

# THE ENCHANTED SPRING

## An American Indian Legend

**Told by Princess Nowedonah / Narration and incidental music by Dennis Starin**  
**Part 1—The Story of Poggatatuck / Part 2—Tiana and the Isle of the Dead**



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E56  
1966

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FC 7753

MUSIC LP



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Part 1 - The Story of Poggatuck  
Part 2 - Tiana and the Isle of the Dead

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# THE ENCHANTED SPRING

(An American Indian Legend)

by Dennis Starin



## PART I: "POGGATATUCK AND ASHWA"

### SIDE 1 Band 1

Who will go back in time with me? ... back in time to the enchanted Indian island, PAUMANOK!

I, Princess Nowedonah, of the Shinnecock tribe of the Algonkian Nation, will guide you back in time - yes, way back through the highways heavy with traffic and the fields and meadows, now covered with houses, - yes back to the time when our island was covered with deep green forests and golden meadows ... as far as the eye could see, and beyond. It was then that the crystal brooks and sparkling lakes bubbled joyously with trout and salmon.

There is a place at the foot of a high bank on the shore of Noyack Bay, where a spring bubbles forth. It was one of the finest mineral springs on Paumanok - the Indian name of Long Island.

Hundreds of years ago the Indians came to this watering place from far and wide across the great island. Here they built their summer camps near the shore of a crescent beach. The place is known as "Weckatuck", which in the Algonkian language means "at the end of the woods"... and the spring had come to be called the ENCHANTED SPRING OF WECKATUCK ... for such were the wonders of the mysterious spells and marvellous enchantments that surrounded the legend of the Enchanted Spring.

... The quiet beauty of Weckatuck had once been a refuge not only for the Indians, but for the animals of the forest and the birds of the air as well. Timid deer roamed through the leaf-covered woods and squirrels and paupocksuogs (or "rabbits" as they are now-a-days called) rustled through the tall grasses and mountain laurel.

High in the trees the chogansuck sang his shrill song, and here the great North American wompsacuckquanog often rested and plumed its feathers, while in the uppermost boughs of the wind-swept oak trees lining the shore, the keen-eyed osprey kept watch over land and sea. Wild bees swarmed and buzzed, while in the gleaming shallows, lillies and rushes waved gently in the breeze.

The voices of my people have been silenced by the grave. But softly in the night of the full moon, when the frost is on the meadow, and quiet haunts the air, the echo of distant voices murmurs from the forest - floating on the tide of the timeless waters of Noyac Bay.

### SIDE 1 Band 2

It was here, many years before the coming of the white man, that the three brothers Nowedonah, Poggatuck, and Wyandanch met for conclave and there established the con-

federacy of the four Indian tribes of eastern Long Island. Momoweta, sachem of the Chorchakes also joined them. There, at the brink of the spring, they smoked the pipe of peace and quaffed refreshing draughts from the spring.

Now it so happened that the powers of the spring were such that, according to the old beliefs, if thanks were given to Pampagusitt, the spirit dwelling in the spring, a blessing would be imparted to the drinker of the enchanted waters ... and this would, as indeed it had, so affect the brain as to give skill and judgment in guiding a skiff, and so powerful its spell that if the prow of a newly launched canoe be sprinkled with the water by the hand of a maiden, that canoe would be lucky in fishing, sports or war, and its owner invulnerable against all adversity. If this enchanted water were offered to the sick by an old squaw - or weany sunck as they used to say - it had the power of curing fevers, as soon we shall see.

Soon after the three brothers had gathered round the fire at the brink of the spring, a spell of enchantment descended from the dark of night. As they sat in contemplation, the spring began to bubble furiously ... and it glowed intensely with an eery incandescence. Suddenly! And this startled the three braves - a strange and terrifying figure arose from the spring and leaped forth! It danced about wildly, shaking itself violently, splashing water on the three brothers, who were too startled to move. When they realized however, that this was none other than Pampagusitt, they rejoiced and danced with him in thanksgiving, for the many wonders he had bestowed through the waters of the enchanted spring.

