



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

Liz Covart: *Ben Franklin's World* is a production of the Omohundro Institute, and this series was made possible with support from Mass Humanities.

If you're enjoying The World of the Wampanoag series, you may also be interested in a new archeology exhibit at the Plimoth Patuxet Museums. This exhibit commemorates the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower, and it's called "History in a New Light: Illuminating Archaeology of Historic Patuxet and Plymouth".

[00:00:30] Founded in 1947 as a museum, Plimoth Patuxet offers powerful personal encounters with history, built on thorough research, about both the Wampanoag people, and the colonial English community that settled amongst them in the 1600s.

Plimoth Patuxet also maintains one of the most significant repositories of New England 17th century archeology. The exhibit "History in a New Light: Illuminating Archaeology of Historic Patuxet and Plymouth," uses archeology, documentary research, oral history, and fine and decorative arts.

[00:01:00] It is the first major exhibit to display artifacts from both the Wampanoag village of Patuxet, and the site of the original 1620 European settlement, which were discovered beginning in 2016 by Project 400 archeologists.

Project 400 is an ongoing archeological research initiative, conducted in partnership with the Andrew Fiske Center for Archaeological Research at the University of Massachusetts Boston, the town of Plymouth, and the Plimoth Patuxet Museums.

[00:01:30] Now, in addition to finding the first evidence of these overlapping settlements, this research has forced scholars to re-evaluate their understandings of daily life in early Plymouth, and the nature of colonial and Indigenous interactions.

To learn more about the "History in a New Light" exhibit, and to plan your visit to the Plimoth Patuxet Museums, visit benfranklinworld.com/archaeology. That's benfranklinworld.com/archaeology.

Liz Covart: In late fall, 1620, the Wampanoag village of Patuxet stood nearly empty. Developed over thousands of years, this established and thriving community was recently



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

[00:02:00] devastated by the epidemic of 1616 to 1619. The Wampanoag would recover, but it was a confusing and difficult time, and it was into this confusing and difficult time that the Pilgrims arrived.

The ship Mayflower left England and set sail for North America on September 6th, 1620. After an ocean crossing of 66 days, the ship sailed into what the English would later call Plymouth Harbor, on December 16, 1620.

[00:02:30]

The 236-ton Mayflower carried more than 100 passengers, who crammed inside its 106-foot long, 25-foot wide frame, the equivalent of just more than the length of two school buses placed end-to-end. For comparison, the 30-to-40-man ocean-going Wampanoag boats, or mishoons, that we discussed last episode, were longer than three school buses placed end-to-end.

Liz Covart:

[00:03:00]

The English passengers intended to become settlers, by establishing a plantation, or a permanent place of residence in North America. Using small wooden boats aboard the Mayflower, a contingent of passengers rode their way to the shoreline, where they found a space that looked livable, even lived in, but also not quite populated.

[00:03:30]

The colonists did not see any people, but the land they decided to establish their settlement on was located on high ground, ground that had largely been cleared of trees, had black, fertile soils, with evidence that corn had been planted there three or four years before. And the ground had the advantage of being located both near the ocean and sources of fresh water.

The ground the English chose for their settlement was the site of the Wampanoag village of Patuxet. Unbeknownst to the English, in the three years before their arrival, an epidemic had ravaged and devastated approximately 90% of the Wampanoag population, including a population who lived at Patuxet.

[00:04:00]

Darius Coombs:

It was fortunate when they landed when they did, for them, the colonists, because we'd just suffered from a major epidemic that wiped out up to 90% of our people in a two or three year span.



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

Liz Covart: Darius Coombs is the director of Wampanoag and Algonquin Interpretive Training at Plimoth Patuxet Museums. This living history museum was founded in the 1940s, and through thorough research, interprets the Wampanoag people and the colonial English community that settled amongst them in the 1600s. Darius is also Mashpee Wampanoag, a citizen of the Wampanoag Nation.

[00:04:30]

Darius Coombs: Our skin turned yellow. People had open sores on their bodies, and they died within two or three days. Common thought over the years, hepatitis. People say smallpox, but we kind of ruled out smallpox.

Disease Control came out with something over 10 years ago. They believe it was from the French trading ships up in Maine, and when those trade ships would come over, they would have rats on the ships, and the rats would get off, and the fetuses of the rats would get into the water system, create an infectious liver disease, that swept along the coastline.

[00:05:00]

This epidemic that came here was three years before the Pilgrims got here, right? It was between probably 1616 and 1619. It went 30, 40 miles inland along the coast of Maine, wiped out whole nations of people. Like I said, for Wampanoag people, it affected us up to 90%, and wiped out.

Liz Covart: Years before the Pilgrims arrived in North America, Europeans had traded more than just trade goods with the Native peoples they traded with along North America's northeastern Atlantic coastline.

They had also brought diseases. As Darius Coombs related, these diseases devastated, and sometimes killed, entire villages and nations of Native peoples. So, when the English colonists arrived at Patuxet, what would later be called Plymouth, Massachusetts, in December 1620, the landscape and demography of the Dawnlands, what we've come to call New England, had changed.

[00:06:00]

Darius Coombs: When they got here, it was a changed place. When they got here, it was a year or two years after that epidemic hit us. If they'd landed four or five years before, it might



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

have been a different story. This whole area was populated with people, and when they landed in Patuxet, this whole area was devastated.

[00:06:30] The nearest living communities was probably Manomet, was called Manomet, about 10 miles south, were a caring people, a loving people, but it's also the time which people needed each other. They needed an ally because of the Native communities that didn't care for them being here, and also we needed an ally a lot of the time, because we just got devastated. We needed help in a way, they needed each other, but it was a very, very confusing time, too. The leaders we lost, the chiefs, the medicine people, the political leaders.

