



## BACKGROUND

In his 2005 book, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*, science journalist **Charles C. Mann** reviews and synthesizes the work of recent scholars who have studied early Native American societies. Christopher Columbus's voyage to the Caribbean in 1492 marked the beginning of contact between native people in the Americas and Europeans. By 1620 Native Americans in coastal New England had been trading on a limited basis with Europeans for about a hundred years. The man named Tisquantum in this excerpt from Mann's book is the person whom William Bradford called Squanto.



# COMING OF AGE IN THE DAWNLAND

History Writing by Charles C. Mann

## PREPARE TO COMPARE

As you read, look for ways Mann draws parallels between the daily lives of settlers and Native American people. Notice how the European settlers viewed Native American customs and practices. Think back to Bradford's account in the excerpt from *Of Plymouth Plantation*, and look for similar ideas in this text.

- 1 Consider Tisquantum, the “friendly Indian” of the textbook. More than likely Tisquantum was not the name he was given at birth. In that part of the Northeast, *tisquantum* referred to rage, especially the rage of *manitou*, the world-suffusing spiritual power at the heart of coastal Indians' religious beliefs. When Tisquantum approached the Pilgrims and identified himself by that sobriquet,<sup>1</sup> it was as if he had stuck out his hand and said, Hello, I'm the Wrath of God. No one would lightly adopt such a name in contemporary Western society. Neither would anyone in seventeenth-century indigenous society. Tisquantum was trying to **project** something.

<sup>1</sup> **sobriquet** (sō'brī-kā'): nickname.

## Notice & Note

Use the side margins to notice and note signposts in the text.

## project

(prə-jĕkt') v. to communicate or put forth.

