

Citizenship, Property, Identity And Representation: The Historical Journey Of Southern New England's Native Peoples

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ABBY KELLEY FOSTER CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Tom Doughton; Henry Zussman; Tim Gervais; Phillip Hureaux, Kelly Davila, Sarah Kaye; Sandra Gibson-Quigley (sp) Nora Werme; Rosemarie Ward; Jennifer Connors; Mike Penney; Richard Latham (not present: *Richard Small; Andrea Bien*)

Introductions: Dr. Charlotte Haller, Nichole Brown from Worcester State College spoke about the Graduate Credits being offered to participants. There will be 15 credits offered over the course of the grant (3 per Summer Institute, 3 for the Academic year courses 2008-2009, 2009-2010). This will lead toward an M.ED. in History. Dr. Haller will correct course work (lesson/unit plans).

Cost: Normally, the cost of a graduate course is about \$800 (including fees, but not books). These courses will cost in the \$300 range.

WSC is asking us to commit to the credits at the beginning of each session. GRE or Miller's Analogy for those working on their first Masters, those who have completed a Masters are exempt from this.

SESSION 1: Thomas Doughton—began by asking participants to make an attempt to list 10 Indian groups of New England (with various results). ***(A much more detailed and extensive overview of this session contained in Dr. Doughton's notes will be published shortly on the website)***

Question: What were Algonkian/Algonquian? Answer: A language group that stretched from Eastern Canada to the Carolinas (within that territory were other language groups—Iroquois, Sioux, etc.). Algonkians are also known as the "Eastern Woodlands Peoples"

It is important to know something about the first contacts and the peoples of what is now New England. We will cover this in the first session, during the second session we will discuss the period through King Philip's war.

There are all sorts of legends about Buddhist monks from China coming to the Americas, St. Brendan coming from Ireland, etc., but these are not grounded in any evidence.

Initial European contacts were with the Indians of Newfoundland where the Norse founded a settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows. The Norse called the Indians there, Skraelings, or, Screamer. There was extensive trade, as well as Norse kidnapping of Indians. The Indians wanted red cloth and weapons. Eventually conflict developed between the groups.

Norse coins have been discovered on the coast of Maine (Naskeag Point) which indicates that there may have been some contact between them and the Indians in New England.

Europeans began arriving in larger numbers to fish off Newfoundland in the 15th century (Grand Banks) and there was some fur trade between coastal Indians and fishermen/traders (fur for finished goods).

The bulk of the contacts in the early 16th century was along the southern Atlantic coastal region of what is now the United States. Ponce de Leon arrived in Florida in 1513 and died of wounds inflicted by natives after a second landing in 1521. Numerous other contacts occurred in the 16th century.

1524—France sent the first explorations to the Northeast. Giovanni Verrazano scouted areas from the Carolinas to Nova Scotia. France also sent explorations in the 1530's encountering the Micmacs and Iroquois in what is now Canada (Jacques Cartier). In 1541 the first attempts at starting a colony in what is now Quebec began—mostly to be destroyed by the Indians. The survivors were repatriated in 1543(1543?). Attempts continued to be made—including a failed colony at Sable Island(1598). Potential colonies based on the fur trade continued to be considered as furs were becoming very popular in European cities. French attempts to colonize at this time were unsuccessful, but independent (and uncontrolled) traders were already dealing directly with the native populations.

The English were also sending excursions to get sassafras (as a remedy for syphilis) and began trading with the native population. Maps were already calling the region New England (after 1616).

1607—Jamestown (first successful English settlement) named in honor of the English king with 104 settlers on a site on Chesapeake Bay.

1607—English colony off the Maine coast (Fort St. George, with 120 colonists—lasted about a year before the survivors abandoned it to return to England).

1608—first French settlement established by Champlain at Quebec (“empty no-man’s land without conquest, purchase or treaty...”).

Many official voyages to New England before Plymouth... countless unofficial (fishermen, other adventurers). The unofficial visits were considered highly unfortunate since contact with the natives was often violent. Perhaps hundreds of natives had been kidnapped, or otherwise abused (even killed), by traders and fishermen. Alcohol was introduced for the first time as were weapons. The Indians of the coastal region of what is now New England became hostile and fearful of the white skinned foreigners.

In 1620, the year of the English invasion of “New England” there were—45 French colonists in Canada; 300 English colonists throughout Eastern North America and 115,000 colonists in Spanish America.

Plymouth colony of 1620 consisted of Calvinist separatists who had originally left England (1607) to practice their religion in Holland and who sailed to what became Plymouth (in Wampanoag territory—Massachusetts). The company was divided between the separatists (“Pilgrims”) and a group of poor migrants who accompanied them. In November 1620 they arrived on Cape Cod,

pillaging native food stockpiles and ransacking what appeared to be an abandoned village. From there they moved on to a natural harbor (across Cape Cod Bay) where they found “deserted cornfields”.

After the devastating winter of 1620-21 the sachem of the Wampanoags, Massasoit, sent his adviser Squanto to begin relations with the English. A former captive, Squanto spoke some English and taught the newcomers how to plant corn. The Pilgrims would maintain good relations with Massasoit for the next forty years.

