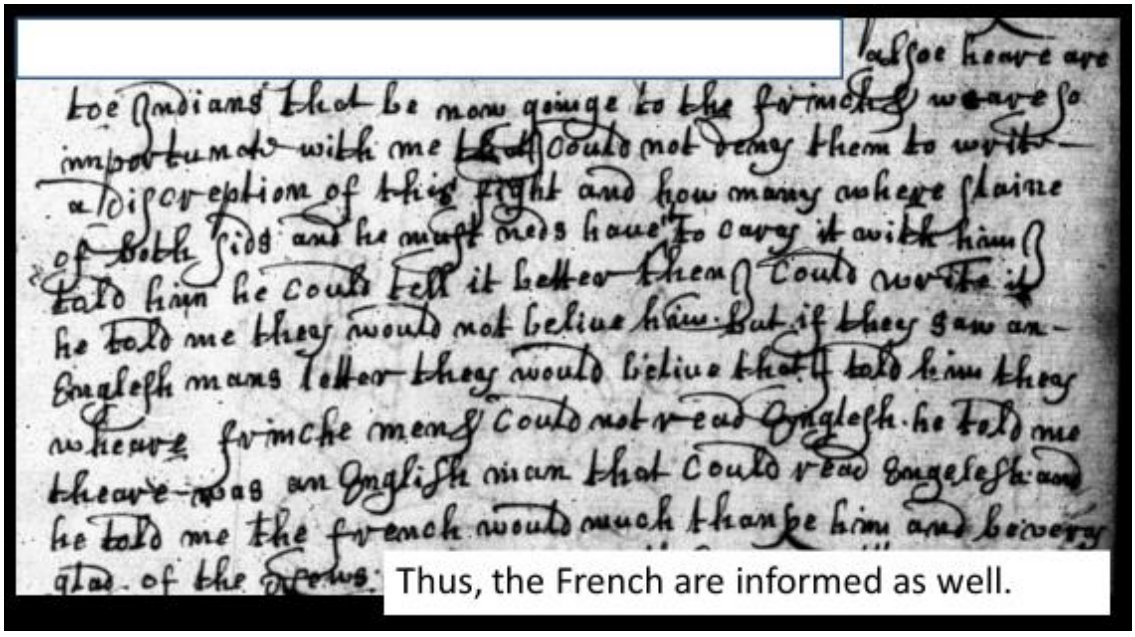
deep trench. Maize was stored both outside the Sokoki stronghold in "barns" at the base of the terrace and inside the fort in prepared pits beneath house floors.

On or about December 1, 1663, part of the Iroquois war party that had left the Hudson valley showed itself outside this new Sokoki fort. Fifty Sokoki warriors pursued the Iroquois into the woods, but the rest of the Iroquois force that was waiting in ambush quickly surrounded them. Eighteen Sokoki escaped, while thirty-two were either killed or captured. Apparently unwilling to antagonize the Iroquois any further, the besieged Sokoki villagers sent a delegation with presents to negotiate a truce.

The Mohawks were inclined to consider a proposal because they had concluded that the Sokoki bulwark was too strong to breach. However, the Oneida and Seneca contingent refused to accept such an agreement, convinced the Mohawks to join them, and subsequently, all the Iroquois attacked the Sokoki stronghold. Protected as it was by palisade walls fronted by steep slopes, the fort gave the defenders a considerable advantage. The Iroquois assaulted this bastion "day and night," managed to set fire to some of the log walls by throwing in a large bag of gunpowder, and destroyed a considerable supply of maize in the unprotected storage barns.

The Sokokis not only held out, but managed to kill a large number of their assailants before the Iroquois broke off their attack. On December 11 and 12, Mohawk, Oneida, and Seneca detachments limped past Fort Orange on their way home with two Sokoki captives, admitting to the Dutch that they had lost about a hundred men.

In late December 1663, David Wilton reported in a second letter that neither the Sokoki nor Pocumtuck had left their forts. Furthermore, the Sokoki had been reinforced by 40 men who had come from a village upriver called hoaz [probably Coasucks from Cohas near modern-day Newbury, VT.] An equal number had come from Pennacook on the Merrimac.




Two Indians were also heading for Canada. As Wilton wrote:

"Here are two Indians that be now going to the French & were so importunate with me that I could not deny them to write a description of this fight and how many were slain on both sides… [He requested a letter that he could take with him.] I told him he could tell it better than I could write; he told me they [the French] would not believe him, but if they saw an English man's letter, they would believe that. I told him they were French men and could not read English; he told me there was an English man that could read English, and he told me the French would much thank him and be very glad of the news."

