

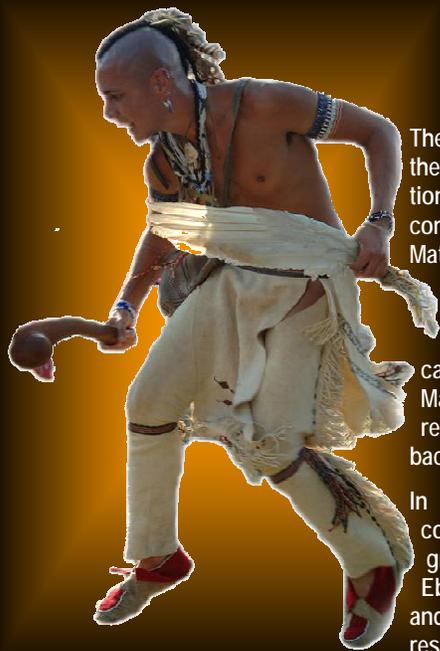
POW WOW

Special Edition



NASHAUONK MITTARK

Living In Two Worlds



The Mashpees lived intimately in their own diverse world throughout most of their history, but the politics of self identity was so crucial to the rest of the nation that it sparked a renaissance within the town which constituted the Tribal community. The early workings of the movement were forming in the days of Mathias Amos and Eben Queppish, but it wasn't until 1914 when Nelson Simon, a graduate of the Carlisle School for Indians, returned to the tribe making public appearances in regalia. Simons became a self elected sachem of the time. Of course Queppish was quite famous for his role as the American Indian in Buffalo Bill Cody's "Wild West Show," an irony not lost on the Mashpee Wampanoags who were used to being the first achievers in many realms. In the Mashpee Wampanoag tradition, Queppish brought his expertise back to Mashpee to edify the Indian youth on many old Indian customs.



In the 1920's, the Wampanoag Nation had formed. The new assemblage consisted of the Indians of Mashpee, Gay Head, and Herring Pond. The group elected Rev. Leroy C. Perry (Yellow Bear) as supreme sachem and Eben Queppish as supreme medicine man. Lorenzo T. Hammond (Little Bear) and William James (Wild Horse) became Chief and medicine man of Mashpee respectively. The Pow Wow was the extension of the annual homecoming celebration the Mashpees held which dated back two hundred years. The homecoming celebration was a reunion for family and friends including family outings and pageants. The Pow Wow added the art of expression to the



equation. The Mashpees were praised for their skill in organizing and publicizing the event and gathering support. By the mid 1920's the Pow Wow was a three day event starting with the a religious service at the Old Indian Church followed by a tribal reunion with speeches and a peace pipe ceremony. The second day consisted of a commemoration of King Philip and ten mile marathon with baseball games in the middle. On the third day, the Mashpees gathered for a beauty contest, and followed with games, song and dance. Aspects of Indian identity and recounts of Wampanoag history were throughout the three day event.

After the untimely death of Eben Queppish, who was killed in an automobile accident in 1933, leaders of the Mashpee Wampanoag proclaimed they would perform dances and ceremonies that were said to be ancient and secret to prove the "mighty Wampanoags still live, still follow the customs, the traditions and adhere to the laws and legends of their ancestors." The ceremonies included an Eagle Dance, Discovery Dance and a Victory Dance all passed down through Queppish, who is credited with being the repository of the ancient Wampanoag beliefs.

