



David B. Martine, Portrait of Quashawam, 1990.

Quashawam: Sunksquaw of the Montauk

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The recorded history of the Long Island Native Americans is mainly limited to an endless list of references to land deeds and descriptions recorded by seventeenth-century English and Dutch observers. Most entries are too brief to illumine the culture, society, and personalities of the indigenous peoples. Moreover, the early observers skewed their accounts with an ethnocentric bias that limits their usefulness. One of many such shadowy subjects is the life of Quashawam, a sunksquaw of the Montauk from 1664 to 1666. Although her father, Wyandanch, is the best-known Native American in Long Island history, and her name appears on deeds and in town records, her character and her role as a leader have been ignored.

The position of sunksquaw is poorly understood. Sunksquaw is an Algonquian term first used in English by Roger Williams, to which he assigned the broad meaning of "Queen." However, the role of sunksquaw was far from uniform in Algonquian society, the word generally designating a woman who exercised a dominant role in community decision making. Although inconsistent with the stereotype of male-dominant Native American cultures, the presence of female leaders was common in Northeastern Algonquian societies.¹

The Narragansetts listed several women among their leaders, including Quaiapan, who commanded 300 warriors in an attack on a tributary group which defied her authority.² Weetamoo, a Pocasset sunksquaw, became a strong war chief who inherited power to rule from her father, and, in alliance with King Philip, led her troops against the English. Awashonks, a Sakonnet, also led her people in war against the English. After her side suffered defeat, she successfully negotiated the freedom of prisoners whom the English attempted to deport to the West Indies as slaves.³

Women took part in other phases of community life.⁴ Many female Shamans conducted religious rituals and administered herbal remedies. Male leaders often depended on the support of these women, who were believed to have supernatural powers. Women helped to organize and supervise trading of corn, skins, fish, venison, wampum, tools, and other commodities vital to the Native American economy.

An important role played by Native American women was to provide an adequate food supply for their communities. The role of men as hunters is often romanticized to suggest that they were the primary providers. Meat was an important food, but the berries, nuts, roots, and greens gathered

by women were more reliable and nutritionally balanced sources of nourishment. After the introduction of agriculture in the Northeast, women became even more important to the economies of the Native American groups. Planting and harvesting, seen as natural extensions of gathering, were therefore assigned to them. Once land use was placed in their domain, any change in the status of tribal lands required women's involvement at some level of decision making. The special relationship with the land accorded to women was never fully comprehended by the Europeans settlers, to whom land ownership was a male prerogative. Nevertheless, the colonial records of eastern Long Island show that Shinnecock and Montauk women—Quashawam, for example—played far greater social roles than acknowledged by historians.

Quashawam inherited her position from her father Wyandanch, who had established friendly relations with Lion Gardiner, a leading English settler. Their peaceable relationship, contrasted with the carnage of the Pequot and King Phillip mainland wars, is generally cited as proof that Native American—English relations could be cordial during the early contact period. However, closer examination suggests a less benign interpretation. The two men first met during the Pequot War, at Fort Saybrook, Connecticut, where Lion Gardiner was in command.⁵ When, in 1637, news of the massacre of the Pequots by a New England army reached Long Island, fear and concern prompted Wyandanch to visit Fort Saybrook to see if his Montauk group was a target. Gardiner assured him that the colonial power would deal stringently only with those Native American groups who fought the English, whereupon the Montauk sachem decided that it was in the best interests of his people to side with the English rather than risk the fate of the Pequot. Wyandanch also understood that with English military and economic support he could gain status and power among his people. The alliance was consummated when Wyandanch delivered a dozen severed Pequot heads to Gardiner and invited his new friend to settle on what became Gardiner's Island, a fertile sliver of land in the Sound not far from his village at Montauk. Gardiner accepted and became Long Island's (and the future New York State's) first English settler.⁶

Wyandanch's English connection bore fruit fifteen years later in 1653, when Ninigret, a Niantic sachem from Southern Connecticut, led his warriors in an attack on the Montauk in which they killed two sachems and captured several women, including Quashawam.⁷ Ninigret, an old enemy of the Montauk who had shunned alliances with the English, claimed that this raid was to avenge the murder of one of his men by Wyandanch several years earlier.⁸ When Wyandanch appealed to the Reverend Thomas James of East Hampton for help, James wrote to Governor John Winthrop, Jr. of Connecticut asking him to intercede:

The occasion of my writing is upon a request of the Sachem of Montacut (Wyandanch) whose sorrows and sad condition I shall not neede, I suppose, to inform you. The thing that he desires me to

write you of is, concerning his great feares he is in, not onely in respect of former taking of his daughter and the rest of the captives, lest they should make them away; but he is in expectation of further assaults from them.⁹

James does not name the daughter as Quashawam, but Wyandanch had only one daughter, as far as can be ascertained.

