

HISTORY MOMENT

PREHISTORIC AND
NATIVE AMERICAN
HISTORY
IN THE NORWELL AREA

Compiled and Presented by the
Norwell Historical Society



WWW.NORWELLHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG

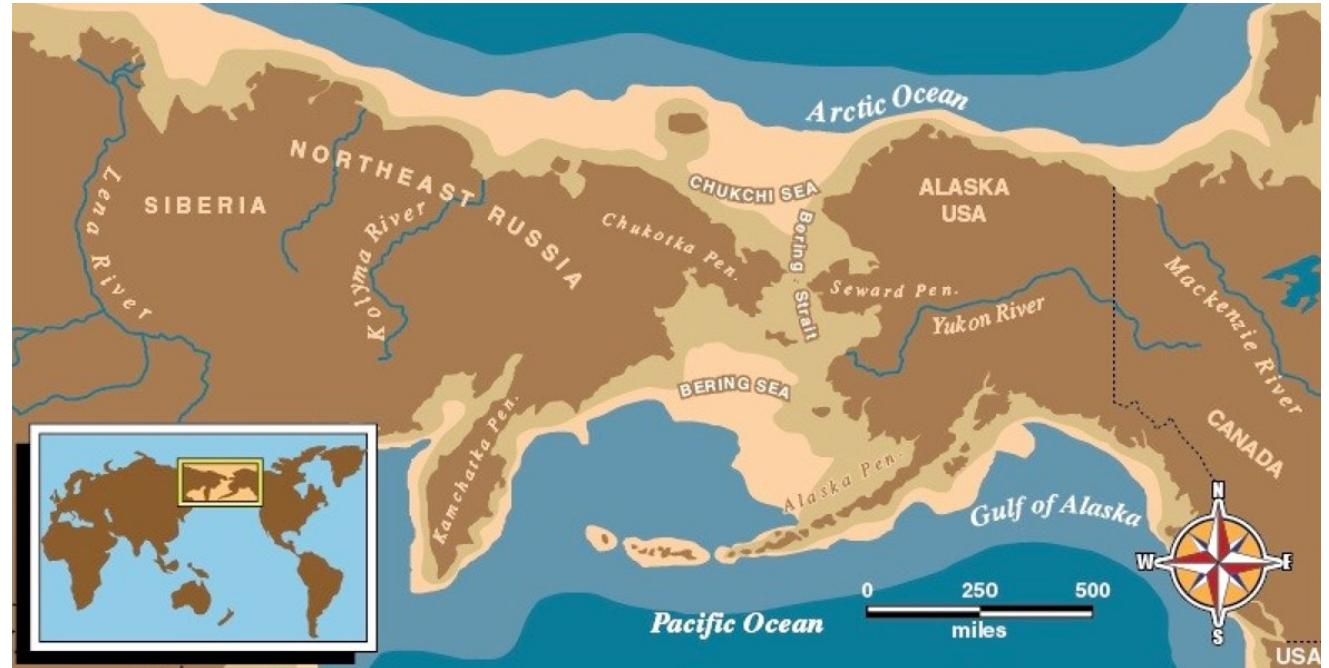
THE AGE OF THE GLACIER

- 75,000 - 11,000 years ago our town (and much of North America) was covered by the Wisconsin Glacier
- Sea levels were much lower than today
- The Wisconsin Glacier was up to 1 mile thick
- No human population in the areas covered by the glacier



THE AGE OF THE GLACIER

- North America's "First Peoples" migrated from Northeast Asia via the "Bering Bridge" of ice between Siberia and Alaska