David Wilton subsequently noted that the Sokoki and their associates were resolved to continue their war with the Iroquois in the following year.

In the Spring of 1664, the Sokoki abandoned their fortified settlement. Thirty-six men and their families move to Pocumtuck. Others likely joined the Pennacook on the Merrimac River or moved north to Coassuck or beyond.

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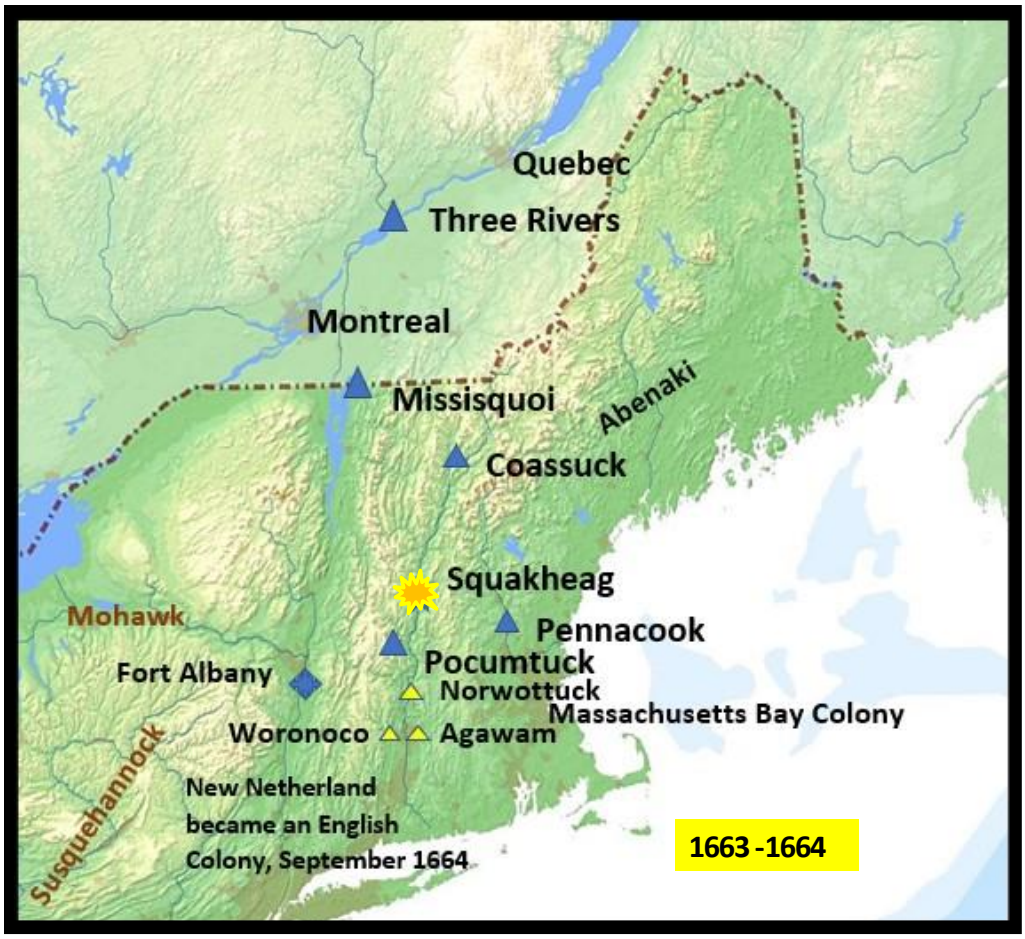


**Status of the Connecticut Valley in 1664**

## Part 3. Excavations at the 1663 Sokoki Fortified Village

As a final segment of this talk, I'm going to explore what artifacts recovered from the Sokoki fort tell us about several aspects of Sokoki life in 1663. Students from several institutions helped me excavate a portion of the abandoned fortified Sokoki village in the early 1970s.

Occupied for only eight months, this site provides a true time capsule of some aspects of Sokoki material culture dating to 1663/64. Most artifacts were recovered from storage pits that had been emptied and subsequently used to dispose of village food and other refuse.

