

# Indian Girl Saves Legends of Race

*Anthropology*

By FRANK G. SPECK

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From the Indians of Massachusetts, if anyone can be induced to believe that there are any, a marvelous epic is being woven into form. It is an epic of the days before the arrival of the Pilgrims on Cape Cod and the neighboring islands, in the early part of the seventeenth century. It is an epic of a hero and creator couched in the phrases of fable and legend, depicting the creation and transformation of the region now embraced between Boston Bay and Vineyard Sound. With the battering down of the last outpost of the Indian settlements during King Philip's War the dwindling remnants sought refuge on the desolate moors on the extreme end of the Island of Kapawok, "the land covered with clouds", as it was known to them, the Martha's Vineyard of today.

In the picturesque but barren up-

## Early American Ware

*Archæology*

Substantial support for the commonly accepted doctrine that "Irish" potato originated in South America is found in the very ancient piece of Indian pottery now on exhibition in the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, which is pictured on the cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS-LETTER. It clearly represents two potatoes of good shape and size, one lying on top of the other, with the eyes rudely but realistically shown. How old the jug is no one knows, but Dr. William M. McGovern, of the museum staff, states that it antedates the Inca conquest of the Peruvian coast.

There seems to have been a fashion among these ancient Indians for modeling their pottery in the shape of food plants, for other pieces represent peanuts, corn, squashes, pumpkins, beans and the poisonous tuber from which tapioca is made. These examples of really Early American ware are of great assistance not only to archæologists and anthropologists in the study of the ways of the people who made them, but to economic botanists interested in the discovery of the original homelands of our present-day food crops, whose history, almost without exception, runs far back and blends into the times when there was no history.

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lands of Gay Head they retreated to secure peace and liberty from the encroachments of the land-seizing whites and here they still reside to the number of several hundred. Little known to the outside world, happy in their fishing and seafaring life, they have evaded the prying interests of investigators who have hitherto remained ignorant of the meaning of the legends preserved in the closets of memory of the older generation. Sedulously refusing to communicate legendary secrets to the questions of the white aliens their reserve has been at last penetrated by one of their own race, a young Indian girl, Gladys Tantaquidgeon, who has just returned from Gay Head with a host of treasures of legend and folk-lore to be woven into a scenic epic which, like a tapestry, will depict the primeval age when the giant God, Mashap, created and formed the land; directed

the activities of his children, the Indians, and ruled the storms and waves of the southern coast of Massachusetts, where since his day so many craft have gone down beneath his wrath.

Miss Tantaquidgeon is a Mohegan Indian. The old Indians at Gay Head are a branch of the Wampanoags, the tribe that under King Philip so strenuously opposed the Pilgrims. They welcomed the Indian maiden and loosened their tongues in her behalf. This has enabled her to bring forth a connected story of their ancient and imposing legends to be admired and studied by the hosts of readers who are ever seeking for fragments of folk-lore to reconstruct the classical narratives of aboriginal races. Miss Tantaquidgeon is a student at the University of Pennsylvania in the Department of Anthropology.

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