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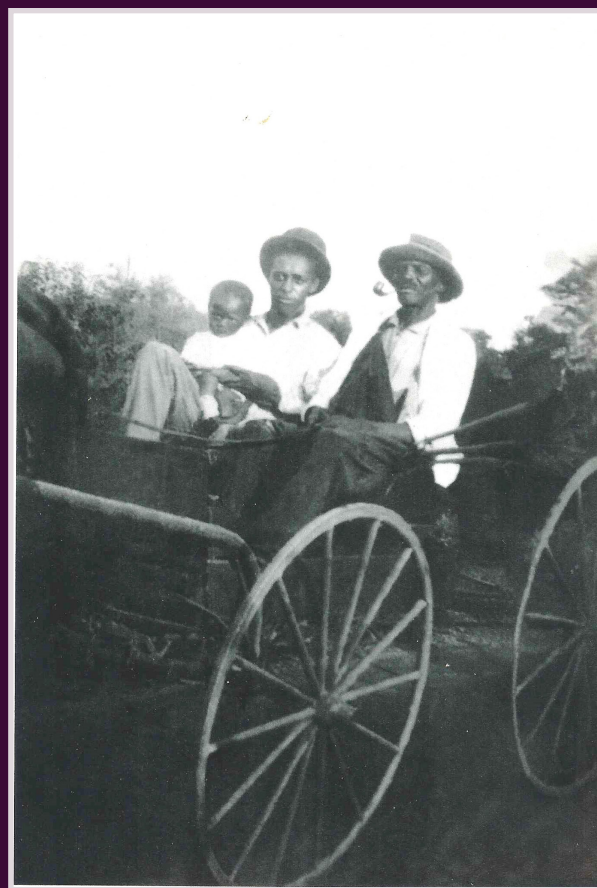


Photo details on page 117



Repairing Erasure

INDIGENOUS IDENTITY AND PAPER GENOCIDE

Teresa A. Vega

This article is a more extensive version of the “Repairing Erasure: Indigenous Identity and Paper Genocide” webinar I gave on October 19, 2023, at the 2023 National Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society’s *Hiding in Plain Sight: Recovering the Erased Histories of our Ancestors in the United States and the Caribbean*.

As a descendant of the Munsee Lenape, early Afro-Dutch settlers, and some of the first Africans hailing from Central, West Africa, and Madagascar who arrived in New Amsterdam during the early 1600s,¹ I’ve had the privilege of bearing witness to the systematic erasure of my ancestors from history, a tragic narrative that continues to persist throughout the ongoing settler colonial project.² The overarching goal of settler colonialism has consistently revolved around replacing the original inhabitants of Lenapehoking with waves of settlers who, in substantial numbers, arrived in the early 1600s, solidifying and imposing their distinct national identity and notions of sovereignty.³ This nefarious process, marked by genocide, enslavement, dispossession, and coupled with the insidious practice of paper genocide, has tragically contributed to perpetuating the mistaken belief that the people of Lenapehoking were rendered extinct.⁴

Original Inhabitants: The People of Lenapehoking

Settler colonizers encountered numerous Indigenous communities, such as the Tappans, Manhattans, Haverstraws, Sing Sings, Kitchawans, Hackensacks, Esopus, Minisinks, and others, who inhabited the expansive region encompassing southwestern Connecticut, New York (including New York City and Long Island), New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware.⁵ These communities often operated as smaller bands within broader

federations. The collective inhabitants of this land were known as the Lenni-Lenape or Delaware people, who resided in the Northeastern Woodlands of the United States. Their language belongs to the Algonquin family and features two dialects, Munsee (spoken in Connecticut, northern New Jersey, and New York) and Unami (used in southern New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware), which were mutually intelligible.

Lenape society operated under a matrilineal structure, where lineage and descent were traced through the maternal line. This matrilineal framework holds the key to comprehending how the Lenape not only endured but thrived amidst the



harrowing challenges of genocide, slavery, epidemics, warfare, land dispossession, forced relocations, and more.⁶ Within this society, women occupied pivotal roles as cultural bearers, transmitting their invaluable knowledge to the succeeding generations. Their resilience shone through in various survival strategies, which encompassed:

Intermarriage with Fellow Indigenous

Survivors and Embracing New Kin: The Lenape forged bonds through marriages and adoption, creating an extended network of support among Indigenous survivors and enslaved Africans.⁷

Formation of Alliances with Dominant Ethnic and Racial Groups: They strategically aligned themselves with more powerful ethnic and racial communities, navigating complex socio-political landscapes for mutual benefit.

Establishment of Mutual Aid Societies, Churches, Political Organizations, and More: These collaborative efforts bolstered their collective strength, fostering resilience through collective action.

Trauma Self-Care Rooted in Religion, Culture, Oral History, and Humor: The Lenape leaned on their religious beliefs, cultural practices, rich oral traditions, and a sense of humor as sources of solace and fortitude in the face of adversity.

Passive or Active Resistance: In their quest for survival, the Lenape sometimes adopted passive or active resistance strategies, adapting as circumstances demanded to protect their cultural heritage.

