

---

# EDUCATION NEWS

---

Where History is Shared and Stories Continue

## Kunoopeam Netompaûog, Welcome Friends!

Neepun (summer); moon of the great sun. This is the seventh of thirteen thanksgivings honoring the abundance gifted by Creator. bRoger Williams recorded his observance in this way, “Kautántowwit (Narr.), “the great Southwest God, to whose house all souls go and from whom came their corn, beans, etc., as they say.” With this moon we thank Creator for the manusquussêdash (beans). Suquahogs, lobster, and other sea foods, and all the berries (blue and black) provided are also abundant. It’s a time of plenty to eat from the waters and the lands. It’s the time for swimming, playing games like hubbub (sometimes village against village), making and repairing bows, arrows, and other tools, baskets, canoes, clay pots and peage (beads) made from shell, bone, clay. All these activities are taught so our life ways continue. In the 1970s Red Wing, in her efforts to educate the public to some of our traditions and stories wrote the “Legend of the Green Bean.”

### LEGEND OF THE GREEN BEAN by Red Wing

A little boy took his bow and arrows and went out to walk on a warm summer afternoon. It was in about what is your July now. He rambled through woodlands and valleys. By and by he rested by a brook as he stooped to drink. He laid down on the bank of the brook. It was a warm day. And as he was lying there almost asleep, he heard a great splashing coming down the brook. He looked over the bank and saw a tiny canoe. And when it reached him it stopped.

A little man stood up in his canoe and said to the boy, “I’ll trade my bow and arrows for yours.” “Yours is too small,” replied the little boy. So the little man paddled on down the brook and the little boy went home. He told his grandmother about the offer. And she said, “Never refuse anything that is offered to you that is too small.”

Another day when this little boy was lying on the bank of the brook and this little canoe came down and stopped in front of him. Again the little man asked him to trade, so he did. Then the little man stood up in his canoe and said “Because you refused my bow before because it was too little, go home and tell your people to pick the beans and put them in the pot, cook them, and eat them.” In disgust the little boy answered, “The beans are too small, you can hardly find the little beans in the green pods.” But the little man said “Go!” So the little boy went home with his little bow and arrows and told his grandmother. She told the medicine man, he told the sachem, the drums began to sound, the people came and sat in the council circle, the medicine man got up and said, “Ho! The little people have told us!” The Sachem sent the women into the garden to pick the green beans. They cooked them, and all ate them. The people found the green beans pleasant to eat and nutritious. So ever after, they ate the green beans as well as ripe beans and always thank the Great Spirit for them by dancing around the garden following the leader.

Tomaquag Museum Archives

## *FROM TOMAQUAG'S EDUCATION DEPARTMENT...*

Blueberries from the high bush and low bush are all around and your main competition are the birds (or small children). In the past blueberries provided sweetness to our naûsamp; a combination of ground Narragansett flint corn meal and hot water (a dish Roger Williams called "pottage" (porridge). Often eaten was nókehick which was when the meal was baked into cakes. These became called "journey cakes," and are now known as "jonny cakes," (these are a fried version often using milk, butter and sometimes sugar). Another traditional dish of boiled corn meal is aupúmineanawsaúmp, a type of dumpling. Today we enjoy an adaptation using flour and sugar to make the most delicious blueberry slump. And there's also blueberry jelly and pie. Oh how deliciously sweet. Blueberries were dried and stored for those later months when they are no longer available ripe and fresh, and they hold their sweetness when ready to be used. Blueberries have a medicinal use as well. They were boiled into a thick syrup (no sugar added of course) used to treat coughs and sore throats. While my ancestors may not have known scientific names or vitamin levels, they certainly knew the health benefits of eating blueberries and shared their knowledge with each generation as well as the early settlers to our lands. Other berries have been used as food and medicine such as the elderberry, black berry, and black cherry. In addition, these berries are a source of dye. The dye was then used for stamping baskets with patterns, coloring porcupine quills as well as cordage to be twined or woven.



blueberry naûsamp



King Nightsky 2022 unripened blueberries

Click here to [Contact](#) the education department with any questions.

With all the bounty that came from the waters, clambakes were and still remain a delicious way to honor Creator for the gifts of the waters and celebrate this time of year. A traditional clambake involved gathering all the ingredients. Women and children dove into the salt ponds for the squahogs, dug on those same shorelines for the soft shell clams. Others walked around the numerous inlets and coves with nets to catch blue shell crabs or gather mussels along the muddy banks. Using the numerous weirs and traps for collecting fish while also gathering the sea weed flowing between and along the rocks. A large fire would be lit and kept burning until the coals were red hot atop a pile of stones to hold the heat. There is more to holding a traditional clambake. Knowledge which an uncle and tribal elder who has since passed asked my brother and I to keep and share only among our families and community, so to respect this elder, I am limiting how much I share here. However, Indigenous author Russell M. Peters, Mashpee Wampanoag, wrote a book entitled “Clambake” (link provided below) about traditional clambakes.



Shellfish varieties i.e. softshell clams, whelk, scallop, razor clams, etc.



Heated stones ready for the seaweed and sea foods; Pequot Museum Clambake 2017 ca. 2017; photo courtesy of Jason Mancini



Pequot Museum Clambake 2017 ca. 2017; photo courtesy of Jason Mancini

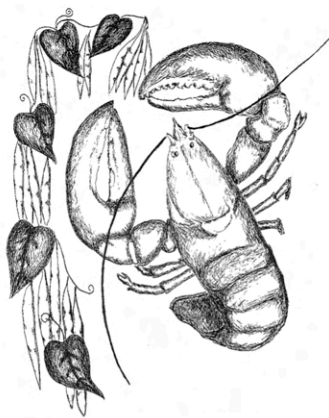
Click here to [Contact](#) the education department with any questions.