The kidnapping is one of Long Island's most famous stories. In his history of East Hampton, David Gardiner, a descendant of Lion Gardiner, reported that Quashawam was kidnapped on "the night of her nuptials," and that her spouse was killed.¹⁰ The story was repeated by Alexander Gardiner in 1846 and Curtiss Gardiner in 1890.¹¹ Although no documentation supports it, the story is constantly retold by East End historians and novelists. Verne Dyson's *Heather Flower and Other Indian Stories*, and two novels, *Lords of the Soil*, by Lydia Jocelyn and Nathan Cuffee, and *Maid of Montauk*, by Forest Monroe, give dramatic accounts of a wedding interrupted by marauders who brutally murder the groom and steal the beautiful princess for ransom.¹² It is hard to say whether Quashawam really was abducted on her wedding night or if the Gardiners embellished the facts. Very likely a surprise attack occurred while the Montauk engaged in a ceremony which diverted their attention, but the details are hazy.

A provocative variation, inspired by Nathan Cuffee's knowledge of Montauk oral history, is introduced in *Lords of the Soil*. In this novel, Gardiner and two associates conspire with Ninigret to attack the Montauk and capture Wyandanch's daughter. Gardiner then rescues the captives and places Wyandanch in his debt, his reward a large tract in what become Smithtown. No hint of this alleged conspiracy exists in Gardiner family histories, or in any primary record.

In October 1654 Roger Williams of Rhode Island reported the return of the women to the Montauks with the help of the English: "about 14 Captives (diuers of them Chiefe Women)" were restored "upon ye mediation & desire of ye English."¹³ It was in the colonists' interest to assist the Montauk sachem to retrieve his daughter, thus placing him in a position of obligation and debt. Gardiner also knew that his support would strengthen Wyandanch's influence among the sachems on Long Island. The East Hampton authorities proclaimed Wyandanch "Grand Sachem" of Long Island, a title which served their interests because they could by-pass the local sachems and buy large tracts from Wyandanch. This policy was confirmed when Wyandanch rewarded Lion Gardiner with a 30,000 acre tract of land in the area that became Smithtown.¹⁴ The Gardiners later sold this land to Richard Smith, an ambitious land owner interested in expanding his holdings. These events give plausibility to the plot of *Lords of the Soil*. The local sachems' rights, however, were not disposed of as easily as Gardiner and Smith had hoped. Nasseconset the Nissequogue sachem, with Quashawam's assistance, successfully challenged the boundaries of the purchase,¹⁵ and English landowners such as

Robert Seelye of Huntington questioned the Wyandanch grant.

When Wyandanch died, in 1659, the English recognized his widow Wichitaubit, and their young son Wiancombone, as the new Montauk leaders. Wiancombone died three years later before he was old enough to claim his father's title, and his mother died at about the same time. This left Quashawam as the only surviving member of Wyandanch's immediate family. Leadership in the larger Southern New England Algonquian communities descended from father to eldest son, and then to the son of the eldest daughter; if she had no adult son, she inherited the authority to make important decisions for the group.¹⁶ In the smaller, eastern Long Island communities, leadership systems were simpler. Authority in the Montauk and Shinnecock bands was often delegated to people who excelled at particular tasks. For example, the best warrior might command when the group was at war, and an elder skilled in diplomacy would lead negotiations for peace. However, the English preferred a single leader whose name they could invoke and attach to their land deeds to legitimize them. They were particularly concerned about the Dutch policy of obtaining agreements from the original owners. Fear of Dutch competition in Western Long Island encouraged the English to press a hereditary system on the local native communities.¹⁷

The loss of her father, mother, and brother within a relatively short time was unsettling to Quashawam. During this period of uncertainty following Wyandanch's death, a Shinnecock sunksquaw, Weany, challenged Montauk authority over Shinnecock land by selling a tract near what is now Quogue to Thomas Topping, a settler. In 1663 another settler, Robert Seelye, wrote to Topping supporting his right to buy from Weany. Seelye, who claimed ownership of land west of the Nissequogue River which overlapped Smith's purchase, noted that "...all the sachems on the island westward together with their Indians do affirm that Mantawcut Sachem hath noe prerogative over their land..."¹⁸ Seelye told Topping that Uncas, the Mohegan sachem, said it was not the custom of Native Americans to take control of the lands of a defeated enemy. There were no legal grounds, argued Seelye, to support Wyandanch's right to grant title to lands in Quogue, Smithtown, or Huntington. And there was no such thing as a "Grand Sachem." Local sachems like Weany, contended Seelye, had every right to sell their lands without the Montauk sachem's approval.

Nasseconset also challenged the legitimacy of the "Grand Sachem" title by asserting his right to land on the Nissequogue River within the Smith purchase. This land, said Nasseconset, was sold by him to Wyandanch on the understanding that his people retain their rights to an area on the west bank of the Nissequogue. Wyandanch's authority over the land was derived from this purchase, claimed Nasseconset, not from the Montauk sachem's alleged rights as "Grand Sachem."