Liz Covart: [00:07:00] When the English colonists arrived at Patuxet 400 years ago, they arrived at a confusing time. The world of the Wampanoag people had changed, in the wake of a destabilizing epidemic. Still, the Wampanoag who remained, persisted. They continued to practice and observe their deeply established economy, culture and politics, even as the English colonists settled on their village sites, and colonized the Dawnlands.

This episode is part of a two-episode series about the world of the Wampanoag. In episode 290, we investigated the life, cultures, and trade of the Wampanoag and their neighbors, the Narragansett, up to December 16, 1620, the day the Mayflower made its way into Plymouth Harbor.

[00:07:30] In this episode, episode 291, our focus will be on the world of the Wampanoag in 1620 and beyond. We'll explore the changes and continuities in Wampanoag life, as they worked to recover from the devastating epidemic of 1616 to 1619.

We'll also investigate how the Wampanoag contended with life, that after 1620, involved sustained contact not just with European traders, but with English people determined to settle on their land. So, who were these English arrivals, and how did they come to find themselves in Wampanoag country?

[00:08:00]

Carla Pestana: Well, the English colonists who came to Plymouth had a variety of reasons for coming. My name is Carla Pestana, and I am a historian of early America and the Atlantic world. I teach at UCLA, where I'm also the department chair at the moment,



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

and I hold the Joyce Appleby Endowed Chair of America in the World, which I've had for the last eight years.

[00:08:30]

Liz Covart: In addition to teaching at the University of California, Los Angeles, Carla Pestana has published a book, *The World of Plymouth Plantation*, which seeks to reconnect our centuries-old perceptions of Plymouth with the reality of the lives of its inhabitants. In essence, Carla separates the facts of the past from the myths of historical memory, to help us recover the real lives and goings-on of the Plymouth plantation colony.

[00:09:00]

Carla Pestana: About half of them had been members of a church in Leiden, in the Netherlands, and many members of that church, though not all of them, had the idea to leave the Dutch-controlled area of Europe, and move to an English-controlled area of the Americas. The members of that church did not want to live in England, because their particular brand of Reform Protestantism was not welcomed in England.

[00:09:30]

Liz Covart: To practice their version of Protestant Christianity, the members of the English church in The Netherlands left England, and decided to establish a home in the Dawnlands, which they thought of as the English-claimed area of North America.

With this decision in place, they had to find financial backers. Migrating to North America and establishing a colony was difficult work. It required a lot of money, time, and labor. It also required more than a group of co-religionists.

[00:10:00]

To establish a thriving colony, the Leiden church members also needed to find other English people, who had skills in carpentry, building, and husbandry. So, to make their dream of settlement in North America a reality, the Leiden church members had to engage in a fair bit of recruiting.

Carla Pestana: They got backers in England, investors who were willing to support a settlement in the Americas, because they saw it as a potential way to make money. In 1620, the



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

[00:10:30] English colonies were starting to seem like a place that people could go, which hadn't been true much before that.

Virginia was doing better than it had in its first decade, and Bermuda, the Somers Islands, was recently settled, and English people were starting to think of the Americas as a destination to which they could go. So, this was part of a larger movement that would pick up in the 1620s, of people moving into various locations in the Americas.

Liz Covart: [00:11:00] As Carla Pestana mentioned, the Leiden church members' migration to North America was actually part of a larger transatlantic movement of people. One of the largest transatlantic movements was the forced migration of enslaved people, who were taken from Africa to the Americas.

[00:11:30] But there were also Europeans now moving to the Americas to claim territory. Some came by the direction of their monarch, like Spanish explorers and settlers. Others came in smaller groups. While the English settlers set out to claim lands, and to settle in the Caribbean or in Virginia, the members of John Robinson's Leiden church landed in Wampanoag country. Why did they make that choice? Was that where they intended to land?

Carla Pestana: [00:12:00] Well, they had a deal with The Virginia Company that they would have a semi-autonomous settlement in the northern regions of Virginia, which would have been around Delaware, maybe, that part of the cost. The King had basically divided the Eastern Seaboard of North America, north of Spanish Florida, up to Maine, into two halves, and given it to these two companies, the Virginia Company of London, the one that we now know about, because it actually succeeded in establishing a colony, as opposed to the Virginia Company of Plymouth.

[00:12:30] So, they were going to be under the authority, the jurisdiction of the colony of Virginia, but they were going to have a certain amount of local autonomy within that. So, it was perfect from the Leiden church's point of view.

[00:12:30] They sailed much later than they meant to. They sailed late, late, late in the season, and when they arrived, they ended up further north than they intended. Came into



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

Cape Cod Bay, and it was already December, and they had to decide, do we stop here, or do we sail out and around Cape Cod and down, and try to find where it is we had originally intended to go?

Darius Coombs: Yeah, they landed here. They landed in Wampanoag country. That's when they landed in Patuxet, and when they landed here, they found devastation. This whole area was cleared out by that plague that came through, that epidemic. That's when they started building, in December 1620. It's an unfortunate first winter, there were many deaths, February, from what I hear, of 1621 was the deadliest months for them.

[00:13:00]

There was numerous sightings of Wampanoag people during that first winter. They say they saw two Native people on a hill, and they waved them over, but the men didn't come over. But they'd heard a lot of Native people yelling in the background, so it was more than just two people.

[00:13:30]

They saw another Wampanoag party of numerous men walking through the woods with their dogs. There was another time which they saw Native people on Clark's Island, which is an island off of Plymouth. It's about three miles out. But they never encountered anybody physically and talked to them, not until March 1621.

