

Pokanoket Wampanoag-Mayflower Pilgrim Myth Busting Two Cultures One Alliance

Pokanoket-Pilgrim Alliance Agreement

That neither he nor any of his should injure or do hurt to any of our people.

And if any of his did hurt to any of ours; he should send the offender, that we might punish him.

That if any of our tools were taken away, when our people were at work, he should cause them to be restored, and if ours did any harm to any of his, we would do the like to them.

If any did unjustly war against him, we would aid him; if any did war against us, he should aid us.

He should send to his neighbor confederates to certify them of this, that they might not wrong us, but might be likewise comprised in the conditions of peace.

That when their men came to us, they should leave their bows and arrows behind them, as we should do our pieces when we come to them.

Lastly, that doing thus, King James would esteem of him as his friend and ally.

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Edward Winslow's portrait, www.mayflower400uk.org

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Pokanoket Wampanoag and Mayflower Pilgrim Myth Busting

Two Cultures, One Alliance

It depends upon the view “from the boat or from the shore.” (Newell. 2021)

OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To learn about events related to the 1621 multicultural alliance agreement and the people involved.
- ❖ To highlight the similarities between the Mayflower Pilgrims and the Pokanoket Wampanoags that supported the alliance.
- ❖ To myth bust fictional information and misinformed folk lore.

RESOURCES

*Massachusetts Society Book Club read

Bachelder, Jody. 2022. *Here First: Samoset and the Wawenock of Pemaquid Maine*. Lanham MD: Down East Books.

Baker, James W. 2009. *Thanksgiving: The Biography of an American Holiday*. Durham N.H.: University of New Hampshire Press.

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Coombs, Linda. 2023. *Colonization and the Wampanoag Story*. New York: Penguin Random House.

Donahue, Betty Booth. 2011. *Bradford's Indian Book: Being the True Roote and Rise of American Letters as Revealed by the Native Text Embedded in Of Plimoth Plantation*. Gainesville FL: University Press of Florida.

Hawaii Mayflower Society, "Two Dogs on the Mayflower", Background summary, Sailing on the Mayflower, accessed 7.14.24, www.mayflowerhawaii.org.

Heath, Dwight B., ed. 1963. *Mourt's Relation: A Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth*. Bedford, MA: Applewood Books.

* James, Sydney V., Jr., ed. 1963. *Three Visitors to Early Plymouth*. Bedford MA: Applewood Books.

Karr, Ronald D., ed. 1999. *Indian New England 1524-1674: A Compendium of Eyewitness Accounts of Native American Life*. Pepperell MA: Branch Line Press.

*Lipman, Andrew. 2024. *Squanto: A Native Odessey*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

* Mack, Jonathan. 2020. *A Stranger Among Saints: Stephen Hopkins, The Man Who Saved Jamestown and Saved Plymouth*. Chicago IL: Chicago Review Press Incorporated.

Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, "Language", accessed February 26, 2025, www.mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov

RESOURCES

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Mayflower 400, “The significance of Wampum and creation of a new belt”, accessed August 9, 2024, www.Mayflower400uk.org.

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Mayflower Society, “Blank parchment template”, Members landing, “Junior members”, Activities, Miscellaneous, www.themayflowersociety.com.

Newell, Chris. 2021. *If You Lived During the First Thanksgiving*. New York: Scholastic.

Pilgrim Hall Museum, “Beyond the Pilgrim Story”, accessed 8.11.24, www.pilgrimhall.org.

Plymouth Patuxet Museum, “Who are the Wampanoag?”, For Students landing, Homework help, Playing and Learning, accessed 8.14.24, www.Plimoth.org.

“Pokanoket: The First People of the East Bay video”, Roger Williams University Students, The Sowams Heritage Area Project, accessed 7.2.24, www.sowamsheritagearea.org.

* Silverman, David J. 2019. *This Land is Their Land: The Wampanoag Indians, Plymouth Colony and the Troubled History of Thanksgiving*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Simons, William S. 1986. *Spirit of New England Tribes: Indian History and Folklore*. Hanover and London: University Press of New England.

The Sowams Heritage Area Project, Dr. David Weed, Project Coordinator, personal communication on July 1, 2024, Bristol RI, www.sowamsheritagearea.org.

YouTube, “Pokanoket not Wampanoag in the 17th Century”, accessed 7.2.24. www.youtube.com.

YouTube, “*The Odd Couple-Assume*”, accessed 8.19.24. www.youtube.com.

PREFACE

- ❖ After centuries of assumptions and inaccurate information, many Pilgrim descendants learned, read or heard myths and misinformation about Ancestors and the Pokanoket-Wampanoag people. Educational materials focus on the similarities between the two cultures that supported the 1621 alliance agreement for over 50 years. The presentation provides opportunities to tease out myths, fiction, and the unknown about two communities taking a monumental leap of faith with the other.
- ❖ The presentation and activities promote ancestral discoveries, Native education and group interactions. The diverse materials and resources are based on documented events and details taken from a multicultural group of historical authors. Pokanoket Wampanoag names are used throughout.

OVERVIEW

❖ Activities

All activities and educational information can be used separately, or anytime during the meeting.

Optional Pre-test Activity

Pokanoket-Pilgrim Word Match is a self-assessment and/or group activity.

Table/Assembly Activity

Table members volunteer to share known assumptions and misinformation related to the Mayflower Pilgrims and Pokanoket Wampanoag.

Assumption Activities

Table Centerpiece

Assumption YouTube Video

Similarities Activity

The assembly volunteers to share cultural similarities supporting the alliance and answer follow-up questions to conclude.

Optional Post-test Activity

Pokanoket-Pilgrim True/False is a self-assessment and/or group activity.

❖ Content

Content includes a mix and match of educational presentations from 20-60 minutes with table and assembly activities, discussions, and take-home materials/activities.

Cultural similarities focus on basic needs, family, spirituality and community. The people involved with the alliance are discussed in reference to events before and after the agreement.

Conclusion: Ask members to share the similarities between the cultures that supported the alliance agreement.

❖ Optional Post-test Activity

Pokanoket Pilgrim True/False knowledge, a self-assessment and/or assembly activity

❖ Conclusion

Assembly discussion and next steps

Swag take-home

CONTENT

OPTIONAL Pre-test and Discussion

Promote familiarity and awareness of common Algonquin vocabulary.

Suggested: Pilgrim-Pokanoket Word Match or True/False (pg. 26 & 28).