Nasseconset took his complaint against Smith to the general court at Hartford, which, before the establishment of the colony of New York, had jurisdiction over the towns of eastern Long Island. The court refused

to rule on the thorny question but urged Smith to pay Nasseconset for the land.¹⁹ Smith refused, probably on the grounds that Wyandanch as "Grand Sachem" owned all the land on Long Island and was free to dispose of it any way he chose. The matter rested at impasse during the next few years, when the increasing tension between the Dutch and the English colonial systems encouraged real estate entrepreneurs to wait for a resolution of the question of hegemony over Long Island.

Uncertainty about Wyandanch's land claims led East Hampton officials to draft a most unusual document—the first to record Quashawam by name. On 11 February 1663/64 she was approved by the English to be "chief Sachem" over both the Montauk and the Shinnecock Indians. The agreement established that the Shinnecock, as well as the Montauk, "owne Quashawam to bee their supream and pay her all honours according to the custom of the Indians," and that the Montauks should not "plunder" the Shinnecock without first consulting the English. Furthermore, a line of succession to the position of sachem after Quashawam's death was established to insure a smooth transition to a leader acceptable to the colonial government. Quashawam's leadership was endorsed by the signatures of four Shinnecock men: Quashaug, Iaskhonse, Accavaco, and Appanch.²⁰

The English openly acknowledged their use of such arbitrary devices as a means of control over Native American communities. For example, after Quashawam's tenure as "Grand Sachem" ended, a colonial ordinance of 1670 established a new chief sachem of the Shinnecock:

Whereas it hath been usuall & is found very convenient that some person amongst ye Indians should in their respective Tribes or Nations be as Chief or Sachem over ye rest as well to keep them in ye better order as to be responsible for any mischife they should happen to committ, ye Indians neare Southampton in ye E. Riding of Yorkshire upon Long Island commonly called ye Shinnacock Indians being destitute of such a person having nominated and elected ye Indian named Quaquashawge to be their Sachem who is likewise approved by ye English to be fitt person amongst them for that purpose by reason of his quiete and peaceable disposition...²¹

Obviously, the English recognized Quashawam as chief sachem because they found her "docile and peaceable." Had she shown a more independent attitude, they would have encouraged that someone else be "nominated or elected." In fairness to Quashawam, she merely continued the policy of accommodation established by Wyandanch, which kept the peace and enabled the Montauk to avoid the fate of the Pequot.

The colonial power, in turn, may have felt more comfortable with a woman because she represented less of a threat. The document of 1664 suggests that the English were nervous that the Montauk would not accept their attempt to install any leader, male or female. The town of Southampton warned the Montauk that:

if Meantacutt Indians shall not pay tribute to Quashawam, true heyre of their master Wyandanch, that then....ye authority of the Long Island...cause them ye said Meantacut Indians to pay their obedience in every respect.²²

This was no idle threat because troops from Connecticut could quickly move across the Sound to deal with any disturbance or uprising.

On the day that Quashawam was appointed chief sachem, Captain John Scott of Southampton claimed power of attorney for all of her affairs:

The Sunk squaw Quashawam doth desire and impower irrevocably her ancient and great friend John Scott to examine and demand & sue for vpon refusall pay for all lands on Long Island bought and not paid for and on the Islands adjacent possessed by English or Dutch, and vpon receipt of Satisfaction to acquit them and to sell all lands not already sold. And to receive satisfaction for them, and to confirme them for ever...²³

Scott was a determined entrepreneur and adventurer whose ultimate goal was to persuade Charles II to make Long Island a new colony, with Scott himself as governor.²⁴ No doubt, he saw the opportunity to increase his property, power, and influence on Long Island by attaining control of the Montauk's financial and business dealings. The words of the document proclaiming him the "ancient and great friend" of Quashawam are very likely creative fiction, as the sincerity of Scott's friendship for Native Americans is questionable, at best.

It seems he continually fancied himself as an authority on, and a great and trusted friend of, the Native peoples. On a trip to London in 1660 to see Charles II, soon after the Stuart Restoration, Scott brought a catechism translated into Algonquian by the Southampton minister, Abraham Pierson. In a notation on the title page, Thomas Stanton, a colonist versed in the Algonquian language, approved the translation. The unscrupulous Scott tore out the original page and entered a new one, crediting himself with approval of the translation: "Examined by that experienced gentleman (in the Indian language) Captain John Scott."²⁵

In spite of his claims, there is little evidence in the colonial records of his close friendship with Quashawam. Before 1660, in Southampton, he focused his attention on his fur and shipping trade; after that he spent much of his time in England trying in vain to convince the king that he would make a just and responsible governor for Long Island. There was little, if any, time for Scott to develop a close relationship with the Wyandanch family out at Montauk. Scott had little respect for Native Americans, whom he once described as "morose, dull, shrinking and (ill) humored."²⁶ A Brookhaven settler attested that Scott was contemptuous of the Indians, once threatening to sell them into slavery in the West Indies if they did not do what he wanted. On 9 June 1664, a Mr. Smith and his wife brought charges to the Committee of the General Assembly of Connecticut, that:

John Scott was treating with the Indians about the rights of land he, the said Scott, caused the Indians Rogers and said he would send them to Barbados upon their refusal to make over their lands to them.²⁷

Unfortunately, there is no evidence to suggest how Quashawam felt about him. We do not know if she trusted him or influenced his decisions concerning the land deals.

