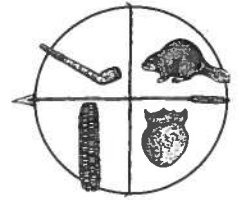


TRUE HISTORY



For twenty-five years the Wampanoag Indian Program (WIP) has been a part of Plimoth Plantation. This unique living museum presents true history to the best of its ability. There has been research accumulated over the years that embodies both the written word and the spoken word, especially for the Native part of history. The Pilgrim history has been mainly from written sources. Both cultures are intertwined whether this fact is realized, accepted or not. The Pilgrim story cannot be told accurately without the inclusion of the Wampanoag and other Native Peoples of the vicinity present during the 1600's. The Wampanoag story cannot be told without including the explorers, kidnappers, Pilgrims and others who came to these Eastern shores in the 16th century and before.

The Pilgrims settled in Wampanoag territory and did not arrive in an unused, uninhabited land. There are many historic writings concerning Native People of the 17th century. Much has been written from the observations and point of view of the Europeans of that day. Among Eastern Native Indigenous People, it is the oral history which dominates and is continuous.

Understanding that much of what the Europeans saw and reported on paper was a biased view of Native cultures at that time, there is still much actual historic information that can be gleaned from their writings. For us of the Wampanoag Indian Program at Plimoth Plantation the written information combined with the oral cultural history gives us an amazingly good idea of how this area's Indigenous population lived at the time the Pilgrims arrived. Native People have amassed much information by their knowledge of the oral history of their People. The fact that cultural ways are still alive and well to this day adds to this knowledge.

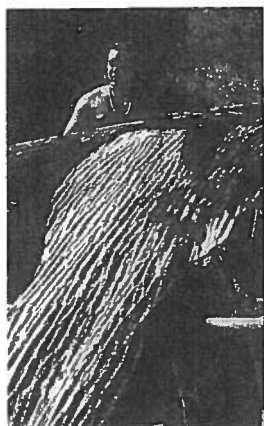
For tribal Peoples, the spoken word is very important. Although in many areas there might be glyphs or drawings on ancient cliff walls, it is the spoken history of the People, information passed on from generation to generation for thousands of years, that is most continuous. Many Nations still have a yearly ceremony in which their history stories are once again told. Telling and listening to the oral history each year is an event taken very seriously. Everyone knows they are the new part of tribal history, and that to learn the past stories of their own People is to continue themselves. Valuable lessons are to be learned as well, from the retelling of past events.

In writings about the Pilgrims and the Native People of this land, we often read what both cultures might have been thinking in the 1600's when the Pilgrims arrived at Patuxet (now called Plymouth). Although ideas might come from primary sources written by the Pilgrims themselves, many writings about Native Peoples of this area are either theories, wrong information, or often inappropriate images. Therefore, we at WIP, question the accuracy of many books, past or present, concerning the Wampanoag. We are all aware that schools' history text books need updating, but this is particularly evident in much so-called "factual" Native American information. Many "facts" are questionable. Although facts about the new settlers to this land were recorded by the Europeans, much of the true history of the Original Peoples has been made up, distorted or simply omitted.

Too many Americans have failed to realize the effects that the European invasion of North America had upon the Native Nations here. There were millions of deaths. Disease, wars, and justifications given by missionaries terminated many Indigenous Nations. As Native People we have never forgotten because these events are part of our history. Sadly, they also continue today in different guises.

WAMPANOAG LIFE, LAND AND FAMILY

By the manager of Plimoth Plantation's Wampanoag Education Program



The history of the Wampanoag People is an oral continuation told since the time of creation. The following passage, written by Wampanoag Nanepashemet, powerfully describes the history and traditional philosophy of Wampanoag People.

“Wampanoag carries the meaning ‘Eastern People’ or ‘People of the Dawn Land.’ We are the first people to see the beginning of the day. We traditionally refer to ourselves as ‘Eninoug’ or the People, implying original, common people. We are the true People of this land, what is now called southeastern Massachusetts and eastern Rhode Island.

“Our ancestors inhabited this land after being put here by the Great Spirit Power, Kiehtan, in the beginning. We were given the use of this land for our support and the continuation of ourselves according to the Original Instructions of Kiehtan. We were given this land to share with other beings, who are our relations because we were made by the same Creator and are born and sustained by the same mother, Earth.