### SIDE 1 Band 3

When the dance had ended, the spirit disappeared. All departed except Poggatuck, who camped for the night close to the spring. With the spring murmuring softly and the waters of the bay lapping gently at the shore, the stillness of the night was broken only by the occasional hoot of the owl and the restless chirping of crickets. Poggatuck wrapped himself in his blanket and was soon fast asleep. During the night he had a strange and most wonderful dream.

#### "The Dream of Poggatuck"

If an Indian maiden blesses your canoe  
with the magic water God has given you,

you shall face all danger; none shall conquer you.  
Bestow on her the water, and she shall love you too.



While the pale moon still hung low in the dark of the western sky, great streaks of crimson clutched skyward from the east. Soon the treetops were etched in gold and the first-rising gulls greeted the dawn of a new day.

MASSA KEAT MUND. SUMANA WEQUANANANK SOOS NIPI. Our land has truly been blessed by the great god of nature.

#### SIDE 1 Band 4

Weckatuck had become a favorite place of Poggatuck. The forest abounded with wild game and the waters of the bay were plentiful in fish, clams and scallops. But in addition to all this, it was beside the enchanted spring where the young brave first met a beautiful Indian princess who lived on Manhansett aha quash awanuck - an island sheltered by islands, far out in the bay. Her name was Ashwa ...

On her island home, Ashwa often ran through clovered meadows to reach the highest hill, where she would spend many hours pondering the strange, but wonderful feeling that now filled her heart. The sight of a distant canoe would light her face with joy. In happiness she sang her first love song to the intoxicating breezes that announced the advent of spring:

#### "Tell Me Why I Have Fallen In Love"

When the bee buzzes gayly on the blossom,  
When the sea rolls gently to the shore,  
I't the spring time calling for life to begin.  
Tell me why I have fallen in love.

When the raindrop splashes in the water,  
will they say that maybe I'm a fool,  
to be loved by someone as handsome as he?  
Tell me why I have fallen in love.

They say Love can last forever.  
Let it start, here and now, right away.  
Don't wait for another summer  
to feel the world begin.

When the wild-flower dances in the meadow,  
when the tree wears a crown of shining leaves,  
I will ask one question to someone who cares:  
Tell me why I have fallen in love.

And so it was that Poggatuck journeyed in his canoe to meet Ashwa, on the shore of her island. With plumes of swan's down on his head and fox tails on his moccasined feet, he would often sing of his love for Ashwa as he guided his canoe, straight and true, across the waters of the bay ... Perhaps, he thought, she would hear his song, or a hungry osprey on hearing it, might interrupt it's hunt and fly away to the island, telling Ashwa of the arrival of her brave young lover. Ah, but this was so long ago in time, and the memories are clouded in mist.

The tides ebbed and flowed for many moons ... and Poggatuck grew in wisdom and strength - for he was one day to become a great sachem and leader of his people.

#### SIDE 1 Band 5

And it came to pass that before Poggatuck and Ashwa were to live together as man and wife, a great ceremony would be held. The Indians of many tribes journeyed by land and water to the shore of the crescent beach, not far from Weckatuck. Many tribal chants were sung and the Indians danced the "green corn dance" many times over ... for it was the season when the fragrance of blossoms filled the air. The forest and woodlands were carpeted in soft laurel clusters of pink and white.

Smoke from the fires of numerous lodges drifted skyward. Teams of Indians hauled their nets, heavy with fish. Children gathered wild berries as women prepared great steaming pots of succotash, naussamp, and quahogs. Over the glowing fires venison and quail slowly roasted as delicious aromas filled the air, teasing the appetites of hungry children.

As the blood-red sun dipped slowly into a bed of purple clouds, torches were lit and campfires glowed brightly in the twilight. The flutter of wings softened the air as a lonely bird flew to it's waiting nest.