Many today have never participated in the gathering or had the opportunity to taste these foods in this way. To me, the smoked flavors generated from this delicious meal are not surpassed by any other ways of eating these foods. I was fortunate to grow up around the numerous salt ponds and other waters of Charlestown in a time when, if you knew where to go, there was access to the places these sea foods are found; the areas that my ancestors once freely occupied. However, access is very limited now. More and more privatization is occurring with signs indicating “private property”, “private beach”, “private drive” “parking for residents only” occupying entrances to almost every access point to these waters and others. In addition, recent years have seen the leasing of the waters themselves for oyster farms! It is truly difficult to teach those of our young people who are interested the ways of our ancestors when there are so many barriers.



Example of the privatization of beach and other water access

Throughout the years these waters were our primary source of sea foods for the clambakes held at the Narragansett Indian Powwow and at Tomaquag Museum. It is indeed challenging to our traditional ways of gathering the resources to celebrate our thanksgivings or to hold ceremony at their locations due to these barriers. But we are a resilient, persistent people and we will continue!



**GREEN BEAN  
THANKSGIVING FESTIVAL  
AND  
CLAMBAKE  
July 18, 1982**

TOMAQUAG INDIAN MEMORIAL MUSEUM  
SUMMIT ROAD • EXETER, RHODE ISLAND 02822

*The Tomaquag Indian Museum  
invites you to celebrate the culture  
and heritage of the American Indian  
at our Annual*

*Greenbean Thanksgiving Festival  
and  
Traditional Indian Clambake  
on Sunday, July 18, 1982  
From Noon to 7:00 P.M.  
at*

*Dovecrest Pavilion*

*Summit Road, Arcadia Village, Exeter, R.I.  
Donation \$25.00 — Tickets in Advance Only  
Send check to: Tomaquag Indian Museum  
Summit Road, Exeter, R. I. 02822*

*For further information call: 401-539-2094 or 539-7213*

*Special Exhibitions in the Museum  
Craft Displays and Demonstrations  
Games, History, Storytelling,  
Dance, Costumes, Music,  
Indian Thanksgiving Ceremony &  
Traditional Indian Clambake*

*Program*

- On going Events Indian Art and Crafts Exhibitions/ Demonstrations  
Museum Tours  
Indian Games with Tall Oak and Wabne
- Noon Cherry Stones, Clam Chowder and Clam Cakes  
Free Draft Beer
- Noon History of the R. I. Clambake by Ferris B. Dove
- 12:30 P.M. Indian Legends
- 1:00 P.M. History of the Narragansett Indian Church  
by Rev. Harold Mars
- 2:00 P.M. Greenbean Thanksgiving Ceremony  
Drummer ..... Tall Oak  
Invocation ..... Prophet Gomo Nitop  
Welcoming Remarks ..... Chief Roaring Bull  
Smoking of the Peace Pipe  
Welcome Dance  
Legend of the Greenbean  
Specialty Dances  
Naming Ceremony  
Social Dances
- 4:00 P.M. Benediction ..... Princess Red Wing  
Clambake Opening  
Includes LOBSTER, STEAMERS, Fish,  
Sausage, Corn, Sweet Potatoes, Potatoes & Onions
- 6:00 P.M. Watermelon and Coffee

This program is made possible by the  
Tomaquag Indian Memorial Museum and a  
grant from the Rhode Island State Council  
for the Arts.



(Tomaquag Museum Archives)

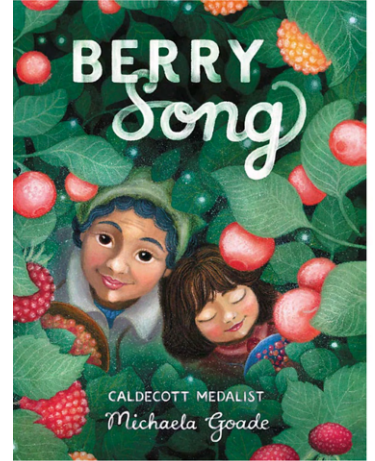
**~Chrystal Mars Baker for July 2023**

Click here to [Contact](#) the education department with any questions.

## FOR THE CHILDREN:

In this story a young girl spends time with her grandmother learning how to forage for good in the natural environment around them. She learns what comes from the waters but most especially enjoys finding the berries! The story takes place in the territory of the Tlingit (Alaska) and the songs and words are from their language. It is written and illustrated by Michaela Goade, a Caldecott Medalist, who is celebrating the land she knows well and the powerful wisdom of elders.

Here are the directions and printable to make your own berry masks. Click [here](#) to print it out and have fun making and wearing them!



## RESOURCES:

At Tomaquag we are continuously doing the work of educating new generations of children as well as the general public about the lives, traditions and life changes of the Indigenous peoples of Rhode Island and neighboring communities. Follow us on our website at [tomaquagmuseum.org](http://tomaquagmuseum.org), [Youtube](#) and [Facebook](#). Check out these resources!

To support Indigenous authors and purchase your own copy of Berry Song visit this [link](#):

For an introduction to the book by the author herself visit this [link](#):

To hear the book read aloud visit this [link](#):

Check out this book by Robert Peters entitled “Clambake” [here](#).

To read a recent article about RI’s privatization effects on access visit this [link](#): (subscription needed).