“We have lived with this land for thousands of generations, fishing in the waters, planting and harvesting crops, hunting the four-legged and winged beings and giving respect and thanks for each and every thing taken for our use. We were originally taught to use many resources, remembering to use them with care, respect, and with a mind towards preserving some for seven generations of unborn and not to waste anything.

“Our People are independent; we own nothing in truth because all comes from the Earth and ultimately from Kiehtan. In turn, we are owned by none as only Kiehtan can truly determine our destinies.

“We are ruled by the examples set forth for all our relations of the creation. Our leaders take responsibility for the care and well-being of all the people. They are to see that no one is hungry when others are well-fed and no one is cold when others are warm. The strong ones are to protect the weak ones, and all are to respect the wisdom and experience of the elders. The wisdom of our elders came to them from their elders all the way back to the beginning when Kiehtan taught the Original Man and Woman.

“Our sacred ceremonies, taught us long ago, are to show our thanks to the Spirit World and to remind our People of their place in the Creation. We honor the keepers of the sacred traditions and give them thanks, for they help to keep us alive and well.

“Our women have provided our stability by caring for our homes, our children and our men. The men have been the keepers of strength and endurance. The children are our greatest treasure because they are our future. All that has been done has been done for the survival of their sons and daughters.



“As long as the People live in balance according to the ancient, sacred cycles as arranged by Kiehtan, they will prosper. When the People forget the Original Instructions of love, caring, and respect for all their relations, then they will have a hard time. It is prophesied that when the People leave the Creator’s path, they will run afoul in many thorn bushes and they will lose their way. Only when they stop and search back for their true path will they again find the healthy life they should prepare for their children. This is the way it is to be done.”

The Wampanoag believe that the ancient ancestors of the Wampanoag have always lived on this land called North America, the first people having come to the northeast from the southwest after a great flood. According to modern archaeologists, this was between 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. The land area that is the original Wampanoag territory was half bound by the sea. Before 5,000 years ago, however, the territory was miles wider than today because of the rising level of the ocean’s waters.

The word Wampanoag identifies the culture of Aboriginal Peoples of this territory from the 1600s to the present day. The language is from the Algonkian language group and is the original indigenous language spoken in present-day Rhode Island, Connecticut and Massachusetts, up to the Saco River in Maine. There are several dialects, causing the spoken language to vary from area to area.

Approximately 67 villages made up the Wampanoag Nation in the 1600s, each overseen by a leader called a sachem. He (or she) led his people according to the Original Instructions of the Creator. Clan leaders

counseled the sachem, as did the sachem’s leading warriors (called pnieese) and the community’s elders. In this way the whole village had a say in governing themselves, with the exception of adopted or captive Natives from other indigenous nations. The sachem was accountable to his people and the clan leaders could oust a sachem if a serious problem arose with the leader. This was, however, rare.

The boundaries of each village and the entire territory were known by the whole nations of Wampanoag who were caretakers or Keepers of the Earth. The land was considered a gift to humans from the Creator of All Life.

While some sachems had more than one wife, Wampanoag families usually consisted of a mother, father, children and grandparents, as well an extended family of aunts, uncles and other relatives. Up to eight related families might live in bark covered winter homes which could be up to 100 feet long. Each family within the extended family group would have its own fire.

Each spring, small extended families would leave their winter homes in inland villages and travel to the seacoast where they would prepare to live for the next three seasons. They lived in round houses which were covered with mats that had been woven of cattail plants the previous winter. Planting and fishing were the main activities. Approximately one or two acres of land per family was planted and tended. Plants were harvested from gardens, gathered from the woods, and dried. Fish would be smoked and dried. Everyone would be busy during these months to insure enough food for the cold weather time, as well as seed for the next planting season.





During the warm months there were ceremonies of giving thanks. Such ceremonies involved visiting family and friends and often included feasting, singing and dancing. Wampanoag life centered around family subsistence and the maintaining of a peaceful village. Maintaining harmonious relations between villages kept the Wampanoag Nation strong.

