Situated on the intersection of Ponus Ridge road and Davenport Ridge, lies the Chief Ponus monument. The towering pyramid-shaped granite memorial was constructed and established in 1897, as a tribute to a Tank Teke Chief, Ponus, Sachem of Rippowam which it is named after. He lived through the 17th century and previously ruled over the towns: North Stamford, New Canaan extending up to Ridgefield in Fairfield County Connecticut.

Each of the four sides of the stone features informative inscriptions that detail the significance of the monument. The North face of the monument reads “Dedicated on the Seventhday of the Tenth Moon of A.D. 1897” displaying the date of its establishment. On the East face it reads “Ponus, Sagamore, 1640” to whom the monument is in dedication of. On the South: “Erected by the Historical Society and the Ponus Tribe No. 31 of Red Men of New Canaan, Marks the Home and the Tradition Tomb of Ponus, Sachem of Rippowams.” Affording recognition to the men who once ruled over the lands the memorial is on. The final side, the West Side, features the exact date of the memorials creation: “October 2, 1897”.

Chief Ponus received fame and supreme honor for his involvement in the “Deed of Ponus and Owneoke.” An agreement that revised the ownership over what is now Pound Ridge, Bedford, Wilton and Greenwich Connecticut. Captain Nathan Turner, a representative of the New Haven Colony endorsed a contract that transferred the right of ownership of Stamford from
the native tribes to him and future white settlers. After the purchase, the town which was formerly known as Rippowam (a native translation of “cliff of rocks”) name was changed to Stamford on July 1st, 1641. Ponus signed the document on behalf of the native inhabitants that resided there: notably the Sagamores of Shippan as well as the Toquam tribes. In return for the generous amount of land offered up, the natives were given 12 coats, hoes, hatchets, glasses, knives plus 4 kettles and fathoms of white Wampum. Ponus had veto power over the agreement but there were other parties involved in the decision. Unfortunately however, since all of the parties involved did not possess the ability to read and write, it can be inferred they had no idea of what or how much land and freedom they were giving up. Nor did they have any idea of the repercussions that would follow.

In 1655, Ponus signed over the water-bordering neighborhood of Shippan, to Norwalk settlers. From 1680 to 1740, other native chiefs like Catoonah sold off the rest of Stamford to white settlers who soon after took over the entirety of the area. The invasion of the white settlers stimulated the diffusion of Smallpox that wiped out the remaining Tanki Teke tribe residents. Essentially all had disappeared by the 1770s.

Son of Ponus, Taphance, endorsed a third contract by which they were to give up all their lands with the exception of the lands they used for farming in 1667. The agreement further asserted that they must live in isolation separated from their neighbors. This agreement went against the core values of the native communities, holding the land belonged to a god-like all-creating entity and it was therefore not their place to negotiate the ownership of the lands. The establishment of the Powahay District is a tribute to Ponus’ grandson: Powahay

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2 Ibid
commemorating the natives' peaceful nature and the struggles they faced on behalf of the white man, forced to give up their home lands.

This is not the only thing Ponus is known for however. Additionally his devotion to his family is another quality he is respected and honored for. So not only was he involved in the sale of the majority of Fairfield country, he also went on to conduct a historically renowned hunt for his lost son. Oenoke Sagamore Ponus (there is a street named after him in New Cannan where he was found) got himself lost in the woods of New Canaan. In order to find his son, Ponus devised a brilliant plan. In 1640, a year before the trade deed, Ponus went off into the woods for seven days in search of his son, when that plan failed him he thought of something better. Ordering the native warriors with the task of hiding treasure throughout the forest, he assigned the youths with a task: to find the hidden treasure. Additionally he spread the word of the hunt to the neighboring tribes to encourage more participants to join. The youths searching through all the nooks and crannies of the forest for the treasure, eventually found his son, just as Ponus had hoped.

The monument recognizes Ponus’ determination and integrity in addition to drastically altering American history. The location of the monument - placed in the middle of an intersection was by no means a mistake. Situated on a triangular plot allows for the monument to be seen from all directions of traffic. The condition of the monument despite its age reflects the effort that has been put into its upkeep, undergoing a facelift in 2017 for restoration purposes. The plot is bordered in by carefully manicured shrubbery and newly planted flowers which demonstrate the town's determination to preserve the monument. The message behind Ponus’ story aligns with the values close to the heart of Fairfield County, and are therefore dedicated to protecting the monument and the story it honors.