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Schaghticoke and Points North: Wôbanaki Resistance and Persistence

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Abstract
The popular versions of New England’s Native American Indian history often contain a gap in reporting on the Native peoples of the middle Connecticut River Valley after Metacom’s War, also known as King Philip’s War (1675-1676). Some nineteenth century historians have suggested that the Agawam, Nonotuck, Pocumtuck, Quaboag, Sokoki, and Woronoco peoples vanished altogether after this tumultuous event. A closer look at the surviving documentary records, however, reveals a far more complex story as Native families chose various paths of resistance and persistence. The Native families that remained in the valley, pursuing traditional lifeways, were poorly documented by European colonists who imagined them to be remnants and wanderers. Some Native individuals assimilated into white communities. Some married or were adopted into neighboring tribes, or traveled west with fur traders. Hundreds of Native families held tight to kinship ties as they relocated to places situated outside the colony of Massachusetts. Some of those relocations were temporary while they and their allies struggled to retake their homelands. Other relocations resulted in the formation of new communities that persist today.

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Schaghticoke and Points North: Wôbanaki Resistance and Persistence - by Marge Bruchac

Introduction

The popular versions of New England's Native American Indian history often contain a gap in reporting on the Native peoples of the middle Connecticut River Valley after Metacom's War, also known as King Philip's War (1675-1676). Some nineteenth century historians have suggested that the Agawam, Nonotuck, Pocumtuck, Quaboag, Sokoki, and Woronoco peoples vanished altogether after this tumultuous event. A closer look at the surviving documentary records, however, reveals a far more complex story as Native families chose various paths of resistance and persistence. The Native families that remained in the valley, pursuing traditional lifeways, were poorly documented by European colonists who imagined them to be remnants and wanderers. Some Native individuals assimilated into white communities. Some married or were adopted into neighboring tribes, or traveled west with fur traders. Hundreds of Native families held tight to kinship ties as they relocated to places situated outside the colony of Massachusetts. Some of those relocations were temporary while they and their allies struggled to retake their homelands. Other relocations resulted in the formation of new communities that persist today.

Native Place Names and Refugee Communities After 1676

The records preserved in Massachusetts, New York, and New France colonial documents, oral traditions, and family names, clearly testify to the presence of Connecticut River Valley Native families at Schaghticoke, Missisquoi, and Odanak during the 1700s and 1800s. These and other Native communities absorbed unknown numbers of wartime refugees, Christian Indians, and inter-tribal allies over the century following Metacom's War. Throughout this period, Native people carried on with the seasonal travels, cultural exchanges, and resource-gathering activities that had long sustained them, and coped with terrible disruptions by expanding their diplomatic linkages. The relationships among these peoples and the histories of these places have, however, long been misunderstood due to the many linguistic, cultural, geographical, and historical errors in interpreting regional Native peoples during this crucial time period.

In particular, the place-name "Schaghticoke," from the Algonkian locative word "pishgoch-ti-goch," indicating a site at the confluence of two rivers, has inspired much confusion, since it was used by three different Native communities, in three different English colonies. The Schaghticoke Tribe in northwest Connecticut emerged when Weantinock, Pequot, Pootatuck, Tunxis and Mohican people created a distinct tribal community along the Housatonic River that persists there today. The Massachusetts Schaghticoke was a Mohican community in present-day Sheffield that, by 1734, joined with the mission village at Stockbridge, and eventually relocated to Wisconsin. The New York Schaghticoke village was once an exclusively Mohican site, but after 1676, the Mohican living there were outnumbered by refugees from the Connecticut River Valley. By 1760, most of New York's Schaghticoke Indians had left the Hudson River to join Wôbanaki communities in northern New England.

