

Chronicled by Travis Henry—a Philmont resident from 2011 to 2013, a graduate student and teacher of American Indian Studies, a primary contributor to the [Native Land map](#), Wikipedia editor for the [List of traditional territories of the indigenous peoples of North America](#), and author of [Original Peoples of the Driftless](#).

For an official account of Mohican history, from the perspective of the present-day Mohican Nation, see [Our History](#). Note: the Mohican Nation presently calls itself “Mohican.” “Mahican” is an academic variant, based on the Dutch spelling. The original name is Muh-he-con-neok: “People of the waters that are never still.”

Origin legend of the Muh-he-con-neok (Mohican) Nation and Lenape (Delaware) Nation:

“At one time everything was dark. As Manitou (Great Mystery) slept, he dreamed. He dreamt of a world. He dreamed of humanity. He started to manifest it.”

“Later, a giant toad and giant snake fought and waters started coming out of the frog in a big flood. Manitou sent Nanapush—a Spirit Being—to help the people. Nanapush went up a mountain and he started gathering all the animals and sticking them in a sash. On the mountain top, he climbed a cedar tree. He sang a song and all the waters stopped rising. The flood hero Nanapush taught our Lenape and Mohican people how to make everything we would need to live.”

“Then Nanapush asked of the animals, who will let me put all the cedar branches on top of you so that all the animals can go on top of you? And the turtle said, you can put them on me and I’ll float on the water and you can put the branches on me. So they did. That’s why we call this land Turtle Island.”

20,000 B.C. : Last Glacial Maximum. Philmont is covered by 2000 feet of ice.

16,000 B.C. : As the ice retreats, meltwater accumulates, forming Glacial Lake Albany, extending from Glen Falls in the north to Newburgh in the South, covering the western third of Columbia County. Philmont is situated near the eastern shore of the gigantic lakefront.

11000 - 8000 B.C. : PALEO INDIAN archeological period. Paleo-Indians from the south follow the retreating glacier northward.

8500 B.C. : Native legend of the formation of the Hudson River and Taconic Hills:

“The water, ages ago, broke through the opposing barrier of Wequehache (the Hudson Highlands), draining a great lake and forming the channel of the Muh-he-con-neok (Hudson) River. A wellspring from the North Woods sent forth Spirit-Water, causing the river-course to bend and wander. Mountains and hills, impelled by curiosity, come from the East to see the strange river and to hear its musical waters. The Taconic Mountains and Foothills willingly remain upon its bank, attracted by the River, and by each other's hilly beauty.”*

*Note: In the Munsee Lenape language (which is nearly identical to the Mohican language), the name “Taconic” (earlier spelled *Taghkanic* or *Tachkanick*) has been interpreted variously to mean: “in the trees,” “forest,” “wilderness,” “there is water enough,” *Tachannike* “full of timber,” *Ket-takone-adchu* “a great woody mountain,” *Takwahneek* “adjoining stream,” or *Wtakwahneek* “gentle stream.” The entire mountain range is named after Taghkanic Creek, whose wellspring is in Hillsdale.

And on the other side of the River—a legend* of the formation of the Catskill Mountains, as they emerged from the glaciers:

“The giant monster Ontiora is slain by Manitou as it walked southward to the sea. Its fallen body becomes the Catskill Mountains.” As seen on the horizon of Philmont today.

*Note: The source of this legend, and the origin of the name “Ontiora” (purported to mean “Mountains of the Sky”), are currently disputed; yet they are included here as a meaningful story dating from the 1800s.

8000 - 6000 B.C. : EARLY ARCHAIC archeological period.

6000 - 4000: MIDDLE ARCHAIC archeological period.

5000 B.C. : From the Mohican origin legend: *“A great people traveled from north and west. They crossed waters where the land almost touched.”*

Linguists conjecture that the Mohican language and its Algonquian neighbors are related to the Nivkh language of Eastern Siberia, with a 7000-year degree of separation.

4000 - 1300 B.C. : LATE ARCHAIC archeological period.

3000 B.C. : From the Mohican origin legend: *“For many, many years they moved across the land, leaving settlements in rich river valleys as others moved on.”*

Linguists calculate a 5000-year degree of separation between the Almic languages which remain in California and the languages of the Algonquian peoples who moved on to the Central Plains and the Eastern Seaboard.

1300 - 1000 B.C. : TRANSITIONAL archeological period.

