

Honoring The Great Circle of Life-- Indigenous Teachings About the Esopus Watershed

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Presented to Cornell Cooperative Extension, Saturday July 29th, 2023

The Eastern Algonquins



The Esopus Munsee language is one of dozens of Algonquian languages, at least 36, spread among 84 “nations.” All are part of the Algonquin Civilization and family of languages. Also called “Kitchi-Atuk-Woagun,” “The People who Wear the Skins of the White Tail Deer.”

ESOPUS

See+poo = river

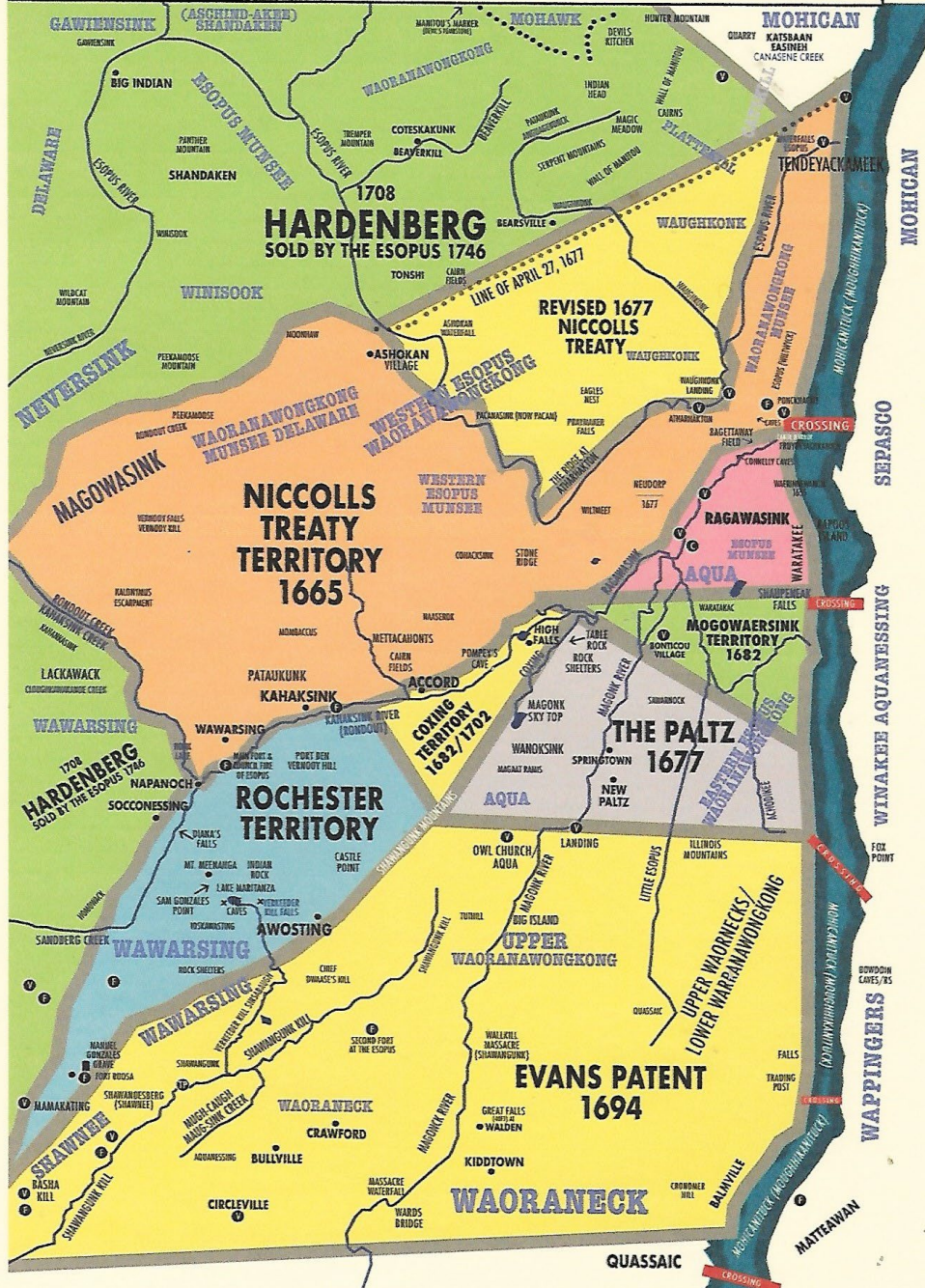
See-poo+us(or -ees) =small river

In Greek mythology, Asopus was a famous island, where the Utopia “Arcadia” was located. The center of the Peloponessos was later named Arcadia; as was the Atlantic Coast. According to Reider T. Sherwin, there was once an “Esopus Island” in the Esopus Creek. There is still one in the Hudson River. The Dutch spelling of the Munsee word implies they regarded it as “Paradise.”



MAJOR ESOPUS MUNSEE LAND TREATIES

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This map shows the major land treaties between the Esopus Munsee and the Dutch and English in what is now Ulster County. Esopus Creek forms the upper boundary of the Nicolls Treaty (various spellings) of 1665. Mama Nuchwe's revision of 1677 uses the mouth of the Esopus (actually Cantine Falls) as a point of reference and landmark.

Esopus (Rapoos) Island





In the foreground is the waterfall that is the source of the Esopus. Behind it is Winnisook Pond, part of Winnisook Mountain. I believe it was a Munsee fish pound, built before contact with Europeans.



Water travels in a great circle of evapotranspiration; when ground moisture dries it feeds the clouds, which eventually rain. Fed by rain in the mountains, and melting snows, this small stream quickly becomes a full sized creek as it travels north then clockwise around Panther Mountain, then travels southeast to the Hudson, also known as the Mohicanituck, "The river that flows both ways." Then it evaporates again and the cycle starts all over again.



This is Winnisook Pond or Lake, now a Hunt Club. Winnisook means “a lovely form of precipitation:” “ie, snowfall. A “Big Indian” lived here, and his name was Winnisook.



This high lake may be where snow first appears in the fall, and affords a view of the first snows on nearby mountain tops. Where the Esopus runs through here is named "Frost Valley" for the same reason. Frost Valley Trail reaches the main trail (now 28) at the Big Indian statue and powwow grounds, which is where Big Indian was killed.

Big Indian

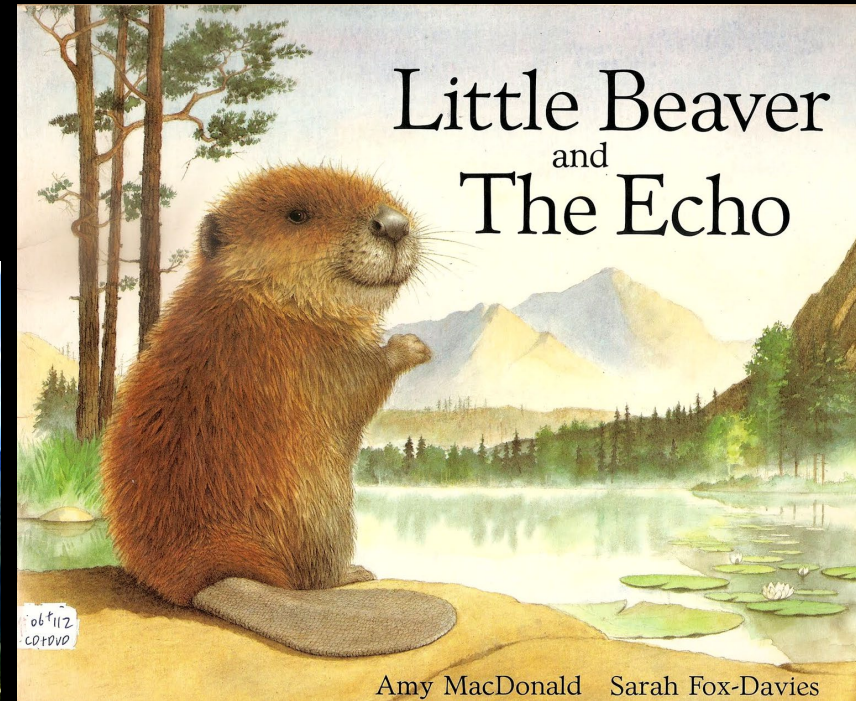
Big Indian (from an old text)

“Winnisook and a band of his warriors had been successful in obtaining a large number of fine cattle. They were returning to their stronghold when they were overtaken at the entrance to the Big Indian Valley (Oliveria or Frost Valley) near the present-day curve of the old Ulster and Delaware railroad.”



Peekamoose Mountain

Peekamoose means “Small Lake of Beavers” in Esopus Munsee:
Bpee=drinking water; +k= plural;
amou=beaver+ us=small. Bushkill Creek,
a small tributary of the Esopus, has its
source near Peekamoose Mountain.



Panther Mountain

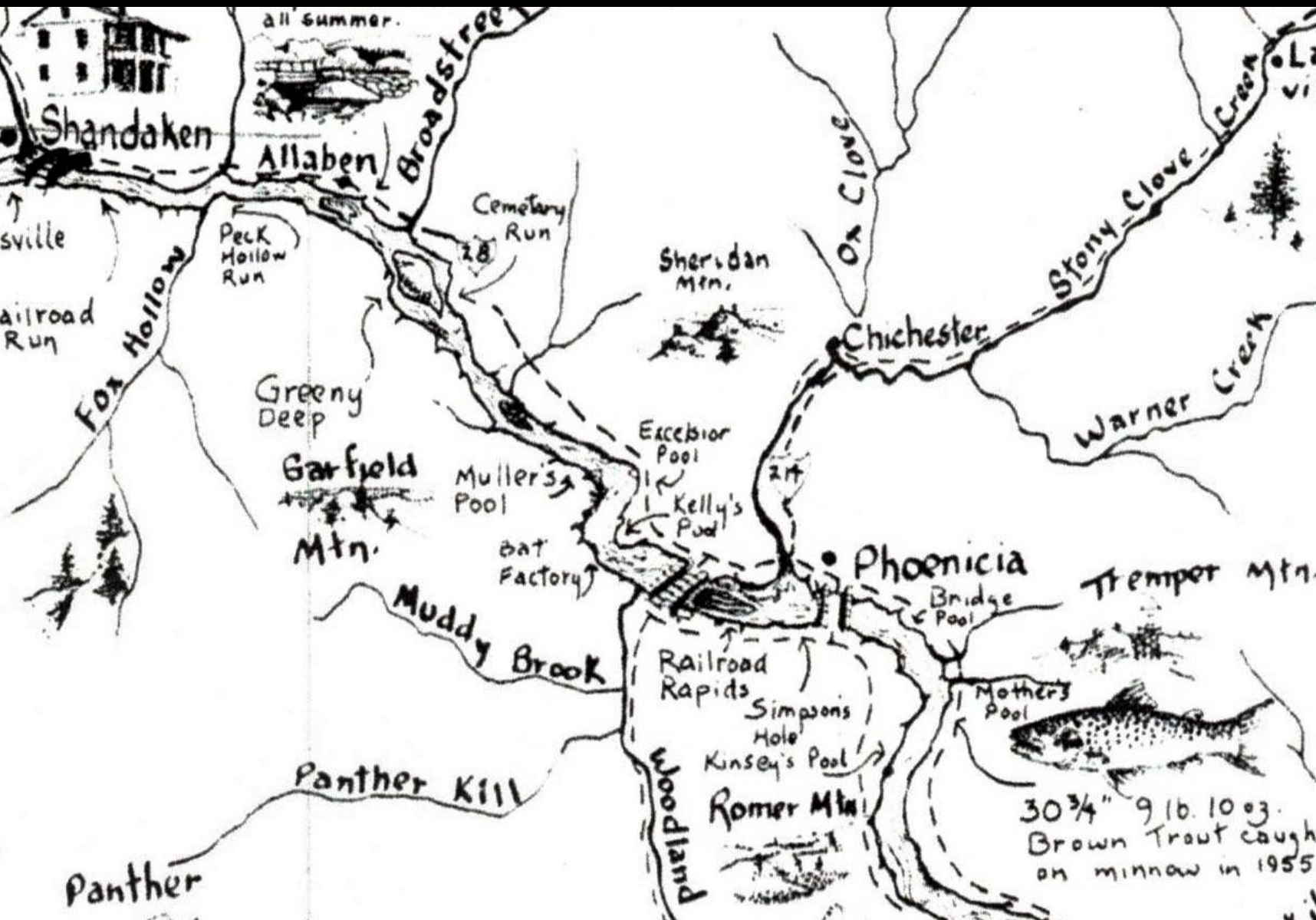
Panther Mountain has long been regarded as a sacred spot, and not just by Native Americans. Its northern slope is the home of the Menla Retreat Center, largely Buddhist in orientation, but which has sponsored a number of memorable Native American events over the years, including a visit by the Kogi of Columbia. Mt. Tremper, about two miles away, is the home of a Zendo and retreat center of long standing, and members have served as activists on behalf of Native American rights and concerns. Mt. Tremper is also right on the 42nd parallel, the latitude of ancient Rome, considered the “salubrious climate,” one ideal for building a utopian city. The Devil’s Tombstone is located at the one place where the Montauk-Hammonasset Line crosses the 42nd parallel. Could ancient peoples from afar come to Phoenicia looking for a new utopia?

