

EXHIBIT GUIDE BOOK



**THE MASHANTUCKET PEQUOT
MUSEUM & RESEARCH CENTER WILL
STRENGTHEN PEQUOT CULTURE
TO HONOR AND SERVE OUR TRIBAL
FAMILY AND FRIENDS.**



- MASHANTUCKET -
PEQUOT
MUSEUM
=====
& RESEARCH CENTER



The tribal symbol is both a reflection of Mashantucket Pequot past and a symbol of hope for the future. Framed against the sky, the lone tree on a knoll represents Mashantucket, the “much wooded land” where the Pequots hunted and kept alive their identity as an independent people. Displayed on the knoll is the sign of Robin Cassasinnamon, the Pequot’s first leader following the 1637 massacre at Mystic Fort. The fox stands as a reminder that the Pequots are known as “The Fox People.”



ABOUT THE MUSEUM

Tribally owned and operated since it opened on August 11, 1998, the Museum brings to life the story of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation. It serves as a major resource on the histories and cultures of Native Americans in the Northeast and on the region’s rich natural history. The Museum is a 308,000-square-foot complex, consisting of permanent exhibits, the Mashantucket Gallery (a gallery for temporary exhibits), classrooms, a 320-seat auditorium, a restaurant, a museum shop and administrative offices. Multisensory dioramas and exhibits introduce visitors to the history of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe and the natural and cultural history of the Eastern Woodlands. Films and videos, interactive programs, archival materials, ethnographic and archaeological collections, commissioned art, and traditional crafts by Native artisans are featured in the exhibits. The building is designed to interact with its surrounding environment while maintaining the ecological integrity of the area. It embraces the tree line and is nestled into the landscape—two of the five levels of the facility are below ground. The 185-foot stone-and-glass tower provides visitors with sweeping views of the swamp and region. The large, circular, glass-and-steel Gathering Space serves as an arrival and event area.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITS

GLACIAL CREVASSE & A WORLD OF ICE

Journey back in time through the simulated glacial crevasse. Travel down into a glacier with dripping water, chilling air and the sounds of an actual glacier, with its creaking ice and whistling winds. Then learn more about the last ice age and its effects on the landscape.

ARRIVAL OF THE PEOPLE

Native people across North America have different creation stories—nine Native American artists provided contemporary works of art to visually represent their tribe's creation story. Complementing the artwork, an adjacent mini-theater shows storytellers relating parts of their own creation stories in their Native languages.

CARIBOU HUNT

Look into the eyes of life-size replicas of dire wolves, a mastodon and a giant beaver—animals that inhabited this part of the continent more than 11,000 years ago. Life-like hunters pursue caribou among streams and rock outcroppings in a scene from ancient life in a cold climate.

PEQUOT VILLAGE

Observe daily life in a recreated 16th-century Pequot village, pre- and post-European contact. Walk among the trees, wigwams/wetuw and people who are cooking, talking, weaving and working. Hear natural sounds and smell the aromas of the woodlands and campfires. All the figures were life cast from Native American people—the traditional clothing, ornamentations and wigwams were made by Native craftspeople. Individual audio tours are available for visitors. Two adjacent galleries, Pequot Society and Daily Life, further explore social and political organization, language and objects from the Museum's collection.

ARRIVAL OF THE EUROPEANS & PRELUDE TO WAR

With the arrival of the Europeans, life changed dramatically for Native people. These exhibits explore the complex relationships, changes and conflicts that arose with the newcomers.

THE PEQUOT WAR

In 1637, the colonies of Connecticut and Massachusetts attacked the Mystic Fort, killing approximately 600 Pequots. The Witness, a 30-minute, 70-mm film, graphically dramatizes the events surrounding the Pequot War. The film includes scenes of violence which may not be appropriate for children under 12.

LIFE ON THE RESERVATION

In this area, visitors learn what life was like for Pequot tribal members living on and off the reservation from the late 1600s to the 1980s. Highlights include an outdoor 18th-century farmstead, a visit to the recreated 1940s home of tribal member Aunt Matt and a look at the Pequot community through the 1970s. The film, Bringing the People Home, explains how the tribe rebuilt their nation and achieved federal recognition in 1983.

