

Shackshoone: a Mysterious Native-American in 17th-century England

The presence of Native-Americans in Europe, as a result of European contact, is of course a well attested fact of history. From the time of Columbus forward, many went as guests, some as slaves, and others resided on the European continent as servants throughout the days of early exploration in the Western Hemisphere as well as during the period of Colonial-American history.

Huron chieftain *Donacona*, of present-day Quebec, journeyed with Jacques Cartier back to France in the early 16th century, where he enjoyed the privileges of a guest, receiving a 'pension' and residence at the expense of the French Crown, spreading tales of the mythical or legendary land of *Saquenay*, which prompted many French explorations into the Canadian wilderness. He would die in France of disease in 1539.

An opposite course of action was taken by the Governor of 'New France,' Jaques Rene...de Denonville, during the late 1680's, when he forcibly shipped some fifty Iroquois chieftains to the French city of Marseilles, where they were used as 'galley slaves.'

Within the English seaboard colonies, many American Indians had periodically been kidnapped or chose to visit Britain over the years, and often aided the settlers in their conflicts with the various tribes they encountered. Two such Indians were *Wanchese & Manteo*, both brought back to England by Captains Philip Amadas & Arthur Barlowe, for the benefit of the would-be English colonizer, Sir Walter Raleigh, after their visit on July 13, 1584 to North Carolina, near Roanoke Island.

The famed 'Indian Princess,' *Pocahontas* or '*Lady Rebecca*,' after converting to Christianity and marrying the Englishman, John Rolfe, would journey to England in 1616, even to the Royal Court of King James the First, along with a number of her relatives and people. *Tomocomo* accompanied Pocahontas at the request of her father Powhatan who gave him a notched-stick to count the number of Englishmen he would encounter in London! Tomocomo would return to the New World, but Pocahontas contracted smallpox and was buried at Gravesend in Britain, far from her native homeland in Virginia.

The famed 'Savior' of the Pilgrims & the Plymouth Colony in 1620, that of *Squanto* or *Tisquantum*, a Pawtuxet Indian (who had been kidnapped by an English scoundrel and taken along with 23 other Indians to Malaga, Spain to be sold as slaves years before), luckily arrived eventually in England, where he was taught the English language, and after many years absence from America, was, according to Governor William Bradford, 'Providentially' returned to his native Massachusetts only a few weeks prior to the coming of the *Mayflower* and its colonists.

It was a Pamunkey Indian servant named *Chanco*, who saved countless English lives, by warning his white master of the upcoming Indian attack on March 22, 1622 in Virginia, which nevertheless resulted in the deaths of some five hundred settlers, a massacre led by

Opechancanough, uncle to Pocahontas and brother to her father, Powhatan.

After 'King Philip's War' (1675-76) in New England, many Pequot Indians would be enslaved and sent to the West Indies, and even a few were sold initially into slavery in North Africa, while as late as 1730, seven Cherokees visited England and met with King George II, one being the famous chieftain, *Attakullaculla*, better known as the 'Little Carpenter.'

Just exactly how many Native-Americans actually visited, lived and died in England or Europe as a whole, will no doubt never be completely known, but out of this number, one peculiar individual stands out in the limited narrative recording his residence in the British Isles.

In an early issue of the **London Gazette**, Issue 2337, for Monday April 9th to Thursday, April 12th, 1688, comes this strange advertisement, on p.2, col.2:

One John Newmoone, alias Shackshoone, an Indian of an unusual Shape, having a Child growing out of his Side, low of Stature, and swarthy of Complexion, belonging to Sir Thomas Grantham, Knight, on Friday the 6th Instant, run away from his House at Sudbury in Middlesex, taking with him several things of value, designing to go beyond the Seas.

Whoever can discover or seize him, and give Notice to Sir Thomas Grantham aforesaid, or to Mr. *Bartholomew Parr*, Woollen draper in the Armitage, shall have 5 {pounds} Reward, and all Charges.

Who exactly John Newmoone or Shackshoone was has not been determined, though his name certainly 'sounds' Algonquian in nature, a tribal or linguistic group, which by 1688, the English had had much contact and relations with for many years on the Eastern seaboard. Perhaps some obscure record exists in England relative to his arrival, departure or eventual fate, though the author of this blog has to date found no such data other than the above, in either British or American Colonial records. Also, a man with such a peculiar physical malady would have definitely draw attention, and thus generated records, on both sides of the Atlantic.

His master, Sir Thomas Grantham, later knighted by King Charles II, came to the Americas on at least three occasions during the 17th-century, the most famous being to Virginia during 'Bacon's Rebellion,' of 1676. His rare autobiography, or; *An Historical Account of Some Memorable Actions, Particularly in Virginia...* (London: J. Roberts., 1716), says nothing about any 'Indian' which he may have brought back with him to England, after these voyages, though the **Calendar of State Papers: Colonial Series, America & West Indies: 1677-1680**, does state for May of 1679, that Captain Grantham, "lately returned from York River, Virginia," reported "great incursions of Indians about the Rappahannock; alarm of a summer attack so great that people were leaving their plantations for a safer part of the country."

It is certainly conceivable that Capt Grantham took an America Indian back with him from Virginia to England, since many rebellious tribal peoples in Virginia, would at times be enslaved within the colony or were sent off to plantations in the West Indies, but *one individual* may have easily been given to Capt Grantham by Governor William Berkeley of the Virginia colony, in gratitude for his aid during that troublesome time.

Grantham in 1676, was in command of the *Concord*, a 32-gunned ship which "took an important part in pacifying the colony during the insurrection of Nathaniel Bacon..." as

recorded in a sketch of Grantham, found in the 1890 edition of the **Dictionary of National Biography**. After his return to England, he later purchased the 'manor of Kempton' at Sudbury, and was dead by 1618.

Perhaps a reader can shed light on the mysterious origins, history and eventual fate of the above *John Newmoone, alias Shackshoone*, an account which is only one of many unsolved mysteries contained within the massive collections here at The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
