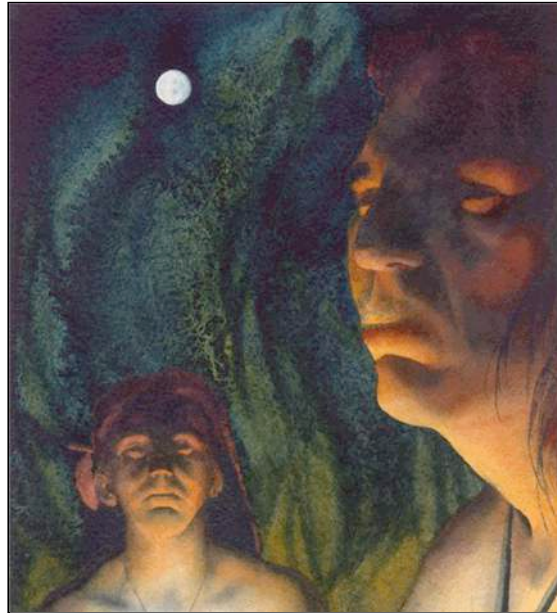


# *A History of the* **Original Settlers**



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*Jack E. Hauck*

# THE FIRST SETTLERS

*Anishnabek*

Before beginning, and as a backdrop to my comments, please let me refer to an address made in Salem, by Rufus Choate, in 1833. Rufus Choate was a famous lawyer, congressman and orator. He was born in Ipswich, and was the descendant of a family, which settled in Massachusetts, in 1643.

“In the course of this decisive struggle with the Colonists, the Indians, some time when all *human help seemed to fail, turned in anger* and despair to the gods of their gloomy and peculiar worship. Beneath the shades of the forest, which had stood from the creation, at the entrance of caverns at midnight, in tempest and thunder, they shed the human blood and uttered the incantations, which their superstitions prescribed, and called up the spirits of evil, to blast these daring strangers, who neither feared, nor honored, nor recognized the ancient divinities of the Indians. The spirits they had raised abandoned them. Their offering was not accepted, their fires of sacrifice were put out. The long, dreary sigh of the night wind, in the tops of the pines alone answered their misguided and erring prayers. Then, they felt that their doom was sealed, and the cry piercing, bitter, and final of a perishing nation arose to heaven!”

## Origin

In Algonquin, "kwey" (*sounds like "quay"*) is a friendly greeting:

Kwey!

The Indians living in the Wenham area, in the early 1600s, bore no resemblance to the Indians, which we read about in novels, and the Indians we see in western movies.

When settlers first arrived in the New World, they met a kind and gentle people, not the warring type, as they have so often been portrayed. They were benevolent and sharing, and cared for the elderly and all families, which had lost fathers.

The Indians, living in the greater Salem-Ipswich area, were the survivors of a race that once had been numerous. However, by disease epidemics, the tribes had become few in number.





The earliest aborigines arrived in the area, which we now call Massachusetts, more than 10,000 years ago. Their migration followed the last great Ice Age. Archaeologists call them "Paleo-Indians." The largest Paleo site, in Massachusetts, is the Bull Brook Site, in Ipswich.

These nomadic tribes were of the Clovis culture. They had migrated, over a great many centuries, from what now is Russia, coming over what was the Bering land bridge, down through Alaska and Canada, and, then, across the North American continent.

Little was known about the inhabitants of the New World, the Algonquin nation, and who the European explorers called Indians: initially thinking they had found a western route to India. The Algonquins called themselves Anishnabek, which means "original people." In the late 1500s, there may have been about 3,000 Anishnabek, living in the northeast region. Overall, the Indian population in New England may have been as many as 100,000.

Puritans believed the Indians were descendants of the "Lost Tribes of Israel," who, according to the Old Testament, had been scattered, by God, and needed to be saved. This belief was a main premise of the Massachusetts Bay Colony Charter, the seal of which shows an Indian saying, "Come over and help us."

In Algonquin, Massachusset (*that's with one "t" and no "s"*) means "range of hills," and which we now call the Blue Hills. Explorers sailing along the jagged coast of the New World saw, from a distance, a bluish hue on the hills. In 1605, Samuel de Champlain, during his exploration voyage, saw Indian villages about Cape Ann.

### Language

The Algonquin language, spoken among the Massachusset tribes, was very difficult to learn, because of its peculiar pronunciation. Few of the settlers learned the language. It was, in general, euphonic, the words being constructed of short syllables, which usually terminated in a soft or vowel sound. There were no written words.

Algonquin, especially the Massachusset dialect, was considered to be one of the most difficult languages, in the world. In his book, "Magnalia Christi Americana" published in 1702, Cotton Mather wrote that the demons of the invisible world, who had mastered Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, were utterly baffled by the Algonquin language.

The Indian's sense of the beauty, for the world around them, is shown in the names they gave to places and persons. The names of many lakes and localities begin with the syllables "Winne," which means beautiful. Winnepesaukee means beautiful high lake. Other words begin with "Wonne," – attractive -- and some begin with "Wunne," which means pleasant.

Might the name Wenham be drawn from the Algonquin "Winnie," meaning beautiful hamlet? No, I do not think so.

I mention the Indian names to show how often we have replaced such appealing appellatives for every creek, corner and creature of Massachusetts. In their place, are a myriad of monikers from other places or people, or as the American psychologist, Dr. Henry Murray, said, "hustled higgledy-piggledy, side by side, without a single element or association, to justify the uncalled-for robbery (*of identity*)." There is not a creek, nob, lane nook or cranny of Wenham bearing an Algonquin name.

Did you know that the first Bible printed in America, was in 1661. The New Testament portion was printed at Cambridge, and the Old Testament followed two years later. However, it was not printed in English, but in Algonquin, the Massachusetts Indian dialect. The translation was the work of a New England Puritan pastor, John Eliot, and intended for use by the so-called Praying Indians, of whom there were very few. (*To help write the New Testament for the Algonquin Indians, Eliot spent several years living among the Indians. Later, had the assistance of an orphaned Algonquin boy, who spoke fluent English, as well as his native tongue.*)

## Indian men

Can you imagine what the first explorers thought when they saw Indians?

