THE MARK OF UNCAS
Produced, Written & Directed by Kenneth A. Simon
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OPEN

NARRATOR: This is the story of Uncas, the controversial 17th-Century Sachem of the Mohegan Tribe in Connecticut.

His life has become legend, passed down through 13 generations. It is a complex legacy, mingling fact and fiction.

According to Mohegan Oral Tradition, "The people are the story."

Telling this story are the descendants of Uncas, the English and neighboring tribes; American Indian scholars and activists; and the residents of Uncasville, the village that bears his name.

KURT EICHELBERG: I'd like to tell you a story of a great warrior that lived in the time of our ancestors. This warrior's wisdom, courage, and vision saved the Mohegan from total annihilation. This great warrior, who became our first sachem, is known as Uncas."

JOHNNY LONDON: In his time, in the early 1600s, he was the major player in America

NATHANIEL FIENNES: All nations and cultures do produce outstanding men from time to time. Perhaps the British saw in him somebody who was outstanding, with whom they could, as it were, do business.

ERNEST GILMAN: *Tahbut ne Mundo, Mundu Wigu*

TITLE

ROBERTA COONEY: He cared for his people. He cared for the colonists, too. He also was shrewd and cunning.

RAY GEER: Uncas was a greedy individual that wanted power and he sold his soul to the colonists.

JOHN BROWN: He coped with people whose intent was truly black and black-hearted and he won.

UNCAS AROUND THE WORLD

NARRATOR: In 1826, James Fenimore Cooper's novel "The Last of the Mohicans," introduced a fictional Uncas to the world.

JOE BRUCHAC (Writer and Storyteller, Abenaki Nation): In many ways it's the first American adventure novel, the first American popular novel, and the first novel that features Native Americans as main characters. It became probably the icon by which all Native Americans were drawn for generations after that because we have those two images in the characters of on the one side Uncas and Chingachgook, who were the noble Mohegans, and on the other side Magua, who is the despicable, lying, dangerous redskin, who is the villain of the piece.

And they're names that were picked out of the popular imagination. But Uncas, of course, was an historical character, the leader of the Mohegan people, who became the primary ally of the English and was a sort of exemplar of the relationship between the white man and the Indian. In the popular imagination he was the good Indian, so when Cooper wrote this book it's not surprising that the Uncas character should be used in name if not an actual person because, of course, the fictional Uncas is totally different.

So you had this picture of Uncas as being absolutely steadfast. He is sort of the image of Tonto. He's the first Tonto and the Lone Ranger. And this image of the white man with the faithful Indian by his side continues on down through movies and television right to the present day. It's one of the most popular images in the American imagination, even though beginning with Uncas himself it is a false image.

NARRATOR: Fiction met reality when publicity for the 1920 version of *The Last of the Mohicans* discovered "real Mohicans" in Connecticut.

The Mohegan Tribe has lived in the area now encompassing Montville, Connecticut, for centuries. In and around Montville and its village of Uncasville, the name "Uncas" is ubiquitous, used by numerous public and private institutions, businesses small and large, and even residences.

When Cooper used the name of Uncas for his fictionalized character, he created an unprecedented international literary phenomenon.

EXCERPT FROM 1936 RELEASE "THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS"

NARRATOR: More than 12 movie versions of *The Last of the Mohicans* have left an enduring mark on American culture.

Roberta Cooney still recalls her hometown's 1936 premiere.

ROBERTA COONEY (Elder, *Mohegan Tribe*): I was a young girl when I went to see this movie. And it was quite something to go to a movie because we didn't go to the movies that often. And before we went my mother told us that it was not all true -- it was a movie. It did make a lasting impression on me.

NARRATOR: Carleton Eichelberg also went with his famliy to see the 1936 version.

CARLTON EICHELBERG (Elder, *Mohegan Tribe*): I remember going down on a Saturday morning with my mother and my step-grandmother and you know, as a young boy at that time, I think everybody was interested in cowboys and Indians so to speak. it was basically fiction but it did take and put our most famous leader into a national limelight and it made the Mohegan people more world renown.

RUSSELL MEANS (Actor and Activist, *Oglala Lakota*): To me it was a fictional story. It didn't have any import to me other than James Fenimore Cooper was an obvious racist.

NARRATOR: American Indian activist and actor Russell Means played the fictional Uncas's father in the 1992 hit film version. Means first read Cooper's story in the second grade.

RUSSELL MEANS: After three auditions I won the role. Dennis Banks and I were competing for the role. I won, and did that awesome movie.

Well, the characterization of Uncas was not developed. He was two-dimensional. He did fall in love, supposedly, but that was the only humanity he was allowed to have in the movie. So to try to compare

him to the historical Uncas is impossible, you know, because the whole movie's concept, "the last of the Mohegans," is an absolute fabrication. He wasn't one of the last, you know.

