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# INDIAN PLACE-NAMES

IN EAST-HAMPTON TOWN,

WITH THEIR PROBABLE SIGNIFICATIONS,

—BY—

WM. WALLACE TOOKER.

Written for the East-Hampton Town Records, Vol. IV.

SAG-HARBOR:  
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INDIAN PLACE-NAMES IN EAST-HAMPTON  
TOWN, L. I., WITH THEIR PROBA-  
BLE SIGNIFICATIONS,

BY

WM. WALLACE TOOKER, SAG-HARBOR, N. Y.

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That part of Long Island now comprising the town of East-Hampton, was once the home of the noted tribe of Indians, called the Montauks by the early settlers. Every sandy bluff and shore bordering on the many tidal creeks, harbors and bays that indent this part of Long Island are whitened on every hand by the decayed shells and other refuse that mark their wampum manufactories and the wigwam sites of long ago. The neighboring sand-flats teeming then, as they do to-day, in marine products, was naturally a favorite resort of these primitive people. Gardiner's Bay and land adjoining was known to the Dutch traders as "the Crommegouw," "crooked country" or "district," and was described by them, long before the English settlement, "as being a fair and fertile land, inhabited by Indians, and where the greater part of the wampum was made, for which furs are traded."

Montauk was not their tribal name, if indeed they ever possessed one, for Roger Williams says of the Rhode Island Indians: "they had no name to difference them from strangers, except that which signifies men, folke or people, and the names that they take from their place of residence." This name, in the case of the Montauks, being the descriptive appellation of their principal dwelling place, "the Meuntacut high-land," as it is called in the Indian deed of 1648, on which their palisadoed inclosures were situated. These stockades

are mentioned in the deed of 1661, viz: "on this side westward to the place where the old Indian fort stood, on the other side eastward to the new fort that is yet standing." The outlines of the latter (150 feet square,) are still visible after a lapse of over two centuries, and inclose about forty Indian graves of a later date. The confederacy, (if we may so term it), of which these Indians formed a part, were governed by four brothers, chiefs of the four eastern Long Island tribes, viz: the Manhassetts, Montauketts, Shinecocks and Corchaugs, with the eldest brother as the principal ruler, who was known as the Sachem of Paumanack, "land of tribute," or "contributing," as eastern Long Island was termed. This name was derived from the fact that they were at first under tribute to the Pequots in Connecticut, and afterwards to the United Commissioners at Hartford. In 1645 these four Sachems took under their protection all the other small tribes on the Island, as far west as the Rockaways in what is now known as Hempstead town. The villages of the Unkechaugs, Secatogues, Setaukets, Rockaways, and the Mattinecocks, who then resided at Niss<sup>e</sup>quogue, being especially mentioned. This protection and care was the reason why the settlers in the western part of the Island visited Three Mile Harbor, Montauk and other places in this town, in order to obtain the sign-manual of the Sachem of Paumanack (as Waiandance the Montauk chieftain was then called, after the death of his elder brother), to their deeds, before they could be recognized as valid instruments of transfer.

The Montauks also belonged to the great Algie family, whose language was spoken, with dialectic variation, along the Atlantic coast from the icy shore of Labrador to the verdant groves of the Carolinas, and which, with slight change, is still spoken in the forests of Canada and on the shores of its great lakes.

It is only by comparison with the vocabularies left by such



men as Williams, Cotton, Heekewelder, Zeisberger, Baraga, and the work done by J. Hammond Trumbull, LL. D., that we are able to obtain the probable meaning of these few local place-names, which are, with the exception of the meagre lists of words left by Gardiner, the 7th proprietor of Gardiner's Island, the sole mementoes of the Montauk dialect. These names are invariably descriptive of the locality, geographically or otherwise, to which they were originally applied by the Indians, nothing poetical or romantic appearing in any of them. In giving these significations we use our best judgment, arrived at only by considerable study and research. Knowing well the localities, familiar from boyhood, has been of great assistance in studying out the reason why the names were so bestowed. At best, however, our efforts are only provisional, owing to the way our ancestors had of changing the names to suit their English pronunciation and to make them easy of utterance. When we find a simple English word spelled in three or four different forms in one deed, we cannot expect regularity in spelling the aboriginal. Frequently the early settlers gave the name of an Indian to the creek, swamp or tract of land where the native at one time erected his wigwam of rushes. Every instance of this kind is a barrier to the interpreter, for they differ from a place-name, and unless we find the name of the Indian mentioned in the early records (as in Georgia) we must remain somewhat in doubt in regard to it.