Assimilation: Recognizing the evolving dynamics around them, some Lenape individuals chose assimilation as a means of survival, albeit while preserving aspects of their heritage.

Through these multifaceted survival strategies, the matrilineal society of Lenape demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of formidable challenges, leaving an enduring legacy that persists to this day. In New Jersey today, there are three state-recognized tribes that are recognized by the federal government: the Ramapough Lenape Nation, the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape, and the Powhatan Renape Nation.

Within my family history, survival strategies took shape through the intermarriage of Munsee Lenape women with men of diverse “racial” backgrounds, encompassing those of African, mixed race, and European descent. Due to the intricate workings of the “One-Drop Rule” and “Blood Quantum” policies within the settler colonial framework, my ancestors found themselves officially classified as “Black,” “Negro,” “Mulatto,” “Colored,” “White,” or “Free People of Color” on government records (e.g., census data and vital documents).⁸ Though many people know that 12 million people of African descent were forcibly imported into this country, many are unaware that between 2–4 million Indigenous people, mainly men, were forcibly exported from their homelands to other areas of the world.⁹ “African American” and “Native American” are not mutually exclusive categories. My ancestors saw themselves as both. They were also very keenly aware of how the larger society viewed them, which was different from how they saw themselves. Indigenous people defied, and continue to defy, phenotypic stereotypes that are based on the dominant culture’s perceived notions of indigeneity.

Manifestations of the Historical Erasure Problem

During the period from 1790 to 1950, Native Americans classified as “not taxed” were systematically excluded from census records.¹⁰ Furthermore, it was the responsibility of census enumerators to arbitrarily assign a person’s “race” up until the 1950 census. Moreover, it wasn’t until 1924 that the US Congress passed the Indian Citizenship



Act, bestowing citizenship upon Native Americans born within the United States.¹¹ However, the right to vote remained subject to the discretion of individual states, with some withholding this fundamental right from Native Americans until as late as 1957.

In this context, it comes as no surprise that Native Americans stand as one of the most chronically undercounted and medically underserved groups in the United States. The implications of census population figures extend beyond mere demographic data, affecting the allocation of economic benefits, representation in Congress, and the enforcement of voting rights laws, amplifying the disparities experienced by Native communities across the country.

The confluence of settler colonialism and eugenics gained prominence in the early twentieth century. Eugenics, an unscientific doctrine, posited that human populations could be enhanced through selective breeding. This idea gave rise to

the noxious concept of scientific racism, which infiltrated various fields, including anthropology, sociology, and even genealogy, during the early 1920s.¹² Underpinning this ideology was the belief in European superiority, relegating other racial groups to lower rungs of a hierarchical structure. As a grim corollary to this doctrine, forced or coerced sterilization emerged to prevent individuals deemed “inferior” from procreating. Throughout the annals of American history, women of color, impoverished individuals, as well as mentally and physically disabled women were subjected to involuntary sterilization.¹³

The horrific specter of eugenics found one of its most infamous expressions in Hitler’s Final Solution, resulting in the genocide of the Jewish population in Germany and Eastern Europe. This dark chapter underscores how eugenics was weaponized to exterminate those branded as “inferior.”¹⁴

Nowhere was the intersection of settler colonialism and eugenics more palpable than in the state of Virginia. Walter Ashby Plecker, an unapologetic white supremacist, eugenicist, and physician, wielded his authority as the head of the Bureau of Statistics from 1912 to 1946 to draft Virginia’s 1924 Racial Purity Act.¹⁵ This legislation not only prohibited interracial marriages but also codified the binary racial categories of “White” and “Colored.” With a single stroke of his pen, Plecker effectively obliterated Virginia’s indigenous population from official records.¹⁶ Compliance with this new racial classification system became obligatory for obtaining birth certificates, military draft records, school enrollment, marriage licenses, and more.

Plecker even delved into investigations of individuals' racial backgrounds, altering pre-1924 birth certificates by substituting "Colored" for "Indian," assigning certain surnames as indicative of "Free People of Color" ancestry, and perpetrating similar actions. This law was overturned in 1967 in the Supreme Court's *Loving vs. Virginia* ruling.¹⁷ Consequently, this insidious phenomenon, known as "paper genocide," emerged as a tool for actual genocide and dispossession. It systematically rendered Indigenous individuals invisible within the realm of written records.

Though it may initially seem innocuous, paper genocide is a profoundly violent act that methodically erased the indigenous identities of countless ancestors on both sides of the Hudson River, spanning centuries. This erasure extended beyond Virginia, affecting other Indigenous communities along the Eastern seaboard who had historically navigated the interconnected realms of the Red and Black Atlantic worlds since the 1400s.¹⁸

Repairing Erasure: Decolonizing the Archives

As a descendant of the Ramapough Lenape, I am acutely aware of the enduring impact of the ongoing settler colonial project. It persists in ways that effectively render my ancestors invisible, contributing to the erroneous belief that the people of Lenapehoking disappeared. In response to this pervasive narrative of Indigenous extinction in New Jersey, I have taken it upon myself to pursue a deeply personal mission: the reclamation and writing of one's ancestors' rightful place back into the historical record.