EXCERPT FROM 1992 RELEASE "THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS"

> *CHINGACHGOOK: Welcome him. Let him take his place at the council fire. For he is Uncas, my son. Tell him to be patient, and ask death for speed. For they are all there but one: I, Chingachgook, last of the Mohicans.*

FIRST OF THE MOHEGANS

NARRATOR: Who are the real Mohegans? Who is the real Uncas? The historic Uncas is in fact the first of the Mohegans.

Tribal Medicine Woman Gladys Tantaquidgeon learned the story of her ancestors from the elders of her youth.

GLADYS TANTAQUIDGEON: I must confess I never read Cooper's *Last of the Mohegans*. It's historical fiction of course. But the Mohican that Cooper wrote about were the northern division of the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Nation. Their homeland was northern New York. And some of that Mohegan group wandered down into this area that's now CT

REDMOON: You have to remember, we came this way for survival, for seafood, clams, oysters, abundance of food we have here.

So on the way down we fought with other tribes. By the time we got in this area we was one of the most powerful, vicious tribes around.

GLADYS TANTAQUIDGEON (Medicine Woman, *Mohegan Tribe*): And there's one story that was told to us that when they arrived in what's now Connecticut, they must have disrupted some of the groups that were in the area because they called them invaders – *Pequotaug*, and that's where you get the name Pequot.

MELISSA TANTAQUIDGEON (Executive Director, Museum Authority, *Mohegan Tribe*): Uncas claimed the name "Mohegan" when he separated from the Pequot because that's the original name of our group, an ancient clan name of the Delaware meaning "Wolf people".

This collar represents the only artifact of wampum that has stayed n the hands of Indian people in all of New England.

The symbols on the collar are very important. The two white triangles signify the split between the Mohegan and the Pequot people. The purple in between the two triangles signifies the trouble and the division between them.

NARRATOR: Uncas was born in 1598, just before the arrival of the European colonists. As a boy, he learned tribal stories of fierce change

FAITH DAVISON (Archivist, *Mohegan Tribe*): My great, great grandmother, Mary Tracy Fielding Storey, told this tale that her great, great grandmother told her to her. When the English came in their ships the Indians saw those vessels and they thought that they were ani mals with great white wings and

that they spoke with thunder, ominous rumble, and that they breathed smoke and fire. And one of the prophets said, this is the animal that will come and eat all the Indians up. We're here. They didn't do it.

CARLTON EICHELBERG: Cochegan Rock is the largest freestanding boulder in New England left here by the glaciers. Uncas always held counsel on the top of this rock.

The word *sachem* as Uncas was called means "rock man", and in Mohegan they would say Ne-woe-me-suns-mo, which mean are you going to the rock, or are you coming to the rock? And that was a phrase that probably would have been used when Uncas decided to hold counsel and call all his captains to come to the rock.

Fort Shantok and Cochegan Rock are probably the two places that are best known as Uncas's stamping grounds, if you will, because they would have to come all the way from Fort Shantok over here to this rock to hold counsel and, of course, Fort Shantok is the area where the ¾ our village actually was.

I used to come here as a young man. a lot of the kids, this was woods to play because all the children wanted to come and see Cochegan Rock and see where Uncas held counsel.

NARRATOR: Uncas lived a long life, from 1598 to 1683. He was the Great Protector of his people then and now. The places where Uncas lived have remained sacred to the Mohegan Tribe for centuries. Jayne Fawcett is the tribal ambassador.

JAYNE FAWCETT (Tribal Ambassador, *Mohegan Tribe*): This is Uncas Spring and not far from here is the cabin of Uncas. This is an important place to us, really a sacred place because the waters are said to bring strength and to bring healing and it's also a place where we continually honor Uncas.

When I was a child I used to come here with my uncle and I always thought of him as the keeper of the spring, and he would come here every spring and clean all of the debris out and leave a cup because he felt that it was important that whoever was thirsty and was passing through should be able to get a drink from from this spot.

ERNEST GILMAN (Pipe Carrier, *Mohegan Tribe*): We're at Uncas's cabin here on Mohegan territory and according to the stories that were told to me, this was Uncas's site, where he lived and spent a lot of his time.

I was pretty well instilled with a lot of the history of the tribe, you know, when I was young and what it was to mean to me later on in life and to make sure that I did never forget that, and I haven't. I still get a good feeling about being out here and any other of the sites that I visit during my path in life and that hasn't changed, it's still there.

This pipe is known as Uncas's pipe. It was found in the vicinity of this cabin and there were no other homes that we know of at the time in that area so they are assuming that because of who was here this was Uncas's pipe. I have been authorized by the tribe to carry this and use it at very special occasions.

Tobacco, we believe, is the greatest gift that you could give someone. Okay? And so with that, I'm going to make a presentation. This is a gift to Uncas and I'll just sprinkle around the area of his home.

HARD TIMES, TOUGH DECISIONS

NARRATOR: The Pequot/Mohegan split in the early 1630s evolved in part from a dynastic quarrel between Uncas and the Pequot sachem Sassacus, who was his father-in-law. Uncas claimed to be the rightful Pequot sachem.