Troubles in the Connecticut River Valley

Traditional Algonkian lifeways in the middle Connecticut River Valley had long depended upon shifting homesites that made use of multiple resources within Native homelands, so it was no great
This illustration shows how many Native people from the middle Connecticut River Valley went northwest to Schaghticoke. Click here to see the entire map.

hardship to move an entire community. (9) This was made easier by the far-reaching inter-tribal trade networks, alliances, and agreements for sharing certain places that had been in place long before Europeans arrived. But the pressures of English colonial expansion and conflict in the late 1600s forced more dramatic, longer-term relocations.

The surviving colonial documents make it clear that Massachusetts colonists took advantage of the inter-tribal conflicts that disrupted Native communities. In 1663, for example, Springfield’s fur trader and land broker John Pynchon, attempted to broker peace for the Pocumtuck by directing the Kanienkehaka (Mohawk) to attack the Sokoki. (10) After the English took control of New Netherland, a new treaty was negotiated with the Kanienkehaka and Mohican against the Pocumtuck and other Connecticut River tribes. (11) In 1665, the Kanienkehaka attacked the Pocumtuck fort; shortly thereafter John Pynchon began arranging to survey Pocumtuck land and secure deeds to enable the settlement of Deerfield.

Over the next decade, relations among Indians and English in the Connecticut River Valley deteriorated. In 1674, John Pynchon reported that many of the Woronoco and Pojassic Indians had moved to Albany. (12) Pynchon recognized the threat posed by English meddling in Native diplomacy: “I hope the engaging the Maquas not to entertain or favor our enemies Agawam, Nonotuck, Pocumtuck, and Sokoki] may be of good use; truly their rage against us increases greatly.” (13) Their rage did, indeed, increase, when King Philip’s War broke out.

During the winter of 1675, Metacom brought a large number of Wampanoag, Narragansett, and Nipmuc people to the Hoosic River to construct a winter camp, but they were driven out by Kanienkehaka who “marched out very strong...killing divers, and bringing away some prisoners with great Pride and Triumph.” (14) Metacom’s allies moved to the Connecticut River Valley, but the bloody May 19, 1676 assault on Peskeompskut forced another relocation. (15) Shortly thereafter, Governor Edmund Andros of New York colony suddenly became more hospitable. He sent a message that “all Indyans, who will come & submitt, shall be received to live under the protection of the Government.” In the same month, 500 Sokoki Indians accepted a similar offer to move to New France (Canada). (16)

The English feared these new Native alliances, and were deeply suspicious when Native men moved their families to safe places far from English settlements. In August of 1676, a Native man named Menowniett reported that the Nonotuck and Pocumtuck "and others are gon to a place about Hudson's River called Paquayag, and were encouraged to come there by a great man of those parts...He was askt where they had ye ammunition to carry on the war; he said the Powquig Indians bought it of ye Dutch and sold it ym...He sayth ye Indians hid a great many gunns about Pacompuck [Pocumtuck]." (17) The New England Commissioners encouraged Mohawk hostility against the Connecticut Valley Indians while they praised the Mohican for their neutrality in this conflict. (18)

After the war’s end, Major Pynchon made several attempts to intercede with the Kanienkehaka to end their attacks on Eastern Indians. During a time when “friendly Indians” were expected to provide a buffer against Indian attacks, Massachusetts colony was particularly concerned about the safety of the Nipmuc Praying Indians in Natick, near Boston, who were considered to be exemplary Christian Indians. (19) There was, however, no comparable concern about the original Native inhabitants of the Connecticut River Valley.

In 1691, 150 Pocumtuck people left Schaghticoke to return to their original homelands in Deerfield, but English hostility made it difficult for them to stay. (20) When conflicts erupted, English “justice” was harsh. In one incident, a Native man named Chepasson, a veteran of King Philip’s War, was taken prisoner for debt and killed at Deerfield. (21) In another incident, four Native men were arrested and two were hung at Northampton for murder, before the Schaghticoke sachems could deliver the real culprits (22). After these incidents, John Pynchon advised the colonies that all Indians living north of Springfield, Massachusetts should henceforth be treated as hostiles. Pynchon and Samuel Partridge asked the King’s agents in London for more military assistance, and cautioned against any attempt to make peace with the Connecticut Valley Indians. They wrote: "sometimes they dwell at Stratburk [Schaghticoke], sometimes at the eastward and make marriages with the Eastern Indians [Eastern Abenaki, Pennacook, Pequawket, etc.], and sometimes at Canada [Saint Francis Abenaki], and live like beasts and birds of prey upon the destruction of others." (23)