MASHANTUCKET PEQUOT TRIBAL NATION TODAY & A TRIBAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Learn about the contemporary Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation through photographs, artifacts maps and a topographical model of the reservation. The story continues in A Tribal Portrait, an exhibit of large black-and-white portraits of individual tribal members and families taken by Kwakiutl photographer David Neel.



THE OBSERVATION TOWER



The view is of the Mashantucket Pequot Reservation (1666), Gathering Space, Terrace, Great Cedar Swamp, Foxwoods Resort Casino, Lake of Isles, the water tower (1983), the Community Center, Rt. 2, Lantern Hill (from elevator), as well as Preston and some Mohegan land...

The Reservation is designated as a National Archaeological District.

The swamp (place of refuge or Cup'pacom'muck) is approximately 500 acres and is the second largest wetland in the area after Chapman Pond in Westerly, RI.

The swamp was originally a glacial lake (not very deep) that became filled in by a shrub swamp and later a forested swamp. Cedar is not the dominate species of tree.

The name "Cedar Swamp" reflects the importance the tree had for Native and Colonial people. The majority of trees are Eastern White Pine and Hemlock followed by Red (Swamp) Maple and Birch. Rhododendron groves are scattered throughout but are not visible through the tree canopy.

A low spot in the hills to the right of Sachem's Chair is Lantern Hill Pond and Long Pond. The two ponds drain into the Mystic River basin that runs south to Long Island Sound.

A 17th-century fort from the King Philip's War era archaeology site is a couple hundred yards beyond the farmstead exhibit below a 1780s farmstead site near the "Indian town" site (but much closer to the MPMRC) and Paleo-Indian sites. The fort, farmstead and paleo sites are located on a 26-acre peninsula (Monhantic Hill) of land jutting into the swamp.

Caribou Hunt diorama (roof) can be viewed from here. The diorama was modeled after a number of dig sites including a site in Preston, CT (NW direction from tower, left of The Fox Tower). Preston is past "Allen's Farm"—the visible clearing on the south side of Rt. 2.

THE GATHERING SPACE

The “Gathering Space” was designed by Polshek and Partners and the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation as a grand hall that showcases the exterior landscape rather than the interior of the building. Due to the fact that it is constructed with over 700 panes of glass, the space changes depending on the time of day, the weather and the season. Because the tree line was kept much closer than most modern American buildings, migratory birds can be viewed from the windows as well as many other indigenous animals. The Great Cedar Swamp is home to spotted salamanders, deer, turtles, hawks, ravens, foxes, the occasional bear and much more.

The area is approximately 20,000 square feet and is 60’ tall at the north end and 80’ in the center. The slope of the roof mimics the pitch of the hill leading down toward the Great Cedar Swamp. (The roof of the Caribou Hunt diorama is sloped as well.) The space is reminiscent of a basket or wigwam/wetus frame in its appearance.

The space is comprised of two offset semicircles representing the Mystic fort that was attacked and destroyed by the English during the Pequot massacre of 1637. The highest point of the Gathering Space was designed to resemble an upside-down canoe where the semicircles meet.

Cedar wood paneling is used on the southern walls and zinc, granite and limestone were used in the construction. The northern glass and steel façade allow ambient light to enter the hall.

A terrazzo floor, with shells and blue and green glass (resembling the waters of Long Island Sound), was poured over steel reinforced concrete. When dry, the floor surface was ground down to reveal shells and glass sanded in half. The entire floor was then sealed and polished. The overall effect is the look of glistening shallow water where the Pequot, or “People of the Shallow Water,” row their canoes.

Behind the two recreated dugout canoes (depicting a scene from the Pequot War) is the ramp that leads to the main exhibits. The ramp handrail has stainless steel weaving similar to twining or woven basket work.

The floor has two acoustic circles that project sound—one, north, into the Gathering Space (bisecting the tribal seal) and the other, south, toward the retail shop. Following the westward line is the vine trellis located on the green roof, and the main entrance walls run parallel to the eastern line.