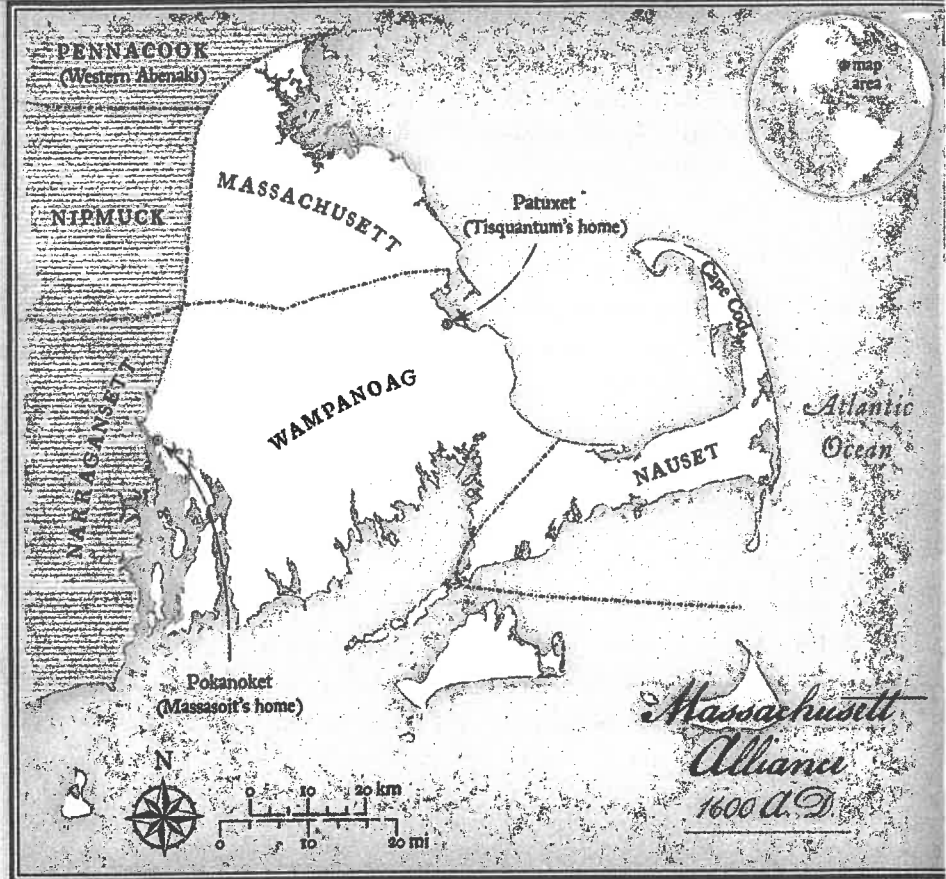


## NOTICE & NOTE

### EVALUATE AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

**Annotate:** Mark places on the map that correspond to places mentioned in the text.

**Infer:** What can you infer about the author's purpose for including this map?



MASSACHUSETT ALLIANCE, 1600 A.D.

### EVALUATE AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

**Annotate:** Mark words and phrases in paragraph 2 that indicate the author is presenting new or surprising information.

**Infer:** What can you infer about the author's purpose?

#### settlement

(sĕt'l-mĕnt) *n.* a small community in a sparsely populated area.

- 2 Tisquantum was not an Indian. True, he belonged to that category of people whose ancestors had inhabited the Western Hemisphere for thousands of years. And it is true that I refer to him as an Indian, because the label is useful shorthand; so would his descendants, and for much the same reason. But "Indian" was not a category that Tisquantum himself would have recognized, any more than the inhabitants of the same area today would call themselves "Western Hemisphereans." Still less would Tisquantum have claimed to belong to "Norumbega," the label by which most Europeans then referred to New England. ("New England" was coined only in 1616.) As Tisquantum's later history made clear, he regarded himself first and foremost as a citizen of Patuxet, a shoreline **settlement** halfway between what is now Boston and the beginning of Cape Cod.
- 3 Patuxet was one of the dozen or so settlements in what is now eastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island that comprised<sup>2</sup> the Wampanoag confederation. In turn, the Wampanoag were part of a tripartite alliance with two other confederations: the Nauset, which comprised some thirty groups on Cape Cod; and the Massachusetts, several dozen villages clustered around Massachusetts Bay. All of these people spoke variants of Massachusett, a member of the

<sup>2</sup> **comprised:** made up of.



Algonquian language family, the biggest in eastern North America at the time. (Massachusetts thus was the name both of a language and of one of the groups that spoke it.) In Massachusetts, the name for the New England shore was the Dawnland, the place where the sun rose. The inhabitants of the Dawnland were the People of the First Light. . . .

4 Tucked into the great sweep of Cape Cod Bay, Patuxet sat on a low rise above a small harbor, jigsawed by sandbars and shallow enough that children could walk from the beach hundreds of yards into the water before the waves went above their heads. To the west, maize hills marched across the sandy hillocks<sup>3</sup> in parallel rows. Beyond the fields, a mile or more away from the sea, rose a forest of oak, chestnut, and hickory, open and park-like, the underbrush kept down by expert annual burning. “Pleasant of air and prospect,” as one English visitor described the area, Patuxet had “much plenty both of fish and fowl every day in the year.” Runs of spawning Atlantic salmon, shortnose sturgeon, striped bass, and American shad annually filled the harbor. But the most important fish harvest came in late spring, when the herring-like alewives swarmed the fast, shallow stream that cut through the village. So numerous were the fish, and so driven, that when mischievous boys walled off the stream with stones the alewives would leap the barrier—silver bodies gleaming in the sun—and proceed upstream.

5 Tisquantum’s childhood *wetu* (home) was formed from arched poles lashed together into a dome that was covered in winter by tightly woven rush mats and in summer by thin sheets of chestnut bark. A fire burned constantly in the center, the smoke venting through a hole in the center of the roof. English visitors did not find this arrangement peculiar; chimneys were just coming into use in Britain, and most homes there, including those of the wealthy, were still heated by fires beneath central roof holes. Nor did the English regard the Dawnland *wetu* as primitive; its multiple layers of mats, which trapped insulating layers of air, were “warmer than our English houses,” sighed the colonist William Wood. The *wetu* was less leaky than the typical English wattle-and-daub house, too. Wood did not conceal his admiration for the way Indian mats “deny entrance to any drop of rain, though it come both fierce and long.”