The direct connections between the forced displacement of Native peoples by English colonists, the shifty transactions of fur trade debt and deeds, and the subsequent hostilities against English settlements, seem obvious. Since English
colonial leaders refused to make any alliances or compromises in the Connecticut River Valley, it should be no wonder the Connecticut River Indians sought allies elsewhere.

Living in Ndakinna

The territory that Wôbanaki peoples knew as "Ndakinna," meaning, "my homeland," spread across present-day Vermont and New Hampshire, into southern Canada and parts of northern New York. During the late 1600s and early 1700s, this region was inhabited by self-governing Wôbanakiak who had not capitulated to European powers. These groups were being courted by New France, but had, thus far, resisted colonization. They enjoyed free movement and abundant hunting and fishing in what had long been their traditional homelands. The English, who caught glimpses of Ndakinna only as captives being carried through it, or as scouts and warriors during the French and Indian wars, depicted it as "wilderness." To the Wôbanakiak, it was a familiar, long-inhabited territory that supplied all the resources necessary for life. (24)

Several thousand Native people traveled through this region to reach Odanak or Saint Francis, a Native village with a Catholic mission situated about 200 miles northwest of Deerfield, on the Anusagunticook (Saint Francis River) near the St. Lawrence in New France. Further north on the Saint Lawrence, the village of Wolinak absorbed Wawenock and Androscoquin people and others from eastern and northern New England. Travel to Odanak was at least an 11-day journey from Deerfield, but many equally hospitable Wôbanaki sites were within only a few days walking or canoeing distance of the middle Connecticut River Valley.

The written records and oral traditions reveal that a number of Connecticut River Valley Native families moved to Sokoki territory just north of Massachusetts, or joined with the Winooski people living along the Winooski River, the Missisquoi at Lake Champlain, the Cowass on the upper Connecticut River, the Penacook in New Hampshire, the Pequawket in western Maine, and other regional bands in northern New England. They planted maize in the river intervale, cut chestnut trees to cover their wigwams, hunted deer and bear in the Green and White Mountains, harvested a wide variety of flora, fauna, and medicinals, and followed the rivers for easy travel. Each of these locations had similar characteristics: easy access to waterways and trails, fertile land for planting, good hunting and fishing, and a resident Native community that was willing to take in refugees. (25)

The populations of Native communities in this region shifted over time as refugees came and went. The Missisquoi Valley, close by Lake Champlain, the Saint Lawrence River, and Lake Memphremagog, became a haven for many Connecticut River families, some of who moved back and forth between Missisquoi and Odanak. Winooski was a popular hunting territory for the Schaghticoke. The Sokoki seem to have split during this time: some went to Schaghticoke, some to Canada, and some remained in Ndakinna. The Penacook, who had maintained neutrality during Metacom's War, followed a similar course. The Cowass, living at the oxbow on the Connecticut River near present-day Newbury, Vermont, offered a haven for those traveling north. (26)

The Pequawket sachem Atecouando tried, unsuccessfully, to make Pequawket a large community by convincing Father Aubery to move the Wôbanakiak then living at Odanak and Wolinak on the Saint Lawrence River, southward. One of the Jesuit missionaries, Father Sebastian Rale, eventually did come to New England, where he founded a Catholic mission for the Kennebec Indians at Norridgewock, led by the sachem Obomsawin, or Bomaseen. (27) The trusting alliance between the French and the Wôbanakiak was a direct threat to the stability of the English colonies. Cotton Mather complained that raiding parties now consisted of "half Indianized French and half Frenchified Indians." (28)

Troubles at Schaghticoke After 1704
In the decades after 1704, while untold numbers of the Connecticut River Valley’s Native peoples folded into Wôbanaki communities in the north, at least 2,000 Native people relocated to Schaghticoke. These Connecticut River Valley Indians maintained separate political and tribal identities from the Mohican. The Albany court records reveal that Mohawk and Mohican sacramhs consistently drew sharp distinctions between themselves and the Schaghticoke Indians, whom they metaphorically referred to as "children" living under their protection. Schaghticoke refugees were also expected to report to Albany and secure passes for safe conduct if they wished to return to Massachusetts, or travel northward for hunting.