CARLTON EICHELBERG: Uncas was married to one of Sassacus's daughters and what happened was that it got to the point where with the English coming stronger and stronger, Sassacus wanted to fight the English, Uncas thought his wisdom was better, that we were too few in numbers and that we should try to befriend the English rather than fight them. Their philosophical differences forced a split and Uncas took his family and his followers and came here to Mohegan.

ELLA SEKATAU (Ethno-Historian and Medicine Woman, *Narragansett Tribe*): Sassacus and Uncas had good relations until the newcomers' arrival and colonization. They were not mortal enemies, they were relatives, and a new social strata was evolving with the newcomers, something that was totally unfamiliar with the indigenous or the Indian people, and that is the reason why they had their disagreements and parted company several times.

NARRATOR: Uncas's open rebellion against Sassacus caused him to finally be banished from the Pequot tribe. And so it was that Uncas traveled with his followers in 1636 across the Thames River to settle on the ancestral land of his father.

SAM DELORIA (Director, American Indian Law Center, *Standing Rock Sioux*): In strictly non-Indian historical terms not too many tribes can have a founder's day. This is our founder. Why not? You know exactly who it is and you can practically pinpoint the date when the tribe was founded in the sense that we look at it as a tribe. And because they can trace genealogies, they know who's descended from him and all of that, it makes it much more difficult for the tribe to mythologize him; he becomes a very distinct historical figure for them and he has to remain that because there's too much of a tribal memory.

NARRATOR: In 1637, Uncas joined forces with the English in a plan to attack the dominant Pequot Tribe. The English/Mohegan alliance created friction with other local tribes with whom Uncas was connected by royal bloodlines.

ELLA SEKATAU: The colonists' goal was to divide and to conquer. They did it through rumor; they did it through gossip.

JOHN BROWN (Tribal Historic Preservation Officer *Narragansett Tribe*): The Indian people were just played. We did not understand the nature of the beast that we were dealing with. They had created the device that they wanted in that triad of power between the Mohegan, the Narragansett and the Pequot and it worked.

The Pequot War was nothing more than feuding factions of the Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut colonies opting and vying for power and attempting to use the Indians as their pawns.

NARRATOR: The English colonists declared war on the Pequot in 1637. Plans were made for an attack on the main Pequot village fort in Mystic under the command of Captain John Mason. He led about 90 colonists, joined by several hundred Narragansett Indians and about 100 Mohegan and Connecticut River Indians under Uncas. The attack took place on May 26, 1637.

JOE BRUCHAC: During the days before that event a number of the Indian allies were deserting. However, Uncas had no doubts. In fact, his exact words are worth quoting. He said, "Though all the Narragansetts leave, and I am certain most of them will, the Mohegans will remain faithful to the end."

When the battle began in the fort at Mystic there were more Pequots than there were English. And the English discovered that if they set fire to the buildings that they would even the odds.

A couple of things began to occur. One is that fire spread very rapidly and the people would not come out of the fort because they would be shot down. Because of the fire their bowstrings caught fire, they could no longer use bows and arrows. They had no distance weapons and, therefore, they had to fight with ax and knife, hand-to-hand, a very unequal combat.

And I can imagine as that battle was going on, as Pequot men were running out with their clothes on fire attacking the English hand to hand I wonder what was going through Uncas's mind. Because I think Uncas felt, well, this would be a typical battle on a fortification, the English will overcome them, they will surrender and maybe I'll be able to take these people into my group. But instead everyone, 400 to 700 people were wiped out.

I cannot help but think that Uncas was horrified when he saw what happened, when he saw the tremendous violence that was unleashed by the English on the Pequot people and yet he does not turn against the English because he knows there's nothing else he can do right now. It has begun. He has to follow it through to the end.

FRIEND OF THE ENGLISH

NARRATOR: In 17th Century Banbury, England, at his manor house, Broughton Castle, the eighth Lord Saye & Sele, received with great interest news of the British/Mohegan alliance. Lord Saye and a partner, Lord Brooke, had helped finance the first English settlement on the south shore of New England, known as Saybrook.

Today, the 21st Lord Saye, remembers his family's shared history with Connecticut's Mohegan Tribe.

NATHANIEL FIENNES (21st Lord Saye & Sele): All nations and cultures do produce outstanding men from time to time and I have a feeling that Chief Uncas was in that category, don't you? I think he was, if you like, head and shoulders above anybody else, imaginative and determined, and perhaps the British saw in him somebody who was outstanding, with whom they could, as it were, do business.

NARRATOR: William Fiennes, the 8th Lord Saye, organized opposition to King Charles I and supported the Parliamentarians in the British Civil War of the 1630s.

NATHANIEL FIENNES: It was a time of great turbulence here. You had a king, King Charles I, who ruled without Parliament for 10 years. He had an archbishop who, if you like, was something approaching a dictator. It was a very autocratic country and if you were a liberal minded man or a puritan minded man you would have been very uncomfortable.