Frequently in searching the early records or deeds of the various towns on Long Island, we find the meaning of an Algonkin term suggested or expressed in English. For instance, in the Montauk deed of 1670 appears the boundary-place Shaheppitchege, "a place midway between Fort Pond and Great Pond." Analysis gives us Shah, "midway," chippitchege, "a separated place." The same suggestions appear in the other names in this deed, every one being bound marks

and evidently bestowed at the time of defining the boundaries before the deed was drawn.

In regard to the degenerated remnant of the tribe now residing within the limits of the township, recognized by their characteristic aboriginal features, mixed with negro, we would say that they have no knowledge of their native language, traditions or customs, all have been lost or forgotten years ago. With these few remarks we submit the names.

*Acabonack*.—Neck of land, meadow and harbor in the northern part of the town, adjoining Gardiner's bay. The hamlet at this locality formerly called by the same name is now known as the "Springs," P. O. The name probably at one time applied to a settlement of Indians who lived on what is sometimes called in the records "Acabonack Neck," near "Fire place." The early forms are Ackobonuk, Occobonak, Accobonock, etc. U. S. Coast Survey, Acabomock. The name Acqueb-omack signifies "place before (on this side of, or in front of) some other place." Perhaps the place before or opposite to Gardiner's Island.

*Amagansett*.—P. O. village. This place has been noted for its off shore whale fishing for many years. Many of the inhabitants gain their living from the neighboring waters. N'amagan-es-et signifies, "at, about, or in the neighborhood of the fishing-place." Gardiner, in the "Chronicles of East-Hampton," derives the name from the Indian owner of the land. No doubt an error, as it cannot be authenticated. Same name with a prefix occurs in Rhode Island, viz: Mashaqu-amaganset, "the red (salmon) fishing place."

*Appa'quogue*.—A farming locality in the western part of the town. Also known as the "Lily pond" at an early period. The name designates "a place where flags or rushes grow," "a lodge-covering place." The flags (cat-tail flag, *Typha Latifolia*) were used to cover their wigwams, and for making

mats. It occurs in Southampton as a name for a creek ; now corrupted to Paucuck.

*Ashawagh*.—A place at "Hand's Creek," Three Mile Harbor. Probably the site of the Indian village between the branches of the creek, indicated by the large shell-heap at that point. The name means "a place between," "on the forks" (of a creek, etc.) and occurs as a place-name in many instances throughout New England.

*Chebiakinnasuk, Chabiakinnauhsuk*.—A locality in the "North Neck," Montauk. One of the many outlets of the swamps in that section, and one of the boundaries of the purchase of 1670. Signifying "a long brook or small stream that divides or separates one tract of land from another." "A long boundary brook."

*Choppauhshapaugausuck*.—Place on the east side of the "North Neck," Montauk, now known as the "Ditch Plain," and one of the boundaries mentioned in the deed of 1670. Choppausha-paugaus-suck means a "place separated where the outlet of a pond or some small stream widens or opens out." The ditch being the outlet of Great Pond on the south.

*Copeces*.—A locality at the head of Three Mile Harbor. The name designates "a little harbor," or "a little place of shelter," literally "a place shut in," and was probably the inner harbor which is shut in by two sandy points of land with a small passage between. Evidences of Indian sojourns in time past are visible on all sides.

*Georgica*.—A pond and locality in the western part of the town adjoining the ocean. Derived from an Indian who formerly lived on what is called Georgica Neck. Early forms are Gorgika, Jorgke and Georgikey. This name (a personal one) is found on a whaling agreement of 1679, as Jeorgkee. See Vol. 2, p. 79. Its meaning has not been ascertained.

*Gunnunks*.—A swamp in the "North Neck," Montauk. A place in close proximity is also known as "Gunnunk's Gar-

den," so called from a squaw who formerly lived and planted there. Her name denotes "the tall standing tree."

*Konkhonganik*.—The southern part of Fort Pond, Montauk. This pond was the eastern limit of the purchase of 1661, and the name *Konkhongan-ut* or it, signifies "at the boundary." Forms of spelling are *Konhunganit*, *Konk-hung-gan-ock*, etc.