Conflicts between the English and the Schaghticoke Indians were sometimes resolved by the Mohican sachems, who were well trusted by the Dutch inhabitants of New York. In one incident involving a "North Indian" who insulted an Englishman, the Schaghticoke sachem Wamsachko apologized profusely, saying, "It was very wrong of the Indian to abuse and scold Philip Schuyler so. They did not know that the Indian had such a bad temper." Wamsachko promised to notify the Mohican and English of any strangers arriving at Schaghticoke in the future. Exchanges of wampum settled the matter, and the Mohican sachem Wattawit thanked the English for dealing calmly with this incident. (29)

By 1704, Schaghticoke had become, not just a place of refuge, but an important center of resistance where displaced Native peoples could find mutual support and build new alliances. The Albany Commissioners made numerous attempts to convince more Wôbanaki people to move to Schaghticoke, in hopes of securing a tighter alliance with the Mohawk and Mohican, and breaking the deepening alliance between Wôbanaki peoples and the French.

When the sachem Sadochques brought a large group of Connecticut River Valley Indians to live at Schaghticoke, he recognized both the fragility and possibilities of the new peace with the Kanienkehaka: "itt is always Said that ye Christians & ye maquase [Mohawk] are in a good union & Covenant chaen be soo Small as your little finger but very thick & Strong...his honr hath been Pleased to order that Scachkook Shall be the Place of our habitacon for which wee are Verry Thankfull." (30) Albany's Secretary for Indian Affairs, Robert Livingston, invited Sadochques to send for more Wôbanakiak to join them: "...ye govr will take Such care to Secure & Protect you that you may wholly Rely upon itt... [we] therefore desyre you to acquaint the Rest of your nation that are Still at Conida of ye good Entertainment you have here and send them this Belt of wampum as a lettr from ye govr who Promises them all favor and Protection." (31)

**Loss of Land at Schaghticoke**

Even as they were encouraging more Native refugees to locate there, English colonists were maneuvering to take away Schaghticoke lands. New York Commissioner Robert Livingston maneuvered a purchase of 2,000 acres of Mohican lands that would soon be converted into the 160,000 acre Manor of Livingston to the south. The Hoosic patent to the east was sold to the Van Rensselaer family, and the Kanienkehaka sold the Saratoga patent to the north. More deeds for Schaghticoke land would follow. (32)

During a 1714 conference, the Schaghticoke complained of these losses, saying: "The owners [Mohican] having sold part of the land to the Christians to wit all the land on one side of the Scackhock Creeks and the Indians were to live and plant on the other side of the creek, but the Christians would now have it on both sides the Creek & Dispossess us of the Lands we formerly Planted." During another meeting on August 31, 1722, the Schaghticoke described one of the specific methods by which the English were duping the Indians out of their land: the English would simply ask for the names of the places where the Indians lived, and then transcribe those names into a deed. (33)

Despite this, New Yorkers kept inviting more Native people to move to Schaghticoke. The Saint Francis Abenaki refused, and took this opportunity to explain their reasons for continually attacking English colonists: "We are so inveterate against those people of N England because they have taken away our Land and kept our People prisoner, but let them restore our Land and releive our People and we will lay down the Hatchett." (34)

At a conference in the 1720s, New York Governor Burnet asked why "your people are so fond of going to Canada?" and reminded the Schaghticoke of the protection they had received under the tree of peace. The Schaghticoke responded, "... its true that a Tree has been planted and we are recommended to live & shelter under the shadow of it but that Tree begins to decay and the leaves to wither, having but a small plot of Land to Plant on." (35) The Schaghticoke were already scouting for other safe places to live, and other strategies to retake their homelands.