The Big Indian powwows, gatherings that were held each year for over two decades, less than a mile from the foot of the mountain, were spiritually inspirational. Other centers and spas include “Rudi’s,” Full Moon (on Oliveria Road) and Urban Cowboys.



Big Indian “Thunder in the Mountain” Powwow

Menla Retreat at Panther



Two parallel portage trails that take you to Phoenicia are 28 and "old 28," the upland "dry" trail, now county 40, an extension of Wittenberg Road. Right in the middle of town, 40 meets Stony Clove Road, today's route 214, which runs along Stony Clove Creek from the north. It seems that there was a fording place across the Esopus, just upstream, near the "railroad rapids," as an extension of 40. That road then continues along Woodland Valley Stream (formerly Muddy Brook) as unnumbered Woodland Valley Road along the base of the Panther Kill. The two islands in the Esopus between Phoenicia and Allaben—near a place called Greeny Deep, would have been of great interest to the Esopus Munsee as "rendezvous" or meeting places. The abundant hemlocks in the area would have also been of interest for tanning purposes.

Shandaken is translated from the Lenape in Zeisberger (1776) as “place of many spruce” but he probably means hemlock. In fact aschind could mean ‘evergreen.’ There is both a Spruce Mountain and a Hemlock Mountain in Shandaken Township, near Slide Mountain. They are both forever green! Explorers more recent than Zeisberger have gotten confused between hemlock and spruce. They look almost the same from a distance.

Shandaken (as it is today) is home to no less than seven sacred springs, springs that are source waters for major rivers. To all Algonquin (Kitchi-atuk-woagun) the source or headwaters of a river or stream is a sacred place. It is said “Water is Life” (now popularly said in Lakota, “Mini Witchoni!”) To respect the source is to respect all life. Warriors would make a pilgrimage along their village stream (or other significant waterway) to the source or “sweetwater spring,” as a sort of vision quest, perhaps a parallel to the quest for higher truth, and for Kitchelamookong, “He Who Dreams Us Into Being” who lives at the source of light, at the twelfth level of clouds in the sky. The source waters are known for their incredible purity and are often quite healing to drink from. Its seven springs makes Shandaken a sacred landscape.

There are two main fording places in the town of Phoenicia; a small one at Stony Clove and a larger one across the Esopus. Little Stony Clove could have been forded during the summer using steppingstones that would have been set in place by a previous trail blazer, and then maintained by all travelers collectively. Hikers also depend on a skilled trail blazer coming before them and cutting down an old tree or finding a large log, and setting it across the stream so that it sits firmly on the rocks. The same trail blazer will assemble some rocks at both ends of the log in the form of a steep Bare feet and moccasins alike are capable of gripping the bark with the toes, In winter, you would cross the creek in your snowshoes.



(stock photos)

The Esopus was fast and deep even in summer and native people preferred to ford rivers just above rapids. It was often shallower there, and the current more consistent. The crossing place of the Esopus here is at Railroad Rapids. While 28, aka The Pepacton Trail, continues northwest, the Esopus is crossed by route 40s extension. In spring, the ice up in the mountains would melt, giving strength to the currents below. Trailblazers would fashion a raft and pole of some kind and leave it at the shoreline for others to use. On yet larger rivers like the Hudson, dugout canoes were certainly left for public use as do-it-yourself, community-run ferries. David DeVries, in his “Voyages” (early 1600s) describes finding several such dugouts along the lower Delaware in winter, still waiting for springtime, locked in the ice. Dugouts weight two or three tons. If no rafts were available, some would risk the rapid currents, moccasins held high,. And drowning was not uncommon.



Following the Stony Clove Trail now 214, along the little creek, we head west to the “clove.” The “clove” is a secret passageway from the Esopus Valley watershed into the very different Schoharie Valley watershed.. As you reach Greene County you may encounter the Devil’s Tombstone. It does, in fact resemble the shape of a tombstone, with a peaked profile. But this is a shape important to the Algonquins, one they called a “Manitou” or “spirit” stone, and colonists borrowed in making tombstones, hence the name.



According to GPS measurements by Glenn Kreisberg, the Montauk-Hamondasset line (SSSS) goes right through the tip of this “Manitou-shaped” rock, which points to the summer solstice sunset as it disappears behind this “V” in the western mountains. It was the Dutch and early English who adopted the “manitou” shape for their tombstones.

Manitou Marker, aka Devils tombstone—

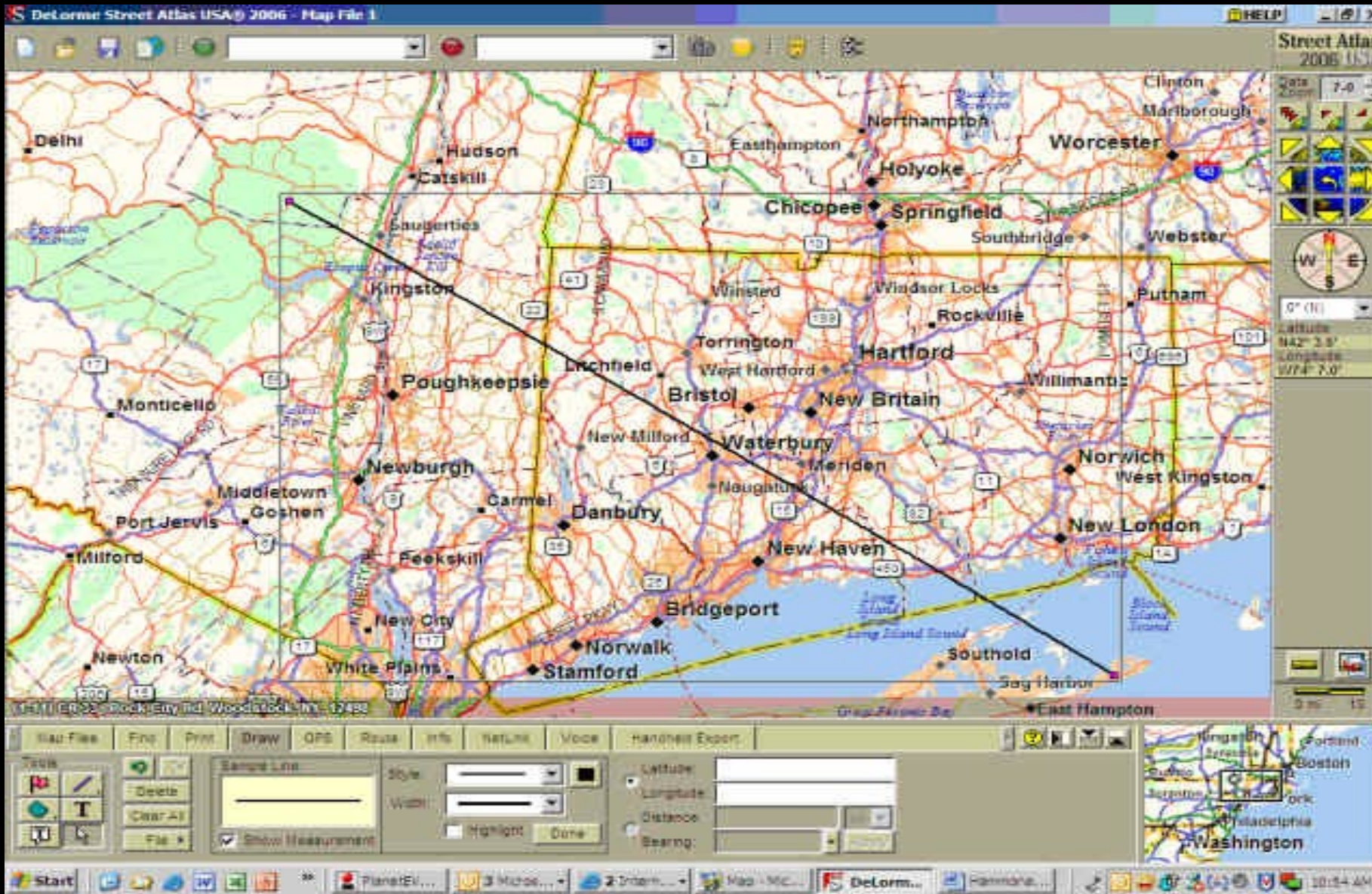
In *Native New Yorkers* (Council Oak, 2002) One solstice line I identified has become famously known as The Montauk-Hammonasset Line, and it leads from a similar upright monolith in Montauk to Devil's Tombstone and beyond, to Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron (Ontario). Since then writers like Dr Curtiss Hoffman, and Glenn Kreisberg have written about such alignments, and Kreisberg used GPS to map out the MHL line, (see *Spirits in Stone*, pp 132-135) and it seems to align with the uppermost tip of this stone slab.



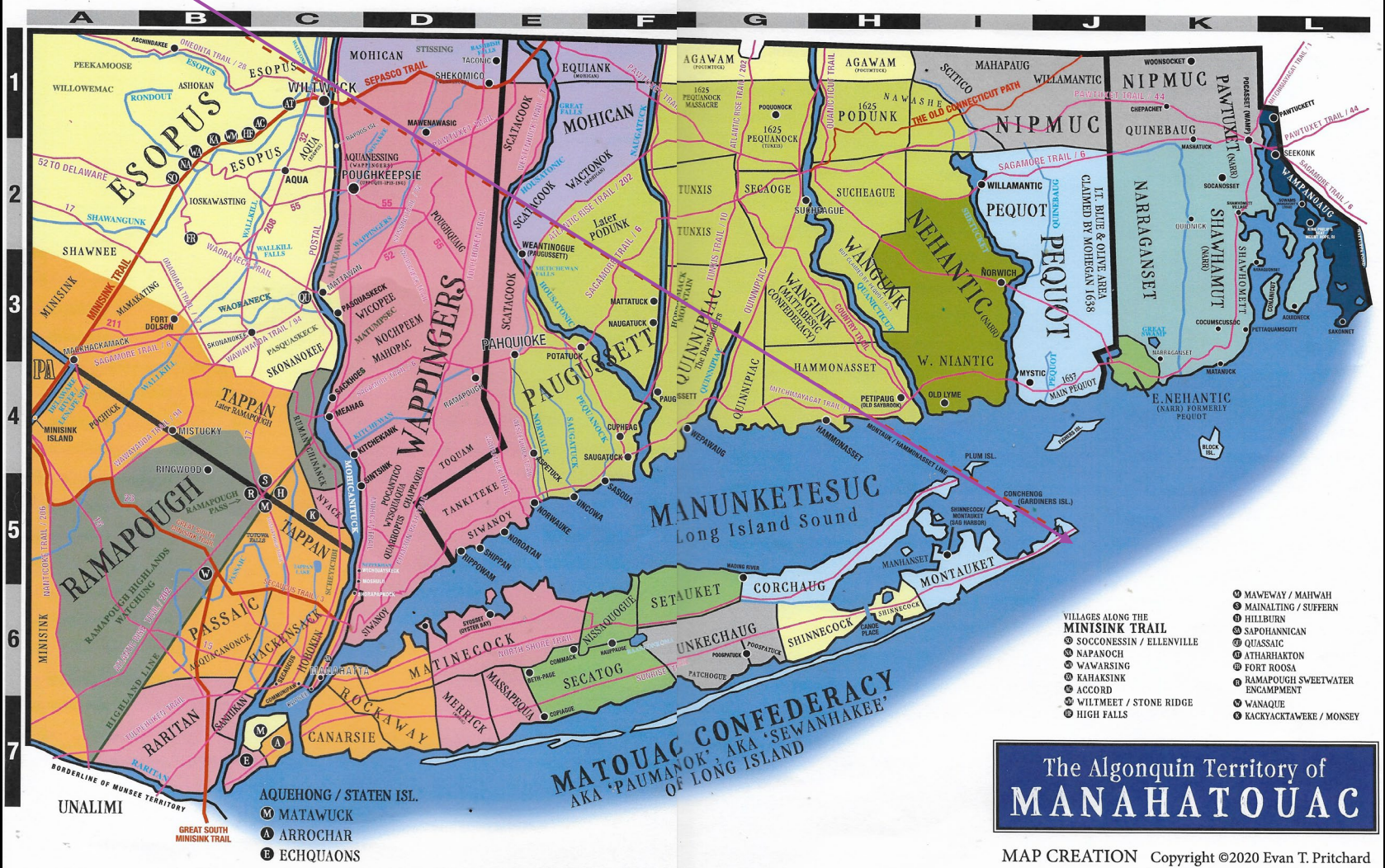
Alf Evers told me that Devil's Tombstone was there when the Dutch first arrived. It is made from local stone, set upright on its end, a common Algonquin practice, and covered with graffiti that goes back to the early 1800s.