There are several critical avenues through which we can endeavor to restore our ancestors to their deserved prominence in history:

Revisiting Oral History as a Source of Identity: Our oral traditions are invaluable sources of identity and cultural continuity. By preserving and sharing these stories, we

can ensure that the legacy of our ancestors remains vibrant.

Re-examining Historic Documents and Records: Scrutinizing historical documents and records with a discerning eye allows us to unearth hidden narratives and perspectives that have long been marginalized or overlooked.

Exploring Local/State History Books: Local and state history books can offer insights into the Indigenous history of specific regions. By engaging with these texts, we can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of our ancestors' experiences.

Analyzing Archives for Indigenous Perspectives: Archival research provides an opportunity to uncover Indigenous perspectives that have been obscured by dominant narratives. These perspectives enrich our understanding of history and challenge prevailing misconceptions.

Learning Ancestral Indigenous Languages: The revitalization of ancestral Indigenous languages is a powerful way to reconnect with our heritage. Language is a conduit to culture, and its preservation is instrumental in ensuring that our ancestors' voices continue to resonate in the present.¹⁹

In pursuing these avenues, I not only honor the memory of my ancestors but also challenge and correct the historical erasure perpetuated by settler colonialism. By actively engaging with our heritage and contributing to the broader discourse on Indigenous history, we can collectively work toward a more accurate and inclusive representation of our people's legacy.

DNA Tests and Indigenous Identity

In the past decade, the popularity of DNA testing has surged, with an increasing number of individuals seeking to unravel the mysteries of their

ethnic heritage.²⁰ While this newfound knowledge can be enlightening, it has also spawned the misconception that possessing Native American genetic markers automatically confers entitlement to perceived government benefits. It's crucial to recognize that each tribal nation maintains specific membership and tribal enrollment criteria, rendering this presumption inconsequential. To be clear, being identified as Native American through DNA does not automatically grant access to tribal affiliations or benefits as these are determined by individual tribal governments based on their established guidelines and traditions.

Combining traditional genealogical techniques with DNA testing can lead to many important family discoveries. It is important to remember that DNA is not culture,²¹ and DNA testing cannot link you to a specific Native American tribe. Ethnic inheritance is also not a given since DNA is *randomly* inherited. It is possible to be a descendant of a tribe without having Native American DNA.²² Your closest matches are your autosomal DNA cousin matches which reflect more recent ancestry. DNA testing can link you to your living Indigenous DNA cousins (tribal-affiliated) if you have a paper trail that directly links you to them. I turned to DNA testing to break down the brick walls that paper genocide created.

Erased No More: The Kitchawan (Wappinger Federation) Patriots of Westchester County, New York

Repairing erasure often begins with the simple act of reaching out to your DNA cousins. In the latter part of August 2023, I initiated contact with one of my European DNA cousins, a woman by the name of Billie. Billie's genetic makeup revealed an ancestry predominantly European, with 97 percent of her heritage tracing back to Europe, complemented by 2 percent Sub-Saharan African, and 1 percent Native American ancestry.²³ Upon closer examination, it became apparent that we shared a common genetic thread, connecting us

through her 4X-great-grandparents, Isaac Sharp (1759–1836) and Amey Mooney (1765–1863). Her ancestors were variously categorized as “Mulatto,” “Free People of Color,” “Black,” and “White” in historical census records.²⁴ Isaac Sharp was also a Black Patriot who fought as a Green Mountain Boy, in New York, Connecticut, and Vermont for the duration of the Revolutionary War, but was not included in DAR's *Forgotten Patriots*.²⁵ He was part of the pioneering men from Connecticut who settled with their families in the Green Mountains of Vermont when it was still a disputed territory claimed by New Hampshire and New York starting in the 1760s. The Green Mountain Boys started out as a *de facto* state militia operating within the territory of the New Hampshire Grants. When the Revolutionary War started and after their leader, Ethan Allen, sided with the Patriots, the Green Mountain Boys became part of the New York Regiment. When Vermont was made a state in 1777, the Green Mountain Boys disbanded, and they joined and fought for the Connecticut and Vermont Regiments.

What added another layer of intrigue to our connection was the discovery of seven additional DNA cousins who all traced their lineage back to Henry Sharp (1800–1877), the son of Isaac and Amey. Billie's family heritage, deeply rooted in the colonial history of the Hudson River Valley region, encompassing Fairfield County, Connecticut, as well as Westchester, Dutchess, and Orange Counties, New York, along with Bergen County, New Jersey, strikingly mirrored the geographic locations where my own ancestors had once resided. With a simple inquiry, I asked Billie if she might be able to provide me with more insights about our shared ancestors, particularly Isaac, while also sharing some details about my own diverse family background. Billie replied with her phone number and email address and wrote about how happy she would be to learn about “our northeast lineage.”²⁶

Over a decade ago, Billie told me that she had sent away for the Civil War Pension file for her 2X-great-grandfather Charles Sharp (1828–1864),

son of Henry. She was surprised when his pension mentioned that he was a member of the United States Colored Troops (Union) who fought in New York's 26th Regiment, Company K.²⁷ She thought it was a mistake as no one in her family had any recollection of a Black ancestor.²⁸ After getting her AncestryDNA test results back, she realized that her own family's hidden history was finally exposed. Billie encouraged me to further investigate her Sharp line as she was "in the declining years of doing genealogy."²⁹ She was also gracious enough to share her AncestryDNA matches with me as a collaborator. I promised her that I would make notes and share my findings with her.

