



Episode One: After the Mayflower Transcript

Slate: The words spoken in this film are in Nipmuc, an Algonquian dialect.

Slate: Wampanoag Tribal Land, Late Summer, 1621

Narrator: Almost nothing is known about the most iconic feast in American history -- not even the date. It happened, most likely, in the late summer of 1621... a little less than a year after the Wampanoag saw a small group of strangers land on their shores.

Half these strangers -- men, women and children -- had died of disease, hunger or exposure in their first winter on the unforgiving edge of North America. But by the next summer, with the help of the Wampanoag, the Pilgrims had taken a harvest sure to sustain the settlement through the next barren season. And they meant to celebrate their faith that God had smiled on their endeavor.

Elizabeth Hopkins (Charlotte Dore): Fill up the pot my child and fetch some more water.

Pilgrim Man: Mind your step.

Pilgrim Man #2: More chairs yet?

Elizabeth Hopkins (Charlotte Dore): We should have this done in no time.

Narrator: As the "thanks-giving" began, a group of Wampanoag men led by their Chief, Massasoit, entered the Plymouth settlement... not entirely sure of the reception they'd get.

Pilgrim Man: They're here.

Edward Winslow (Nicholas Irons): *greeting in Nipmuc*

Jenny Hale Pulsipher, historian: Sometimes the Pilgrims are saying, uh, back off, and sometimes they bring the Wampanoags closer depending on what circumstances are like. But this is a celebration of their survival, of their recognition that they probably wouldn't have survived without the assistance of these Indians. This is a time clearly when they're welcome.

Elizabeth Hopkins (Charlotte Dore): The governor cannot mean 'em stay.

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Narrator: Massasoit and his men had not appeared empty-handed. They brought five fresh-killed deer -- providing some of the vitals for a celebration that stretched over the next three days.

Miles Standish (Duncan Putney): Musketeers make ready! ... Musketeers, fire!

Crowd: Huzzah! Huzzah!

Narrator: The Wampanoag and the Pilgrims were an unlikely match... but the two peoples were bound by what they shared: an urgent need for allies. The Pilgrims were completely alone in a new world, separated by thousands of miles of ocean from friends and family. The Wampanoag -- badly weakened by rolling epidemics -- lived in fear of rival tribes. That they found one another in 1621 looked like a boon to each.

Neal Salisbury, historian: The Thanksgiving celebration at Plymouth was certainly an unusual event. It's not something we see thereafter. It symbolizes where the relationship stood as of the fall of 1621.

Wampanoag Man (Larry Mann): My name is Spotted Crow.

Pilgrim Man: Ankantookoche... I'm not so good at your tongue I think. I'm glad you are amused anyway....

Wampanoag Man (William Elk III): I am hungry.

Pilgrim Man: You like it then. Bellycheer. Try some of this...

Wampanoag Man (Zahn McClarnon): This tastes bad.

Wampanoag Man (Larry Mann): No, this tastes good. Yes.

Neal Salisbury, historian: For the English it establishes that they are going to be able to survive because of the Native Americans.

Edward Winslow (Nicholas Irons): It looks to be some sort of gambling game.

Neal Salisbury, historian: There are strong personal relationships -- certainly going on among the leading political figures on each side and, for all we know, among other individuals as well.

Wampanoag Man (William Elk III): Winslow, play!

Massasoit (Marcos Akaiten): Play! Play!

Narrator: For those who followed the Pilgrims across the Atlantic, the first "Thanks-giving" would enter into national mythology, where it remains the bright opening chapter of the American creation story.

For the Wampanoag, and for Massasoit, the memory of that day would recede into darker places, shadowed by betrayal and loss.

Jill Lepore, historian: It's as if you could take the storybook version of American History -- the myth of the first Thanksgiving -- and turn it entirely upside down. Here is this story that's sad, that's sinister and finally is about cruelty and power.

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Colin G. Calloway, historian: Looking back Massasoit would on one level have felt he was true to himself, but on another level he must have regretted what he'd done. He must have thought -- what if we had taken a different course of action in dealing with these people?

Narrator: They lived in a place of privilege, at the edge of a world, where every new day began. And they called themselves the Wampanoag -- the People of the First Light.

Rae Gould, Nipmuc, Anthropologist: Well, think about it. You're here. You are in the east. You see the sun rise. In relation to your world, to what you know, you are the people of the first light. You are the Wampanoag.

Narrator: Behind the Wampanoag, the sun's west-moving light slowly revealed three-thousand miles of human culture -- from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific.

Colin G. Calloway, historian: Indian people shaped this continent. They established civilizations here, societies that had risen and in some cases fallen long before Europeans arrived. As you look across the continent at this time, Shawnees in the Ohio Valley are shaping that area, building their own societies; Cherokees in the southeast, Sioux in the western Great Lakes reaching out in the plains, Apaches on the southern plains and in the south west. Everywhere across North America there are communities and tribes and peoples whose histories are ongoing.

Wampanoag Man (Larry Mann): Use this to fix the hole. Tie it well. Yes. Yes, very good.

Narrator: The confederation of tribes that made up the Wampanoag was one small network section of the native web that spread across North America.

The People of the First Light hugged the coast of a vast ocean. To the north were "The People of the Big Hill," the Massachusetts. To the west and inland were the NIPMUC, "the People of the Fresh Water." Then the Mohegan and Pequot, and the Narragansett.

Rae Gould, Nipmuc, Anthropologist: Just think of this one big circle, and everyone speaking different dialects of Algonquian language, but they were mutually intelligible. So, we're all interrelating with each other, married, trading, sharing resources, using resources.