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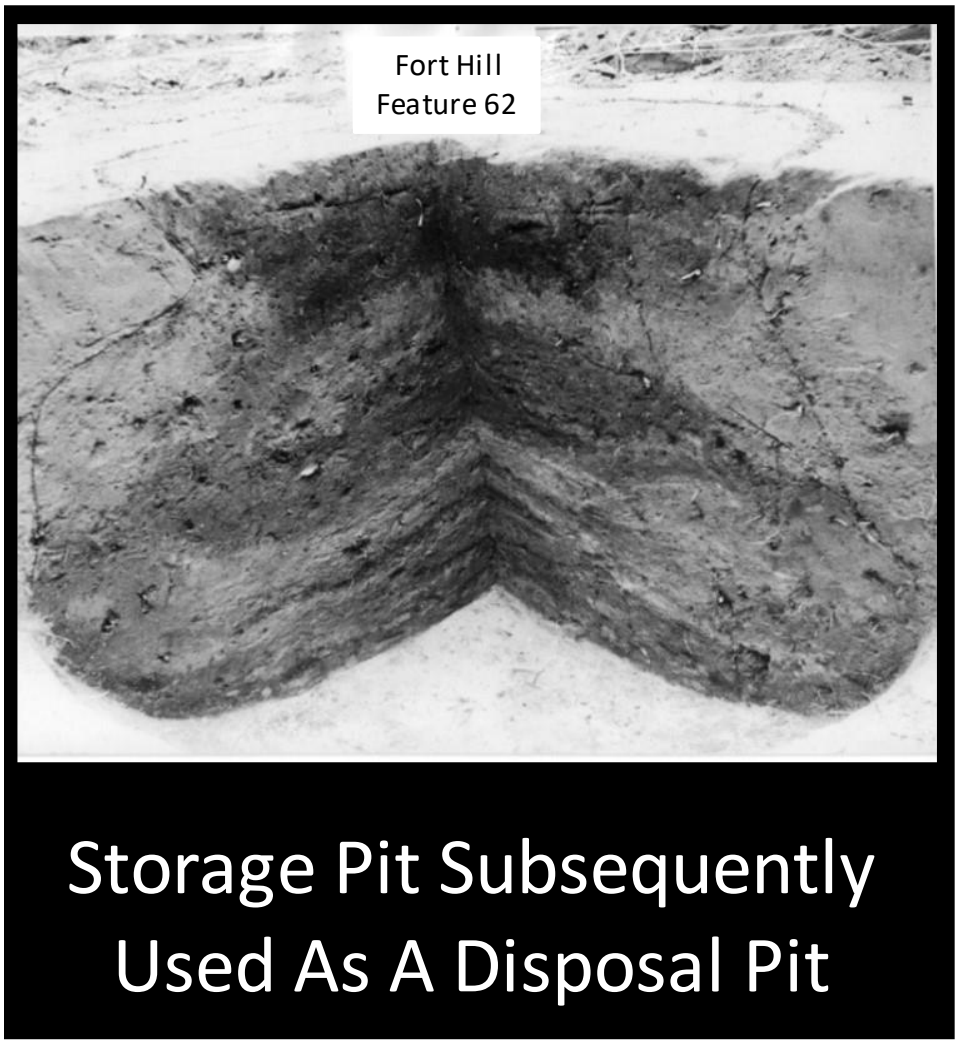


## Analyses

Artifacts enumerated in Pynchon's trading ledgers and those recovered from excavations at the Fort Hill site indicate that the Squakheags were melding aspect of two world views--a traditional one which provided the core of beliefs, motivations and means for undertaking life on a day-to-day basis and a foreign one which could be rejected, adopted, or adapted to suit both individual and community needs.

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John Pynchon of Springfield was the only licensed fur trader with the Massachusetts Bay Colony's portion of the Connecticut Valley. The trade was begun by his father, William Pynchon, in 1636.


From John Pynchon's trading ledgers dating between 1647 and 1665, and other documents, we learn the following:

Tremendous amounts of wampum were used in Pynchon's Springfield operations. In fact, roughly half of his Native trade for pelts involved payments in Indian-manufactured wampum.

- Virtually all of his accounts with Indians are noted in fathoms and hands of wampum--about 24 beads to a hand, 10 hands to a fathom.
- Wampum was so significant that between 1647 and 1649, Pynchon hired local settlers to string 1,691 fathoms of white and purple (black) wampum manufactured on the southern New England coast.
- Simply stated, this effort involved the stringing of 405,840 beads of wampum. If that pattern continued over the next 20 years, some 4 million beads of wampum may have passed through English hands to Native consumers.

OF NOTE: A significant Native motivation for participating in the fur trade was to acquire traditional Native-made goods (wampum) that **allowed them to maintain many elements of their cultural system – especially diplomatic consultation and alliance building.**

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Aside from wampum, **cloth,** in the form of red, blue, purple, and occasionally white yard goods, was Pynchon's most successful foreign-made commodity.