6 Around the edge of the house were low beds, sometimes wide enough for a whole family to sprawl on them together; usually raised about a foot from the floor, platform-style; and always piled with mats and furs. Going to sleep in the firelight, young Tisquantum would have stared up at the diddering<sup>4</sup> shadows of the hemp bags and bark boxes hanging from the rafters. Voices would skirl<sup>5</sup> up in the darkness: one person singing a lullaby, then another person,

<sup>3</sup> **hillocks:** small hills.

<sup>4</sup> **diddering:** trembling.

<sup>5</sup> **skirl:** make a high-pitched sound, like bagpipes.

#### ANALYZE LANGUAGE

**Annotate:** Mark words with positive connotations in the first five lines of paragraph 4.

**Evaluate:** What feeling about Patuxet do these words create?

#### EVALUATE AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

**Annotate:** Mark examples in paragraph 5 that describe English reactions to Patuxet homes.

**Evaluate:** What can you infer about the author’s purpose for including these descriptions? How effective are the descriptions?



## NOTICE & NOTE



The exterior of a *wetu*

### EVALUATE AUTHOR'S PURPOSE

**Annotate:** Mark a comparison in paragraph 6 of the diets of Patuxet and European citizens.

**Infer:** What can you infer about the author's purpose in including this comparison?

### ANALYZE LANGUAGE

**Annotate:** Mark words and images in paragraphs 8–9 that have negative connotations.

**Analyze:** How do these words support the idea that "Tisquantum's regimen was probably tougher than that of his friends"?

until everyone was asleep. In the morning, when he woke, big, egg-shaped pots of corn-and-bean mash would be on the fire, simmering with meat, vegetables, or dried fish to make a slow-cooked dinner stew. Outside the *wetu* he would hear the cheerful thuds of the large mortars and pestles<sup>6</sup> in which women crushed dried maize into *nokake*, a flour-like powder "so sweet, toothsome, and hearty;" colonist Gookin wrote, "that an Indian will travel many days with no other but this meal." Although Europeans bemoaned the lack of salt in Indian cuisine, they thought it nourishing. According to one modern reconstruction, Dawnland diets at the time averaged about 2,500 calories a day, better than those usual in famine-racked Europe.

7 Pilgrim writers universally reported that Wampanoag families were close and loving—more so than English families, some thought. Europeans in those days tended to view children as moving straight from infancy to adulthood around the age of seven, and often thereupon sent them out to work. Indian parents, by contrast, regarded the years before puberty as a time of playful development, and kept their offspring close by until marriage. (Jarringly, to the contemporary eye, some Pilgrims interpreted this as sparing the rod.) Boys like Tisquantum explored the countryside, swam in the ponds at the south end of the harbor, and played a kind of soccer with a small leather ball; in the summer and fall they camped out in huts in the fields, weeding the maize and chasing away birds. Archery practice began at age two. By adolescence boys would make a game of shooting at each other and dodging the arrows.

8 The primary goal of Dawnland education was molding character. Men and women were expected to be brave, hardy, honest, and uncomplaining. Chatterboxes and gossips were frowned upon. "He that speaks seldom and opportunely, being as good as his word, is the only man they love," Wood explained. Character formation began early, with family games of tossing naked children into the

<sup>6</sup> **mortars and pestles:** bowl-shaped containers and blunt tools for grinding and crushing.



The interior of a *wetu*

snow. (They were pulled out quickly and placed next to the fire, in a practice reminiscent of Scandinavian saunas.) When Indian boys came of age, they spent an entire winter alone in the forest, equipped only with a bow, a hatchet, and a knife. These methods worked, the awed Wood reported. “Beat them, whip them, pinch them, punch them, if [the Indians] resolve not to flinch for it, they will not.”