R. David Edmunds, historian: It was a community of communities and they had inter-meshed and had their own agendas, their own political problems, their own warfare, and their own trade. There was a rich sort of political interaction in this region.

Tall Oak, Absentee Mashantucket Pequot, Wampanoag: Sometimes everyone gets along and sometimes they don't. But they resolved the conflicts sometimes through military activity and sometimes through negotiations. We had times when we forgave offenses as part of our traditions - with certain ceremonies were held - like the Green Corn Festival, which was held around the harvest time, for the corn. That was a time when you would forgive all the offenses of your-uh different people that you might not have been on good terms with, and you would invite them to the ceremony and they would come and you'd exchange songs and dances. We continue with that because we believe that everything we had was a gift from the Creator.

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Narrator: The half-dozen neighboring tribes had achieved a balance of power. The weaker paying tribute to the stronger. The Wampanoag had sufficient numbers to defend their territory against their nearest rivals, the Narragansett. And the bounty of the land itself eased inter-tribal tensions.

Wampanoag Woman (Tonantizin Carmelo): Children! Children! Come!

Narrator: The shallows of the ocean and the bays gave up heaps of shellfish; inland rivers watered the growing fields, where the Wampanoag cultivated corn, beans, squash. The woodlands were filled with game for food and furs to get them through the cold, dark of winter. In 1615, the land sustained tens of thousands of people.

Neal Salisbury, historian: The explorers who describe these regions all describe the native peoples of New England living in these very populous villages. In fact Champlain, sailing for the French, decided that they didn't want to colonize New England because there were too many people here.

Narrator: For a hundred years alien ships had trolled off the Wampanoag coast... apparitions on the horizon. Odd-looking European explorers and fishermen occasionally came ashore, but they made scant effort to establish relations.

Wampanoag Man (William Elk III): Some strangers are coming.

Wampanoag Man (Zahn McClarnon): Maybe they will pass by.

Wampanoag Man (William Elk III): Maybe, but I don't think so.

Narrator: The visitors were known to kill native people, or to capture and carry away men and women, but in the century since Columbus, the Europeans had yet to leave any real footprint on the Wampanoag shores.

Neal Salisbury, historian: In the years 1617 to 19, an epidemic swept through New England. We don't know exactly what disease this was. And some of the reports of symptoms seem to suggest different diseases. It's possible that one followed rapidly upon the other.

Karen Kupperman, historian: A normal epidemic hits a few people and then other people get sick but the first people start getting better. In this case everyone gets sick at once.

Neal Salisbury, historian: A sickness was usually interpreted as an invasion of hostile spiritual powers. And the native people had medicine men, whom they called "powwows," who were experts at countering the spirits of the diseases with which native people had experienced. In this case the powwows were ineffective. Often they were victims themselves.

Lisa Brooks, Abenaki, historian: The way that native people refer to it is that the world turned upside down.

Jill Lepore, historian: A whole village might have two survivors, and those two survivors were not just like any two people. They were two people who had seen everyone they know die miserable, wretched, painful -- excruciatingly painful -- deaths.

Massasoit (Marcos Akaiten): Great Spirit, please accept these humble offerings.

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Jill Lepore, historian: So, it's not only that the population was eviscerated, it's that the survivors were deeply affected by their experiences, and vulnerable in ways that are hard for us to imagine, this sort of post-Apocalyptic vulnerability.

Narrator: Massasoit had seen nine of every ten of his people perish of a cause nobody understood: tiny microbes for which the native population had no natural defense - alien diseases left behind by European sailors. As the season of death subsided, the Narragansett -- largely spared the ravages of the epidemic -- began a series of raids on Wampanoag villages. And the beleaguered Wampanoag looked to Massasoit to lead them into an uncertain future.

Edward Winslow (Nicholas Irons): Miles, I think there's a channel further starboard.

Miles Standish (Duncan Putney): I spy it.

Edward Winslow (Nicholas Irons): Not much further now lads.

Miles Standish (Duncan Putney): Haul away. Put your backs into it. Pull! Pull, lads, pull!

Narrator: In December of 1620, after 66 days at sea and five uneasy weeks on the northern tip of Cape Cod, a scraggly cult from England anchored its sailing vessel -- the Mayflower -- off the mainland coast and sent a small party of men to scout the wooded shores.

Miles Standish (Duncan Putney): Ship oars.

Pilgrim Man: Shore the oars.

Miles Standish (Duncan Putney): Prepare to set sail.

Pilgrim Man: Let's tie it off here.

Pilgrim Man #2: Let's tie it off.

Narrator: Radical religious views had made the Pilgrims unwelcome and unwanted in England; they had no home to go back to if they failed to make one in this new world. Soon after coming ashore, the scout party stumbled onto the Wampanoag village of Patuxet.

Edward Winslow (Nicholas Irons): Miles. It's a village.

Jonathan Perry, Aquinnah Wampanoag: Prior to the 1600s, Patuxet was a large community of it's estimated well over 2,000 native people. In 1618, the sickness reduces the population to almost zero.

Edward Winslow (Nicholas Irons): Some kind of jewelry.

Jonathan Perry, Aquinnah Wampanoag: When the English arrive they find houses fallen to ruin, fields lying fallow, human bones bleaching in the sun that have been scattered by animals.

Colin G. Calloway, historian: They attributed this devastation to God looking out and clearing the way for his chosen people.

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Edward Winslow (Nicholas Irons): I think we've found a home.

Pilgrim Man: We'll need more wood. Pile it up over here...

Narrator: Patuxet had easy access to fresh water, a decent harbor, and high ground from which the Pilgrims could defend themselves. They set their lone cannon on a nearby hill and christened the village New Plymouth. The fortifications were hardly sufficient to the task; the Wampanoag, even in their weakened state, could have wiped out the visitors with ease; instead Massasoit sent warriors to keep an eye on the strangers.