*Mahchongitchuge*.—A swamp in the "North Neck," Montauk, "where the hay stacks stood," being one of the bound marks of the purchase of 1670. It means "the swamp where rushes grow," from the Narrag Machaug, "swamp," and *Muskechoge*, "place of rushes." *Machaug-kechoge*.

*Manchonack*.—Gardiner's Island. The signification of this Indian name, as given to John Lyon Gardiner, the seventh proprietor of the Island, by a Montauk chief, was a "place where many have died." This is probably correct and no doubt the true meaning, for taken in its variations of spelling as found, it seems to be equivalent to a Narragansett term signifying "the land or place of the dead."

*Manunkquiaug*.—A locality in the "North Neck," Montauk. This has been translated as "Menhaden country," no doubt incorrectly. It was the eastern limit or boundary of the purchase of 1670, mentioned in that deed as "being on the farthest side the woods, growing on great pond eastward." Careful study shows that it denotes "as far as the land goes," "limit or ending of the land."

*Mirrachtauhacky*.—Dutch notation for Montauk. Found so recorded in a treaty of 1645, between the tribes and council of New Netherland. Given in DeKay's Indian names of L. I. as *Merantahacky*, "a place unknown on Long Island." See the following.

*Montauk*, *Montaukut*.—The peninsula on the eastern end of the town. Probably the best known Indian place-name in the country. Its signification has been variously given. J. Hammond Trumbull, the eminent Algonkin scholar, in his

“Names in Connecticut,” says: “This name is probably a form of Manatuck, a name frequently bestowed on high or hilly land throughout New England, and denotes ‘a place of observation,’ ‘a look-out,’ ‘a place for seeing (or to be seen) far off,’” and not as he once believed from Manati, “island.” Gardiner, in the “Chronicles of East-Hampton,” 1840 and 1871, and Ayers, in the “Legends of Montauk,” 1849, translates it as “the hilly land or country,” from having been called in deeds and elsewhere “the Meuntacut high land.” The writer would suggest another derivation, one that is more probable than either the above, and has tradition and history to support it. The early forms of the name (see Vols. I, II III of these Records, and the other early records of the Long Island towns), are Meantaquit, Meuntacut, Meuntauket, Meuntaukut, etc., which are synonymous with the Delaware (Zeisberger), Mœnaehk-et or Menachk-ut, “at the fort,” or “fort place.” The Dutch form Mirrachtauhacky, finds its parallel partly in the Mass. (Cotton) and partly in the Del. Menehketau-hacky, “fortified country,” or “fort country.” With this meaning the quotation from the deed of 1640 would be “unto the fort-place high land.” The fort at that period having been located directly on the boundary now marked by a granite post and a pile of stones, where the Nominick hills rise, (see sale of Montauk with map, 1879). The second fort is now perpetuated in “Fort Pond” and “Fort Pond Bay.”

*Munchog, Munchoage, Manchoage.*—Now known as the “Great Pond Island,” Montauk. “Trustees ordered that notice be given for the sale of liberty to mow what mowable grass may be found within the Indian field, provided they the buyers cut no other than where the rushes grow, and also what if any kind may be found mowable on the Island in the great pond called Munchoag.” Aug. 30th, 1709. See Vol. III, p. 216. This name probably signifies “an island of meadow,” “a place where rushes grow,” from Munni, “island,” muske-

choge, "rushes," "place of rushes," "a meadow." Large part of its area being rushes and marsh. Moriches Island, Brookhaven town, was called Kitcha-minchog, "the great Island meadow or place of rushes," etc. See Mahchongitchuge.

*Neapeague*, (Nap-peeg.)—The long beach that connects the high land of Montauk with the Island at the Amagansett hills. The name signifies "the water land," and well describes its appearance, being a dreary stretch of sand and marsh.

*Nominick*, *Nommonock*.—Hills at the western end of Montauk. These hills rise from the dreary waste of Neapeague beach, and can be seen from a long distance both by land and water. The name Naumun auke signifies "land to be seen, or seen," (from afar.)

*Pantego*, *Pantigo*.—A locality short distance east of East-Hampton village, on the road to Amagansett. Hon. Henry P. Hedges regards the name as being the same as the English pant-I-go, from some local happening, and not aboriginal as supposed. Similar names occur in other parts of the United States.