On 25 February 1663/64 Scott oversaw the first transaction for Quashawam, involving the sale of a large tract in Jamaica, Queens, by local Native Americans to Benjamin Coe and Daniel Denton.²⁸ Scott and Quashawam apparently attempted to reinstate Wyandanch's claims to western Long Island, challenged by settlers like Thomas Topping and Robert Seelye. Quashawam may have believed that alliance with Scott was her only way to recapture the power and status her family lost after the death of her father. She received some immediate benefits from her association with Scott. In an appendix to the Jamaica deed, John Scott ordered Coe and Denton not only to pay the local sachems but also to award twelve looking glasses to Quashawam no later than 3 March 1663/4.²⁹

Quashawam's relationship with Scott was short-lived. John Winthrop, Jr. and Scott became bitter rivals in the struggle for power and influence on Long Island. In May 1664, Winthrop accused Scott of embezzling land from "a certain Indian Queene," who can be none other than Quashawam.³⁰ In addition to embezzlement, Winthrop had Scott arrested for sedition, defaming the king, forgery, profanation of God's holy days, and abetting and encouraging warfare among the Indians.³¹ Connecticut had jurisdiction over the eastern Long Island towns, while the Dutch controlled the western towns. As England and the Netherlands moved towards the confrontation which would result in Dutch defeat, the fate of these towns hung in the balance. Governor Winthrop was threatened by Scott's power on Long Island, which increased significantly when the latter gained Quashawam's power of attorney.

After having Scott arrested, Winthrop abrogated his power by replacing Scott's magistrates with men loyal to him. Winthrop sought a meeting with Quashawam to discuss the charges against Scott, and to ask her to testify in court; she refused, contending that she was lame. In June 1664, Thomas James wrote to Winthrop, requesting him to come to East Hampton to deal with "severall things of weight." Now that Winthrop had the upper hand, the East Hampton officials apparently wanted to distance themselves from Scott. The Montauk, said James, refuse to come to Southampton because of their "squaw sachem being lame."³²

Was Quashawam lame or was she avoiding meeting with the governor in order to protect Scott, believing that he was a trusted friend? She neither met with Winthrop nor testified at the trial of Scott, who was now as unpopular with town officials as with Winthrop. Perhaps Quashawam did not want to express loyalty for Scott for fear she would alienate herself from the town, or she may simply have wished to avoid all entanglement

with the town's political wrangles. With Scott out of the picture the authorities would find a new overseer of her affairs, and she would have as little to say as she had with Scott.

Later that summer the English fleet, commanded by Richard Nicolls, evicted the Dutch from New Netherland. John Scott, who survived an attempt to poison him while he was in prison, escaped and greeted the English troops with a small band of mounted volunteers recruited from the eastern towns. The irrepressible adventurer gambled for high stakes. He hoped that Nicolls, now governor of the new province, would reward his military contribution with a pardon and a land grant on Long Island.³³ Nicolls granted a safe conduct pass to protect Scott from arrest while he was in New York, but Charles II ignored both Winthrop and Scott; he casually wrote a new patent for his brother James, the Duke of York, incorporating Long Island into the colony of New York. Scott, under pressure from Nicolls, who was understandably anxious to see the last of him, reluctantly accepted a commission to command a garrison in Barbados. In the spring of 1665 he left Long Island once and for all.

Quashawam soon proved she could manage her affairs without the help of her former "advisor." On 7 June 1665 the court of sessions at Southold required East Hampton to pay twenty-five shillings a year to the Montauk sunksquaw.³⁴ Wyandanch had sold land to John Ogden, of Southampton, with the stipulation that this annual fee be paid to the Montauk sachem. When Ogden sold this land to East Hampton, the town apparently attempted to cut off the payments. The court was persuaded (perhaps by Quashawam?) that the eastern towns should uphold the real estate deals made by Wyandanch—most of which were beneficial to them. Evidence of Quashawam's diplomatic skill is the relationship she established with Governor Nicolls when he presided over three days of meetings with Long Island sachems and town leaders.³⁵ The first agreement, signed 3 October 1665, voided the controversial title "Grand Sachem," and gave local sachems authority over their lands.³⁶ This was not a great loss for Quashawam, because, except for the Jamaica endorsement, the title was virtually unenforceable after the death of Wyandanch.

The next day an agreement was made between Quashawam and the Town of East Hampton, in the presence of Governor Nicolls, settling long-standing disputes over boundaries and land use at Montauk. Nicolls affirmed Quashawam's right to the Montauk homeland on the eastern end of Long Island, an area of about 4,000 acres east of Fort Pond.

