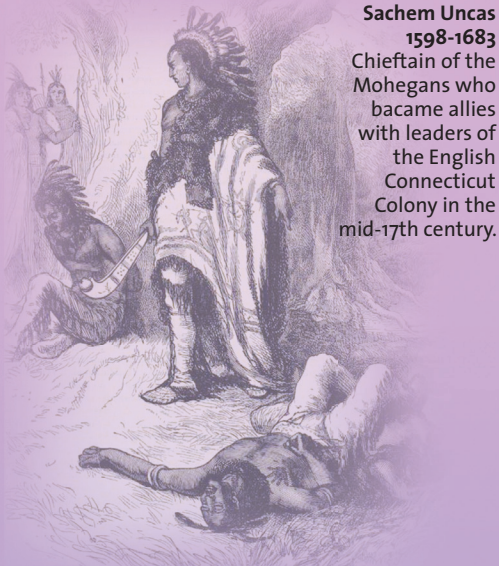




Oregon
Shakespeare
Festival

2023 Study Guide



Sachem Uncas
1598-1683
Chieftain of the
Mohegans who
became allies
with leaders of
the English
Connecticut
Colony in the
mid-17th century.

Mohegan History that pertains to the play

Early 1600's: A pivotal time of upheaval for Connecticut tribes due to European settlements that create competition for land and resources, while disease decimates the native population at a catastrophic rate. At this time Native people living along the Massapequotuck (Thames River) are part of the Pequot nation.

1626: Sachem Owaneco, a Mohegan Chieftain, arranges for his son Uncas to marry the daughter of the principal Pequot, Sachem Tatobem, to secure an alliance with them.

1633: Sachem Tatobem is captured and killed by the Dutch. His son Sassacus and son-in-law Uncas vie to become his successor; Sassacus is chosen as the new great sachem. However, there is disagreement on how to deal with European colonists. Sachem Sassacus wants to fight these strangers and Uncas wants to befriend them because he believes they will all die if they fight.

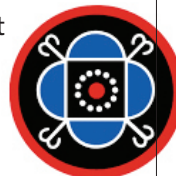
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The Peace Studio

About the Playwright: Madeline Sayet

- She is an avid runner! Having completed many marathons and half marathons.
- She is an Assistant Professor in the English Department at ASU, with the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, and also the Executive Director of the Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program
- Both she and her brother have middle names for important Mohegan leaders. Her middle name is Fielding for Fidelia Fielding and her brother's middle name is Uncas.
- She directed her first play, a production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* at 22.



- She first performed *Where We Belong* in London at Shakespeare's Globe in 2019 as part of an Indigenous Arts Festival that spanned across London.
- She was awarded The White House Champion of Change Award from President Obama at 21.
- She was recently appointed by President Biden to the Board of Trustees for the Institute for American Indian Arts.
- She has been the Executive Director of the Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program since 2019, where she produces an annual new play festival of Native plays, and runs an Annual Award for Young Native Playwrights Under 25, and an Annual Award for Native Actors under 25 as well, both of which accept submissions from Native Youth across the nation.

Above, The Young Chief Uncas.
Credit: John Mix Stanley

1634: Uncas rebels against Sachem Sassacus with support from the Narragansett people. Uncas is defeated and exiled but soon returns after ritually humiliating himself before Sassacus. However, Uncas continues to challenge Sassacus which leads to his indefinite exile from the Pequot nation. Uncas and his followers take on the name of their ancestors, Mohegan or Wolf People, and Uncas becomes Sachem.

1635: Uncas strategically develops relationships with important figures in the Connecticut Colony. He becomes a trusted ally of Captain John Mason, the Colony's Deputy Governor.

1636: War breaks out between the Pequot tribe and New England colonists due to the English efforts to break the Dutch-Pequot control of the fur and wampum trade in the Connecticut River Valley.

1637: Uncas forms an alliance with the New England colonists against the Pequots during the Pequot war. Due to this alliance, the Pequots are defeated and the Mohegans take in much of the remaining Pequot people and their land.