Their clothing was scanty. The sole clothing of an Indian man was an animal skin wrapped around his waist and legs, tied with a snake's skin, at the waist. In cold weather they wore moccasins, which reached above the ankle, and were made of moose hide, and they wore leather britches. Some of them wore, on one of their shoulders, a cloak of bear, moose, beaver, otter or raccoon skin. In winter, they switched to a thick-furred skin of a wild cat.

Many Indian men were 6 feet tall -- taller than the settlers. (*Yet, you would never know this, when looking at paintings showing Indians with the settlers: both were shown of equal height.*) They had strong arms and legs, long and slender hands, broad shoulders and small waists and feet. Their eyes were black, and they had excellent long-distance vision. Their black hair was long and straight, but none had a beard. As youths, they kept themselves "clean-shaven," by plucking out their facial hairs. They considered facial hair as unclean and shameful.

They were born with skin somewhat light in color: in the open air and sunshine, their skin became tawny. When going to battle, they painted their faces with a red dye, which later led to the hated name "red skins." During the summer, they coated their body with bear fat, to protect their skin from the sun and insect bites; and during the winter, the coating helped retain body heat.

They were proud, which they manifested by wearing, in their ears, decorated ornaments, including stone and shell pendants, in their ears. The ornaments had carvings of birds, animals and fish. They also wore carved bracelets. Around their waists, they wore elaborate belts, called wampumpeag.

Their leaders proudly wore the most decorations. Many of the leaders had facial tattoos of animals, such as bears, deer, moose and wolves, or of eagles and hawks. These tattoos were carved into the skin, using a sharp instrument, coated with black ink. On other parts of their bodies, -- arms and chests -- using a hot iron, were seared star-shaped designs.

The Indians were very healthy. They did not have gray hair, nor wrinkled brows, until they were over fifty. This was the result, apparently, of freedom from severe labor, annoying cares, and the abuse of unhealthy food and alcoholic drink.

Indians showed no sign to ordinary pain. They remained unemotional, even when beaten or whipped. This trait was developed during childhood, when they would be punished, and commanded not to cry or whimper.

## **Indian women**

Indian women wore tunic-like animal skins, which extended to below the knee and were tied, at the waist.

The squaws planted the crops. The planting season began, they said, when the leaves of the white oak were the size of a "mouse ear." From this may have come the settler saying, "When the white oak trees look gosling grey, plant then, be it April, June, or May."

The squaws constructed the house, fished for bass and codfish, and caught lobsters, which their husbands used as bait. They caught the bait daily, whether the weather was hot or cold. They also dried fish, to keep for winter use. Animal hunting was restricted to the men.

In summer, they gathered reeds, to make mats, for their homes. They also gathered hemp and rushes, which they wove into baskets, with animal and bird designs, and colored with dye stuffs.

The Indians had a deep affection for one another. They could not endure the thought of doing wrong. There had no cross, swearing or provoking words among them. They spoke little, and when they did speak it was with gravity and clarity. They respected those who spoke few words, and those whose word could be relied upon. They rarely smiled, but did have a friendly manner, and were kind to visitors. When visitors came to their homes, they gave them the best lodging and food they had, and the visitors were served by the man.

It is strange that the Massachusetts general court, in November of 1646, passed a law making blasphemy, by both English and Indians, punishable with death. Where did the Indians learn to curse?

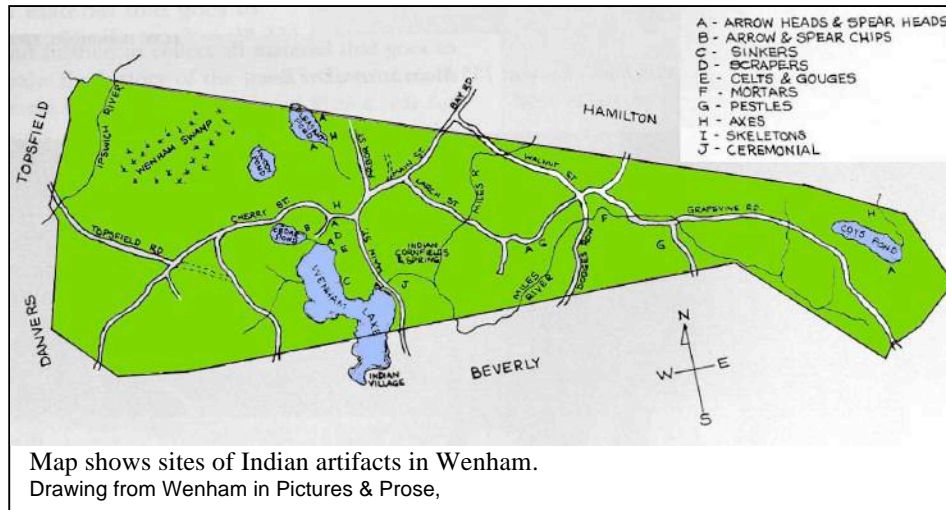
## **Families**

Their marital relations were controlled by certain rules. The sagamore – the tribal leader -- could have two or three wives, but seldom exercised the right. For the most part, other Indian men had only one wife.

When a man wished to marry, he obtained the consent of the woman, whom he wished to become his bride, and then of her friends; if approved by the sagamore, a dowry of wampumpeag was paid to the father. The marriage was consummated by the sagamore, by joining the hands of bride and groom. There was no divorce, except for adultery.

Indian boys, from their early years, were taught how to hunt, fish, know what vegetation was safe to eat, and how to make the tools, they would need to survive. At the age of twelve year, they spent a winter, alone, in the forest, with only a knife. Indian girls were taught all the skills needed to build lodges, weave, fish, do the planting and prepare meals.