Tall Oak, Absentee Mashantucket Pequot, Wampanoag: The Pilgrims reported themselves in their journals that they saw Indians. And of course when they didn't see them, they thought they saw them because any time a bush would move they were sure there was an Indian behind it. Our people always had to watch. It was part of our survival. You had to watch anyone, to observe how they were and to see how they were going to act.

Colin G. Calloway, historian: When Indian people see the strangers who have arrived and they've brought with them women and children, that makes them different from previous Europeans that they've seen or heard of.

Jessie Little Doe, Mashpee Wampanoag: In Wampanoag tradition, if you're thinking about making trouble, you don't bring your women and you don't bring your children. So to see folks showing up with women and children, immediately they're not a threat. Secondly, they're really, really sickly and they're starving.

William Brewster (Victor Shakespeare): To you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flame and fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill the good pleasure....

Narrator: The longer the Wampanoag watched, the more pitiful the strangers appeared. One hundred and two Pilgrims had made the trip across the Atlantic. Midway through that winter, 15 had died of disease or deprivation. By the end of the winter, the Pilgrims had buried 45 of their fellow travelers. 13 of the 18 women had died. But even as their numbers dwindled, it was clear the strangers were not giving up... and anxiety grew among the Wampanoag. While many powerful tribal leaders -- or sachems -- argued that it was time to finish off the Pilgrims before their settlement took hold, Massasoit counseled patience. The final decision on handling the strangers would fall to him.

Sachem of the Pokanokets -- one of the groups that made up the Wampanoag confederacy -- he had risen to the leadership of all the Wampanoag, earning his title: Massasoit.

R. David Edmunds, historian: Massasoit is a classic sort of village chief or super village chief in the Algonquian world. He is a man of great respect among his people. He doesn't have the coercive power that a European sovereign or a monarch would have. He is a person who leads by example, and people have faith in his leadership and his experience.

Narrator: Throughout that winter, Massasoit wrestled with the question of how to deal with the newcomers. The Chief's first impulse had been to put a curse on the Pilgrims, and watch them die off altogether. But the weakened Wampanoag needed any friends they could get. Massasoit was paying steep tribute to the Narragansett, but he knew his near neighbors had the numbers to overrun the remaining Wampanoag villages

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whenever they chose. And he was aware that the strangers came from a nation of wealth and military might.

Karen Kupperman, historian: During the winter of 1620-21, Massasoit must have been thinking about the possibilities of some kind of alliance because the Pilgrims look pretty manageable, given the fact that 50 percent of them are dead by the end of the first winter.

Massasoit -- and this is an assumption that was made by Indians all up and down the coast -- would have thought, 'This will be good. I can have these people here. I can get from them the things that I want from Europeans and I can control them. So they'll be an ally and a benefit to me and my people.'

Massasoit (Marcos Akaiten): Oh Grandfather Sun, I am thankful for this beautiful day. Let me choose wisely my actions for the well being of my People.

Pilgrim Man: This country ain't fit for man or beast! That's ready now.

Pilgrim Man #2: We need more water over here.

Pilgrim Man #3: Steady Boys...

Narrator: In the first days of spring, 1621, Massasoit sent a small party into the Pilgrim settlement.

Pilgrim Man #4: Alright, stay back everyone.

Edward Winslow (Nicholas Irons): Please.

Narrator: The Wampanoag chief and 60 of his men waited on the far side of a small river; he refused to enter the village himself until the Pilgrims agreed to give up a hostage.

Pilgrim Man: Don't worry. We'll be right here.

Narrator: The English chose a young man with little to lose. Edward Winslow was a 25-year-old whose wife was just days from death.

Pilgrim Man: You're all right, Lad.

Narrator: Winslow agreed to go as the hostage, and to deliver Governor John Carver's invitation to Massasoit to enter Plymouth for talks.

Edward Winslow (Nicholas Irons): I come from King James who welcomes you with love and peace. The King sees you, my lord, as his friend and ally. Please enter our village. Mr. Carver -- the governor -- would like to speak with you. Please we wish to be at peace with you, as our closest neighbors. Please.

Narrator: Among the men with Massasoit that day was a Wampanoag who could act as translator.

Squanto (Troy Philips): Nippe. Nippe.

Narrator: Tisquantum, or Squanto, had been kidnapped years earlier and sold into slavery in Europe. When he made his way back home Squanto could speak a little English, and was familiar with European custom.

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Tisquantum (Troy Philips): My king welcomes you here.

Massasoit (Marcos Akaiten): We see that you have great difficulty here.

Colin G. Calloway, historian: This is one of the very first of these treaty encounters that are going to become such an important part of Anglo-American relations with Indian peoples across the continent.

John Carver (Alan Francis): We want to be at peace with you. We want you to promise that none of your people will harm any of our people.

Massasoit (Marcos Akaiten): Tell him we mean no harm.

John Carver (Alan Francis): Let us agree then that if any one unjustly attack you, that we will help you, and if any unjustly attack us, then you will help us.

Narrator: There was cause for joy on both sides: the Pilgrims had friends to help them navigate the unfamiliar hardships of their new home; the Wampanoag had made themselves the first and favored ally of the new English colony.

Jenny Hale Pulsipher, historian: There's a very clear sense that Massasoit understands the entire treaty as reciprocal. At the very end of the treaty it says if you do these things then King James will esteem you his friend and ally. So it would make very good sense for the Indians to think this is an alliance, this is a meeting between friends.