Exactly when the first explorers came to the eastern coast is unknown, although European records point to the 1524 visit of the Italian explorer Giovanni da Verrazano (sailing for the French) to Narragansett Bay. Verrazano described the Natives he observed there. Spanish explorer Estevo Gomes arrived in 1525 and kidnapped 58 Native People to sell as slaves. His king (Charles V of Spain) ordered the captives released. There is no known record of what happened to any of them.

In the following 95 years, until the English colonists arrived in Patuxet (now called Plymouth), there were many such incidents between Native People and the Europeans. Some trade took place but because of kidnappings and some killings, relations between the Europeans and the Native People of this country were uneasy at best.

In 1611 the English captain Edward Harlow kidnapped five Native men, one of whom was Sachem Epanow from Capawé (now called Martha's Vineyard). Epanow was taken to England where he was displayed as an exotic specimen from the New World. He began to learn English and was eventually acquired by the colonial organizer Sir Fernando Gorges. Understanding the English desire for gold, Epanow informed Gorges of the presence of gold in New England. In 1614, acting as an informant on one of Gorges' ventures, Epanow guided Captain Nicholas Hobson's ship to Capawé. There, under a barrage of arrows, he leapt overboard and swam to shore to his People.

Among the Wampanoag, Epanow was (and is) looked upon with great respect for his courageous return to his home after a three year imprisonment in a foreign land.

In 1619, a Wampanoag man named Tisquantum (now called Squanto) returned to his homeland at Patuxet (present-day Plymouth) having been kidnapped five years before. There he found that a plague of European origin had wiped out his community of approximately 2,000 people. After the arrival of the English colonists, he remained with them at Plymouth, acting as a translator and guide. Because of his less-than-honest dealings with his people, Tisquantum is not looked upon with much favor by most Wampanoag.

Wampanoag lifeways and outlook often differ greatly from history as told by Europeans and other observers. The cultural bias of the Europeans is plainly apparent in their observations and records of cultures very different from their own. When reading accounts of Native People, the cultural background and bias of the writer needs to be taken into consideration.

Today, the Wampanoag are still alive and well in their homeland. Two main Wampanoag communities are in Mashpee on Cape Cod and Aquinnah on the island of Martha's Vineyard. Other groups of Wampanoag are in Chappaquiddick, Herring Pond, New Bedford, Fall River, Assonet, Seaconk and Pokanoket. Wampanoag families also live all across the country.

The Wampanoag take pride in having preserved so much of their traditional cultural ways in spite of the invasion by European groups. The Wampanoag still consider themselves caretakers and keepers of their traditions as well as this beautiful land, our Mother Earth.

WAMPANOAG HORTICULTURE

Around 1,000 years ago, oral history tells us, our relative the Crow flew from the Southwest to the Wampanoag Nation bringing us the first corn and bean seeds (weachamin gka tuppacquam wskannemuneash) as a gift from the Creator. Since that time we have learned from our grandmothers and grandfathers how to plant, tend and harvest these wonderful plants. In ancient times Wampanoag drew what they needed from the land without destructive exploitation of the resources. Interacting with the environment was a natural part of the culture. With gratefulness, the Wampanoag took the spring Herring from their runs up the rivers and used some of them to help fertilize worn out planting lands. Some areas did not need the fish except every two or three years. As soon as the signs of planting time were given to us, corn seeds were put into soft earth mounds, which were covering the Herring. We always planted a couple of extra seeds in each mound for Crow and honored him this way because we knew Crow loves the newly planted corn. In our fields we often had a corn watch which is a platform on poles about eight feet off the ground. Women and girls sitting on that platform, threw pebbles and sticks and made noises at animals and birds coming to take the corn plants, being vigilant around early morning and late afternoon as those are the feeding times of our relatives of the woodlands.

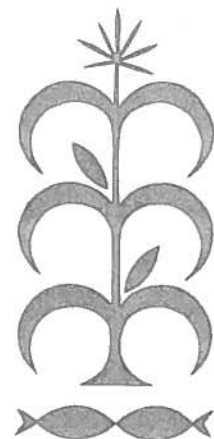
Around the time the corn plants were the height of one's hand, it was time to plant the beans and squashes around the base of the corn. Squashes include the pumpkins. Once weachimin grew taller, tuppacquamash climbed and wound around the stalks. Beans, we've discovered, add nitrogen to the ground which corn uses up. From this scientific fact of modern times we clearly see how wisely our grandparents followed the Creator's instructions for growing these plants.