## Lodges

In the winter, Indian camps were inland, for protection from cold ocean winds. At the Beverly end of Wenham Lake, about where the Lakeview Golf Course is now located, there very likely was a large Indian camp. Many artifacts were found in the area. What we call Wenham Lake, the Indians may have called “michigamea,” meaning Great Pond.

Summer camps were near the seacoast, or large ponds and lakes. The Indians usually built their camps on the southern – warmer -- side of a hill, on a flat area, well above an adjoining body of water.

The Indians had a longhouse for tribal meetings, with some being 100 feet long and 30 feet wide. During the winters, the long-houses would be shared by several families and would have several fires to provide heat and for cooking.

For individual families, there were smaller, dome-shaped, bark-covered lodges, called “weetues.” The wetu was made with small poles, stuck into the ground, and covered with tough walnut bark. At the top, there was a draft hole for the smoke, from a fire within, to escape. When it rained or snowed, the hole was covered by an animal skin flap. If the wind caused smoke to come down the hole, there was a small mat, at the exterior of the hole. The flap could be turned, by the pull of a cord, to shift it, to face the wind direction. A mat covered the entrance to the wetu: it was kept shut to aid the draft of smoke from the top hole.

The wetu had inner and outer layers. Thus there was an insulating layer between the layers. The overlapping layers kept out rain, even when it was very windy. It would take the settlers many years to adapt the double-wall design, for their houses.

The Indians did not use chairs or stools. They slept on mats, covered with skins of deer, otters, beavers, or bears, which they had dressed, leaving the hair.

For light, inside their wetu, the Indians used pitchy-splints of the pine trees, split in two, which burned clearly.

For utensils, they had water pails, made of birch bark, and also dishes (*shells*), pots (*clay*), and spoons (*wood and bone*). Gourd shells were used for food storage, and as water jugs and dippers. They boiled their meat in earthen pots, or roasted it on the end of sticks stuck into the ground, next to the fire, constantly turning the spits.

## **Food**

For the most part, the Indian diet consisted of boiled maize, to which they added whatever fish or meat that was available.

They were expert fisherman, knowing when to fish in the river, at the rocks, in the bay and out at sea. They made their fish lines of hemp and hooks of bone. They also wove strong nets, for ocean fishing.

In the night, they went out on the ocean, in their birch canoes, carrying long lines attached to a sharp, barbed dart. When out where they thought sturgeon could be found, they lit a torch, and waved it, by the side of the canoe. Seeing the light, the sturgeon swam to the boat and turned up their white bellies, into which the fisherman thrust his lance, the back being impenetrable. They towed their prize to the shore, and a great feast was held.

Most of the land, in this region, was covered with thick forest. The Indians cleared small areas, for planting maize, pumpkins, beans, cucumbers, melons and a species of sunflower, which had a succulent tuberous root, which tasted like artichoke.

Wenham once had unforested fields, with small mounds, on which the Indians grew corn. For fertilizer, they buried fish carcasses, alewife, in the mounds that they seeded. A large corn field was across from Wenham Lake, where there is now a golf course. (*On the 7th fairway, at Wenham golf course, are a couple of mounds similar to the Indian corn mounds.*) One tool sufficed, for their meager husbandry. This was a hoe made of a clam shell or of a shoulder-blade of a moose, fastened to the end of a long wood pole.

Although no information exists about Wenham Indians growing tobacco, this was a crop grown by many tribes. The settlers quickly took to growing tobacco and enjoying their smokes. It also proved to be a profitable export crop to England.



The chief animals they hunted were deer, moose and bear, and they also took wolves, wild cats, raccoons, otters, beavers and musquash, trading both skin and flesh to the settlers. They set deer traps, which were formed of sprigs, made of young trees, and smooth cord. Traps of other kinds were made for beavers and otters.

They stored little food, for much was readily available. They had no salt, and preserved flesh by fumigation or, in the winter, by burying it in the snow.

They preserved corn baskets buried in the ground: the baskets were woven of rushes and reeds, and were covered with woven mats. In summer, when their corn was gone, they used a small variety of squash for bread. They rarely, if ever, made corn bread, but boiled kernels, sometimes along with beans. This combination, they called succotash.

Their drink was water. Strange that with all the berries, that they did not make juice. The European settlers introduced the Indians to apple cider. Liking it, the Indians would take fruit from trees and make hard cider, and get drunk.

Meals were communal. However, married women were not allowed to eat with them, but were kept back, eating after the others were done.

When an Indian killed a deer or caught a large fish, he sent for his friends, to enjoy it with him. This generosity was applied with other possessions, as well. The settlers said an Indian would freely give his friend anything he had, except his wife and children.

When traveling, their principal food was corn, the kernels of which they had baked in the hot ashes of a fire; after sifting the ashes from the kernels, they beat them to powder, in a stone or wooden mortar. It was moistened with water and made into a paste, which they called nookkek, and was carried in a leather bag, slung at their back. They ate the nookkek in small quantities, three times a day, but had no set meal times.

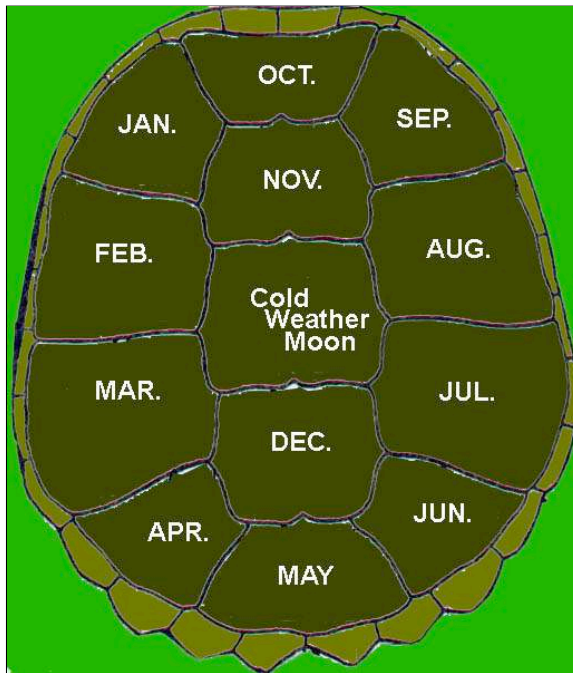
### **Sharing**

Without the help of the Indians, during the early years, many of the early settlers would have died, from starvation (*they had brought few provisions*), as well as from the harsh winters (*they did not have proper winter clothing*). The Indians showed the settlers which berries, nuts and other vegetation were safe to eat, and how to prepare animal skins, for making warm clothing.

