CHAPTER THREE

Wyandanch: Sachem of the Montauks

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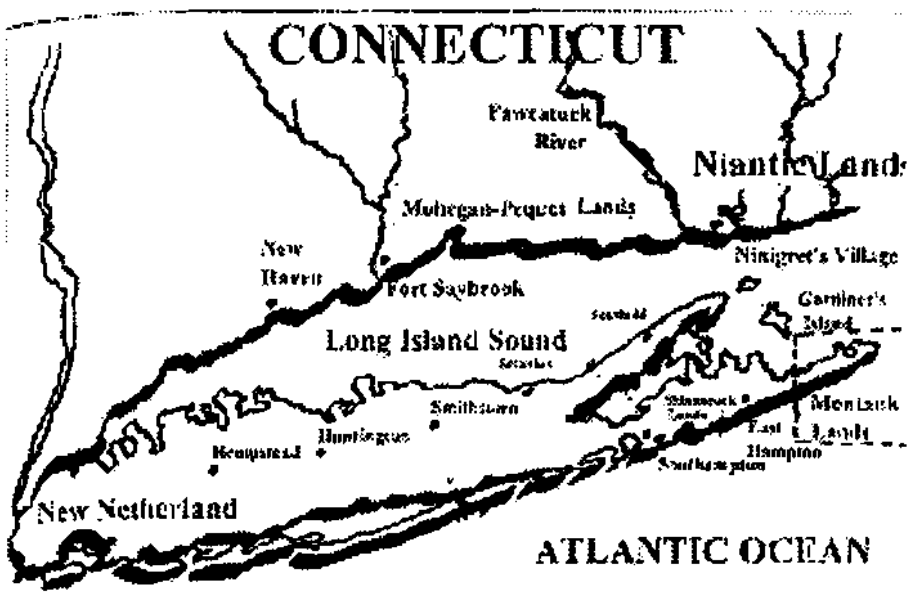
Introduction

WYANDANCH, WHO WAS BORN at Montauk on eastern Long Island at about the time of the Pilgrims' arrival, became an important intermediary between the Algonquian communities and the English. From his first meeting with Lion Gardiner, the English commander at Fort Saybrook, immediately after the devastating defeat of the Pequots in 1637 and until his death in 1659, Wyandanch played a major role in Indian affairs on Long Island. The evolution of his role as broker between the two cultures, each with its distinct values and systems of social organization, provides some important insights into developing institutions on the colonial frontier.

Before the arrival of the Europeans, the Algonquian peoples on Long Island lived in scattered village communities along the banks of freshwater streams near tidal estuaries and saltwater bays (Salwen 1978:164; Strong 1983:7-45). These communities were linked in an intricate web of kinship relations which was continuously reinforced through exogamous marriage customs. This network, which extended across the sound to the MoheganPequot, Narragansett, and Niantic peoples of southern New England, served as a basis for social, political, and economic interaction (Goddard 1978a:72; Smith 1950:110-16; L. Williams 1972:5).



Southern New England and Long Island 1650. Drawn by David Bun Martine, Shinnecock Reservation.

These villages would, on occasion, form temporary associations beyond the village level. An influential sachem would negotiate a temporary alliance with several neighboring villages to join in a great hunt or form a war party, These alliances generally dissolved once the goal was either accomplished or hopelessly frustrated. Military alliances appear to have been more common after the Dutch and English settlements were established. Tribal systems did emerge, as we shall see, as a response to European presence in the seventeenth century, and Wyandanch was to play a significant role in this development.

As the English and Dutch settlements expanded, they came into direct conflict with one another, first in the Connecticut Valley and later on Long Island.' The English challenged the Dutch attempts to develop a trade route along the Connecticut River and later sent Lion Gardiner, a professional soldier and military architect, to build a fort at Saybrook on the mouth of the Connecticut River. The intrusion of the two contending European powers into the Native American political arena upset the existing alliances and forced many tribes to establish new external relationships for security and trade. In these increasingly unstable times, local sachems had to keep a wary eye on a complex and continually shifting political scene.

When the English crushed the Pequot resistance in the spring of 1637, New England sachems had to seek some form of accommodation with the victors. The dramatic and devastating massacre of the Pequot village near Mystic had demonstrated vividly the potentials of English technology and military organization. The Montauks, close relatives and tributaries of the Pequots who h@d depended on them for protection, also looked to the English for security. The New England Algonquians had given tacit submission to whichever English colony claimed their territory. Uncas, the Mohegan sachem, had already committed himself to the English in Connecticut; Miantonomi, the Narragansett sachem, had allied himself with Massachusetts Bay; and Ninigret, the Niantic leader, formed an alliance with Roger Williams in Rhode Island.

These alliances between the English and the Algonquian peoples brought together two sharply contrasting systems. The sachems, unlike their English counterparts, governed by persuasion and had limited control over their followers. As Richard White (1991:36-40) has pointed out, the Europeans had to create a new political office among the Algonquians, which he called the "alliance chief." To establish this position, Europeans gave friendly sachems goods to redistribute and military support when necessary. The role of the alliance chiefs was to mediate disputes between their own followers, to keep. in fairly close touch with the English, to prevent any of their group from harming the English or their property, and to negotiate land sales.

"To Augment their owne Kingdom": Alliances and Intrigue on the Middle Ground

When Wyandanch first learned of the Pequot massacre on May 26, 1637, he went to Lion Gardiner at Fort Saybrook to assure the English that, in spite of their kinship and historic ties with the Pequots, the Montauks wanted friendly relations with the victors (Gardiner in Orr 1897:137-38). Gardiner told the Montauk sachem that he had to show good faith by helping the English

troops hunt down all of the Pequots on Long Island who had killed Englishmen. According to rumor, Sassacus and a large number of Pequots had fled to Long Island.

Gardiner's charge to Wyandanch put him in a difficult position, because Pequots and close relatives o f Pequots could be found in nearly every villa e on eastern Lon Island. A ur e of these eo le could result in near chaos. One of the Long Island sachems who protected Pequots was Youghco (later called Poggatacut), an influential elder sachem closely related to Wyandanch who lived on Shelter Island (Munhausett) in Peconic Bay, a short distance from the Montauk villages. Youghco did not oppose an alliance with the English, but he was unwilling to cooperate in the killing of Pequots.