Wampanoag sunflowers were grown also and were smaller than the ones we see today. The tubers of a similar plant, now called Jerusalem Artichoke, were gathered from the wild and later planted also. Seeds from the sunflower were eaten and the tubers from the Artichoke were boiled and eaten. Melons, actually small, round versions of present day watermelons, were part of the Wampanoag gardens and offered a sweet treat.

In late July, we would pick some of the green corn for a special ceremonial feast, as it is such a sweet corn taste at that time. As summer went by, the weeding would be continuous but once the squash and melon leaves grew large enough, they helped to keep weeds down and helped to keep the ground moist around the mounds during the warmest weather.

Soon enough it was harvest time when beans would be picked and eaten fresh, or dried and saved for winter food or for seeds. Corn would be picked as soon as the corn silk turns brown on each ear. All corn would be dried on the cob. Some kernels would then be removed to parch over a fire and then were pounded into nokehig; a fine, corn flour used for a travel food as well as a thickening for soups. Seeds would be saved from all the best plants for planting the following year. All squashes would be sliced and dried for later use although some would be cooked up fresh too. Tubers from artichokes were dug out of the ground in the fall or the next spring. The small watermelons had to be eaten when ripe, which was a juicy job that no one minded at all!

The rhythm of Earth's cycles, having been adhered to, gave us the delicious bounty of tended foods. For many Wampanoag it is the same today. Our appreciation for all plant life is given to Creator throughout the year as we are nourished once again by these great gifts!



HOW NOT TO TEACH NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE IN THE SCHOOLS

By Jane Sark Heinrich, former director of Chicago's alternative school for Indians

1. Don't use alphabet cards that say "A" is for apple, "B" is for ball and "I" is for Indian. Pick a different word so they aren't equated with "things."
2. Don't talk about Native Americans as though they belonged in the past. There are about 2.5 million Native Peoples in the United States today, yet many books and filmstrips still have titles such as "How the Indians Lived".
3. Don't lump all Native Americans together. Study the Hopi, the Sioux, or the Apache, not "the Indians". There were no "Indians" until the Europeans called them that. There are separate nations of groups with different names, cultures and languages.
4. Don't let television stereotypes go unchallenged. Discuss with students the meaning of stereotypes and help them understand that the Native Americans were no more "savage" than others who fought to defend their land. Watch out for portraits of Native groups as having few words (mostly "Ugh"). Be sensitive to statements such as "You act like a bunch of wild Indians".
5. Don't let students think a few Europeans defeated millions of "Indians in battle". Historians say the number killed in battle was small; what really defeated Native Americans were diseases brought from Europe for which they had no immunity.
6. Don't teach that Native Americans are just like other ethnic and racial minorities. Other minorities weren't dispossessed of their land and only Native groups have a legal right through laws and treaties (although often ignored) to the land they still have.
7. Don't assume that Native American children are acquainted with their heritage. Native children often know far more about things such as TV programs than they do about their own culture. Don't expect them always to be good "resource" persons for your class.
8. Don't let students think Native ways of life have no meaning today. Native arts have long been the subject of interest and respect. Most important in today's world is the Native American philosophy of life—respect for the land, every form of life, and for living in harmony with nature.
9. Don't talk about "them" and "us". Native peoples are the only "original" Americans and actually are more "us" than anyone else.
10. Don't expect Native Americans to look like "movie Indians". Since they come from different nations and often have intermarried with other nationalities, they don't all fit into a "western" stereotype.



SOME STRATEGIES FOR INTERPRETING NATIVE AMERICAN ISSUES IN THE CLASSROOM

- Consider the children's preconceptions and stereotypes.
- Consider subliminal messages in books and curriculum.
- Try to establish a rich and full context for all activities: their cultural meanings, developmental history and connections to the natural and spiritual world.
- Try to incorporate a sense of the people and even of particular individuals into your lesson.
- Situate the lesson content within an historical period, not an historical vacuum. (What was happening within and without the community?)
- Incorporate and present the culture's perspectives on origins, religion, and history.
- Be respectful of the culture's sensitivities and values.
- If possible, seek Native American advice and guidance in the teaching process, as staff, guest lecturers, demonstrators, etc.
- Establish a continuum between the selected historical period and the present day: where are the people now, has the culture changed, etc.
- Use contemporary life to demonstrate the on-going connection between the past and the present.