The Indians instructed the settlers, in the planting of corn, teaching them to select the finest seed, to observe the best season, to plant in mounds, at a distance from each other, and to fertilize and cultivate their plantings with fish carcasses.

They also showed the settlers where it was best to hunt for animals, and how to trap them. They guided the newcomers to protected winter havens, and showed them their trails to fresh water.

Appreciation by the newcomers, of the Indians, their culture and knowledge took a very long time to develop. In his journal, written in 1837, Salem-born writer Nathaniel Hawthorne lamented, "Our Indian races, having reared no monuments, like the Greeks, Romans and Egyptians, when they have disappeared from earth, their history will appear a fable, and they misty phantoms."



Turtle shell's 13 segments corresponded to 13 new moons.

The Indians were well aware of the yearly seasons. Although they did not have a 12-month Gregorian calendar, they did follow a lunar year. As children, they learned that a turtle's shell has 13 segments, one for each moon, and that, around the outer rim, are 28 small segments, coinciding with the 28 days, between each new moon.

### **Sickness**

The European settlers, having developed immunity, were largely untouched by the small pox disease, but the Indians were not immune. Early explorers described finding many deserted bark houses, unharvested fields, and scattered human bones.

What was the epidemic that killed nearly all the Indians, in the early 1600s?

Most historical records say the Indians were killed by small pox. However, some believe that it was not just small pox, but also hepatitis. Daniel Gookin, in his book published in 1674, said that he spoke with Indian survivors of the 1614-1620 epidemics, who said that the bodies of the dead were yellow. A later epidemic, in 1636, definitely was smallpox.

For centuries, Indian medical men, called powwows, had dealt with health and physical problems. They set broken limbs, and developed a great "medical chest" of medicinal roots and herbs.

The powwows treated disease, as being caused by evil demons. The powwows were believed to be capable of battling the demons. They did this with mystical mutterings, incantations and waving of scented smoke above and around the ill.

Seeing so, many of their people dying from sickness, the Indians became very agitated, for they greatly feared death. If they believed that the pain they were enduring was the prelude to death, they became very morose.

The Indians believed that their enemies and the unworthy, among their own people, passed to the subterranean dwellings of Abamacho, also called Windigoto, to be punished.

Only if they lived a worthy life might they go, when they died, to the region where the pleasant southwest winds came. There, they would enjoy continual pleasures of hunting and fishing.

In November 1646, the general court ruled that no Indian shall, at any time powwow, or show outward worship to their false gods, or to the devil. In each case, the powwow was to be fined five pounds (*a huge sum*), and each assistant a pound.

Isn't it strange that the settlers came to the New World seeking freedom of religion, yet denied it to others?

### **Religion**

They worshipped two gods: one, their good god, was called by various names, including Woonand or Mannitt; and the other god, whom they feared would do them hurt, was called Mattand. To their good god, after a bountiful harvest, they sacrificed; and also invoked of him for fair weather; or in time of drought, for rain, and for the recovery of the sick.

They were greatly afraid of a spirit called Abamacho. Because of him, they would not leave their dwellings, in the night. They had rather stay all night, with a settler, than go a quarter of a mile, to their dwelling, in the dark.

In 1640, the settlers made the Indians forsake their gods, and worship the "one true God," of the settlers. Thereafter, the Indians often attended the religious services of the settlers, and sat soberly, -- at the back of the meetinghouse. They had not the slightest understanding of the doctrines preached. However, they readily believed, as they said, the story of creation, and the origin and fall of man.

## Burial grounds

Indian burials were preceded by a time of extreme grief, often lasting weeks. Annually, this mourning was repeated, by friends and relatives, who blackened their faces.

They believed the spirit to be immortal. With the corpse, they buried their possessions and wealth. Generally, the bodies were buried, in shallow graves, with their head to the west.

Here's how an Indian burial, around 1620, was described, by an English settler: The mourners sat around the body and loudly cried. Next, the body was put in the shallow grave, and a second lamentation was held. The mourners spread a mat, on which the deceased had died, over the buried body and put a dish the deceased had eaten from, on the mat. An animal-skin coat, of the deceased, was hung on a nearby tree. No one ever touched the coat: it was allowed it to decay, with the dead body. The relatives of the deceased blackened their faces, as a sign of mourning.

Several Indian grave sites, according to a few documents, were in Wenham, but they cannot be confirmed. Church records indicate an Indian, Lazarus, servant fo Nathaniel Brown, Esq., died May 30, 1776. No mention is made of where he was buried.

## Tools

In Algonquin folklore, their first chief was a spirit called Glooscap. He looked and lived like an ordinary man, but was twice as tall, twice as strong, and possessed great magic. He never was sick, never married, never grew old, and never died. He had a magic belt, which gave him great power, which he used only for good.

When animals began to attack people, Glooscap told the people that he had made the animals to be man's friends, but they had become treacherous. Therefore, he made the animals to be man's servants and to provide the people with food and clothing. Glooscap showed man how to make arrows, arrow throwers and stone tipped spears, and how to use them. *(As late as the 1500s, the Indians used an atlatl dart throwing stick, as well as a bow and arrow. The atlatl stick, about 2 ft long, had a handgrip at one end and a cup at the other end. Into the cup, the end of a 4 to 6 ft long dart was placed. The dart, laid along the stick, was held by the tips of the fingers, at the handgrip. By sweeping the arm forward, much like throwing a spear, the dart was launched. The Indians could accurately throw the dart over a hundred yards.)*

Their bows were of graceful shape, and strung with sinews of the moose. The bows were not the recurve design, rather the single curve. They made arrows of young elder, stabilized by eagle's feathers, and the heads triangular shaped.