When Gardiner asked Wyandanch to kill an influential sachem who had allegedly slain two Englishmen, the Montauk sachem replied that Youghco would not allow the execution (Gardiner in Orr 1897:146). WYandanch may have faced similar opposition to the killing of Pequot refugees who had fled to Long Island. He apparently resolved the dilemma by joining with the English troops in pursuit of the fleeing Pequots in southern New England. Wyandanch presented Gardiner with twelve trophy heads, which he may have taken when he was serving under English command. In so doing he avoided any direct conflict with Long Island sachems such as Youghco. During the next two months, as English troops pursued remnants of the Pequot across southern Connecticut, more Long Island sachems made overtures to the English. One sunksquaw from Long Island apparently tried to establish alliances with the Narragansetts and the English by sending them both wampum tribute. Two other Long Island sachems went directly to the English and worked out an agreement, apparently that summer. The sachems agreed to become tributaries to both the Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay Colonies in exchange for military protection. The treaty is mentioned in a letter from John Winthrop, Sr. to William Bradford, but unfortunately no copy has survived. Although no sachems were named in the letter, it is very likely that one of them was Wyandanch (Ales 1979:31; Winthrop 1908 [1]:231; 1929-47 [3]:457). The other sachem was probably Youghco, who may have been willing to accept tributary status with the English as long as he did not have to antagonize Miantonomi or Ninigret unnecessarily or shed Pequot blood. The sachems would pay wampum to both colonies, but Massachusetts Bay was to receive twice as much as Connecticut.

The Long Island sachems believed that they would receive the same protection that they had received as tributaries to the Pequots. The English colonies, however, were very reluctant to become involved in disputes between Native American sachems unless some clear interest of a particular colony was at stake. The rotection anticipated b Wvandanch and his allies, therefore, was unlikely to come unless it would also serve the policy interests of one or more of the English colonies.

It is important to note that the complex political affairs in southern New England and Long Island can not be simplified into "English" and "Algonquian" interests because both groups were divided into sharply contentious factions. The colonies were constantly feuding among themselves over boundary lines, and the Algonquian sachems engaged in intricate schemes to strengthen their power a· d influence at the expense of their rivals. Israel Stoughton wrote to John Winthrop, Sr. in July, 1637 warning that the sachems were "so eagerly sett upon their own ends, to gett booty

etc. and to augment their owne Kingdom etc., that upon the matter they use us as their stalking horse. . . " (Winthrop 1929-47 [3]:442).

The tangle of conflicting interests became evident in the late spring of 1638 when Ninigret, leading a war party of eighty men, came across the sound to convince Wyandanch that he should ally his people with the Niantics instead of with Connecticut and Massachusetts Ba y. 4 Ninigret was attempting to take advantage of what he believed was a power vacuum on Long Island. He hoped to break the newly formed alliance between the two English colonies and the Montauks and to draw the former Pequot tributaries into an alliance with his Niantics. It was a daring plan that would strengthen his position against his rivals, Uncas and Miantonomi. It was also one way sachems had expanded their power and influence in the past.

Shortly after he landed on Long Island, Ninigret sent a delegation to Wyandanch urging him to abandon the English alliance and accept a tributary status with the Niantic (Ales 1979:32; Winthrop 1929-47 [4]:4344). Wyandanch refused and went into hiding to avoid capture. Ninigret caught him and pressed the Montauk sachem to reconsider, arguing that the Connecticut and Massachusetts Bay Colonies would take their wampum but would not protect them as welt as he would. The Englishmen, he said, "are liars they doe it but only to gett your wampum." The English of Connecticut, said Ninigret, "will speak much but doe little," and the Massachusetts Bay English could be paid off with wampum (Ales 1979:32; Winthrop 1929-47 [4]:43-44).
When Wyandanch refused again to abrogate his alliance with the English, Ninigret humiliated him by stripping him in front of his people, seizing thirty fathoms of wampum and other goods, and burning several wigwams. The Niantics then attacked several neighboring villages convincing some Montauk elders to accept his terms. Ninigret demanded orn and wampum as the terms of the alliance. future payments in c

Wyandanch immediately went to Windsor, where he told his story to p,oger Ludlow and demanded that the wampum be recovered. According to Ludlow, the Montauk sachem made a compelling argument. How can I pay tribute to the English, asked Wyandanch, if they allow the Niantics or others to steal it from me at will? Ludlow agreed and ordered John Mason, the commander who had led the troops against the Pequots, to take an armed guard of eight men to confront Ninigret. The Niantic sachem, acting upon the advice of Roger Williams, reached a peaceful accommodation with Mason and paid back the wampum.

The following spring two English settlements, Southampton and Southold, were established on the eastern end of Long Island, several miles west of the Montauk lands. The Southampton settlers negotiated a treaty with Mandush, the sachem from Shinnecock, and several others who apparently represented neighboring villages. Mandush and his colleagues, probably thinking about Ninigret's raid, made sure that the treaty included a clause which read, "the above named English shall defend us the said Indians from the unjust violence of whatever Indians shall illegally assaile us" (Pelletreau 1874-1910 [1]:12-14). The second group of settlers established Southold near the Corchaug village on the north fork of the island. Wyandanch, who had close family ties with the sachems in both villages, undoubtedly was pleased because the expanded English presence meant better protection and more trade.

Two years later, according to an account by Lion Gardiner in his brief history of the Pequot War, Wyandanch foiled a dangerous plot against these new English settlements (Gardiner in Orr 1897:140-43). Miantonomi, reported Gardiner, had visited Wyandanch and his elder counselors and told them to stop sending wampum to Connecticut. Wyandanch replied that he did not want his people to suffer the same fate as had befallen the Pequots at Mystic. The Pequots were destroyed because they killed an Englishman, sai@ Miantonomi, but since the Montauks had not done so, they need not fear them.

Wyandanch reported this to Gardiner, who told him to tell the Narragansetts that he needed a month to discuss their proposal with the other Long Island sachems. As soon as Miantonomi left, Gardiner sent Wyandanch with a letter to John Haynes, a wealthy Connecticut settler who was to be t d overnor of Connecticut in 1643. H es told W andanch not to pay any tribute to Miantonomi and informed Gardiner of this in a letter. When a Narragansett delegation re turned to Montauk, Gardiner met them and sent them away with a copy of Haynes's letter, telling them to have Roger Williams read it to Miantonomi. Haynes and Gardiner apparently felt that if Williams was informed, he would dissuade Miantonomi.

There is very little documentation about these events other than Gardiner's account. If Williams attempted to intervene, he was not successful; according to Gardiner, Miantonomi came back to Montauk when Wyandanch was away and delivered an address in secret to the Montauk elders, telling them that the Mohawks had joined in an alliance with the Narragansetts to destroy all English settlements. Miantonomi laid out a very specific plan calling for the Montauk to raise 100 men from Shinnecock and another 100 of their own warriors and to prepare for an attack forty days later. The signal for the attack would be three fires, apparently on Block Island, on the given night. The elders, according to Gardiner, endorsed the plan enthusiastically.