Liz Covart:

[00:14:00]

So, the Leiden church members had intended to settle in the northern part of Virginia, which in 1620 would have been somewhere along the coastline of present-day Delaware. Instead, a late start and a bit of faulty navigation caused the English colonists to sail first into Cape Cod Bay, and then into a more sheltered bay off mainland Massachusetts. A bay that's now called Plymouth Bay.

So, the English colonists did not initially choose to settle at Patuxet. They made that choice only after arriving in North America, and finding that winter seas and sick passengers prevented the Mayflower from sailing around Cape Cod and heading further south.

[00:14:30]

Now, as Darius Coombs mentioned, the colonists found the Wampanoag village of Patuxet to be an ideal building site. Of course, so did the Wampanoag, which is why they had developed it over centuries.



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

Patuxet occupied high ground, and by 1620, there was evidence of fertile soils that had been used to plant corn, and much of its space had already been cleared of trees. Further, those Patuxets who had survived the epidemic would have already moved inland, to spend the winter months in their fall and winter villages.

[00:15:00] Still, as Darius noted, there were many Wampanoag people around to notice the colonists' arrival. They would have noticed the colonists' efforts to build new homes, a place of worship, and a protective palisade at Patuxet.

They may have also noticed how the colonists struggled with their first Dawnlands winter, and with the heavy death toll that came from that experience. By March 1621, 45 of the 102 Mayflower passengers had died.

[00:15:30]

Carla Pestana: They're not expecting it to be as harsh a winter as they find, and also, they're 100 people, many of them ill, crammed into, and they were crammed into, a fairly small sailing vessel. So, the ship itself is not a very comfortable place to be, but the weather that they're seeing is not that welcoming either.

[00:16:00]

In spite of the emphasis on a rock that serves as sort of a dock, allowing them to step off their boats onto a dry spot and walk onto land, they actually, and they describe in some of the early texts, they actually waded through the water, as one would expect, taking smaller boats off the ship, getting as close as they can, and then stepping off these boats and walking through the waves.

[00:16:30]

So, when they get onto land, it's not the greatest weather to begin with, plus they're wet up to their knees. And if we picture the material reality of their lives, it's not like they have lots of clothes to change into, or that it's easy to dry out all those layers of clothes, or any of those kinds of things. So, they're probably pretty miserable in that time.

The building of structures, they're having to fell trees, they're having to build, and that's not easy to do at any time, but certainly not as it's snowing, and it's damp, and



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

it's cold. So, it's not an easy time for them. It's a terrible time to arrive, and they actually had intended to arrive much earlier.

[00:17:00]

Andrew Lipman: The English, of course, had arrived at the worst time that you could in any New England winter, much less a very cold Little Ice Age New England winter. Had suffered devastating losses from starvation and exposure over the winter, and their numbers had been halved.

Liz Covart: Andrew Lipman is an associate professor of history at Barnard College. He's the author of the Bancroft-Award-winning book *Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast*. He's also the author of the forthcoming book, *The Death and Life of Squanto*.

[00:17:30] Now, as Andrew and Carla described, the English colonists had arrived in the Dawnlands at the worst possible time of year, to try and build a settlement. But build, they did, and as they built their new houses, a blockhouse, chapel and a palisade, they were watching the Wampanoag, who were also watching them. It wasn't until March 1621 that the Wampanoag made their first direct encounter with their new neighbors.

Darius Coombs: What's very important to remember is what happened six years prior. There was an English explorer, John Smith, and he came round Virginia and mapped out Virginia, came round New England and mapped out New England. And before he left in 1614, this is six years before the Pilgrims arrived, he left his captain behind, being Thomas Hunt. What Thomas Hunt did, he landed in Patuxet, what's Plymouth today, and took 19 Patuxet as slaves, went down to Cape Cod and took eight Nauset Wampanoag as slaves.

Liz Covart: Interacting with Europeans wasn't anything new. The Wampanoag had been trading and interacting with Europeans for almost 100 years before the arrival of the Mayflower. Since the 1520s, European explorers and fishermen had traded for furs and peltry they no longer had in Europe, and for foodstuffs that they needed to support their seasonal fishing villages, or the return voyages across the Atlantic.

[00:18:00]



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

[00:19:00] As Darius mentioned, in some instances, as in the instance of Thomas Hunt in 1614, these European explorers and fishermen also captured and enslaved native peoples. It is likely because of these earlier encounters with Europeans that the Wampanoag kept their distance, and observed the colonists from afar, throughout the winter of 1620/1621. However, it is also because of these earlier experiences of violence with Europeans that, when they were ready, the Wampanoag found themselves able to communicate with the settlers.

Andrew Lipman: [00:19:30] Pretty early on, though, even before Tisquantum was taken captive, there are enough repeat visitors, and from 1605 onwards, other Native men from the Dawnland regions, from both near Patuxet and further away, who have been taken as captives, who then start to act as translators and go-betweens.

And it was at the beginning of the spring plantation that a nearby native man, this man, Samoset, who came from further north in the Dawnland coast, arrives as an initial emissary on behalf of various native people from the region.

[00:20:00] Darius Coombs: Samoset wasn't even from around here. He was from up in Monhegan Island up in Maine. He was brought back down here as a guide in 1619 by Thomas Dermer. He ended up escaping. He went to go live in Massasoit's community of Pokanoket, about 40 miles west of Plymouth. And Massasoit sent Samoset into the Pilgrim village.

He probably sent him because, one, he was one of his own men. Two, he could speak English, and he was considered to be a sagamore. A sagamore, what that means is, languages chief. So, he's a good man to send in there, and Massasoit didn't know what was going to happen.