The fear of what was going on in this country was a motivational force as much as trading. And I think that Lord Saye and Lord Brook put up the money to establish this settlement not just to trade but as I say to have a place to which they could retire

And then suddenly they met these, whether it's Pequots or Mohegans, that must have been very strange, wasn't it, because they appeared different, they spoke a different language, they would have been totally opposed to all their thinkings. One wondered how did the two lots get together? How as it that the Mohegans became friends with the English settlers there, and indeed how did they communicate? Who learned their language?

It was a very different world wasn't it? And no doubt a very alarming one.

NARRATOR: Uncas's friendship and support ensured that the British would become the dominant military power in the territory.

NATHANIEL FIENNES: In point of fact I think history would show it was entirely due to the Mohegans that they were able to survive there and eventually defeat and overwhelm the Pequots altogether.

NARRATOR: In gratitude to Uncas and the Mohegans, King Charles II gave Uncas a bible to show him the path to Heaven and a sword to protect himself from his enemies. Tribal legend has it that Uncas preferred the sword.

The success of Uncas and his tribe led to great change in the region's power structure. The English triumphed against the Dutch. The Mohegans became the unrivalled native power. It was a controversial change that severed intertribal connections and relations.

JAYNE FAWCETT: Uncas is a very controversial character. Many of the things he did don't bring a lot of pride to his people here in the present day, but it's the result of what he did that makes us feel that he was a great leader. Some of his actions could be questioned particularly the things that he did against other Indian tribes

RAY GEER (Medicine Man, *Paucatuck Eastern Pequot Nation*): Uncas was a greedy individual that wanted power and he sold his soul to the colonists to help enhance his position. Uncas saw a chance to get back at the Pequots, get back at Sassacus, destroy the tribe with the help of the colonists and some help from the Narragansetts and when he offered his support to John Mason and then the Narragansetts joined in, there was quite a devastation to the power that the Pequots had in the area.

NARRATOR: After the Pequot War, in 1638, Uncas and 37 of his men made a ceremonial visit to Massachusetts Bay colony Gov. John Winthrop in Boston. At least 6 of the men accompanying Uncas were former Pequots, now Mohegans. The colonists accused Uncas of harboring the Pequot enemy. Uncas angrily denied breaking faith.

JOE BRUCHAC: That was when he made his famous speech about loyalty. And Uncas said these famous words. "If you do not trust me, you should kill me." And then placing his hand on his heart he looked straight in Governor Winthrop's eyes and said, "This heart is not mine, it is yours. I have no men. They are yours. Command me to do any hard thing and I will do it. I will never believe any Indian's word against the English, and if any Indian shall kill an Englishman I will put him to death were he never so dear to me", so spoke Uncas.

So you can see that Uncas was indeed both allying himself with the English and protecting his people including those former Pequots who now regarded themselves Mohegan.

KAREN COOPER (Smithsonian Center for Museum Studies, *Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma)*: I think to understand Uncas you need to think of the time that he was born into. It was a very challenging time. There were a lot of choices to make and they were critical choices, critical for the survival of his people.

The Europeans had arrived. There were different factions of them. He had to sort of figure out who was who and what were their agendas and it was very confusing. And all of those groups were trying to pit Indian groups against each other.

Seeing all that-- seeing the kind of power that Europeans had with their large boats and with the populations that just kept coming -- and the clothing that Europeans had that was so tailored. Native people certainly had a richness to their own lives but seeing those kinds of items had to cause them to wonder about this other people and what powers and special gifts that they might have of their own. It could be very intimidating, I think.

There were diseases that took out 90 percent in some cases of the population so that you lost elders and experienced people and children, which caused you to be concerned about the whole future of your people.

My understanding of the way native people fought was more to embarrass your enemies and to kind of do a blustery show to dominate and intimidate them but usually not with the idea of wiping them out entirely. But with European arrival then you had a very different people and Europeans were experienced in wars that just totally decimated people and with the weapons they had those weapons served them to that purpose. So for native people contemplating warfare meant they really had to think about it in new ways.

Uncas said if they're to be here then how do we make sure that we survive and the way to do that was to gain alliances, to gain dominion as it were over certain native groups so that he could have power and influence that then could be used with the Europeans to advantage. And people might see his actions as somewhat of a weakness in that he didn't fight to the death but instead I think he had a great amount of bravery to meet the situations head-on.

THE WINDS OF CHANGE

NARRATOR: Seeing the world change around him, Uncas made difficult decisions to protect his tribe's future. Once powerful rivals, other tribes were now vanquished, killed or enslaved.

RUSSELL MEANS: It's amazing to me that a people can be reduced to good and bad. So to racistly label Indians good or bad only enhances your own ignorance. And Uncas was a survivor. A wise survivor.