Devil's Tombstone is not a spicy slice of pizza. It is a marker of the solstices.



This map compliments of author Glenn Kreisberg (*Spirits in Stone, Inner Traditions*) The black line is aligned with WSSR and SSSS, and connects the tops of two monoliths 150 miles apart, with pinpoint accuracy. Hundreds of petroforms can be found along the MHL corridor.



The red diagonal line across this map shows the path of the Montauk-Hammonasset Line which goes directly through the tip of the Manitou Marker (aka Devil's Tombstone)

The Algonquin Territory of
MANAHATOUAC
MAP CREATION Copyright ©2020 Evan T. Pritchard

SHANDAKEN, A LAND OF SACRED WATERS

Shandaken is home to seven very significant “sweetwaters” and is therefore a sacred landscape.

Rondout Creek aka Kahaksink (kahak=geese+ sink=place) At the town of Peekamoose, Rondout Creek heads off trail and skirts the east side of Peekamoose Mountain, then heads towards its source at Friday Mountain which is 3,694 feet, and within the borders of the township of Shandaken. The Rondout is 63 miles long.

Esopus Creek aka Seepooshish (seepoo=river+sheesh/us=little) In the south of Shandaken lies Winnisook Mountain (winni=lovely+sook=precipitation), a word for snow. It is at a high elevation (2664) with a good view, and would be one of the first villages in the region to see snow in the autumn. Winnisook Mountain is part of Slide Mountain, the tallest in the Catskills at 4190 feet.. The Esopus is 65 miles long.

Neversink Creek: A few hundred feet away from the source of the Esopus, on Slide Mountain, is a spring that is the headwaters of the Neversink, which joins the Delaware near Port Jervis, which is near Minisink Island, the “capitol” of the Munsee Delaware. The Neversink is 55 miles long.

Woodland Valley Creek: Formerly “Muddy Brook” then “Snyders Hollow.” A smaller creek that runs near the library, its source is Slide Mountain, the tallest in the Catskills.

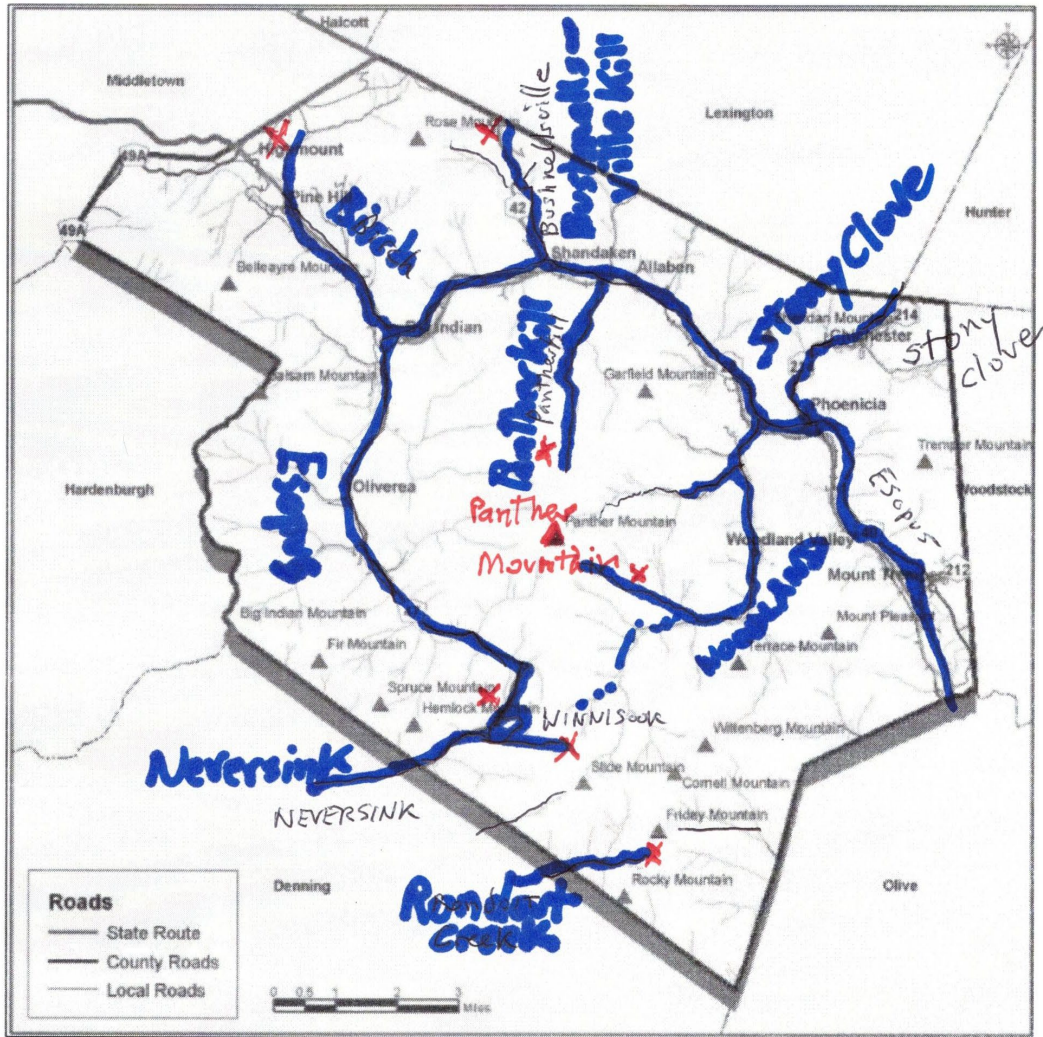
Pantherkill Creek: A smaller creek, its source is not surprisingly Panther Mountain.

Bushnellville Kill: This shallow creek runs down from Rose Mountain along 42. It starts on the ridge that divides the Schoharie Valley from the Esopus Valley.

Birch Creek: This creek starts at Halcott Mountain which was a sacred area in general.

Seven Sacred Springs in Shandaken

Figure 2 - Existing Road Constructions (Source: Ulster County Transportation Plan)