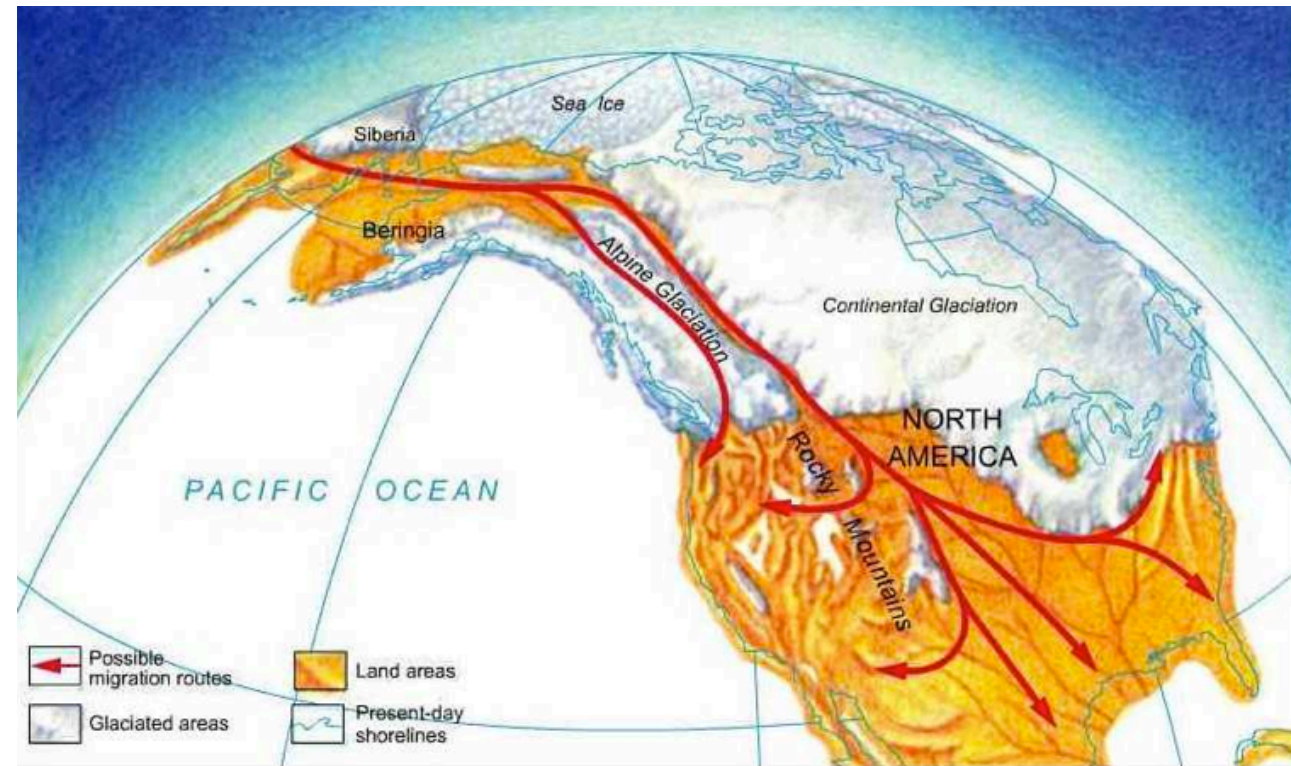
POST-GLACIER

- Warming temperatures melted the glacier... the receding glacier reshaped the landscape
- The area became inhabitable by humans
- Norwell's topography and soils were produced by the receding glacier



POST-GLACIER & FIRST PEOPLES

- As the glacier receded the 'First Peoples' moved into the Northeastern region of North America



NATIVE PEOPLE IN SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND

- The 'First People' arrived in the Norwell area about 10,000 years ago
- They took the names the Massachusett ("People near the Great Hill") and Wampanoag ("People of the First Light")



