



# **Who Were The Quinnipiacs?**

## **School Program**

### **New Haven Museum**

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Grade Level: K-12

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## Who Were the Quinnipiacs? K-12 School Program

**Grades:** K-12

### **Program Goals**

Students will:

- Study the history and traditions of the Quinnipiacs
- Learn about the Quinnipiacs' role in the early history of the New Haven Colony
- Examine the treaty that the Quinnipiacs signed with the colonists
- Investigate the relationship between the Quinnipiacs and the colonists

### **Connecticut State Curriculum Connections:**

**Social Studies** (Common Core State Standards, 2010):

- Grades K-4: 1b, 1e, 1f, 1g, 2a-d, 3a, 3f, 3g, 4a, 4c, 4d, 4e, 11g
- Grades 5-8: 1d, 1e, 1f, 1g, 2a-d, 3a, 3f, 3g, 3j, 4a, 4c, 4d, 4e, 11g
- Grades 9-12: 1d, 1e, 1f, 1g, 2a-d, 3a, 3f, 3g, 3j, 4a, 4c, 4d, 4e, 11g

**Objectives for the Teacher:** This guide is designed to give students background about the Quinnipiac tribe as a people as well as an understanding of their vital role in helping the New Haven Colony to survive. Through the activities the students will face questions about how they were treated and to consider this crucial aspect of the beginnings of New Haven.

## **Background on the Quinnipiacs**

This area of Connecticut was first populated between 10,000 and 7,000 B.C. The only evidence of those origins survives in stone artifacts, with the first artifacts from New Haven dated to around 6,000 B.C. While no one is sure if these are from the Quinnipiacs themselves, evidence suggests that they were living in the area for centuries before contact with Europeans. Rough estimates say that they were about 250 to 460 strong at the time of contact with Europeans. Their land was roughly 300 square miles, including current day New Haven, Cheshire, Prospect, Wallingford, Meriden, Branford as well as several other outlying towns.

The Quinnipiacs lived in wigwams that were built by the women of the tribe. Much of the work in the village was done by women, who controlled most of the household goods and supplies. Quinnipiac society, like other Algonquin tribes, was matriarchal. After marriage, the young man would move in to the young woman's household and was absorbed into her family. They did not live in longhouses, as did many other northeastern tribes.

### **Transportation**

For transportation, the Quinnipiacs relied on footpaths and waterways. To navigate waterways, they built dugout canoes. Usually built to fit 4 or 5, some canoes were big enough to fit 18 people. They used canoes to travel up the Quinnipiac River (54 miles to Farmington) and to fishing stations off the islands. For travel on land, they relied on an intricate system of footpaths, which ran across all of their extended domain. These paths followed water or the most practical routes, which is why many modern roads like Rt. 1, 5, and 10 sit right on top of ancient Native American trails. Some men, known as runners, served as messengers, sometimes for Europeans as well. They could cover as much as 100 miles in a single day.

### **Work**

Hunting took up a good part of a Quinnipiac man's time. Hunting territories were inland, away from the planting grounds near the shore. To help hunting, they would burn the underbrush and create meadows so that it was more difficult for the animals to hide. The main weapon was the bow and arrow, which was larger than the ones used in the West. Spears, tomahawks, war clubs, and shields were mainly used for battles with other tribes, or as tools to skin and prepare animals after the hunt. The Quinnipiac diet was supplanted by roots, wild berries, nuts and fruits that were collected by women. Because of the area's rich soil, the Quinnipiacs were more sedentary than many of the northern tribes, taking advantage of a long growing season that lasted for 195 days. The English tended to look down on the Quinnipiacs for many reasons, including the amount of work done by the women, which made them see the Quinnipiac men as lazy.

Before 1622, wampum beads were worn as sacred jewelry by sachems and during pow wows by medicine men. That year, coastal Native Americans, with encouragement from the Dutch, began to use

metal tools to make more wampum, which they started to use to trade for beaver pelts, deer skins and meat with interior tribes.

The Dutch, while never settling in the area, so greatly increased the beaver demand for pelts that, by around 1630, when the British arrived, the population of beavers had been practically decimated.