Contention over the boundary began in 1660, when Lion Gardiner and a small group of East Hampton investors bought all of the Montauk lands for a price of one hundred pounds. The death of Wyandanch and a devastating epidemic left the Montauk weak and demoralized. Ninigret, their old nemesis, took advantage of the situation by launching a series of attacks which forced the Montauk to seek refuge in East Hampton, where another danger awaited. Led by Wyandanch's widow and young son, the dispirited Montauk were induced to sign away all of their land at Montauk. Gardiner apparently told them that if the English held formal

title to the Montauk lands, the Niantic would be afraid to continue raiding.

John Ogden, a Southampton official engaged in real estate transactions, challenged Gardiner's deed. Ogden testified at a meeting of the United Colonies that the Montauk were being cheated by Gardiner and the East Hampton leaders. Gardiner admitted that it was a "sham deed" but claimed it was done to prevent the land from being bought by "foreigners" [sic], presumably from Rhode Island.³⁷ Under pressure from the United Colonies' commissioners, Gardiner and his East Hampton associates agreed to allow the Montauk to return home whenever they wished; however, the English never rescinded their claim to Montauk itself. The situation had been further confused in 1662, when Wiancombone and his mother granted East Hampton a section of the land from the town's eastern boundary to Fort Pond, where the village of Montauk is today, in "appreciation" for protecting the Montauk during the war with Ninigret's Niantics.³⁸ By the end of 1663, when Quashawam became sunksquaw, the Montauk had lost a large portion of their land and held a clouded title to the rest. Quashawam's success in getting the governor to clarify her title to, and prevent the erosion of, the remaining Montauk lands were important accomplishments.

Other important issues were addressed during the negotiations with the governor. Between 1662 and 1665, friction between the town and the Indians over the use of the land at Montauk increased. The colonists wanted to graze their livestock at Montauk from October, after the Indian harvest was in, until spring planting began at the end of March. However, this was made impossible by the Native American practice of burning off their fields each fall, a custom viewed by the English as wasteful and dangerous. Other areas of conflict involved stray English live-stock that roamed the Montauk fields in summer, destroying crops, and the Indians' dogs that roved at will in the fields adjacent to Montauk village, often attacking English cattle.

An accommodation was reached resolving some of these problems. East Hampton received the right to graze cattle as long as this did not interfere with the Montauk corn harvest. Any damage to Montauk crops would be paid for by East Hampton. For their part, the Montauk promised not to burn the brush each winter. The East Hampton leaders were able to restrict Quashawam's title to land by making her promise that the Montauk would not sell land to anyone but East Hampton residents.³⁹ In return, a memorandum was added stating that permission to graze livestock at Montauk did not compromise Quashawam's title. These land-title resolutions voided the previous agreements between Quashawam and John Scott,⁴⁰ giving the sunksquaw no choice but to abandon her ties with Scott, who by then was in Barbados. Now well rid of Scott, she had to take her chances with the Reverend Thomas James and the other East Hampton officials. In the early summer of 1666, Quashawam was involved in a dispute over the land her father gave Lion Gardiner for his aid in ransoming her from the Niantics. Richard Smith, the owner, remained at impasse with Nasseconset until jurisdiction for Long Island shifted from

Hartford to the new colony of New York in 1664, when Smith reopened the case and appealed to Quashawam for support. The Montauk sunksquaw, now living in a village on the west bank of Three Mile Harbor, received Smith in the presence of several East Hampton officials. Smith pressed her to reject Nasseconset's claims, but the sunksquaw testified that Wyandanch indeed purchased the land from Nasseconset. However, she claimed that she did not know the details of the agreement, and that there was no written record of it. Unable to get a clear resolution, Smith returned home and settled with Nasseconset, giving the sachem a gun, a kettle, ten coats, a blauket, and three handfuls of powder and shot.⁴¹

There is a different account in the first volume of Smithtown records, edited by William Pelletreau.⁴² The testimony of Pauquatouns, a Montauk elder who served as an advisor to Wyandanch, was recorded by Thomas James and witnessed by John Mulford, a prominent East Hampton official. Pauquatouns stated that the land in what is now Smithtown had belonged to Wyandanch's grandmother, who passed it along to him, and that Nasseconset, and Assawawkin, the Sagamore of Oyster Bay, acknowledged Wyandanch's right to dispose of it as he wished. When James later asked Quashawam about the matter, she said that "The Sunksquaw on Montaukett sends word by her husband and Obadiah, that the fore said land was her father's own land, and that those Indians if he were living durst not deny it." James signed the document, dated 22 June 1666, and testified that "These particulars above were spoken to ye best of my understanding before me—Thomas James."⁴³

The obvious discrepancy between the two documents raises some interesting questions about all of the parties involved. Unfortunately, we do not know which of the meetings with Quashawam came first, or the exact date of the meeting between Pauquatouns and James.⁴⁴ Quashawam's support for Nasseconset's land claim (in Smith's account) suggests that she no longer was willing to play the role of pawn to the colonial authorities. Such a show of independence would upset James and the East Hampton officials; it seems odd that, given the seriousness of the case, James did not go to Quashawam himself. Instead, he sent a messenger and then repeats this second-hand information in his testimony. If Richard "Bull" Smith had James's support, why did he return and pay off Nasseconset? He could simply ignore Quashawam's statement to him, and deny payment to Nasseconset on the basis of the public testimony of so respected an official as the Reverend Thomas James. Did Quashawam say one thing to Smith and another to James's messenger?