As soon as the treaty is concluded, that very day, Massasoit says, "Tomorrow I'll bring my people and we'll plant corn on the other side of the stream." So this sense that we're the same people now. We're going to be sharing everything.

Narrator: Over the coming months, the two peoples made halting moves toward codifying their alliance. As a show of friendship, Massasoit formally ceded the settlers the village of Patuxet, and all the planting land and hunting grounds around it.

In July Edward Winslow made a forty-mile journey to Massasoit's village, Pokanoket, and presented the chief a gift of a copper chain. The Wampanoag agreed to trade with the English alone, and not the French.

Massasoit would benefit as the facilitator of trade between the English and other tribes. A few weeks after Winslow's visit, the Pilgrims invited the Wampanoag to take part in their first American thanks-giving. But what sealed the relationship was a simple show of personal respect.

Narrator: In February of 1623, when a messenger arrived at Plymouth with the news that Massasoit was desperately ill, Winslow -- like many Algonquian -- rushed to his side.

Voices: Heal him!

Karen Kupperman, historian: Winslow makes the point that this is what Indians do. When a friend is sick everyone congregates at the friend's bedside. This is one of those places where Winslow is acting as he knows Indians expect people to act.

Edward Winslow (Nicholas Irons): Massasoit....

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Massasoit (Marcos Akaiten): Is that you Winslow?

Edward Winslow (Nicholas Irons): Yes, Massasoit.

Massasoit (Marcos Akaiten): Until we meet again my friend.

Karen Kupperman, historian: Edward Winslow is a very interesting man. He was the second in command in Plymouth and he's the one who takes it upon himself to become the principle emissary to Massasoit.

Edward Winslow (Nicholas Irons): Eat, Massasoit.

Karen Kupperman, historian: Some Indians had a dual chieftain system. That is they had a overall chief who is called the "inside chief," who is responsible for the community and basically stays within the community. And then there's an "outside chief" who is responsible for essentially foreign relations and war. Winslow is acting as the outside chief.

Edward Winslow (Nicholas Irons): Please, heavenly Father, watch over your child Massasoit....

Narrator: Winslow's medicine was of no particular benefit to Massasoit, but the chief did recover and Winslow was there -- representing the entire Plymouth Colony -- when Massasoit was able to rise again.

Massasoit (Marcos Akaiten): I will never forget your kindness.

Narrator: In spite of a growing trust between Edward Winslow and Massasoit, the relationship between the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag remained tentative.

The Pilgrims were separatists, devout Christians who had fled the Old World for fear its corruptions would darken the Godly light in which they dwelled. Corrupting influences lurked everywhere.

Wampanoag Woman (Tonantzin Carmelo): See. This is what they should look like.

Elizabeth Hopkins (Charlotte Dore): She cannot mean to eat this.

Narrator: Even Winslow, who found the Wampanoag and other tribes "trustworthy," "quick of apprehension," and "just," fretted about close contact with Indians.

Jill Lepore, historian: You see at the beginning of the 17th century, this kind of cautious getting to know one another. As those peoples become more and more dependent on one another, and exchange more and more goods, and ideas, and people-children, wives, families - have more and more contact with one another. In a sense, the two peoples come to share a great deal. They come, the English come to be more like Indians in many ways. They dress more like Indians. They use Indian words. They're familiar with Indian ways. And the Indians come to be more like English. A lot of Indians speak English. They wear English clothes. They build houses that are English. There's a reciprocity of exchange that actually turns out-we might think, 'oh how lovely. What a nice multicultural fest that is.' But actually it makes everyone very, very nervous.

Narrator: The Pilgrims were especially wary; they were badly outnumbered and many Indians, they believed, bore the English "an inveterate malice." They also knew Massasoit hadn't the power to shield them from every danger.

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So in the spring of 1623, after hearing rumors of a planned attack by Massachusett Indians to the North, the Pilgrims -- under their militia leader Miles Standish -- made a deadly pre-emptive raid and returned to Plymouth with an object lesson to those who would cross them.

Miles Standish (Duncan Putney): Gentlemen, here is a proper trophy.

Narrator: "This sudden and unexpected execution has so terrified the Indians," Edward Winslow wrote, "that many have fled their homes. Living like this, on the run, many have fallen sick, and died."

Shocking and brutal as the raid was, Massasoit counseled his sachems to keep up relations with Plymouth. The Wampanoag were still the favored friends of the English. And the English were surely no threat to their friends.

Colin G. Calloway, historian: Massasoit is able to keep this peace for a long time, which suggests that it's not simply his personality and his command that's doing that. The nature of native society means that he is representing what the majority of his people want to do.

Karen Kupperman, historian: The Indians wanted certain things from the Europeans: knives, axes, swords and steel drills.

Jean O'Brien, Ojibwe, historian: Europeans bring things like metal kettles that are very useful for Indian people and Indian people incorporate those goods into their own cultures on their own terms and in their own ways.

Lisa Brooks, Abenaki, historian: For native people, trade is about binding people together in relationships of reciprocity. So that was the question. How do we bring the English into these relationships of reciprocity?

Tall Oak, Absentee Mashantucket Pequot, Wampanoag: We lived right near the shoreline, and we harvested the quahogs, which you make quahog chowder from and all the other good things. And then after you eat the contents, then you saved the shell. We wasted nothing that the Creator gave 'cause everything was a gift, and from the shell from the quahog, the purple spire is what we made the wampum beads from.

All the tribes respected the wampum-and the value that wampum had was spiritual, more so than material. We used it in ceremony, it sealed agreements, it was what notarized a transaction. When wampum was exchanged, no one would break the agreement that went along with the wampum -- be it a marriage agreement or a treaty or whatever, because it was so sacred, and you don't go against the creator.