*Potinack*.—A depression or hollow on the south side of Montauk, in the "Hither Woods," west of the U. S. L. S. Station, on "Hither Plains." It is sometimes called "Potinack hole." The Indian name describes the locality "where the land sinks or bulges in." A watering place at Amagansett is also known as Potinack hole.

*Quadams*.—Hill in the "Indian Field" near the Oyster Pond, Montauk. From the mark of the English possessive, probably so called from some Indian named "Quadam" who lived on or near the hill.

*Quanuntowunk*, *Quannontowunk*.—The name of the northern part of Fort Pond, Montauk. Has been misapplied by historians and others to Fresh Pond on the western end, but the deed of 1661 says, "the name of the pond (Fort Pond) being Quanuntowunk on the north, and Konkhonganik on the

south." (Hedges' address, East-Hampton Bi-centennial, 1849. Ranger's deeds of Montauk, 1850.) The significations sometimes found for this name, "the haunts of the fish-hawk," and "where there is a fence," are evidently wrong. The name probably refers to the long ditch or outlet of the pond, now partially closed, which crosses the beach at this point. It was through this outlet that the Indians formerly dragged their canoes back and forth from the pond to the bay. The name seems to be compounded from Quannon "long," towunk "a ford" or "wading place." "The long ford or wading place." Towouunk or Towunk as a name of a wading place is found in the name "Towd," Southampton, and in "Toyongs," "To-youngs" or "Towungs," the Indian name of "Red Creek," Southampton town.

*Shagwannock*, (Shag-wom.)—Hills, point of land, and reef of rocks on the north side of the "Indian fields," Montauk. The hills are the highest on Montauk. On their slopes the Indian huts were erected and occupied until recently. Now they have disappeared, a low mound and shallow excavation alone mark their sites. The various forms of spelling, beside the above, are Shagwong, Shangwong, Shagwanac, etc. The name is probably the same as the Delaware Schajawong, with the locative suffix, "place on the side of a hill."

*Shahchippithuge*.—A place on the "North Neck," Montauk. Being a pile of stones midway between Great Pond and Fort Pond, to mark a boundary as given in the deed of 1670, known as the nine-score acre purchase, or land between the ponds. The name denotes, "the midway place of separation."

*Wainscott*.—Earlier, Wayinscot, Wayunscut and Wainscut. A farming district and pond in the eastern part of the town, adjoining the ocean. The "Chronicles of East-Hampton," derive the name from the Indian owner of the land. The authority for this cannot be found. Analysis of Indian names by Dr. J. H. Trumbull would make the name Waen-omsk-ut

“where a creek, road or path winds or goes by a rock.” Same name occurs in North Providence, R. I.

*Wamponamon*.—The eastern end of Montauk where the Light House stands. “Neck of Montaukut from sea to sea, from the utmost end of the neck eastward, called Wompenan-it,” deed 1661. Also Wompenoonot, later Wamponamon. The name signifies “at the east,” or “eastward.”

*Wegwaganuck*, *Wigwagonock*.—That part of Sag-Harbor lying in East-Hampton. The name probably designated the Indian village now indicated by the remains of the large shell heap at the foot of Sleight’s hill, on land belonging to Mrs. Fanny R. Harrison, and to the heirs of the late Wm. R. Sleight. The greater part of this village site has been carted away to fill up the adjoining meadow. The name Wequac-adn-auke signifies “land or place at the end of the hill.” The same is found in Sharon, Conn., as Wegnagnock.

*Wuchebehsuck*.—A valley on the “North Neck,” Montauk, being the north-west boundary of the “land between the ponds,” purchased in 1670, “bounded by Wuchebehsuck, a place by the Fort Pond, being a valley southward from the fort hills pond.” The name Wutchebeh-suck denotes “at the bound-mark brook” or “outlet,” “the brook that divides,” or the division brook.” Eliot in his Indian Bible, 1663, uses, almost the same prefix for divided, in Genesis 1 chap., 4 v., “and God divided the light from the darkness.” At certain seasons of the year a small stream flows through this valley, fed by the numerous swamps, lily ponds, etc., that are to be found in the vicinity.

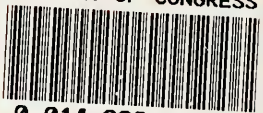








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