Video

A humorous point about assumptions.

www.youtube.com/theoddcouple-assume

Activity #1 (*Individual/table and/or assembly*)

Identify common Pilgrim-Pokanoket myths and assumptions.

Directions: Ask table guests or assembly to write them down to discuss.

Activity #2

Emphasize the assumption point by highlighting the table centerpiece. Point out the flower arrangement made up of ball point pens. Offer members to take one home.

EDUCATIONAL CONTENT

- ❖ Pokanoket Wampanoag-Mayflower Pilgrim Life: Basic needs, family, spirituality, community and similarities.
- ❖ Paths to the 1621 alliance agreement: Samoset, Tisquantum, Epenow, Myles Standish, Hobomock, Stephen Hopkins, Edward Winslow, Governor John Carver, William Bradford and Massasoit Ousamequin.

AFTER PRESENTATION

Activity #3 (*Individual/table and/or assembly*)

Directions: Create a list of similarities between the two cultures. Presenter can compare responses to those listed, beginning on page 13.

CONCLUSION

Continuing the Conversation

Mayflower Community discussions and next steps.

“How did cultural similarities support the agreement?”

“What did you learn today?”

“Were Mayflower Pilgrim-Pokanoket Wampanoag myths busted?”

“What will you share with family and friends?”

“What else do you want to further explore?”

SWAG TAKE-HOME

Assumption pen

String tied or wax sealed scroll at place setting or hand out during check-in. Can include:

Resources (pg. 5-6) Parchment template under *Mayflower Society*.

Algonquin Glossary (pg. 25)

Pokanoket Wampanoag -Mayflower Pilgrim Word Match (pg. 26)

Wampanoag Pokanoket - Mayflower Pilgrim Crossword puzzle (pg. 29-30)

Pokanoket Wampanoag - Mayflower Pilgrim True/False (pg. 28)

Massasoit's 1649 land deed mark (pg. 31)

Table centerpiece directions and materials list (pg. 27)

EDUCATIONAL CONTENT



Sowams, home of Massasoit Ousamequin Yellow Feather

How did the Pokanoket Wampanoag-Mayflower Pilgrim alliance agreement last over 50 years?

The materials take a closer look at the similarities between two cultures and the positive impact they had on the 1621 alliance agreement with activities, presentations and group discussions. Today, the agreement is referred by many names, such as peace treaty, alliance, and agreement.

Pokanoket Wampanoag -Mayflower Pilgrim Life

Basic Needs – Family – Spirituality – Community



Wetu



Plimoth Patuxet

Before the Mayflower Pilgrims arrived, the Algonquin people lived along the Atlantic coast in Maine to northern Virginia for over 10,000 years. The Pokanoket Wampanoag lived in southeastern Massachusetts, Cape Cod and the Islands, to the Narragansett Bay in Rhode Island. The landscape included up to 69 villages, with most led by a sachem.

BASIC NEEDS

“The natives of New England are accustomed to build the houses much like the wild Irish”.

Thomas Morton (Karr, 1999)

Safety When the Mayflower Pilgrims arrived in Plimoth Bay, the Pokanoket Wampanoag people were still recovering from the epidemics between 1616-1619. Like Patuxet, villages vanished. The cause was the fur and fishing trade that transported the European diseases to the New England coast. The impact was a major loss of Native members and contributions for the good of their community. The Pilgrims experienced the same, with half of the 102 Mayflower passengers dying the first winter. A third of the survivors were children with some orphaned by the spring of 1621. The defenses for both cultures were significantly impacted with fewer abled people to protect their communities.

Shelter Through the winter of 1620-1621, the Pilgrim men buried Mayflower passengers at night for fear the Natives would find out, while continuing to build shelter on Leyden Street during the day. The Pokanoket Wampanoag lived away from the coast at their winter wetus, which were shared with multiple families until Spring. There were fewer women to weave new bulrush mats for the inside walls of the wetu and fewer men to make the repairs or cover the outside of the home with huge sheets of dried bark.

The home could range in size from a 10'x10'x10' domed roof for the summer wetu to as large as the 360'x 60' x10' Nipmuc winter structure found in Worcester, Massachusetts (Cape Cod Times, 2024).

“When the oak leaf was the size of a mouse’s ear, it was time to plant.” (Coombs, 2023)

Food The spring season was the time to plant for the year but not before the fields were burned to fertilize the soil. Food security in 1621 was challenging for both cultures. There were fewer members to plant, harvest, and hunt. In the same situation, there was also the reality most of the Pilgrims were not farmers. Ousamequin sent Tisquantum, more commonly known as Squanto, to help teach them how to plant the corn by first burying alewives, a type of herring, to fertilize the sandy soil (Lipman, 2024). The Natives continue to plant corn with pole beans and squash on the same mound, known today as complimentary farming. The Natives used hoes made of larger

bones from deer or elk to prepare the soil for crops and a jawbone to take off corn kernels (Coombs, 2023).

Deer was the most common food hunted throughout the year, in addition to black bear, racoon, beaver and fowl. During the summer, meats were smoked while fruits and vegetables dried for the winter. Beans were dried then harvested at the end of the summer to store during the winter. Weirs were constructed to capture the many varieties of fish dried at the winter village for eating. Sturgeon was cut up and shared among sachems, elders and villagers. Cornmeal was put in the water to rid shellfish of sand, and mint and other herbs were used as tea. Both cultures caught fish with a hook and line and used plants and herbs for medicinal purposes (Coombs 2023, Newell, 2021).

Food preparation items were made of wood, clay and soapstone. The quality of Native items was admired and praised by the Pilgrims. Many shells and a few things that could not be used or repaired went in the midden, a large mound mostly filled with muscle shells. The middens found on the Atlantic coast provided great insight into what the Natives ate, wore and used. Though food was limited, social visits between the communities in 1621 began with food and drink, which was as part of Native culture. Feasts giving thanks included the Native strawberry and green corn harvest festivals and the Pilgrim celebration of thanks for their first harvest, which eventually became an American holiday. In 1863 during the Civil War, President Lincoln “declared a traditional November Thanksgiving,” and in November of 1941, Congress passed a law “mandating the fourth Thursday in November as the permanent date for the Thanksgiving feast and celebration” (Baker, 2009).