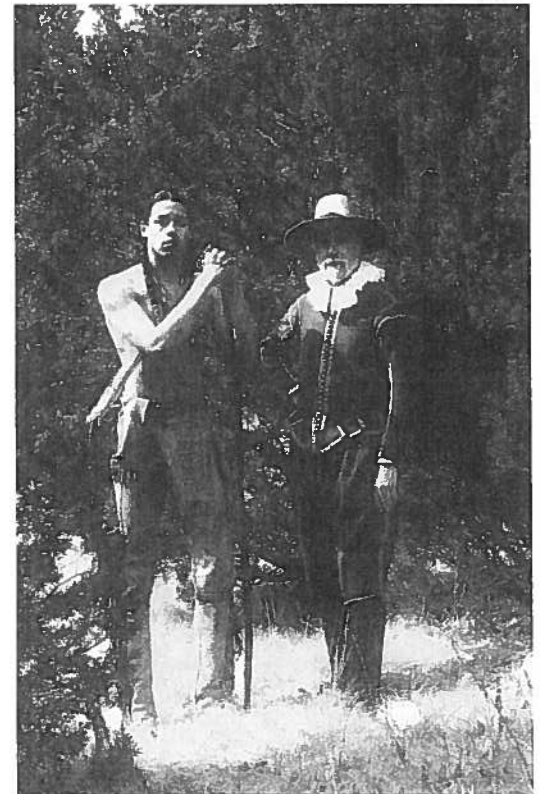
NATIVE AND ENGLISH RELATIONS IN EARLY PLYMOUTH COLONY

The Wampanoag and English first learned of each others' existence in the 1500s. Alliances and trade developed quickly as did exploitation and hostility. By the time the colonists arrived in New England, each culture's early experiences with the other clearly shaped their attitudes towards each other and influenced the course of events in Plymouth Colony. The English felt they were coming to a wild land, full of "wild beasts and wild men." The Wampanoag might have believed that interaction with Europeans meant trade and possible kidnapping and violence.

The Wampanoag relationship with other New England Natives also influenced their association with the English at Plymouth. Wampanoag territory in the early 1600s encompassed the southeast corner of Massachusetts—including Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, the Elizabeth Islands and Nantucket—and the northeast corner of Rhode Island. The Wampanoag Nation was made up of approximately 60 tribes or villages, each ruled by a leader called a sachem. The village of Wampanoag which became most closely associated with the Plymouth settlement was Pokanoket, located in present-day Rhode Island. Their leader Massasoit, also known as Ousamequin, was the first to treat for mutual protection with the English. The Massachusetts People lived to the North of the Wampanoag, the Narragansett to the West. The Wampanoag, with the Massachusetts as their allies, had a long-standing, generations-old rivalry with the Narragansett.

It is not known for certain when the first contact with Europeans occurred, but by the time the English settlers arrived at Plymouth, the French, English, Spanish and Dutch had become familiar visitors to the region. In 1525, Spanish explorer Estevo Gomes visited New England and captured 58 Natives between New England and Nova Scotia which he intended to sell as slaves. Though forced by the King of Spain to release the Natives, Gomes' actions initiated a pattern of violence, retaliation and kidnapping between Europeans and Native People.

Among other explorers and traders to visit New England were English traders Bartholomew Gosnold and Martin Pring, French explorer Samuel de Champlain, and Englishmen Edward Harlow and Captain John Smith. The encounter with Smith's group in 1614 was to have a direct bearing on Plymouth Colony. Following Smith's return to England, his lieutenant in charge of fishing operations, Thomas Hunt, abducted



27 Wampanoag—7 Nauset and 20 Patuxet — and sold them as slaves. Among the captives was Tisquantum, better known as Squanto, of Patuxet. Back in Wampanoag territory, the kidnapping caused widespread concern and hostility.

Another effect of the European presence was the arrival of European diseases. In 1616 a plague, probably smallpox, swept down from Maine along the coast. So devastating was the sickness that some towns, including Patuxet, the future home of the English colonists, were entirely depopulated. A visitor to Plymouth in 1623 wrote, “in this bay wherein we live, in former times hath lived about 2000 Indians.” The Narragansett were spared from the sickness entirely.

