

JUNE

MamaroneckHistoricalSociety.org

| MamaroneckHistory@gmail.com

Members Monthly Get-togethers!

Third Tuesday of every month
(except January, July & August)
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm at
Woman's Club of
Mamaroneck, 504 Cortlandt
Avenue.

First we have a group
discussion of current research
projects and local mysteries in
Mamaroneck.

We'll break after that, stretch
& grab some refreshments.

Then we take our seats for the
"feature" presentation, usually
with a PowerPoint, leaving
lots of time for Q & A.

Fall Presentations

Tuesday, September 19th

**Smugglers, Scoundrels &
Landwindlers: A Story
From the Beginning of
Mamaroneck.**

Did you know that there was
a secret conspiracy to steal the
three necks of Mamaroneck
from John Richbell?

From **Peter M Fellows**
based upon his research for
his book, **Merchant Trader.**



June 20, 2023, Member Get-together

At each Get-together there's always something new to discover and some new mystery to uncover!

We talked about the upcoming presentations for the Fall, the restoration of Florence/Powell led by James Maver, and the Trail of Historic Signs project that Dennis Cucinella is working on.

This month the feature presentation was *Myths & Mystakes About Early Mamaroneck*. I've included one myth in this issue.

It was well-attended with 9 guests, 4 of which became new Members. While this is a Member Get-together, we do open it up to *prospective* new members.



Tuesday, October 17th

The Weaver & the Boatman:
A Story about Mamaroneck during the Revolution.

1816 School House

Just a reminder that (thanks to John Pritts) the School House is open for visits on the last Sunday of each month, from 1:00 - 4:00pm.

You can make a difference as a Member!

Some folk want to be involved. Some folk just want to support us.

When you become a 2023 Member no matter how much you participate or donate, it all helps!

Minimum Suggested 2023 Member Donations: \$25 (\$20 for Seniors & Students - \$40 family)

Checks payable to "The Mamaroneck Historical Society"

Mailing Address: **The Mamaroneck Historical Society, PO Box 776, Mamaroneck, NY 10543**

or online at

2023 Membership Donations



The Restoration of the Florence/Powell Burying Ground -

The burying ground is situated on the side of the Palmer Avenue Campus of Mamaroneck High School.

James Maver and his family worked on clearing the overgrowth in the burying ground. There are now no vines, and the stone wall is visible.

At his request, the Town came and removed a dead tree, and pulled up a large rock from where it had rolled to a position closer to the stone wall.

He found a metal gate with the initial "H" on it, which (according to oral tradition) originally comes from the one-time neighboring property.

A neighbor, Elizabeth Atchison offered to supply James with two new trees. And one of the grounds crew at Mamaroneck High School has agreed to keep an eye on the grounds.

James also sourced discarded wrought iron fencing. He spoke with a professional who agreed to volunteer his time to repair the gate and cut the fence to match.

As with the restoration of the De Lancey Burying Ground that we undertook, these types of projects take a long time, tremendous dedication, and funds.

You can help by becoming a 2023 Member!



Some Member Photos From Our June 20th GET-TOGETHER



What does 'Mamaroneck' mean?