[00:20:30] Liz Covart: Ousamequin, or the Massasoit, was the principal leader of the Wampanoag people. As the principal leader, Ousamequin was responsible for the safety of the Wampanoag. So, in early 1621, Ousamequin carefully orchestrated Wampanoag interactions with the English colonists, to make sure that there was not a repeat of 1614.



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

[00:21:00] At first, it seems Ousamequin had Wampanoag men observe the colonists from afar, to ascertain their activity and intentions. When the houses the colonists erected indicated that this group of English intended to stay in Wampanoag country, in March 1621, Ousamequin sent Samoset, a Native man from further north in the Dawnlands, to make physical contact with these Europeans.

Liz Covart Having lived along the Maine coast, Samoset had repeated interactions with English fishermen, who came near his home to fish and trade. These interactions allowed Samoset to pick up a working English vocabulary.

[00:21:30] Samoset knew enough English to greet the colonists at Patuxet, and to convey that he came in peace, and that another man, a Wampanoag man named Tisquantum, who was more fluent in English, would visit them soon.

[00:22:00] As Darius Coombs suggested, it seems that Ousamequin had sent Samoset, a non-Wampanoag man, to greet the colonists as another way to gauge whether the English at Patuxet had peaceful intentions. When Samoset returned to Ousamequin unharmed, that's when he decided to send one of his own tribal members, Tisquantum, to meet the colonists.

Andrew Lipman: Best known to most people as Squanto, Tisquantum was a Wampanoag man who was taken captive by English sailors in 1614, returned to his home in what is now the town of Plymouth, which he knew was Patuxet, in the year 1619, and soon thereafter was introduced by another Native man to the Plymouth colonists. He became their chief guide and translator, from March of 1620 until his death in the November or December of 1622.

[00:22:30] So, this is where Tisquantum's story is a bit different from the majority of Native men taken captive. Most of the Native men taken captive by English people, and as well by French, as well, were brought immediately back to either England or France.

Tisquantum is a little different, in that his captor, Thomas Hunt, he was planning to sell them, Native people. Not to use them as translators or guides, but to sell them as



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

[00:23:00] slaves into a Spanish market for enslaved Indigenous people, which had already been in existence for about a century.

The sale of enslaved Native people was close to completely illegal, but not entirely, and at some point in this sale, Spanish officials figured out that these Indigenous men were not from the small parts of Spanish dominions where it was legal for Spanish people to take Indigenous people as slaves. But they were, in fact, from North America, and thus could not be enslaved under Spanish law.

[00:23:30]

At some point, Tisquantum manages to be brought to London. We know where he lived, in the house of John Slanie, on Cornhill. John Slanie was a well-off merchant who had connections to a circle of merchants who were interested in expanding English influence everywhere in Europe, and in the larger Atlantic.

[00:24:00]

We also know, however, that his time overlapped with the Powhatan woman that we know best as Pocahontas, then known as Rebecca Rolfe, who was living only a few blocks away from him in London at this time.

Andrew Lipman:

But it's entirely possible, I'd say even probable, that at some point in their time there, Pocahontas and Tisquantum probably, if not met, in that they shook hands, but were aware of each other's existence, and probably laid eyes on each other. I think that seems a pretty safe guess.

[00:24:30]

It wouldn't have been particularly easy for them to communicate. The Powhatan language is on this vast dialect continuum, and would be not at all really intelligible to the Wampanoag language. So, if they did meet, and spoke, they probably spoke in English.

Liz Covart:

Tisquantum spent five years, from the time of his capture in 1614, to his return to Wampanoag country in 1619, learning and speaking the English language. By the time Tisquantum returned to Patuxet in 1619, he was fluent in the English language, as well as in his first language, Wampanoag.



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

[00:25:00] Tisquantum's return from England had been difficult. He was able to find passage from England to Newfoundland, where he joined Englishman Thomas Dermer's southbound crew as a guide. In exchange for his knowledge about the Atlantic coast, and the Native peoples who lived along it, Dermer returned Tisquantum to Patuxet.

Andrew Lipman: He makes his way down the coast with Dermer, and as soon as he starts moving south from Newfoundland, makes a horrible discovery that much of the Dawnland region has been hit by waves of epidemic disease, and has been left severely depopulated.

[00:25:30] We can, I think, assume that Tisquantum is deeply upset, that he realizes there's a need for him to make some contact, both probably seeking out his own family and relations, and a larger network of people that he can reconnect with. But the details in terms of what exactly that network looked like, who, if anyone, directly related to him was surviving.

[00:26:00] So, we know that this is obviously a hugely important moment for Tisquantum. I'm not entirely sure if this is how it went down, and my own read of this, but it seems likely that Dermer delivered up Tisquantum to the Massasoit as a kind of prisoner and captive at that moment, so that he was not quite treated as a homecoming son returning, but as someone who, having been gone so long, probably at this point dressed in European clothing, and speaking the foreigners' language, needed to be, in some ways, debriefed.

[00:26:30] We know from a later account that Tisquantum, at some point in this time period, did have an audience with the Massasoit, and explain to him a bit about his assessment of the English, explain to him the time and the things he had seen in England.

Andrew Lipman: This appears in later sources, that some sort of meeting and discussion happened. But it's the theory of the historian Neal Salisbury, and I think I agree with him, that pretty much until Tisquantum reappears in the European records, he was probably being... Enslaved would be too strong a word, but kind of the ward, or under the care and recognizance of Massasoit.