R. David Edmunds, historian: Initially the Europeans then will say, "Well, this must be like silver or gold. This is something that Indian people will use and trade back and forth." So they accepted it initially as well and wampum is seen as Native American currency by the English.

Narrator: European traders -- long familiar with a money economy -- set in motion a system for exchanging hard goods for wampum, making the Indian's traditional ceremonial amulet the coin of the American realm. Trade flourished under this ingenious new system. English merchants eagerly awaited Indian furs from the New World; the beaver hat was *the* fashionable new accessory on the streets of London. And the arrival at Plymouth of product-laden ships from England was happy news to all. With the import of steel drills, native tribes could greatly speed the manufacture of wampum.

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Karen Kupperman, historian: It's much easier to create a wampum shell, to drill that hole through the center with a steel drill than with a stone drill, and so suddenly there's a large supply of wampum. And what this means is that tribes in the interior who previously had very little access to wampum now are able to get it and they're also groups that have furs and other things to trade to the Europeans.

Daniel K. Richter, historian: Plymouth colonists rely on Massasoit to begin brokering connections with other Native groups. So Massasoit becomes this very important node in these regional exchanges among furs and European goods and wampum all of which are being exchanged many times in different groups depending on who has what.

Narrator: With the Pilgrims integrated into the web of his alliances, Massasoit's gamble -- welcoming the Strangers -- seemed to have paid handsome dividends.

Daniel K. Richter, historian: I think he would have looked back over the previous decade and thought that he had done some pretty good work. It must have seemed possible to Wampanoags and to other Native groups and southern New England to envision a future in which English and Native communities could live profitably together.

Narrator: In the spring of 1630, a fleet of ships led by the *Arabella* appeared off the coast to the north of Plymouth -- carrying a thousand new immigrants. While the Pilgrims had been escaping Europe, these Puritans meant to re-create a new and more pious England in America. They had embarked from England with a grant from their King to establish the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and with a boundless sense of mission.

R. David Edmunds, historian: In Europe at this time, and particularly among the Christian kingdoms of Europe, there was this belief in the right to go out and usurp land that was not occupied by Christian people. And this was a religious basis for this, as well as political, in that this was a God-ordained practice in which one would be spreading Christianity and would be spreading European civilization, and there was a moral obligation to do so.

Narrator: On board the *Arabella*, days before it landed, the future Governor of the new Massachusetts Bay Colony, John Winthrop, essayed the epic vision: "The Lord shall make us a praise and glory, for we must consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us."

The Puritans washed into Massachusetts Bay by the thousands in the next five years, establishing town after town, their path cleared by new waves of small pox hitting tribes in New England.

Tall Oak, Absentee Mashantucket Pequot, Wampanoag: One of the historians of the Puritans -- I'm quite sure it was one of the clergymen -- said, in reference to the death of so many of the Massachusetts people, that the land was almost cleared of 'those pernicious creatures so as to make way for a better growth.' Now he's talking about women, children, all of that, but that's the way they related because their unfounded notion of European superiority.

They kept coming, one boatload after another.

Lisa Brooks, Abenaki, historian: You have all of these people who are coming over from England with that sense of entitlement. They have this image of the colonies as if there's just great space for them to occupy and there are great resources that are for the taking.

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Narrator: In less than a generation, Massasoit saw the English population surrounding the Wampanoag rise from 300 to 20,000.

Wampanoag Woman (Tonantizin Carmelo): English beasts! Go away!

Karen Kupperman, historian: The animals that the English bring with them are incredibly devastating because they let them run loose. The pigs in particular had apparently no natural enemies here. They would talk about, you know, enumerable numbers of pigs just vacuuming up the acorns and the other things on which Native people relied for food and on which these animals that the Native people were accustomed to hunt relied for food.

Daniel K. Richter, historian: The population of the English colonies was growing dramatically, with an increasing demand to establish new towns, create farms and expand. The one thing that Native People have that the English people want is their land.

Colin G. Calloway, historian: Access to an acquisition of this so-called "free land" that the Americas offer is a source of constant and recurrent conflict with Indian people.

The English came from a society where land was in short supply. Ownership of land was a mark of status as well as a source of wealth. For Indian people, land is homeland. You are rooted to it by generations of living on the land, your identity is tied up in it. It's not a commodity to be bought and sold.

Narrator: Massasoit had not felt pressured to sell land for the first 20 years of Plymouth's existence and his first commitments to cede territory had seemed harmless. But just as the English became more aggressively acquisitive, Massasoit found himself in a weak bargaining position.

The beaver population was badly depleted, collapsing the trade on which his relationship with the Pilgrims had been built. And the English no longer needed Massasoit's help in expanding their commercial reach. So he was forced to bend to his allies' desire to have his land.

The chief got what he could for the Wampanoag land. He sold one parcel for ten fathom of beads and a coat. As time went on he asked for more: hatchets, hoes, knives, iron kettles, moose skins, matchlock muskets, yards of cotton and pounds of English coin.

Jenny Hale Pulsipher, historian: There are several incidents where Massasoit's clearly disgruntled with the way things are changing. For instance he agrees to sell some of his land to some of the settlers down in Rhode Island. And they pay him for it and he says, 'This is this is nowhere near enough.' And he gives it back. And they refuse to take it. They refuse to take the gifts, the payment back. And they say, you know, 'You can't return this and this is a done deal. This, this land is now ours.'

Narrator: The English were in a race to establish empire in the Americas, jockeying for territory with the French, the Spanish, the Swedish, the Dutch.

