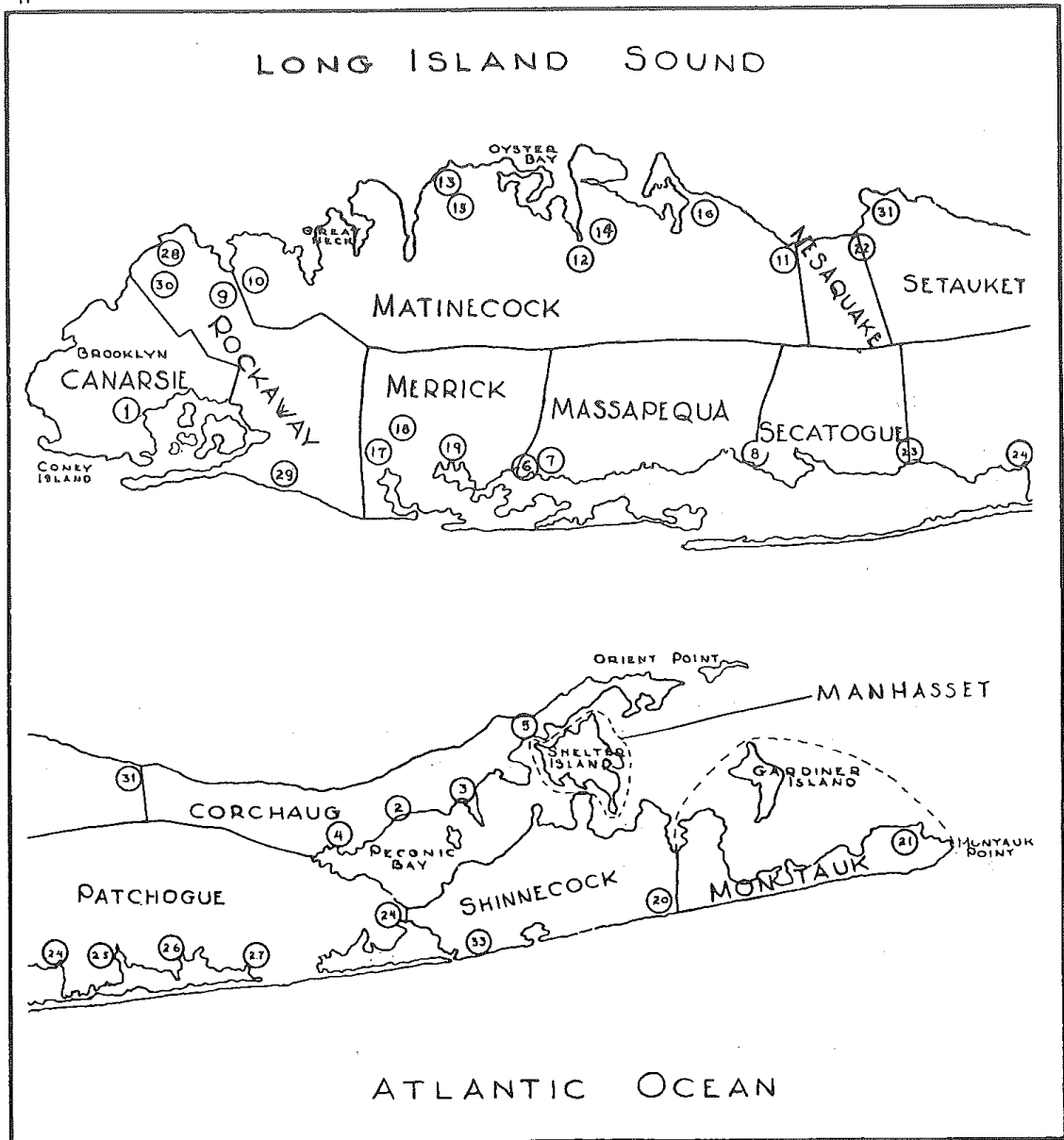


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LONG ISLAND INDIAN TRIBES

ALGONKIN. All of the tribes of Long Island were members of this linguistic stock, the largest in extent of territory in North America. A common dialect was not spoken over the whole island. Those tribes which lived on the western third or thereabouts of the island spoke a language which was closely connected with that of the Unami branch of the Delaware or Lenape, who lived on the Jersey side of New York Bay. The remaining tribes, especially those on the eastern part, spoke a tongue which was very closely related to that of the Pequot and Narragansett of Connecticut and Rhode Island. See leaflet 27-28.