Clothing Earlier traders to New England and Edward Winslow described the leather leggings worn by the Natives in the winter “as those of the gypsy Irish”, the people of Bharat, which is now India. The deer hide was sewed together with sinew or tendons of animals strung through a fish bone or copper needle. The villagers also wore center seamed moccasins. Stitching clothing or pouches by hand were common tasks between the cultures. The Pilgrim women and older girls hand sewed pockets to tie around the waist. An important Native accessory was the tobacco pouch worn by young and old to hold the thanksgiving offerings needed throughout the day (Newell, 2021).

Another accessory helped the Pilgrims stem the flow of visitors to feed from their limited food supply. On the first trip to see the Massasoit, Winslow brought a copper necklace, along with other gifts, to Sowams and requested the Native visitors going to Plimoth wear it as a signal upon arrival to offer them food and drink. Ousamequin granted Winslow’s request. Unfortunately, he didn’t have any food to offer Winslow, Hopkins and Tisquantum.

Discussion: Similarities between the two cultures related to basic needs

SIMILARITIES

- ❖ Both communities dealt with hunger, illness and mourning after a great loss of family and friends.
- ❖ Both built and maintained homes with fewer members to harvest, hunt and care for others.
- ❖ Women planted the crops. Pilgrim women eventually took over the planting duties several years later.
- ❖ Caught and ate fish using hook and line and hunted for game and furs.
- ❖ The wetu and native leggings reminded the Pilgrims of the Irish homes and people of India

FAMILY

“...they (Natives) are great lovers of their children and people...”- John Pory (James, 1963)

Language In 1620, the Algonquin language was made up of many regional dialects throughout the Atlantic coast. The shared language base ranged from the St. Lawrence Gulf to the southern part of the Chesapeake Bay. Today, the language for southeastern MA Natives is Wôpanâô8aok (Newell, 2021). Wampanoag means “people who live where the sun rises near a body of water”, People of the first Light, and the People of the Dawn (Newell, 2021, mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov, 2025).

Habitat The homeland boundaries for Natives related to streams, rivers, ponds, hills, mountains, and rocks. The beauty and bounty of the landscape was documented by earlier explorers, traders, Winslow, and Bradford to name a few. Algonquin homes regionally varied by name. The Pokanoket Wampanoags lived in a summer and winter wetu and the Connecticut Pequots’ homes were similar shaped structured “wigwams”. Family members lived in the smaller summer ones along the coast to care for the summer crops. Before winter, the village migrated inland to live in the larger wetu with multiple families until Spring. Life during the winter, aside from daily chores, included weaving, repairing or sewing new mats for the wetu, telling stories, and creating wampum belts to record village and personal history, or trade them for goods. Transportation included walking and paddling mishoons on the waterways. The long boats were used for hunting and fishing and moving goods and materials back and forth between summer and winter locations. Once at the winter location, the mishoons were sunk in the water for the winter to decrease rot and damage (Coombs, 2023). Dogs lived in both communities as pets, protectors and hunters. The Mayflower voyage included a mastiff and an English springer spaniel, and possibly owned by 25-year-old passenger John Goodman, who didn’t survive the first winter (Hawaii Mayflower Society, 2024). There likely were other dogs on board too.

Roles

Women Wampanoag women were considered a maternal force as life giver and nurturer. They were responsible for growing and harvesting food for the village and always gave an offering of thanks before picking the bounty. The women also were very involved in the harvest of shellfish. Native women taught the girls to weave cedar bark mats for the walls of the wetu and baskets for storage and transport (Karr, 1999, Newell, 2021). Food preparation, cooking multiple meals, and caring for children, elderly, and sick were common daily tasks in both communities.

“It was a very pretty device (snare), made with a rope of their own making, ... as artificially made as any rope in England can make, and as like as ours can be.” (Heath, 1963)

Men The Pokanoket Wampanoag men were life-takers and protectors. As a life taker, they did not plant crops, but did prepare the earth for planting and guard the cornfield at night during the growing season. The male role focused on protecting the village and seasonal hunting and fishing using a basswood bark line with fishhooks of antler, deer bone and copper. Copper was also used for arrow points, beads, jewelry, mat sewing needles, and spoons. The longbow was made from maple or ash with tendon or sinew for the bowstring, and dip nets made of basswood cordage. The men routinely maintained fishing and hunting items, including nets, fishhooks, ropes and traps. They made offerings of tobacco as a gift of thanks for fish and game and anything they took from nature. Both cultures made pipes to smoke tobacco (Coombs, 2023, Newell, 2021).

Children The Pokanoket Wampanoag children began their education in toddlerhood, learning about their relationship with earth. They also learned at an early age to respect the plants by not spilling any seed or food or eating more than needed. Parents and family used playful teasing to remind young children that good for the earth and community came first. By age six, children helped harvest plants and fruit, watch the corn fields during the day, dig clams and quahogs, and dry vegetables. Girls learned to weave cedar bark mats for the seasonal wetu, and the boys learned to fish and hunt (Coombs, 2023, Newell, 2021). Pilgrim children’s chores were similar, including helping with the younger children, the food harvest and daily preparation of meals.

Children from both cultures grew up with games and activities. Swimming, catch games, foot races, telling stories, and sport competitions were choices when the children had free time. The Pilgrim children also played the games Draughts, Naughts and Crosses, All Hid and Gliffes. The games are better known as checkers, tic-tac-toe, hide and seek and tongue twisters (Plimoth Patuxet, 2024, Newell, 2021).

Discussion: What similarities do you see between the two cultures related to family?

SIMILARITIES

- ❖ Care of family and home
- ❖ Gender specific responsibilities
- ❖ Children helped with daily tasks at a young age
- ❖ Children learned about expectations, roles and responsibilities to the family
- ❖ Child and adult recreation
- ❖ Domestic dogs in both communities
- ❖ Appreciation for good craftsmanship

SPIRITUALITY



Quahogs

Shells

White Whelk

“The Algonquin headmen engaging the Plymouthans were spiritual leaders of their people” - Donahue, 2011

Beliefs Both cultures identified with one creator, the creation of earth and nature, and gave daily thanks with each having a unique practice of spiritual beliefs (Coombs, 2023). The Pilgrims gathered every Sunday for services, which included led prayer, sermons, Geneva Bible scripture readings, and offerings for those in need.

The Native homelands were seen as an animate and spirited life with the land and humanity maintained by sharing basic needs and tasks. The family was considered a force of nature due to the lifegiving ability and care of the land. Wealth was believed and defined as contributions someone made to nature’s life sustaining ecosystems (Newell, 2021).