I went back to Amey (Mooney) Sharp's Widows' Pension³⁰ and traced the couple's footsteps on all official documents. Amey mentioned that she married Isaac in 1784 in North Salem, New York, and they later moved to Bedford, New York. In 1818, when Isaac received his Revolutionary War pension, they "officially" moved their family to Nichols, Tioga County, New York.³¹ Isaac Sharp and his son worked in the lumber industry in Tioga County. He died in 1836 in Nichols, New York, and Amey later passed away there in 1863.

Isaac Sharp was found in both the 1800 census record living in North Salem, New York,³² as well as in Southeast Dutchess County³³ heading a household of seven Free People of Color. I immediately noticed that there was an Absalom Mooney living right next door to him in the 1800 North Salem census heading a household of six Free People of Color. Could he be one of Amey's brothers?

Researching Absalom further, I found Absalom's military record along with his brother John's in *The History of Ridgefield, Connecticut*.³⁴ Both fought in Connecticut's 2nd Regiment under the guidance of Colonel Zebulon Butler. However, Absalom and John are not found in any Westchester County, New York, census records after 1800, indicating that they may have moved away from the area or died by 1810. I then went back to the 1790 North Salem census where I stumbled upon

a Philip Mooney³⁵ who headed a household of six Free People of Color. He was not recorded in the 1800 census. His age indicated that he could be the father of Amey, Absalom, and John. Was he?

In pursuit of additional insights, I turned my attention to the Northeast Slave Record Index,³⁶ focusing on North Salem and Bedford, New York, to explore the names of both enslavers and enslaved individuals. Regrettably, my search did not yield any individuals bearing the surnames Sharp or Mooney. Nevertheless, within the records of North Salem and Bedford, I did discover names affiliated with my family's history, including the Purdy, Brown, Lyon, and Green, and Banks families, all of whom enslaved by ancestors.

During that pivotal moment, I revisited Billie's AncestryDNA matches with a newfound determination, honing in on her DNA cousin matches nestled just across the river in Bergen, New Jersey, as well as in the neighboring regions of Rockland and Orange Counties, New York. To my astonishment, a trove of over twenty Ramapough Lenape DNA cousin matches unveiled themselves, bearing surnames such as Mann, Van Dunk, DeVries/DeFreese, and others intimately connected to my own Ramapough Lenape ancestral roots.³⁷

Turning my attention inward, I meticulously scrutinized the DNA cousin matches within my own Sharp lineage, extending the investigation to encompass the genetic connections of my maternal aunt and sister. We unearthed a tapestry of familial ties, woven with the threads of Dutch, Swedish, and Swiss heritage, as evidenced by the presence of individuals bearing the Scherp/e surname scattered throughout the expanse of the Hudson River Valley. Furthermore, our genetic mosaic unveiled Sharp/e descendants of English descent who had intermarried with Dutch settlers on both banks of the Hudson River. This rich tapestry suggests a potential connection to Isaac Sharp's mother, who, like our other ancestors, may have shared Afro-Indigenous heritage. Intriguingly, the substantial Sweden and Denmark admixture detected in my maternal

aunt's DNA points toward the possibility of a link to Isaac Sharp's paternal lineage.³⁸ In our relentless pursuit of ancestral truths, Billie will be Y-DNA testing her paternal nephew, a crucial step toward authenticating her paternal lineage and unraveling the intricate tapestry of our shared heritage.

My own family history was a tapestry woven with threads of diverse Indigenous tribes, including Kitchawan, Siwanoy, Paugussett, Delaware Lenape, Shinnecock, Montauk, Mantinecock, Nipmuc, Mohawk, Mahican, and Wampanoag, among others.³⁹

Within the pages of *When Our Town Was Young: Stories of North Salem's Yesterday* by Eichner and Ferris, I came across a passage that shed light on the local Indigenous inhabitants. It states, "In North Salem, the band of Indians present when our earliest settlers arrived were known as the Kitchawanks, and they were an integral part of Chief Katonah's Mahican tribe."⁴⁰ It was in Yorktown, situated in Westchester County, New York, that the Kitchawan culture had its last stronghold, and it was here that Absalom Mooney was documented as the final Indian resident of North Salem.⁴¹ Coincidentally, Yorktown was also the place where our Peterson, Green, Heady/Hedden, and Butler ancestors called home.

