

At the time America was being colonized, the Indians had no historians of their own race, no chroniclers to record their views in matters of controversy, or to explain why they fought against the White man. In many well authenticated instances, early explorers, seafarers, and settlers would have perished without help from the "Original Americans". The hospitality of the Red man was often ill repaid by torture, death, and being sold into slavery. With few exceptions, the colonists were only interested in the valuable lands and fur pelts. Tragically, civilized man considered the Indian a primeval creature, wild as the beasts that roamed the forests, and fair game for extermination.

When the Thomas Weston settlers built a fort at Wessaguscus in 1622, with permission from Chief Aberdecrest, the local Sagamore, the greater part of the native population had been decimated by plague. The Sachem of the Massachusetts Indians was Chikataubut, a Chief owing his loyalty to Massasoit, the leader of the Wompanoag nation. Chikataubut, with several other Sachems, previously signed a treaty of friendship with the English at Plymouth on September 21, 1621.

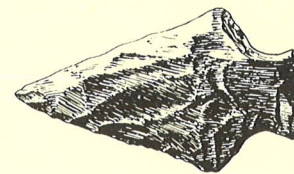
The winter was full of hardship for the Weston adventurers, who soon earned an infamous reputation. Rather than purchasing food with trade goods, or foraging, many incensed the Indians by stealing what they desired. As conditions worsened, the Weston men even petitioned Plymouth for "permission to take corn by force", which incidentally was not approved. The scene that gradually unfolded was set to a stage of intrigue. Imagine the drama, particularly the plight of the White man lacking food at Wessaguscus; the fears of the Plymouth Pilgrims over alleged Indian plotting, and the Weston Colony trade competition; and finally, the increasing disgust of the Red man for the White squatters. However, it should be pointed out that some of the Weston men were on good terms with the Indians and peacefully visited their villages or resided with them.

Unfortunately, fear and suspicion reached a climax in Plymouth, when Captain Myles Standish was ordered to "take men and fall upon the conspirators, and secure Wittawamet, and bring back his head." Wittawamet, and another marked Indian named Pecksuot, both men of reputation, frequented the Wessaguscus area. Wittawamet was said to have magical powers, and Pecksuot was known as the strongest of warriors. Early in 1623, Captain Standish and a party of Plymouth men, arrived at Wessaguscus under a pretext of conducting trade. Wittawamet, Pecksuot, and several other Indians were enticed into the fort. Thomas Morton, a member of the Settlement, who recorded the event, confided that the food Wittawamet and Pecksuot were given was drugged, and while sleeping, they were killed with their own knives by Captain Standish and his men. Glorified accounts, which have been popular in the past, claim that a desperate struggle ensued before the Red men were dispatched. As a result of the bloodshed, and the apprehension over possible reprisals by the Indians, the Wessaguscus settlement was abandoned shortly thereafter.

It is also interesting to note that Weymouth was the "high water mark", or nearest Indian penetration to Boston during the King Philip War of 1675-1676. The Town was attacked on several occasions, and as with most conflicts, they were caused by misunderstandings which erupted into hate. With the demise of King Philip, all serious resistance ceased and the threat to Weymouth and its neighboring towns was over. The Red man had at last been forced to abandon his rightful heritage.

Let us hope that any remaining scars from the struggles of history will be healed by brotherhood between all men. People of all races must stride into the future arm-in-arm to insure a peaceful and prosperous world.

## Weymouth Indian History



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