Thomas Morton’s colony at Merrymount—destroyed by the Plymouth colony for its “heinous atheism”. Morton later wrote a satire about the Plymouth colony. Morton was sympathetic to the Indians. He also gave us the etymology of “Yankee” (meaning “cut your throat people”).

Massachusetts Bay colony founded in 1629 (between Merrimack and Charles Rivers—but Puritans understood it to mean between the headwaters of those rivers). “Great Migration”—by 1637 8,000 immigrants to Massachusetts Bay (Plimoth had only 600 at that point).

- Prior to colonization—already bad relationship between natives and Europeans
- Many natives kidnapped, murdered, otherwise abused by foreigners—Squanto kidnapped near Plimoth—sold as a slave at Malaga—finally makes his way back to New England
- At the time of contact both Northern and Southern native populations experienced violent “virgin soil” epidemics—meaning new pathogens that have never been experienced before. Many groups who had never seen Europeans suffered these as they moved inland from coastal peoples who had contact with European fishermen, tradesmen, etc. (well before colonization)..... The impact of the plagues was especially great since it took the youngest and the oldest people—depopulation and loss of traditions (passed down by elders).
- Initial contacts were welcomed by natives as a chance for trade (different ideas of reciprocity)
- By the time the English colonists arrived the native peoples were very cautious about any contacts.
- New England was not a wilderness, much open land for corn fields and fringe areas where animals could graze (deer, etc.—no farm animals yet) and be hunted interspersed with woodlands.

NAMES AND MEANINGS:

- Nipmuck(Freshwater People—Central MA, NE Connecticut, Western/Northern Rhode Island—possibly the ‘inland bands of the Mattachusett) were the inland Mattachusett people (according to kinship patterns, lack of a particular Nipmuck language, the fact that the Massachusett high chiefs acted as if they controlled the territory from the coast to the Connecticut Valley).
- Narragansett, Niantic, Mahican, Pequot
- Wabenaki (People of the Dawn): Micmacs of upper Maine, Abenakis—from Maine to Vermont.
- Pennacooks (South-central New Hampshire, Northeast Massachusetts)

- Mattachusett (Eastern Massachusetts)
- Wampanoags (south of the Mattachusett—coastal, Cape Cod, Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket, parts of Rhode Island)
- Narragansett (Narragansett Bay Rhode Island)
- Niantics (Long Island Sound near current Connecticut/Rhode Island border)
- Peqouts & Mohegans (southern Connecticut and Block Island)
- Mahican—Stockbridge (Berkshires and Hudson Valley). They were driven out of New York by the Iroquois and later removed by the whites to Wisconsin. Not to be confused with “Mohegan” from southern Connecticut)
- Mohawk (Maqua)—cast fear and terror among the Southern New England peoples (means—“man-eaters”). They, like other Iroquoian tribes, ate human flesh as part of rituals.
- People tended to be divided by landforms (Chabunagugamaug—“fish boundary place”), mountain ranges, rivers, etc. Place names often give this away. (‘maug’—body of water; ‘chu-sett’—hill; Wadchu-sett “big hill”). (--gansett= plowed field)
- There is nothing in the New England native tradition that speaks of “sacred” mountain-tops. It’s a white thing. In Nipmuck territory spiritual forces tended to be seen in water—not on hill tops.
- In 1618-19 (eve of English colonization)—up to 70% of the population had been destroyed by a plague (measles?). Just before this time a comet was visible in the sky...which was seen as a foretelling of great events (1617?). (In 1633-34 the smallpox plague took another 50% of the remaining population)
- The English saw this as the work of Jehovah and as a sign that the natives had been doomed to disappear. This was “God’s plan” in the minds of the Europeans. The emptied land was a “widowed land”—emptied of houses (vacuum domicilium). In the European mind, land must be improved and built upon—as well as marked (fenced) and parceled out. If it is squatted upon for 7 years it becomes the property of the squatter (adverse occupation).

SECOND SESSION: Thomas Doughton

Introduction to the Native Americans of New England.... The first image of the peoples of the Northeast that Europeans got was from Champlain....looked very European, with bearded men...

Tom gave a PowerPoint presentation of the New England natives

Interconnected Indian New England—map of native settlement and trails, c. 1600-1650...lots of villages along rivers waterways, lots of trails...Today’s roads tend to follow the old Indian pathways (which followed logical pathways avoiding hills, etc.).

Not only was New England connected but the whole continent was connected. The natives of Virginia knew about King Philip's War within a week... much sooner than the whites in the region did.

At the time of contact there were five large clusters of Nipmuc people in what is now Worcester County (Worcester Core, Mendon Core, Sutton Core, Lancaster Core, Brookfield Core)...The colonists settled where the natives were/had been because the natives had already cleared the land...

Rev. John Eliot... "apostle to the Indians" Educated, learned Massachusetts and with help translated the Bible... Believed that the Second Coming would occur only after the heathen were converted... many believed that the Indians were from the lost tribes of Israel (language was not comprehensible—Indo-European). First preached in 1644 at a site called Nonatum (modern Newton)..making converts and becoming encouraged that it would be possible to convert all the Indians.....sets up "praying towns" ...

Translation of Bible was problematic because of lack of comparable words.

1654 sets up community at Hassanamesit (Grafton)—focus of missionary territory of what is now central Massachusetts (second community after Natick).