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

[00:27:00]

Liz Covart: Sending Tisquantum to speak with the English at Patuxet allowed Ousamequin to gain more information from the colonists. Through Tisquantum, Ousamequin ascertained that the colonists had indeed come to settle permanently in Wampanoag country.

Andrew Lipman: There's just so much mythology around this moment as being, generally that the Pilgrims were being welcomed by people who wanted them there. That's clearly not the case in any way. This was a strategic decision of a canny political leader in a pretty desperate time, to at least establish contact, before deciding whether or not to permit them to keep their village there. And that careful feeling out, getting more
[00:27:30] information, recognizance-style, is, I think pretty characteristic of what I've been able to interpret of Massasoit as a leader, that he was someone who was very good at assessing and processing information, and tended to favor consensus-building as a general governing strategy.

[00:28:00]

Carla Pestana: With Tisquantum, they're able to have a deeper conversation, and they're able to use the fact of the translation skills that Squanto brings, to have conversations with the local native peoples.

They negotiate an agreement with a man they call Massasoit, that allows them to be in the area, and that says that they will be basically allies and trading partners. From there, they begin to encounter other groups, and to understand that there's a complicated politics of Native interactions. That there are these distinct groups, not too far distant, that they have their own leaders, that those leaders might have some political relationship to Massasoit, or might not.
[00:28:30]

The Narragansetts in particular are referred to as enemies and fearsome people, and they were able to keep relations fairly calm, by and large. But there are moments of severe tension, and there are moments of violence as well.

[00:29:00]

Andrew Lipman: What was interesting was the decision being made by Massasoit and the other Wampanoag people at the community at Pokanoket, which is where Massasoit was from, just decide somewhat strategically to build up a web of alliance, to work to



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

create kind of allies, primarily Native, but to include this new English settlement, probably as kind of a defensive hedge against other Native groups in the region that were seen as threatening Massasoit's community, in this case probably the Narragansetts.

[00:29:30]

Andrew Lipman: That's the general interpretation of the Wampanoags making a political calculation that this community was not necessarily as dangerous as they appeared. That they could be reasoned with, that they could be a source of various trade goods, and that temporarily permitting them to exist in peace would be a wise strategic move.

Liz Covart: After doing his reconnaissance on the colonists, Ousamequin approached the English in spring 1621 to prepare a treaty. The main points of the treaty stated that the Wampanoag promised to defend the colonists against Native attack, and the colonists promised to do the same for the Wampanoag, should they be attacked.

[00:30:00]

The treaty of 1621 protected the colonists from the Wampanoags' Native neighbors. It also protected them from other Wampanoag peoples, like those at Pocasset. The Pocasset Wampanoag sachem, Corbitant, objected to the English settlement at Patuxet.

[00:30:30] But as he was just a sachem, and not the Massasoit, or the principal leader of the Wampanoag people, Corbitant and the Pocasset Wampanoag were powerless to overrule Ousamequin in his dealings with the English.

Negotiating a treaty like the treaty of 1621 proved to be a difficult process. In addition to navigating different languages, the Wampanoag and English also had to navigate different cultural understandings about land, law, and governance.

[00:31:00] Where Ousamequin believed that the Wampanoag had entered a treaty of peace, cooperative alliance and mutual defense, the treaty the English colonists recorded reflected their view, that English law would have the final say.



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

This view of English legal superiority, combined with their idea of land as property that could be owned by individuals, served as core issues that opened the door to future conflicts about the rule of law and governance in Wampanoag country. Conflicts that would lead to warfare in the late 1630s, and again in the 1670s.

[00:31:30] But in those first years, the treaty of 1621 served to more closely unite the Wampanoag and English colonists by establishing a trade relationship. What did the Wampanoag and the English trade with each other? Our investigation on this subject will continue just after we take a moment to talk about our episode's sponsors.

Liz Covart As you're listening to this series, The World of the Wampanoag, you may want to check out a new book coming next spring, from our friends at the Library of America, *Plymouth Colony: Narratives of English Settlement and Native Resistance from the Mayflower to King Philip's War*.

[00:32:00] This volume is edited by scholars Lisa Brooks and Kelly Wisecup. Published for Plymouth's 400th anniversary, *Plymouth Colony* includes a vast array of writings from multiple points of view, including Indigenous voices and perspectives, so it can give its readers a multi-faceted view of Plymouth colony, which was formed within Wampanoag homelands.

[00:32:30] *Plymouth Colony* includes a full text of William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*, his journal and reflections of the settlement, which he kept over decades. The volume also includes a wide range of documents that provide insight into the experiences of the Wampanoag people and their leaders.

The non-profit Library of America champions our nation's cultural heritage by publishing America's greatest writing in authoritative new editions, and providing resources for readers to explore this rich living legacy.

[00:33:00] To explore and pre-order Library of America's *Plymouth Colony: Narratives of English Settlement and Native Resistance from the Mayflower to King Philip's War*, visit benfranklinworld.com/plymouth. That's benfranklinworld.com/plymouth.



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

Whether Wampanoag or English, much of your time in the 1620s would have been consumed with the preparation of food. Feeding your family was a top priority, so tending gardens and preparing game or livestock for daily meals was a key and time-consuming task.

[00:33:30]

Thankfully, we live in the 21st century, where meal preparation doesn't have to take up a majority of our time. EveryPlate does the meal planning, shopping and prepping for you, and EveryPlate's easy-to-use recipes and pre-portioned ingredients come together in about 30 minutes, which really takes the stress out of dinner time.

