

Wyandank Pharaoh, chief of the Montauk Indians, claims his tribe is not extinct, as has been declared by the State Attorney General. Chief Pharaoh says there are twenty-five or more full-blooded Montauk Indians alive today. He and the remnants of the once proud tribe live in Freetown, a suburb of Easthampton. The old chief claims that the Montauk lands, said to be worth \$2,000,000, were purchased from the Indians by the late Arthur Benson of Brooklyn for \$10, but the Indians were guaranteed the privilege of returning to the tract at any time to hunt or fish. Twenty-five or more years ago the Montauks began a court action to recover the property. Since then, the Easthampton Star says, tribal meetings have been held yearly at Sag Harbor and the ancient customs observed. All of which may be correct from the viewpoint of the aged chief of the Montauks, but it seems highly improbable that any legal formalities were lacking in the transfer of the big Montauk tract to Mr. Benson, or that any improper advantage was taken of the tribe. Mr. Benson was a man of high character, who cannot justly be suspected of any trickery toward the Indians. The deed given him is a matter of record, and its provisions can be readily ascertained. No doubt Chief Pharaoh honestly believes his tribe still has certain rights in Montauk—it is possible they have under the deed to Benson—but it is also to be believed that as to the tribal standing of the Montauks, the Attorney General is better qualified to give an opinion than the uneducated Chief Wyandank Pharaoh. His statement in the Star is interesting, but not convincing.

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