In the latest demographics it's estimated that in the eastern United States, east of the Mississippi River, there are 12 to 14 million Indian people. Where'd they go? Where'd they go? So Uncas represents someone who is smart enough to survive and he got his people to survive, otherwise they'd be as extinct as the hundreds of Indian nations that were wiped out in the holocaust of the settlement of the East,

SAM DELORIA: When the history of these times is written they very often do not judge the behavior of Indians in the same terms that they judge other people. White people do diplomacy; Indians do something else. This guy was a diplomat and he had to make some alliance of some kind. And he made a choice and interpreting his choice strictly along racial grounds, I think, is a very limited way of looking at it.

He made some choices and they're very easy to second-guess 350 years later. He certainly had diplomatic skills in being able to manipulate the system to enable himself to survive. This was an early example of a much more subtle view of the power politics of the day than the people who just stayed in one place and said, "we're gonna fight to the end." And, in fact, they did fight to the end and it was over.

NARRATOR: Following the Pequot War, hostilities continued between the Mohegans and the Narragansetts led by their great sachem Miantinomo.

CARLTON EICHELBERG: During the 1630s and 40s there was a lot of hostilities between the Narragansett and the Mohegan, and this was due mainly to a conflict between the sachem of the

Narragansetts, Miantonomo, and the sachem of the Mohegans, Uncas. And this eventually led to the battle known as the Battle of the Great Plains.

NARRATOR: The Mohegans were outnumbered by the Narragansetts but Uncas had developed a surprise military strategy.

REDMOON (Elder, *Mohegan Tribe*): Uncas knew he didn't have enough warriors to battle Miantonomo but he was a brave chief. For his people he would die. So he told his men the night before that he would ask Miantonomo to fight one-on-one. He told his warriors if he refused, he would drop to the ground and for them to fire. So that's when he started to win the war right there.

CARLTON EICHELBERG: During that battle Miantonomo started to run north and he was chased by one of Uncas's warriors by the name of Tantaquidgeon.

NARRATOR: The pursuit led to the great gorge at Yantic falls. It was here that Uncas jumped the chasm to avoid capture. Many Narragansett men, in their haste to retreat, fell to their death.

REDMOON: This is called Uncas's Leap. The gorge was much narrower than it is today because over the years it got washed out. This is sacred land. This was our land and Uncas was protecting it from the Narragansett.

NARRATOR: The Battle of the Great Plains led to the capture of Uncas's Narragansett rival, Miantonomo.

CARLTON EICHELBERG: And Tantaquidgeon ran Miantonomo down and captured him and brought him back to Uncas.

NARRATOR: Uncas brought Miantonomo to the Colonial Commissioners in Hartford. They later returned him to Uncas with orders to execute him in Mohegan country. Subsequently, Miantonomo was slain by Uncas's brother, *Wawequa.*

LASTING CONNECTIONS

NARRATOR: In the old Colonial Cemetery in Norwich, Connecticut, many of the headstones bear the names of early British settlers – Brewster, Rogers, Minor and Leffingwell.

These generations of Leffingwells were descendants of the first Leffingwell to venture to the Saybrook settlement -- Thomas Leffingwell.

THOMAS LEFFINGWELL (Descendant of Lt. Thomas Leffingwell): When he came over from England he was a very young man and he settled in the Saybrook section of Connecticut. He was an Ensign in the British Militia and he befriended Chief Uncas of the Mohegan Tribe and they became very close friends. And the reason he befriended him was, evidently Lt. Thomas Leffingwell was an outdoorsman, trapper and woodsman. And, therefore, he fit right in with the Indian culture.

NARRATOR: Shantok was the Mohegan's primary village in the 17th Century. It was here that the Narragansetts sought revenge for their loss at Great Plains.

CARLTON EICHELBERG: Around 1645, the Narragansett wished to get revenge for the slaying of Miantonomo so they came here and they laid siege to Fort Shantok. And it got to the point where the Narragansett had just about starved the Mohegan out.

NARRATOR: A Mohegan runner managed to slip through the Narragansett lines and set out to get help from the colonists.

THOMAS LEFFINGWELL: They got word to the English settlement in Saybrook. And Lt. Thomas Leffingwell came up from Saybrook with provisions and snuck into the fort and broke the siege.

CARLTON EICHELBERG: They raised up a side of beef high enough so that the Narragansett could see it to let the Narragansett know that, "we've got food and there's no way you're gonna starve us out. So why don't you go on home?" And they finally did leave and that basically ended the Narragansett war.

THOMAS LEFFINGWELL: Because Uncas was grateful he gave Lt. Thomas Leffingwell 9 square miles of land which was later to be the settlement in Norwich.

WHIT DAVIS (Descendant of Thomas Stanton): This house was built prior to 1675 when both Uncas and Thomas Stanton were in their prime

NARRATOR: John Whitman Davis is the proprietor of the old farm established in the middle 1600s by Thomas Stanton, in Pawcatuck, Connecticut. Stanton, the interpreter general for the crown colonies of New England, later established a trading post about a mile up the river in 1654.