### **Pequots**

Before the Pequot War in 1636-1637, the Quinnipiacs had control of as much as half of Connecticut. By 1634 epidemics decimated the Connecticut Algonquins, which was a major factor in the British deciding to colonize the area. The Pequots lost 77% of their population before the Pequot War, and their defeat by the English led to a jurisdictional vacuum in Connecticut that the Europeans would soon fill.

### **Religion**

While worshipping many spirits, the Quinnipiacs believed that one deity, named Keihtan, created the heaven and earth, all animals, people and the spirits contained within. They revered the Sleeping Giant and had many stories about how it came to be formed. The Quinnipiacs believed that when they died, they went to the southwest, to where Keihtan lived. They were usually buried with goods for the afterlife, and there was no idea of hell in their beliefs. In 1651, a local clergyman named Rev. Pierson translated a catechism into the Quiripi dialect which the Quinnipiacs used. He was paid to do so by the Colony of New Haven. He had difficulty explaining Christian doctrine and was unsuccessful in converting the Quinnipiacs, but he preserved some of their dialect, which had vanished by the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It wasn't until 1725 that the Colony attempted to convert the tribe seriously.

### **First Contact**

The Pequot War allowed the British to come across the Quinnipiac lands, and they spread glowing reports of what they had seen. In 1638, Theophilus Eaton and John Davenport led 500 settlers to the area now known as New Haven. They were welcomed by the Quinnipiacs, who saw friendship with them as potential protection from the Pequot and sporadic Mohawk raids. The Quinnipiacs taught the settlers how to farm so that they could survive as a colony. The Quinnipiacs also taught the formerly urban settlers how to hunt, trap animals and fish. Even still, the Quinnipiacs were more adept at farming, growing 60 bushels of corn to the colonists' 30. The colonists were therefore dependent on the Quinnipiacs to supply food, which was traded for metal goods, clothing and alcohol (despite a law banning trading alcohol with natives) from the English.

### **Cultural Differences**

The two cultures were very different and soon began to clash. The New Haven Puritans practiced the most rigid form of Christianity in New England. To the Puritans, the Quinnipiacs violated the Sabbath in many ways, and were generally more relaxed in social interactions. One punishment included a whipping for "blasphemy," a very loosely defined law. While the most important reason for

the English in coming to the new world was to gain new land, the concept of land ownership was completely foreign to the Quinnipiacs, who believed that all land belonged to Keihtan, the creator, and that humans were simply stewards of the earth because no mortal could possess it.

### **Momaugin Treaty**

The first official treaty between the British and the Quinnipiacs was the Momaugin Treaty, signed in November 1638 and named for the sachem who signed it. The terms of the Momaugin Treaty favored the settlers, who were granted land rights in exchange for military protection. They set up a reservation of 1200 acres on the east side of the harbor, which is considered the first Native American reservation in America. Unlike later ones, it contained decent farmland, fresh water springs, and the original village of Momaugin. The treaty indicated that the Quinnipiacs couldn't set up wigwams or plant crops outside of the reservation. Since they were seasonal migrants with semi-permanent villages, this stipulation would disrupt the Quinnipiacs' age-old migration patterns and result in a drastic change for their culture. The treaty said that the English would not send them guns, even though they needed them for protection from other tribes who lived on the edges of the Quinnipiacs' settlement. In exchange for the land, the British gave the Quinnipiacs a small amount of gifts, including a few coats, spoons and scissors, but not enough to be shared throughout the community.

### **Selling Off the Land**

In the 1650s, alcohol addiction became a big problem for the Quinnipiacs. Those charged with public drunkenness would be put in jail and had a hard time making bail. The Quinnipiacs had no equivalent of jail in their society; their punishments were public humiliation or, in more severe cases, social ostracism and banishment. One Quinnipiac, Rum Tom, kept getting in trouble and it became difficult to find bail. A settler named Trowbridge convinced them to sell their land in 1683 (the only thing of value they possessed for the English), and this set a precedent for the next few decades as they sold off their reservation piece by piece.

