

Notes from a Wampanoag Child

for Your Classroom



Harvest 1621

I don't know if I can sleep tonight! Tomorrow we will go to see the English at Patuxet! The Sachem Massasoit of Pokanoket has been there with 90 warriors and has said that the English are holding a celebration to give thanks for the harvest. Even though Massasoit had made an agreement with the English last spring to be allies if either should go to war, he was troubled by the news that many, many shots were heard from their weapons that they call muskets. When Massasoit and his warriors arrived they weren't certain what they would find. They found that the noise came from the men hunting to get enough food for a feast. Some of the other men were practicing shooting these strange weapons too. They invited our People to stay and join in their celebration. Now father and I will go there too. I will tell more after I have seen the coat-men.

I do not know why these so-called English cover themselves with so much clothing! It must make it difficult to move through the forests or to fish. And it looks so strange! Still, they have proven that they are able to hunt using their muskets. I am so curious about these English! They live in strange square houses, wear curious clothing, and keep odd animals near their houses.



Some of their food is very strange as well. At least we had deer to eat, which some of our people had presented to the English Sachem that they call Bradford.



While I was there I saw some of the English children playing with a ball, like the deerskin balls that we use to play football. The ball dropped on the ground and rolled toward me, so I picked it up and threw it back to a girl about my size. I was hoping that they would motion me to play with them, but just then someone, I think it was the girl's mother, called "Lizzy!" to her. I don't think she wanted the girl to ask me to join their game.

We will sleep one more night here, outside of the village of the English, then we will return home in the morning. I'm trying to stay awake for our dancing but I'm afraid I'll be asleep before it even starts. I can't wait to return home and tell my friends about all that I have seen.

Diary entry of 12-year-old Pometacomet, a fictional member of the Pokanoket tribe of the Wampanoag nation.

Wampanoag Words

Sachem: chief

Pniesog: warrior counselors valued for courage, wisdom, and strength. Only the strongest of boys is selected to become a pniese

Ahtomp: bow

Fletching: attaching feathers to the shaft of an arrow with glue and animal sinew.

Kouhquodtash: arrows