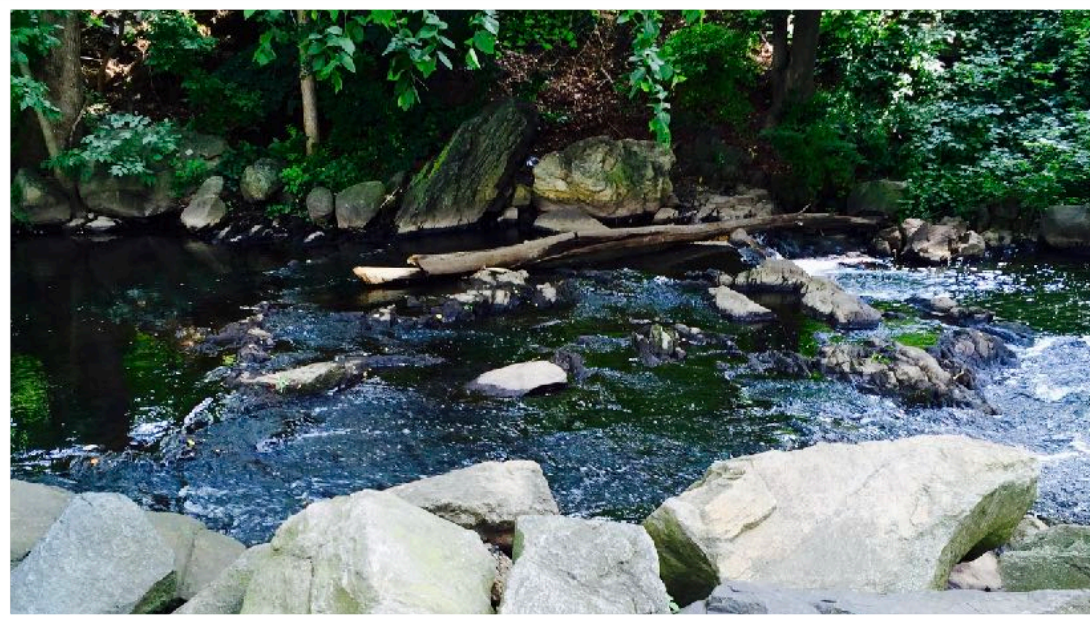
The first thing to know about the Indian word 'Mamaroneck' is that it was the name of the *River*. It was not the name of any *place*.

The myth is that it means "*Where the fresh water falls into the salt.*"

The phrase refers to a spot on the river (approximately where Tompkins Bridge is) where Indians traveling the Secarah ('shore path') could cross it over a ledge of stone.

At that point, the ledge dropped off, deep enough that at high tide, when the salt water of the Sound and Harbor flowed up the river, it stopped at the ledge. Thus the fresh water of the Mamaroneck River would fall into the salt water from the Sound.

But that phrase was *not* from a translation of the Indian word 'Mamaroneck.'



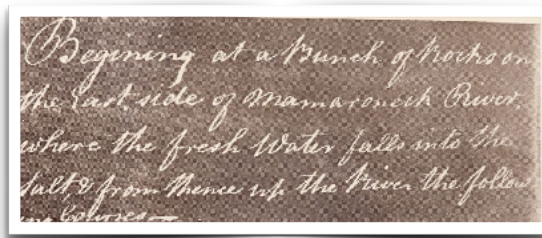
It is poetic and it does sound like something we might imagine a 'noble savage' naming this long lost spot on our river, but unfortunately it has a much less romantic origin.

In 1664 the English forced the Dutch to leave New Netherland and King Charles II of England gave it to his brother James, the Duke of York.

Connecticut was freaked out because the King had just promised New Netherland to *them*.

New Netherland had always claimed most of Connecticut as theirs, and now the King had given it to his royal brother. They had to figure out how to at least hold onto the land they claimed as being part of the Colony of Connecticut.

So they negotiated a border at the Mamaroneck River, and the government sent an unnamed civil servant to go to survey the border.



That bureaucrat determined that...

"... a lyne drawne from ye east point of Syde where ye fresh water falls into ye salt, at high water marke, north northwest to ye line of ye Massachusetts be ye westerne bounds of ye said Colony of Connecticut."