TRIBAL ORGANIZATION. The Long Island Indians were divided into thirteen main groups, some of which had sub-divisions. These tribes were bands which were lead by families in which the chieftainships were hereditary. If there was no man to inherit a woman might serve. The distinctions between the bands were purely political, as all spoke the same or very closely related tongues and lived in much the same manner. The bands to the east were closely tied together in a confederacy lead by the Montauk. Often the heads of several different bands were closely related.

NAMES. When the Dutch arrived and learned the language they spelled the Indian names one way. The English chose another manner, and later generations of Americans corrupted both. The spellings used in this paper are those used by the Bureau of Ethnology. In Bulletin 30 of that Bureau, the Handbook of American Indians, most of the variations will be found. Others are in reference four.

CAUSES OF DECLINE. Warfare between the island bands and with the mainland people seems to have reduced the population before the discovery. The coming of the white man had its usual effect. Those Indians who survived the guns of the Europeans were killed by arms given by the whites to other Indians, such as the Mohawk and Pequot. And finally the survivors of war fell victim to the diseases and vices of the whites and to the ill effects of the loss of their old accustomed food and manner of living.

POPULATION. The only available estimate of their population is that of Mooney, who says that in 1600 there were about 6,000 Indians on Long Island. Today there are a few hundred mixed bloods on the island and scattered elsewhere. The principal losses came with the Dutch wars of 1640 and 1664 and the pestilences of 1658 and 1662.

HISTORY. Hudson's landing on Long Island in 1609 was the first contact of the Indians with the white man. The island was not colonized to a great extent until about 1640, the Dutch having been busy at Manhattan and the English in New England. Once colonization began it spread rapidly. The Dutch towns were at the extreme western end and those of the English elsewhere. Both parties made extensive purchases of land from the Indians. The Dutch governors bought the land and distributed it among their people, while the English colonists bought direct from the Indian. The Indian considered these purchases as rentals or arrangements of joint occupation and objected strenuously when he was ordered away from his old haunts. These objections led to the wars in the middle of the 17th century. There was no fighting after about 1670, but the Indians who survived the wars rapidly vanished at the touch of civilization, so that by 1750 only a few hundred were left.

CANARSIE. An abbreviated corruption of a longer word meaning "the fenced place." This tribe owned most of King's County, part of Jamaica and spread over on lower Manhattan. Their chief village was at Flat-

lands. A division of the tribe, the Mareykawick, lived on the site of Brooklyn. By 1670 they had sold all of their land to the Dutch except that by their village at Canarsee (1). Wars with the Dutch and the Mohawk reduced them rapidly. The last member of the tribe died in 1800.

CORCHAUG. A corruption of Kehch-auke, "the greatest or principal place." This tribe held Riverhead and Southold townships. Their towns were at Mattituck (2), Cutchogue (3), Aquebogue (4) and Ashamomuck (5). Of these Cutchogue was the most important, being the site of one of the four palisaded forts of the then confederated four eastern tribes, Montauk, Manhasset, Shinnecock and Corchaug. The Yannocock were part of this tribe.

MANHASSET. This name is apparently connected with Manhasset, the common name of Shelter Island and meaning "island neighborhood." This tribe lived on Shelter and Ram Islands. Though living in a small territory the tribe was of considerable size, having an army of several hundred.

MASSAPEQUA or MARSAPEGUE "great water land." This tribe held the south shore of Long Island from Fort Neck (6), southwest of Amityville (7), to Islip (8) and inland to the center of the island. Their principal village was on Fort Neck (6). The Dutch attacked this fortified town in 1647, and in 1653 it was destroyed in the only large battle between Indians and whites held on Long Island.