The Gathering Space was designed as a multifunctional space. Functions have included animal demonstrations, our annual Education and Veteran’s powwow, storytelling, student lunch area, a puppet theater, Tribal inaugurations, after-hour events, and even a number of high school proms and weddings.

A few things that may not be immediately apparent are:

1. The space has NO central support. This is a very bold design (complicated, cutting edge and heavy). Some I beams weigh approximately 10 tons. The weight of the roof is carried within angled walls near the main entrance and the far wall closer to the top of the ramp.
2. The Gathering Space creates the ceiling for the 300-seat auditorium on the second floor. The Gathering Space uses state-of-the-art design to raise awareness that the Mashantucket Pequot community is an exciting living culture with a past (designed to resemble a historic fort), present (right here, right now) and future (cutting-edge design, modern material and technology).





WELCOME TO THE MASHANTUCKET GALLERY

Our ancestors have lived here for thousands of years, and we strive to carry on many of their traditions and ideals. Over the past decades we have built the services of our nation to provide for the health and welfare of our tribal members.

Depicted in this gallery are examples of our efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and exercise our sovereignty—our inherent right as a Native people to practice independent self-government. Sovereignty also means that our tribal nation is recognized by other Indian nations, as well as by the U.S. federal government.

In addition to being a tribal nation, we are also a newly revitalized community—one that has been realized by years of planning, hoping and hard work. We have struggled to make Mashantucket a better place for our children and for the generations to come, with businesses that we own and manage, housing, public services, and a community center where residents of all ages come together.

LEVEL 1

LIFE IN A COLD CLIMATE

1. THE GLACIER

Travel through a glacial crevasse in New England during the Ice Age. This escalator takes you down to level one.

2. THE WORLD OF ICE

The centerpiece of this exhibit is a revolving globe showing the advance and retreat of the Wisconsin Glacier.

3. ARRIVAL OF THE PEOPLE GALLERY

The works of nine Native artists represent the creation stories of each artist's tribe.

4. ARRIVAL OF THE PEOPLE THEATER 🎭

Storytellers relate creation stories in English and their own languages.

5. CARIBOU HUNT DIORAMA

Life-size recreation of a caribou hunt from 11,000 years ago.





CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

See how scientists learned how this area changed over the past 15,000 years.

6. THE FOUR SEASONS

Dioramas portray life at Mashantucket from 8,000 to 3,000 years ago.

7. TOOL THEATER

Take a look at the actual tools used by the Mashantucket Pequots for farming and building.

8. INTRODUCTION TO HORTICULTURE

Life-size diorama illustrates techniques for growing corn, beans and squash.

9. AUDIO TOUR UNIT PICKUP

Village maps and directions for our audio guides are available at the desk. Dial in the numbers on the floor to hear each activity explained.

10. 16TH-CENTURY PEQUOT VILLAGE

Walk through a Pequot Village and imagine life before the arrival of Europeans.

11. PEQUOT DAILY LIFE GALLERY

View videos of Native artisans creating the tools and utensils for everyday life.

12. PEQUOT SOCIETY GALLERY

Learn about the Tribe's social and political organization, ceremonies, spirituality and medicine.

13. ARRIVAL OF THE EUROPEANS GALLERY

Examine the political, economic and religious reasons that led to the arrival of the English and Dutch.

13.1 HALL OF DISEASE

LEVEL 1

THE PEQUOT WAR

14. PRELUDE TO WAR

Video displays tell how trading conflicts led to tension between the Pequots, English and Dutch.

15. WAMPUM THEATER

Learn about the tube shell beads first used for ceremonial purposes and then for trade.

16. THE MASSACRE AT MYSTIC

See how, in 1637, the colonies of Connecticut and Massachusetts attacked the fort at Mystic, killing approximately 600 Pequots.

17. WAR THEATER: THE WITNESS*

Experience the tragedy of the Pequot War through the eyes of a Pequot elder who survived the Massacre at Mystic. Film is shown in War Theater 2 at 11AM, 1PM and 3PM.

*The film includes scenes of violence which may not be appropriate for children under 12.