When Wyandanch returned, the elders would not reveal the contents of Miantonomi's message. He questioned them several times for three days but was told nothing. Wyandanch then came to Gardiner for advice. It was inappropriate, said Gardiner, for the Narragansett sachem to address the elders when Wyandanch was absent. Clearly Wyandanch did not have the full support of the Montauk elders. An alliance chief was expected to have more control over relations with other Native American communities. Gardiner concluded that Wyandanch's influence over his elders had to be strengthened by English economic and military support.

Gardiner sent Wyandanch back with a strategy to deceive the elders into revealing Miantonomi's plan. Gardiner did not record what the strategy was, but Wyandanch was successful and brought back a full report. Gardiner then wrote to New Haven and Hartford about the conspiracy. Unfortunately, related Gardiner, his boat was not available for several days, and the letter did not arrive until two weeks later. In the meantime, said Gardiner, the Montauk elders discovered that the conspiracy had been reported and sent a canoe over by night to warn Miantonomi to call off the attack.

Shortly after Gardiner's letter arrived in New Haven, Governor Eaton received another conspiracy account from Roger Ludlow, who came from [5]:161-64; Sain sbury 1971:116-17). Ludlow said that a sachem near Fairfield had come to him and told him in confidence about the conspiracy.

The sachem said that he would be killed by Miantonomi or his allies if Ludlow revealed his identity. The two accounts were similar in general outline, but Ludlow's account was more detailed.

Connecticut responded to the reports of Miantonomi's conspiracy with an immediate call to arms, but John Winthrop, Sr. wanted to talk directly with Miantonorm before he took any precipitous action. He called the Narragansett sachem to Boston, where he could question him face to face. Miantonomi came and denied that he was involved in any plot against the English. When the Narragansett sachem asked to confront his accusers, Winthrop said that he didn't know who they were. Winthrop probably knew who the informants were but did not call them forward because he did not want a confrontation that might provoke bloodshed. Winthrop was apparently satisfied that Miantonomi had yielded to his authority by coming to Boston at his request and submitting to the interrogation. If Miantonomi had ever entertained any notion of attacking the English, the glare of publicity would force him to abandon the scheme. Winthrop announced that he believed Miantonomi, and the matter was put to rest (Sainsbury 1971:117; Winthrop 1929-47 [2]:76).

The following spring, Miantonomi and Uncas were at war. Uncas defeated the Narragansetts, took Miantonomi prisoner, and reported to the Connecticut authorities for instructions. The English told Uncas they would not object to the execution of Miantonomi as long as it was not done in the English settlements (Sainsbury 1971:119). The Mohegans took the Narragansett sachem away and executed him. Thus Uncas increased his power and influence, but he also reaffirmed his acceptance of Connecticut jurisdiction.

The defeat of Miantonomi must have seriously weakened opposition to Wyandanch among the Long Island sachems. The Montauk sachem took this opportunity to strengthen his alliance with the English by paying the annual tribute in wampum, which had apparently been done irregularly since the agreement in 1638 (NPNER [10]:171). From then on he continued to pay it regularly until Ninigret's raids disrupted the Montauk economy in 1653.

The death of Miantonomi may have prompted four Long Island sachems-Youghco, Wiantause (Wyandanch), Moughmaitow, andWeena44 meetin of the United Colonies, a confederation formed by Connecticut, Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, and New Haven, where they negotiated a treaty of friendships Although the document does not give the location of the groups represented by Moughmaitow and Weenagarnin, later documents indicate that the former probably came from Corchaugs on the north fork of Long Island and that the latter may have been from Shinnecock. The commissioners granted the sachems a "certification" that acknowledged the sachems as "tributaries to the English." They pledged not to harm English or Dutch people or their property, and to turn over to the English any of their own people who did so. The United Colonies, however, made no promise to protect the Indians from their enemies.

That same year, according to Gardiner, Ninigret again attempted to interfere in Montauk affairs (Ales 1979:38-39; Drake 1857:74; Gardiner in Orr 1897:143-44). His agent was captured by Wyandanch, who came to Gardiner for instructions. Gardiner advised Wyandanch to send the man to Governor Eaton of New Haven for questioning. Gardiner says that he wrote a letter to Eaton warning him of Ninigret's conspiracy. Bad weather forced Wyandanch's party ashore on

Shelter Island, where Youghco's village was located. Youghco made Wyandanch release Ninigret's agent, but allowed the letter to go on to Eaton. There is no mention of the letter in the New Haven records, and the incident is not mentioned by Rhode Island historians .6 If it is true, the conflict between Wyandanch and Youghco suggests that Ninigret had support among the Long Island sachems and that Youghco was again playing a cautious role by staying neutral.

In 1648, East Hampton, a third settlement, was established on eastern Long Island. The English officials met with Wyandanch and the sachems from neighboring villages to negotiate the purchase of a 3 1,000 acre tract of Montauk land on the eastern boundary of Southampton. The Shelter Island sachem was the first to sign, suggesting that he held the highest status and led the delegation. He was'also the first one mentioned in the 1644 agreement at Hartford. Wyandanch was clearly a minor sachem at the time.

Two other men who played an important role in the negotiations signed the deed. Thomas Stanton, one of the first English colonists to become fluent in the local Algonquian languages, served as interpreter for the English. The Algonquian- sachems brought their own interpreter, Cockenoe, who may have been trained by the Massachusetts Bay Colony missionary Reverend John Eliot (Tooker 1896). Cockenoe soon became one of

Soon after the East Hampton deed was signed, nine families arrived and put UP the first buildings in East Hampton. According to a local legend recorded in the East Hampton Trustee's Journal, a Montauk huntit,- party discovered them and the settlers invited them into the houses for a meal. The hunters, apparently unaware of the agreement signed by Wyandanch, returned to their village and made plans to drive the English out. The men went to their sachem, presumably Wyandanch, to approve the attack. The sachem asked them, "Did they invite you into their houses?They did.- Did they give you [food] to eat?-They did.-Did you experience any harm from what you ate; did it poison you?-It did not." The reply of the sachem, turning to his warriors was, "You shall not cut them off.`8 The account may be apocryphal, but later events indicate clearly that Wyandanch was eager to establish good relations with the English. Any attempts to harm the English would certainly have been opposed by Wyandanch.

In the spring of 1649, Wyandanch demonstrated his diplomatic and political skills as he resolved an ugly conflict between the English in Southampton and the Shinnecocks and used the opportunity to expand his own power base. A white woman was murdered in Southampton, apparently in retaliation for the Shinnecock killed by the English six years earlier (Gardiner in Orr 1897:144; Pelletreau 1874-1910 [1]:158). Mandush, the Shinnecock sachem, apparently felt that the woman's death restored Shinnecock honor and that the matter should not be pursued further.