Princess Ashwa appeared at her wig-wam, bowing gracefully to all present. None had ever seen a more beautiful princess. She wore a dress of white deerskin and her hair was arranged in bangs, denoting her state of maidenhood.

Poggatuck joined her and together they walked to the place of honor. With all solemnity Poggatuck took hold of a leather quiver filled with the water of the enchanted spring. He presented it to Ashwa to drink, saying: CUCH QUA MAMISH.

Holding the quiver to her gold-painted lips, Ashwa drank deeply of the enchanted water. She then walked to the shore where Poggatuck's canoe stood ready for launching. Murmuring the magic word GEE-AH, Ashwa poured the remaining water over the prow of the canoe, and was thus certain that her lover would be safe and brave in all voyages and adventures.

Ashwa returned to the place of honor while Poggatuck prepared for the great ritual dance of courtship. As a torrent of sound pulsed from a hundred drums, Poggatuck leaped in the air as the flames of the fires licked at his body. He danced in savage splendor!

From high on the hills of Weckatuck, the campfires could be seen burning far into the night. As the moon grew dim, the bay seemed to be covered with black velvet and sprinkled with the diamond reflections of countless stars. With the lamp of the heavens to guide them, Poggatuck and Ashwa sailed to Manhansett aha quash awanuck, the island sheltered by islands ...

Although Poggatuck and Ashwa sailed deeply into the mists of time, their story is yet remembered.

#### "Manhansett aha quash awanuck"

There is a ballad of an Indian boy  
that was sung 'round the fires long ago.  
And it told of his love for a fair Indian girl,  
in words not ever heard again.

#### PART II: "TIANA AND THE ISLE OF THE DEAD"

#### SIDE 2 Band 1

Of all the gifts bestowed upon Man by the Deity, perhaps none has been more gratefully received than the gift of water.

In the murmuring fountain and bubbling stream are carried the precious traces of forgotten cultures. Such waters quench not the thirst of the body, but of the spirit.

It happened with the Indians as it did with many of the ancient peoples that strange and wonderful powers were attributed to the life-giving waters.

The waters of the enchanted spring once flowed clean and fresh from the fertile womb of nature, unpolluted by the malevolent spirit of so-called "civilized" man that was later to overtake and destroy the Indian culture of the continent.

The giving of water was highly esteemed among the Indians. It is said the custom of launching ships with wine or water stems from this ancient practice. Wyacombone, the Indian prince of the Montauketts, could give no richer gift to his guardian, who was Lord of the Isle of Monchonock, than a few drops of the water from the enchanted spring of Weckatuck.

#### SIDE 2 Band 2

At a place on a hill, where the earth meets the sky, the ancient squaw Tiana once lived. How many years ago? No one yet alive remembers.

Her life and work would have remained forgotten and unsung were it not for the mothers and children of this ancient berg who listened and repeated the story of Tiana around the glowing hearth fires during the cold winter nights many centuries ago.

In sifting through the archives of time, the story of Tiana reveals the courage and bravery of an individual woman and her concern for her people.

Tiana lived in a wooden lodge situated on a majestic bluff overlooking a bay. In early childhood she found the world about her to be a wonderland of beauty. As she walked through woodlands and meadows, along pebbled beaches and wandering inlets, she was filled with endless questions. In exploring the mysteries of a sea-shell or the design of a dogwood blossom Tiana entered the great university of nature.

She observed the change of seasons, the growth of plants, and the ways of birds and animals. Tiana realized the world must indeed be guided by a Divine Hand.

When she was old enough to paddle a canoe - or KUT O NUCK as the Indians called them, Tiana explored the bays and creeks, to see what adventure awaited in some unseen part of the landscape. At other times she set out to explore a distant island that sparkled like a ribbon of gold in the western sky. And always she would return home, her canoe heavy with treasure - perhaps freshly dug clams, unusual wildflowers, or delicate shells in pastel colors, that would later be woven into wampum. During the spring and summer months the meadows abounded with wild berries and Tiana joined the birds and animals in feasting on this delicious harvest.