In the book *History of Westchester County, New York* by Scharf, I uncovered a vital piece of the puzzle. Scharf states that "[s]ome of the lineal descendants of the original landowners have continued to reside in the town, most notably the descendants of Absalom Money, the son of Philip Money, an Indian who made his home here in 1784."⁴² With Scharf's statement, the connection became clear: Philip Money was the father of Absalom, John, and Amey.

Like most Black Patriots who served during the Revolutionary War, Isaac valiantly served with just the clothes he wore on his back. In Burtis Everett's 1974 book *A History of Nichols, New York*, he recounts the following incident:

Upon one occasion, at an early period of the war, the Colonel of his regiment desired a

detachment of picked men for an expedition then planned which required men of nerve and prowess. Among other volunteers for the enterprise, Sharp stepped forward, although destitute of shoes. The officer in immediate command drew the attention of the superior officer to the condition of his feet, remarking that they required men with shoes. Sharp promptly convinced them, in his own ready way, that his feet, although unprotected, were as sound as his courage.⁴³

Billie told me that the Sharp men were between 6'5"-7' tall. One can only imagine how imposing Isaac must have looked to the members of his regiment and what an asset he was to them. That he chose to settle amongst his Revolutionary War peers is very telling in that it is a testament of bonds that were forged in the fire that birthed this country.

In a gesture of restorative justice, I resurrect the memory of Patriots and veterans whose contributions have been unjustly overshadowed. It is never too late to write our hidden and forgotten ancestors back into the annals of history. The Sharp and Mooney families played an integral role in the birthing of this nation, their stories representing the enduring resilience of those who bravely survived slavery, dispossession, and genocide, while simultaneously helping to build this nation. Today, I pay the highest tribute to these remarkable individuals and express my deepest gratitude for their unwavering service to our great nation.

Among these unsung heroes, we find Kitchawan/Wappinger Federation Patriot Isaac Sharp, who valiantly served in the New York, Connecticut, and Vermont Lines, under the distinguished leadership of Colonel Seth Warner and Colonel Heman Swift. His unwavering dedication was manifested in pivotal battles such as Fort Ticonderoga, Fort Crown Point, Bennington, Hubbardton, and Saratoga.

Furthermore, the Kitchawan/Wappinger Federation Patriots Absalom and John Mooney

lent their service to our nation in Connecticut's esteemed 2nd Regiment under the command of Colonel Zebulon Butler.

The legacy of Isaac and Amey extends to their sons Philip (1784–1872) and David Sharpe (1786–?), both of whom answered the call of duty during the War of 1812, further solidifying the family's commitment to our nation's defense.⁴⁴

Isaac's grandson and Billie's 2nd-great-grandfather Charles Sharp (1828–1864) demonstrated his unwavering dedication as a soldier in the United States Colored Troops (USCT), proudly serving in the 26th Regiment (Company K). He made the ultimate sacrifice for his country, resting eternally in Beaufort National Cemetery, an emblem of selflessness and commitment to the cause of freedom.

We commit their names to public memory going forward. May they be erased no more.

Teresa Vega holds degrees in Anthropology and Asian Studies from Bowdoin College. She is a proud member of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (NY/NJ Chapters) as well as a member of the Greenwich Preservation Trust. She serves as a core panelist on Black ProGen Live, a podcast of professional genealogists, and is also the co-administrator of FamilyTree DNA's Malagasy Roots Project along with CeCe Moore of PBS's Finding Your Roots. Her genealogy blog can be found at www.radiantrootsboricuabranches.com. Most recently, she has been the founder/owner of the new online genealogy-focused store, www.rrbb-Shop.com.



ENDNOTES

- 1 See Vega, Teresa. "A Revolutionary Breakthrough: Discovering our Van Salee Lineage" in *The Journal of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society*, Vol. 40, Summer Edition, 2023, pp. 86–93.
- 2 Over the past two decades, there have been a plethora of books written on the settler colonialism and the negative impact it had on Indigenous people of this nation. See Horne, Gerald. *The Apocalypse of Settler Colonialism: The Roots of Slavery, White Supremacy, and Capitalism in 17th Century North America and the Caribbean* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2018); Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2015) and *Not "A Nation of Immigrants": Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy and a History of Erasure and Exclusion* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2022); Resendez, Andres. *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016); Parent Jr., Anthony S. *Foul Means: The Transformation of a Slave Society in Virginia, 1660–1740* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); and Helen C. Roundtree and Wesley D. Tauckchiray's *Manteo's World: Native American Life in Carolina's Sound Country Before and After The Lost Colony* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021).
- 3 My definition of "settler colonialism" comes from Paul Wolfe's seminal article "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native" in *Journal of Genocide Research*, December 2006, pp. 387–409. He defines settler colonialism as an ongoing system that erases and eliminates Indigenous people replacing them with non-Indigenous settlers who have their own notions of sovereignty and identity (<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14623520601056240>).
- 4 The issue of Indigenous extinction also impacts Latin America and the Caribbean. See Forte, Maximillian C. "Extinction: The Historical Trope of Anti-Indigeneity in the Caribbean" in *Issues in Caribbean Amerindian Studies*, Vol. VI, No. 4, August 2004 (<https://indigenouscaribbean.files.wordpress.com/2008/05/forteatlantic2005.pdf>). See also Castanha, Tony. *The Myth of Indigenous Caribbean Extinction: Continuity and Reclamation in Borikén* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
- 5 For more information on Munsee Lenape, see Grumet, Robert S. *Munsee Lenape: A History*