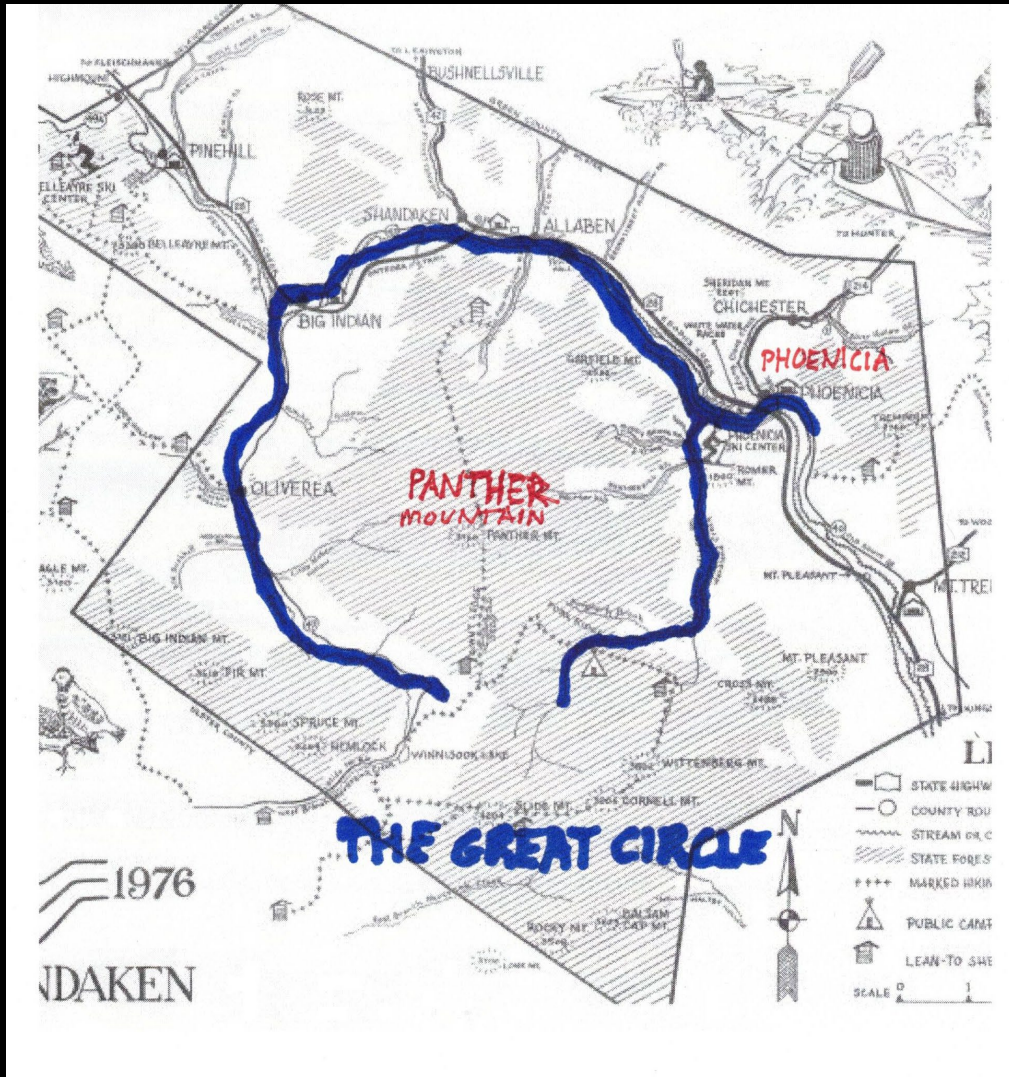


Seven Sacred Springs

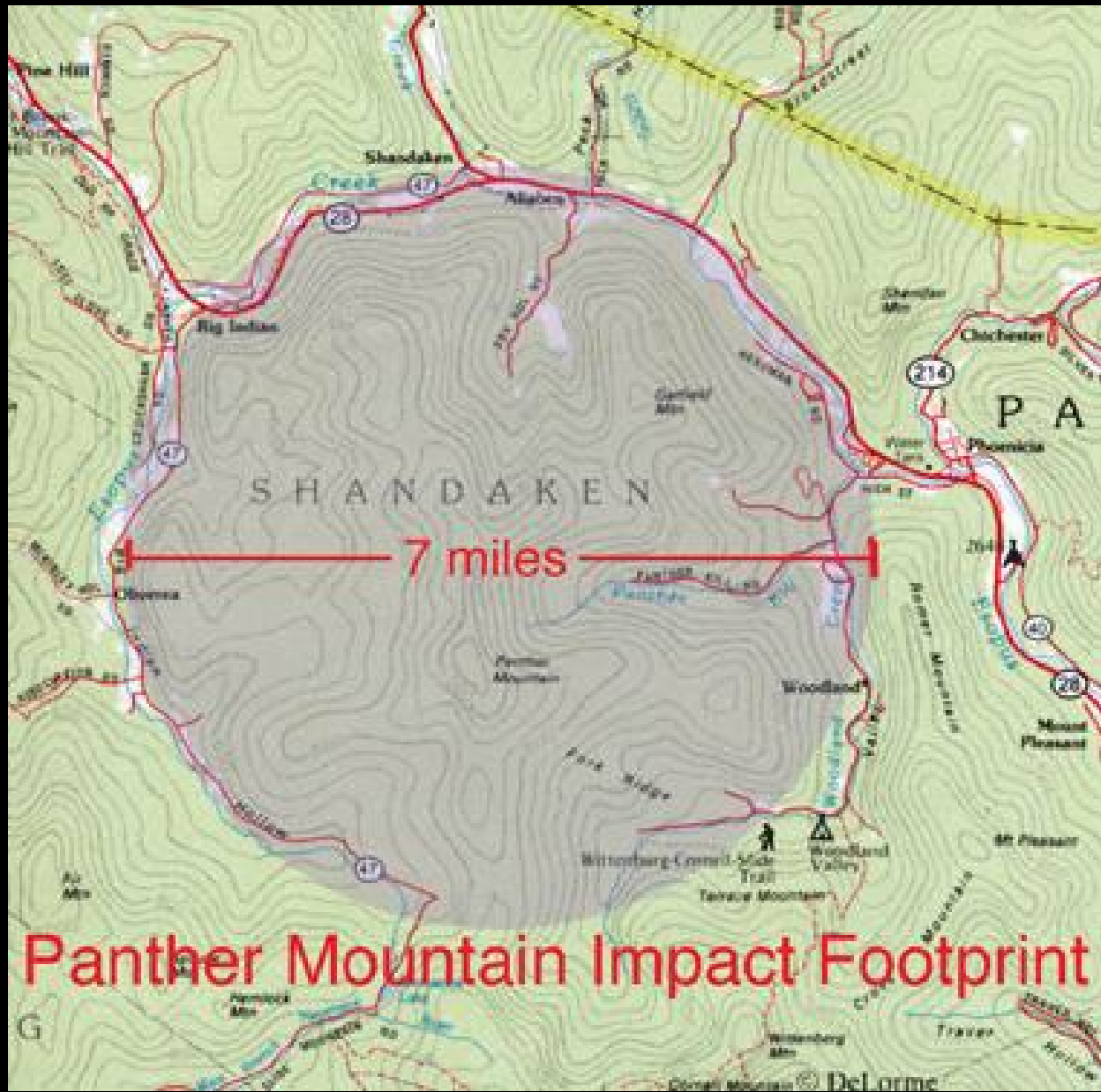
Friday Mountain, the source of the Rondout, is seen on the lower right corner of this map of Shandaken.

Slide Mountain, also lower right, is the source of the Neversink ("Fishing Place?" "River, and part of that is **Winnisook Mountain**, source of the Esopus (Little River). **Panther Mountain** (center) is the source of Woodland Valley Creek which joins the Esopus in Phoenicia. Panther Mountain (center) is also the source of the Pantherkill between Shandaken Center and Allaben. **Halcott Mountain** is the source for Birch Creek.

The great circle at “the wellspring of creation”



According to Zena Halpern’s book *The Templar Mission*, page 228, she mentions Panther Mountain, calling it “The Lenape place of the Wellspring of Creation.” (Thanks to Munsee descendant Robin Hill Chandler for this quote) This epithet combines their knowledge of the various rivers that have their wellsprings of origins either on or near Panther Mountain, plus their knowledge of the ancientness of the mountain, and the Biblical cataclysm that formed it millions of years ago. Science has recently confirmed that Panther Mountain—the 18th tallest of the High Catskill Peaks at 3720 feet, was shaped 375 million years ago by a meteor a half mile across that bashed into the earth and created a hole 2670 feet deep. Fortunately no one was around at the time, as it must have created a thick layer of dust all over the Esopus Valley, but pre-contact Esopus Munsee apparently recognized the circular base of the mountain as the footprint of a meteor, and maybe even found parts of the meteor itself. Esopus Creek and Woodland Valley Creek filled the edges of the hole and created a near perfect circle of water around the mountain, making it almost island-like.



Panther Mountain Impact Footprint



The circle is a widely understood symbol among Native Americans for sacredness, either in omens or in petroglyphs, and possibly even for Creation as a whole, adding to the perception of sacredness in the eyes of all who looked upon this massive peak, or those who planted their moccasins upon The Giant Ledge and looked down to the rivers and streams far below.



Meteor crater at Winslow, Arizona. Panther Mountain may have started out like this, but due to different geological factors, it inverted. The Great Circle at Panther Mountain is just under seven miles in diameter. The crater at Winslow is less than a mile across.

Cosmogogenesis theory is still in its infancy, but recent studies of fallen meteors and meteorites have proven beyond doubt that they are often highly populated with anaerobic viruses from deep space, some of which apparently fall off before impact. In 1969, near Murchidon, Victoria, Australia, a meteor fell that was studied and found to contain sugars, amino acids, and forms of RNA that are the building blocks of DNA, the building blocks of terrestrial life.

Scientific American, June 16, 2008 article by J.R. Minkel, "Were Meteorites the Origin of Life on Earth? DNA Building Blocks Found in Meteorite Took Shape in Deep Space."



The belief that meteors are uniquely tied to the creation of life on earth is also millions of years old. This relationship is alluded to in aboriginal Australian lore, and the Old Testament and is central to Islamic mysticism. The Kaab, a temple of purity housing the milleniums-old meteor that guided Adam and Eve to the spot where they should build the first temple to God, now Mecca. Panther Mountain was the destination of pilgrims following several rivers to their source, but were there other types of pilgrimage as well? And other types of pilgrims?



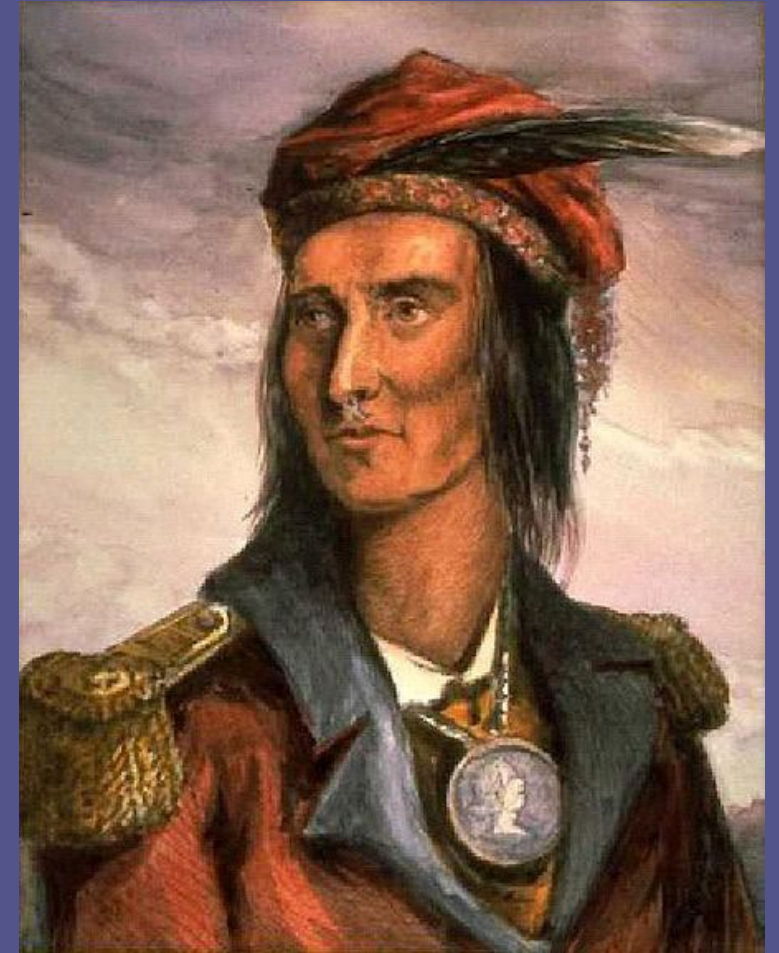
Mohammed depicted with the “Black Stone” of Creation, putting it into place; from 1315 illustration.

War Panther's Munsee name is *Ma-min-da-a-see*. The English word panther can cover a number of sub-species and regional adaptations. According to zoologist Wes Gillingham, mountain lions and true panthers are the same, and "catamount" is an antique term for them that has come down to us from early Dutch settlers, and is now in local vernacular. [James Fenimore Cooper used it to refer to a small panther] . The black panthers that one used to see in Florida were actually leopards from Africa and Asia that escaped from a circus which was wintering there in the 1930s, but true panthers have long yellow tails, with some individual melanistic mutations. Like the catamount that climbs the huge sign of the Emerson Resort and Spa two miles to the east of Panther Mountain's base, Comet has a long pale golden tail as well. When He attacks we are to imagine that tail streaming out straight behind him. In fact, when He charges across the horizon, it is His golden tail that we mainly see as He drops meteorites from the sky. Some say that war may arise in the direction from which *Maminda'asee* comes. " Had it been now a catamount, or even a full-size panther, I would have embellished a performance for you worth regarding." From *The Last of the Mohicans*| James Fenimore Cooper.

Wes Gillingham, phone conversation February 1st, 2022.



When the war chief Tecumseh was born, Comet passed over his village. This was certainly a *kee-gay-no-lay-woa-gun* or “prophetic sign.” It showed he was blessed by the War Panther and would be a great warrior. That is why he was named Tecumseh, which is Shawnee for “Panther Passing Across.” It was interpreted by his elders that as Comet came from the south he would never be defeated in battle as long as it was in the south. His only defeat came in 1814 and it was in the Thames River Valley, far to the north, his final and fatal battle. Like Panther Mountain, the Thames was in Munsee territory at the time. Naturally, it stands to reason that the Panther Kill is looked upon with reverence, and that the source of the creek, high up on Panther, is even more sacred than most headwaters. In fact, the Esopus itself flows forth from the earth within that same sacred circle.