A year after the plague decimated his village of Patuxet, Squanto was sent back to North America from London as a guide for the English explorer Thomas Dermer. Soon after his arrival in Maine, Squanto and Samoset—an English speaking Monhegan sachem—accompanied Dermer on a voyage to Cape Cod. During a skirmish on Martha’s Vineyard, Dermer was killed and Squanto and Samoset were taken captive and eventually given over to Massasoit at Pokanoket.

After a voyage of 66 days, the English colonists arrived at Cape Cod on November 11, 1620. The passengers decided to settle in New England due to the lateness of the year and the difficulty of further travel. Soon after their arrival, they set about searching for a suitable place to establish their settlement. While exploring, they came across mounds in the earth in which were buried Indian corn. They took this corn and more later (totaling ten bushels) which they planned to use for seed. They also came across several

graves. They dug up one and took “sundry of the prettiest things.” They, likewise, took “some of the best things” out of two Wampanoag houses. Although the colonists claimed that they would give full satisfaction to the owners of the corn and household goods when they could be located, the Wampanoag considered it stealing.

On December 8, 1620 the colonists and the Wampanoag had their first violent encounter. As a group of English were traveling along the coast on their way to explore the headlands of Cape Cod Bay, a group of Nauset Wampanoag—probably wary because of earlier attacks, kidnappings and the invasiveness of the Europeans—attacked. No one was injured in the short battle. Later that evening the English reached Plymouth. The plentiful water supply, good harbor for shipping, cleared land for planting, and a hill which would provide a



NATIVE AND ENGLISH RELATIONS IN EARLY PLYMOUTH COLONY *continued*

military advantage made the area a favorable location for settlement. The *Mayflower* arrived in Plymouth Harbor on December 16, 1620 and the English soon began building.

While the colonists were constructing their village and ordering their affairs, Native People were occasionally seen in the distance. Contact was finally made on March 16, 1621, when Samoset visited the colony on behalf of Massasoit. Samoset startled the colonists by walking in unannounced and greeting them in English. He explained that their settlement was located on the site of the former community of Patuxet. He also informed them of the location and size of nearby Native communities.

Aided by Samoset's report, the Pokanoket considered what course they should take. Eventually, they decided to ally themselves with the English, presumably thinking that the colonists' guns and military power would

help them retain their independence from the Narragansett. On March 22, 1621 Samoset again visited the colony, this time with Massasoit, 60 Wampanoag men and Squanto. Massasoit met with Governor John Carver. The outcome was a treaty that consisted of an article of mutual friendship and defense; a promise that neither group should harm or steal tools from the other and that if they did the offender would be returned to his own people for justice; an agreement to leave weapons behind when meeting; and a promise that Massasoit would spread word of the treaty to neighboring communities and encourage them to enter into agreements of mutual protection with the English as well. After peace was established, Squanto remained with the colonists at his old home grounds. There he acted as an interpreter and guide and taught the English about growing Indian corn and where to obtain other food.

In the spring of 1621 several colonists paid a diplomatic visit to Massasoit. During this time an English boy, John Billington, Jr., got lost in the woods and was being held by the Nauset, the people who had attacked the English on Cape Cod. Although the tension between the English and the Nauset was great, the boy was returned to the English and peace was established between the two groups.

While at Nauset, the English were told that Massasoit had been captured by the Narragansett. They were also informed that Combatant, sachem of the Mattapuysett Wampanoag, was leading a counter-alliance against them. Squanto, a Pokanoket named



Tokamahomon and Hobbamock—a Pokanoket who had been sent by Massasoit to live with the Plymouth settlers—traveled to Nemasket (Middleboro, MA) to gather information for Plymouth. There they encountered Conbatant, who took all three captive. Hobbamock escaped and returned to Plymouth. The English, believing Squanto dead, sent ten men to avenge his death. They attacked a Native house only to learn that Squanto was still alive. The English returned to Plymouth, taking the injured Natives with them for medical treatment. Massasoit was released by the Narragansett soon after.