Karen Kupperman, historian: They're very expansive and they don't expand incrementally. They're aware that the Connecticut River is a major conduit of trade. The Dutch are already on the lower end of the river and so clearly they want to control the Connecticut River from its midsection.

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Colin G. Calloway, historian: With the influx of English people in the 1630s Puritan New England ceases to be weak and vulnerable and now becomes a power in the region. As they look further west, they see another major power. The English identify the Pequot as an obstacle to their expansion.

Narrator: In the spring of 1637, Massasoit received word that a force led by Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth colonies had destroyed the Pequot -- the most powerful Indian confederacy in the area. In the final battle, English soldiers -- to the horror of their Indian allies -- had burned an undefended village, killing hundreds.

Jean O'Brien, Ojibwe, historian: The Pequot war established in Indian minds the potential savagery of the English. The idea of 700 people -- men, women, and children -- perishing in the burning of a fort was incomprehensible to Indians. It was a cautionary tale that Massasoit did not forget.

Massasoit (Marcos Akaiten): Keep them dry.

Wampanoag Man (Zahn McClarnon): Hand me more.

Narrator: Soon after the destruction of the Pequot, Massasoit traveled to Massachusetts Bay Colony to deliver to its governor, John Winthrop, a gift of sixteen beaver skins, and to re-state his long-standing friendship with the colonists, all in hopes they would continue to honor the promise of shared security the English had made in that first long-ago treaty.

Jenny Hale Pulsipher, historian: Massasoit hopes that this tribute is going to solidify his friendship with Massachusetts because he's worried and he's not the only one. Winthrop writes in his journal that after the Pequot war dozens of Indian groups in the area come to Massachusetts to the court and try to make friends. Say you know, we, we want to be your, your friends, your partners, your subjects, whatever it takes. They're frightened.

Narrator: Massasoit's eventual heir -- his second son -- was born around the time of the Pequot War, and nearly twenty years after the arrival of the Pilgrims. He knew no world but the one in which English and Wampanoag lived together. Even his names would suggest a man comfortable in two cultures. He was first called Metacom, and later Philip. He came of age in the 1650s in a world his forefathers could not have imagined. He fancied fine English lacework, and richly detailed wampum. He was one of the few Wampanoag who kept pigs. And he counted among his close friends both Indians and Englishmen.

Daniel K. Richter, historian: He was described by an English traveler as walking through the streets of Boston decked out in massive amounts of wampum showing his wealth and his power, comfortable walking in this world that had been created together by the English and the Native People of the region.

Narrator: As he approached manhood Philip was more and more aware of his father's growing unease. Massasoit's tribal borders had receded in around Narragansett Bay. Disease continued to thin the Wampanoag. His trusted ally, Edward Winslow, had died. The new leadership in Plymouth had little memory of the time they had needed Massasoit's help.

Jill Lepore, historian: When do the English lose their sense of openness? Well when they become more independent. When they realize that they no longer need the Indians. And right around that same time, in the 1650s, they make one attempt to convert the Indians to Christianity. Which is to say, in effect, 'Well if you're

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gonna live among us, you need to basically become us, because we can't live with people who are different from ourselves.'

Narrator: In 1651, Puritan minister John Eliot established a 'praying town' in Natick, Massachusetts. In Natick, as in the dozen praying towns that followed, Indians who converted to Christianity were assured physical security and the promise of eternal life so long as they agreed to live by moral codes drawn up by Puritan clergy.

Tall Oak, Absentee Mashantucket Pequot, Wampanoag: The praying Indian towns were set up by the English to basically control Indians. You had all these rules that were alien in concept, and native people had to do everything in the English way; and everything Indian, of course, all the traditions that were sacred to your fathers and your father's father since time immemorial, you had to reject all of that in favor of following the English way. So you had to look down on your own people, essentially is what it boiled down to.

Jessie Little Doe, linguist: Wampanoag people here got the idea that somehow if we are to survive at all, we've got to at least say that we're assimilated; we've got to say that we're Christian. Whatever that means, or we're going to be wiped out completely.

Jean O'Brien, Ojibwe, historian: In order to be accepted as a full member of the church you needed relate a conversion experience that was witnessed by the congregation and that was deemed sufficient that you've been saved. That you believe yourself to be saved.

We have this remarkable set of documents that were published at the time called "Tears of Repentance," that were Indians from Natick relating their conversion experiences, and they were witnessed by a panel of ministers.

Praying Indian #1: I heard that Word, that it is a shame for a man to wear long hair, and that there was no such custom in the Churches; at first I thought I loved not long hair, but I did, and found it very hard to cut it off; and then I prayed to God to pardon that sin also

Praying Indian #2: When they said the devil was my God, I was angry, because I was proud. I loved to pray to many Gods. Then going to your house, I more desired to hear of God... then I was angry with myself and loathed myself and thought God will not forgive my sins.

Praying Indian #3: I see God is still angry with me for all my sins and He hath afflicted me by the death of three of my children, and I fear God is still angry, because great are my sins, and I fear lest my children be not gone to Heaven.

Colin G. Calloway, historian: The English missionaries demanded from Indian people much more than an expressed belief in their God. It was part of an English cultural assault, which Massasoit must have seen as tearing apart many native communities, and I think that's why he wants to try and curb the missionaries, try and stop this kind of assault taking place.

Narrator: As Massasoit's days drew down, he made a point of stipulating in land deeds that Christian missionaries stay out of what remained of Wampanoag territory.

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Having watched the English erode his tribe's landholdings and his father's authority, Philip determined to make a marriage of power. He wed a woman who was a leader in her own right, the daughter of a chief who had opposed Massasoit's alliance with the English from the beginning.