Over the decades, the Schaghticoke Indians constantly complained to New York's colonial leaders about their fear of being displaced by English settlers to whom the Mohican and Mohawk were selling land. In one such transaction, Sir William Johnson went to some effort to distinguish the different claims when he wrote "the Mohocks do acknowledge the title of the Scarticook [Schaghticoke] Indians to the east of our bounds, and we the Mohocks and Stockbridge [Mohican] Indians do declare the foregoing bounds to be just and true" (36) Despite these efforts, the land losses continued.

**Gray Lock's War**
Between 1712-1726, a number of Connecticut River Valley Indians living at Schaghticoke became involved in the Anglo-Abenaki conflict known as "Dummer's War" or "Gray Lock's War." Gray Lock was a Woronoco sachem who had fought in Metacom's War and moved with the first refugees to Schaghticoke. Gray Lock was known to the Wôbanakiak as Wawanolewat, meaning "one who fools the others," or "puts someone off the track." By 1712, he had relocated with his family to Missisquoi on the east side of Lake Champlain, in present-day Swanton, Vermont.

Gray Lock's allies included Missisquoi, Saint Francis, Sokoki, Schaghticoke, and Kahnawake Indians who were supplied with guns and ammunition by Canada's Governor Vaudreuil. From there, Wawanolewat led surprise strikes against the English at Northfield, Deerfield, Sunderland, Northampton, and Westfield. Fear of these attacks inspired the construction of the blockhouse at Fort Dummer, now Brattleboro, Vermont. Colonists tried to track Wawanolewat, but they never found Missisquoi, which they called "Gray Lock's Castle." (37)

The differences in colonial diplomacy between the Kahnawake and the Wôbanakiak are interesting. In November of 1723, Colonel Samuel Partridge of Northfield sent a belt of wampum to Kahnawake in hopes of securing an end to Gray Lock's attacks. Two Kahnawake captains, Saguenognas and Cahowasco, explained that "their young people were deluded...Gov. Vaudreuil persuaded them, and gave them powder and shot and ten guns; but they are very sorry and ashamed that they have gone, and say they will never go again." As a peace gesture, they called back 300 Kahnawake warriors. (38) No such entreaties or wampum belts were sent to Missisquoi. Instead, the Massachusetts legislature began making plans for "an expedition to St. Francis...400 able bodied men, English and Indians might be thought sufficient." Smaller expeditions were sent out to destroy small Wôbanaki family groups wherever they could be found, seeking to profit from the scalp bounty paid by the colonies. (39)

Colonial authorities recognized that Gray Lock's War was the direct result of injustice and encroachments by the English, but Massachusetts soldiers nonetheless retaliated by attacking and burning the Wôbanaki community at Norridgewock, killing Father Rale and relatives of Bomaseen. Another English party attacked the Penobscot in eastern Wôbanakia. Missisquoi was never attacked by the English, but an expedition to Saint Francis was still in the works.

After the French Governor Vaudreuil died in 1725, several Wôbanaki leaders sought to end the fighting. The Penobscot sent messengers to make peace with the colonial leaders at Boston. Wawanolewat was invited, but he sent a wampum belt with a message that his men were as yet undecided. (40)

**Deerfield Conference in 1735**

English towns in the middle Connecticut River Valley had been hard hit during Queen Anne's War and Gray Lock's War, and Massachusetts was eager to avoid such attacks if hostilities broke out again. Now that John Pynchon and most veterans of Metacom's War were long dead, the way seemed clear for a new era of treaty-making with the region's Native peoples.