- His ledgers record a total of **18,850 yards** of cloth valued at over **£5,000**, or 25 times the value of all metal items combined. If early paintings are an indicator, blankets became a common item of wearing apparel in Native communities.

Pynchon also sold finished, European-style articles of clothing - caps, coats, shirts, waistcoats, buttons, and stockings. Were such cloth goods functionally better than skin clothing? Roger Williams' observations would appear to challenge such an interpretation, or at least suggest an additional motivation.

While Indians might own such clothing, they would put it on just before entering an English village, wear it in town, then changed back into Native clothing after leaving. Such clothing became a signaling device that the wearer was friendly and wished to interact with their foreign neighbors. It is also not surprising that most English garb was sold to Pynchon's principal clients who visited Springfield more often.

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| Item | Quantities Derived from Pynchon's Trade Ledgers 1652-1664 | Quantity Recovered from Fort Hill 1663-1664 |
|---|---|---|
| Knives | 6,451 | 4 |
| Scissors | 1,677 | 2 |
| Awls | 4,235 | 2 |
| Fish Hooks | 12,869 | 5 |
| Needles | 11,481 | 0 |
| Pins | 134,000 | 0 |
| Mirrors | 2,723 | 1 |
| Kaolin Pipes | 2,147 | 63 |

From the variety of European and colonial-manufactured metal items inventoried in Pynchon's ledger books or recovered during archaeological excavations at the Sokoki village site of Fort Hill, we observe the following:

- Pynchon's inventory of approximately **£ 200**-worth of metal artifacts enumerated in his ledgers and from archaeological excavations exhibit similar patterns in terms of types of items. The table provides a basis for comparison. It is also clear from these data that the quantities of artifacts recovered from archaeological excavations at a site cannot be used to estimate the quantities of such goods circulating in the local community.

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Many of these simple tools -- iron knives, scissors, hatchets, fishhooks, and even an occasional mouth harp -- were likely broken in use, such as the hatchet blade missing a pall or knife blades with broken handles, since none show specific evidence of modification.


The Sokoki clearly had access to firearms. This broken gun lock is derived from a French gun manufactured during the 1640s.

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Identical features between a French lock and the forward portion (exterior) of the lock from Fort Hill.

It was damaged; the lock was stripped of all its springs, screws, flash-pan, and cock. Subsequently, a beveled edge was sharpened, and the rounded end is folded over as if damaged during use as a chisel.


The barrel was cut to a length of 15 inches and both ends were crimped; Clearly, the original flintlock was stripped, and the parts used for other purposes.

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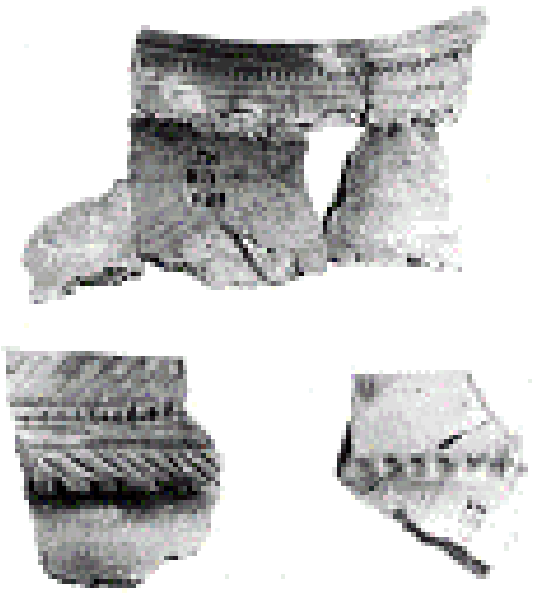
Lead shot of roughly 23-caliber to balls of 70-caliber were recovered. These might have been secured in trade, but the presence of a sandstone mold used to make lead or pewter buttons indicates that by 1663 individuals in the Sokoki village had learned to do basic metallurgy.



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Ceramic vessels of Native manufacture are of particularly high quality. Based on rim counts, forty-two vessels were recovered. If we assume a general homogeneity of artifact density across the site, then upwards of 400-600 pots may have been in use during the 6-8-month period when this palisaded village was occupied.


During the early 17th century when Native American tribes were competing for dominance, one of the many changes that had occurred was the collapse of trade arrangements that brought high-quality chert and quartzite for stone tool manufacture into the Connecticut Valley.

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Typical 17th Century, Triangular Chert Arrow Points

To overcome the deficiency, the Sokoki utilized local quartz or bone as raw material.