[00:34:00]

Plus, as America's best-value meal kit, EveryPlate is up to 50% cheaper than other major meal kits out there, allowing you to save time and money. I know from experience that EveryPlate has saved me a lot of time in the kitchen. Rather than trying to figure out what to make for dinner days in advance, EveryPlate sent me everything I needed to make dishes such as kung pao beef bowls, panko ranch pork chops and sweet chili chicken, with each meal ready to go in about 30 minutes.

Now you can try EveryPlate too. Get three weeks of EveryPlate meals for only 2.99 per meal by going to everyplate.com and entering code BFW3. Get three weeks of EveryPlate meals for only 2.99 per meal by going to everyplate.com and entering code BFW3.

Liz Covart:

How do we know what the Wampanoag and the English traded?

[00:34:30]

Jade Luiz:

There's a really exciting archeological project that's happening in downtown Plymouth, Project 400, that's through the UMass Boston's Fiske Center for Archaeological Research.

Liz Covart:

That's Doctor Jade Luiz, the curator of collections at the Plimoth Patuxet Museums. Jade is a historical archeologist, and was the curator behind Plimoth Patuxet Museums' new archeology exhibit, "History in a New Light: Illuminating Archaeology of Historic Patuxet and Plymouth".



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

[00:35:00]

Jade Luiz: They've been excavating a really intact section of the 1620s, 1630s Plymouth colony site, and what they've found is that there's a contemporary Wampanoag site that's virtually a pace or two from the palisade wall, the fence surrounding the community.

[00:35:30]

It really puts in place how close these two communities were. There's a lot of textual evidence about pretty constant interactions between the English and the Wampanoag, but to physically see in space that they were neighbors really emphasizes this high-stakes international diplomacy relationship that is hinted at in the writing.

Liz Covart:

With the treaty of 1621 in place, and with the colder weather of winter giving way to the warmer weather of spring, Wampanoag people returned from their fall and winter villages, to Patuxet, for the planting season.

[00:36:00]

As Jade Luiz, archeologists have found evidence that just a pace or two outside of the English palisade, that wall that surrounded their new village, the Wampanoag established another home site.

This means that early on, the Wampanoag and English lived in very close proximity to one another. This makes sense. The Wampanoag were actually already at home at the place where the English were trying to establish their plantation.

The English became just a new dynamic incorporated into the world of the Wampanoag. Living in such close proximity to each other meant that both the Wampanoag and the English began to exchange goods, food and cultural knowledge.

[00:36:30]

Carla Pestana:

I think they spent a lot of time thinking about keeping the material reality of life under control. They spent a lot of time thinking about food, growing it, gathering it, preserving it, preparing it. So, I think just those aspects of life would have been hugely time-consuming, for both men and for women, to the extent that the men did the heavy agricultural labor, and any kind of hunting.



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

Carla Pestana: At first, they have goats, and chickens, for sure. They bring pigs pretty quickly. Cattle, et cetera, are a little later in the 1620s. So, they're gradually building up a kind of English farm economy, the basis for that, with the livestock.

[00:37:00]

But in the meantime, if they're going to eat meat or fish, they're just going to have to capture it themselves, and they're not hunters. I mean, they are not of a social status in England that they would have ever been involved in hunting.

[00:37:30]

The English seeds that they bring don't do well. They plant things that the Natives also plant, and there's actually a famous account of Squanto teaching them how to plant corn and beans and squash together.

Andrew Lipman: What's also interesting about Tisquantum teaching them how to grow this first harvest, and how to survive in this land, is that the work of raising crops was not traditionally the work of men in Wampanoag society.

[00:38:00] Men and children participated in the act of planting. So, most any community member would know the basics of how to plant corn, but that this farming information of where to do it, how to do it, was mostly knowledge that Wampanoag women had, which I think brings out something interesting we can see in these early records.

[00:38:30] Edward Winslow in particular describes this first summer as being constantly, really, in his word, being bothered, or visited, by Indigenous people. Which I think, I think we step away from the Eurocentric perspective here, what he's actually referring to is Indigenous people treating Patuxet as though it were Patuxet, a working Indigenous community where summer camping at this spot, for fishing. It was a very rich harbor for fish and shellfish, and for fowling.

It would have been part of a regular kind of seasonal practice of land use that Indigenous people had done for millennia in this region, and that in some ways, what's happening that first summer, when Tisquantum is there acting as their guide, and teaching them all these ways to use the landscape, they're also witnessing, with



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

[00:39:00] Tisquantum explaining to them in English what's happening, Indigenous people using this land and living off it as they always had.

And that for a while, when there are all these, quote, visitors, around this region, these are people who probably in some cases have connections to Patuxet. They could be families that have survivors from Patuxet, and we also know from these records, too, that there's references in Bradford to, quote, "a member of Squanto's family," in Bradford's account.

Andrew Lipman: So, this implies to me, if we think of house, family, what they're talking about here is, Tisquantum does have a kinship network of people that are probably coming and staying with him, including women. These women are the people with this store of agriculture and planting and harvesting knowledge, that Tisquantum himself probably doesn't have in the same stores.

[00:39:30]

And that these acts of translation that are going on, are really, Tisquantum, we could imagine, in some ways, speaking to and talking about planting with Indigenous women he knows, and then translating this information to the English.

[00:40:00]

Liz Covart: For millennia, Patuxet had served as a summer fishing and agricultural village for the Wampanoag. Just because the English had arrived in late 1620, and built a new English village on the site, did not make Patuxet any less Native. Instead, Patuxet grew and expanded to accommodate new instances of Native- English diplomacy and trade.

Trade took multiple forms at Patuxet. One form was the exchange of agricultural knowledge. A piece of critical agricultural knowledge that the Wampanoag shared with the English was how to grow food in Wampanoag country.