The Indian men taught their sons to hunt in the forest or to man a canoe for the dangerous and exciting hunt for the mighty whale. The women however, taught their daughters the arts of wampum and pottery making, together with responsibility of caring for the vegetable garden ... Such were the ways of the Indians.

#### SIDE 2 Band 3

There were times then, as even now, when all was not peaceful ... when the storm clouds of pestilence gathered in twisting spirals over the land, blotting out the golden sun.

Tiana was known far and wide among the neighboring tribes as much for her kindness and beauty as for her knowing ways with plants and animals. She had indeed guided many a weary traveler to the Enchanted Spring - located not far from her lodge. There by the waters of Weckatuck, Tiana would lower the leather container, called a wolomucam, and with it draw forth the crystal waters from the spring.

Here she often met with Anabackus, the basket-maker, who even in her later years preferred to gather the choicest reeds and grasses that grew beside the waters of the enchanted spring. Indians from the thirteen tribes of the island met there to exchange accounts of the past winter, or renew acquaintances, and to quaff the waters of the spring.

One afternoon, as the midsummer sun reclined on a cloud-filled horizon, Tiana stood by her lodge contemplating the serene beauty of the bay. As she gazed upon the waters, her attention was diverted by a solitary figure making its way along the shore.

"Tiana! ... Tiana!"

The voice was plaintive, and as the figure approached the steep embankment below her lodge, Tiana recognized at once the basket-maker Anabackus, who now called to her in distress.

The old squaw labored under the burden of the sad news she had to relate. A young brave had journeyed from Montauk, falling exhausted in the meadow beyond the enchanted spring. Anabackus had by chance found him half-dead and burning with fever. Reviving him with the waters of the spring, Anabackus learned of a terrible malady that had fallen upon their neighbors - the Montauketts. In desperation they had dispatched their strongest and swiftest brave to carry the message for help to Princess Tiana, who somehow, they knew, would help them through the strength of her potions and the magic of the waters of the enchanted spring.

#### SIDE 2 Band 4

When Tiana heard of the tragedy she rushed to her lodge and gathered a bundle of herbs and medicines. She threw a blanket trimmed with goose quills over her head, fastened shut the door of her lodge and, according to Indian custom, climbed out through the chimney opening.

Upon reaching the beach, Tiana launched her canoe and paddled swiftly to the nearby spring of Weckatuck. As she drew the waters from the spring, she muttered an incantation to the spirit of Pampagusitt - that he bestow his blessing on the waters and save her people from illness and death.

Tiana carried the water-filled quivers to her canoe ... and without a moment's hesitation, once again set out on the journey to Montauk.

She sailed through coves and harbors to the deep and open waters of the bay. The voyage was both long and dangerous.

The swift-running tides and magnetic cross-currents tossed her canoe at whim. But Tiana would not be deterred from her course. With even greater determination, she guided her canoe eastward. Finally she approached the sheltered waters of Konkhoga Bay at Montauk.

In a loud voice she called: "NETOMPAUG! NETOMPAUG! A CAN MUCK NOTESHAM KU TTASS AM WU TA TASH MAU MAWN TEANTASS! ("Friends, friend ... hear me! I come from across the sea. I bring you the waters of the enchanted spring. Drink and be of good health!")

As Tiana reached the shore, cries were heard in the wigwams. The faces of braves and squaws were covered with sequet - or ashes - as was the custom then in mourning for the dead. Terror had seized the tribe! The chief had already died and the tribe was without hope or direction. Funeral mounds were everywhere. A squaw sat moaning on the ground, still holding the lifeless body of her papoose.

Tiana's presence helped to relieve the terror of the Indians. As she went about administering to the sick and giving comfort to those who had lost their dear ones, hope was restored. And soon the sick likewise returned to good health and well-being.

But for Tiana, her work was not yet finished. The terrible sickness had spread to yet another tribe living on an island in the bay. The Montauketts implored Tiana to bring the enchanted waters to their brothers on the island.