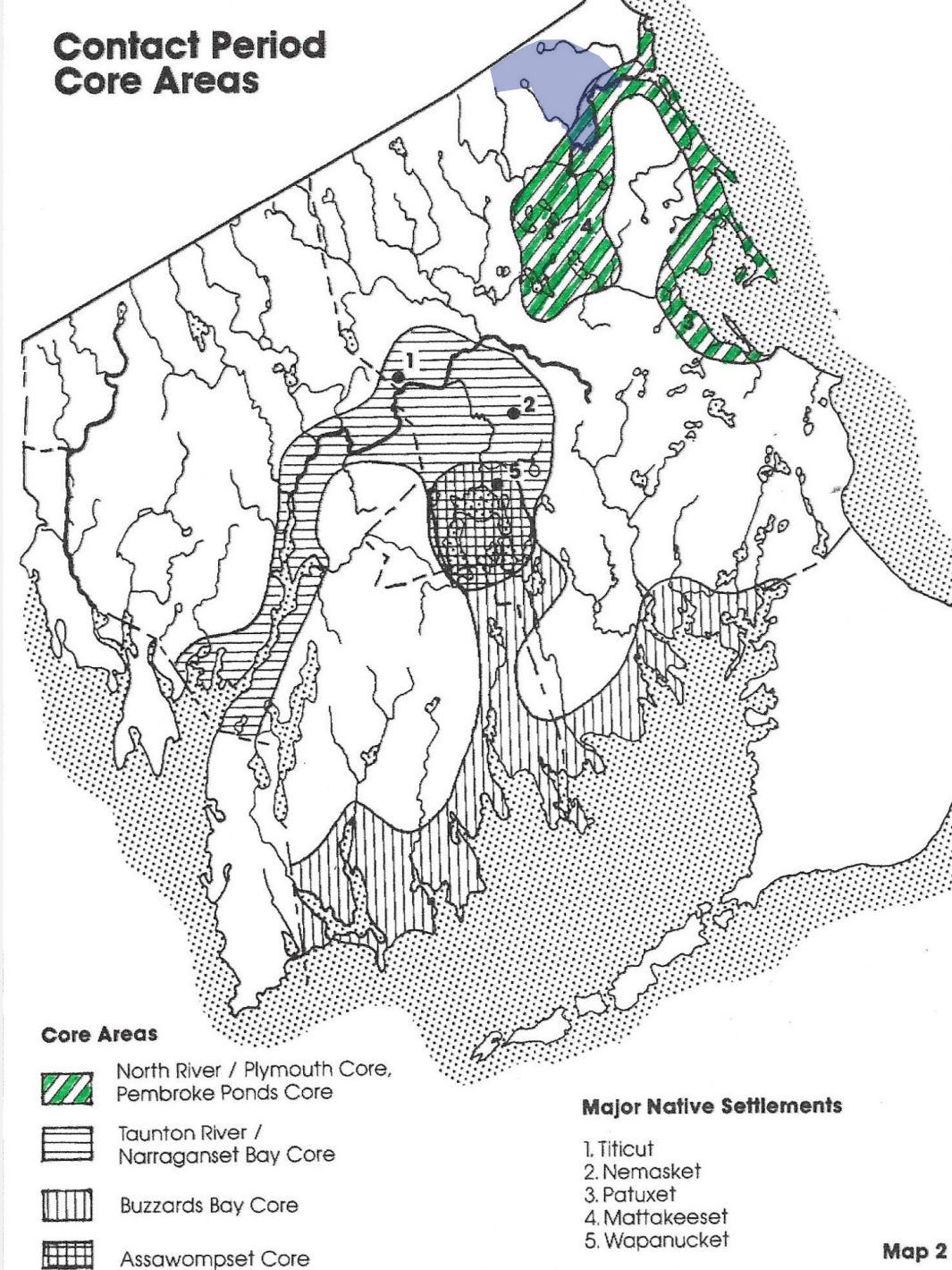
NATIVE PEOPLE ON THE SOUTH SHORE

- In 1600 the Wampanoag population was estimated to be 40,000+ living in 67 villages from Weymouth to Provincetown
- Around 1617, a disease (believed to be leptospirosis) decimated the population