- 9 Tisquantum’s **regimen** was probably tougher than that of his friends, according to Salisbury, the Smith College historian, for it seems that he was selected to become a *pniese*, a kind of counselor-bodyguard to the sachem. To master the art of ignoring pain, future *pniese* had to subject themselves to such miserable experiences as running barelegged through brambles. And they fasted often, to learn self-discipline. After spending their winter in the woods, *pniese* candidates came back to an additional test: drinking bitter gentian juice until they vomited, repeating this bulimic process over and over until, near fainting, they threw up blood.
- 10 Patuxet, like its neighboring settlements, was governed by a sachem, who upheld the law, negotiated treaties, controlled foreign contacts, collected tribute, declared war, provided for widows and orphans, and allocated farmland when there were disputes over it. (Dawnlanders lived in a loose scatter, but they knew which family could use which land—“very exact and punctuall,” Roger Williams, founder of Rhode Island colony, called Indian care for property lines.) Most of the time, the Patuxet sachem owed fealty<sup>7</sup> to the great sachem in the Wampanoag village to the southwest, and through him to the sachems of the allied confederations of the Nauset in Cape Cod and the Massachusetts around Boston. Meanwhile, the Wampanoag were rivals and enemies of the Narragansett and Pequots to the west and the many groups of Abenaki to the north. As a practical matter, sachems had to gain the consent of their people, who could easily move away and join another sachemship. Analogously, the great

<sup>7</sup> **fealty**: obedient loyalty.

### regimen

(rĕj´ə-mən) *n.* a system or organized routine of behavior.

### LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

**Annotate:** Subordinate clauses add details and cannot stand alone as sentences. Underline one subordinate clause in paragraph 10 and circle its subordinating conjunction.

**Analyze:** Explain the relationship between the subordinate clause and the independent clause. Why do you think Mann used a subordinate clause in this sentence?



## NOTICE & NOTE

### defection

(dē-fēkt'shūn) *n.* the abandonment of one social or political group in favor of another.

### WORD GAPS

**Notice & Note:** Mark the foreign phrase the author uses in the second sentence of paragraph 12.

**Analyze:** What clues in the sentence help you figure out the meaning of the phrase? Explain.

### stoically

(stō'īk-lē) *adv.* without showing emotion or feeling.

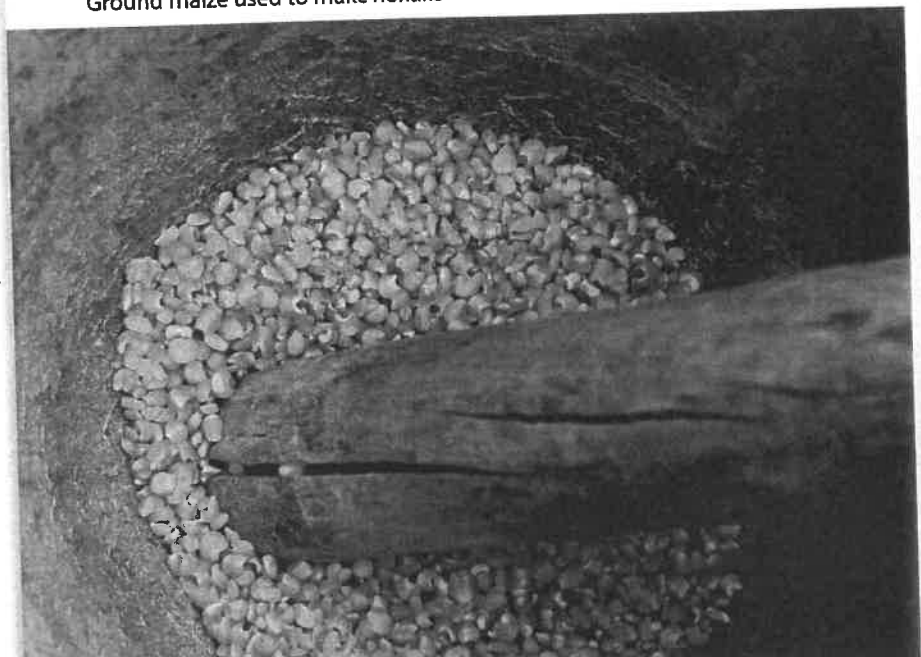
sachems had to please or bully the lesser, lest by the **defection** of small communities they lose stature.