The Natives followed the seasonal cycles of plant and animal life. Plants were “considered elders” in relation to food vegetables, cordage for rope and nets, and garlic, onions, poultices, salves, acorns and nuts as medicine. Harvesters always left the first pick of the plant for the earth and the next creature. After praying to seek permission to harvest, there was an offering of thanksgiving to the plants, which could be tobacco, corn meal, cedar, sweetgrass or sage (Newell, 2021, Coombs, 2023).

Middens also had spiritual meaning to the Native community. Muscle shells made up most of them, which over time became part of the earth (Newell, 2021). When discovered, they provided a window into what the communities ate, couldn’t use or was no longer functional. Several middens were found on Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

The Pokanoket Wampanoag people had spiritual ties to handmade things of beauty. Handmade “decorative and pleasant looking” items were considered a reflection of the creator’s beauty given to earth.

Wampum belts had spiritual meaning. The quahog and white whelk shells, found between Cape Cod and Long Island Sound, were used on the belt. The purple outer edge of the quahog and center stem of the spiral white whelk were woven into it to record events, laws, treaties or offer condolences. After the 1500’s, the belts were also traded for metal awls and nails, clothing and jewelry decoration (Newell, 2021, Coombs, 2023).

Ceremonies A Native prayer offering started each day before the morning fires were lit. Prayers also sought permission to use nature’s gifts throughout the day. The daily giving of thanks called for pouches to be worn by the young and old, which most often were filled with tobacco or cedar as an offering for the land’s bounty (Newell, 2021, Coombs, 2023).

There were Native ceremonies to heal disruption.

Harvest feasts gave thanks and celebrated with food and recreation in both communities.

Discussion: What similarities do you see between the two cultures related to spirituality?

SIMILARITIES

- ❖ Believed in a creator and creation of earth
- ❖ Gave daily thanks
- ❖ Thanksgiving celebrations for harvests
- ❖ Shared common uses of “elder plants”.
- ❖ Spiritual practices – acknowledged beauty in hand crafted objects.

COMMUNITY

“The Records of Plymouth Colony reveals that in addition to the pnieeses assigned to live in the compound, ordinary Algonquins also occupied the settlement.” – Donahue, 2011

Language The Pokanoket Wampanoag language is a form of Algonquin, which in 1621 was the base language spoken from Maine to northern Virginia made up of regional dialects, such as “Sachem” in Massachusetts and “Sagamore” in Maine, meaning “leader.” The Natives of southeastern MA today speak Wômpañâak/ Wôpanâôt8aok. The name Wampanoag was first documented by Increase Mathers in 1676, in reference to King Philips’ men who fought for the sachem. Bradford wrote down and referred to the Pokanoket people as “Packanokich” (Mack 2020, www.mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov, 2025, YouTube-“*Pokanoket not Wampanoag*”, 2024).

Customs Spring marked the beginning of the year, and the Pokanoket Wampanoag kept calendar time by the full moon. Thirteen moon cycles of 28 days made up the year. The 1621 English calendar was based on Julian time, which didn’t change until 1752. Both cultures gave daily thanks and had thanksgiving celebrations for harvests with music and singing in prayer or ceremony. Governor Carver arrived to meet the Massasoit with the musical fanfare of “drum and trumpet.” (Heath 1963, Newell, 2021).

The Natives migrated inland for the winter and back to the coast in the spring to plant and tend crops. They used nature to identify boundaries, such as rivers, ponds, hills and mountains. Crop harvests were for all members in the community, and the same for the Pilgrims in 1621. Upon marriage, the husband moved in with his wife’s family. Lineage was traced through the mother, and children became members of her village (Newell, 2021). In Plimoth, marriage was considered a civil matter, not religious.

The spiritually of the wampum belt was important and told a story, recorded history, or highlighted the meaning of truth. The belt established positive relations with the person who made it. During King Phillip’s war, Metacom’s wampum belt was taken upon his death. The belt contained the Pokanoket history with images and symbols. The length of the historical belt was described to go over the shoulder to the ground in the front and back. It was “curiously woven of wampum nine inches broad in black and white figures and flowers and many picture of birds and bears.” (Newell, Coombs, Mayflower 400, 2024). Petroglyphs told a personal story with markings or symbol chipped into rock. The meaning of the markings was only known to the person who made them (Newell, 2021).

Recreation Recreation came in many forms and often involved skills needed for daily tasks. Hunting activities were used in recreational and sporting competitions by both communities. Handmade soapstone or clay pipes were made to smoke tobacco. Storytelling and stargazing were activities all ages enjoyed. Children’s games and board games involved eye hand coordination and problem-solving skills (Coombs, 2023). Races, catch games, and swimming were common recreational activities enjoyed by both cultures.

“The Plymouth governor, like the Massasoit, did not have supreme authority.” - Donahue, 2011

Governance Governance for Native villages was led by a sachem, who often was a pniiese, and occasionally a female. Most villages had a sachem. Some sachems had greater leadership responsibilities for multiple villages, like Ousamequin.

The Wampanoag people of Cape Cod and the Pokanoket of Sowams were led by the Massasoit, Ousamequin. The elder women of sachem families chose the sachem descendant, who could be replaced anytime if not living up to the position. A sachem’s council was made up of a group of advisors, including pnieces, shamans, village mothers and public opinion. Consensus was reached to decide important matters related to the community, land, trade, alliances with other villages, and member behaviors. Upon discussion with council, the sachem could ban a member who wasn’t a good match for the community. Also, a member could leave and seek another village (Newell, 2021, Mack, 2020).

Accounts of the Massasoit’s role in 1621 indicates that the pressure from Narragansett Sachem Canonicus, whose village was spared from the earlier epidemics, and the arrival of the Mayflower Pilgrims were the two motivators for him to contact the newcomers. The arrival of the Pilgrims with their weapons offered protection against the Narragansetts, and the Pilgrims needed an ally to survive their first year in an unknown land with limited resources. Ousamequin understood the benefit of an agreement for both cultures, and so did Governor Carver.

Trade The first European traders fished off the coast of Cape Cod and established trade with the Pokanoket Wampanoag. They continued to trade with the English for copper, steel knives, glass beads and bottles. Ousamequin sent Tisquantum to promote the fur trade with other villages. The Pilgrims committed their payment to the Mayflower Investors in fish, fur and wood for seven years. With the help of Isaac Allerton, England granted Plimoth a Kennebec fur trade patent. In 1628, the Cushnoc fur trading post on the river and now Augusta, Maine was established. It was Plimoth’s most successful commercial endeavor and supported by official Plimoth records that indicate the beaver trade eliminated their debt to the investors (Mack, 2020, Donahue, 2021).