### **King Phillip's War**

The second-class status of the Quinnipiacs was made clear during King Phillip's War of 1675-1676, even though they fought alongside the British. The town of New Haven was fortified during the war and no Quinnipiac was allowed into the town, a clear sign of the Puritans' lack of faith in their allies. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Quinnipiacs were reduced to even further levels of poverty due to the loss of the fur and wampum trades, which essentially made them unemployed. At the same time, there was no chance they could be employed to do English jobs. Despite their military alliance, the Quinnipiacs faced several restrictions. In 1714, Quinnipiacs who couldn't pay their fines were bonded out to creditors and forced to work until their debts had been paid. By 1720, all the best land had already been purchased, so there were new calls to buy more Quinnipiac land. Wealthy East Shore farmers were now allowed to buy up Quinnipiac land, with one individual, John Morris, buying 200 acres. The Quinnipiac population decreased to 400 people.

## **English Policies to Thwart Quinnipiac Survival**

The Quinnipiaks provided several services for the colonists, such as killing wolves who ate livestock, delivering goods and messages for the English, constructing buildings, acting as guides, and even catching runaways and criminals for them. The English were also dependent on the Quinnipiaks for deer meat and wampum, which the English used as currency themselves in the absence of paper money or coins. The English proved to be poor farmers who nonetheless built huge houses and made bad trading ventures. In the 1650s, Momaugin's band increased as other bands joined his. As the Quinnipiaks sold off pieces of the reservation, Momaugin retained the only part that hadn't been sold. In the years following the treaties, the English had greatly changed the surroundings of the reservation, making subsistence more difficult. The Quinnipiaks were not allowed to plant outside of their reservation and no settler was allowed to sell them any land. This policy can be seen as a form of ethnic cleansing. By designating an area for them to inhabit, placing invasive laws on their lifestyle, slowly driving them off their land by making subsistence more and more difficult, and all the while making it illegal for them to buy any of their old land back, the British made it difficult for the Quinnipiaks to survive as a people.

## **Decline in Quinnipiac Population**

Between 1680 and 1750, a large number of Quinnipiaks died in colonial wars, fighting for English goals, while at the same time, the English were taking away their ancestral lands. In response to their dwindling amount of land, the Quinnipiac began moving to areas where land was more abundant. By 1756, fewer than 100 lived in New Haven. The census of 1774 listed only 11. As they left their ancestral homeland, their way of life changed just as it had during the first contact with the Europeans. In 1770, the remaining Quinnipiaks emigrated to Farmington, where the Tunxis tribe, reduced in numbers, welcomed other Native Americans. To fund the move, they sold the last of their last thirty acres in New Haven. As the Quinnipiaks were absorbed by the Tunxis, they ceased to exist as an autonomous tribe.

## **Brothertown**

In Farmington, the migrant Quinnipiaks converted to Christianity, led by Joseph Johnson, who was a convert of Samson Occum, a Native American preacher who advocated that Native Americans move west to remove themselves from the sinful ways of the whites. In 1774, the Tunxis/Quinnipiac tribe ratified a treaty with the Iroquois that gave them 15 to 20 sq. miles of land near Oneida, New York. They named the new settlement Brothertown to show their aim for harmony. In 1777, their settlement was destroyed by pro-British tribes because they had backed the patriot side. Now homeless and without any possessions, they moved to Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where there was a community of Housatonic and Mahican Native Americans.

At the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783, they returned to New York, this time to a six-square-mile piece of land they called New Stockbridge. Their culture was now largely transformed. They brought with them a book of Connecticut statutes and their community resembled the Colony of New Haven. Where women were once exalted and could even be sachems, they were now marginalized and needed permission to speak at meetings. The Sabbath was strictly observed. In 1795, New York stripped

their land considerably, which precipitated a move to Wisconsin. By the time of the Civil War, most Brothertown Native Americans had sold off their land and assimilated into other reservations across the country.

## **Pre-visit Activity**

For use in the classroom

**Pre-visit Activity:** To prepare students for their visit to the museum, these activities are designed to communicate the significance of the Quinnipiacs' role in the early history of New Haven and help provide an understanding of the relationship between them and the first settlers of the Colony. These activities establish the foundation of the ideas that will be brought up during the program at the New Haven Museum or in your classroom.

