



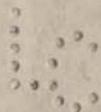
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SQUANTUM

BY

SIDNEY S. RIDER ✓

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PROVIDENCE, R. I., SEPTEMBER 1915



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SQUANTUM

BY

SIDNEY S. RIDER

EARLY in the year 1605 the English Government sent a ship to the Coast of North America to discover a Northwest passage. The ship was under the command of Captain George Waymouth, a man well advanced in such work. No passage was found. Captain Waymouth then turned his ship south and sailed along until he reached the coast of what is now called Maine; the Indian name was then Monhigon. There he found the creatures later known as Indians. One of these Indians went on board of Captain Waymouth's ship, and he sailed with him, to a place known to us now, as Plymouth, in Massachusetts. Captain Waymouth soon left on his return voyage to England. The Indian, whom he had brought from Monhigon went with him, and three other Indians. The name of the first Indian was Tisquantum or Tasquantum. These names became abbreviated in England to Squanto, or Squantum.

There are still other spellings of the names of Tisquantum or Tasquantum, doubtless each variation being dependent upon the particular ability of the hearer of the name to translate the sounds into English.

After a life there of four or five years, Squantum returned in an English ship to the Plymouth country. Later he made a second return voyage to England; these two voyages covered near eleven, or twelve years. The time then reached was about the year 1615. Squanto had removed from Monhigon, on the Pemmaquid river, to a place called Patuxet, but soon to be known as Plymouth. When Squanto first came there were no English settlers there. He left soon after to live in a native village named Namasket. This Indian Village was in a direct line west from Plymouth in Middleboro, Massachusetts, distant from what ultimately became Plymouth, about seventeen miles. Squantum was still living there when the Plymouth settlers came in 1620. As Squantum had been twice in England and could talk English this made him a prominent factor in the Planting of Plymouth and in truth of all New England; he had become an interpreter of immense value and his service was all with, and for Plymouth Planters. I will give a brief illustration.

On the 3rd of July, 1621, Edward Winslow, then Governor of Plymouth, went with Stephen Hopkins, one of the Planters, to see Massasoit, the Great Sachem of the Tribe called Wompanoags. They were led by the Indian Squantum, as guide, and translator of languages. The lands which Squantum showed them became subsequently Rehoboth, Swansea, Barrington, Sowams, Bristol, etc.

It was on the 12th of December, 1621, that a clergyman named Robert Cushman preached the First Sermon ever preached in New England; and the oldest extant of any delivered in America. This sermon was first printed in

New York City in the year 1847; and prefixed to it was a preliminary note written by the clergyman, and addressed to his loving friends, and adventurers for New England. On page XIII (13) this appears: "and by reason of this one Tisquanto that lives amongst us, and can speak English, we have daily commerce with their Kings, and can know what is done, or intended towards us, among the Savages; also we can acquaint them with our courses and purposes, both human and religious; and the greatest commander of the country, called Massasoit, cometh often to visit us, tho' he lives 50 miles away from us, and often sends us presents."

Captain Thomas Dermer (who was the Captain of an English ship) was the first Englishman ever to have seen Massasoit; he visited him at Sowamset, now known as Warren, Rhode Island; he was led by Squantum, who translated the English of Dermer, so that Massasoit could understand it, and the Wampanoag of Massasoit, so that Dermer could understand it. In a letter, written by Dermer, on the 27th of December, 1619, he speaks of my Savage, Squanto, and his native country; the landing place of which is now known to be Plymouth; and finding all dead with the great plague; and how he travelled a day's journey to a place called Nummastagnyt, the real name of which was Namasket, which was the home of Squantum, where Captain Dermer says the savages would have killed him, had not Squanto entreated hard for him; he continues: "I despatched a messenger a day's journey to Pokanokit and two Kings (Indian Sachems), came to see him (Dermer), Massasoit and Quad-aquipa, his brother. Pokanokit was the name used by the Wampanoags; and Sowamset by the Narragansetts for the section now known as Warren, Bristol, Barrington, etc.