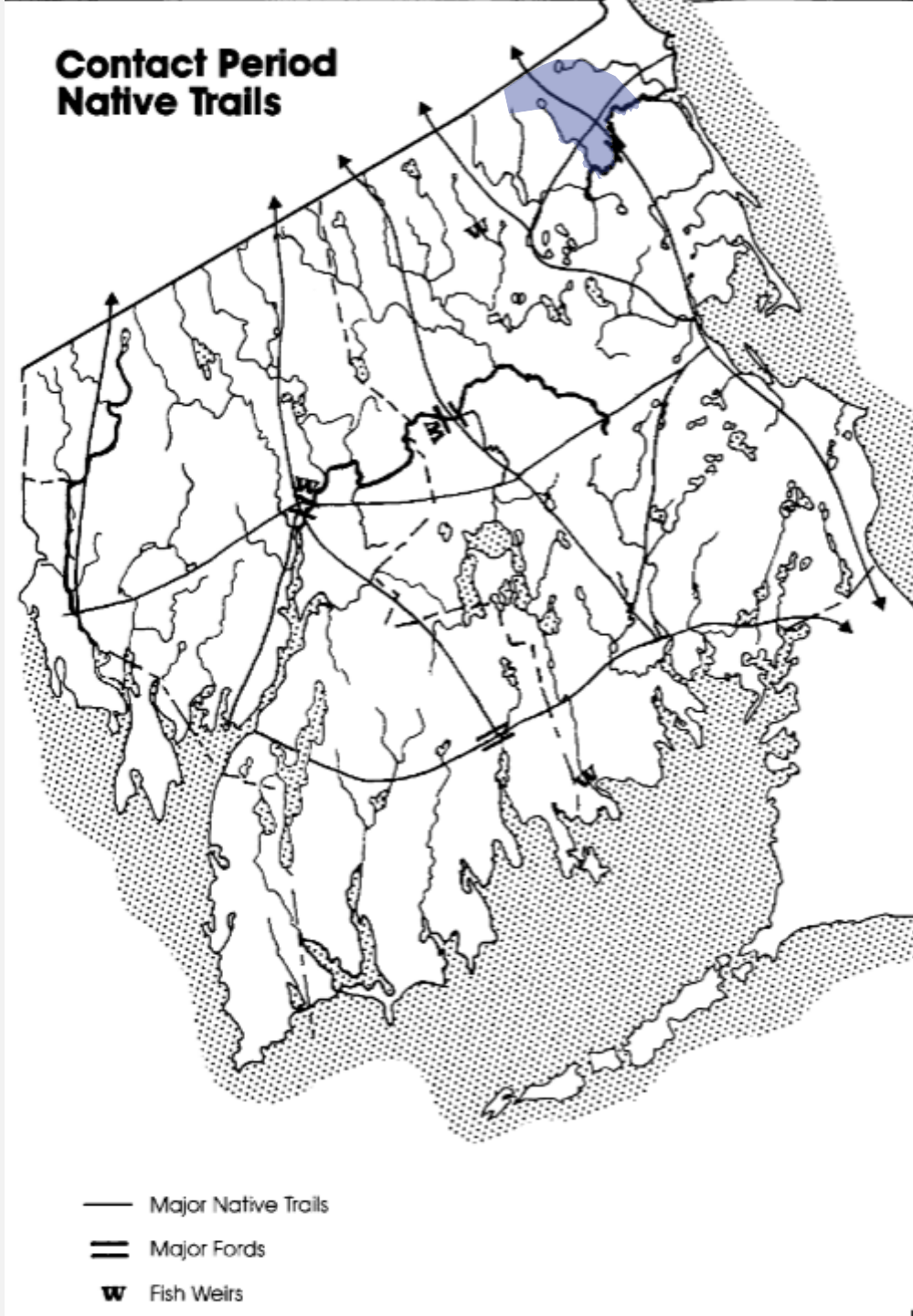
NATIVE PEOPLE ON THE SOUTH SHORE

- The North River and Plymouth areas were one of the main settlement areas for the Wampanoags in Southeastern Massachusetts
- Natives had larger villages inland and spent warmer months in the coastal areas
- Their livelihoods were based on agriculture as well as hunting and fishing
- They evolved from hunters and gathers to become farming communities as well
- “Satuit” was the name adopted by the English settlers for our town—meaning “Cold Brook”



NATIVE PEOPLE ON THE SOUTH SHORE

- The Wampanoag and Massachusett tribes had a well-established system of trails and river fords throughout the region
- The routes have now become our highways and bridges, including:
 - Main Street in Norwell
 - Little's Bridge (today's Route 3A bridge crossing the North River)



NATIVE PEOPLE IN NORWELL'S HISTORY

Historians rarely mention native history

- Rev. Samuel Deane (*History of Scituate, Massachusetts*)
- Joseph Merritt (*Anecdotes of the North River and South Shore*)
- Mary Louise Power (*Old Scituate*)



LUCY STEWART
Last of the Native Indians

EVIDENCE OF NATIVE PEOPLE TODAY

- Two large collections of native artifacts at the Society Museum at the Jacobs Farmhouse
- Look in your own back yard!

