



INTRODUCTION

Native people have been living here in the Connecticut River Valley of western Massachusetts for more than 10,000 years. This is the homeland of many First People, all related to one another.

They are called the Sokoki, Pocumtuck, Nonotuck, Woronoco, and Agawam.

This homeland includes the towns of modern-day Northfield, south to Longmeadow, from Holland in the east, and to Rowe in the west.

There are many other tribes who visited and still visit this Native homeland. Among them are the Abenaki, Nipmuck, Wampanoag, Narragansett, Mohegan, Pequot, Mohican, and Mohawk. These tribes are recognized today by states or the federal government as sovereign nations.

Historically, tribes gathered in this valley to trade, to fish, to plant, to participate in sacred ceremonies, to reunite with family, and perhaps to find a spouse.

Where are the Pocumtuck, Nonotuck, Woronoco and Agawam peoples today? During the wars waged in the colonial period, they were driven from this valley. They blended into the Abenaki, Nipmuck, and Mohican tribes across the Northeast. When danger passed, some came back to their homeland in the Connecticut River Valley. Often, they integrated into the settler communities. Some were herbal doctors, basket makers, and carvers. They dressed like their European descendant neighbors, but they kept their culture alive.

Much has been written about the last of the Indigenous people in the Northeast....that they are gone and extinct.

This is not true.

Native people had children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Their spirits, their memory, and their descendants are here living among us.

We invite you to listen to some of their stories



To learn about the Native history of your town, identify whose Tribal homeland your town is in. That Tribe's history is your town's history. Town lines are arbitrary borders that do not reflect traditional Native homeland or land use.