Colin G. Calloway, historian: Massasoit must have wondered what kind of world he was handing on to his sons, to his children. I think there's a certain resignation in some of his actions toward the end of his life -- an attempt to stem the tide of English assault on Indian land, on Indian culture, on Indian sovereignty, and a lingering hope that maybe things will still work out okay. Maybe there can still be peace, because I think that was his vision of what New England would be, was a vision of peace.

Narrator: Massasoit died in the early 1660s, 40 years after his first alliance with the Pilgrims. His passing came just as a new hard-edged generation of English leaders was rising to power.

Men like Josiah Winslow, Edward's son, who was intent on hastening the final reckoning between the Wampanoag and the English.

Philip, just 24 years old, took his father's place as the Wampanoag chief.

Jonathan Perry, Aquinnah Wampanoag: And suddenly it's all on him. He was leading in a very difficult and very dangerous time, where essentially every part of our society, was being stripped away.

Daniel K. Richter, historian: The wampum trade was declining. The fur trade was declining. The demand for the English to acquire more and more Algonquian land was increasing. More and more Native People, for whatever reason, were choosing to move to praying towns. The world that had created Philip was collapsing around him.

Narrator: Philip hoped to strike a delicate balance: maintaining his alliances among the English while also maintaining what remained of Wampanoag sovereignty. He continued to abide by the terms of his father's treaty. But like his father, he rejected repeated efforts by Puritan missionaries to convert him. "If I became a praying sachem, I shall be a poor and weak one," he said, "and easily trod upon by others." He also declared a moratorium on land sales. English authorities had little interest in humoring the young Wampanoag chief.

Jean O'Brien, Ojibwe, historian: There were a variety of ways that English claimed possessions of Indian lands: everything from just seizing them and then attending to the legalities much later, merely occupying lands that they want to declare vacant and thus, available for the taking. One that is often overlooked is that the English would get Indians indebted. As Indians continued to experience ill health and epidemic disease, one of the things that they become indebted for is health-care that's being provided by English guardians. These English guardians used this as a way to get their hands on Indian land. So that once the debts have been accumulated they go to the Indian estate for the land for payment. And this becomes a massive mechanism of Indian dispossession.

Jessie Little Doe, linguist: What people felt for millennia, 'This is my land, and my land is me, and I am it,' obviously because we come from it, and we eat from it and things die, they go into the land, and we eat from what grows from there. So when we say land it's just "ahh-key" -- land. But if you say 'my land,' you have to say "na-tahh-keem." This means that 'I am physically the land, and the land is physically me.' And after Europeans were here for about 70 years, people started, you started to write "na-tahh-key", which is

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so sad, because that means 'I am not necessarily part of the land anymore. It can...my land can be separated from my person.'

R. David Edmunds, historian: There is a continual erosion of tribal people's ability to maintain control over their own lives. And I think by the 1660s, Philip finds himself up against the wall. In other words, unless one makes a stand, the Wampanoag or the tribal people are going to be completely overrun.

Narrator: In 1671, rumors spread that Philip was growing angry, and preparing to act. Authorities in Plymouth -- Josiah Winslow chief among them -- summoned Philip to account for himself.

Jill Lepore, historian: Josiah Winslow has no curiosity whatsoever about these people with whom he's grown up. He's known them all his life. He considers them an obstacle. He considers them untrustworthy. He wants nothing more than to find a means of provoking a war that could lead to their extermination.

Josiah Winslow (Jim Loutzenhiser): You have, have you not, in recent times, procured a great and unusual supply of both ammunition and provisions, planning an attack on us both here in Taunton and in other places.

Philip (Annawon Weeden): These charges against me are false.

Josiah Winslow (Jim Loutzenhiser): If you have no such designs, have your men hand over their weapons.

Tall Oak, Absentee Mashantucket Pequot, Wampanoag: He had two choices. Either give all the weapons up or acknowledge to the English that he was preparing for war, as they were accusing him of. So he had to choose the lesser of the two evils.

Philip (Annawon Weeden): We have no choice at this time. Give up your guns.

Wampanoag Man (William Belleau): No, we have done no wrong.

Narrator: Before taking his leave, Philip was made to sign a confession in which he admitted disloyalty to the English, and promised to turn over any weapons the Wampanoag had amassed.

Daniel K. Richter, historian: This is a real turning point for Philip in that it's quite clear that the aims of the English are not just to gain more and more land, not just to undercut native people economically and spiritually, but clearly to make native people their subjects.

R. David Edmunds, historian: They no longer are being treated as equals; they're no longer being treated as allies; they're being treated essentially as second-class citizens in their own country.

Narrator: Philip was not eager to make a fight with the English; a war would shred his father's historic alliance. And put his entire tribe in peril. There were only a thousand Wampanoag remaining, and nearly half were living in the Praying Towns.

Philip had few warriors. But the Wampanoag chief did prepare -- seeking allies among nearby tribes, and quietly buying up firearms. At home in Mount Hope, with his English friends nearby, Philip wrestled with the enormity of a war against Josiah Winslow and Plymouth colony.

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Colin G. Calloway, historian: He was clearly a person caught in historical forces that gave him very difficult choices, and like many Indian leaders in those situations across the continent, he must have been weighing the options of peace and war, he must have been trying to balance conflicting pressures.

Narrator: Betrayal forced Philip's hand. In January 1675, Philip's personal secretary traveled to Plymouth to warn Governor Winslow that Philip was arming for war. Three weeks later, the secretary was dead. English authorities arrested three of Philip's men, tried them for the murder, and executed them.

Colin G. Calloway, historian: For Indian people, of course, a killing of an Indian by an Indian in Indian country was something that should have been settled by Indian people. After that blatant assault of Indian sovereignty, Philip must have been under incredible pressure from his warriors to step up and do something about this.