The Shinnecocks' refusal to respond to the demands from Southampton led to an armed stand-off between the two communities. John Gosmer and Edward Howell, the Southampton magistrates, attempted to resolve the crisis by calling on Wyandanch to honor the clause in the 1644 treaty requiring that Indians accused of injury to English people be turned over to the English authorities. Wyandanch consulted Gardiner, who urged him to go to Southampton and capture those responsible for the murder. Gardiner gave the sachem a paper that asked Englisl settlers to

grant VVYandanch safe conduct and to provide him and his men with food while he was on a mission for the English.

One man had already been taken by the English, and Wyandanch captured two more. The town officials met with Wyandanch and Mandush, the Shinnecock sachem (Pelletreau 1874-1910 [1]:158). Mandush, who had signed the 1640 deed for Southampton, was apparently con-

armed men from Southampton to turn over the accused men and accept Montauk sovereignty. This proved to be a mixed blessing for Wyandanch because, although he now held the right to sell Shinnecock land for his own profit, he was also responsible for Shinnecock behavior. The three accused men were taken to Hartford, where they were tried and hanged by the colonial authorities (Gardiner in Orr 1897:145).

Wyandanch strengthened his political position with his success in resolving a potentially dangerous impasse between the Shinnecocks and the English. The Montauk sachem demonstrated to his people that he had material and military support from the English, which increased his power well beyond that of other sachems. Viewed from the context of Algonquian culture, Wyandanch had exacted blood revenge on those who opposed him. The English were pleased because Wyandanch forced the Shinnecocks to comply with the colonial legal system and assumed responsibility for the sale of Shinnecock land.

Wyandanch and Mandush were called upon again several months later to help settle a dispute between the Town of Southampton and Indians living at Sebonac, a short distance north of the Shinnecock village. The English complained that the Sebonac villagers had continued to plant corn on land that the whites believed they had purchased in 1640, and that their cattle were often injured when they fell into food-storage pits abandoned when wigwams were relocated. The Indians complained that English livestock destroyed their crops. A compromise was reached that called for fences to be constructed, abandoned pits to be filled, and restrictions to be placed on livestock grazing (Strong 1983:69).

At the same time as Wyandanch was increasing his ties with the English, his Algonquian rivals, Uncas and Ninigret, were working to improve their own power bases. The Long Island sachems accused Ninigret of sending an agent to kill Mandush, perhaps because the Shinnecock sachem had formed an alliance with Wyandanch (Ales 1979:50; NPNER [10]:96-97). The Niantic sachem was also accused by John Mason of plotting to assassinate Uncas in the spring of 1649 (Sehr 1977:49). Both plots failed. Mandush captured his assailant when his gun misfired and took him to Wyandanch. The two Long Island sachems brought the Niantic agent to Hartford, where he was tried and found guilty by the colonial court. Connecticut did not execute the man, probably because they did not wish to strain their ties with Ninigret. Instead, they turned the agent over to Wyandanch and Mandush, who killed him and burned the

By 1650, the Algonquian sachems were engaged in complex and intricate diplomacy that involved shamanism as well as European forms of statecraft. Uncas, perhaps seeking to undermine Wyandanch's growing influence with the Connecticut officials, accused Wyandanch of hiring a shaman to kill some of his men and to bewitch others. Uncas demanded that the United Colonies

take action against Wyandanch. The commissioners investigated, but there is no record of any action against the N4ontauk sachem (NPNER [9]:167). Uncas also accused Ninigret of hiring a shaman to poison him and complained to the United Colonies.

The stakes and tensions increased in 1652, when England and Holland went to war. Although the fighting did not spread to the Atlantic colonies, the two European powers there watched each other warily. Uncas, in an attempt to undermine Ninigret's ties with the English, reported that the Niantic sachem was plotting with the Dutch to attack English settlements. Ninigret and Peter Stuyvesant, the Dutch governor, denied that they had any such intention, but the Long Island towns were not convinced. The English in East Hampton were even more concerned about rumors of Dutch intervention in Montauk affairs. They were alarmed about a rumor that the Dutch, who had been trading guns and powder to the Algonquians, had urged the Montauk to reject Wyandanch and follow a sachem allied with them (Osborne 188 7:3 1).

The East Hampton officials took defensive precautions. In April, 1653 they passed a resolution requiring all Indians to have a permit before entering the town. Guards were set with orders to shoot any Indian who did not identify himself when he approached the village (Osborne 1887:31). The East Hampton settlers were also concerned about protecting Wyandanch from internal and external threats to his status as a sachem. They supported Wyandanch against any attempt by rivals on Long Island to gain influence over the Montauk, but they did not take adequate precautions against the threat from his Niantic rival across Long Island Sound.

Ninigret may have made overtures to the Dutch, but it is unlikely that he would ever have joined in a war against the English. The Niantic sachem was much more interested in seeking some opportunity in the Dutch-English conflict to strengthen his position within the Algonquian communities in southern New England. As later events demonstrate, his primary interest was in eclipsing Wyandanch's influence over the eastern Long Island Indians. According to Roger Williams, Ninigret came to Governor Endicott of Massachusetts Bay early in the spring and asked if he could retaliate a ainst the Montauks for the execution of his agent who had attempted to kill Mandush (NPNER [1 0]: 442). Williams reported that Endicott gave "implicit" approval for Ninigret to "right himself" Endicott probably told Ninigret only that Massachusetts Bay would not interfere in Algonquian matters. The governor apparently had concluded, after the exhaustive inquiry that spring, that the alleged Niantic-Dutch alliance, if it existed, was directed against Uncas, not the English.

Later in the spring, perhaps during the green corn powwow, Ninigret attacked the Montauk village, killing thirty men and capturing fourteen prisoners, including two male sachems and Wyandarich's daughter.9 One captive was killed and his body burned in revenge for the similar treatment suffered by Ninigret's agent. The United Colonies investigated the incident and discussed an appropriate response at their September 1653 meeting. Connecticut, New Haven, and Plymouth voted to send troops against Ninigret, but Massachusetts Bay vetoed the declaration of war, stating that the English had no obligation to protect Wyandanch and that it was bad policy to get involved in a dispute between the Algonquian sachems (NPNER [10]:99).

Apparently Massachusetts Bay felt that Ninigret's gesture of submission in seeking permission for the attack had satisfied the crucial aspect of their relations with the Niantics. The proper policy now was to let the two sachems resolve the issue. Another attack followed in which several more Montauks were killed and a few captives were taken, but soon after this incident, Ninigret sent a woman to deliver a peace proposal to Wyandanch.