There is a footnote in Hutchinson's History of Massachusetts, which I will reproduce. Gov. Hutchinson's History is in two Volumes: the first was published in 1755;

the second, in 1757. The footnote was in the first volume; here it is, verbatim:

“The tradition is, that this Sachem had his principal seat upon a small hill, or rising upland in the midst of a body of salt marsh in the township of Dorchester near to a place called Squantum, and it is known by the name of Massachusetts hill, or Mount Massachusetts to this day. The Blue Hills, so-called, in the township of Milton, etc., are called in Capt. Smith’s map, in 1614, Chest Hills, but they were called before, Massachusetts Mount. Prince Charles changed the name, and also gave the name of Charles river to what had been before called Massachusetts river.”

This is a footnote, in Hutchinson’s History of Massachusetts, Vol. 1, Boston, 1755, page 460.

It must be noticed that Hutchinson does not give the name “of a great Sachem,” but he mentions “a place called Squantum.” (History of Massachusetts, v. 1, p. 460.)

It was two years before Gov. Hutchinson published his second volume, in 1757. He admits, however, a tradition; what is the value of a History of Massachusetts Bay, which omits all reference to Plymouth?

I come now to the publication of Hutchinson’s second volume. Here is what is said in his preface to this second volume:

“Some of my friends of the Colony of New Plimouth took it unkindly that I said no more of their affairs in the first part (volume) of the history. My principal object was the Massachusetts colony; besides, I never could meet with many papers relative to Plimouth. From such papers as I have been able to obtain I have prepared the best summary I could, to which I shall give a place in the Appendix.” (Hutchinson’s History of Massachusetts, v.2 Preface page 11.)

I refer to the Appendix; the only reference begins on page 468 of that volume. But there is not the slightest mention of the planting of Plymouth, nor of the Indian Squantum, nor of his work. Instead of being "History," it is scandalous fiction.

In 1720, Daniel Neal published in London, the History of New England. He tells the story of Squanto, otherwise Tisquantum. He says: "This Squanto was a hearty friend of the Colony (Plymouth) and brought his countrymen to have a good opinion."

I come now to the clearing of the history of Squantum. It comes from Nathaniel Morton's New England Memorial.

This book was printed the first time in 1669. I am using a copy printed in 1826. I will give a few pleasing extracts.

"It was about the 16th of March, 1621, that a certain Indian called Samoset, came boldly among them at Plymouth; he told them of another Indian called Squanto, alias Sisquantum, one of this place, who had been in England, and could speak better English than himself." Four or five days later Massasoit came with the chief of his friends and other attendants, with the aforesaid Squanto, alias Squantum, with whom, after friendly entertainment and some gifts, they made a league of Peace.

The conditions of said league is as followeth:

- 1st. That neither he nor any of his should injure or do any wrong to his people.
- 2nd. That if any of his did any hurt to any of theirs he should send the offender that they might punish him.
- 3rd. That if anything were taken away from any of theirs he should cause it to be restored, and they should do the like to his.

4th. That if any did unjustly war against him, they would aid him; and if any did war against them he should aid them.

5th. That he should send to his neighbour confederates to inform them of this, that they might not wrong them, but might be likewise comprised in these conditions of Peace.

Such were the conditions of Peace between the Plymouth Colony men, and the Great Sachem Massasoit, chiefly arranged by Squantum.

After these things were arranged, Massasoit went to his place, Sowams; but Squantum continued with the Plymouth Colony men; and was their interpreter and proved a special instrument sent by God for their good. This all is taken from Morton's Memorial.

Squantum became sick with a fever at his home at Namasket, and died there in December, 1622.

It was the result of the two voyages and visits, made to England by Squantum, that founded Plymouth Colony and assisted so much in its planting and growth. He had known the Plymouth Colony less than a year, but in that short time, he had laid before them all the land along the shore of the Bay. It was the result of these great services, to the Plymouth planters, by this Indian, and which never before have been told, that should make his name famous. These things suggest the reason why the name Squantum was given to the greatest fishing ground in Narragansett Bay and to the Huge Rock, which is so beautiful.

The names of Indian Sachems were sometimes applied to fishing places, or clam digging places, on the land along the shores of the Bay called Narragansett. Pomham is an illustration. He was an Indian Sachem who lived on the land of Warwick; his name was given to an island on the

shore lands of East Providence. So also was applied the name Squanto, or Squantum, to the huge rock, just north of the island "Pomham," and which was then a celebrated fishing and clamming place.



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