



Hitting the Jackpot: The Inside Story of the Richest Indian Tribe in History

Brett Duval Fromson

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In 1637, Puritan settlers in Connecticut were at war with the Pequot Indians. In retaliation for a Pequot raid, Captain John Mason led an assembled militia of English and Indian allies in an attack on a Pequot fort that left over four hundred Pequots dead. Within two years, the Pequot tribe was all but extinguished. It would remain that way for the next 350 years. In 1973, the last remaining descendant of the Pequots to live on the tribal reservation, Elizabeth George Plouffe, passed away, but not before imparting the advice to her grandson Richard "Skip" Haywood: "Hold on to the land." These words would instigate a thirty-year legal and political drama that would lead Hayward and his relatives to re-create the Pequot tribe and become the richest Indians in history. *Hitting the Jackpot* uncovers a labyrinthine tale of legal maneuverings, back-room political dealings, and ethnic reinvention. Fromson details the process by which today's Pequots gained tribal recognition, hired top lawyers to claim thousands of acres of land, gained the right to open a \$1.2 billion-a-year operation, and distilled the barest traces of Pequot lineage into a full-fledged tribe with over six hundred tribal members.

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