WHIT DAVIS: And they visited back and forth and they traded. And through his trading with them he had probably first came in contact with Uncas. And Thomas, through being the interpreter, was *the* one that he did business with and allied himself with, because Thomas had a lot of influence in the colonial legislature. He was powerful with the Indians and very important to the white people because they had to get along somehow.

Because Uncas allied himself with the English he and Thomas became very close friends He trusted Uncas and Uncas trusted Thomas Stanton, and they each kept their word to each other which meant a lot.

NARRATOR: In 1999, Mohegan tribal counselor Jayne Fawcett visited the Stanton Farm.

WHIT DAVIS: Well, Jayne, this is where our ancestors no doubt walked and they probably sat right here, probably not in these same chairs, but this table. That's an old table, an old Stanton table, kind of primitive made, but nevertheless that's the best they had in those days. And it was custom then to invite someone into their house to see it when they had a new one

JAYNE FAWCETT: You were talking about some of the things in the room, things that would have been traditional -- that probably were here when Uncas was here. And these very floors: The floors most certainly were floors that Uncas and Thomas walked on. And I can't tell you how extraordinary that is.

WHIT DAVIS: Well, I'm so happy and proud and grateful that you feel that way.

JAYNE FAWCETT: So we can imagine Uncas and Thomas sitting here in this space.

WHIT DAVIS: That's right. And so he would have his best friends come in and see his new house and I'm sure that when Thomas went over to Montville, to your people, that Uncas probably had him into his wigwam or his cabin. And I bet they did quite a lot of business together making plans for settling and the wars.

JAYNE FAWCETT: That's what this is about, isn't it – old-time connections.

WHIT DAVIS: Yes.

JAYNE FAWCETT: Getting together, friendships that last through generations. Our families have had connections all these years.

WHIT DAVIS: As I counted out as of now it's been 345 years. That's quite a while.

JOE BRUCHAC: Well, Uncas truly did become the friend of the English. I think that's an interesting thing about the man that he was able both to be friendly to the English on their terms and also on his own terms. He was maintaining the sovereignty of his people. In some ways he is the first native person to maintain sovereignty in the face of European pressures on land and culture. He keeps his people as his people. But he also, I think, really did like the English.

MELISSA TANTAQUIDGEON: Uncas signed many of the documents that we see in the Colonial era with his mark. His mark was a representation of not only himself but some of his very most important beliefs

In the most prominent of these marks you'll notice that there's a heart at the center with something piercing the heart. Very frequently, when Uncas signed documents where he gave away tribal land, you actually see a bloodletting from his heart as he gives away each parcel of tribal land. You'll also notice, though, that beneath that is a pipe. And the pipe represents the fact that he has made a gesture of friendship and goodwill toward the non-Indian people. And he will abide by that and commits to that.

YEARS OF PAIN, ACTS OF FAITH

NARRATOR: Although the Mohegans kept their faith with the English and later the Americans, the tribe suffered from land loss and destitution after the American Revolution and well into the 20th Century.

JOE BRUCHAC: I think one of the things that is not understood or fully appreciated is that to give one's word is regarded as a sacred trust among native people to this day. The irony about it, of course, is that European promises to Indians have almost all been broken. Yet the Indian word was kept and Uncas is the first person that we see in that position: The faithful Indian in the very best sense -- not a stereotype sense -- but a person faithful to their word, and that faith being kept throughout the generations.

DAVID LEFF (Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection): Over time people's notions of what was due the tribe and what their responsibilities were and the sense of mutual friendship disappeared. And in the 19thCentury, the system of overseers of Indians that the state had was very cruel and resulted in the loss of property through deals that could be described almost as shady if not worse. And so really, historically, a great wrong has been done to these people.

NARRATOR: In 1907, when "Buffalo Bill" Cody visited the Mohegan Royal Burial Gounds in Norwich, Connecticut, it was a show of respect to the place where Mohegan tribal leaders had been buried for centuries.

MELISSA TANTAQUIDGEON: This burial ground is particularly sacred and important to the Mohegan people because all who have been buried here represent the lineage of Uncas. The tribe owned these lands according to an original agreement that was made between Uncas and the City of Norwich in 1659, when Uncas deeded the city to Norwich -- with the exception of the 16 acres in the middle of Norwich, which he had agreed with the settlers would always remain the Mohegan burial ground.

What remains at this burial ground is a scant eighth of an acre, when originally it was a full 16 acres. Those 16 acres were desecrated as houses were built in this area and more and more non-Indian people came into the community.

In the mid-1840s, the best-recorded desecration of this burial took place and was witnessed by our Medicine Woman Emma Baker. Emma came here with her grandmother and watched while piles of bodies with pipe in them were being burned and people were being excavated in order for all the homes that are now in this area to be built.