Their stone knives were often shaped like a spear head.

Grooved hammers were made by cutting a groove around a large, smooth, oblong stone. The handle was fastened to the stone by passing thongs, in the groove, around the stone and wooden handle.

Stone axes, generally made of a heavy, close-grained material, were sharp enough to cut wood; but, it must have taken an Indian a long time to fell an ordinary softwood tree. These cherished tools were handed down, from father to son.

They had chisels, with flat cutting surfaces, drills and awls of stone and of bone. Mortars were made of wood or stone.

There is a small collection of the Indian implements, which have been gathered in Wenham, at the Historical Association. (*Harold Boothroyd drew a map showing where various artifacts were found.*)

The Indians used fire to make many of their tools. Trees were felled and cut into sections by fire, and then with stone axes, chisels or gouges, fashioned into a variety of wooden articles. Fire was used to char that part of the material to be removed. They made bowls in this manner. Fire was also used for making clay pots. The Indian pottery was decorated with various designs.

In 1602, John Brereton wrote that, for making fire, the Indians carried, in a leather purse, a mineral stone and with a flat emery stone. They struck the emery stone upon the mineral stone, to produce sparks, which ignited dried wood shavings. The settlers had no previous knowledge of this method for making fire.

The Indians wondered at the mechanical tools of the settlers. The windmill, which finely ground corn, was especially admired. The Indians are said to have watched, for hours, the motion of the arms, and the stone wheel grinding the corn. The plow was another admired tool. It could turn up more ground, in a day, than they, with their clam-shells, could scrape up in a month.

### **Trades**

Government reports, both state and local, as well as writings of settlers are filled with references to the Indians as being lazy, idle and slothful, and without useful skills.

No, the Indians did not have tradesmen, such as were common among the settlers.

But, the Indians were skilled craftsmen, trappers, and farmers. They, however, did not do these things for money, only to meet their needs or the needs of their neighbors.

One of the earliest trades of settlers, in Wenham, was shoe making. There were numerous 10-footers (shoe making shops) around the town. This was not a special skill of just the settlers: every Indian made shoes – moccasins.

No, the Indians did not have jobs, although some did initially become servants for the settlers. This they did more for the safety of the settler's home, than for money. However, in March 1630, the general court "ordered, that whatever person has received any Indian into their family, as a servant, shall discharge themselves of them by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the next May. No person shall, hereafter, entertain any Indian for a servant, without license from the court." This order was repealed, in May 1646, since Indians would rarely work as servants, disliking how they were poorly treated.

### **Currency**

For currency, the Indians had "money" belts, called wompompeage. These consisted of small cylindrical wolk shells, which had a hole drilled in the center. They were usually strung upon a thread. The shells were of two colors, white and black, with the black considered of greater value.

In 1637, money was so scarce, among the settlers that, on Nov. 15, the general court ordered that wampumpeag could be treated as currency. This lasted more than 20 years. In May 1661, because of the "much inconvenience of the law," the general court ordered that wampumpeag no longer was to be used as legal tender.

### **Games**

The Indians enjoyed athletic games. Tribes, from great distances, gathered to challenge each other.

A favorite sport they played was baggataway, which early French settlers renamed "lacrosse." In Algonquin, baggataway means "little brother of war." It was a game for teaching young boys how to fight with sticks.

Another favorite game was a form of football. The Indians kicked a stuffed, animal-skin ball, the size of a handball, and played on beach areas, with the goal lines often being as much as a mile apart. They had target and other shooting competitions; and, various contests involving running and swimming.

A "table" game they played was hub-bub. It was played with five small flat stones, which were black on one side and white on the other. They placed the stones in a small smooth tray or platter, which they put on the ground. By hitting the platter violently they caused the dice to rise up and fall, changing their position, and also by the motion of their hands, they caused a current of air to assist in turning over the dice, as they rose and



fell. While playing, they smote their breasts and thighs, crying "hub bub, hub bub," making so much noise, that they could be heard a long way off. There was no great laughing, as they played hub bub. Indians never laughed aloud.

However, they really enjoyed singing. They sang songs, in which they mimicked bird calls. They had war and death songs, and sung lulling lullabies, to quiet their restless children. Their songs also were a means of passing on their folklore and legends, to their children. There are no records of the local Indians ever chanting war songs.

### **Military**

After the string of epidemics of the early 1600s, the Indians had no army. William Wood wrote, in 1634, that "they doe not now anything in martiall feates worth observation, saving that they make themselves Forts, to flie into, if the enemies should unexpectedly assaile them. These Forts some be fortie or fiftie foote square, erected of young timber trees, ten or twelve foote high, rammed into the ground, with under- mining within, the earth being cast up for their shelter against the dischargements of their enemies, having loopeholes to send out their winged messengers. When they goe to their warres, it is their custome to paint their faces with diversitie of colours, some being all black as jet, some red, some halfe red and halfe blacke, some blacke and white, others spotted with divers kinds of colours, being all disguised to their enemies, to make them more terrible to their foes, putting on likewise their rich jewels, pendants and Wampompeage ...Being thus armed with this warlike paint, the antique warriors made towards their enemies in a disordered manner, without any souldier like marching or warlike postures, being deafe to any word of command, ...they let fly their winged shaftments without eyther feare or wit; their Artillery being spent, he that hath no armes to fight, findes legges to run away."

The few Indians, that remained, readily gave their wampumpeag to acquire guns from the settlers. They wanted the guns for hunting, not for fighting.

The authorities, however, regarded the possession, by the Indians, of guns and ammunition as dangerous. In September 1630, a law was passed prohibiting the selling of guns and gun powder to Indians, as well as banning the repairing of guns owned by Indians.