In autumn of 1621, the colonists celebrated their first harvest and the recovery of their health with three days of celebration. Massasoit and 90 Native men came and contributed five deer to the feasting. The Natives probably took advantage of the opportunity to assess the resources and strength of the English. Although the English were fairly well provided, the unexpected arrival a month later of the poorly supplied *Fortune* and its 35 new colonists severely strained the colony's resources and forced the rationing of food. The Narragansett, hearing of the colonists' food shortage, began to threaten. In January, 1622, a messenger arrived at Plymouth bearing a bundle of arrows tied with a rattlesnake skin. When Plymouth discovered

that this was sent as a threat, they removed the arrows, filled the snake skin with gunpowder and shot and sent it back to the Narragansett who refused to receive it and appeared to have dropped the challenge.

The next conflict between the Wampanoag and English came from an unexpected source. Squanto had attempted to trick the English and the Pokanoket into warring with each other in hopes of breaking up their alliance. This done, he planned to use his knowledge of the English to gain influence over the Native People. Massasoit, furious at Squanto, demanded that Squanto be turned over to him so that he could be put to death. Governor Bradford stalled, but seeing no other way out convinced Squanto to submit to Massasoit. Before he could submit, word arrived that a ship was approaching. Squanto's fate was put on hold. This infuriated Massasoit who cooled his relationship with the English.



NATIVE AND ENGLISH RELATIONS IN EARLY PLYMOUTH COLONY *conclusion*

The passengers of the ship were Englishmen sent to establish a colony at Wessagusset (Weymouth, MA). After spending several months in Plymouth, the Wessagusset colonists arrived at their settlement site in late summer, 1622. The unruly and undisciplined group soon found their food supply dwindling and began stealing corn from local Natives. In hopes of obtaining more corn, they joined Plymouth on a joint trading venture to Cape Cod. During this venture Squanto died of a fever and nosebleed.

While trading, the English heard that Massasoit was deathly ill. Edward Winslow, along with Hobbamock and a visitor to the colony, were sent to pay their respects to Massasoit. Shortly after Winslow administered some medicine, Massasoit began to recover. So grateful was Massasoit that he forgave the English for not returning Squanto and warned them of a growing alliance against the Wessagusset colonists, led by the Massachusetts sachem, Wituwamet. Massasoit warned Plymouth that the conspiracy could turn against them as well. In the spring of 1623, Captain Miles Standish and several colonists traveled to Wessagusset under the guise of a trading voyage. Once there, they killed Wituwamet and six other Natives. Three Wessagusset colonists were killed. Wituwamet's head was brought back to Plymouth and placed on top of their fort as a warning to other Natives.

As a result of their actions at Nemasket and Wessagusset, Plymouth developed a reputation for violent retaliation which strengthened their power over local Native communities. Probably because of this, conflicts between the English and Natives dwindled; none are recorded through 1627. According to English sources, subsequent relations with the Natives revolved primarily around diplomacy and trade.

In response to a drought in spring of 1623, the colonists held a day of fasting and prayer. Though skies were clear in the morning, by the end of the day a gentle, soaking rain began to fall. The apparent responsiveness of the English God so impressed Hobbamock that he vowed to learn more of Christianity. Later that summer, Massasoit, four other sachems and 120 Native men attended Governor Bradford's wedding.

Land and religious and cultural conversion were the areas of conflict which would characterize later Native and English interaction and eventually lead to King Philip's War. Trade was important to the colonists from the beginning. In the first few years when their food supply was critically low, the English traded imported goods for corn. With good harvests, the English began to have a surplus of corn which they traded for furs to Northern Natives who, because of a shorter growing season, had less of a supply of their own corn. At first seen as luxury or status items, European trade goods such as pots, kettles, metal tools, beads, clothing, and jewelry were increasingly incorporated into Native material culture.

“Coming to America” Stories

Have students research their family’s (or community’s) story of how, when, where and why they came to America. What did the immigrants hope to find? Did they find it? How were they treated by the people already here in this country? How did they treat the people who were already here? How do these stories compare to the experience of the English at Plymouth and the Wampanoag?

Point of View and Writing

Writing from the point of view of an English colonist, have students describe what they might think of the Native People and their way of life.

Have students write about how they think the Wampanoag might have felt about the Plymouth colonists and their way of life.

Choices

Discuss what choices the students in your class must make at their age. Did the students’ 17th-century counterparts—both English and Native—have to make these same choices? If they did, would they have made the same decisions as students today? What factors would affect their decisions (e.g. parents, church, society)?