According to Ninigret, Wyandanch sent representatives to the village of a Narragansett sachem named Pessacus, where an agreement was negotiated in front of two English witnesses (NPNER [1 0]: 1 70). The -captives were released, said Ninigret in a later testimony, and Wyandanch ac.knowledged Ninigret as his chief sachem, with control over au Montauk land. It was the same arrangement that Mandush had made with Wyandanch in 1649. If these were the terrhs, they held serious implications for the towns of East Hampton and Southampton, because all of the unpurchased Shinnecock and Montauk lands would be under the control of Ninigret. The Niantic sachem might sell the property to purchasers in Rhode Island and Massachusetts Bay.

Wyandanch later repudiated Ninigret's account, stating that he had rejected Ninigret's terms and had, instead, sent him a ransom for the release of the captives. The ransom was paid, said Wyandanch, by Lion Gardiner, who "as a father ... giving us money and goods ... ransomed my daughter and friends."10 Given the clear implications of Ninigret's demands, Gardiner's "generosity" is easy to understand. According to an account by Roger Williams, the captives were restored "upon the mediation and desire of the English," but no other details are mentioned (NPNER [10]:442). The uncertainty about the agreement may have been a factor in a surprise attack launched by the Montauk against a party of Niantics visiting Block Island in September 1654. Ninigret's nephew, two Niantic sachems, and over thirty others were killed by Wyandanch's men. I I The raid may have been encouraged by the English towns on Long Island because it would dramatically demonstrate Wyandanch's independence from Ninigret.

Wyandanch: The Chief Sachem of 'English" Long Island

In the spring of 1655, Wyandanch had problems closer to home. A dispute arose between the Montauk and the settlers in East Hampton over the grazing habits of the English livestock. Cattle frequently invaded Montauk corn fields and destroyed food supplies needed to sustain the people through the winter. Wyandanch and two of his advisors, Sassakata and Pauquatoun, met with Gardiner and several representatives from East Ulampton to discuss this issue and to further clarify the larger questions of the unpurchased Montauk lands and Wyandanch's role as an alliance chief (Montauk Indian Deeds: Folder 3).

The conflict over grazing rights was resolved by requiring the English to build and maintain a fence to protect the Montauk fields. The English also promised to pay for damages caused by any livestock that got through the fence during the late spring and summer, when crops were in the ground. In return the Montauks allowed the English cattle and horses to graze at will after the fall harvest and until the time came for the spring planting. In addition, the English were granted access to the salt hay near the wetlands.

As for the threat that Ninigret posed to their rights to the unpurchased lands adjacent to the town, the settlers included a clause in the treaty prohibiting Wyandanch and his successors from selling their land to anyone other than the proprietors of East Hampton. And in addition to having supported Wyandanch's attack on Ninigret, the East Hampton officials gave the Montauk sachem a monopoly on the distribution of alcohol to his had attempted to kill Mandush (NPNER [10]:442). Williams reported that Endicott gave "implicit" approval for Ninigret to "right himself." Endicott probably told Ninigret only that Massachusetts Bay would not interfere in Algonquian matters. The governor apparently had concluded, after the exhaustive inquiry that spring, that the alleged Niantic-Dutch alliance, if it existed, was directed against Uncas, not the English.

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Apparently Massachusetts Bay felt that Ninigret's gesture of submission in seeking permission for the attack had satisfied the crucial aspect of their relations with the Niantics. The proper policy now was to let the two sachems resolve the issue. Another attack followed in which several more Montauks were killed and a few captives were taken, but soon after this incident, Ninigret sent a woman to deliver a peace proposal to Wyandanch.

According to Ninigret, Wyandanch sent representatives to the village of a Narragansett sachem named Pessacus, where an agreement was negotiated in front of two English witnesses (NPNER [10]:170). The -captives were released, said Ninigret in a later testimony, and Wyandanch ac.knowledged Ninigret as his chief sachem, with control over all Montauk land. It was the same arrangement that Mandush had made with Wyandanch in 1649. If these were the terms, they held serious implications for the towns of East Hampton and Southampton, because all of the unpurchased Shinnecock and Montauk lands would be under the control of Ninigret. The Niantic sachem might sell the property to purchasers in Rhode Island and Massachusetts Bay.

Wyandanch later repudiated Ninigret's account, stating that he had rejected Ninigret's terms and had, instead, sent him a ransom for the release of the captives. The ransom was paid, said Wyandanch, by Lion Gardiner, who "as a father ... giving us money and goods ... ransomed my daughter and friends."10 Given the clear implications of Ninigret's demands, Gardiner's "generosity" is easy to understand. According to an account by Roger Williams, the captives were restored "upon the mediation and desire of the English," but no other details are mentioned (NPNER [10]:442). The uncertainty about the agreement may have been a factor in a surprise attack launched by the Montauk against a party of Niantics visiting Block Island in September 1654. Ninigret's nephew, two Niantic sachems, and over thirty others were killed by Wyandanch's