[00:40:30]

As Carla Pestana mentioned, the colonists were grateful for this knowledge, even if they pretty quickly abandoned the Wampanoag method of planting corn, beans, and squash together, in favor of planting one crop per English planting row. The English still thought they should do things their own way. Another form that trade took at Patuxet was a trade in physical objects.



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

[00:41:00]

Jade Luiz: As far as the objects that are found in Patuxet, lots of points, lots of ceramic fragments have been found as well. You also see evidence of elements of dress. So, gorgets, which would have been worn at the neck.

You have evidence of food, so types of animal bones, shells, that sort of thing. There's a vast number of objects that are recovered representing life at this time for both the Wampanoag and for the English.

[00:41:30]

You can see items that are Wampanoag, such as pottery, appearing in English houses. That's showing that it's not just items going back to the Wampanoag that are being traded, but Wampanoag are also trading items in as well.

On the Wampanoag sites, you find European ceramics. You find glass beads that were often used as trade goods. Lots of different pieces of metal kettles, like brass and copper kettles, that have been cut to pieces to be repurposed as points or beads.

Jade Luiz:

[00:42:00]

So, for the Wampanoag, they're looking to acquire items that they want, as far as unusual goods that they can't get, or easily get, here in the northeast. And for the English, it's primarily trading for goods that they can sell back in England, but also for items that they might just need here in the northeast, like corn, like ceramics, other types of meats, that makes it a little bit easier for them to survive as they're trying to figure out this new environment.

[00:42:30]

Carla Pestana:

They are heavily reliant on items that come to them from England, for clothing, for shoes, et cetera. They do sometimes get cloth, and then they're able to make the cloth into clothes, and the women would have been involved in doing that. But they suffer a fair amount from the fact that they cannot produce these things locally, and they don't have the ability to do it without things arriving from England.

[00:43:00]



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

Liz Covart: The trade in goods was strategic, for both the Wampanoag and the English. From the English, the Wampanoag acquired items that would help them fashion metal arrowheads for hunting and warfare, and items such as beads, copper and brass, to exchange with other Native peoples, as these items were difficult to access in the northeast.

From the Wampanoag, the English acquired necessary items that helped them to live, or at least make do, until the next trade ship sailed in from Europe. They traded for ceramic pots, furs, and foodstuffs, to help their families.

[00:43:30] Despite what seemed to be a good trade, the English colonists worried about living so near the Wampanoag. They worried about being able to keep peaceful relations with the Wampanoag, and they worried about their ability to maintain their Englishness. The English had strong prejudices about Native peoples, and a strong sense of superiority of English ways.

Jade Luiz: There was a lot of anxiety with early colonists about the loss of their English identity, or the over-influence of other cultures. So, you see that anxiety played out in sometimes really strange adherences to English norms of dress and food production,
[00:44:00] that maybe don't make sense logically, but philosophically make a lot of sense.

[00:44:30] For the English, you have evidence of elements of dress that, when you think about coming to the northeast in the 1620s, and the fact that you have large forests, and areas that haven't been cleared, it doesn't make a whole lot of sense to wear a lot of heavy armor as you're moving through this space, or wear a lot of clothing that is loose and flowing, and many layers, especially if you've ever been here in summer, it can get very humid.

But you see through the archeology that people are still dressing in very English ways, and that may not always make logical sense, as they're trying to move into this area, and make it more English.

[00:45:00]

Liz Covart: The Wampanoag may have also worried about their relations with the English. Forging diplomatic ties fit within Ousamequin's desire to forge a network of



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

alliances, primarily Native alliances, that would help protect the Wampanoag people from Native attack, from further conflict with European explorers, fishermen and enslavers, and to provide the Wampanoag with access to English technologies.

[00:45:30]

However, unlike the English, the Wampanoag did not see peaceful relations with the colonists as key to their survival. In the big picture of the Dawnlands, the Plymouth colonists constituted a very small population, about 50 settlers in its first year. While within the wider world of the Dawnlands, there were thousands of Native peoples, some of whom the Wampanoag had peaceful relations with, and some of whom they did not have good relations with. For the Wampanoag, relations with the English only made sense within the larger picture of Wampanoag diplomacy.

[00:46:00]

Andrew Lipman:

I think it's always a mistake if we think about this, from the perspective of Native peoples, of being about the future survival of a European colony. That simply was never central in their goals.

They were always interested about their relationships with other Native people. The English were always just a small part of a bigger plan in which Native needs, Native politics, Native concerns, trying to rebuild societies after this massive, disturbing epidemic, is the top priority of Native leaders here.

[00:46:30]

That's the world in which Native people are operating, and these 50-odd settlers, some of whom are young children, aren't considered super strategically important, other than what technology they can offer, what protection they can offer from further visits of colonists or enslavers, or what have you.

So, that's always the way to think of it, that this is about Native politicians again trying to bring about political stability after a pretty horrible several years, and that the English people are a small part of that.

[00:47:00]

In general, compared to many other early colonies, like, for example, their Jamestown colony, I think it's fair to say that relations were comparatively peaceful in early times, but that took a lot of work. It took a lot of work at first, using, first, Tisquantum, as a guide and translator, with Massasoit regularly making diplomatic



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

overtures and visits to many other Native villages, and then encouraging various other Native sachems to also visit Plymouth as well.

Andrew Lipman: So, I think we can look at that first year of interaction between Wampanoag people and the Plymouth colonists as being a wary, uncertain time, in which Massasoit and his community and his backers were looking to establish peaceful relations as part of building a more powerful alliance, mostly among Native people.