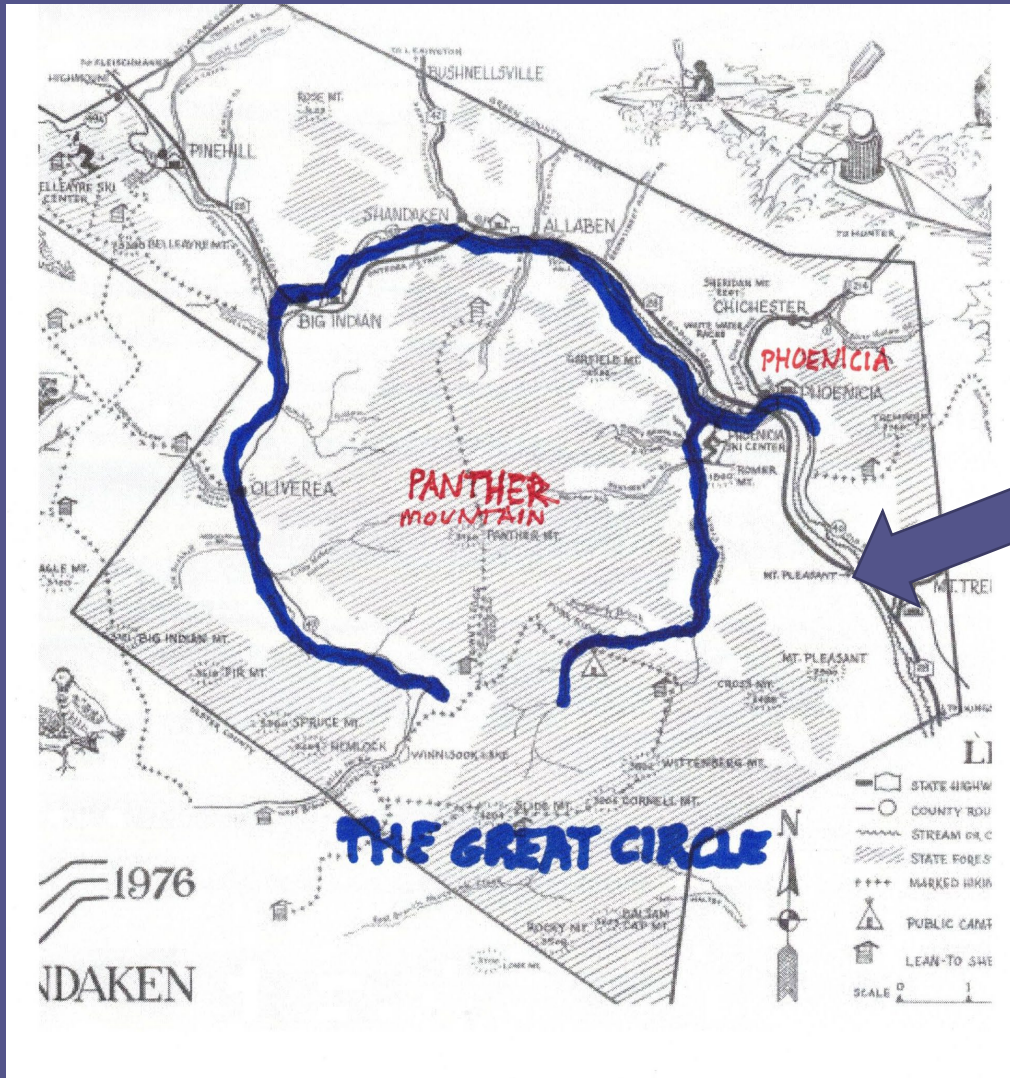


When the Munsee migrated west and reached the large mountain ranges of Essex County, New Jersey they named them Kittatinny Mountains (large mountains), and later when Kittatinny established a college and chose a mascot for their football team, they chose *Ma-min-da-a-see*, the Munsee War Panther as their mascot, to inspire them to be victorious. As it is a mountain lion more than a literal panther, the team became known famously as “The Kittatinny Lions,” although it was later changed to “Cougars,” a different species. Around campus, the ambient statuary correctly shows mountain lion or catamount, rather than circus lion as their resident ‘War God.’”



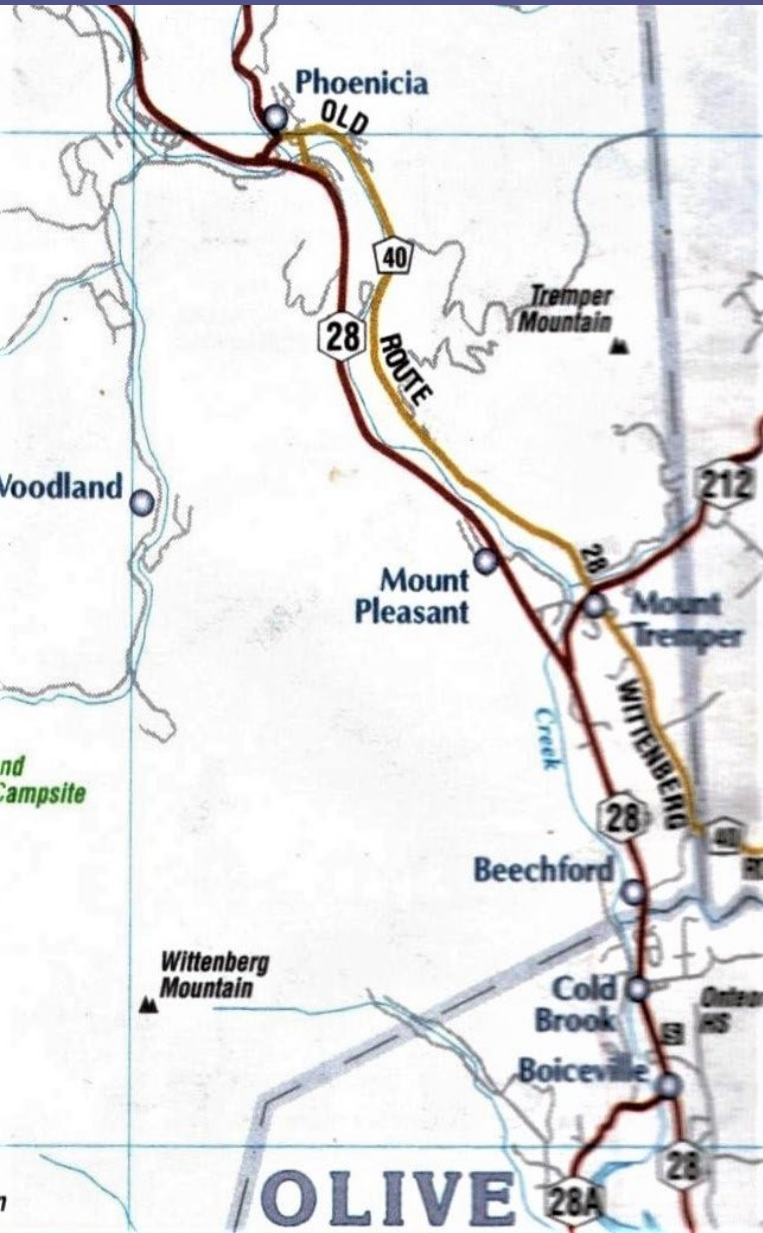
Can readers see the connection between creation and destruction in the natural world, not just in the kaboom of a life-giving meteor crashing into the earth, but in smaller ways at all times? Apparently the Munsee attributed sacred life-giving properties to War Panther that have been kept secret even to this day.





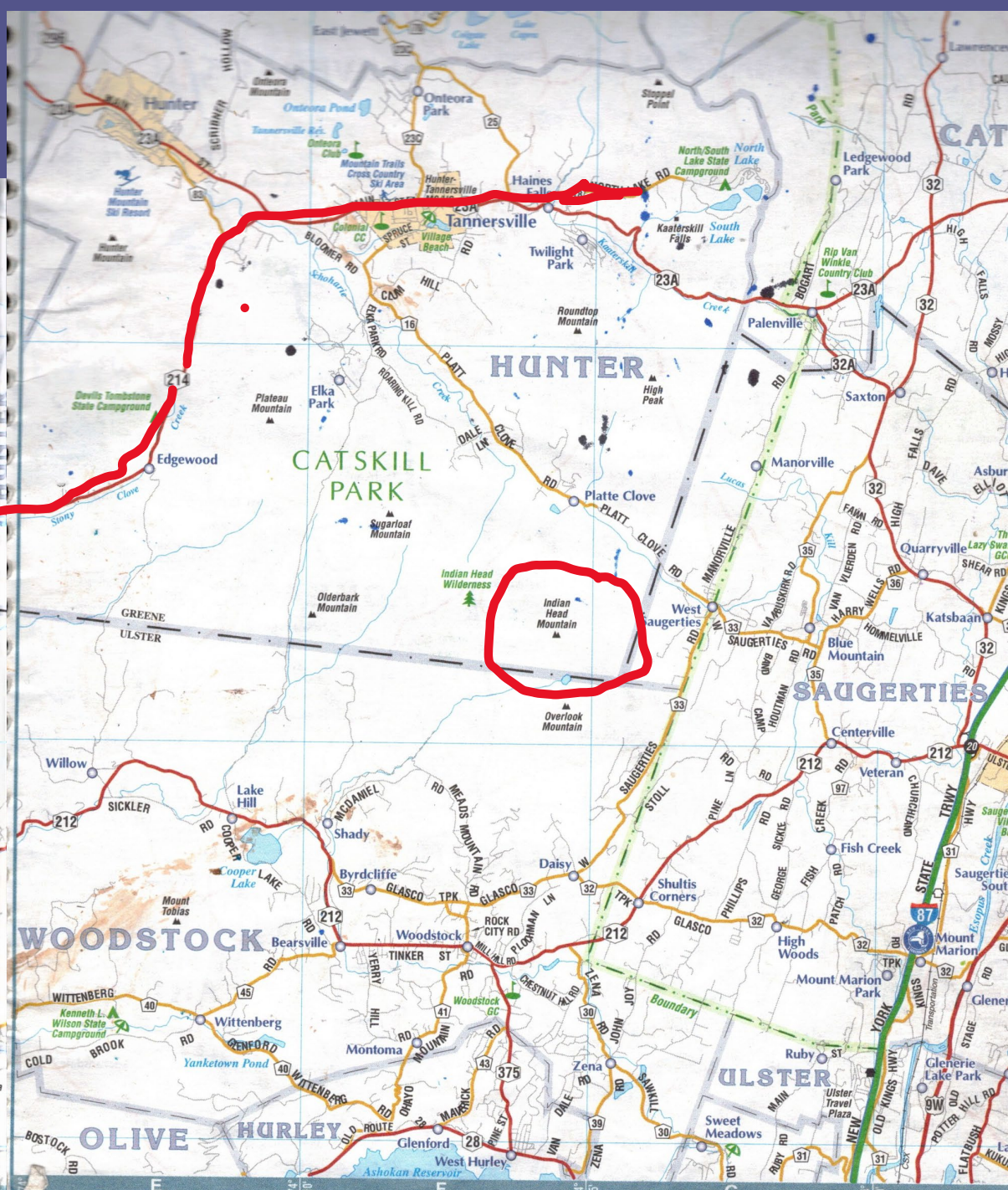
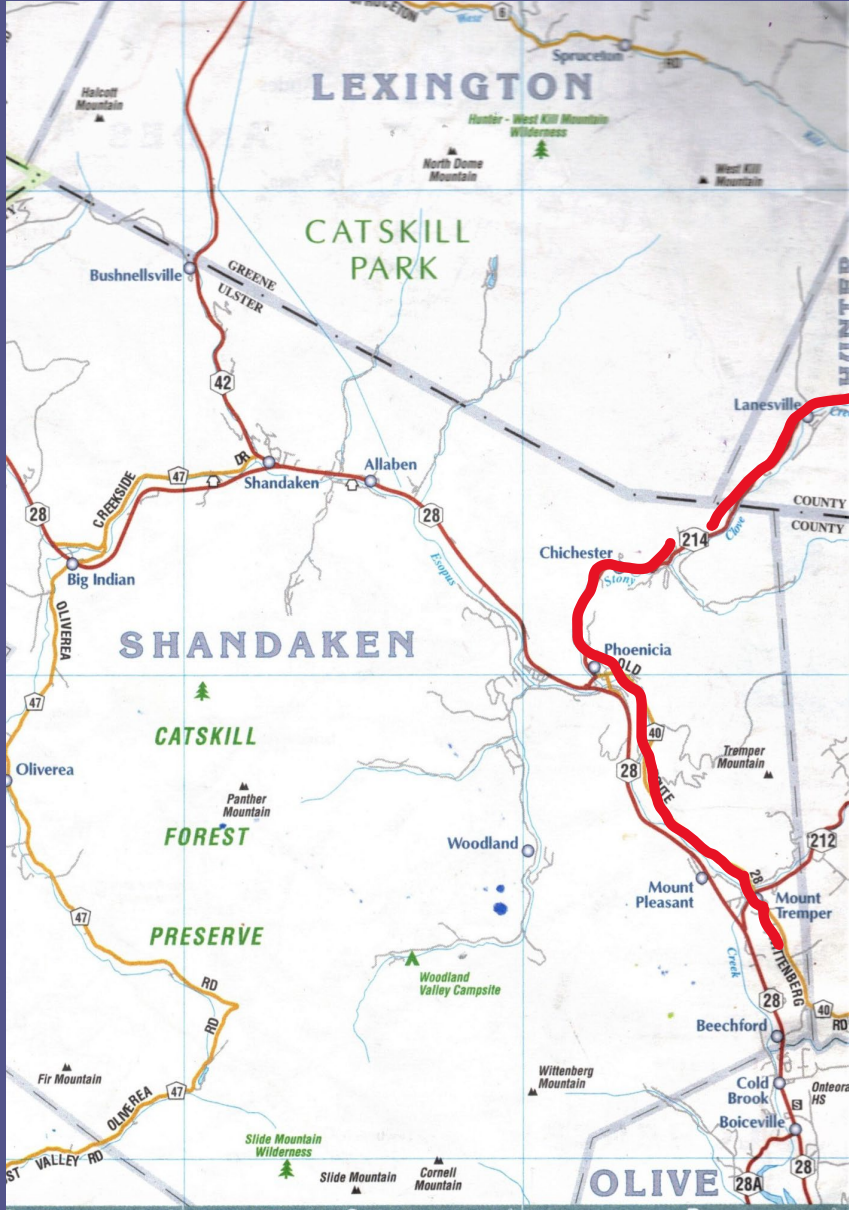
Coincidentally, the so-called “Green Comet” was sitting on Draco’s Tail from Jan. 23 to Jan 26th, and moved off of it yesterday.