Discussion: What similarities do you see between the two cultures related to community?

SIMILARITIES

- ❖ Oral and recorded history
- ❖ Exiled non-compliant or “bad fit” community members
- ❖ The governance of both cultures included a chosen leader with support from council, militia and spiritual advisors. Consensus was used for major decisions.
- ❖ Leaders helped resolve issues within the family and community.
- ❖ Child play and adult games
- ❖ Some Native families lived in the Plimoth community.
- ❖ Trade, interactions and relationships between the cultures
- ❖ Food at community social gatherings
- ❖ Consensus and mutual understanding of the alliance agreement

PATHS TO THE 1621 ALLIANCE AGREEMENT

“The names and deeds of Algonquians essential to Plymouth Colony were first documented by Plymouth settlers and historians”. - Donahue, 2011

Samoset

Samoset was a 29-year-old Wawenock Wabanaki Sagamore from Pemaquid, today Bristol near Boothbay Harbor Maine. Some sources indicate he was kidnapped by European traders years before the Pilgrims arrived and knew Squanto before going to Plimoth. Samoset is best known as the first Algonquin to greet the Mayflower Pilgrims at Plimoth, saying in English, “Welcome”. He shared that he learned the language from English fisherman at Monhegan, an island in the Gulf of Maine.

After the 1616-1619 epidemics took the Wawenocks’ sagamore and most of the villagers, Samoset became their new leader. For unknown reasons, he left the village shortly afterwards and showed up in the Pokanoket Wampanoag area eight months before the Pilgrims landed in 1620. Samoset also shared with the Pilgrims that the distance to his village was 5 days on foot or one day with a full sail. After his infamous greeting, Samoset specifically asked for beer. Several authors point out the sagamore purposely requested a drink to ease tensions in the room before discussion and modeled Native hospitality. The Pilgrims did not have any beer and offered Samoset food and drink, afterwards acknowledging he liked it. Winslow wrote that Samoset “was not willing to go this night” and slept at Stephen Hopkins’ home. As Pniece, Samoset remained because it was his role to spiritually prepare the setting for the Massasoit’s arrival and a successful first encounter with the Pilgrims (Bachelder, 2022, Donahue, 2011).

Many Pokanoket Wampanoag sachems and villagers were already in the Plimoth area pledging their allegiance to the Massasoit. Samoset left the Hopkins home the next morning after receiving a ring, knife and bracelet. He came back the next day with “five tall proper men” returning the tools previously taken in the woods from Standish and Cooke. The small group was fed and wanted to trade, but it was Sunday, and the Pilgrims declined because work wasn’t allowed on their day of worship. Samoset’s companions left but he stayed for three more days leaving on Wednesday. He came back the day after with the Massasoit and 60 or so men. Once the agreement was established, Samoset didn’t stay much longer and returned to Pemaquid after a year away from home. Bachelder points out that Samoset was never given credit for his diplomatic efforts with the two cultures. There is a 1623 reference he had a wife and child. His last known reference was his mark of a bow-and-arrow on a Maine land transaction in 1653 (Karr, 1963, Bachelder, 2022).

Tisquantum (Squanto) “*A special instrument sent of God.*” Bradford

The Patuxet native was one of 17- 20 people kidnapped by Captain John Hunt in 1614. The Catholic Friars blocked the human auction in Spain and Tisquantum ended up in England where he learned English. In the Spring of 1619, Captain Thomas Dermer brought him back to his village, Patuxet, and found it abandoned due to the epidemic. They went on to find the Massasoit in Sowams, which is the Bristol/Warren area of Rhode Island and Captain Dermer sailed away.

Tisquantum was the main interpreter for the Massasoit during discussions with the Pilgrims that led to the agreement and shared he was one of the men captured by Captain Hunt years before. He lived in Plimoth after the agreement was established, indicating the Pilgrims were comfortable to have the Massasoit's "eyes and ears" in the community, which further established trust. Bradford's writings about Tisquantum showed an affection for the man. Before Tisquantum died in 1922, his ambitions and actions broke Ousamequin's trust. It was Bradford who would not return Squanto to the Massasoit as requested after the betrayal. Squanto and Bradford both survived "political exile, social alienation and the loss of close relatives and friends to devastating diseases and sudden deaths." (Donahue, 2011, Lipman, 2024).

Epenow

The Aquinnah native of Noepe, today known as Martha's Vineyard, was captured sometime between 1611-1615 and displayed throughout London, England as "a wonder". His appearance and stature were admired and documented at the time. Epenow was eventually returned to Aquinnah and became their sachem, who also supported the alliance agreement with the Pilgrims, as did other sachems.

Hobomock

Hobomock was a Pokanoket pniiese and took over Tisquantum's role as the Massasoit's connection to Governor Bradford. Emanuel Altham wrote that Hobomock was an "advisor, medicine man and a neighbor with more than ten family members."

Hobomock first lived with Myles Standish inside Plimoth's protection, then moved outside the palisade in 1623. Tokamahamon and he were instrumental in safely bringing back 16-year-old John Billington, who was lost in Manomet and ended up in Nauset. Billington's misadventure is credited for Plimoth's reparation of goods and items previously taken from the Nauset Village, which would have strengthened trust and relationships. Winslow indicated the Pniiese always put Plimoth's needs above others.

"We called a meeting for the establishing of military orders among ourselves; and we chose Miles Standish our captain." Mourt's Relation (Heath, 1963)

Captain Myles Standish

Myles Standish was the militia captain of New Plimoth. Governor Carver appointed ten men to be the Captain's council, including Winslow, Alden, Howland, and Bradford.


By the time the Mayflower arrived, the Nauset Wampanoag already showed caution toward the European traders because of the earlier Native kidnappings.

Captain Standish led a group of men involved in the "First Encounter" with the Nauset Natives. Arrows flew then musket fire followed but neither side was injured. In another effort to contact the Natives the day after the tools were stolen, Standish and Hopkins took a musket and placed it on the ground "in their sight, in sign of peace, to parley with them." (Karr, 1999). There was no response until the next day when Samoset arrived in Plimoth.

Standish's signature, along with the Massasoit's mark, are on a 1649 land grant, indicating continued interactions and support for the alliance agreement.

(Copy of the Original Deed for the Purchase of Old Bridgewater.)