[00:47:30]

Tisquantum's actions to help the English colonists seemed very much a part of his goal to be just a general guide and emissary. The idea that if the English were safe and strong, that would help other Wampanoag people and their allies be safe and strong.

[00:48:00]

Liz Covart: It's clear that after the English arrived in December 1620, that the world of the Wampanoag continued to operate largely as it had for millennia. The Wampanoag continued to organize their society around seasonal, sustainable food supply.

In spring and summer, the Wampanoag were living and working in villages near the coastal waters where they fished, and the soils where they planted. In the fall and winter, they would move to large winter encampments, where they had stored the food that they had grown and harvested, or hunted and fished, in earlier months. And where the trees and distance from the water provided protection from icy sea winds and winter storms.

[00:48:30]

The epidemic of 1616 to 1619 definitely influenced how the Wampanoag approached diplomacy and the English colonists. As Darius Coombs noted at the start, forging alliances with as many people as possible seemed crucial to keeping the Wampanoag safe as they slowly recovered from the devastating loss of life inflicted by the epidemic.

[00:49:00]

Still, often when we look at many histories of the Pilgrims' arrival at Plymouth, in December 1620, we read that it was the English who brought great change to the world of the Wampanoag, not an epidemic of disease.



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

[00:49:30] Also missing from these books that recount the past is information about the Wampanoag's larger world, and their longer history. If the world of the Wampanoag still operated as the world of the Wampanoag after the English arrived in December 1620, why do we remember the Pilgrims' arrival as a world-altering event? An event that in many American histories is described as the advent of religious freedom and even democracy, and the demise of the Wampanoag and the Indians of New England.

Carla Pestana: [00:50:00] You may have noticed, I have never used the word Pilgrim. Pilgrim is a term that is assigned to them much later, and is part of the myth-making that occurs around them, to make them as a founding group in US history.

Carla Pestana: The term Pilgrim actually has a number of different implications, but when it's used in that mythic sense, it almost seems to imply that they've come on a mission to create America. They've come on a mission for religious liberty, they've come on a mission to create a settlement that will go on to become the United States. That's how they're depicted in the early literature that extols them in the 18th and the early 19th century.

[00:50:30] That image of them as purposeful in that respect is silly. I mean, there's no way they could have been thinking in those terms. So, in that sense, the term Pilgrim doesn't really make a lot of sense.

Liz Covart: But this picture, which is focused on the people who came to be called the Pilgrims, is now finally beginning to change.

Carla Pestana: [00:51:00] I was struck when all these commemorations were planned for the 400th anniversary, that it's really the Native legacy that's become our focus. That is, for more than a century, two centuries, the focus was really on the settlers' experience itself. That they suffered for their beliefs, that they were hard-working, pious people who were willing to sacrifice in order to come to this place and set up a new society. That had been the narrative for a very long time.



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

[00:51:30]

Jade Luiz: I think that in terms of what we see regarding Indigenous culture is that it's not a monolithic thing. It wasn't that things had been the same before the arrival of Mayflower, and then all of a sudden everything changed seriously. All through Indigenous history, you see changes that are being influenced by climate, by access to resources, by political shifts, by social relationships.

Darius Coombs:

[00:52:00]

Think of two different numbers. Think of 400 years and think about 12,000 years. And we've been here on our homeland for over 12,000 years. There's two different words being tossed around a lot of the time, celebration and commemoration, and people are not sure which one to pick. I don't mind people saying celebration, because it is a celebration for a lot of people, what's happened over those 400 years, and how people have gained. So, I don't mind people saying that at all. For us, it's not a big deal, because we've been here for a long time.

[00:52:30]

What made these people different is they stayed, and they formed a colony, in 1620, that lasted. It's unfortunate, because we had people coming over before, we had people come over afterwards. Before and after 1620, these are different people, with different ways of thought, a lot of the time. And that was just one boat that came over, but that one boat did establish a colony.

[00:53:00]

One thing I always want people to remember, that we are a powerful people. We're still here today, come 2020, and we're not going anywhere. We'll be doing our education and raising our kids into the culture, our culture. Everybody should be proud of who they are.

Liz Covart:

So, what can we remember in this anniversary year, a year that marks the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the Mayflower? We can remember that in 1620, the Mayflower was but a small part of a much larger world, the world of the Wampanoag.

[00:53:30]

This episode is part of a two-episode series about the world of the Wampanoag, which is co-written and co-produced by Liz Covart and Karin Wulf, and made possible with support from Mass Humanities.



Episode 291: The World of the Wampanoag, Part 2 Transcription

If you're looking for more information about this series, our guest experts and scholars, and notes and links for all the information we discuss today, visit the show notes page, benfranklinworld.com/291.

The show notes page is also where you'll find a list of resources and texts that we used to write this series, plus pictures from some of the objects we talked about today. Again, you can access this list of resources and pictures at benfranklinworld.com/291.

[00:54:00]

We're grateful to the large number of historians, tribal experts and spokespeople, and museum professionals, who took the time to speak with us during the course of our research. We're also grateful for the research assistance of Gail Coughlin and Eugene Tesdahl.

[00:54:30]

The original music you heard throughout this episode was composed by Joel Rosten, in collaboration with Wampanoag musician Derwood Van der hoop. The Wampanoag and Narragansett songs included in the score, and arranged throughout the episode, were composed by Derwood Van der hoop. Production assistance for this podcast comes from the Omohundro Institute's Digital Audio Team, Joseph Adelman, Martha Howard, Holly White and Karin Wulf.

[00:55:00]

Finally, any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this episode do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities. *Ben Franklin's World* is a production of the Omohundro Institute, and this series is made possible with support from Mass Humanities.