The “old 28”, county 40, an original portage route



The Pepacton Trail follows 28 A through Olive into Boiceville, closely following the Esopus. There are numerous cairn fields to the east of 28, one field on Bostock Road to the south. Then it heads north through Cold Brook with the Esopus to the left. Then at Beechford we enter Shandaken Township and the portage trail splits into an upper and lower river road. Wittenberg (40) is the upper road (higher, dryer elevation better for spring and fall) while 28 follows the Esopus closely. Wittenberg Road has numerous “cairns” along its length. We cross Little Beaver Kill then access Wittenberg Road through Winne Road. Great Fort Shandaken was between Migliorelli’s Farm Mart (on 28) and Carle Road (on 40). Then at Mount Tremper the road splits. 212 (elsewhere the Waughkonk Trail) here is a connecting spur to Mount Tremper (former site of Camp Wapanachki). Then one turns left onto “old 28,” county 40, the low portage route.

The Path Chief Shandaken Took in the Legendary Story



Is the profile on “Indian Head Mountain” really that of Chief Shandaken? It would make sense, as the path of his sorrowful retreat, from Pine Orchard to Fort Shandaken forms a broken bow pointing skyward with Indian Head Mountain in the archer’s position.

Algonquins associate altitude with levels of the spirit world. The mountains from which the Esopus runs are mostly above 3500 feet.



**View of Burroughs Range
from Phonacia**

A mountain was literally a “stairway to heaven.”



Half Way to Heaven

As with many ancient cultures around the world, the Lenape and Mohican of the Hudson Valley reserved the mountains for fearless hunters of game and also fearless seekers for God. As Manitou is found at the highest of twelve levels of heaven, parallel to the levels of clouds in the sky, so one ascends to God by climbing the mountain, not just symbolically, but in fact. It is said that the power of spirit increases as you climb higher, and that most people are not pure enough to withstand that power for very long, and come back down to the valley sooner or later. Some Algonquin thought says such an ascent can make you crazy if you're not ready for it...The Wall of Manitou is so tall it was said to reach half way to heaven. No one lived up there in the old days, and few live there today, But the Munsee and Mohican would go up to that top berth, halfway to heaven, to get a taste for the afterlife and to do a four day fast alone, with no one near but God."

Native New Yorkers p. 302 Council Oak Books, 2002

Twelve Levels of Clouds in the Sky

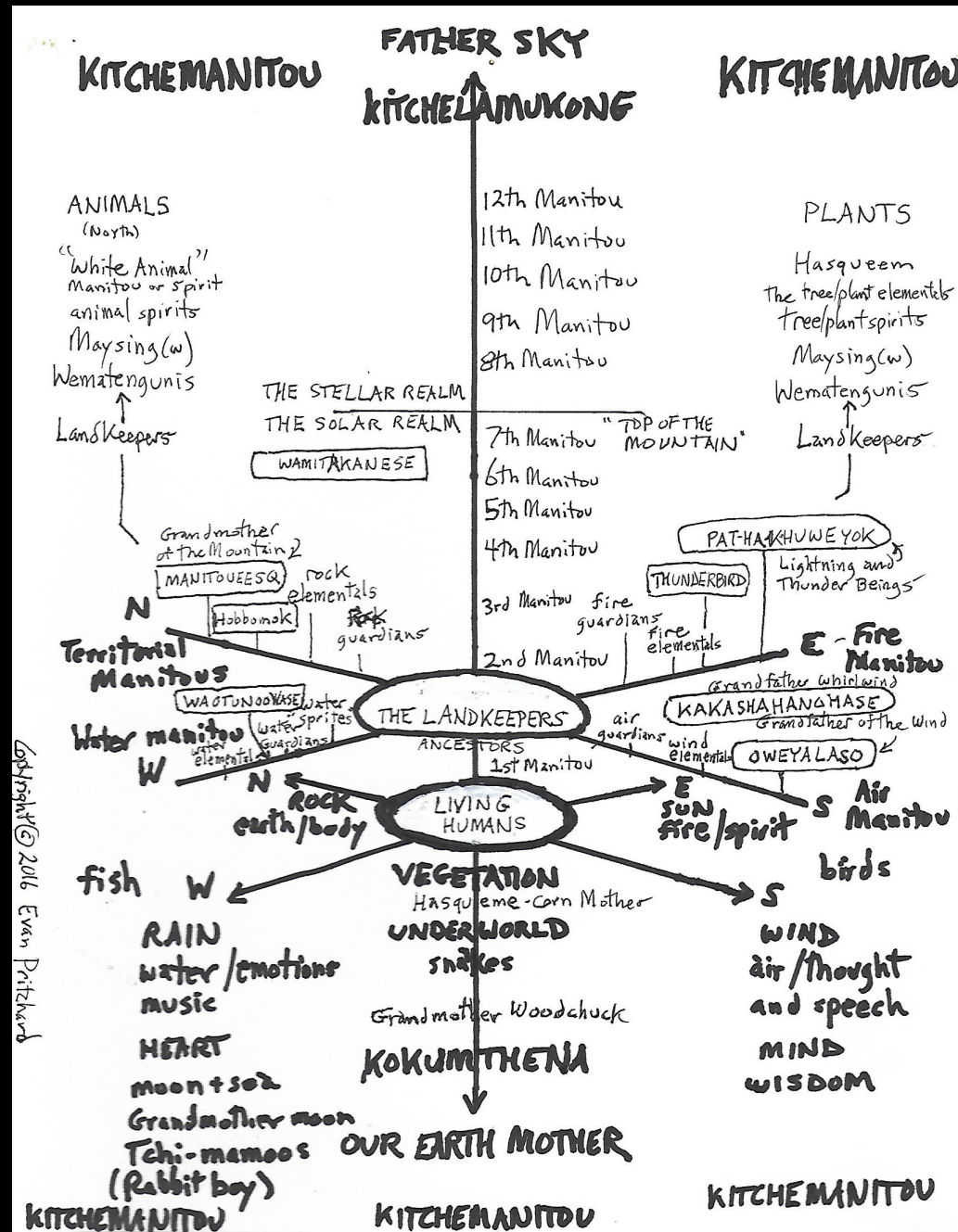
In the Cass-Trowbridge questionnaire, Cass writes: (#5) “Do they believe in subordinate deities, and by what names do they distinguish them?”

Answer: “They believe in twelve subordinate deities placed in different grades descending from the highest to the lowest. They think the lowest is on earth among them but invisible noticing all their actions, which he communicates to the next deity and so from one to the other until it is communicated to the supreme being.”
Cass writes: “The concept of twelve heavens, each presided over by a Manito, who repeated the prayers of the Indians until they reached the Creator on high, was an important part of the Delaware religious pattern. Thus, a supplicant repeated his prayers twelve times.”

p. 113 *The Delaware Indian Westward Migration*
C.A. Weslager Middle Atlantic Press 1978
Wallingford PA

WE HAVE LOST AN INNER GEOGRAPHY AS WELL

In Delawarian cosmology, the natural world is filled with a wide variety of spirit beings, who interact with each other in complex ways. There are “Twelve Levels of Clouds in the Sky” each with a head Manitou (or spirit). Each level has a “medicine wheel,” with four directions (plus up, down, center, totaling seven). Here we see the physical level (1) where living beings live, plus the dream level (2) where the Landkeepers and many magical beings live. By climbing tall mountains we gain easier access to the upper levels of cloud beings, but not past the seventh.



The Importance of Altitude in Algonquin Culture

From Lewis Henry Morgan, *The Indian Journals, 1859-1862* p 167 (From Rocky Mountain Journal, 1862) From the Shawnee

“Father DeSmet told me the following which he had from a Shawnee who was a Catholic. He said that the residence of the Great Spirit was upon a high mountain in the midst of a large and beautiful island. He dwelt upon the summit. From the top issues numerous stream which, descending on all sides to the plains became beautiful rivers, which abounded in fish. The plains between were covered with cattle of all kinds and with game. The plains were full of flowers, and roots and berries. Here the good and saved Indians resided in the midst of abundance. This island was surrounded by water, and was reached in one place only by a [fallen] tree of supernatural length, on which the departed spirit was obliged to cross. Near the center was a grape vine bearing delicious grapes. As the spirit approached it he became anxious to reach the fruit. If his life had been upright and good, his step was firm; he reached it in safety, and soon crossed to the island which his eternal happiness was secure. But if he had been wicked when he approached the grape vine, his anxiety to reach it became equally great, but he was sure to lose his footing and fall into the rushing waters beneath by which he was borne onward to a cold and barren and desolate country, where he was doomed to wander forever in a state of misery and famine.”





Dancing Rock Observatory Seat at Boyceville off route 28

There are many petroforms in Boyceville ...cairns, stone rows, serpent mounds, even this chair. Interestingly most of them are located at between 800 and 1100 feet altitude. This stone bench, facing south, is located so as to be an ideal astronomical observatory.



Here is a different Algonquin village, one on Manhattan. The stream in the foreground replicates what The Esopus Creek looked like before the dam.

In the early 1900s there were at least 19 tracts of land owned by people named Davis which are now underneath the reservoir. Even the postman was named Davis (and I'm pretty sure he was Munsee) Its hard to say how many were related to the Esopus Munsee Delaware Davises, descendants of Kit Davits.