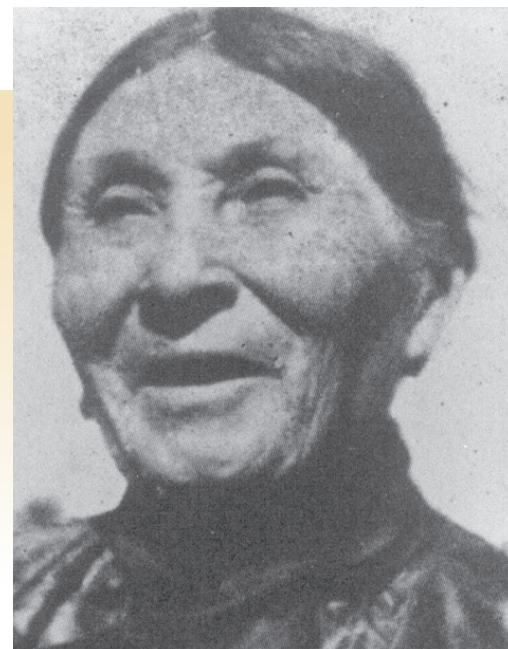
1638: The Treaty of Hartford makes the Mohegans a tributary of the Connecticut River Colony. The treaty dictates that Uncas can pursue his interests in the Pequot country only with the explicit approval of the Connecticut Colony. The Mohegans become a regional power.



Sachem Mahomet Weyonoman 1700-1736
The memorial stone of Mohegan Chieftain (great-grandson of Uncas) who sailed to London in 1735 to petition King George II for the return of stolen lands. He died of smallpox in England before seeing the king.

Before seeing/reading the play

1. Research Brexit. These and other websites provide information:
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-32810887>
<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/brexit.asp>
2. Research Mohegan Language Revitalization Program. These and other websites provide information:
<https://www.mohegan.nsn.us/about/our-tribal-history/historical-figures/fidelia-fielding>
<https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2020/11/return-mohegan-elders-diaries-help-revitalize-language>
<https://news.yale.edu/2018/04/19/preserving-delicate-languages-life-work-yale-visiting-fellow>
3. Research Mohegan Federal Recognition. These and other websites provide information:
<https://www.mohegan.nsn.us/about/government/tribal-sovereignty/federal-recognition>
<https://connecticuthistory.org/mohegan-federal-recognition/>
<https://www.nytimes.com/1994/03/24/nyregion/not-the-last-of-this-tribe-mohegans-granted-us-recognition-want-a-casino.html?auth=logingoogleitap&login=googleitap>
4. Research Sachem Uncas, the Chief of the Mohegan Tribe from 1598-1683. These and other websites provide information:
<https://www.mohegan.nsn.us/about/our-tribal-history/historical-figures/sachem-uncas>
<https://whereilivect.org/the-mohegan-tribe-and-the-founding-of-norwich/>
5. Research Samson Occom, a Mohegan ordained presbyterian minister and teacher in the 18th century.
<https://connecticuthistory.org/samson-occom-and-the-brotherton-indians/>
<https://www.nbcconnecticut.com/news/local/samson-occom-papers-to-aid-in-mohegan-language-revitalization/2777524/>



Fidelia Fielding "Flying Bird" 1827 - 1908
Mohegan cultural keeper and perserver of the Mohegan Pequot language.



Dr. Gladys Lola Tantaquidgeon, Mohegan medicine woman, who worked to preserve traditional Mohegan spirituality, Native herbal remedies, traditional Native ceremonies and artforms, and much more.

6. Research Mahomet Weyonomon. These and other websites provide information:
<https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/memorial-to-mahomet-weyonomon>
<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6526343>
https://www.londonremembers.comsubjects/mahomet-weyonomon?memorial_id=3527
7. Research Gladys Tantaquidgeon. These and other websites provide information:
<https://www.mohegan.nsn.us/about/our-tribal-history/in-memoriamp/gladys-tantaquidgeon>
<https://connecticuthistory.org/gladys-tantaquidgeon-preserves-the-states-native-past/>
8. Research Decolonizing Shakespeare. These and other websites provide information:
[Anti-Racist Shakespeare: The Tempest | Shakespeare & Race \(2021\) | Shakespeare's Globe](https://www.howlround.com/interrogating-shakespeare-system)
[https://www.howlround.com/interrogating-shakespeare-system](https://www.howlround.com/theatre-history-podcast-46)
<https://www.howlround.com/theatre-history-podcast-46>
<https://www.howlround.com/decolonizingcreation-processes-reclaiming-narrativesreclamandonuestras-narrativas>
9. Research the main themes, plot, and characters in *The Tempest*. These and other websites provide information:
<https://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/the-tempest/read/>
<https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespedia/shakespeares-plays/tempest/#:~:text=The%20Tempest%20Summary,by%20Prospero's%20spirit%20Dservant%20Ariel.>