North Land. Content with north in halcyon
of all its inhabitants of her home of the brown
the to green and green for about
The native one wolf of the red aspen
Lawson better put in June 25 of May
1969

removal of  inflammation

Ex coagulation of the abundant lymph
and fat now present, makes possible
removal of graft and without further work
but sufficient to very fully get rid of infection
for and in coagulation of the infected tract
of hand as follows:

[illegible]

Neah and CONSTANT Southworth in behalf of all townsmen of the town of Duxbury to them and their heirs forever. In witness whereof the said Ousemaquin have hereunto set my hand this 23rd of March 1649.

In consideration of the aforesaid bargain and sale we the said Miles Standish Samuel Nash and Constant Southworth do bind ourselves to pay unto the said Chasmequon for and in consideration of the said tract of land as follows; 7 coats a yard and a half to a coat, 9 hatchets, 8 kum 20 kalum, 4 mouse skins, 10 yards and a half of cotton. Miles Standish, Samuel Nash, Constant Southworth.

—Translation by Stella J. Snow.

22

Plimoth. Winslow was also sent to initiate the first meeting between Governor Carver and the Massasoit. He volunteered as a hostage to ensure the two leaders' safety during their first encounter.

On their first visit, Winslow, along with Stephen Hopkins, and Tisquantum as the guide, were sent by the governor to Sowams to find out exactly where Ousamequin lived, assess the area and become familiar with the trail should events require a trip. They stopped along the way at Cummaquid, today's Barnstable Massachusetts, and a mother shared her sons were kidnapped years before and didn't have them to care for her in old age. The elderly woman was assured that Plimoth would not do the same thing and acknowledged Captain Hunt's actions were bad (Karr, 1999).

After 1621, there was a summons to Plimoth from Sowams to see Ousamequin, who was sick and assumed on his deathbed. Hobomock was stricken with grief. Winslow and Hobomock were sent to see the Massasoit. The entry into his room included many shamans exhibiting "their prayerful appeal to the spirits." Although Ousamequin was weak and exhausted, he aroused when the men arrived. The Massasoit hadn't had anything in his mouth for two days. Winslow looked at Ousamequin's mouth and slightly opened it with his knife to allow for some liquid nourishment and water. Afterwards, he used the knife to scrape his tongue. The Massasoit showed trust in Winslow, as did the pnieces who chose not to stop him (Silverman, 2019). The relations between the two communities strengthened afterwards. Several authors noted the kind and positive attributes Winslow wrote about the Great Sachem.

Governor John Carver

John Carver was a wealthy merchant, who reportedly invested in the Mayflower venture. Upon meeting Massasoit Ousamequin, the Governor kissed the Great Sachem's hand, who returned the gesture. Their gestures showed great respect to the other as equals. The Governor and Ousamequin, together with their advisors, created and supported the alliance agreement. Governor Carver died after the first winter possibly from heat stroke, and his wife Katherine, shortly afterwards.

William Bradford

"And so, all the bows and arrows was brought into the Governor's house and he brought the Governor three or four bucks and a turkey." Sir Edward Altham's account of Bradford's wedding, 1623 (Heath, 1963)

William Bradford was elected Governor of New Plimoth upon John Carver's death. Except for five years, he remained governor for the rest of his life until 1657 when he died. In 1622, Mourt's Relation was published in London, England. Governor Bradford and Edward Winslow were the most likely co-authors for most of the writings, with documentation to support the deduction. Bradford began writing *Of Plimoth Colony* in 1630 and stopped in 1650 (Pilgrim Hall Museum, 2024).

Bradford's invitation for the Massasoit to attend his marriage to Alice Carpenter Southworth was a sign of respect and an opportunity to further develop their relationship. The Massasoit and company also showed respect for the agreement leaving bows and arrows in the house and bringing deer and turkey for the wedding party and guests. Bradford continued to support the alliance agreement through various challenges and deadly engagements. The alliance was tested on several occasions and survived because of resilience, wisdom, and the diplomacy between Bradford and Ousamequin.



**Known as “King Phillip’s seat”
Warren, Rhode Island**

Ousamequin Yellow Feather was the Pokanoket Wampanoag Massasoit when the Pilgrims arrived in the winter of 1620. He lived in Sowams, which is now Warren/Bristol, Rhode Island. As the Massasoit, he was responsible for the wellbeing of 62- 69 villages. Was this his seat before it was his son’s?

Ousamequin Yellow Feather

Before leaving for Plimoth, the Massasoit would have sought advice from the Pokanoket village mothers, and his council of pnieces and shamans before discussing or agreeing to an alliance with the Pilgrims. At their first meeting on March 22nd, both leaders showed signs of respect. There was “strong water” to drink and food before the agreement was discussed. After the alliance was settled, Governor Carver escorted the Massasoit to the brook, where they embraced and departed. Ousamequin was described as “a very lusty man, in his best years, an able body, grave of countenance, and spare of speech” (Newell 2021, Heath, 1963).

In the fall, the Pilgrims had a successful harvest, and the alliance agreement was generally working for both cultures, even though some sachemships did not support the alliance.

In 1841, Reverend Alexander Young wrote the two words “first thanksgiving” as a footnote to describe the historical gathering (Newell, 2021, Coombs, 2023, The Sowams Heritage Area Project, 2024). There is the argument if the Pilgrims were offering a true thanksgiving, they would have spent the day praying instead of loudly celebrating with shooting competitions that attracted the Massasoit and his 90 men to the village. If Ousamequin and company were invited by the Pilgrims beforehand, wouldn’t he arrive with deer in hand as he did for Bradford’s wedding? Sending his men to hunt for additional food highlighted Native values to share and contribute to all. Ousamequin was a servant leader looking out for his vast community. He led the Pokanoket Wampanoag people until his death in 1660. His age at the time varies among scholars, which is anywhere from 70’s to 90.

Two diverse cultures came together as an allied community for protection and survival.

Relationships, community, food and leadership stand out as consistent similarities Natives and Pilgrims shared supporting the alliance’s longevity. What do you think?

