

Today in our History

Samoset and Squanto Meet the Pilgrims

March 16, 1621 | March 22, 1621

The Native American Patuxet band once belonged to the Wampanoag tribe and had inhabited the site which later became Plymouth (named New Plimouth by the English Captain John Smith as he explored parts of Cape Cod Bay around 1614). Tisquantum, "Squanto" as he was later named, was a Patuxet and was the only surviving Patuxet as a result of a plague which diminished their number to one.

Squanto: A Warrior's Tale 1994



In 1614, six years before the Pilgrims arrived in Plymouth, Squanto and about twenty other Patuxet were captured at the hands of a sly English sea captain, Thomas Hunt. He succeeded in taking them to Malaga, Spain to sell as slaves. When the monks of Malaga discovered that these slaves had been brought from America, they took care of Squanto and the remaining captives, instructing them in English and Christianity for the next couple of years. Because of his good English, Squanto was trained to be a guide and interpreter for sea captains exploring the New England coasts to establish trade.

These expeditions eventually took him to London where he met a wealthy merchant going to Newfoundland. Squanto's plan was to join yet another expedition from Newfoundland that would take him to his Patuxet family, but that fell through. He returned to London, to then serve as an interpreter for a peace-making expedition to Cape Cod in 1619, only to discover that the other Native American bands were still very angry about the kidnappings five years prior.

Unfortunately, while Squanto was away from his Patuxet people, English merchants and fishermen had spread a devastating plague which completely wiped out his village. This left Squanto homeless, so Squanto went to live with Massasoit, head of the Wampanoag Confederation.

On November 11, 1620, the Pilgrims landed at Cape Cod. After a month of exploring, the scouts discovered the vacated Patuxet site, a perfect clearing for a colony of English Pilgrims and settlers. On December 21, they established it as their colony, calling it the same name it had been given earlier, Plimouth Colony.

On March 16, a group of Pilgrims were more than surprised to see a sachem named Samoset walk into the colony and declare, "Welcome" in English! Samoset was from a tribe in Maine, and had learned some English from fishermen. He originally thought that the Pilgrims were fishermen as the others that had come before. Samoset stayed so long that they invited him to spend the night on the *Mayflower*, but winds made it difficult for the shallop (their small boat with sails) to get to the *Mayflower*, so Samoset slept at Stephen Hopkins' house! The Pilgrim hosts surely did not sleep a wink!

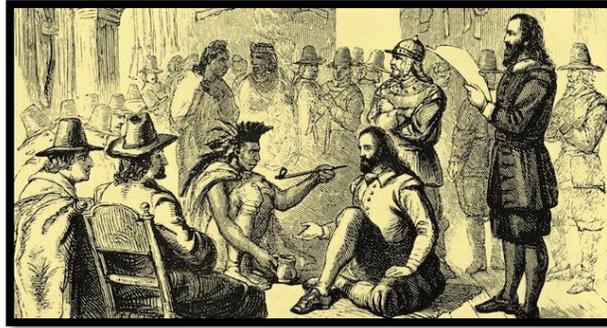


From Mourt's Relation: *All the afternoon we spent in communication with him; we would gladly have been rid of him at night, but he was not willing to go this night. Then we thought to carry him on shipboard, wherewith he was well content, and went into the shallop, but the wind was high and the water scant, that it could not return back. We lodged him that night at Stephen Hopkins' house, and watched him.*

Samoset told the Pilgrims that he was going to bring the only surviving Patuxet, Tisquantum (later called Squanto) to meet them, since Squanto had been to England and could speak better English. On March 22, 1621, Squanto, Samoset and about 60 others, revisited the colonists. Squanto and Samoset spent the night, while the others slept in the woods. The Pilgrims' new friends returned in a week later and planted corn on the other side of the brook for the new colony.

April 1, 1621: After an exchange of greetings and gifts, the two groups of friends signed a peace treaty that incredibly lasted for more than 50 years.

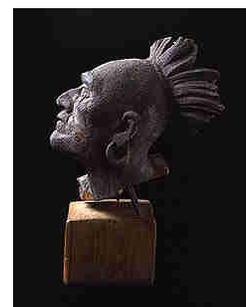
THE TREATY WITH MASSASOIT



"... the coming of their great Sachem, called Massasoiet. Who, about four or five days after, came with the chief of his friends and other attendance, with the aforesaid Squanto. With whom, after friendly entertainment and some gifts given him, they made a peace with him (which hath now continued this 24 years) in these terms (Of Plymouth Plantation by William Bradford, edited by Samuel Eliot Morison):

- I. That neither he nor any of his, should injure or do hurt to any of their people.
- II. That if any of his did any hurt to any of theirs, he should send the offender that they might punish him.
- III. That if any thing were taken away from any of theirs, he should cause it to be restored; and they should do the like to his.
- IV. That if any did unjustly war against him, they would aid him; and if any did war against them, he should aid them.
- V. That he should send to his neighbours confederates to certify them of this, that they might not wrong them, but might be likewise comprised in the conditions of peace.
- VI. That when their men came to them, they should leave their bows and arrows behind them.

Squanto would become a valuable member of Plymouth Colony as translator between Plymouth's governors, John Carver (and later William Bradford), and tribal leaders including Massasoit. Peace was also made with a number of leaders within the Wampanoag Confederation. Squanto was also a guide, taking the Pilgrims to various locations, helping them to establish trading relations. Massasoit and Squanto lived in Plymouth with the Pilgrims until their deaths.



Tisquantum/Squanto
Pilgrim Hall Museum

nativeamericanencyclopedia.com

www.pilgrimhallmuseum.org

Mourt's Relation, page 46 - *Mourt's Relation* was primarily written by Edward Winslow as an accounting life at Cape Cod and Plymouth Colony through 1621. Winslow seemed to understand the Pilgrims' historical impact and published his writings in London in 1622. Presumably the publisher was George Morton (therefore the title, *Mourt's Relation*).