After seeing/reading the play

1. Refer to your research on Brexit. Why is Achokayis so wary and anxious while waiting in line at the border entrance to Sweden? Why does how she voted for the Brexit referendum matter to the guard? What does she mean when she says "Today the word 'remain' means togetherness, tomorrow it could mean apart"? How have America and England revealed their roots, according to Achokayis?
2. What about border queues "feel like waiting in line to get in trouble"? Why does Achokayis feel like she's supposed to be there less and less? How does her light skin and knowledge of Shakespeare add to this? What other borders does Achokayis encounter in the play and in her life? How does her relationship change toward borders, if it does, in the course of the play?
3. Why does her mother name her Madeline Fielding Sayet? How does knowing her native language tie her to the Mohegan nation? Why is Madeline taught to introduce herself by her Mohegan name, Achokayis? What is in a name?
4. Why is Achokayis' Mohegan family so intent on not leaving their homes? What is her mother's solution to dealing with how Mohegans are seen by those on the outside? How is Achokayis expected to represent Mohegans? How do Shakespeare's plays provide an escape for Achokayis? How does Achokayis' relationship to the expectations change by the end of the play?
5. Why is Aunt Gladdie considered "a living legend"? How does Aunt Gladdie influence Achokayis early on as a teen, especially after she passes? What shocking discovery does Achokayis make about her Mohegan name? Why does she feel her Mohegan name no longer feels tied to her? In what ways does she own her name by the end of the play? In what ways does she not?
6. Refer to your research on *The Tempest*. How does seeing a Native character onstage in a Shakespearean play, and studying theatre in NYC change Achokayis' artistic trajectory? Why does she feel every production of her favorite Shakespearean play is horribly wrong? What pivotal character and plot points of this play lead her to believe Shakespeare is anti-colonial?
7. Refer to your research on Sachem Uncas and the Mohegan historical timeline. What issue ultimately divides the Pequot nation in the early 1600s when the English land on their shores? What impossible choice is Uncas faced with? What is Uncas' reasoning behind the choice he makes? How does understanding the complicated history between the Mohegan nation and European colonists shape the way Achokayis asserts her Mohegan identity in a contemporary world?

8. How is Achokayis' work as a director in collaboration with Native theatre artists in New York received by larger white theatre institutions? What parallels exist between how these white institutions approach Achokayis and the way English colonists interact with Sachem Uncas?
9. Why does Achokayis decide to fly across the ocean to the UK to study Shakespeare? What does she hope to find or achieve by going to the UK? Why does her mother react so negatively to this news? What does her mother mean when she tells her, "We must ALL stand in love for the tribe. That is the only way we will survive."?
10. What is Achokayis' initial reaction to British culture when she lands in the UK? How does this change as she takes a deeper dive into Shakespeare's language and interacts with other Shakespeare enthusiasts? Why is academia so fascinated by Achokayis' take on *The Tempest* and her love of Shakespeare? How is this tokenism?
11. What is the legacy of how Native people came to speak Shakespeare? Why is acknowledging this legacy so important to reimagining Shakespeare from a Native perspective? Why does Achokayis get so much pushback from Shakespeare scholars and other academics during her time in England?
12. Looking back on the lives of Uncas, Mohamet, and Sansom Occum, why does Achokayis feel it's necessary to talk about Indigenous erasure, genocide, and assimilationist education initiatives in America to understand Indigenous Shakespeare? How does this create a pathway for Achokayis to begin "to show them the difference between who we are and how they see us"?
13. Refer to your research on Mahomet Weyonomon. What special connection does Achokayis have to Mahomet? Why does Mahomet's memorial bring Achokayis so much peace and comfort? How does his journey help her find herself during a time when she feels so lost?
14. What does Achokayis experience at the British Museum's Native American exhibit? How does this experience change Achokayis relationship to being the "Native American in front of the word Shakespeare"?
15. What is the breaking point that leads Achokayis to quit the PhD program in the UK? How is being an academic in direct opposition to Mohegan cultural values and identity? Why does Achokayis' mother insist she attend the Mohegan graduation ceremony in Shantok even though she didn't get her degree?
16. In what ways is the play a story about how Achokayis becomes a bird? What does flying mean to Achokayis? What does it mean to be a bird and a wolf? How does Achokayis come to embrace the duality of being both a bird and a wolf?
17. What is the significance of the title *Where We Belong*? How do the stories passed down to Achokayis by her ancestors help her see beyond man-made borders and define her purpose as a free-spirited Blackbird?
18. Refer to your research on Fidelity Fielding. What is the significance of Fidelity Fielding's journals being returned to the Mohegan nation? What does Achokayis mean when she says "a sacred relation came home this year"? What does this mean for future generations of Mohegans? What lesson does Achokayis hope to pass on to the audience at the end of the play?



Sansom Occum 1723-1792
Mohegan teacher and preacher, one of the first Natives to be ordained a Christian minister and to have his works published in English.

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