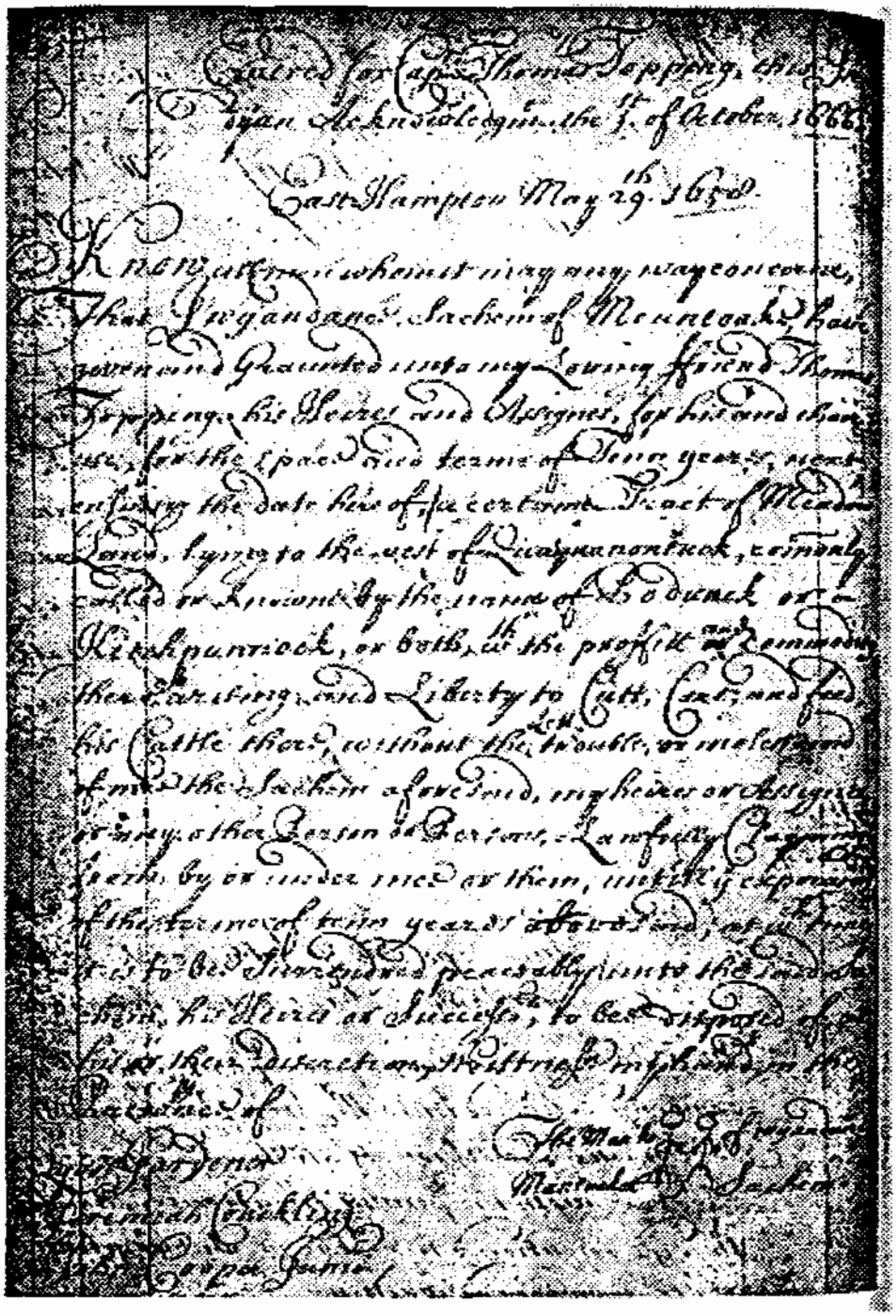
men. II The raid may have been encouraged by the English towns on Long Island because it would dramatically demonstrate Wyandanch's independence from Ninigret.

Wyandanch: The Chief Sachem of 'English" Long Island

In the spring of 1655, Wyandanch had problems closer to home. A dispute arose between the Montauk and the settlers in East Hampton over the grazing habits of the English livestock. Cattle frequently invaded Montauk corn fields and destroyed food supplies needed to sustain the people through the winter. Wyandanch and two of his advisors, Sassakata and Pauquatoun, met with Gardiner and several representatives from East Hampton to discuss this issue and to further clarify the larger questions of the unpurchased Montauk lands and Wyandanch's role as an alliance chief (Montauk Indian Deeds: Folder 3).

The conflict over grazing rights was resolved by requiring the English to build and maintain a fence to protect the Montauk fields. The English also promised to pay for damages caused by any livestock that got through the fence during the late spring and summer, when crops were in the ground. In return the Montauks allowed the English cattle and horses to graze at will after the fall harvest and until the time came for the spring planting. In addition, the English were granted access to the salt hay near the wetlands.

As for the threat that Ninigret posed to their rights to the unpurchased lands adjacent to the town, the settlers included a clause in the treaty prohibiting Wyandanch and his successors from selling their land to anyone other than the proprietors of East Hampton. And in addition to having supported Wyandanch's attack on Ninigret, the East Hampton officials gave the Montauk sachem a monopoly on the distribution of alcohol to his people. East Hampton ruled that no Indian may purchase liquor without a -writine ticket" from Wyandanch (Osborne 1887:81). The English also made sure that Ninigret could not regain a military advantage over Wyandanch: they commissioned an armed sloop, under the command of Southold settler John Youngs, to patrol the route across the sound. Youngs was empowered to block any attempt by Ninigret to bring his men across the sound "by taking, sinking, and destroying so many of his canoes ... as shall come within your power" (Ales 19 79:5 7; NPNER [1 0]: 15 1). Youngs maintained the blockade for a year and a half and was paid 153 pounds by the United Colonies. In contrast, the missionary John Eliot was paid a yearly stipend of only fifty pounds that same session for his "Indian work" (NPNER [101:167). The English also sent Wyandanch some lead, presumably to cast into musket balls (NPNER [10]:175). Few Long Island sachems would challenge openly any leader who could draw upon this level of support from the English.



Wyandanch's "stick figure" signature (May 29, 1659) appears on several documents. The figures probably represent Wyandanch's close relationship with the English. From New York Secretary of State, Record of Deeds [2]:152(New York State Archives series A0453).

Ninigret, prevented from using traditional means to expand his influence, turned to the English institutions. He sent his agent, Newcom, to the United Colonies meeting in 1656 with several complaints against Vvyandanch (NPNER [1 0]: 169). Ninigret had carefully selected charges that he believed would impress the English. Newcom began by accusing Wyandanch of

murdering an Englishman named Drake in what must have been an unsolved crime. He next charged that, when Wyandanch attacked Ninigret on Block Island after the settlement, he broke the peace treaty that had resulted in the release of the Montauk prisoners. The third complaint concerned witchcraft, a matter that both cultures took very seriously. Wyandanch was said to have hired a witch to kill Uncas. This latter charge may have been related to the one Uncas himself brought against Wyandanch in 1650.

The United Colonies required Wyandanch to come to Plymouth for questioning. Ninigret and Uncas did not appear at the hearing. The witnesses for the witchcraft charge had either changed their account or did not appear, for no further action was taken. Newcom brought some witnesses who said that they heard an Indian named Wampeague confess that Wyandanch had hired him to kill Drake and steal his goods; one witness confirmed Newcom's charges, but Wampeague did not appear at the hearing. The commissioners dismissed the charge. Newcom then turned to the terms of the settlement between Wyandanch and Ninigret, stating that an Englishman named Robert Wescott had witnessed Wyandanch's surrender on Ninigret's terms, but Wescott did not appear to testify. That charge was also dismissed.

Ninigret's attempt at using the English court system did not work for him in this instance, but the incident provides insight into the developing patterns of accommodation taking place on the New England frontier. Alliance chiefs were becoming more adept at using European institutions to advance their own political agendas, and Newcom showed a great deal of ingenuity and understanding of English court procedures in his use of witnesses and presentation of the charges.

Newcom lost the case against Wyandanch, in part because the English on Long Island testified that the Montauk sachem was both innocent and a good and loyal friend of the settlers. Wyandanch, too, deserves some credit for the decision: his testimony, although not recorded, was so effective that, in addition to winning his case, he was given a respite from his tribute payments, which were four years overdue (NPNER [10]: 1 7 1).