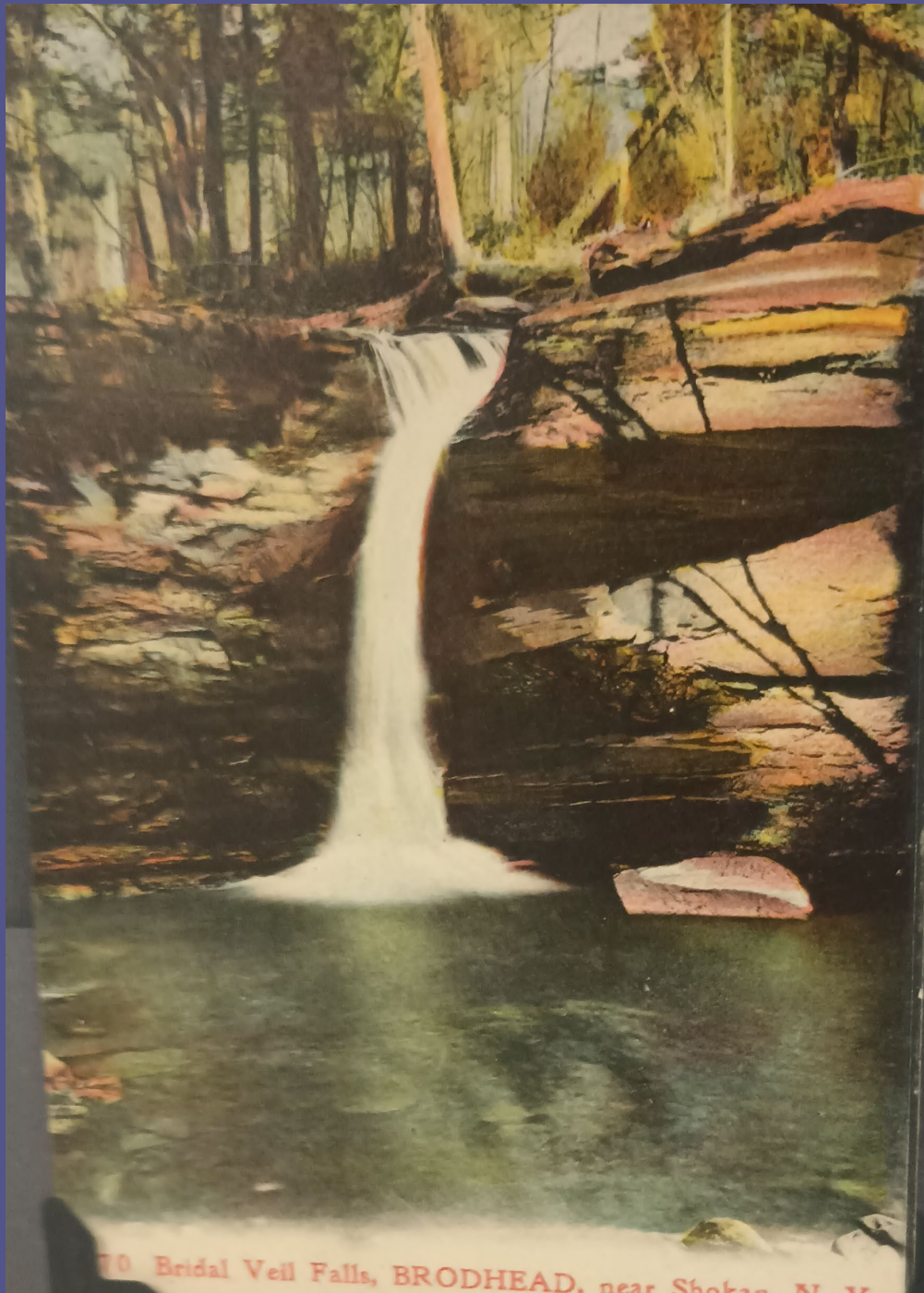


Incidentally.....



“Every waterfall has its song,” so say the Abenaki and Mohicans of Hudson Valley. Tenor Enrico Caruso (1873-1921) the world’s first major recording star who sang at the grand opening of the Metropolitan Opera in 1903, visited our Bishop’s Falls in 1904 and sent this post card. Does this “Theater” Wurlitzer look like Bishop’s Falls to you, or is it just me? Bishop’s Falls is now under the Ashokan Reservoir, not far from today’s Ashokan Music Camp which hosts a recording studio. (Photo by Evan Pritchard)

This is Bridal Veil Falls, near Bishop Falls, both of which, like the hamlet of Brodhead, NY, (within Shokan, NY) exists no more. It pours its tears of grief somewhere under the Ashokan Reservoir.



Post Office where old man Davis worked

70 Bridal Veil Falls, BRODHEAD, near Shokan, N. Y.

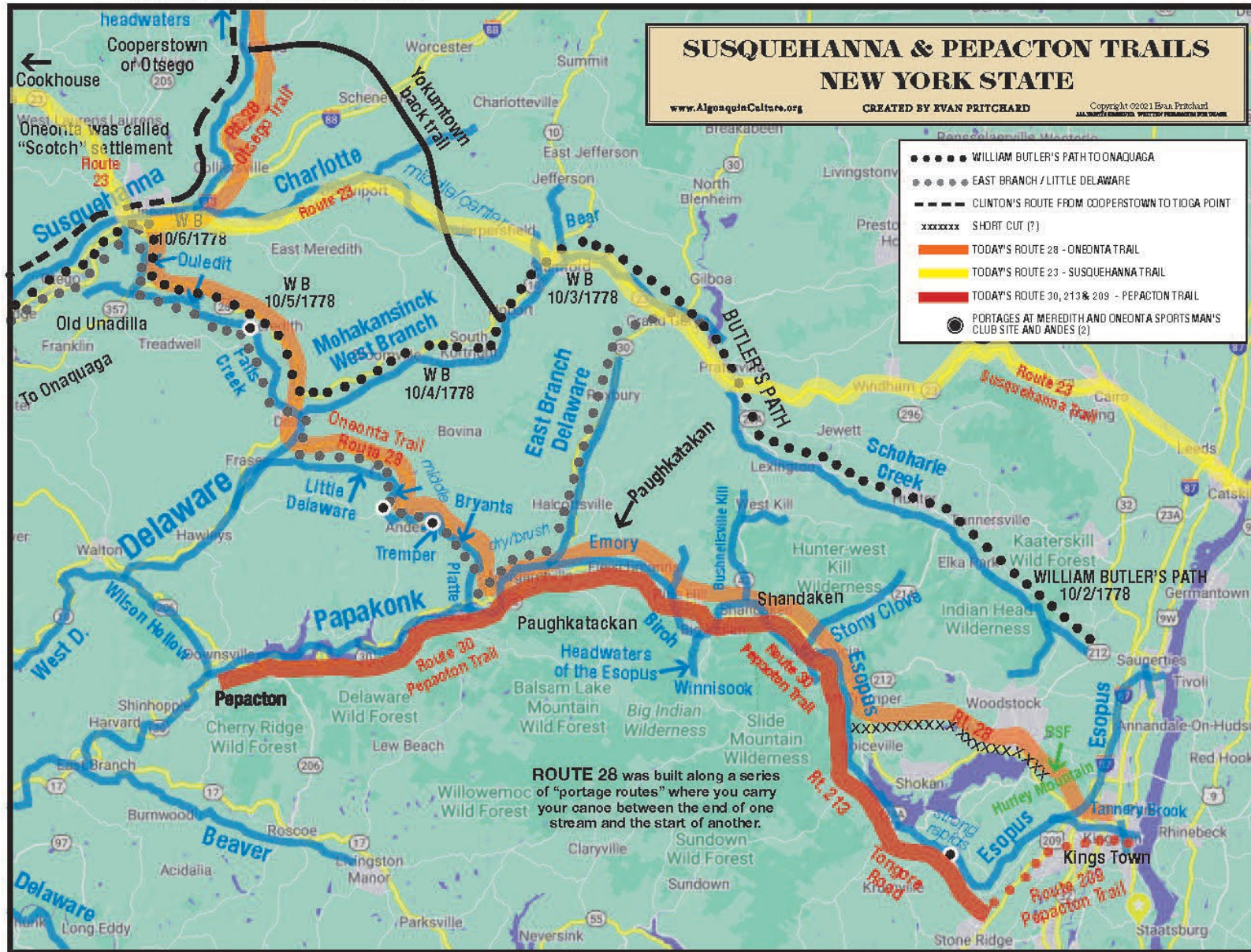
Wigwam at Ashokan Center



Portage Route Along Esopus

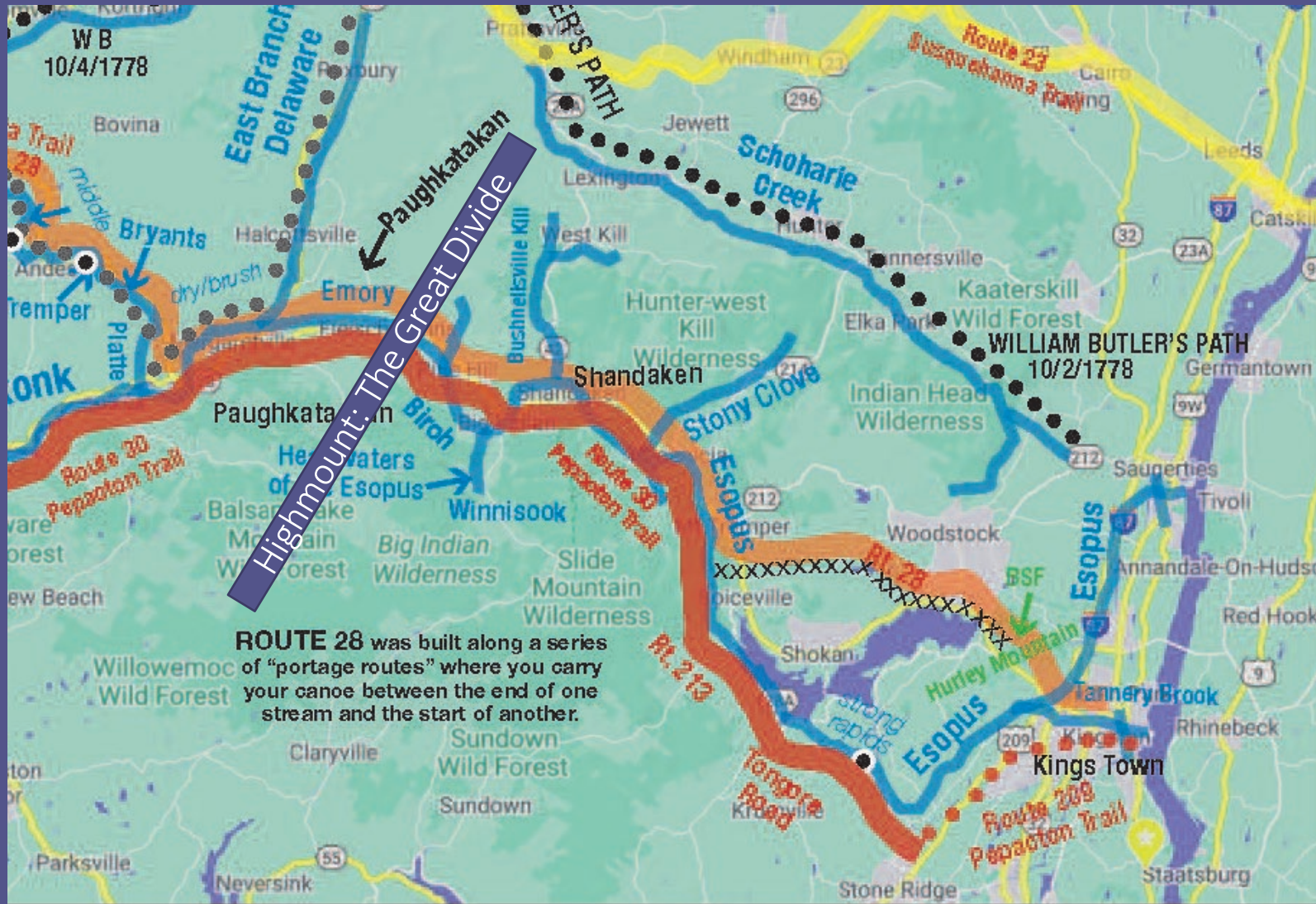


Clinton's army marched along what is now **Route 28** from Cooperstown / Otsego August 9th, 1779.



Features from the 1777 map of the trail to Pepacton are in red ink.

There were many portage routes between the Hudson and Susquehanna; The yellow is the Susquehanna Trail now route 23. The orange is the Oneonta Trail, now route 28, made up of several portage trails, including those taken by General Clinton south from Cooperstown, and General Butler west from Schoharie (on the way to Oquaga; he went to Fraser using part of this route); The red trail is the Pepacton Trail, following Tannery Brook from the Hudson (Washington Ave Kingston) to the Esopus, then following 209 (Minisink Trail) west to Tongore Road, then following the Esopus through Ashokan, to 28 A to 28. Then at Margaretville, it follows Route 30 west to Pepacton.



The trail marked xxx was not a portage route, but was perhaps a shortcut over Hurley Ridge through Blue Stone Forest. It is now part of 28.

The bar marked "Highmount" is the great divide between the Hudson River watershed to the east and the Delaware River watershed to the west. Birch Creek to the east and Emory to the west are remarkably close, just under a mile, allowing for reasonable portaging.



The bend in the
Esopus at Tongore
Road....

This is a section of the
Esopus most people
miss—located
downstream from the
Ashokan area, where
it stops flowing south
and makes a
surprising turns east
again.



The long stairs to the river at Marbletown Park on Tongore Road, part of the old Pepacton Trail.