- (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009); Hardesty, Jared Ross. *Black Lives, Native Lands, White Worlds: A History of Slavery in New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2021); Lipman, Andrew W. *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 2015); *Brethren by Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016); Bailyn, Bernard. *The Barbarous Years: The Peopling of British North America: The Conflict of Civilizations, 1600–1675* (New York: Knopf, 2012); Den Ouden, Amy E. *Beyond Conquest: Native People and the Struggle for History in New England* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); Wolf, Missy. *Insubordinate Lives: A True Story of Life and Loss in Earliest America* (Guilford, CT: GP Press, 2012); Scharf, Thomas. *History of Westchester, New York* (Philadelphia, PA: L. E. Preston & Co., 1886). Eicher, Frances, and Helen Ferris Tibbets. *When Our Town Was Young: Stories of North Salem's Yesterdays* (North Salem, NY: Board of Education, 1945); and Claire Garland's "Indian Summer at Sand Hill: The Revy and Richarson Families of the Jersey Shore" in *New Jersey Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2023) Winter 2023; pp. 168–224 (<https://njs.libraries.rutgers.edu/index.php/njs>).
- 6 Jack Tchen, Founding Director of The Public History Project, shared The Public History Project and the Price Institute Eco-History Working Group's "The Colonial Roots of our Climate Crisis: An Estuarial Regional History—and a Vision for Our Collective Future" publication with me (forthcoming). The paper describes how The Doctrine of Discovery and settler colonialism impacted the lives of Indigenous people in the Hudson River Valley, including the Lenni-Lenape, which ultimately led to land dispossession and displacement to other areas of refuge.
 - 7 Books on runaway slave advertisement provide some of the best documented shared history of enslaved Native Americans and Africans. See Stessin-Cohn, Susan, and Ashley Hurlburt-Biagini. *In Defiance: Runaways from Slavery in New York's Hudson Valley, 1735–1831*, 2nd ed. (Catskill, NY: Black Dome Press Corp, 2023); Cook-Bell, Karen. *Running from Bondage: Enslaved Women and Their Remarkable Fight for Freedom in Revolutionary America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Hagist, Don N. *Wives, Slaves, and Servant Girls: Advertisements for Female Runaways in American Newspapers, 1770–1783* (Yardley, PA: Westholme, 2016); and Graham Russell Gao Hodges and Allan Edward Brown, eds. *"Pretends to Be Free": Runaway Slave Advertisements from Colonial and Revolutionary New York and New Jersey* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2021).
 - 8 The One-Drop Rule (i.e., one drop of "Black" blood makes you "Black") and Blood Quantum (i.e., the amount of "Indian" blood one possesses) are NOT based on biological facts. They operate differently within the settler colonial project whereby any amount of "Black" blood is seen as polluting; however, any amount of "Native" blood is considered "superior" if one is classified as "White." If you are Indigenous, blood quantum will ultimately erase you from history because in each succeeding generation "Indian" blood is diluted.
 - 9 Resendez, p. 5.
 - 10 See Jason R. Mancini's YouTube webinar on "Ezra Stiles, Census Making, and Indian Erasure in New England, November 1, 2021 (<https://rewirenewsgroup.com/2019/12/09/paper-genocide-the-erasure-of-native-people-in-census-counts/>) and Jenn Deerinwater's "Paper Genocide: The Erasure of Native People in Census Counts, December 19, 2019 (<https://rewirenewsgroup.com/2019/12/09/paper-genocide-the-erasure-of-native-people-in-census-counts/>).
 - 11 The Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 [H. R. 6355. [Public, No. 175] states, "*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled*, That all non citizen Indians born within the territorial limits of the United States be, and they are hereby, declared to be citizens of the United States: *Provided* That the granting of such citizenship shall not in any manner impair or otherwise affect the right of any Indian to tribal or other property."