SIDE 2 Band 5

With the last of the water from Weckatuck, Tiana once again pointed her canoe to the open waters of the bay. Even as the shores of the Montauketts were still in view, great storm clouds gathered in the sky. An ocean wind pushed the white-capped waves into a mountainous sea. The skies suddenly broke open with a torrential rain! Great drums of thunder pounded in the sky as arrows of lightning were hurled seaward. With a deafening roar a mountain of water crashed down on Tiana, throwing her canoe end-over-end. Submerged in the churning waters, Tiana grabbed desperately for a life-line to safety. She caught hold of an empty quiver and managed to float to the surface. For what seemed an eternity, she rode the crest of each wave and survived the downward pull of the undertow that threatened to swallow her.

The storm released its grip on the sky and sea as quickly as it had begun. Great shafts of sunlight broke through the parting clouds. With her eyes stinging with salt and blinded by the brilliance of the sun, Tiana uttered a prayer of thanksgiving for being yet alive.

Several canoes paddled swiftly to her rescue. When she again reached the shores of Montauk, Tiana was wrapped in blankets and cared for by the squaws. When the evening fires were lighted, Tiana was escorted to the place of honor. In the hope that the island tribesmen might yet be spared from the evil malady - and in thanksgiving for the deliverance of Tiana, a ritual ceremony was held.

By the first light of dawn on the following morning a party of braves was dispatched from the shore in a large hunting canoe. The fate of their island brothers must be known at all costs. Throughout the day women and children gathered in the hills of Montauk, keeping watch on the horizon for signs of the returning canoe.

When in late afternoon the party of braves could be seen approaching the waters of Konkhoga Bay, everyone gathered anxiously at the shore.

As if a dagger had at once rendered the stillness of the warm summer air, a piercing cry plunged across the waters ... "Monchonock! Monchonock!"

I cannot translate the terror, the horror, the fear and desolation - conjured by that fateful word: "Monchonock!" Some have said it means "the land of the departed", or "they have all gone away". But from that day onward the island was known as "Monchonock" - "The Isle of the Dead."

SIDE 2 Band 6

With a heart heavy with sadness, Tiana gave a last farewell to the Montauketts. She returned to Weckatuck

in dignity and quiet resignation, strengthened by the knowledge that through her efforts those departed would be forever remembered by the living.

On a hill where the earth meets the sky, the waters of the Enchanted Spring can still be heard carried high on the breeze. When the dogwood is in blossom in the forest, and the fields of Anabackus are once more dipped in summer green, the voice of Tiana calls ....

"There on a hill where the wind blows high  
There on the shore where the earth meets the sky,  
Tiana's song will I sing:  
A Legend of the Enchanted Spring."

(The End)

PRINCESS NOWEDONAH was born at Heady Creek on the Shinnecock Indian Reservation, Southampton, Long Island. Having received her early education at the Reservation school, she later returned there in the capacity of teacher and tribal historian.

A graduate of Cheney State Teachers College, Pa., Princess Nowedonah continued her studies at Rutgers University and at New York University.

The author of several books and a newspaper column, Princess Nowedonah has lectured widely and has presented programs of Indian lore and folkcraft at schools and colleges throughout the eastern coast. Her efforts in the field of applied anthropology were instrumental in winning a favorable judicial decision in the Shinnecock land case of 1961.

DENNIS STARIN is a graduate of the Johns Hopkins University. He received his musical training at the Peabody Conservatory and at the Juilliard School of Music.

After graduation he worked as a music therapist at a large New York hospital and has taught classes in special education at several Long Island schools. His continued interest in both the creative arts and social sciences led to further study at Adelphi University where he received a graduate degree in Sociology.

Drawing his themes largely from the regional folklore of Long Island, Mr. Starin's has written in the media of ballet, musical comedy, instrumental and vocal music. He is presently on the faculty of the Southampton School System.