Ernest C. Myer Elementary



This parking lot was built over an important archaeological site of an early Munsee village, that had built up near an artesian spring just across the Minisink Trail from the Esopus creek.



This slope lies behind the school, and faces the creek, the site of seated burials.



Creekside





Old Hurley Burial Grounds

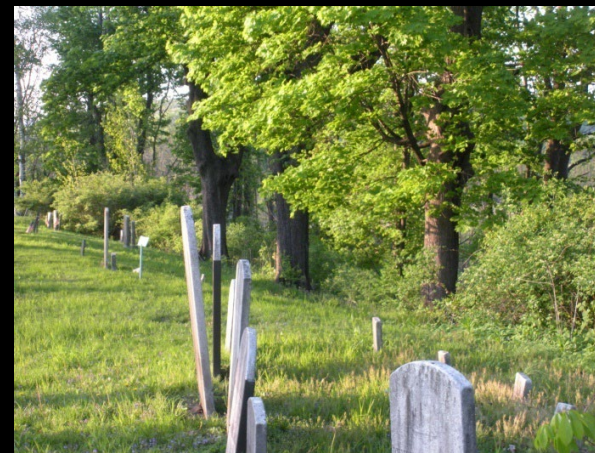


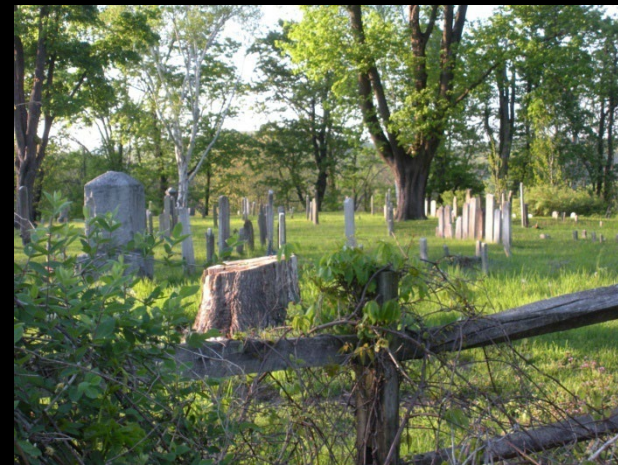
Photo right: just beyond the colonial burial grounds is the edge of a steep bluff. The Esopus is at the bottom.





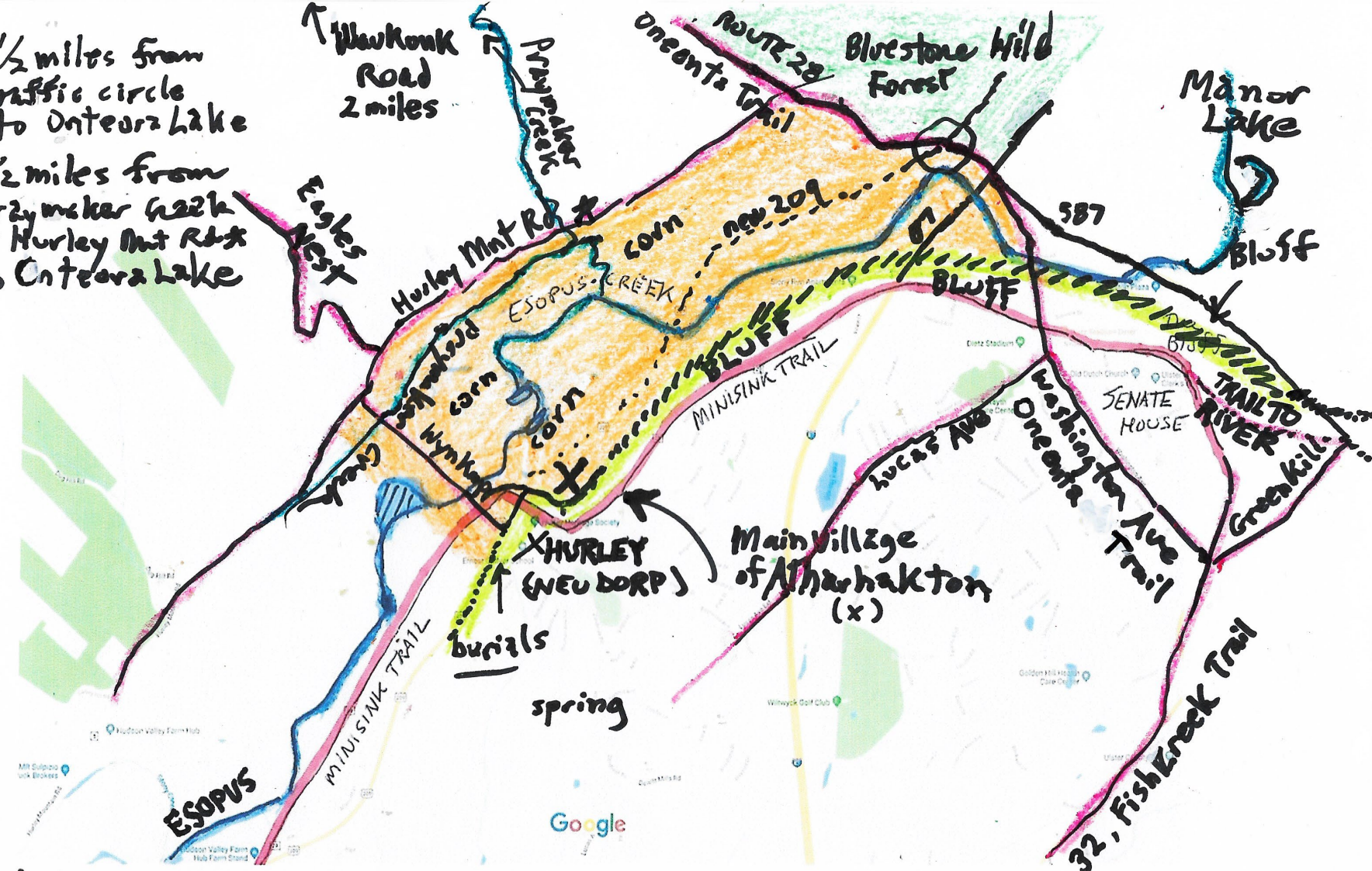
The name “old mine road” is disputed by some, but the Minisink Trail is not. It connects Minisink Island (near Port Jervis) with Kingston, NY (via 209).

Old Hurley Burial Grounds



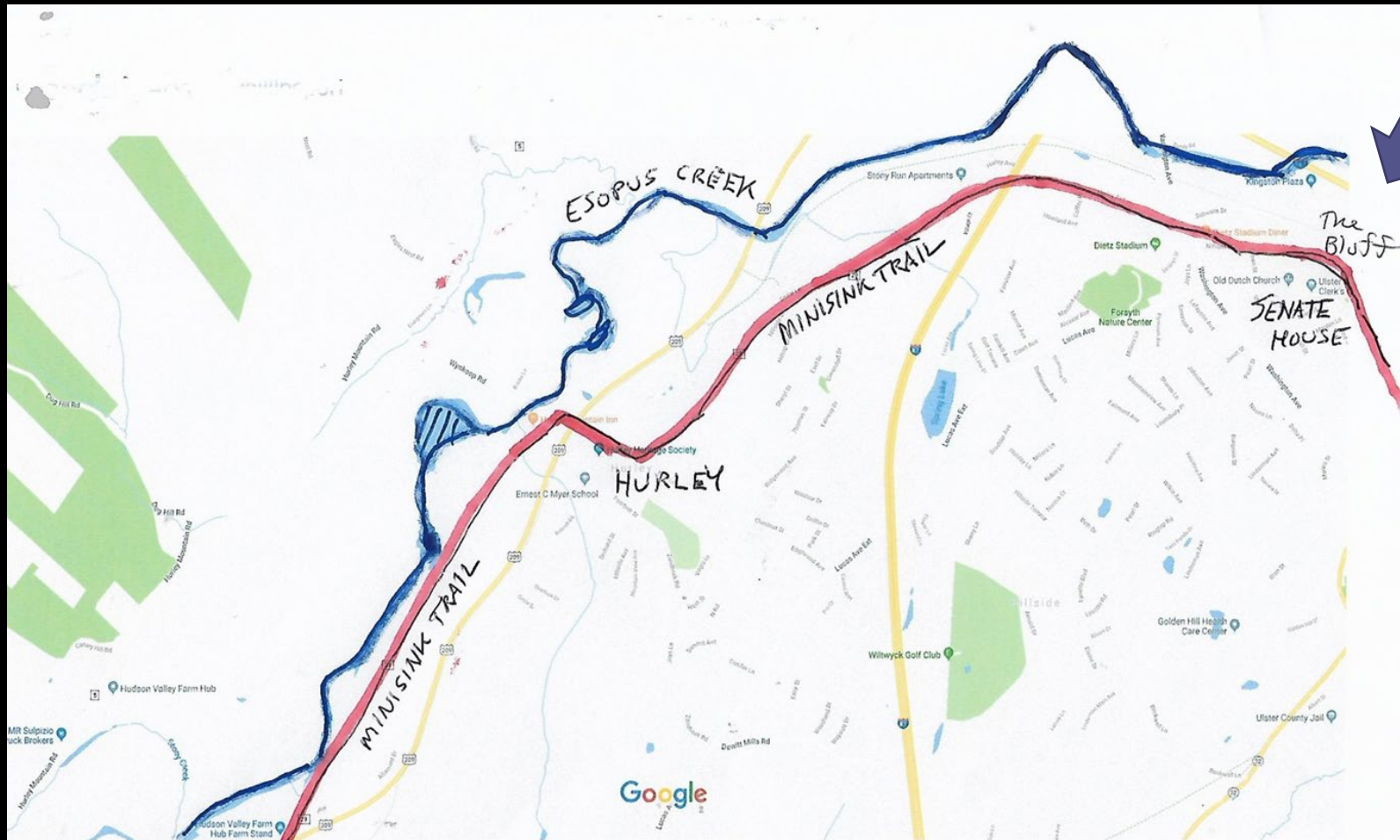
2 1/2 miles from traffic circle to Ontario Lake

2 1/2 miles from Praymaker Gap at Hurley Mt Rd to Ontario Lake



The best farming in the Hudson Valley was said (by Orstami) to be in the Esopus: the SW/NE section of the river from Wynkoop to route 28 between the bluff and Praymaker Creek was the heart of it.

Reconstruction of Atharhakton + Thomas Chambers deed of 1652
Even Pritchard



Manor Lake possible site of original Thomas Chambers “Wiltwyck Manor” perhaps called Wiggawansink.

Sylvester believes that a branch of the Minisink Trail followed 209 past Hurley, connecting with The Kings Highway now 31, following the Esopus. It would then have followed 212 east to Main Street. A path along Partition Street would take you to the falls, where the eels gathered in council, and following Main and turning right would take you to the mouth of the Esopus where the lighthouse stands today.



Council Fire of the Eels
Near the mouth of the
Esopus is “the council
fire place of the eels,”
which is below what
we call Cantine Falls.
Mama Nuchwe
mentioned this as a
land mark for a land
treaty of 1677. Her
name for it was
“Teenday
Sayakameek!”

Mama Nuchwe's name means "Striped Blanket" in Munsee. She created her "self portrait" during the signing of the Nicolls Treaty, January 19th, 1681.



The Native Americans of the Hudson Valley had been living peaceful, civilized lives for centuries prior to the time of European contact. The Sawkill, which runs past the Bearsville Theatrical was called Waughkonk, a "peaceful valley," and unfortunately colonization destroyed whole communities in a relatively short amount of time. Names of rivers, valleys, roads and villages were changed or appropriated with little or no acknowledgement of their origin. To acknowledge the rich Native American history of local sites that have inspired artists of the Woodstock Colony is a way to understand and to begin to make peace with the indigenous ancestors of the land; and peace-making is integral in native society. As Mama Nuchwe, female chief or sunkskwa of the Esopus Munsee said, on April 21st, 1675, her people "are inclined to preserve peace and desire it as much as anybody desires the light of early morning which is pleasant to everybody."