MATINECOCK. A corruption of Matinne-auke-ut "at the hilly land." This tribe held the land from the middle of the island to the north coast from Newton (9) and Flushing (10) to the Nissequogue River (11). They seem to have been diminishing before the arrival of the whites because of wars with the Iroquois. By 1650 only a few dozen families remained. Their villages were at Flushing (10), Glen Cove (12), Cold Spring (13), Huntington (14), Dosoris (15), and Northport (16).

MERRICK or MEROKE or MERIKOKE. A corruption of Merri-auke-ut, "at the barren land." This tribe held the territory from the center of the island to the south shore between Rockville Center (17) and Fort Neck (6), near Amityville (7). Hempstead (18) lay in their area. Their principal villages were near the present Merrick (19) and on Hicks' Neck.

MONTAUK. Apparently a corruption of Meuntaukut, "at the fort." In a restricted sense this name is applied to that tribe which held the land from Easthampton (20) to Montauk Point and Gardiner Island. But owing to the fact that the Montauk chief was the leader of the confederation of tribes on the eastern two-thirds of the island, the name was often given to all the people in the confederacy. The main village of the tribe was on Fort Pond (21). The tribe was under the domination of the Connecticut tribes after 1641. About 500 survived the plague of 1658, but thereafter they rapidly declined. Today a very few mixed bloods still live near their old home.

NESAQUAKE or NISSAQUOGUE. A corruption of Nissaquack, "the clay or mud country." This tribe held the land from the center of the island to the north shore between the Nissequogue River (11) and Stony Brook (22). The main village was near the present Nissequogue (11).

PATCHOGUE or POOSEPATUCK or UNKECHAUG. 1. Pachau-auke, "a turning place." 2. "Where a creek flows out." 3. Ongk-adch-auke, "land beyond the hill." This tribe held the land from the center of the island to the south shore between Patchogue (23) and Canoe Place (24). Their main towns were at Patchogue (23), Fireplace (24), Mastic (25),

Moriches (26) and Westhampton (27). The Cannetquot were part of this tribe. A few mixed bloods still live on a small reservation near Mastic (25).

ROCKAWAY. A corruption of Rechqua-akie, "sandy land." This tribe occupied a strip running diagonally across the island from Long Island City (28) to Far Rockaway (29). Their principal villages were near the present Maspeth (30) and Rockville Center (17). Their lands were sold to the Dutch in 1685.

SECATOGUE. A corruption of Sequat-auke, "black or dark colored land." This tribe owned the land between the south shore and the center of the island between the present Islip (8) and Patchogue (23). The principal village was near Islip (8). The tribe was nearly extinct at the time of the white discovery.

SETAUKET or SEATALCOT. A corruption of Setukqt, "land at the mouth of a river." This tribe, said to have been one of the most powerful, occupied the land between the north shore and the middle of the island between Stony Brook (22) and Wading River (31). The principal town was on the site of the present Setauket (32), on Strong's Neck. By 1675 all its lands had been sold.

SHINNECOCK. A corruption of Shinne-auk-ut, "at the level land." This tribe held the territory between the Atlantic and Peconic Bay from Canoe Place (24) to Easthampton (20). A portion of the tribe weathered the storm of white invasion. In 1789 a number joined the Brother-ton band of survivors of many New England tribes. Their descendants live today on the Oneida reservation in Wisconsin. Near Southampton (33) there are a small number of the tribe, much mixed with negro blood. Recent accounts state that the people have been slowly moving away, since twenty-eight of the men were drowned in a catastrophe at sea in 1876.

METOAC or MATOUACK. A corruption of Meht-anaw-ack, "land of the ear-shell or periwinkle." This is a collective name covering all the Indians on Long Island. The name is sometimes applied to the Montauk because of their supremacy over the other tribes.

SEWANHACKY "land of shell money." This name was applied to the western part of Long Island because of the great quantities of wampum which were made there.

PAUMANACK or POMMANOCK. A corruption of Pauman-auke, "land of tribute." A name for eastern Long Island, inspired by the fact that this area and its tribes were long under the control of the Connecticut Pequots and later of the whites.

Compiled by F. H. Douglas from the following sources :

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