1000 B.C. - 1 A.D. : EARLY WOODLAND archeological period.

700 B.C. : From the Mohican origin legend: *“Reaching the eastern edge of the country, some of these people, called the Lenni Lenape, chose to settle on the river later renamed the Delaware. Others moved north and settled in the valley of a river where the waters, like those in their original homeland, were never still. They named this river the Mahicannituck, and this creek Ockawamick (Agawamuck). They called themselves the Muh-he-con-neok, the People of the Waters That are Never Still.”*

Linguists date the differentiation of the Eastern Algonquian languages to 700 B.C.

1 - 700 A.D. : MIDDLE WOODLAND archeological period.

700 - 1600 A.D. : LATE WOODLAND archeological period.

1090 A.D. : A traditional date of the formation of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy. The powerful uniting of the Five Nations enables a dominion over their eastern neighbors, the Mohican Nation, who, at the time of European contact, are reportedly tributaries of the Iroquois.

1622 A.D. : The Mohican Nation “cedes” the land of Potkoke (also spelled Potcoke or Potthoke) to the Dutch, including present-day Philmont.

1624-1664 A.D. : The Dutch settle Potkoke, naming it Klaver Rack (Clover Reach) or Klaver Akker (Clover Field), in the Province of New Netherland.

1625-1628 A.D. : The Mohicans revolt against the Iroquois. The Mohicans are defeated in battle on Rogers Island between the present-day cities of Hudson and Catskill, and surrender to the Iroquois the lands west of the Hudson River, but retain the lands eastward, including Philmont.

1663 A.D. : Five nations hold a secret council at the village of Potkoke near Philmont. Namely:

1. The Mohican Nation proper (of the Albany area)
2. The Ontiora* Nation, Catskill Nation, or Mayna's Nation (of the Catskill Mountains, who soon merged with the Mohicans)
*(A name of uncertain provenance.)
3. The Wappinger Nation (of the east side of the Hudson River from Rhinebeck to the Bronx)
4. The Esopus Nation (four Lenape tribes of the Kingston area)
5. The Weantinock Nation (of the Litchfield-Amenia area; ancestors of the present-day [Schaghticoke Nation of Kent, Connecticut.](#))

At this time, the village (latter-day Claverack/Philmont) serves as the international capital of the five-nation Potkoke Confederacy, whose traditional territories encompass the Hudson Valley.

1664 A.D. : The English take over Claverack, in the English Province of New York.

1675 A.D. : In King Phillip's War, a portion of the Pennacook Nation of southern New Hampshire retreat to the village of Claverack, where some remain for time, while another portion move on to Potick (Catskill). Soon, the governor of New York invites them all to move to Schaticook (in present-day N.W. Rensselaer Co.) in Mohican Country, and they accept.

To this day, the Abenaki Nation (inheritors of the Pennacook Nation) consider these sites, including Potkoke (Claverack/Philmont), to be significant places in their cultural geography.

1738 A.D. : The Mohicans “leave” the Philmont area, moving their national capital from Escudahki (Schodack), New York to Usi-a-di-en-uk (Stockbridge), Massachusetts. Later pushed from the Eastern seaboard, the Mohican Nation—now known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community—is presently based near Green Bay, Wisconsin.

1788 A.D. : The District of Claverack formed in the newly independent State of New York, including the hamlet of Claverack Falls, later known as Factory Hill and Philmont.

1892 A.D. : Philmont is incorporated as a Village.

PRESENT: Even today, Philmont and the Hudson Valley are considered to be a part of the Historical Lands of the Mohican Nation, and also within the “Area of Ancestral Interest” of their grandfathers, the Lenape Nation. These two cultural spaces overlap each other, and are named:

1. *N'DahAhKiNaNa* (“Our Ancient Heartland”), the Mohican Traditional Territory.
2. *Lēnapèhòkink* (“In the People's Land”), the Lenape Traditional Territory.

About the chronicler: Travis Henry lived in Philmont from 2011 to 2013. He's done graduate work in American Indian Studies at Montana State University. He served as a primary contributor to the [Native Land map](#), and as editor of the [List of traditional territories of the indigenous peoples of North America](#) on Wikipedia. He authored the book [Original Peoples of the Driftless](#), based on a course on indigenous territoriality which he taught at Thoreau College in Wisconsin. Travis served as facilitator for the [Entreaty for Lenape Amends](#). Though of primarily European Settler identity, he's infused with a homeopathic dose of Cherokee and Powhatan ancestry. He presently lives in Austerlitz, and is writing a book on Amerindian-centered, 12-Step-powered Recovery principles, entitled *Great Mystery Way*. He can be reached at traversetravis@protonmail.com.

Map Sources: The Mohican map is courtesy of Maggie Bennett, Land/GIS Tech with the Stockbridge-Munsee Tribe. The Lenape map is a composite by Travis Henry drawn from official Delaware tribal government sources.