

NAME _____ CLASS _____ DATE _____

Biography

Squanto (c. 1590–1622)

Shortly after the Pilgrims arrived at Plymouth in 1620, a Native American stepped out of the forest. "Welcome!" he shouted to them in English. His name was Samoset. He had learned a few words of English



from fishermen who visited the coast several years earlier. He told them that he knew a man who spoke even better

English. Many days later Samoset returned with Tisquantum, or Squanto, as the settlers called him. Without Squanto the Plymouth Colony might not have survived.

English people were hardly strangers to Squanto. In 1605, he met Captain George Weymouth, an English explorer, on the New England coast. Squanto sailed to England with him. No one knows what Squanto did there, except learn English.

Squanto returned to America in 1614 with Captain John

Smith, who explored the New England coast that summer. With Smith's help, Squanto returned to his people.

Captain Smith left one of his ships behind to trade with the local people for fish and furs. The ship's captain, Thomas Hunt, had other business in mind. He kidnapped 25 Native Americans and sailed for Spain, where he sold the captives as slaves. Squanto was one of them. Somehow he escaped and returned to England. From there he sailed back to America. In his absence, Squanto's people were wiped out by disease. He was the sole survivor of the Pawtucket People.

Squanto helped the Pilgrims survive in New England. He taught them how and when to plant corn—"when the leaves of the white oak are as large as a mouse's ear." He showed them how to use herring as fertilizer. Three of the tiny fish went into each hillock before the seed was dropped in and covered. He helped them get through the winter of 1622 by leading them to local villages that had corn to trade. On one trading trip that winter, he became ill and died. William Bradford, the governor of Plymouth, described him as, "a special instrument sent of God for their good beyond their expectation."

focus your reading

- 1 What makes Squanto's life so remarkable for the time period?
- 2 How did Squanto help the Plymouth colonists?
- 3 Why was Squanto so important to the colonists?

SKILLBUILDER PRACTICE *Contrasting*

Contrasting means looking for differences between events, places, institutions, ideas, or people. In this section you read about conflicts between Native Americans and English settlers. By contrasting Native American views with those held by Europeans, you can begin to understand some of the reasons for these conflicts. Read the passage and answer the questions that follow. (See Skillbuilder Handbook, p. 996.)

Disputes Over Land and Religion

Disputes between the Puritans and Native Americans arose over two issues—land and religion. For every acre a colonial farmer needed to support life, a Native American needed 20 for hunting, fishing, and agriculture. To Native Americans, no one owned the land—it was there for everyone to use. Native Americans saw land treaties with Europeans as mere agreements in which they received gifts—blankets, guns, iron tools, or whatever—to share the land for a limited time. Europeans, however, saw the treaties as a one-time deal in which Native Americans permanently sold their land to new owners.

Similar misunderstandings existed over religion. Puritans considered Native Americans heathens—people without a faith. At first, Puritans tried earnestly to convert them, which many Native Americans resisted. Over time as hostility between the two groups grew, many Puritans tended to view the Native Americans as agents of the devil who presented a constant threat to their godly society. Rather than convert the Native Americans, the New England colonists set out to remove or destroy native societies. For their part, Native Americans developed a similarly hard view toward the white invaders.

1. Why did the Native Americans need more land than European colonists? _____

2. How did Native American and European views of land ownership differ? _____

How did these differences affect how both groups viewed land treaties? _____

3. Why were the Puritans at first so interested in converting the Native Americans? _____

How did Native Americans react to attempts to convert them? _____

4. What differences would you say finally led to war between the two groups? _____