The Indian tribes, from the north, attacked not only the local Indians, but also the settlers. At first, the settlers sought to recruit the local Indians, in their defense. However, by order of the general court, passed in May 1656, no Indians were allowed to train in the militia. But, when the

Indian war began, it was ordered that the trustworthy Indians – called the praying Indians – were to be armed for military service.

### **Transportation**

Canoes and dugouts were the only means of transportation for the Indians.

The dug-out was carved from the trunk of a large pine tree. Fires, placed on one side of the tree trunk, charred the wood, which, then, was scraped out, using clam or oyster shells. The trunk's outside was chiseled to shape, using stone hatchets. The large dug-outs, some as big as 2-feet wide and 20-feet long, had paddlers on both sides.

Canoes had birch bark skins, covering a-ribbed frame, made of broad, thin, wood struts. The Indians could easily carry the lightweight canoes on long trips, in order to cross rivers and lakes.

The first Colonists adopted the Indian method of getting about, which was mostly by waterways. The streams in Wenham, notably the Miles River and Longham River, were kept free, from being overgrown, by burning, which was an Indian custom.

On land, footpaths were worn through the woods. These soon opened into bridle paths, as settlers rode their horses. Established roads soon became a necessity: "It is ordered that the selectmen shall laye out, according to their discretion, what highways they think necessary for the use of the town." The General Court, in 1640, had ordered a way to be laid out, from Salem to Ipswich, through Wenham." Thus, Wenham's Main Street originally was an Indian path, called, by the settlers, the Agawam Way.

In winter, to hunt beaver, the Indians used a toboggan made of either birch bark or cedar wood, laced with moose sinew. In effect, this was a land rover version of their canoes. The toboggan was outfitted with spears, paddles, nets, and traps, all placed in the front part of the toboggan. A space was left at the back for food containers. The toboggan was drawn by hand.

The Indians had never seen horses, until settlers brought them here. Some Indians purchased, at exorbitant prices, horses from the settlers. However, in May 1656, the general court enacted a law prohibiting the sale of horses to Indians, under a penalty of 100 pounds. Horses owned by Indians were to be confiscated.

### **Government**

The Indians had a leader, who they called sagamore, who was also referred to as sachem. (*both meaning great or wise leader*). The sachems

were not just rulers of the people, but also their trusted advisors and councilors. Men and women came to council meetings, at the long house: the sachems listened to all the people. Unlike the settlers' leaders, that only listened to the freemen.

Their government was like a monarchy: it had kings and princes. The right to rule came by inheritance, descending from father to son. If, at the father's death, there was no son, the widow squaw reigned: she was called squaw sachem. If there was no widow, the next of kin became the ruler.

The importance and power of the sachem depended upon the number of his subjects. The Salem sagamore, in 1629, only had about 300 men. The sachems were very kind and caring toward their tribal members. This was likely due to the custom of tribal members leaving to go to another tribe, if their sachem was not kind toward them.

The Algonquin had no written laws and nor any taxes. However, half of the possessions of the sachem's subjects were at his disposal. The tribesmen were loyal, freely obeying and freely sharing.

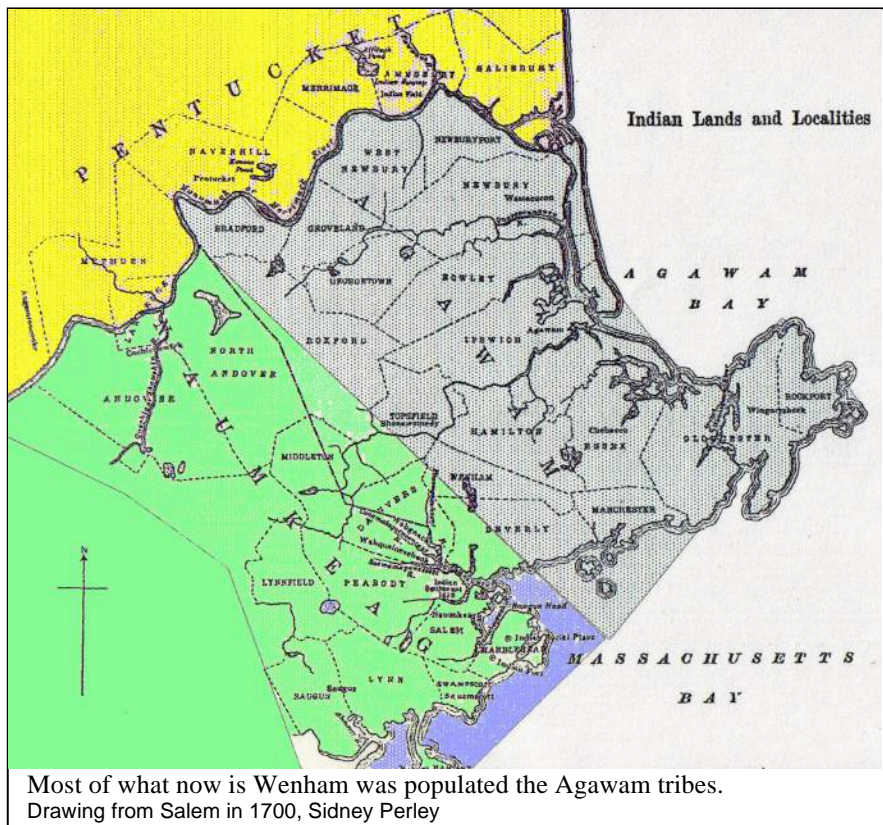
Abuses, among the Indians, were addressed generally by scolding and warning, administered by the sachem. In serious cases, the matter was investigated by the sachem and his wisest men. If found to be guilty, the culprit was physically punished: they did not have a system of fines. If the offense was worthy of death, the condemned was executed, with a hatchet or club.

In May 1647, the Massachusetts general court passed a law establishing a European-style court, for the Indians. They no longer were allowed to have their own courts. The new courts were presided over by one or more appointed magistrates, once a quarter, at places where the Indians ordinarily assembled for religious worship, just as how the settlers used their meeting houses. Indian sachems brought tribesmen to the court. Fines paid to these courts were used to build meeting houses, educate poor children or for other public use.

