

Beyond the Mayflower: History, Culture, and Encounter in Plimoth Colony

Class 2: Encounter and Exchange: Native Peoples and English Settlers

Dr. David J. Silverman, djsilver@gwu.edu

Key Dates

ca. 10000 BC: Earliest signs of human habitation in southern New England.

ca. 1000 AD: Appearance of corn horticulture in southern New England.

1600–1619: Regular contacts between Wampanoags and European explorers; includes violent clashes and captive-taking.

1616–19: Unidentified epidemic devastates Wampanoags and their neighbors to the north. Narragansett tribe drives Wampanoags from the head of Narragansett Bay.

Dec. 1620: Arrival of the *Mayflower*.

Spring 1621: Wampanoag-Plymouth peace treaty.

Fall 1621: Feast later known as First Thanksgiving.

1622: Squanto plots against Massasoit. Massasoit demands Squanto's head. Squanto dies of disease that summer.

Spring 1623: Edward Winslow doctors Massasoit and his people. Massasoit reveals Indian plot against English. Miles Standish leads strike against ringleaders on Massachusetts Bay.

1629–40: Founding of Massachusetts Bay Colony and migration of upward of fifteen thousand English to New England. Colonies of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Haven follow.

1636–37: Pequot War in which the English and their Narragansett and Mohegan allies devastate the Pequot tribe.

1640–1671: Multiple rumors of Narragansetts, Wampanoags, and other tribes organizing a multiracial resistance to the colonies.

1660: Death of Massasoit/Ousamequin. His son Wamsutta/Alexander becomes Wampanoag sachem.

1662: Death of Wamsutta. Brother Pumetacom/King Philip becomes paramount Wampanoag sachem.

1675–76: King Philip’s War in southern New England, pitting portions of the Wampanoags, Narragansetts, Nipmucs, and “River Indians” (Norwotucks, Pocumtucks, Sokokis) against the New England colonies and their Indian allies, the Mohegans, Pequots, and praying Indians (including Christian Wampanoags). Colonies triumphant.

1841: First association of Thanksgiving holiday with Pilgrims and Indians.

1970: First National Day of Mourning Protest led by Wampanoag Frank Wamsutta James.

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Tuininga, Matthew J. *The Wars of the Lord: The Puritan Conquest of America's First People*. New York, 2025.

Websites with Contemporary Wampanoag Perspectives

“Our” Story: 400 Years of Wampanoag History

<https://www.plymouth400inc.org/our-story-exhibit-wampanoag-history/>

Rethinking Thanksgiving Celebrations: Native Perspectives on Thanksgiving

<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/informational/rethinking-thanksgiving>

In Our Words: An Indigenous Story of Thanksgiving

<https://app.discoveryeducation.com/learn/videos/0e009de9-4e98-4342-aa3e-bef519542550>

Thanksgiving from Wampanoag Youth <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rOCISNKFNEY>