- 12 See Fernandez-Sacco, Ellen. "Can Genealogy be Racist? Identity, Roots & The Question of Proof," *Latino Genealogy and Beyond.com*, March 22, 2018 (<https://latinogenealogyandbeyond.com/blog/can-genealogy-be-racist/>).
- 13 For information of forced sterilization see Alonso, Paola. "The Forced Sterilization of Women of Color in 20th Century America" at <https://twu.edu/media/documents/history-government/Autonomy-Revoked-The-Forced-Sterilization-of-Women-of-Color-in-20th-Century-America.pdf>; Stern, Alexandra Minna. *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2005); and Cohen, Adam. *Imbeciles: The Supreme Court, American Eugenics, and the Sterilization of Carrie Buck* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017).
- 14 On October 5, 2023, *The New York Times* published an article by Trip Gabriel in which Former President Donald J. Trump is quoted as using the language of eugenics. Trump is quoted as stating, "Nobody has any idea where these people are coming from, and we know they come from prisons. We know they come from mental institutions and insane asylums. We know they're terrorists. Nobody has seen anything like we're witnessing right now. It is a very sad thing for our country. It's poisoning the blood of our country. It's so bad and people are coming in with disease." Clearly the specter of eugenics is still with us.
- 15 The 1924 Racial Purity Act can be read here: http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/lewisandclark/students/projects/monacans/Contemporary_Monacans/racial.html.
- 16 Since the 1924 Racial Purity Act was overturned, the following tribes are now federally recognized in the state of Virginia: the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe- Eastern Division, the Monacan Indian Nation, the Nansemond Indian Nation, the Pamunkey Indian Tribe, the Rappahannock Indian Tribe, and the Upper Mattaponi Tribe.
- 17 See Ablavsky, Gregory. "Making Indians 'White': The Judicial Abolition of Native American Slavery in Revolutionary Virginia and its Racial Legacy" in *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, April 2011, Vol. 159, No. 5 (April 2011): pp. 1457-1531; and Murray, Paul T. "Who Is Indian? Who Is Negro: Virginia Indians in the World War II Draft" in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, April 1987, Vol. 95, No. 2, "The Taking Up of Powhatans Bones": Virginia Indians, 1585-1945 (Apr. 1987, pp. 215-231).
- 18 Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Weaver, Jace. *The Red Atlantic: American Indigenes and the Making of the Modern World, 1000-1927* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); Forbes, Jack D. *The American Discovery of Europe* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2011) and *African and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black People* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1993); and Ned Blackhawk's *The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2023) all show how African and Native people operated in and engaged with the larger world that linked Africa, the Americas and Caribbean, with Europe for centuries.
- 19 Language revitalization programs are now being instituted by many Indigenous people seeking to preserve their cultures. See Feliciano-Santos, Sherina. *A Contested Caribbean Indigeneity: Language, Social Practice, and Identity within Puerto Rican Taino Activism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2021); Kasike Jorje Baracutay Estevez. "Waking a Language from Its Slumber" in *American Indian*, Summer 2023, Vol. 24, No. 2; and Brahm, Nikki. "Endangered Indigenous Languages: Universities Advance Revitalization Efforts" in *Insight into Diversity*, September 2023 (<https://www.insightintodiversity.com/wp-content/media/digitalissues/september2023/index.html>).
- 20 The major autosomal DNA testing companies are AncestryDNA (23M tested), 23andme (14M tested), Family Tree DNA's Family Finder (1.5M tested), MyHeritage (7.2M tested), and Living

- DNA (3000,000 tested). Autosomal DNA tests give you DNA cousin matches from both maternal and paternal sides. Only Family Tree DNA's mtDNA (maternal line) and Y-DNA (paternal line) tests give DNA cousin matches that will link you to cousins on those lines. See https://isogg.org/wiki/Wiki_Welcome_Page for a more detailed discussion of DNA tests and companies.
- 21 Simply put, DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) is the hereditary material that is passed down to the next generation. DNA tests give ethnic admixture results in percentages which show the various geographical regions that contributed to a person's genetic makeup. Culture, however, is a way of life of a people that is reflected in their behavior, values, beliefs, etc. that are passed down to the next generation by previous generations. See Tallbear, Kim. *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).
 - 22 I have a maternal 2nd cousin who is the biological niece of a Wampanoag sachem who did NOT receive any Native American DNA. My cousin has spent her entire life as a Mashpee Wampanoag. This is an example of how DNA is *randomly* inherited.
 - 23 In my family, the Native American World Region is between 1 percent and 11 percent of ethnic admixture.
 - 24 Year: 1800; Census Place: North Salem and York, Westchester, New York; Series: M32; Roll: 27; Page: 28; Image: 245; Family History Library Film: 193715; Year: 1800; Census Place: South-east, Dutchess, New York; Series: M32; Roll: 21; Page: 177; Image: 182; Family History Library Film: 193709; Year: 1810; Census Place: Owego, Tioga, New York; Roll: 37; Page: 667; Image: Nym252_37-0101; FHL Roll: 0181391; Fourth Census of the United States, 1820; Census Place: Tioga, Tioga, New York; Page: 204; NARA Roll: M33_79; Image: 470; Year: 1830; Census Place: Nichols, Tioga, New York; Series: M19; Roll: 109; Page: 293; Family History Library Film: 0017169.
 - 25 See Wren, Christopher S. *Those Turbulent Sons of Freedom: Ethen Allen's Green Mountain Boys and the American Revolution* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2019). See also: <https://www.revolutionary-war.net/the-green-mountain-boys/>. For a list of African American and Native American Patriots, see Grundset, Eric, Briana L. Diaz, Hollis L. Gentry, Jean D. Strahan, eds. *Forgotten Patriots: African American and American Indian Patriots in the Revolutionary War: A Guide to Service, Sources and Studies* (Washington, DC: National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, 2008). Many descendants of DAR's Forgotten Patriots can attest to the fact that Black Patriots fought alongside their compatriots and served with distinction throughout the Revolutionary War. Approximately 5,000 Black Patriots fought in the War and that number is expected to increase as more African American and Native American Patriots are rediscovered (https://www.dar.org/sites/default/files/media/library/DARpublications/Forgotten_Patriots_ISBN-978-1-892237-10-1.pdf).
 - 26 Personal correspondence with Billie on September 5, 2023.
 - 27 United States Colored were comprised of both Free and enslaved men of primarily African descent, but also included Afro-Indigenous, Indigenous, and other Mixed-Race, men who volunteered to fight in the Union Army during the Civil War. USCT Regiments made up 10 percent of the Union Army. In New York, 4,125 men served in various regiments. See <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/topics/united-states-colored-troops>. Charles Sharp's service record can be found here: <https://www.fold3.com/unit/138597/new-york-26th-infantry-union-civil-war-stories>.
 - 28 Billie's family is not unique. Both Hobbs, Allyson. *A Chosen Exile: A History of Racial Passing in American Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2014) and Wilkinson, A. B. *Blurring the Line: Mulattoes, and Mixed-Breeds in British Colonial America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020) offer examples of how and