NARRATOR: Uncas sold or gave away vast tracts of land. But until 1790, the tribe held 2,700 acres in reservation. As desecrations and theft of tribal land by corrupt state overseers continued through the 1800s, the tribe successfully petitioned the state to disband the reservation in 1872. Once-tribal lands became privately owned by tribal members and others. In the early 20th Century, Uncas's former village at Shantok was turned into a state park.

DAVID LEFF: Well, as part of the settlement of the Mohegan land claims, we were to turn Fort Shantok back to the tribe. And I say, "back to the tribe" because originally it belonged to them.

Shantok had been part of the state park system since beginning in the 1920s and the actual getting the job done of making the transfer fell to me. The business with the different kinds of legal maneuvers and documents went back and forth and lasted to the very day of the transfer. Shortly before the ceremony was to take place. I came down here in my old yellow truck and with the document in hand. I drove in and handed off the deed to Roland Harris. The ceremony that followed was a very emotional experience and it's something I'll never forget as long as I live.

NARRATOR: Uncas was the first Mohegan sachem. Through the centuries many others followed his path. Tribal Elder Roberta Cooney has known many chiefs.

ROBERTA COONEY: The Mohegan chiefs that I have known all have followed Uncas's stance as far as being loyal to his people. They all had the same feelings to do for their people, to do the right thing by their people, to be honest with their people.

There was Occum, who was my grandfather's brother. He was a peace chief. Chief Occum was Lemuel Occum Fielding. Lloyd Harris was Chief Pegee. My grandfather was Chief Matagha, he was a war chief -- Burrill Hyde Fielding.

NARRATOR: Loretta Roberge is also a granddaughter of Chief Matagha.

LORETTA ROBERGE: He was a great person because he always tried to keep the tribe together. He was the one who tried to keep the wigwams and the powwows going, which was a dying tradition.

And then I knew Cortland Fowler, who was the next chief. He was absolutely wonderful. He had a very, very kind gentle way about him.

And I forgot -- Harold Tantaquidgeon was there too before Cortland. And he was, too, because he was so involved in all the activities with children and making sure that nothing was ever lost.

So I have a great deal of respect for all of them, for that they've done.

And then the last one we had, and we still have, is Ralph Sturges. And he was one of the main forces for us getting federally recognized. He worked extremely hard.

NARRATOR: On March 7th, 1994, the Mohegan Tribe of Montville received official federal recognition.

RALPH STURGES (Lifetime Chief, *Mohegan Tribe*): When we got recognition, the one thing I told the people in that tribe is there's three words that they got to remember: They've got to have perseverance, honor and integrity. They've gotta have that. That's three things that Uncas actually stood for. And those are three words that it's very simple for any human being to live by. But you've got to do it. You can't get carried away with money and crazy things. They gotta remember what they stand for and what they should be trying to develop, you know?

I'm not saying that everybody does it but they should. They should remember what their forefathers said.

LIVING ON MOHEGAN HILL

NARRATOR: Many descendants of Uncas have continued to live in their hometown of Montville and its village of Uncasville, coexisting for more than 350 years with their non-Indian neighbors.

LORETTA ROBERGE: Everything around us, if you notice, in this town is named after Uncas. We call this the Village of Uncas, Uncasville. Our school is named after the Mohegans and if you look around and drive through town you'll see all our streets and so forth are named after him.

CARLTON EICHELBERG: We didn't have reservations then. And so, therefore, we weren't reservation Indians and we were able to meld with the people because we lived in houses and lived on streets ordinarily just like everybody else.

ERNEST GILMAN: Everybody knew who we were. And because of our reputation, particularly living on Mohegan Hill, we were well thought of. I don't ever remember hearing of any derogatory remark about Indians from anyone. That was great.

NARRATOR: One reason for the continued friendly relations between Mohegans and townspeople is the Tantaquidgeon Museum, the country's oldest Indian-owned-and-operated museum. Since it was built in 1931, thousands of Montville schoolchildren have come to learn the Mohegan story.

GERTRUDE MINSON (Retired Teacher, *Uncasville Resident*): We met outdoors in a council ring with Chief Harold Tantaquidgeon. Harold and his father, I think, built the museum. When we went out on a field trip, we'd meet out under one of the trees there in the yard and Chief would talk to us and they could ask some questions.

Then later we'd go into the museum itself and Miss Gladys Tantaquidgeon. And she had her talking stick. And if the stick was up, we were to be quiet. And she was very good and she told the children many things about the objects in the museum. The boys and girls got an appreciation as to what the Indian life was like way back.

NARRATOR: In Norwich, the Leffingwell Inn Museum has been a part of town history since the start of English settlement.

ANN CANNON (Leffingwell Inn): It was owned by Thomas Leffingwell in the late 1600s, the time of Uncas. He had a license for a public house, which is what this building was used for originally. Public meetings like town meetings were held here.

NARRATOR: In 1996 the owners of the Leffingwell Inn decided to turn a treasured antique into a contemporary symbol of friendship.

