

Archeological Society of Virginia Massanutten Chapter

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POINTS



CONNECTIONS: The Topping Family and Long Island Native Americans - Part 2

Submitted by George Lott

Native Americans did everything within their power to accommodate the newcomers to their world. They never really understood the concept of land ownership and entered into deeds that reflected their view that the agreements were temporary leases rather than absolute dispossessions. (Strong) This was generally not the case with the early white settlers. As Strong states "The Montauketts, for example, were allowed to remain on the land and to continue hunting and fishing there as they had always done. In their minds little had changed. The English were granted permission to cultivate the land around their villages, but they did not appear, at first, to need very much space. (Strong) For this reason Native peoples would often enter into multiple such leases on the same property.

Initially, the Toppings seem to have operated within the spirit of the native understanding. In 1658, for example, Wyandanch, a wise Montaukett sachem who was not fooled by English intentions, leased to Thomas Topping a small track of meadowland near present day Westhampton Beach, to be surrendered peacefully to the sachem in ten years. It also included a provision for the sachem and his family to receive a regular income for the term of the agreement. (Strong) According to Dr. Strong this transaction was unique in that it guaranteed a continuing return of income without a final disposition of the property.

It would be nice to conclude from this that the Toppings were always involved in fair dealings with the native population and were not involved in the exploitation. Sadly, this was not the case. In 1662, the same Thomas Topping made a purchase of land from a Shinnecock Indian woman by the name of Weany. Known as the Topping Purchase even to this day, it included a vast area surrounding the town of Southampton. (In family lore I had always been told that we once owned much of what is known today as the Hamptons of Long Island and this seems to support that story.) There was only one problem. The land had previously passed through the hands of two owners and was, at the time Thomas was making his deal, claimed by the town

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2009 State and Chapter Dues

Submitted by Tom Mizell

As 2009 has quickly arrived, we are gently reminded that "Dues for ASV are now due." Please check your records and start the New Year with a smile and show of support for both ASV and your local chapter. Annual Membership Renewal Dues were due **January 31, 2009**. Prompt remittance ensures that members continue to receive the Quarterly Bulletin and Newsletter. Other benefits include major discounts on all Society publications and participation in Society supervised archeological activities in the field.

There is a **Membership Renewal Form** that is included in the most recent ASV mailing. The form has typically been available on the ASV website as well. You may submit the **form with payment** directly to William A. Thompson, Jr. Treasurer ASV. Mr. Thompson's address is provided at the end of this article. A second option is for you to submit both the Massanutten Chapter and State dues to me. I will be glad to forward the State dues to Mr. Thompson for you. If you opt for this alternative please provide the completed **Membership Renewal Form** and the funds to me at your earliest convenience. I will have a stock of the forms available soon. Attached with the minutes is the new Chapter Membership Application. Please fill out and bring to the next meeting or when you pay dues.

Chapter Dues are \$5.00 (Don't forget to fill out the attached MCASV Chapter Membership Application).

State dues vary as shown below:

Regular Membership Dues	\$25.00
Senior (65 and older)	\$20.00
Student	\$15.00
Life	\$350.00
Sustaining	\$50.00
Additional family members	\$ 2.00 (please provide their names)

For those opting to submit directly to Mr. Thompson (ASV Treasurer) his mailing address follows:

Treasurer, ASV
536 Summit Ridge Drive
Chesapeake, VA 23322

The Massanutten Chapter ASV appreciates your attention to this matter and we look forward to your participation in the life of our Chapter in 2009!

March Birthdays

March 7 Trisha Moust-Blosser

Please complete the MCASV Membership Application and submit to the MCASV Treasurer, so we have your birthdates for the newsletter.



Certification Program Opportunities

Submitted by Carole Nash

The following is information on upcoming certification opportunities:

Historic and Prehistoric Lab Work: Artifact processing and analysis from several 19th century historic home sites and prehistoric base camps. M, W, F schedule -- set your time! Contact Carole (432-6864 or nashcl@jmu.edu) for parking information and directions to her new JMU lab space.

****2008 Field School and Volunteer Opportunities****

There are a number of opportunities available throughout the state for Certification members and Chapter volunteers. Check out the MCASV website at www.mcasv.org for a full listing of the programs, their web-sites, and contact information.