ALGONQUIN GLOSSARY

Canonicus	Narragansett sachem who pressured Massasoit Ousamequin after the epidemic of 1616-1619 to pay tribute with wampum in exchange for protection and assistance.
Cheepi	God of the dead. A source of power for the pnieces and shamans. Both Tisquantum and Hobomock's names have the same meaning as cheepi.
Epenow	Aquinnah Sachem, one of many who agreed to the alliance agreement.
King Phillip	Metacom/Pometacom/Metacomet was the second son of Ousamequin. He became the sachem after the mysterious death of his brother Massasoit Wamsutta. Metacom led the charge in the war named after him, dying in 1676.
Massasoit	Great Chief/leader. Ousamequin Yellow Feather was the Great Chief of the Pokanoket Wampanoag people.
Midden	A trash mound mostly made up of muscle shells and non-shell material left by the natives before the Mayflower arrival. They are over a thousand years old and have spiritual meaning to the Natives.
Mishoon	A long boat. Large tree trunk is burned on the top side to hollow out using Elk horn or a large mammal's hip bone.
Nauset	Present-day Eastham, Cape Cod, Massachusetts where the first sighting of the Nauset Natives occurred at First Encounter Beach.
Noepe	Martha's Vineyard, an island off the coast of Cape Cod Massachusetts.
Patuxet	Location of the Wampanoag Pokanoket village wiped out by the epidemic and where the Pilgrims settled.
Petroglyph	Images chipped into rocks that only have meaning for the person who created it.
Pniece	A spiritual leader, priest, counselor warrior.
Pokanoket	The first people who inhabited villages in Southeastern Massachusetts Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Islands, and the east side of Narragansett Bay.
Sachem	Chief of a native village. Known as sagamore in the area known as Maine. Sachemships are villages lead by a sachem.
Sowams	The home of the Massasoit Ousamequin, a peninsula on the east side of Narragansett Bay in Warren/Bristol Rhode Island.
Weir	Net and wood fences in the water channeling varieties of fish for the catch.
Wetu	A winter or summer house of the Pokanoket Wampanoag people.

POKANOKET WAMPANOAG-MAYFLOWER PILGRIM

Word and Name Match

Match number to letter

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. mishoon | _____ a. house |
| 2. Tisquantum | _____ b. Wabanaki Sachem |
| 3. Sowams | _____ c. base language for People of the First Light |
| 4. Algonquin | _____ d. Aquinnah Sachem |
| 5. midden | _____ e. fishing trap |
| 6. wetu | _____ f. Plimoth Colony |
| 7. Pemaquid | _____ g. Bristol, Maine |
| 8. Massasoit | _____ h. long boat |
| 9. Pniece | _____ i. Squanto |
| 10. wiers | _____ j. Pokanoket Chief |
| 11. Epenow | _____ k. counselor, spiritual warrior |
| 12. alewives | _____ l. shell/refuse heap |
| 13. Ousamequin Yellow Feather | _____ m. where the Massasoit lived |
| 14. Samoset | _____ n. river herring |
| 15. Patuxet | _____ o. Great Sachem |

CENTERPIECE DIRECTIONS

Materials

Ball point pens with caps
Floral tape
Artificial flowers
Wire cutters
Vase
Marbles, stones, etc. for vase (optional)



ASSEMBLY

1. Cut stems with wire cutters.
2. Place wire of stem alongside the top of the pen and wrap around with floral tape.
3. Stop at the end of pen to allow for cap.



**Pokanoket Wampanoag and
Mayflower Pilgrims
True/False**

1. _____ The Mayflower passengers were Puritans.
2. _____ Massasoit is a title meaning Great Chief/leader.
3. _____ At the minimum, two dogs sailed on the Mayflower.
4. _____ The Pokanoket people were referred by the English as Wampanoag at the end of King Phillip's war.
5. _____ Governor Bradford was involved with the alliance agreement.
6. _____ Captain John Smith named the Patuxet village bay "Plimoth Bay" after Plymouth England.
7. _____ Samoset and Tisquantum spent the night in Plimoth at Stephen Hopkins' home.
8. _____ The Pilgrims traded with the Pokanokets at their first meeting.
9. _____ Winslow and Hopkins walked to see where Ousamequin lived in Rhode Island.
10. _____ Stephen Hopkins likely learned another Algonquin dialect living at Jamestown.
11. _____ The Pilgrims were taught how to plant the Three Sisters (corn, pole beans and squash).

Pokanoket Wampanoags and Mayflower Pilgrims

Across

2. The Pokanoket Wampanoag were part of a larger group of Natives along the Atlantic coast

7. Where the Massasoit Ousamequin lived

8. One of two federally recognized tribes in Massachusetts

10. Another Algonquin name for Sachem

12. He was chosen as the Captain of the New Plimoth militia

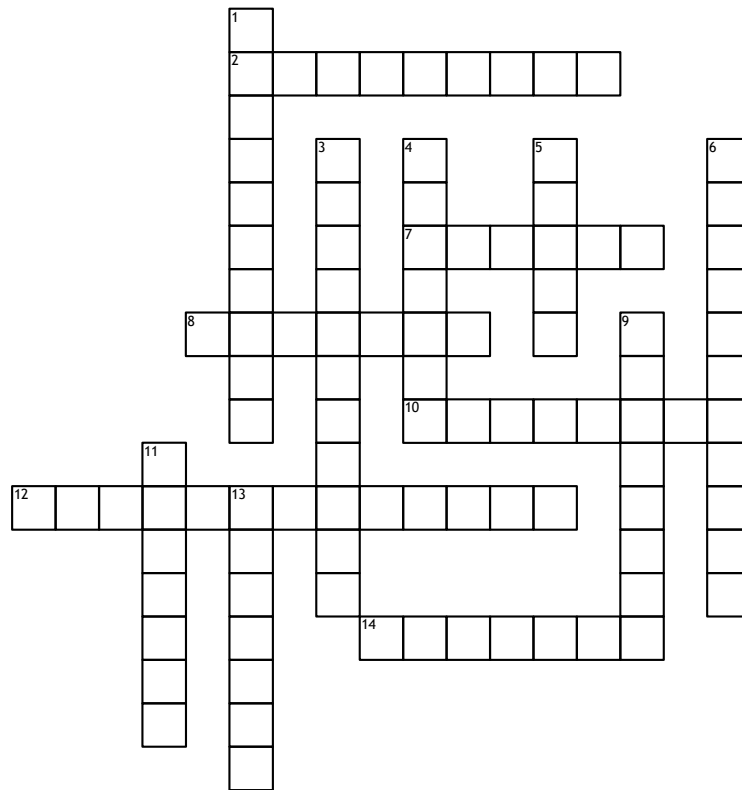
14. What was Samoset's initial greeting the Pilgrim men?

