

Stories of the Susquehanna

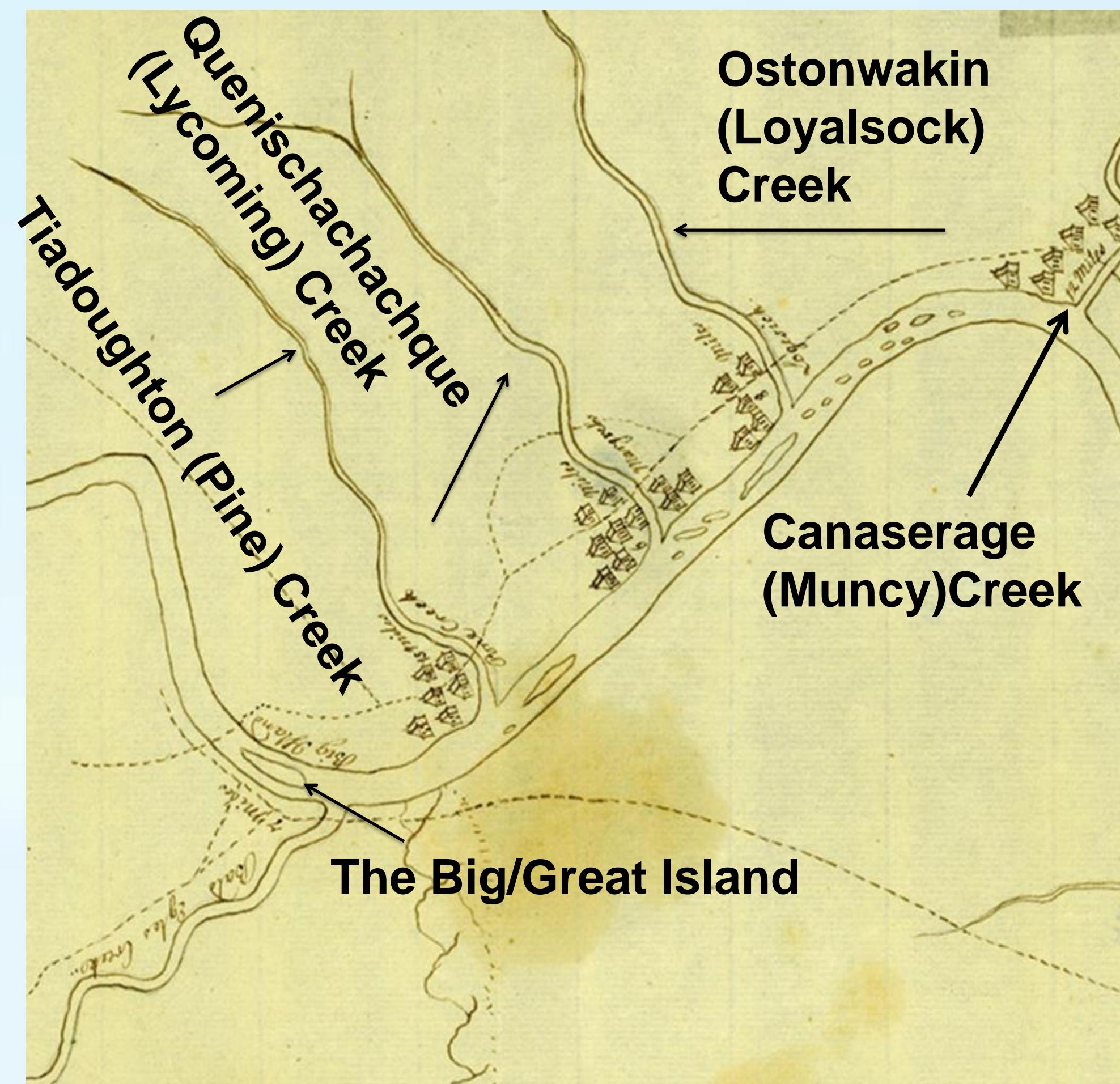
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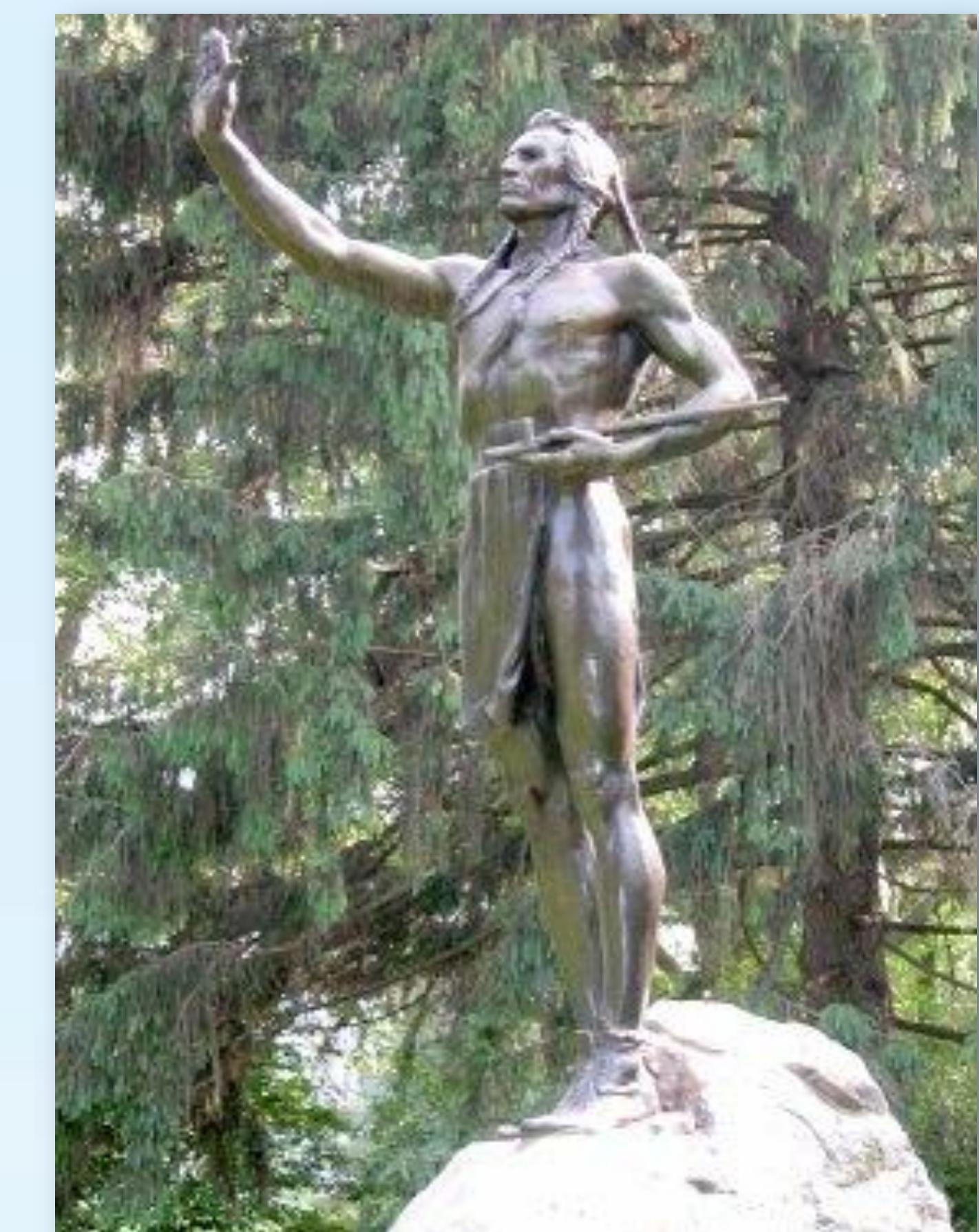
"According to a vague tradition this beautiful river was called Otzinachson by some of the early Indian tribes—perhaps the Susquehannocks or Andastes—but its meaning has never been clearly defined"- J.F. Meginness