Department of Historic Resources (DHR) Volunteer Program

The DHR Fall Field School has ended for the Fall 2008 season, but volunteer days can be arranged during the week for anyone interested. Prehistoric and historic artifact processing, cataloguing, data entry, documentary research, and outreach activities are some examples of what work is available. Please contact Chief Curator Dee DeRoche at dee.deroche@dhv.virginia.gov or (804) 367-2323 x134 for an application and to set up day(s) to volunteer if you are interested.

Golden Ball Tavern Site *NEW*

Join DHR in doing historic excavation at this site in Petersburg from June 17-July 19 (Wednesdays through Saturdays). Applications for participation are due May 1. Contact Chris Stevenson at DHR for more information and to get an application (chris.stevenson@dhv.virginia.gov or (804) 367-2323 ext. 132).

MCASV March 4, 2009 Meeting Agenda

The MCASV monthly meeting will commence at 7:00 at the Bridgewater Town Hall.

I. Call to Order

II. Welcome to Guests

III. Program: Trisha Maust-Blosser, MCASV member and former curator of the King William Regional Arts Center, Abingdon. "Historic Pottery Traditions of Southwest Virginia"

IV. Secretary's Report

V. Treasurer's Report

VI. Newsletter Editor's Report

VII. New Business

VIII. Certification Program Report

IX. Morris Pottery Kiln

X. Announcements

XI. Adjournment

Upcoming Events

Mar. 4, 2009 MCASV Monthly Meeting, Bridgewater Town Hall, 7:00 p.m.
Program: "Historic Pottery Traditions of Southwest Virginia"
presented by Trisha Maust-Blosser

Apr. 1, 2009 MCASV Monthly Meeting, Bridgewater Town Hall, 7:00 p.m.
Program: Michael Pulice, Architectural Historian, Virginia Department of
Historic Resources Roanoke Regional Office. "Bricks and Brickmaking in
Virginia"

May 6, 2009 MCASV Monthly Meeting, Bridgewater Town Hall, 7:00 p.m.
Program: Patrick O'Neill, ASV President. Topic TBA

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of Southhampton. The town claimed that it was no longer legal for an individual to make land deals with the Indians due to an earlier ruling by the colonial governor. The courts upheld the town's position and Topping was compensated for his inconvenience. The only real losers were the Shinnecock's who received the customary nominally valued trade goods but lost any claim to the land. (Strong, Topping)

Once Native Americans were stripped of their lands, they really had little to bargain with except their labor. By the 1600 they had become accustomed to European trade goods with which they couldn't do without. As a result many entered the colonial labor market as whalers. This was a highly profitable business producing over 2000 lbs of sterling a year for the eastern Long Island communities. (Strong)

Initially, Native Americans seemed to have fared better in the labor market than they had as land dealers. The English were dependent on them because of their skill and courage. The whaling took place between November and March of each year when the waters around Long Island were extremely cold and dangerous. This meant almost certain death to any whaler thrown from the small whaleboats used to harpoon the animals. (Strong)

This competitive advantage was short lived. The whaling captains and owners, seeking to limit the Indians' earnings from the harvest, appealed to the royal governor to set a limit on their earnings and also to make that payment in the form of a credit line. (Sounds familiar) To make matters worse for the Indians, the owners also made the determinations of the annual value of the whale harvest, without input from Native Americans. (Strong)

There is circumstantial evidence that my family was very much a part of this scheme. They were whale ship owners and operators, and there are records to show that they employed local Indians at this time on a credit basis. (Strong)

According to Strong, the native peoples of Long Island suffered even worse humiliations in the form of indentured servitude and even slavery but somehow managed to survive and thrive. This is chronicled in another of his books entitled *"We are Still Here!" The Algonquian Peoples of Long Island Today*.

To answer the most obvious question, my grandmother inherited nothing from the Topping estate. What little she had was consumed in raising five children in a Philadelphia row house during the Depression on a carpenter's salary. It's sad, however, to think of the greed that motivated those early colonists during the formative years of our country and sadder still that my family was part of it.

Massanutten Chapter of the
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We're on the web
www.mcasv.org

We Need Your Help in Contributing Articles!

Your article could be here!

Please help by contributing articles each month.

The deadline for any information to be included in the newsletter will be the TWENTIETH of each month. Please have articles sent to Laura and Jeff by this time.

Your article could be here! Please email the Newsletter Editors at roderla@aol.com (Laura Roder) and atlatlist@comcast.net (Jeff Good) if you are submitting an article to the MCASV Newsletter.