In the spring of 1657, a serious conflict between settlers and Shinnecocks erupted in Southampton. Several houses were burned, apparently by rebellious Native American and African American servants. The town officials, in a panic, appealed to the Connecticut court at Hartford for aid. They were distressed, they said, "by reason of the insolent and insufferable outrage of some heathen upon that land and near that plantation" (Records of the Connecticut Particular Court 1928 [22]:175-76). On May 11, 1657, the Connecticut court heard their complaints and listened to the testimony of Wigwagub, a Shinnecock, who said that he had been hired to burn down Mrs. Howell's house by two men whom he identified as Awabag and Agagoneagu. Wigwagub said he was promised a gun and seven shillings, six pence. Another man, Auwegenum, had been present when Wigwagub was hired, but his role was not clear. Thesparse report in the Connecticut Particular Court records makes no mention of the motive or extent of the conspiracy. One possible cause may have been the destruction of Shinnecock planting fields by English livestock; the Shinnecocks had made this complaint to Wyandanch for several years prior to 1657.

Four days later, the court approved a carefully worded commission sending nineteen men armed with twenty-five pounds of powder and fifty pounds of shot to investigate the incident, under the

command of Major John Mason. Mason was told to go with "all convenient speed" to Southampton and meet first with the town magistrates, then with Wyandanch. He was instructed to find out what was done, when, and by whom (CPR 1 :295 .

These general orders were followed by detailed instructions about the procedures Mason was to follow. Perhaps fearing that too heavy a hand would provoke more violence, the court told Mason that he must explain his mission to Wyandanch and make certain the Montauk sachem fully understood why the Connecticut troops were there and what their orders were.

Mason, veteran of the Pequot War of twenty years earlier, was told that he must not act independently in an attempt to settle the conflict. If wyandanch was unw ' illing to help, Mason was to report back immediately (CPR [1]:295). If the Montauk sachem was willing to help but faced local opposition from his own community, Mason was to assist him with arms. The people responsible for the fire were to be sent to Hartford for trial. Once again, Mason was reminded not to take any independent action and 14make after any Indians in the woods" (CPR [1]:295). Clearly, colonial officials wanted the matter settled through the offices of the alliance chief, if possible.

Mason arrived to find that forty townsmen had been issued gunpowder in preparation for a conflict (Pelletreau 1874-1910 [1]:154-55). There is no record of Mason's activities in Southampton, but neither Wigwagub nor anyone else was brought to trial for the arson. The Shinnecocks agreed, undoubtedly with considerable reluctance, to accept an exorbitant fine of 700 pounds sterling to be paid over a seven-year period (NPNER [10]:180). Perhaps the evidence against the men accused by Wigwagub had proved inconclusive, or perhaps they were prominent men whom the community did not wish to surrender. For whatever reason, the issue was resolved by a determination of collective guilt. The sentence is an example of the cultural innovations that took shape during the early contact period; English trial procedures, intended to establish individual guilt and punishment, were often frustrated by cultural differences, as the Algonquians usually protected members by refusing to give them up or by'providing alibis.

Ironically the concept of collective guilt, so alien to the English legal system, was more in harmony with the Algonquian value system, where retribution was often exacted against an enemy people for the acts of individual members. The Southampton settlers wanted both punishment and some assurance that the acts of rebellion would cease. The fine was a convenient solution, as it allowed the Shinnecocks to protect the individuals responsible while forcing them into a debt servitude that could be used as of Shinnecock land in the future. The seven-year installment plan may have been viewed by the Shinnecocks as a form of yearly tribute.

Wyandanch was responsible for collecting the tribute and paying the Connecticut court because he had accepted control over the Shinnecocks after the murder of the English woman in 1649. The Montauk sachem demonstrated that the role of the alliance chief could be more than that of a passive conduit for English governance when he sent a representative with a written petition to the United Colonies session in Boston the following September to appeal the Connecticut court's sentence (NPNER [10]:180). His decision to go over the head of the Connecticut court and the articulation of his arguments indicated a growing familiarity with English legal institutions.

Wyandanch began by reporting that the Shinnecocks had sustained losses from English horses. Wyandanch was careful not to suggest that the arson was justified because he knew that this would offend the English and weaken his chances of winning the appeal.

Next, he discussed the facts of the arson case, and again was careful not to directly criticize Mason, who had just been elected as a commissioner from Connecticut. Wyandanch reported that Mason had not been fully informed. The houses were burned, said Wyandanch, by "a wicked Indian who wee heare desperately killed himselfe to prevent just execution; and partly by a mischievous Negar woman servant; far deeper in that capitall miscarriage then any or all of the Indians" (NPNER [10]:180). This account is most intriguing, whether true or false. If true, it raises some interesting questions about the African woman who was able to plan and carry out a conspiracy involving Shinnecock Indians. If false, it indicates that Wyandanch may have played astutely on English prejudices against Africans.

There are no records to verify either account of the arson. If Wyandanch's report was an invention, it was'well-suited to win support and gain a successful appeal. If the guilty Shinnecock was dead, and the plot had been planned and directed by an African servant, there was no justification for fining the Shinnecock community. The commissioners accepted Wyandanch's explanation, and with Mason's approval they acknowledge that the fine was excessive. The matter was returned to the Connecticu court with a recommendation that the sentence be reviewed.
When he submitted the petition, Wyandanch also sent seventy-eigh fathoms of wampum to the United Colonies' treasurer at New Haven t influence the commissioners (NPNER [10]:194). While the matter was pending before the Connecticut court, the town of Southampton paid twenty shillings to Mrs. Howell for damages suffered to her house and ten pounds to Major Mason for his part in protecting the town (Pelletreau 1874-1910 [1]:119). It seems clear that all of the damages done to the town could have been repaired with a small fraction of the fine; the fine was obviously intended to serve as a mechanism for social control.

The Connecticut court took no action until a year later, when they agreed to reduce the fine to 500 pounds over seven years (CPR [1]:31617). It was still an amount well beyond the means of the Shinnecocks to pay and left them in debt bondage to the English. Although the success of the appeal did little to change the actual impact of the fine on the Shinnecocks, it indicates that Wyandanch was becoming more involved in English political institutions.

Wyandanch's reputation and influence as an alliance chief was now recognized by all of the English settlers on Long Island. In 1657 Wyandanch negotiated land sales in Huntington (Street 1887: 10-1 1) and Mastic (Hutchinson 1887:2-3). His role as a certifying agent for the deeds sets an important precedent that the English hoped would bring some order to the process of land dispossession.