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The presence of brass kettles might suggest that ceramic pots were supplemented with European cooking implements.


Of far greater importance, copper and brass pots were used as raw material and reworked into items which took on traditional forms, such as triangular and rolled arrow points, tinklers and awls, and effigy figurines.

Jesuit rings handed out after catechism classes when some of the Squakheags visited Montreal the year before were incorporated into a

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traditional symbolism that was expressed in brass, bone, shell, and mudstone items, such as mudstone concretions made by a race of shy little people who lived under water in the rivers. These *Manôgemassak*, when surprised by humans, sank their stone canoes, and disappeared. It seems likely that Squakheag beliefs about the fundamental nature of the physical and supernatural environment had undergone little change.

Traditional grinding stones and granite cobblestone mullers were regularly employed to process plant foods.


It is evident that European trade goods served other purposes than strictly functional items. From a Native perspective, European goods were incorporated into their culture, but, with the exception of guns, not necessarily with the exclusive goal of technological equivalency. Rather, goods were acquired primarily to bolster traditional values, expectations, and relationships within and among Native communities.

We have seen that copper and brass kettles immediately became raw material for making arrow points and other tools, not to cook in. Broken metal artifacts could be resharpened or otherwise reworked into tools that served traditional

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functions. Most importantly, Native peoples used gift giving, with expectations of reciprocity, to establish, cement and maintain relationships within the family, within the community, and particularly when engaging with other Indian communities to establish alliances, end feuds or prevent outright war. For the latter priorities, wampum and blankets were an absolute necessity. Guns and iron weapons were soon added to the list of expected gifts.

## Part 4. General Conclusions

One fact is clear. Members of the Sokoki community at Fort Hill were active players in the tumultuous world of the mid-seventeenth century – a Native world that spread over several thousand square miles, and sometimes beyond.

With the abandonment of their fortified village at Fort Hill and the subsequent loss of some of the Sokoki families when the Pocumtuck village was overrun by the Iroquois in late January 1665, the Sokoki begin to fade once again into the mists of unrecorded history. The "*Sohkwahki* or *ozokwaki*, plural *ozohwakiak*" were recorded only in the French records. In English documents, the Squakheag and other Native groups were identified solely by the place in which they lived. When the Squakheag community relocated, the activities of former inhabitants were no longer attributed to the same people.

Within the next few decades, given the diaspora of many Native American groups out of New England, the Sokoki become part of an amorphous group of kith and kin from throughout the Northeast who the French called "Loup" (Wolves) and the English referred to as the "North or French Indians". Explicit village or "tribal" associations disappear. It is the colonial records that are at issue here, not the disappearance of a people.

Fleeting references to the place called Squakheag do appear from time to time. An English party scouting for land came here in 1669. Negotiations in 1671 and 1673 for Squakheag lands by settlers living in Northampton, clearly

attest to the presence of several Sokoki families still living near English villages. Given the continued threat of Iroquois raids, it seems unlikely that they were living in their old villages. The *Jesuit Relations* record that in the summer of 1675 some Sokoki moved north out of New England into the St. Lawrence valley. They took up residence at the Jesuit mission at Three Rivers.

By 1680, some families residing on the St. Francis River in Quebec were Sokoki. They were the genesis of what would become the village of Odanak (St. Francis). Sokoki families played an important formative role at Odanak, and the people known today as the Western Abenaki or Wabanaki. Many people from these communities fought in the colonial wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In times of peace, Sokoki families negotiated additional purchases of their territory (1686 and 1687); periodic visits and seasonal settlement by descendant Sokoki families in the Northfield area occurred as late as 1829.

The Sokoki of 1663 exhibited a rich, traditional culture, were highly adaptive in their use of recently introduced European goods and were actively engaged with Native communities located hundreds of miles from their village. Native traditionalism was reflected in many ways. Indians acquired what they wanted from colonial traders, used them in ways European settlers could not or did not anticipate, and, until Iroquois expansion and near constant warfare overshadowed their lives, individuals, families, and villages followed an independent course.

When the Sokoki left their territory around Northfield and Hinsdale, it was not the identity of "tribe" – a purely colonial and modern-day political construct – they carried with them. Rather, it was the memories and traditional practices of a way of life that had developed over centuries. It was a culture which they would continue to maintain, adapt, alter, or reclaim as the world around them changed. Today, many of their descendants can be found among the Wabanaki peoples of northern New England and southern Canada, still living near the places where their ancestors found refuge in the late 1600 and 1700s.

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