

# A Niantic Review

Many may wonder or speculate, ~~as~~ the writer has often done, what became of the Niantic Tribe, or <sup>Why</sup> Niantic, for with the passing of both Niantics, the name appears to be completely erased from the map. The Pequots were the Mohicans from out beyond the Hudson river, and they were either driven away, or decided to wander and seek new territory, we are to realize that there were no state lines drawn at this period. We gather from certain authorities, that the Pequots came through what is now Western Massachusetts, and we are to infer that they had scouts out, spying out the country.

The eastern part of Connecticut on the shore apparently looked very good to them, and they seemed to have decided that they wanted it. This part of the country was peopled by several small tribes, including the Niantics, and all more or less confederated with the Narragansett Tribe.

We are told that the Pequots were very fierce and warlike, for they came down and drove all of these tribes out and took possession. What appears to be the better theory of the two Niantics, is that the Pequots entered the country in such a manner as to split the former Niantic Tribe, driving part West, where in time they seem to have located near Lyme, Connecticut, where the name Niantic was known for many years. "We have not the exact data

at hand." The other part of this tribe appears to have been driven east, and located at, or near Bradford, formerly Niantic. With the formidable Pequots between, the Niantics were never re-united. Ninigret alias Janemo must have been very young at this time, and we can only speculate as to whether he was old enough to be a Sachem or not. Many histories mention Sassacus as Sachem of the Pequots, but looking backward to an earlier period we find Wapegoot as Sachem. We are not told how long the Pequots were in coming, it may have been months or several years. In all probability it was Wapegoot who led his tribe into the new country, Wapegoot was slain by the Dutch.

In the early days of the Pequot disturbances we find the Niantics more or less allied with the Pequots, for when the traders Stone and his companion were killed by the river, we are informed that both Ninigret, and Sassacus shared in the plunder. Alvin G. Weeks, who has apparently made extensive research, casts some doubt upon Ninigret being of real Narragansett lineage, still facts have been gathered that Ninigret was a brother-in-law, also a nephew of Cononius, also Miantononi's wife has said that he was her uncle. "The readers may

draw their own conclusions." It is probably not clearly known whether the Indians had any uncles or nephews in their own classification, until the English came, for we read that cousins were called brothers, and most older men were called fathers. Late writers have called Miantonomi a son of Cononius, but the earlier records refer to him as a nephew. In the early days of the English in the country the Niantics were very much inter-married with the Narragansett Tribe, and their allies, until about the tenth month of what is known as King Philip's War. We gather from encyclopedias that the Niantics kept out of King Philip's War, but referring to Arnold's history of Rhode Island, we find the Niantics with the English army, led by Catapuzet, son of Ninigret. The Niantics were the most active in pursuing Cononchet, the Narragansett Sachem, when he was captured, and they also burned the quarters of his body. Quinapen who's father had been Sachem, succeeded Cononchet, and was the last Sachem of the old regime of the Narragansett Tribe. Quinapen was re-captured, court-martialed and shot. There were two papooses by his younger wife, but we hear no more about them.

Cononius died a peaceful death in body, if not in mind, and was laid lovingly away with much ceremony, but his successors all appear to have died a violent death.

Persecution was the order of the day, and the Narragansetts and Wampanoags were more or less scattered, and wanderers, finally finding a partial haven in Charlestown, where they seem to have been allowed to remain, near the Niantic Tribe. Ninigret though much older than the former Sachems with the exception of Cononius, appears as the only possibly blood heir to the Narragansett Sachemdom, which he was allowed to assume. Many neutral Indians were slain, but from a fore-going statement we find that Ninigret was not neutral. You will find the Niantics and the Wampanoags with the descendants of the Narragansett Tribe, for it was but natural that they should come together as one body. "Niantic is also Nehantic"

Fred V. Brown