11 Sixteenth-century New England housed 100,000 people or more, a figure that was slowly increasing. Most of those people lived in shoreline communities, where rising numbers were beginning to change agriculture from an option to a necessity. These bigger settlements required more centralized administration; natural resources like good land and spawning streams, though not scarce, now needed to be managed. In consequence, boundaries between groups were becoming more formal. Sachems, given more power and more to defend, pushed against each other harder. Political tensions were constant. Coastal and riverine New England, according to the archaeologist and ethnohistorian Peter Thomas, was “an ever-changing collage of personalities, alliances, plots, raids and encounters which involved every Indian [settlement].”

12 Armed conflict was frequent but brief and mild by European standards. The *casus belli*<sup>8</sup> was usually the desire to avenge an insult or gain status, not the wish for conquest. Most battles consisted of lightning guerrilla raids by ad hoc companies in the forest: flash of black-and-yellow-striped bows behind trees, hiss and whip of stone-tipped arrows through the air, eruption of angry cries. Attackers slipped away as soon as retribution had been exacted. Losers quickly conceded their loss of status. Doing otherwise would have been like failing to resign after losing a major piece in a chess tournament—a social irritant, a waste of time and resources. Women and children were rarely killed, though they were sometimes abducted and forced to join the winning group. Captured men were often tortured (they were admired, though not necessarily spared, if they endured the pain **stoically**). Now and then, as a sign of victory, slain foes were scalped,

<sup>8</sup> *casus belli* (kā'səs bēl'ī): Latin: cause for war.

Ground maize used to make *nokake*





much as British skirmishes with the Irish sometimes finished with a parade of Irish heads on pikes. In especially large clashes, adversaries might meet in the open, as in European battlefields, though the results, Roger Williams noted, were “farre less bloody, and devouring then the cruell Warres of Europe.” Nevertheless, by Tisquantum’s time defensive palisades<sup>9</sup> were increasingly common, especially in the river valleys.

- 13 Inside the settlement was a world of warmth, family, and familiar custom. But the world outside, as Thomas put it, was “a maze of confusing actions and individuals fighting to maintain an existence in the shadow of change.”
- 14 And that was before the Europeans showed up.

<sup>9</sup> **defensive palisades:** fortified walls of tall stakes.

#### ANALYZE LANGUAGE

**Annotate:** Mark words in paragraph 13 that describe the contrast between life inside and outside the settlement.

**Predict:** Given this contrast, what is suggested by the final sentence of the selection?

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Answer these questions before moving on to the **Analyze the Text** section on the following page.

- 1 Why does Mann begin the selection with a discussion of Tisquantum?
  - A It serves to introduce the topic of Wampanoag culture at Patuxet.
  - B It gives important details about the way the Wampanoag lived at Patuxet.
  - C It suggests a reason that the Pilgrims continually failed to understand Wampanoag culture.
  - D It provides background information on why the Pilgrims traveled from Europe and encountered Wampanoag culture.
  
- 2 Why was Patuxet called the Dawnland?
  - F The Pilgrims called the New England shoreline the Dawnland.
  - G The Pilgrims called their own settlement in New England the Dawnland.
  - H In the language of the Wampanoag, the New England shoreline was called the Dawnland.
  - J In the language of the Wampanoag, the Pilgrim settlement in New England was called the Dawnland.
  
- 3 How does Mann characterize life at Patuxet?
  - A Difficult and harsh
  - B Peaceful and civilized
  - C Unorganized and chaotic
  - D Primitive and violent