In 1727, Massachusetts Governor Dummer met with four nations of the Eastern Abenaki (Penobscot, Pequawket, Norridgewock, and Wawenock) in Maine, then considered part of Massachusetts colony, to ratify a 1725 Boston peace treaty. In 1732, his successor, Jonathan Belcher, met with the Penobscot, Pequawket, Norridgewock, and Androscoggin, and endeavored to turn them away from both French Catholicism and English rum. (41) With peace on the eastern shores seemingly secured, Belcher turned his sights west.

In 1732, Belcher suggested that Kahnawake people be relocated into Sokoki territory, "between Otter Creek and Fort Dummer," to provide a buffer from Saint Francis attacks. The brief respite of peace between England and France was, Belcher suggested, "a favourable Conjuncture of bringing the Indians on our Borders into our Interest, and nothing will so naturally contribute to it as to let them feel more & more the Sweets of Trading with us." (42) Belcher apparently did not understand that Kahnawake was, at that time, part of the Seven Nations Confederacy along with the Saint Francis, and that any requests to settle by the Connecticut River would not have been made without the consent of their displaced Wôbanaki allies.

The sachems of the Kahnawake, Saint Francis, Schaghticoke, Hudson River Mohican, and Housatonic Mohican communities requested a meeting with Belcher to make their wishes more clear. In August of 1735, more than 140 Native representatives—8 from Kahnawake, 17 Hudson River Mohican, 19 Saint Francis Abenaki, 44 Housatonic Mohican, and 66 Schaghticoke—gathered in Deerfield. A large tent was erected with tables for members of the Governor's Council and the House of Representatives. Numerous spectators attended over the five days of meetings. Belcher opened the gathering with an offering of wampum to symbolically "wipe away all Tears from your eyes...open your Throats that you may speak with freedom...[and] wipe away all Blood." The official interpreter was Captain Joseph Kellogg from Fort Dummer. As a teenager, Kellogg had been captured from Deerfield in 1704 and lived ten years among the Saint Lawrence tribes before returning to New England; as an adult, he was an invaluable interpreter who spoke French, Kanienkehaka, and Wôbanaki languages fluently. (43)
The goals of the conference were straightforward and far-reaching. The Kahnawake called for peace among the French, English and Five Nations Iroquois. The Mohican Captain Konkapot asked that a missionary be appointed to the Housatonic Mohican village, then being rebuilt in the English model at Stockbridge, MA. The Saint Francis Abenaki and Schaghticoke requested more supplies and a missionary for the fort and truck house for fur trading at Fort Dummer, (now Brattleboro) about 20 miles north of Deerfield. (44) It is clear from the proceedings, and subsequent movements, that Wôbanakiak, not Kanienkehaka, people would be the chief beneficiaries of this new truck house.

In February of 1735, Nechehoosqua, Massaqunt, and their two children sold Captain Joseph Kellogg 20 miles of lands on either side of Fort Dummer. In August, Penwanse, his brother Wallenas, and other relatives of Woolauotaumesqua and Nepuscauteusqua, negotiated the transfer of a large stretch of Sokoki homelands across northern Massachusetts for English settlement. The signers of the deeds identified themselves as "Indians of the Scauhtecook Tribe [who] are the true sole and rightful owners of the Land" since their "ancestors habitations were by or near unto Connecticut River." (45) In these deeds, there is no mention of reserving hunting, fishing, or other indigenous rights; apparently, the lands from present-day Charlemont to Templeton, Massachusetts were intended to be sold outright.

Kellogg hired a number of Native sachems as scouts for Fort Dummer, including Hendrick (Kanienkehaka), Aupaumut (Stockbridge Mohican), and three Schaghticoke: Massequnt, Naunautoohoah, and Mascommah, who had signed the 1735 deeds. Together, they hoped to ensure peaceful trade while enforcing the new territorial boundaries. (46)

After this conference, a number of Mohican people moved from the Hudson River to the new mission village of Stockbridge. Around the same time, a number of Native people moved from Schaghticoke to the lands around Fort Dummer. Some joined Pennacook families still living in the Merrimack River Valley, or folded in with the many different bands of Wôbanakiak across northern New England. Others went to Odanak on the Saint Francis River. The written records of the movements of these people are scarce, since most parts of Wôbanakia were not settled by the English until after the last French and Indian War.