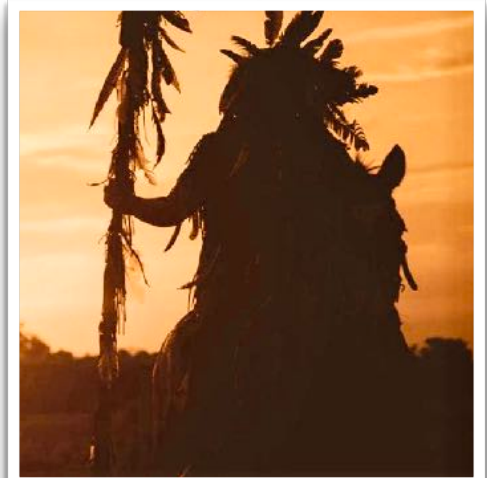
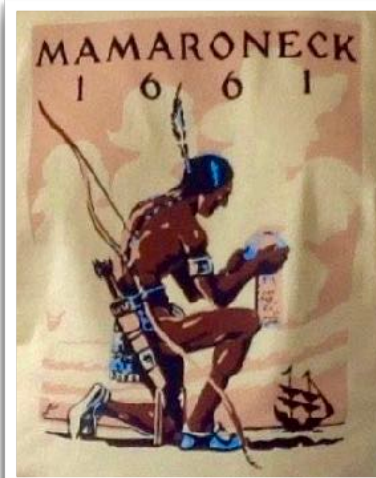
And one century later in 1774 the same phrase was used in the *Journal Book of Commissioners* for a survey of Caleb Heathcote's Manor. (Above image)

There is nothing to suggest that either surveyor was giving a translation of 'Mamaroneck.'

But what if we flipped the script.

How would you say "where the fresh water falls into the salt" in the language of the Indians who lived here?

In 1974, Philip Reisman Sr. of the Larchmont Historical Society, in 1974 referencing an 18th century dictionary (Lenni Lenape to English) compiled by the Reverend David Zayas Berger, a missionary, says that English phrase would translate back into Lenni Lenape as **'Kschieopectatpennum biskiń k'** - so not quite the same as 'Mamaroneck.'



Could the river have been named after a Weckquaesgeek Sachem - Mamarunock?

According to Doris Darlington Cohen of the Ardsley Historical Society, "A chief called Mamaroneck or 'limping will' or Mahmoanuck, which last means, 'he assembles the people,' lived in Dobbs Ferry or Weckquasguck, until that village was destroyed by the Dutch in January 1644 under Lt. Baxter and Sgt. Cook. He later resided at Kicktawanc or Croton River and appeared in Fort Amsterdam in April, 1644 to sue for peace for his people."

And here's one of the challenges of doing historical research. "Limping Will" was another Indian usually called Marmaking, who lived in the Rye area. I can find no record of such the raid mentioned but at about the same

time the Dutch destroyed a winter village of up to 700 people usually described as Siwanoy and Weckquaesgeek, at Pound Ridge village.

Mamarunock did not go to Fort Amsterdam in April of 1644 to sue for peace, but he did go to Stamford in Connecticut.

“April 16, 1644. Of the arrival at Stamford of Mamrunock, Wapgaurin, chiefs of the Kitchawank, Mongochkonnone, Pappenoharrauw, of Wiechquaesgeek and Nohcpeem, together with the Wappings, have come to Stamford to solicit Captain Undersell to apply to the Governor of New Netherland for peace...”

(Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York)

So to what extent can I trust Cohen’s research?

Even in this quotation from an original document, Mamarunock is identified as a chief of the Kitchawanc. Elsewhere he is referred to as a Weckquaesgeek. At least Cohen’s story gives a rationale for why the recorder thought he was a Kitchawanc.

Do we know this sachem’s name means?

The Indians didn’t spell out their words for us in English letters. (Wouldn’t have helped that much because we have no symbols for some of the pronunciations!)

They spoke them and we spelt them as we heard them. This resulted in numerous variant spellings of many Indian words including ‘Mamaroneck.’

But basically it has two components:

The beginning sound of something like ‘mama’ and the end sound of something like ‘eck.’

James Hammond Trumbull in his book *Indian Names, Places, Etc., in and on the Borders of Connecticut*, states that ‘mama’ means ‘to bring [or gather, or assemble] together.’

William Wallace Tooker in his book *The Indian Place Names on Long Island and Islands Adjacent With Their Probable Significations* says that the suffix ‘ock’ or ‘ack’ means ‘land’ or ‘place.’

Then if the suffix is pronounced ‘uck’ by the Indians instead of either ‘ock’ or ‘ack’ then the meaning changes from ‘land’ to ‘river.’

These find differences in pronunciation would probably be lost upon the early record keepers.

So perhaps the best candidate for the meaning of the word ‘Mamaroneck’ as used for our home is *“The place where we gather.”*