### **Tribes**

There were many Indian tribes in the Massachuset nation, but these were mainly small independent villages, each ruled by a sagamore. Some confusion about distinct tribes may have resulted from the custom of the Indians to refer to themselves by the area in which they lived, rather than being part of a tribe. Territorial boundaries generally were defined by rivers and creeks.

In the north shore of the Massachuset nation, there were many sub-tribes, including: the Pentucket (*"land of the winding river"*), of Haverhill,



Methuen and Merrimack; the Agawam (*"fish curing place"*) of Ipswich, and the Naumkeag (*eel area*) of Salem. The Bollaston River (*today called the Danvers River*) was the dividing line between the Agawam and the Naumkeag tribes. Masconomet's territory extended, on the north, from the Merrimac River, south to the Danvers River, and west from the Cochicewick River to the Massachusetts coast.

In 1629, when European settlers arrived at the North Shore, only a few hundred Agawam and Naumkeag were left, in the area. Just four years later, another smallpox epidemic killed many of them, leaving many villages empty.

Not only sickness decimated the Massachuset. During this period, rival northern tribes, Tarrantines from Maine, seeing the local tribes diminishing in number, attacked the small and scattered camps of the Agawam and the Naumkeag of the Salem-Ipswich area. These were reprisal attacks from earlier attacks on them, by the Massachuset tribes.



## Local tribes

The leader of the Naumkeag tribe was Wenepoykin (*called Sagamore George, by the settlers*). He controlled the Salem-Beverly area. The Indians called him No Nose (*he had a disfigurement from small pox or possibly from a battle*). He became sagamore when he was only 4 years old, and was tutored by a wise, old member of the tribal court.

Masconomet (*Sagamore John to settlers and Quanopkonat to his people*) was the leader of the Agawam, in Ipswich. In Algonquin, Masconomet means “area of the great islands.” There are no sketches or paintings of Masconomet. Alan Pearsall painted an Ipswich history mural, which includes his depiction of Sagamore Masconomet. Jose Rosario, an Ipswich resident, was used as the model for the sagamore, and he was given a Mohawk-style haircut.



Masconomet's burial site on Sagamore Hill, Hamilton. Photo J. Hauck, 2012

A plaster statue of Masconomet, created by George Aarons, is on display at the Manchester Historical Society. In 1980, the statue was cast in bronze, and is in the foyer of Manchester Town Hall.

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Masconomet was the first Indian to greet the settlers. In 1630, he and a few of his braves paddled out to the Arbella, in Manchester Harbor (*then called Jeffrey's Creek*), to meet John Winthrop, the first governor of the Bay Colony. He welcomed the settlers and stayed with them the whole day. Within a year, because of his frequent unannounced visits, he was banished from every settler's house, on the penalty of ten beaver skins.

In 1638, Masconomet is said to have sold his land to local settlers, headed by John Winthrop, Jr. Indians had no concept of owning land, nor could they read or write. Thus, the idea of Masconomet “selling land” does not seem likely.

Documents, from the period, state that Masconomet was a kindly disposed and a peaceful neighbor, to the settlers. In March 1643, Masconomet, along with other sagamores, submitted to colonial rule, and promised to be true and faithful, and agreed to be instructed in the knowledge and worship of God. It is not known, if he ever became a Christian.

Masconomet was given 6 acres of land, in 1655. He lived there, with his wife. When Masconomet died (Jun. 18, 1658), he was poor and a ward of the state. He was buried on Sagamore Hill, now a part of Hamilton, with his gun and other implements.

Sometime later, two young settlers, perhaps having spent too much time at a tavern, dug up Masconomet's remains, and carried his skull about Ipswich. Over 300 years later, 1993, the Chief of the Ponkapoag People, Oee-Tash, consecrated Masconomet's grave, restoring peace to his spirit.

In addition to his wife, daughter and two sons, Masconomet left several descendants, including three grandsons: John Umpee, Samuel English and Joseph English. (*We'll hear more of them later.*)

### **Selling land**

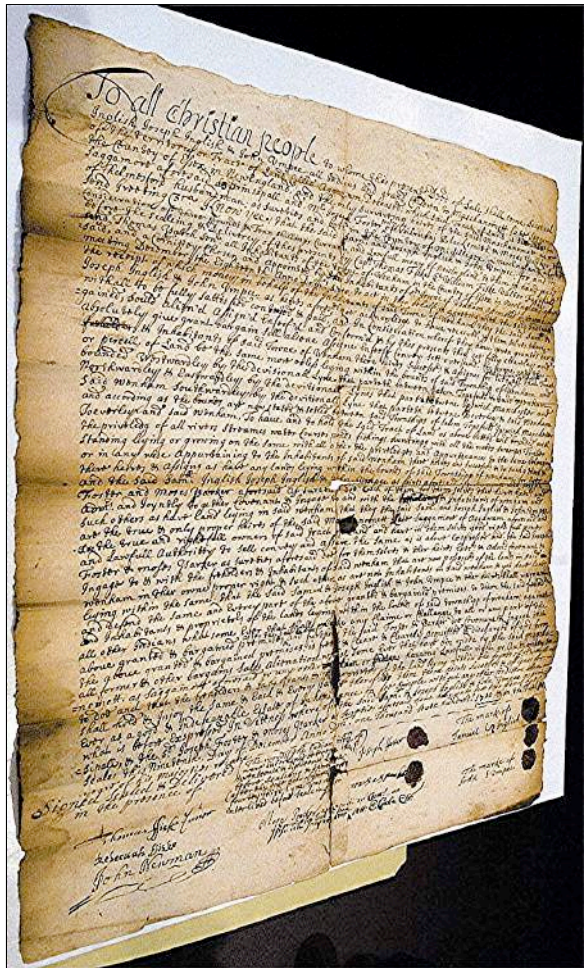
The early years of the arrival of the settlers – 1620s and 30s – were very peaceful, with the Indians, in the Wenham area. A settler in the Enon area wrote, "When we settled, the Indians never molested us. They showed themselves very glad of our company, and came and planted by us. Many times, they came to us for shelter, saying they were afraid of the Indians from the north. We sheltered them. We had their free leave to build and plant, where we had taken up lands."