French and Indian Wars

Throughout King George’s War (1745-1748) and the French and Indian War (1754-1763), the Wôbanakiak and their allies fought to prevent further English encroachments into their territory. The populations at Schaghticoke and Odanak changed frequently as families arrived and departed at will. Warriors from different Native nations passed through Odanak and Kahnawake, carrying captives who would variously be kept as servants, adopted as kin, sold to the French, or ransomed back to the English.

Massachusetts Governor Belcher made little effort to prevent English colonists from moving into Wôbanaki territory, but he repeatedly asked Wôbanaki sachems to stop Saint Francis attacks. In one letter written in 1740, he reported that the Kahnawake Kanienkehaka "took the hatchet out of the hands of the St. Francis Indians in June last when they intended to make warr with us," and appealed to the Norridgewock and Penobscot for similar assistance. (47)

In July 1752, when pressed to explain the attacks on the Connecticut River Valley, the Pequawket sachem Atecouando (also known as Atiwaneto) stated, "Brothers, we tell you that we seek not war, we ask nothing better than to be quiet, and it depends, brothers, only on you English, to have peace with us." He specifically referred back to the 1735 Sokoki deeds by noting: "We will not cede one single inch of lands we inhabit beyond what has been decided formerly by our fathers...We acknowledge no other boundaries of yours than your settlements whereon you have built." (48) Since the English had no intention of respecting those boundaries, the fighting continued.

By July of 1754, the Schaghticoke settlement was foundering. The sachems explained to the Colonial Congress in Albany, "Your Honor may see that we are but young and unexperienced, our ancient people being almost all dead, so that we have nobody to give us any Advice, but we will do as our Fathers have done before us." (49)

On August 28, 1757, in the midst of the French and Indian War, the Schaghticoke Indian settlement in New York was finally abandoned. Governor Delancey complained that a party of marauding Saint Francis Abenaki had "made an incursion into this Province and burnt the houses and Barns full of grain at Hoseck [Hoosic]...[and] they carried off with them the few remaining Indians of Scachtaecook, being between fifty and sixty Men, Women and Children." Although New Yorkers assumed them to be prisoners, the Schaghticoke were likely grateful to be rescued from under the thumbs of the English by their allies and kin. (50)

Wôbanaki People After Schaghticoke

After Schaghticoke was abandoned in 1757, its inhabitants did not disappear. A few families joined the Kanienkehaka village at Kahnawake, and oral traditions suggest that some Schaghticoke Indians might have joined the Mohican at Stockbridge or the Nipmuc in central Massachusetts. Local historical and oral traditions note that some of the Schaghticoke Indians stayed in New York, living in the foothills of the Adirondacks, around Lake George, Saratoga...
Springs, and in the Sacandaga River Valley, where their descendants eventually mixed with rural Kanienkehaka, Mohican, and white communities. (51)

The village of Missisquoi, around present-day St. Albans and Swanton Vermont, on the east side of Lake Champlain, remained one of the central settlements of Wôbanaki people throughout the French and Indian wars and American Revolution, and right up to the present. The land around Missisquoi was never deeded away, but the French were allowed to build there for a time, and a portion of land was leased in 1765 for an English sawmill. (52) Artificial divisions were cut through Ndakinna by the institution of state and international boundaries, abetted by the fiction that Vermont was an uninhabited wilderness. Members of more than a dozen New England tribes moved through Missisquoi, Pennacook, and Odanak during the 1700s and 1800s.