Smith had no reason to invent the story of his visit to Quashawam because her testimony went against his interest. James may have attempted to help Smith and assert East Hampton's authority over the Montauk afterwards, by calling in Pauquatouns and putting pressure on Quashawam to change her position. The issue may have led James and the East Hampton government to replace Quashawam with new leaders recruited from more compliant Montauks.

Events the following fall suggest that Quashawam either was deposed,

perhaps for her independent stance, or died. If she were alive in fall 1666 when the Shinnecock sunksquaw Weany's challenge to Montauk authority finally was answered, she would have been drawn into the controversy. A Shinnecock faction associated with the family of Mandush, a recently deceased sachem, and led by his daughter (not mentioned by name) issued a statement rejecting Weany's 1662 sale of land in Quogue to Thomas Topping.⁴⁵ Punch (Appanch) and Quaquasaw (Quaquashaug), who represented the Shinnecock at the negotiations endorsing Quashawam as their sunksquaw, joined the Mandush family in the protest. Mandush's daughter was first to sign, followed by Quaquashaw. The position of her mark above all other Native Americans who endorsed the document suggests that she was a sunksquaw. Mandush's son (also not named) was listed fifth, below Punch (Appanch).⁴⁶

The Mandush faction testified to turning over their interest in the land west of Canoe Place to their "ancient and loving friends the Townsmen of Southampton," provided the town pay them a fee to be determined by Governor Nicolls. Two days later Thomas Halsey and Thomas Sayer, both Southampton men, testified to witnessing Mandush accept tributary status under the Montauk seventeen years earlier, in a ceremony involving the presentation of a piece of Shinnecock turf to Wyandanch.⁴⁷ Halsey and Sayer apparently tried to demonstrate that only Shinnecock aligned with the Mandush family were empowered to sell land.

The conflict over the land in Quogue was resolved by Governor Nicolls in a special hearing on 3 October 1666.⁴⁸ He granted the land to the Town of Southampton, requiring it to pay the Mandush faction four-score fathoms of wampum, the same fee that Topping paid Weany. Several months later Weany joined the Mandush family and its supporters in signing a treaty endorsing the governor's determination, and acknowledging receipt of the wampum.⁴⁹

Because of the connection between Wyandanch and Mandush, it is curious that no Montauk leader was called to testify in the Quogue case. By the fall of 1667, however, Pauquatouns was recognized by East Hampton as the new leader of the Montauk, undoubtedly because he supported James in the controversy over Smith's land claims. Pauquatouns was called the following year to testify in another land dispute, between Southampton and Southold.⁵⁰ He is identified as the Montauk "chief Counsellor" rather than as the sachem, but the colonial power regarded him as spokesperson for the Montauk. Again, there is no mention of Quashawam. Two elderly Montauk women, Aquabacack and Impeagwam, were called to testify, but neither was identified as a sunksquaw. These women grew up at Aquabogue near the disputed area and married men from Montauk, where they lived with their husbands.

East Hampton's involvement in western Long Island land disputes declined after 1667, when the town focused its concern on the Montauk lands to the east. Governor Nicolls issued a patent to East Hampton endorsing the existing deeds and granting the exclusive right to purchase the rest of the Montauk lands.⁵¹ The "exclusive right" clause depended

upon the compliance of Montauk leaders, who, therefore, were watched very carefully by the East Hampton officials. In November 1669, Pauquatouns and five other Montauk, including a sunksquaw, Askickotantup, and a Montauk sachem, Ponitute, signed a declaration of loyalty to Governor Thomas Lovelace, who replaced Nicolls the year before.⁵² Ponitute may have been Quashawam's son, because later on he adopted the name "Wyandanch," and testified that he was the grandson of a great chief "loyal to the English." His signature on this document indicates that Ponitute continued his grandfather's policy of accommodation with the English. The pledge of loyalty clearly shows that the English were tightening their control.

Askickotantup's signature suggests that a new sunksquaw may have emerged among the Montauk. On 28 July 1669, five months before the pledge was signed by Askickotantup, Ninigret told the court at Rhode Island that the daughter of Wyandanch no longer was alive, but he did not date her death,⁵³ which could have happened any time after 1666. Marion Fisher Ales, whose master's thesis at New York University is the first documented history of the Montauk, raises an alternative theory. She dismisses Ninigret's report and speculates that Askickotantup may be a new name taken by Quashawam.⁵⁴ She bases this theory on the widespread Native American practice of taking new names when traumatic events were experienced, such as a puberty ritual, or a significant personal goal was achieved, such as a military victory or successful hunt. Name changes might also be a response to a vision or a dream. Although this is a plausible speculation, Ales cites no evidence that Ninigret's statement was false. The Niantic sachem had nothing to gain from lying about Quashawam's death, and her absence from the documentary record after 1666 supports his testimony.