Down

1. People of the First Light

3. One of ten who explored New Plimoth with Myles Standish

4. Rushes, bark, maize husks, wild hemp and silk grass are options to make _____.



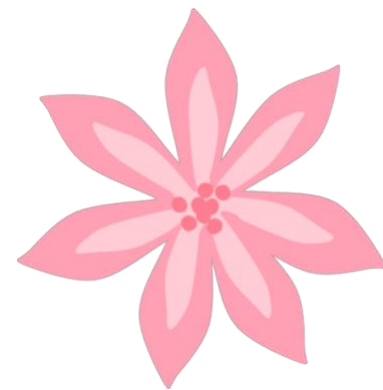
5. What brought the Algonquin and Europeans in contact

6. Definition of Massasoit

9. A title for the Pilgrim female head of the household

11. Another name for alewife

13. Tisquantum's nickname



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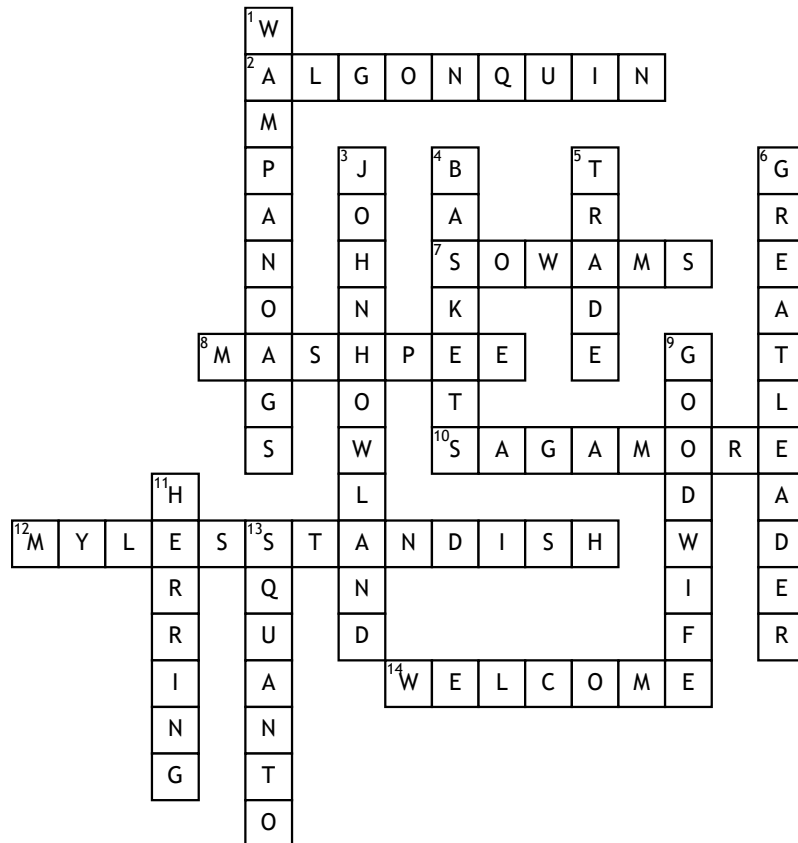
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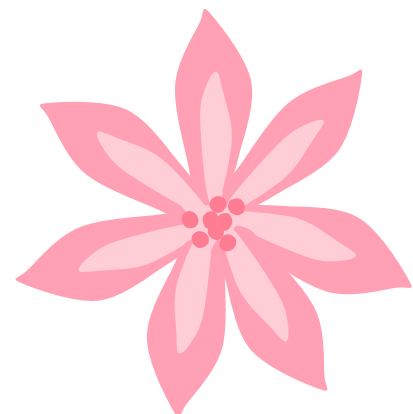
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Ousamequin's mark on 1649 land deed

(Copy of the Original Deed for the Purchase of Old Bridgewater)

Now Land Constant Southworth in behalf
of all the townsmen of the town of Duxbury
to them and their heirs forever for about
£1649

mark of  Ousamequin

In consideration of the aforesaid bargain
and sale now put and made Standish
Remond and Constant Southworth for
and of value to pay unto the said Ousamequin
for and in consideration of the said tract
of land as followeth

- 7 coats and 20 knives in hand
- 9 hatchets
- 20 axes
- 4 moose skins
- 10 yards of cotton

Miles Standish
Samuel Nash.
Constant Southworth

Nash and Constant Southworth in behalf of all townsmen of the town of Duxbury to them and their heirs forever. In witness
whereof I the said Ousamequin have hereunto set my hand this 23rd of March 1649.

In consideration of the aforesaid bargain and sale we the said Miles Standish Samuel Nash and Constant Southworth do bind
ourselves to pay unto the said Ousamequin for and in consideration of the said tract of land as followeth; 7 coats a yard and a
half to a coat, 9 hatchets, 8 hoes 20 knives, 4 moose skins, 10 yards and a half of cotton. Miles Standish. Samuel Nash.
Constant Southworth.

—Translation by Stella J. Snow.

ANSWER SHEET

Word Match ANSWERS

1. **h**, 2. **i**, 3. **m**, 4. **c**, 5. **l**, 6. **a**, 7. **g**, 8. **o**, 9. **k**, 10. **e**, 11. **d**, 12. **n**, 13. **j**, 14. **b**, 15. **f**

True/False ANSWERS

1.F 2.T 3.T 4.T 5.F 6.T 7.T 8.F 9.T 10.T 11.F

EXPLANATIONS

1. The future pilgrims separated from the Puritans in England before they went to Leiden Holland and returned home after 11-12 years. The pilgrim separatists made up a third of the Mayflower passengers.
2. Massasoit is a title and not a person's name.
3. Two dogs were a mastiff and English springer spaniel.
4. The first publication of the name Wampanoag was in 1676 to describe King Phillip's men.
5. William Bradford was not governor at the time.
6. Captain John Smith drew a map of the bay named it after Plymouth England.
7. Stephen Hopkins was familiar with Natives after being with them in Bermuda and Jamestown.
8. It was Sunday, and the Pilgrims could not trade with the Natives on their "day of rest".
9. Edward Winslow made multiple trips to see Ousamequin in Sowams.
10. Stephen Hopkins and Captain John Rolfe, Pocahontas' husband, were at Jamestown the same time.
11. They were taught how to plant corn without referencing the beans and squash, which were familiar.

Author



Susan Feely, MS, MSW

Susan is a GSMD lifetime member descending from John Tilley. She retired after a long and enjoyable career working with children, parents and families.

