

Indian Blood Brothers

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The sachems of Long Island's four easternmost tribes at the time of the first white settlements are believed by most local historians to have been actual brothers. The most influential of these leaders was unquestionably Pogatticut of the Manhansetts. Although his tribe was the smallest of the island's 13 he was elected to serve as grand sachem of them all. It was not until after the death of Pogatticut that this island-wide post of honor and leadership was passed on to Wyandanch of the Montauks, another of the four brothers.

Pogatticut, unlike Wyandanch, was unfriendly and suspicious of the settlers. He probably had good reason as he foresaw that his backward people could not match the efficiency of the newcomers except in the most primitive activities. The Manhansetts over whom he ruled had their homes on Shelter Island, Ram and Hog Islands and, thus isolated, they were a strong tribe notwithstanding their small numbers. Their only mainland territory was the easternmost section of the North Fork, about from Mattituck to Oyster Ponds (Orient).

Furthermore the tribe's prestige under Pogatticut was high because the chief was held in great esteem because of his wisdom. His death however was not unwelcome to the settlers who were aware that under Wyandanch their relationships would be much more friendly.

Nowedina, a third brother, was sachem of the Shinnecocks whose territory, lying west of the Montauks, extended from Bridgehampton to Eastport and cross the breadth of the south fork. Their lands were bounded on the north by Peconic Bay, just as the Montauks held sway along Gardiner's Bay.

The fourth brother was Momoweta, sachem of the Corchaugs, the tribe that occupied the site of Southold town, most of the north fork westward to Wading River, almost all of which fronted on the northern shores of the Peconics. As can be seen, the tribes ruled by the four brothers were in direct contact with one another by protected bodies of water.

The four eastend tribes had what amounted to their own protective

organization, in addition to the island-wide league of which they were all a part, and Pogatticut ruled over both. It is said that the Montauks, Shinnecocks, Manhansetts and Corchaugs also maintained a watchtower, visible from all four areas, on which signals could be displayed to acquaint the four tribes with a common plan to repulse invaders. This system was made possible only because of the open water which lay between the four tribal territories. Like the other Indians of Long Island, they were a maritime people, maintaining large numbers of dugout canoes suitable for ocean as well as protected water use.

Wyandanch is said to have had a dugout canoe capable of carrying at least 40 men in which he made voyages up the coast as far as the northernmost points of New England.

As far as is known, the Setauket and Unkechaug tribes whose territory bounded that of the four eastend tribes on the west maintained peaceful relations with them, as seems to have been the case with all the island tribes at the time of the white man's coming. It is therefore likely that the four-tribe confederacy and that of the 13 tribes were created chiefly, if not solely, to organize a defense against the mainland tribes, especially the Pequots and Narragansetts of New England.

The New England tribes are known to have carried out frequent raids, coming across the Sound by dugout. Their main objective seems to have been to the capture members of the Long Island tribes to be used as slaves. These swift raids continued for many years after the arrival of the white settlers although they became much less frequent.

Some historians have wondered about the four brother connection and the late Paul Bailey was inclined to believe that these leaders were not the issue of the same parents, or chief, but rather symbolic brothers bound one to the other by the friendship of their peoples and the similarity of their positions. But that is a matter that will long be pondered and argued, possibly with no final sure verdict.

Setauket Church of 1660

The Presbyterian Church of Setau-

ket was organized in 1660, five years after the town was founded. Its first resident pastor was the Rev. Nathaniel Brewster who began his duties in 1665. He was a member of Harvard's first class, graduated in 1642. His first sermon in Setauket, according to tradition, was delivered from a great rock in the village green. The following year, however, the town moved Scott's Hall, the onetime home of John Scott, swindler extraordinary, who had decamped, leaving it believed the church services were held therein.

In 1669 Nathaniel Norton built the first meeting house in which in 1688 a pulpit was installed. In 1696 the building was greatly improved. After Pastor Brewster, he served until his death in 1690, and the second regular pastor, the Rev. George Phillips, took over seven years later. He too was a Harvard man, having been graduated in 1686. The second meeting house was built in 1714 as a replacement of the original building but owing to differences of opinion among the members it was not finally completed and equipped until several years later. When in 1729-30 Caroline Episcopal Church was built, a land that had originally been set aside for church purposes was divided equally between the two institutions.

As is well known, the Presbyterian building was sadly treated by enemy occupation forces during the Revolution. Although repaired after the war, it was eventually found necessary to build a new place of worship. It was finished and dedicated May 24, 1812, as the second war with England was about to begin. This is the building that stands today across the village green from the older Episcopal Church structure.

Until the railroad was built as far as Farmingdale in 1839, the road now known as Hempstead Turnpike was generally called Bethpage Turnpike. As today, the road connects Hempstead with the south shore at Babylon and was an important route. It was a farm-to-market highway for the south shore farms of Suffolk County as far east as the Hamptons from whence wagons used the South Country road (now Montauk Highway, Merrick Road, Main Street in many villages) to Babylon.