



The English Colonies

BIOGRAPHY READING

Squanto

The English colonists who arrived in America found a land of wilderness populated by American Indian tribes. Although some tribes were hostile, many Indians befriended the new settlers and tried to help them learn about living on unfamiliar land and other important survival techniques. One of the American Indians who helped the Pilgrims was a man named Squanto.

Squanto was born sometime around 1590. He was a member of the Pawtuxet tribe, who lived along the coast of Maine. In 1605 Squanto was probably captured and taken to England by George Weymouth. He returned to America in 1615 with Captain John Smith's expedition to New England. Shortly thereafter, Captain Thomas Hunt kidnapped and sold Squanto and about 30 other Indians into slavery in Spain.

Squanto eventually escaped from slavery and made his way to England. Once there, he worked for John Slany, treasurer of the Newfoundland Company. After traveling to Newfoundland and then back to England, Squanto piloted Captain Thomas Dermer's expedition to New England in 1619. He left the expedition before it reached Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and made his way back to the home of his tribe. When he arrived, he found that his entire tribe was dead, probably victims of smallpox, which had been brought to the Americas by the English.

Squanto went to live with the Wampanoag tribe, who lived about 40 miles from his native home, near present-day Plymouth, Massachusetts. When the Pilgrims arrived in 1620, Squanto befriended them. He was introduced to the Pilgrim leaders by Samoset, an American Indian leader. Squanto soon became a guide, interpreter, and helper to the English colonists. He helped the Pilgrims negotiate a treaty with the Wampanoag tribe and their chief, Massasoit. This treaty of mutual assistance lasted almost 40 years.

Because Squanto did not really have a home or tribe of his own, he spent a great deal of time with the Pilgrims. He taught them how and where to plant their corn and how to find the best places for fishing.

Squanto began to make enemies among the Indians because of his close friendship with the colonists and because he pretended to have the power to spread the smallpox plague. Then, in the spring of 1622, he stated falsely that Massasoit was going to betray the Pilgrims. When the Wampanoag chief learned of this incident, he demanded that Squanto return to the tribe to be punished. Eventually, Squanto made peace with the Wampanoag.

In November 1622, while acting as a guide and interpreter on Governor Bradford's expedition around Cape Cod, Squanto fell ill with a fever. He died at Chatham Harbor on Cape Cod within a few days.

Chapter 4: Biography Reading continued

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ After you have finished reading the selection, answer the following questions in the space provided.

1. When was Squanto first taken to England? What happened when he returned to America in 1615?

2. What did Squanto discover when he returned to America with Captain Thomas Dermer's expedition?

3. List three ways that Squanto helped the Pilgrims in the Plymouth Colony.

4. Why did Squanto begin to make enemies among the Indians?

5. Write a 6 word memoir for Squanto.