### **Activity: Write a Treaty (Grades 1-6)**

**Objective:** This activity is designed to expose students to the problems faced both by the settlers and the Quinnipiacs in their efforts to live side by side and in harmony. It will give them a chance to explore a fair way to divide up the land as well and compare their solutions with the actual Momaugin Treaty signed by the two groups.

### **Materials:**

- Board
- Markers

### **Procedure:**

1. Lead a discussion about the different ideas of land ownership held by the colonists and the Quinnipiacs. **Ask the following questions:**
  - a. How do you think the Quinnipiacs lived?
    - **Sample Answer:** They lived in wigwams that were built by the women of the tribe. They hunted and fished for food, and their diet was supplanted by roots, wild berries, nuts and fruits which were collected by women.
  - b. What do you think the colonists thought about owning land?
    - **Sample Answer:** They felt that ownership was an individual's right, just as do today.
  - c. Do you think that the Quinnipiacs felt the same as the colonists about owning land?
    - **Sample Answer:** They believed in sharing the land and taking care of it for future generations. They believed that all the land belonged to the Great Creator, Keihtan.
  - d. Why do you think the colonists wanted land?
    - **Sample Answer:** So that they could expand their colony and have more land to farm.
  - e. Do you think the Quinnipiacs understood what they were doing when they were "selling" the land to the colonists?



- **Sample Answer:** Not completely, they came from a society that shared everything communally.
- f. What do you think the Quinnipiacs would want in return for selling their land?
- **Sample Answer:** The main thing they wanted was guns so that they could protect themselves from other tribes who would try and raid them.
- g. The Quinnipiacs did not have a written language. They shared information through oral history. Do you think they understood signatures or deeds/contracts the way that we do?
- **Sample Answer:** It is unlikely that they understood the meaning of the treaty fully. They came from a very different culture with different values and traditions. It is impossible to know for sure, because all of the information we have about them comes from colonial sources.
2. Break students into two groups, The Quinnipiacs and The Settlers, with The Settlers being the larger group because of their numerical advantage historically. (**Note:** Depending on the size of your class, you may want to divide your class into multiple groups of each side.)
  3. Have each group select a leader to represent them in negotiations with the other group.
  4. Draw a map on a board, or have a map printed out, containing a piece of land which they will to have to divide. The Quinnipiacs will be selling the land, The Settlers buying it. The Settlers will be able to offer protection against other tribes as well as wampum, guns, beads, axes and other metal tools.
  5. Have each group spend some time and discuss what they could offer to the other in exchange for what they want. Have students focus on the following question: *Does the trade of land for protection against other tribes seem a fair one?*
  6. Have students write down their items to trade on paper.
  7. Have leaders present these items. (**Extension Idea: During class time, have students make these props in preparation for the activity.**)
  8. After the agreement is made, you can discuss the difference between the students' decisions and the actual treaty. **Ask:**
    - a. Was the students' treaty more fair than the Momaugin Treaty? Why or why not?
    - b. Do you think the settlers take advantage of the Quinnipiacs based on their different understanding of land rights?
    - c. Do the settlers deserve more land because of their greater numbers? Or, should they respect the Quinnipiac's claim because all of this used to be their territory?

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### **Activity: Native American Stereotypes (Grades 7-12)**

**Objective:** To have the students examine their images of Native Americans and question where these images come from, whether they are accurate or not, or just stereotypes reinforced by Hollywood and television.

### **Materials:**

- Board
- Markers

### **Procedure:**

1. Have a discussion about the students' background knowledge of Native Americans and their culture.
  - a. What words first spring to mind?
    - **Sample Answer:** Casinos, bow and arrow, horses.
2. Write these student answers on the board, and then ask them where these images come from.
3. Point out that many of these images relate to the lifestyle of the Native Americans of the Western Plains, who had a different culture from tribes living in this area. **Ask:**
  - a. Have any of you met or know any Native Americans?
  - b. Can you name any local tribes?
    - **Sample Answer:** Quinnipiacs.
  - c. What have you learned in school about Native Americans besides traditional stories like Thanksgiving?
3. Introduce several ideas about the perceptions of Native Americans for discussion. **Ask:**