The peaceful co-existence soon disappeared. In June 1644, the general court passed a law barring Indians from coming into any English town or house, upon the Lord's Day, without leave. Other days, they first had to knock, and only enter when invited.

As had been their custom with other tribes, the Indians traded with the English settlers. In the land trades, the Indians believed they only gave the newcomers the right to hunt, fish and live on the land, but not to exclusively own it. The Indians thought they agreed to accepting new neighbors and sharing nature's resources. However, the settlers believed that they had purchased the land, and they wanted the Indians to vacate, immediately, "their property."

The courts, thereafter, decided that the Indians had only the right of occupancy, and had no title to the land. In this ruling, they overlooked the fact that the Algonquin were a gentle people, not warlike, and agricultural; remaining, year after year, in the same locality, and re-planting and har-





1700 Wenham land deed at the Peabody Essex Museum. Photo Hamilton-Wenham Chronicle

vesting their fields, with the return of each season.

As previously mentioned, the Indians had little comprehension of the concept of land ownership, in the European sense. Certainly, they had no knowledge of the obligations entailed through the land sales deeds, written by the settlers, and to which they were told to make their marks.

There was a dichotomy, in how Indians and settlers viewed land. Indians saw land, not as a property, but for the resources it offered. In contrast, the English saw land as a commodity, to be bought and sold, at a profit.

While in England, in 1629, John Winthrop wrote, "That which lies common, and hath never been replenished or subdued is free to any that

possess or improve it -- as for the natives in N. E, they enclose noe land, neither have any settled habytation, nor any tame cattle to improve the land, and soe have noe other but a natural right to these countries. Soe as if we leave them sufficient for their use, wee may lawfully take the rest, there being more than enough for them and us."

In March 1633, the general court ordered, that no one was allowed to buy land from an Indian, without permission from the Court. The settlers, for the most part, paid no attention to the court.

The colonists believed, as unashamedly stated by Governor Endicott, that they had made "fair composition, with such of the savages, as pretended to claim title to any of the land." Since the Indians had no written deeds, they did not have proof that they owned the land. In 1676, the min-

ister Increase Mather wrote, certainly not with Christian compassion, "The land of heathen people, amongst whom we live, the Lord God of our Fathers has given to us, for a rightful possession."

The first settlers in Enon, later called Wenham, believed they had fairly obtained their land, by purchase, from the Indians. One property in Wenham, (*Daniel Perkins farm, on Arbor St.*) has a deed from an Indian, and signed by him, with an arrow, as his mark. Yet, after the town had been settled more than 60 years, a claim to the land was made by heirs of Masconomet: Samuel English, Joseph English and John Umpee.

At a Wenham town meeting, assembled December 15, 1700, it was:

*"Voated that whereas Sam English, Joseph English & John Umpee, Indians, & as they say heirs to Maschanomett Late Saggamore of Aggawam Lay claim & challenge to the Sayle of ye Townshipp, its agreed that ther shall be a comittey Chosen to treat with them & examine into the Claime & Challenge which they sd Indians make of Sd Land."*

Following the committee's report, a tax was imposed to cover the cost (£4, 16s) of purchasing the Indian title of the land, within the town. The Indians received £3, 10s, with the rest going to expenses.

Sometime after 1825, the Wenham land deed was lost. However, in 1968, a lawyer, living in Wenham, discovered among documents, in the State House archives. He was unable to retrieve it for Wenham, but did get a photocopy of the document, for the Wenham Museum. The original deed, now, is preserved at the Peabody Essex Museum.

### **Alcohol**

Much is made, in the literature and movies, of how Indians could not handle drinking spirited beverages.

The settlers introduced the Indians to a drink that they had never known: alcohol. Like the diseases the settlers brought, alcohol was a curse to the Indians. They easily became intoxicated, and belligerent, not just toward the settlers, but also their own people.

The settlers introduced the Indians to a drink that they had never known: alcohol. The Indians could not handle alcohol, and easily became intoxicated, and belligerent.

In July 1633, the general court passed a law that no one was to sell, or trade any strong water to any Indian. In November, the law was modified, permitting the sale of wine to the Indians. About 25 years later, the general court ordered that neither wine nor other strong liquor be sold to them, stating: "the fruites whereof are murder and other outrages."

Apparently, the settlers also ignored this law. In May 1666, it was ordered that liquor, in the possession of Indians, was to be seized; and, drunken Indians were to be confined, until they told where and of whom the liquor was obtained. The sellers were fined ten shillings.

Merchants made a lot of money from the sale of alcohol to the Indians. The government wanted its share. Therefore, a license to sell to the Indians was permitted, by an act passed April 1668, upon condition that the colonial treasury received a share of the profits. This act was repealed, in July 1675, because of the war with the Indian chief, King Philip. Trade of any kind, with the Indians, was forbidden.

### **Conclusion**

The family names of many of the original European settlers still exist in Wenham. However, not a single Indian family name remains, not even the Indian name for any place, street or stream.

Where did they go?

In 1674, it was said that less than 300 men, beside women and children lived, among all the local tribes. These were once a formidable nation of well over 3,000 men. The last record of Indians living, in the area, is that a few lived at Wigwam Hill, in Hamilton, in 1730.

Now, all that's left are some of their words:

Moose, Opossum, Woodchuck, Raccoon, Skunk, Squash, Pecan, Hickory, Hominy, Chipmunk, Succotash, Sachem, Papoose, Moccasin, Tomahawk, Wampum, Hickory, Caucus, Pow-wow, Toboggan, and Massachusetts.

Yes, Mr. Choate, a great and kind nation arose to heaven, which, in Algonquin means "thank you."

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