Narrator: As whispers of a coming war spread among the English colonists that following summer, the deputy governor of Rhode Island invited Philip to a meeting to offer some friendly advice.

John Easton (Mark Cartier): Koonpeam, Philip. We thank you for coming over to speak with us. Our business is to try to prevent you from doing wrong.

Wampanoag Man (William Belleau): We have done no wrong.

Wampanoag Man (Tatanka Means): We have been first to do good to the English. They have never been good to us.

Philip (Annawon Weeden): We have done no wrong.

John Easton (Mark Cartier): If you start a war against the English, much blood will be spilt. A war will bring in all Englishmen for we're all under one king. I urge you to lay down your arms Philip because the English are too strong for you.

Philip (Annawon Weeden): Then the English should treat us as we treated the English when we were too strong for the English.

Narrator: Philip's angry young warriors refused to heed Easton's warning that war with Plymouth would bring every colony in New England down on their heads. Days after the conference with Easton, Philip sent warning from Mount Hope to an old English friend in nearby Swansea: it might be best to leave the area.

When Wampanoag warriors began their rampage, Philip stood with them, convincing other aggrieved tribes in the area -- including the Wampanoag's old rival, the Narragansett -- to join their fight against New England: a fight the English would come to call King Philip's War.

R. David Edmunds, historian: This war that breaks out in New England is a major war. It has a big impact on the societies in New England, both Native American and white. By the winter of 1676 or so, to get outside of Boston for Europeans was a very dangerous prospect.

Daniel K. Richter, historian: Native American forces had devastating victories over the English in the early months of that war, destroyed large numbers of towns and people and property, and were very much winning that war and putting the English on a defensive.

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R. David Edmunds, historian: The war spread to Connecticut. The war spread into Rhode Island. The war spread into eastern New York. Tribe after tribe after tribe became involved in this.

Narrator: English colonists from the outlying villages fled to bigger towns; some simply boarded ships and headed back to Europe. Alarmists among the English feared they would all be driven into the sea.

Colin G. Calloway, historian: The English look now very differently at Indian people, even those Indian people who have lived among them, even those Indian people who have committed to living a Christian life and are living in the praying towns. These Indians now come to be regarded as, at the very least, a potential fifth column - as people who cannot be trusted, as people who are liable to turn on you at any time.

Narrator: As winter approached, the colonists banished hundreds of Christian Indians living in praying towns, men, women and children.

Tall Oak, Absentee Mashantucket Pequot, Wampanoag: They took them on a forced march to the Charles River, put them in canoes, and put them on Deer Island in the middle of Boston Harbor, which at that time of year is a cold, blustery place. Over three or four hundred perished from lack of food and exposure, because they gave them no blankets or food, or anything, and just dumped them there.

Narrator: The war ground on -- month after month -- exacting a terrible price. 25 English towns were destroyed; more than 2,000 English colonists died. But the shared danger did unite the colonies, and they lashed back. In early 1676 Philip could feel the tide turning; and then the powerful Mohawks -- longtime allies of the English -- made a surprise attack, killing almost 500 of Philip's men and dooming his confederacy.

A year into the war, scores of Indian villages had been burned to ash. 5,000 native people had died; hundreds of men, women and children who did survive -- "heathen malefactors" Josiah Winslow called them -- were loaded onto boats, shipped to the West Indies and Europe, and sold into slavery. Native tribes in southern New England had been crushed, and would never again control their destiny in their homeland.

Narrator: In the summer of 1676, Philip retreated home to Mount Hope with his wife and children; his cause all but lost.

Philip (Annawon Weeden): O Grandfather Sun, I am thankful for this beautiful day. Let me choose my actions wisely for the well being of my People.

Jenny Hale Pulsipher, historian: It does seem a little unusual that he would come back to Mount Hope, because there are so many troops around there looking for him. It's like consciously walking into a trap.

Jill Lepore, historian: When he returns to Mount Hope, he certainly has given up, he's going there to die. Rather than a grand, heroic military figure, he's a more poignant, sad figure, a person filled with sorrow at the end of his life.

Narrator: On August 12, 1676, an English militia unit -- along with a Praying Indian named John Alderman -- surprised Philip and his dwindling band of followers.

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Jonathan Perry, Aquinnah Wampanoag: After Philip was shot by Alderman, they dismembered his body. The scarred right hand of Philip was given to Alderman as a trophy of the war. His parts were strewn about the colonies, spread to the four corners.

Colin G. Calloway, historian: This is a warning to other people, to other Indian people. This is what the English will... this is how the English will deal with rebellion, deal with treason. And remember that in English eyes Philip was a traitor -- and this was the punishment meted out by 17th century Englishman to traitors.

Narrator: Massasoit's son was dead and scattered, but the colonists were taking no chances; they captured Philip's son and heir -- a nine-year-old boy -- and locked him in a jail in Plymouth. While English authorities deliberated on whether to sell the boy into slavery, or simply murder him, the Puritans gave thanks to their God.

Jill Lepore, historian: And the final day of thanksgiving, of the war, is the day Philip's head is marched into Plymouth. This decapitated head on a pole, its erected in the center, in the center of town and is cause for a great celebration.

Narrator: They wouldn't take it down, Philip's head. For two decades -- while Philip's son lived in slavery in the West Indies -- the head was displayed in Plymouth, a reminder to the Indians about who was in charge; a reminder to the English that God continued to smile on their endeavor.

Colin G. Calloway, historian: It's hard to see how conflict could have been avoided and how the outcome of that war could have been different. Looking at the generation before this war, there is at least a moment, where things were different.