- why people chose to pass into another racial category and what the ramifications meant. In a future article, I will be writing on Isaac Sharp, and I will discuss how being a settler in a frontier region led some of his descendants to become “White” as they migrated out of New York into other states in the Mid- and Southwest.
- 29 Personal correspondence with Billie on September 6, 2023.
 - 30 Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files (NARA microfilm publication M804, 2,670 rolls). Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group 15. National Archives, Washington, DC.
 - 31 In the June 22, 1814, *New York Evening Post*, Isaac Sharp was mentioned as having voted in Tioga County. It seems he may have moved to, or was working in, Tioga County before receiving his pension. He is also listed as one of the first settlers of Tioga County in the following books: *Historical Gazetteer of Tioga County, New York, 1785–188*, p. 271 (New York: Syracuse: W. B. Gay & Sons, 1887: 271) and Kingman, Leroy W. *Our County and its People: A Memorial History of Tioga County, New York*. (Elmira, NY: W. A. Ferguson, 1900: 493).
 - 32 Year: 1800; Census Place: North Salem and York, Westchester, New York; Series: M32; Roll: 27; Page: 28; Image: 245; Family History Library Film: 193715.
 - 33 Year: 1800; Census Place: Southeast, Dutchess, New York; Series: M32; Roll: 21; Page: 177; Image: 182; Family History Library Film: 193709. See also <https://www.southeastmuseum.org/history-of-southeast>.
 - 34 Rockwell, George L. *The History of Ridgefield, Connecticut* (Ridgefield, CT: Privately printed by the author, 1927), p. 179.
 - 35 The National Archives in Washington, DC; Washington, DC; First Census of the United States, 1790; Year: 1790; Census Place: North Salem, Westchester, New York; Series: M637; Roll: 6; Page: 204; Family History Library Film: 0568146.
 - 36 The Northeast Slave Record Index (NESRI) is a database that collects records related to all aspects of enslavement assembled by universities, colleges, and schools, and then makes them available online already indexed. Going to <https://nesri.commons.gc.cuny.edu/dashboard/>, I was able to search for the names of enslaved and enslavers for North Salem and Bedford, New York.
 - 37 Vega, 2023: 86–93.
 - 38 AncestryDNA’s Sweden and Denmark World Region includes the following countries: Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, England, Faroe Islands, Germany, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, and Switzerland. Billie’s has substantial Swiss ancestry. Her ethnicity estimate is 18 percent while my maternal aunt is 6 percent.
 - 39 Details of my family history can be found in my two personal essays, “What It Means to Be a Ramapough Lenape Descendant” and “Decolonizing the Archives,” and can be found on Rutgers University’s *Our Land, Our Stories* Collaborative Project Community Exhibit Page (<https://our-land-our-stories.libraries.rutgers.edu/olos-exhibits>).
 - 40 Eichner, Frances, and Helen Ferris Tibbets. *When Our Town Was Young: Stories of North Salem’s Yesterdays* (North Salem, New York: Board of Education, 1945). Chief Katonah was the Munsee sachem who governed parts of Connecticut and New York, including North Salem, Bedford, Greenwich, and Stamford. See also Buckland, John Alexander. *The First Traders on Wall Street, the Wiechquaeskeck Indians of Southwestern Connecticut in the Seventeenth Century* (Berwyn Heights, MD: Heritage Books, 2019) for more information on Chief Katonah.
 - 41 Ibid., p. 39.
 - 42 Scharf, Thomas. *History of Westchester, New York* (Philadelphia, PA: L. E. Preston, 1886).
 - 43 Everett, Burtis, A. *A History of Nicholas, New York for the Town’s 175th Anniversary Celebration* (Tioga, NY: Self-Published, 1974).
 - 44 New York State Archives; Albany, New York, USA; Adjutant General’s Office War of 1812 Claims files, 1857–1861; Volume: 10. US Army, Register of Enlistments, 1798–1914.