



THE HOURGLASS

NORTHBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Northborough Historical Society
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

October 2024



Next Meeting & Program: Friday, October 25, 2024. Meet Frances Perkins: The Unsung Heroine Behind the New Deal, Part 2. Janet Parnes will portray Frances Perkins, the first woman in U.S. history to be appointed to a Cabinet position. She will reveal the trials, triumphs, and trip-ups that characterized her 12 years in FDR's Cabinet during the tumultuous era of the Depression, the New Deal, and World War II. This program is Part 2 of the program held at the Library in April but it is not necessary to have seen Part 1 to enjoy it.

The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. at the Society building, 52 Main St., Northborough, MA. The event is free and open to the public. Masks will be optional.



History Corner

by Norm Corbin

Early Boroughs Archaeology – The Contact Period

This is a continuation of my articles about the early inhabitants of the Boroughs region. The archeological time period of interest in this article is called the **Contact Period**. It runs from Columbus in 1492 to the American Revolution in 1775. This article will focus on the very early Contact Period when Native American and Europeans interacted along the North Atlantic coastline (1504-1620). Although this article does not include Native American interactions in our Boroughs region, I thought it was valuable to recognize the more than 100 years of Native/European interactions along our coastline before Plymouth Colony.

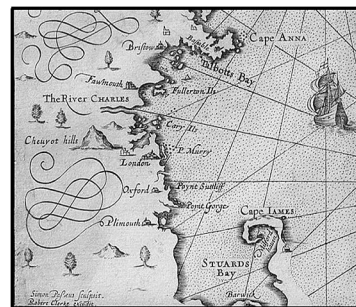
As early as 1504, only 12 years after Columbus's 1492 discovery, fishermen from the Normandy and Brittany regions of France were known to have arrived off the coast of Newfoundland for cod fishing. This was more than 100 years before the settlement of Plymouth Colony.

Around 1508, Thomas Aubert of France, had a fishing and reconnaissance exhibition which brought back seven North American natives of the Micmac tribe to France. The Micmacs lived along what are today the Canadian coastal provinces of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Quebec.

In 1524, Estêvão Gomes, a Portuguese explorer, explored the coast of present day New England. Gomes named landmarks such as "Rio de San Antonio" (now the Merrimack River) and "Cabo de las Arenas" (present-day Cape Cod). While exploring the area of the Penobscot tribe in Maine, Gomes abducted at least 58 natives and took them back to Spain as evidence of a potentially lucrative slave trade.

The first organized attempt by the English to establish a colony was in 1607 in current day Maine. The Popham Colony was established at the mouth of the Kennebec River. They returned a native named Skidwarres, who had been captured by George Waymouth, an English mariner, in 1605. The colony lasted only a little over a year. It is likely that the failure was due to multiple problems, one being the hostility of the native people.

Captain John Smith, of Jamestown fame, made a voyage to the coast of Massachusetts and Maine in 1614. He published his findings in his book *A Description of New England* in 1616, and is the first to apply the term "New England" to this region. His book describes the fishing, soils, inhabitants, fauna, flora and climate of the coastal region along with including maps. At the conclusion of his exploration in 1614, Smith returned to England leaving Captain Thomas Hunt, one of his subordinate commanders, with instructions to continue fishing and trading before returning to England.

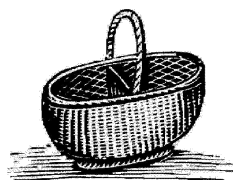


A Section of John Smith's Map showing the Massachusetts Coastline from Cape Cod to Cape Ann (Dated 1616)

However, Captain Hunt decided to engage in the slave trading business as a means of enhancing his voyage profits. He seized twenty natives from the Patuxet village to sell into Spanish slavery. Some researchers blame Hunt for introducing the devastating plague to the Patuxet natives. This village would eventually become the site settled by the Plymouth Colonists six years later. One of those taken from Patuxet was Tisquantum (native name) also called Squanto (English name).

Captain Dermer, an English explorer, met Tisquantum and recognized his unique advantages of speaking English and his native

(continued on page 2)



Curator's News

by Ellen Racine

Quite often, I am asked who had the first automobile in town. Townspeople walked great distances, or rode horseback or carriages. Transportation had a breakthrough when the train came to town in 1855 which enabled workers, students and sightseers to travel. And in 1898, the trolley was even more welcomed when it connected Worcester, Westborough and Marlborough.

Ezra Chapin who enjoyed owning and racing horses, bought the first car in town in 1907. His mansion and mill were located

on Hudson St. The second auto in town was bought in 1910 by Dr. Josiah M. Stanley whose house was later replaced by the Trinity Church parking lot. The third was a luxury automobile: a Thomas Flyer owned by George Felt, c. 1912. He owned a coal and lumber business in town and lived on Pierce St and later Bartlett St.



Ezra Chapin, 1907, 1st auto in town



Dr. Josiah M. Stanley, 1910



George Felt and family, c.1912

History Corner, continued

language. Dermer included Tisquantum on his next planned expedition to New England. It was also believed that returning Tisquantum to his people would ease the tension and flat-out hostility that had escalated since the abductions in 1614 by Captain Hunt. So, after 5 years in Europe, Tisquantum was able to return to his village of Patuxet in 1619. What Tisquantum found upon his return was that his entire community was destroyed by disease.

On December 21, 1620, the first landing party of colonists arrived at the previous native village of Patuxet and selected the site for their settlement. Chief Massasoit of the Wampanoag tribe was very hesitant to make contact with the Europeans. Contact did not occur until March 16, 1621. Why the 3-month delay? As previously shown, the European explorers had a reputation of abducting natives who were never to be seen again.

The Native American named Samoset figured prominently in the first days of the interaction between the natives and Plymouth colonists. Samoset was born on Monhegan Island, a small rocky island off the coast of present-day Maine. This island had an English fishing camp where Samoset was friendly enough with the fishermen and the boat captains to learn some English. Samoset was sent by Massasoit on March 16, 1621 to meet the colonists. He boldly walked into the Plymouth settlement and greeted the astonished colonists in broken English. *Welcome Englishmen, Welcome!*, and then asked for beer.

After Samoset’s short stay, Tisquantum became invaluable as a guide and translator between the Pilgrims and the Native tribes until his death in 1622. A future article will focus on local Native American and European interactions, STAY TUNED!

Membership

Annual Dues:

Single — \$30
Student/Senior — \$25
Family — \$55
Lifetime — \$500
Send dues to:
Northborough Historical Society
Membership Secretary
P.O. Box 661
Northborough, MA 01532
*Please make checks payable to
Northborough Historical Society*
Dues are due each September



Root Beer

Our famous, homemade root beer will be available for purchase at our Friday meetings in October and December, while stocks last. Once it’s gone it’s gone until next September!
\$15 per 6-pack
Pay by cash or check

Reminder: Dues are now overdue!

Please mail your check to the address above, or bring your payment, cash or check, to the membership table at the October 25 meeting. To ensure that your contact information is up to date, please complete a membership form (link below) and submit it with your dues.
<https://www.northboroughhistoricalsociety.org/pdf/Membership.pdf>

Next
Board of Directors
Meeting

Tuesday, November 12



Custodian Needed

The Property Committee is looking for a custodian. If you are interested in the position, or if you would like more information, please contact Paul Derosier at stude38paul@yahoo.com or phone 508-361-7321.

Information about future programs and more is available on our website.
www.NorthboroughHistoricalSociety.org

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