ANN CANNON: For many years, we displayed in the tavern room Uncas's succotash bowl, which was approximately eight-inches-long oval and it had two carved wolves' heads on the end. When we gave the bowl to the tribe, it was completing a circle of friendship that had begun with Thomas Leffingwell over 300 years ago.

NARRATOR: Montville business owner Johnny London reflects the view of many area residents.

JOHNNY LONDON (Owner, Native American Traders, *Norwich Resident*): He is very much a hero to me -- very much. People will say to me, "ah, yeah, you like Uncas. Well, what do you know about him?" And I love to take my wallet out and I have a picture I carry all the time of Uncas. I have it laminated and then after a while they go, "oh my God, are you ever gonna shut up?"

He was a great leader for his people and it bears the same fruit today -- the connection with the Mohegans and the community is just as strong. That's exactly what he wanted.

JAYNE FAWCETT: I think the big lesson that we would derive from Uncas's life is that new situations require new solutions. We tend to have the prejudices and the same ideas that our parents had, and it takes a huge intellectual and cultural leap to think of something in a unique and totally different way.

JOE BRUCHAC: You could really say that Uncas set the standard in many ways, both in terms of maintaining native sovereignty, in terms of relationships between white and European, and a relationship that was positive for native people. And also in terms of keeping his word, making a promise and honoring that promise throughout the generations

DAVID LEFF: Uncas certainly deserves much honor. He was a great leader. There is much to be learned from his cooperative approach to dealing with problems. I think probably today we're too confrontational. And I think the lesson, the great lesson, for all of us that Uncas has is that much can be accomplished by cooperation and working together in friendship.

A TIME FOR HEALING

NARRATOR: In 1999, the state of Connecticut helped to negotiate the return to the Mohegan Tribe of their Royal Burial Grounds, including a former Masonic Temple built over much of the site.

ROLAND HARRIS (Tribal Chairman, 1995-2000 *Mohegan Tribe*): Many agreements were broken in the past. But we were always taught since our youth to never look back, to always look forward, and to understand that these desecrations, whatever, we can't change, but to understand in the future that it doesn't happen any more.

So I think he'd be proud of us today, understanding that what he started in the 1600s perpetuates itself today. And as we continue in the future, I think our future generations are just going to understand it even more now that we have the ability and the resources to do that.

MONTAGE OF NEWSCLIPS AND IMAGES

RALPH STURGES: We now are officially recognized as …

NEWSANCHOR: Governor Lowell Weicker has signed an agreement that would allow the Mohegan Indians to build a casino in Montville …

JAYNE FAWCETT: Thirteen generations have passed since our grandfather Uncas brought us to this cove…

NARRATOR: After the return of Mohegan land to sovereign federal trust status, the tribe established in 1996 a highly successful casino resort, The Mohegan Sun.

By 2001, the Mohegan Tribe had established business enterprises employing 10,000 people, built a governmental infrastructure to manage increasingly complex needs, sponsored numerous community programs and intensified efforts to revitalize tribal culture. In early 2001, the tribe announced a $10 million gift to the new Smithsonian Museum of the American Indian.

JAYNE FAWCETT: Without Uncas, there would probably be no Mohegan people here in Connecticut today. I have to stress survival because that's the one thing that has come down through my family as such a very, very strong mandate from Uncas: That the most important thing is to survive.

So you have to come from a place where just existing long enough for things to become better is the sole goal of the people. And that's, I think, difficult for non-Indians to understand.

NARRATOR: In 2000, Mohegan Chief Ralph Sturges carved the mark of Uncas in marble for the Uncas School in Norwich.

RALPH STURGES: I'm not only carving to bring the beauty out of his mark and the beauty in the stone. I'm carving to create history that won't be dissolved for years and years to come. This will always be. It will always be Uncas's mark as long as the stone lasts. And the stone'll last forever.

That's why his signature will go down in history. Right? It'll go down in history because of what we're doing. He was quite a leader. He was quite a man. There's no doubt about that. You know?

OVER CREDITS

DOUG CHAPMAN: I'm Doug Chapman and I'm proud to be a descendent of Uncas.

BRITTANY CARLTON EICHELBERG: Hi, I'm Brittany Eichelberg and I'm glad to be part of Uncas's tribe.

DAN ROBERGE: My name is Dan Roberge and I believe Uncas was a very powerful man.

BRITTANY JULLARINE-QUINN: Hi, my name is Brittany Jullarine-Quinn and Uncas was a very good chief of the Mohegans.

JUSTIN KOBYLUCK: My name is Justin and I have five shirts of Uncas.

CARRIE BROWN: I'd almost give anything to just sit down with him to have the chance to just talk to him, hear what his voice is like, how tall he is, you know, just everything. And I just really admire him and I think that he was a really noble man for befriending the white people. And he was a great leader.

JACOB BOSZUM Hi, my name is Jacob Boszum and I'm really curious like why he jumped off that cliff. That's all I have to say.