The safety that the Wôbanakiak had long enjoyed among the French in Canada was shattered in October of 1759, when Odanak was attacked by a party of 118 New England men with Rogers' Rangers, following the orders of Sir Jeffrey Amherst. Thirty-two Wôbanakiak were killed, and homes and the church were burned to the ground. Rogers was assisted by 25 Stockbridge Mohican scouts who had abandoned their friendship with the Wôbanakiak to fight for the English. The village was soon rebuilt with the assistance of the French. (53) At various times before and after this raid, some of the Saint Francis people could be found living among the Kanienkehaka at Akwesasne and Kahnawake, before those communities became more exclusively Mohawk. The village of Odanak moved several times, eventually settling on the north side of the Saint Francis River, south of the Saint Lawrence and just west of Pierreville. Even with all this movement, the population of Odanak averaged only about 300 people at any given point in time, since family bands frequently came and went at will.

This essay touches only briefly on the history of the Connecticut River Valley Indians and other Wôbanaki people in New England after 1800, and space does not permit a full discussion of their descendants today, which is, in itself, a fascinating story. But it should be known that throughout the 1800s and early 1900s, Wôbanaki families in Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, and southern Canada made a living at a variety of occupations. They made and sold ash-splint baskets at resorts like Lake George and Saratoga Springs and the grand hotels in the White Mountains and Green Mountains. They made birchbark canoes, served as guides for sport hunters in the mountains of New England, and worked for the Hudson Bay Company as fur trappers and guides.

Wôbanaki people also worked as Indian Doctors and Doctresses, dispensing herbal medicines to Native and non-Native people alike. In the early 1800s, the Abenaki Indian Doctor Louis Watso was such a regular visitor to Deerfield that the resident white doctor, Stephen West Williams, complained that "I have seen hundreds of my fellow citizens chasing after a part of a tribe of Indians who came here to make us a visit from Canada, for the cure of their diseases." (55)

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there was an exodus of some northern Wôbanakiak back to southern New England to find work in the mill towns and factories of Massachusetts and Connecticut. Over the course of the two centuries between 1800 and the present, although Wôbanaki families traveled widely, many stayed close to their original homelands in northern New England.

Surviving Names From the Connecticut River Valley
Although many Native families left their permanent homesites in the Connecticut River Valley behind, they still traveled through, and carried oral traditions, place names, and personal names with them that connect people over time and space. Some of the surviving oral traditions among the Wôbanakiak include stories of mythological characters in deep time who shaped the land. (See Wôbanakiak: Amiskwâlowôkoiak—the People of the Beaver-tail Hill in the Voices & Songs section of this website.) 

Other oral traditions record specific historical events, such as Metacom's War and Rogers' Raid with details on the individuals and families involved and their relationships through the generations.

Some of the family names still in use today among the northern Wôbanakiak at Missisquoi and Odanak reveal the strongest evidence of Connecticut River Valley origins. Over time, the descendants of Shattoockquis or Sadochques, originally from Pocumtuck and Quaboag, changed the family name to Mesadoques and Sadoques. The descendants of the Woronoco war chief Gray Lock, or Wawanolewat, now go by the names of Wawanolet and Nolet. The Norridgewock sachem Bomaseen, the English version of Obomsawin (meaning, "far traveler"), has many descendants today, some of whom claim the family hailed from the Connecticut River Valley. The names Penewanse (from "kepinawos," "the person who takes care of someone") and Wallenas (from " wolhanas," which means "valley person"), came from Sokoki men who were identified as "Schaghticoke Indians" when they signed deeds for Sokoki land, and later as "Abenaki Indians," when they fought during the French and Indian wars. Their descendants throughout Wôbanaki territory today use the names Penewanse, Capinawans, Capino, Woinlas and/or Wanlinas. Virtually every surname in use among the Wôbanaki people today holds just such a story about where that family came from, who they are related to, and what their ancestors went through to survive.

Thousands of descendants of the Schaghticoke Indians live among the Wôbanakiak today, where they generally self-identify as members of various bands of "Abenaki" people, rather than as "Connecticut River Valley Indians." Some Wôbanaki families still live in Massachusetts; others have traveled across the continent with their relations. The kinship ties and family memories of Wôbanaki communities across northern New England and southern Canada, in their old homeland of Ndakinna, transcend the international and state borders that have artificially divided them.

Further Reading