

Transcript: Part One, Episode Three- Meeting the Neighbors

When we last left the Pilgrims in February 1621, they had completed much of the work on building their colony. And one day in walks a guy named Samoset who says, "Welcome, Englishmen!" This is Keep Liberty Alive, Part One, Episode Three: Meeting the Neighbors.

Samoset was originally from Maine and had learned English from other Europeans who had been there. He informed them of the epidemic that had wiped out the Pawtuxet and told them about Squanto and the Wampanoag Chief Massasoit. He agreed to introduce the pilgrims to Massasoit. Massasoit wasn't so sure because many of his tribe had been killed by English traders. Squanto, for obvious reasons, was also apprehensive. Nevertheless, Samoset brought Squanto and some of Massasoit's men to meet with the Pilgrims, where they established a peace treaty and exchanged gifts. They agreed not to bring harm to one another and that they would aid each other in times of war. Shortly after this, the Mayflower, after being in Plymouth Harbor for four months, set sail and returned to England.

Contrasting the, so far, mostly peaceful interactions with the Plymouth colony, Jamestown was an entirely different story. There were many skirmishes between the Jamestown colonists and the indigenous peoples. After initially being welcomed and having peaceful interactions, the indigenous s became disenchanted with their English neighbors, possibly because the English were exploring further than they agreed to and that more and more colonists were coming to the area. This disenchantment led to many attacks by several tribes that belonged to what was called the Powhatan Confederacy. Ultimately it led to what is known as the Indian Massacre of 1622, when the Confederacy tried to eliminate the Englishmen for good. More than 300 colonists were killed and many of the settlements were wiped out. Jamestown only survived due to a warning by a friendly indigenous employee. Over 6,000 people came to the Jamestown area between 1608 and 1624. Of those 6,000 plus people, just over half survived. In spite of all these hardships and attacks, Jamestown continued to expand. Again in 1644, the indigenous attacked to try and limit Jamestown's' growth. The Powhatan Chief was captured and killed, and his successor signed the first treaty between the colonists and the Powhatan. It required the Powhatan to pay tribute to the English annually and placed them on reservations.

Meanwhile, back in Plymouth, Squanto was helping the Pilgrims with planting crops, teaching them the fur trade, and negotiating peace deals with other indigenous tribes. During this time, the Pilgrims helped Massasoit deal with skirmishes with other tribes and even defended indigenous tribes against threats of other English Settlers.

November 1621 saw the Pilgrims celebrating a harvest feast, which later became known as the first American Thanksgiving. Attending the feast were the 53 Pilgrims that survived the winter, Squanto, Massasoit and 90 of Massasoit's men. The feast went on for three days and included wild Turkey, fish, and five deer provided by Massasoit's people.

In May the following year, several ships of all male passengers seeking to find another new colony for the purpose of establishing a trading post, arrived from Britain. After staying with the pilgrims for a short time in Plymouth, they eventually settled a bit north in what is now Weymouth, Massachusetts, named after Weymouth, Dorset, a town in England. They called this

settlement Wessagussett. Somehow, reports of an impending attack against Wessagussett by a indigenous tribe in the area reached Myles Standish, and he sent reinforcements to the settlement. When the attack never happened, he, for some reason, decided to do a pre-emptive strike against the tribe. He invited two of the local leaders to dinner, and then killed them. This, obviously, caused immense harm to relations with the indigenous tribes, who fled the area in fear. Many, being away from their homes, died from disease and from the elements. Additionally, the pilgrims lost their partners in the fur trade, which was how they were paying off their debts for establishing the colony.



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