- a. In the past, Native Americans were considered savages, less civilized because of their lack of technology and different beliefs, in comparison to Europeans. Is this a fair definition of “civilization,” or is “civilization” a relative term?
  - b. How much of this perception of Native Americans is based on a culture’s similarity to your own culture?
  - c. More recently, popular culture has portrayed Native Americans as “noble savages”, pointing to their respect for the earth as one example of how they are more civilized than the Europeans who settled on their lands. Is this a fair term, or does it simplify their experience and gloss over aspects of Indian culture that don’t fit in with this idea?
4. As a homework assignment, have students write an essay focusing on one of the questions that has been raised.
5. In the next class, you can ask some students to share their responses and see how the rest of the class agrees or disagrees with their positions.

## **Post-Visit Activity**

For use in the classroom

**Post visit activity:** To follow up the NHM visit about the Quinnipiacs, students will be given the opportunity to use the information they learned during the program at the Museum for maximum retention.

### **Activity: Unplugged (Grades 1-6)**

**Objective:** The activity is designed to have the students imagine what it would be like to live in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century without so much of the technology that we take for granted. Hopefully, it will give them a greater appreciation for the settlers and what they had to endure, along with the daily struggle just to survive.

### **Procedure:**

1. Lead a discussion about life in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, focusing on the hardships that the settlers and Quinnipiacs had to deal with. Start by asking the students what they learned at the Museum.
2. Note the absence of technology, as well as the lack of running water and electricity. This meant washing clothes by hand, churning butter and other time consuming activities, and is one reason families had so many children to help out with the chores around the house or the farm. Make a list on the board about the hardships faced by both settlers and Quinnipiacs.
3. Give the students a homework assignment to try to go a day without computers, phones, video games or iPods.
4. Have each student write a paragraph in response to the question and have them bring it in for the next day. **Ask:**
  - a. What sorts of activities would the Quinnipiacs or settlers do to pass their time?
5. In the next class, have the students read their paragraphs and have a discussion about what they learned. **Ask:**
  - a. What was the hardest part of not using these devices?
  - b. Did you miss them, or barely notice?
  - c. How did you stay in touch with friends?

## **Post-Visit Activity**

For use in the classroom

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### **Activity: Genocide Debate (Grades 7-12)**

**Objective:** This activity is designed for students to discuss whether the colonists' treatment of the Quinnipiacs was consistent with the U.N.'s definition of genocide.

### **Materials:**

- Notebook paper
- Pencil
- Stopwatch

### **Procedure:**

1. First, display this quote on the board:

“According to Article 2 of the U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment on the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG), drafted in 1948, genocide is defined as follows: ‘any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life, calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.’”
2. Explain that the class will be debating whether or not the colonists' treatment of the Quinnipiacs can be defined as genocide.
3. Split the class into two groups, each representing one side of the genocide debate.
4. Supply each side with a notebook paper and a pencil.
5. Describe how groups will argue for and against the charge of genocide.
  - a. Ask questions from each side:
    - i. Those in favor of calling it a genocide, Group 1
      - Was it intentional or unintentional?
      - Was it possible for both groups to live side by side in harmony, or was it inevitable that one group would thrive while the other would disappear?
    - ii. Those opposed to calling it a genocide, Group 2

- Since many students may not be related to the original settlers, and since these events occurred centuries ago, what, if any, guilt should modern inhabitants of this area feel?
  - The Quinnipiacs were a small tribe with few allies and were decimated by disease. Is it possible that the colonists actually improved their chances for survival by offering protection against raids from other tribes?
6. For homework, have each group organize their arguments for or against the genocide claim.
  7. The groups must organize their arguments to include an introduction and closing remarks or rebuttal. Students must also pick a speaker for each part of the argument.
  8. In class, for 16 minutes, each group takes a turn arguing their case.
    - a. This is a recommended timeline per group:
      - i. Introduction (1 min)
      - ii. Point 1 (2 min)
      - iii. Point 2 (2 min)
      - iv. Point 3 (2 min)
      - v. Closing remarks or rebuttal (1 min)
  9. In the remaining time, have a class discussion about the debate refocusing on the issues that were raised.