



# State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
P.O. BOX 300  
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625

PHILIP D. MURPHY  
*Governor*

TAHESHA WAY  
*Secretary of State*

SHEILA Y. OLIVER  
*Lt. Governor*

October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020

Honorable Governor Murphy,

We, the tribal representative of State of NJ Commission of American Indian Affairs, support the **Liberty State Park Protection Act** and we humbly request you endorse this bill into law. The land now known as Liberty State Park is of historical significance and is a sacred site for tribal people from the colonial era and even has additional significance due to more recent events. We request that it be protected and preserved for future generations.

Kieft's War (1643–1645), also known as the Wappinger War, was a conflict between Gov. Kieft of New Netherland and the Lenape Indians of New York and New Jersey. Gov Kieft demanded all indigenous people in the area pay tribute to him, against the recommendations of his council. David de Vries, a Dutch colonist with a plantation on Staten Island, noted the Native American response to this attempted taxation. The Tappan, while trading with de Vries, state that Kieft

must be a very mean fellow to come to live in this country without being invited by them, and now wish to compel them to give him their corn for nothing.

<https://www.newyorkalmanack.com/2020/07/kiefts-war-against-native-people-a-primer/>

Kieft sent soldiers from New Netherland to the camps at Pavonia on February 25, 1643 and killed 120 Lenape people, including women and children. De Vries described the events in his journal:

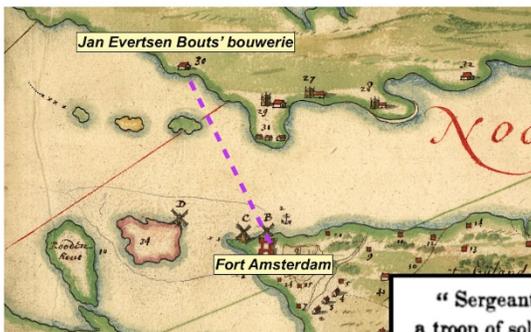
Infants were torn from their mother's breasts, and hacked to pieces in the presence of their parents, and pieces thrown into the fire and

in the water, and other sucklings, being bound to small boards, were cut, stuck, and pierced, and miserably massacred in a manner to move a heart of stone. Some were thrown into the river, and when the fathers and mothers endeavored to save them, the soldiers would not let them come on land but made both parents and children drown.

<http://nycourts.gov/history/legal-history-new-york/luminaries-dutch/de-vries-david-pieterszen.html>

This tragic history occurred at what is now called Caven Point at Liberty State Park. The local newspapers have reported Liberty National Golf Course, an exclusive private club are wanting to expand their golf course to include Caven Point, thereby blocking public access. This is a public site and the Lenape come from all over the country to pay our respects and pray at this site.

This area was also known to be the staging area of New Yorkers escaping the 9/11 tragedy. They came here by ferry from Manhattan to escape the chaos of the fallen towers.

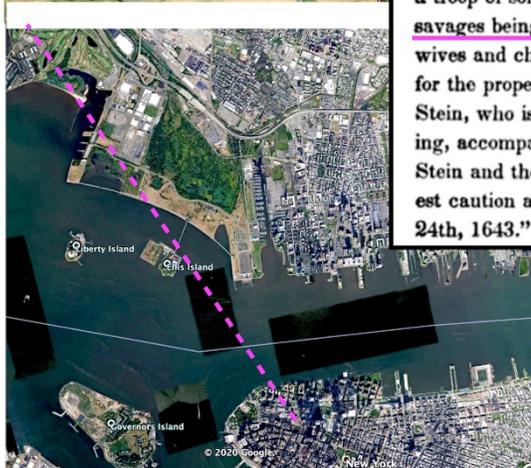


← **Excerpt from 1639 Vinckeboon's Map**

*The dashed line is the line of sight from Fort Amsterdam to Jan Evertsen Bout's farm. The massacre was witnessed from the fort by the Dutch patroon David Pieterszen DeVries, and was later described by him in his journal.*

**Original Order from Dir. Gen. Kieft:**

“Sergeant Rodolf is commaneda and authorized to take under his command a troop of soldiers, and lead them to Pavonia, and drive away and destroy the savages being behind Jan Evertsen's, but to spare, as much as is possible, their wives and children, and to take the savages prisoners. He may watch there for the proper opportunity to make his attack successful; for which end Hans Stein, who is well acquainted with every spot on which the savages were skulking, accompanies him. He, therefore, shall consult with the aforesaid Hans Stein and the corporals. The exploit to be executed at night, with the greatest caution and prudence. Our God may bless the expedition. Done, Feb 24th, 1643.” Alb. Rec. ii., 210, 211. Hol. Doc. iii., 148, 204.



← **Aerial photo from Google Earth**

*Using the same fixed points of Ellis Island and Fort Amsterdam's former location to establish a line on a modern aerial photo, it appears that the Caven Point wildlife preserve is at or near the site of the massacre.*

We urge you to support the **Liberty State Park Protection Act** by signing it into law to preserve and protect this valuable piece of history forever. May it always remain a protected public space.

Sincerely,

*Lewis "Grey Squirrel" Pierce*

*Steven Burton*

Lewis "Grey Squirrel" Pierce  
Commission Chair  
Nanticoke Lenape Tribe

Steven Burton  
Co-Chair  
Ramapough Lenape Nation

CC:

Urie Ridegeway, Nanticoke Lenape Tribe  
Eileen DeFreece, Ramapough Lenape Nation  
Joanne Hawkins, Powhatan Renape Tribe  
Barbara Jefferson, Powhatan Renape Tribe