CONCLUSIONS

Quashawam appears in various documents between 1654 and 1666, but in most cases there is only a brief reference. The English were not concerned with preserving the history of Quashawam and the Montauk. From the records, it appears that Quashawam's role as sachem was created for her by the English in order for them to gain legitimate, or "legal," control of the lands. It is too harsh a judgement, however, to dismiss Quashawam as a pawn in the colonists' game because her people were caught in a difficult position, which worsened as the English settlements grew around them. She showed courage by refusing to play the role of puppet when she defied "Bull" Smith and Thomas James in her support of Nasseconset.

The question of Quashawam's leadership and character can not be answered satisfactorily with the meager data in the colonial records, but other equally important insights into the role of women in aboriginal society can be gained. Recent studies about sunksquaws in coastal Algonquin cultures conclude that the stereotype of Native American

women as "...beasts of burden, drudges, slaves..." is a serious misconception.⁵⁵

The number of women mentioned in colonial records may be underestimated, because ethnohistorians tend to assign the male gender to any leader who is not clearly identified as a woman.⁵⁶ New findings concerning Native American women are supported by records from eastern Long Island. In a relatively short time frame, a small demographic sample identified five sunksquaws, three from the Montauk—Wichitaubit, Quashawam, and Askickotantup, and two from the Shinnecock—Weany and the daughter of Mandush. All these women were active in the important affairs of their communities. The elderly Montauk women, Aquabacak and Impeagwam, who testified in the land dispute between Southold and Southampton, demonstrate the important part that women played in issues concerning property rights.

NOTES

1. Roger Williams, *A Key to the Language of America* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1973), 201. Modern ethnologists shorten William's "Sauncksquaog" to "sunk squaw" or "sunksquaw"; see also Trudie Lamb, "Squaw Sachems: Women Who Rule," *Artifacts* 9 (Winter/Spring 1981): 1-3.
2. Robert Steven Grumet, "Sunksquaws, Shamans, and Tradeswomen: Middle Atlantic Coastal Algonquian Women During the 17th and 18th Centuries," in Mona Etienne and Eleanor Leacock, eds. *Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Praeger, 1980), 50-51.
3. *Ibid.*, 52.
4. *Ibid.*, 53-59.
5. Roger Wunderlich, "An Island of Mine Owne: The Life and Times of Lion Gardiner 1599-1663," *Long Island Historical Journal* 2 (Fall 1989), 5-6.
6. *Ibid.* 7.
7. David Pulsifer, ed. *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth* (Boston: William White, 1859), 10:96-98. The last two volumes in this collection contain the records of the United Colonies. This raid is typical of warfare in southern Algonquian culture. Raids were carefully planned to catch the enemy by surprise and avoid a major confrontation. A major goal was to steal away as many women and children as possible and adopt them into the victor's community. See Thomas Lotfield, "The Adaptive Role of Warfare Among the Southern Algonquian," in William Cowan, ed., *Papers of the Seventh Annual Algonquian Conference*, (Ottawa, Canada: Carleton University Press, 1975), 289-295. The new women and children increased the size and strength of the community and made it possible to expand the planting fields.
8. *Records of Plymouth Colony* 10: 96-98.
9. *Winthrop Papers, Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Vol. 7, 4th Series (Boston, 1865): 482-483.
10. David Gardiner, *Chronicles of the Town of Easthampton, County of Suffolk, N.Y.* (1840; reprint, Sag Harbor: I. G. Mairs, 1973), 23.
11. Alexander Gardiner, "History of the Gardiner Family," *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Vol. X, 3rd Series (Boston, 1846), and Curtiss Gardiner, *Lion Gardiner and His Descendants*, (St. Louis: Whipple, 1980), 63.
12. Verne Dyson, *Heather Flower and Other Indian Tales of Long Island*, (Port Washington:

Ira Friedman, 1967); Nathan Cuffee and Lydia Jocelyn, *Lords of the Soil*, (Boston: C. M. Clark Publishing Co., 1905); and Forest Monroe, *Maid of Montauk* (New York: William Jenkins, 1902). Dyson's undocumented, biographical sketch identifies Wyandanch's daughter as "Heather Flower," but does not mention her later role as a sunksquaw. The colorful name must come from local folk traditions because it does not appear in colonial records. Nathan Cuffee, descended from a Shinnecock who worked on whaling crews in the late-seventeenth century, was considered a reliable folk historian. Joyceln may have derived her interest in Native American history from her experience on a Sioux reservation, where her father served for many years as a missionary. She did the historical research in the local records, relying on Cuffee for the Montauk folk traditions.