LIFE ON THE RESERVATION

18. ROBIN CASSASINNAMON

Meet the Pequot Sachem from 1645 to 1692 who helped the Pequots return to their land.

19. EXPLORE THE FORT AT MASHANTUCKET

Use an interactive program to navigate a 3D computer model of the fort discovered by archaeologists on this site in 1992.

20. 1780 FARMSTEAD

Step inside a typical farmstead. During warm weather, tour the two-acre garden outside.

21. AUNT MATT'S HOUSE MINI-THEATER

Our Remembered Sisters, describing the lives of three Mashantucket women in the first half of the 19th century.

22. THE CHANGING RESERVATION

Computer-interactive program shows how the shape and nature of Pequot land changed over the last 300 years.

23. FEDERAL RECOGNITION THEATER

View the film, Bringing the People Home, and learn how the Tribe achieved federal recognition in 1983.

23. TRIBAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

Listen to the voices of tribal members as they recount what it means to be a Pequot and Native American today.

24. MASHANTUCKET GALLERY



Members receive unlimited free admission to the Museum and invitations to educational events, workshops, programs and member-only exhibit previews. Additional benefits include 10% discounts at the Museum gift shop. Accompanying guests receive a 20% discount on admission rates. Members also receive discounted admission and memberships at other partner institutions. The Museum Pass Program also provides library patrons opportunities to visit the Mashantucket Pequot Museum & Research Center year-round and receive special discounts.



BECOME A MEMBER

MEMBERS ENJOY UNLIMITED FREE GENERAL ADMISSION TO THE PEQUOT MUSEUM, AS WELL AS OTHER EXCLUSIVE BENEFITS!

- FREE ADMISSION
- SUPPORT OUR RESEARCH
- INSPIRE AWARENESS

Your membership helps students, educators and visitors from all over the world learn about American history and its Native people.

Visit pequotmuseum.org/members for more information.

ANNUAL EVENTS

KIDS WEEK

Family and friends enjoy native crafts and special highlights of the museum with various tours and workshops.



EDUCATION POWWOW

The Mashantucket Pequot Museum's Educational Powwow is a narrated exhibition showcasing Native American dancers and the significance of this cultural gathering for Indigenous people. Gain a greater understanding and appreciation for the powwow experience and how it helps sustain a sense of community for America's first people.



SCHEMITZUN

Every summer in late August, all are welcome to join our annual family-friendly celebration as we usher in the harvest season and give thanks to the Creator for our rich heritage while honoring our ancestors, warriors, veterans and Elders. Located at the Mashantucket Pequot Cultural Grounds in the heart of one of America's oldest Indian reservations, Schemitzun features traditional and contemporary tribal dance exhibitions, drum and live music, and plenty of authentic Native American-made crafts.



HONORING THE VETERANS POWWOW

In November each year, the Honoring the Veterans Powwow will unite and honor Native and non-Native Americans who have bravely served side by side in the U.S. Armed Forces for more than 200 years. Doors open at 10AM, and the grand entry begins at Noon, drawing nearly 1,000 veterans, active-duty service members, families and members each year. Attendees will be immersed in the traditional celebration of our veterans through Northeastern Woodland song and dance inside the soaring two story, glass-encased Gathering Space of our museum.





MEESUMÔK NEETÔP

GIVING FRIEND

MEESUMÔK NEETÔP INITIATIVE

MISSION

The Meesumôk Neetôp Initiative will acquire funding and donations that will directly support our community members and the MPMRC through educational programming and outreach.

VISION

The Meesumôk Neetôp Initiative envisions the realization of interdependence through bringing communities together in the spirit of helping and learning from one another.

GIVING FRIEND SUPPORT

Community support and donations are a powerful commitment that supports our efforts to share the Pequot Story and its significance in America's history with the world. As an ongoing Meesumôk Neetôp, your contributions along with our community partner fundraising efforts will support the Mashantucket Pequot Museum to be able to continue to bring hidden histories to light, and through educational and outreach programs reach thousands of students and visitors from our own local communities, as well as from around the world.

EXPERIENCE THE BENEFITS



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SALES

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KUTAPUTUYUMUW

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