Project Overview

- As part of an ongoing project to document the cultural history of the Susquehanna River, this summer's research focused on the West Branch. The work of previous years focused on the North Branch and Main Stem of the river.
- Paralleling the work of previous research students, we have compiled a database of 22 significant locations within a 5 mile corridor of the West Branch.



"Detail from Joseph Shippen's Map of the Susquehanna River (4 Parts) at Moravian Archives, Bethlehem, 1756"



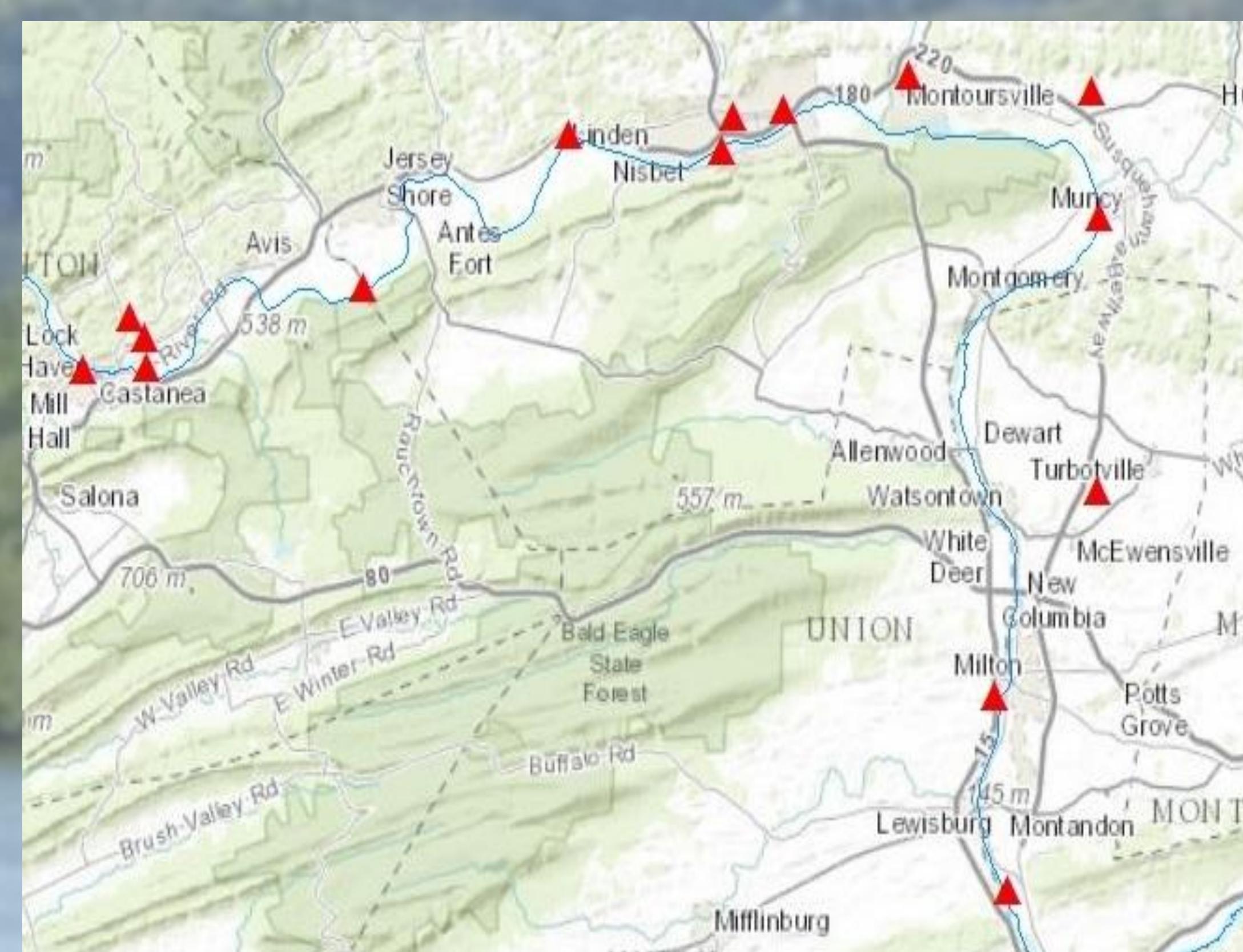
Chief Shikellamy, the Oneida Viceroy of Shamokin

http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/environmental_center/sunbury/website/ShikellamysDream.shtml

Methods

- Researching the histories of surrounding counties to gain insight to the pattern of Native American settlements along the river and in areas surrounding the river
- Analysis of primary documents, such as maps and journals and of secondary literature to provide location sites and information
- Contextualizing location of settlements within a historical framework, such as the French and Indian War; and interactions with European settlers, like the Great Runaway, to understand settlement patterns
- Using Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping software to create a visual representation of the Native American locations

Results



- The Susquehanna River area was a hunting ground of Native Americans, such as the Seneca from the Iroquois Nation.
- Indians were displaced throughout the pre-contact and early contact periods, 1650-1800.

Discussion

- Locations indicated on the GIS map show the historical significance of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River, with its rich Native American history

Acknowledgements

- Chesapeake Conservancy
- Place Studies Initiative of the BUEC

Conclusion

- Using multi-layered GIS allows for compilation of the spatial representation of multiple data strands
- Given the lack of written historical sources from the Native American perspective, we will research the significance of these sites to contemporary native peoples

References

- Otzinachson: A History of the West Branch Valley of the Susquehanna* by J.F. Meginness: 1857
- Moravian mission diaries at Shamokin: 1742-1755 (trans by Katherine Faull)
- The Frontier Forts Within The North and West Branches of the Susquehanna River Pennsylvania* by Captain J.M. Buckalew : 1895