13. John Russell Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island* (Providence: A. Crawford Green, 1856), 1:297.
14. Wunderlich, "An Island of Mine Owne," 3-4.
15. The spelling of Native American names is from William Wallace Tooker, *Indian Place Names on Long Island* (1911; reprint, Port Washington: Ira Friedman, 1962).
16. Trudie Lamb, "Squaw Sachems," 2.
17. See John A. Strong, "How the Land Was Lost," in Gaynell Stone, ed., *The Shinnecock Indians: a Culture History* (Lexington, MA.: Ginn and Company, 1983); see also Morton Fried, "On the Evolution of Social Stratification and the State" in Stanley Diamond, ed. *Culture in History*, (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1965) and June Helm, ed. *Essays on the Problem of Tribe*, (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1971).
18. William Pelletreau, ed. *The Fifth Book of Records of the Town of Southampton*, (Sag Harbor: Hunt, 1910), 18-19.
19. Edmund O' Callaghan and Berthold Fernow, eds. *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 15 vols. (Albany: Weed and Parsons, 1885-1887), 14:640. Both claims are suspect: the sale of land by one sachem to another is most unusual because Native peoples did not consider land as a commodity. Nasseconset's claim selling the land to Wyandanch is without precedent. The title of "Grand Sachem" is clearly an English concept imposed on Native Americans to facilitate land transactions. See Strong, "How the Land was Lost."
20. *The Second Book of Records of the Town of Southampton* (Sag Harbor: John Hunt, 1877), 36-38.
21. O'Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents*, XIV: 647.
22. Pelletreau, *The Second Book, Southampton Records*, 36.
23. *Ibid.*, 37-38.
24. Lillian Mowrer, *The Indomitable John Scott: Citizen of Long Island 1632-1704* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1960), 78. Mowrer is one of few scholars presenting a positive view of Scott. This scholarly and well documented book should be read along with the many negative characterizations of Scott by local historians.
25. *Ibid.*, 393-394.
26. John Scott, *A Preface to the History of North American*, Sloane Manuscripts, 3662:26. British Museum Manuscripts Room.
27. *Records of the Town of Brookhaven*, Patchogue, 1880), Vol. 1:38-39.
28. *Book of Deeds*, Office of the Secretary of State, Series 453, Box 1, vol. 2: 159-160. (New York State Archives, Albany, N.Y.).
29. *Ibid.*, 160.
30. Robert C. Black, *The Younger John Winthrop* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1966), 261.

31. Mowrer, *The Indomitable John Scott*, 397-398.
32. "Letters of Thomas James," in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Vol. 7, 4th Series (Boston, 1863), 484.
33. Pelletreau, *The First Book, Southampton Town Records*, 171.
34. Mowrer, *The Indomitable John Scott*, 143.
35. *Book of Deeds*, Series 453, Box 1, Vol. 2: 123-125.
36. *Ibid.*, 126.
37. Pulsifer, *New Plymouth*, X: 250; see also Marion Fisher Ales, "A History of the Indians on Montauk, Long Island," in Gaynell Stone, ed., *The History and Archaeology of the Montauk* (Stony Brook: Suffolk County Archaeological Association, 1979), 71-73.
38. Raymond Smith, ed. *In Re Montauk*, (East Hampton, 1926), 25-29.
39. *Book of Deeds*, Series 453, Box 1, Vol. 2:123.
40. O'Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents* Vol. XIV:606.
41. John Lawrence Smith, "The Town of Smithtown," in *A History of Suffolk County*, (New York: W.W. Munsell, 1882), 4-5.
42. William S. Pelletreau, ed., *Town Records of the Town of Smithtown*, (Smithtown, 1898), 1: 16-17.
43. *Ibid.*
44. The assertion that Wyandanch inherited the property from his grandmother is interesting. If the land passed through the female line, which seems possible because of the relationship between women and the planting grounds, the property would go to Wyandanch's sister. It is possible that the sachem had no sister at the time but no records of any of this survive.
45. Pelletreau, *The First Book, Southampton Records*, 169.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*, 158.
48. *Ibid.*, 172-74.
49. Strong, "How the Land Was Lost," 80.
50. William Pelletreau, ed., *The Third Book of Records of the Town of Southampton*, (Sag Harbor: Hunt, 1978), 110-11.
51. Smith, *In Re Montauk*, 19-22.
52. O'Callaghan and Fernow, *Documents*, XIV:627.
53. Bartlett, *Records of Rhode Island*, II:270.
54. Ales, "A History of the Indians on Montauk, Long Island," 89. William Wallace Tooker, Long Island's pioneer ethnologist, also believed that Askickotantup was a new name taken by Quashawam, but he offers no documentation for his interpretation. William Wallace Tooker, "Cockeno-de-Long Island," in Gaynell Stone and Nancy Bonvillian, eds, *Language and Lore of the Long Island Indians*, (Lexington, MA.: Ginn and Company) footnote, 186.
55. Lamb, "Squaw Sachems," 1.
56. Grumet, "Sunksquaws, Shamans," 50, 58.