For their part, the English were beginning to realize just how useful a grand sachem could be. In the summer of 1657, according to testimony taken twenty years later, a dispute arose between the English settlers at Hempstead and the sachem Tackapousha about payments due under the 1643

deed. Wyandanch served as an arbitrator in an attempt to resolve the conflict, showing independence from the English by requiring additional payments to Tackapousha and to Mangobe, a sachem from Rockaway (Hicks 1896-1904 [1]:312-13). This indicates a growing sense that Wyandanch, in his role as chief sachem, could provide a mechanism to avoid unnecessary conflict and endless litigation. The endorsement of the "chief sachem" was becoming accepted by the English settlers as a requirement for the purchase of Algonquian land. Near the end of March, 1658 Wyandanch sent his trusted adviser, Cockenoe, to Hempstead with his authorization to mark out the town boundary (Town of North Hempstead Court Proceedings 1657-60:91).

In one instance Wyandanch overreached his authority: he prohibited the Pequots from coming to Long Island to gather shells for wampum. The Pequots, realizing that traditional means of resolving such grievances were no longer possible, brought their case to the United Colonies and asked that their ancient privileges be restored. The commissioners gave notice to Wyandanch that "the Pequots ... bee permitted to freely fetch shells there ... as formerly they had done" (NPNER [1 0]: 199-200). They took the opportunity to humble Wyandanch further by reminding him that he was four years behind in tribute payments.

In spite of these minor setbacks, Wyandanch knew that local sachems had to acknowledge his authority when English interests were in harmony with his. This was demonstrated in January 1659, when Wyandanch was called in to settle a dispute over land claims between the Indians at Corchaug and the English at Southold, on the north fork of Long Island. The record of the meeting was kept by the Southold Town clerk, who does not mention the names of the Corchaug Indians or their specific complaint. All we know is that Wyandanch stood forth and proclaimed in a loud voice that the land on the north fork had always been his and that he and his brothers had sold it to the English. Wyandanch was referring to the deed made with Eaton and Goodyear in 1649. According to the clerk, the Corchaug delegation stood silently and accepted Wyandanch's statement.

That same month, Wyandanch brought suit against Jeremy Daily for damage done to his "Great Cannow" (Osborne 1887:152). The vessel, probably used for trips across the sound, may have been thirty to forty feet long; canoes this large were observed by John Smith and John Winthrop. This must have been one of the earliest trials involving an Indian plaintiff and an English defendant in colonial history.

Lion Gardiner testified for Wyandanch against Daily, who was charged with negligence. Daily and Anthony Waters, another East Hampton man, had repaired the canoe, and Daily was given permission to take some goods over to Gardiner's Island with Gardiner's son, David. The two men apparently met with bad weather and did not take the time to secure the canoe when they came ashore on the island. Gardiner met the men, and when he asked them if they had pulled up the canoe, they replied that there was time for that later. According to Gardiner, he took them back to take proper care of the canoe, but the weather was so bad that they could do nothing. When they were finally able to reach the vessel, it had sustained considerable damage and was full of water. The court ruled for the plaintiff and awarded Wyandanch ten shillings for damages. Daily also had to pay one pound and one shilling in court costs.

addition to this trial, he was involved in eight land transactions and two sales of the rights to beached whales. 12 Prior to that he had negotiated five deeds in 1658, three in 1657, and two with the East Hampton settlers in 1655 and 1648. The sharp increase in land sales, of course, reflects the growth in English population on Long Island. A related factor may have been the devastating epidemic, which according to Lion Gardiner took the lives of nearly two-thirds of the Algonquian population on Long Island (Gardiner in Orr 1897:146).

The last three documents were signed jointly by Wyandanch and his son, suggesting concern about the sachem's longevity. The last deed bearing the marks of Wyandanch, his wife, and his son, Wyancombone, was signed on July 14, 1659. Executed shortly before his death, this document reads more like a will than a deed. Wyandanch granted a tract of land in what is now Smithtown to Lion Gardiner to repay "much kindness of him, not only by counsell and advise in our properties but in our great extremytie, when wee were almost swallowed upp by our enemies, then wee say he appeared to us not only as a friend, but as a father, in giving us his monie and goods, whereby wee defended ourselves, and ransomed my daughter and friends, and wee say and know that by his meanes we had great comfort and relief from the most honorable of the English nation heare about us." The land, said Wyandanch, was the only thing of value that he had left to reward Gardiner for his "fatherly love, care and charge" for the past twenty-four years (Paltstits 1910 [2]:408-9).

Wyandanch died later that year. According to Gardiner, the sachem was poisoned, but he gives no further information about the suspected assassin, nor does he suggest a possible motive (Gardiner in Orr 1897:46). The office of grand sachem collapsed with the death of Wyandanch. The sachem's wife and son died shortly afterwards, and his daughter, Quashawam, was named sunksquaw over the Montauks and Shinnecocks by the towns of East Hampton and Southampton in 1663, but no attempt was made to assert her authority over the other Long Island sachems. The following year the English conquered New Netherland and established a centralized colonial administration over the towns of Long Island.

The new English governor, Richard Nicolls, saw no need for a chief sachem in the new system. Nicolls assumed the responsibility for supervising all Indian land purchases, and ruled that the title of grand sachem was no longer valid. He issued a resolution stating that "every sachem shall keep his particular property over his people as formerly" (Albany Deed

Conclusion

Wyandanch spent the last twenty-two years of his life moving adroitly between two cultures. Having witnessed the destruction of the Pequots in 1637, he concluded that military resistance was futile and proceeded to pursue his own interests within the English sphere. In order to expand his influence in the Algonquian communities, Wyandanch obtained the necessary access to English trade goods by agreeing not to harm English persons or property and by accepting English jurisdiction over all Montauks accused of such acts.

Wyandanch gave up a measure of his sovereignty, but he rapidly increased his stature in Algonquian society on eastern Long Island. He served the English by resolving two major disputes between the Shinnecocks and the town of Southampton, but in the process Wyandanch gained control over Shinnecock lands. Although the English were initially reluctant to provide Wyandanch with military protection, they finally agreed to finance an armed patrol blocking Ninigret's route across the sound to Montauk. This show of English support enabled Wyandanch to expand his influence over Algonquian villages throughout eastern Long Island. During the last two years of his life he supervised nearly all of the major land sales as far west as Hempstead and enriched himself in the process.

Another important aspect of Wyandanch's success was his growing familiarity with English legal institutions, which he used to advance his own interests. His rivals, Uncas and Ninigret, became equally adept at operating within the English system. The modern descendants of the eastern Algonquians continue to press their interests in federal, state, and local courts. Contemporary Shinnecocks, Pequots, and Narragansetts have all developed extensive contractual relations with outside public and private agencies, enabling them to maintain and strengthen their Native American identities.