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The relationship between Massasoit and the *Mayflower* Passengers, the pilgrims, was generally friendly, cooperative, and peaceful. This is seen through the willingness to meet with the Pilgrims and assist them with establishing a colony, entering into a peace treaty with the Pilgrims, and constantly maintaining good relations between the Wampanoag and the pilgrims throughout Massasoit's life. Massasoit demonstrated noble character and great service in his relationship with the *Mayflower* passengers, and the colony may not have survived without him.

When the *Mayflower* landed near Plymouth in what is now Massachusetts, they began their attempt to create an English colony. However, this was not very successful until, about three months after landing, they started interacting with the Wampanoag natives in the area. In March 1621, a native named Squanto, who had much better English and told the settlers that Massasoit, the chieftain of the Wampanoags, wanted to meet with their leaders. This resulted in a peace treaty between the Pilgrims and the Wampanoags that lasted to the death of Massasoit, about 40 years later. Massasoit became friends with several leaders in the Plymouth colony, particularly Edward Winslow, and was a great friend to the Pilgrims as a people. Massasoit encouraged his people to help the Pilgrims establish crops, teaching them about what crops would grow and how to cultivate them in the rocky New England soil. This helped the passengers of the *Mayflower* firmly establish a colony and enabled them to store up food to survive the winter. Massasoit also feasted with the leaders of the Pilgrims in October of 1621, in what is now considered the first Thanksgiving. Throughout his life, Massasoit maintained positive relationships with leaders of the Plymouth colony and to maintain the peace treaty.

The relationship between Massasoit and the passengers of the *Mayflower* in many ways can be encapsulated by the peace treaty signed on either March 22 or April 1, 1621 (the date is disputed among various sources). It was Massasoit that approached the Pilgrims with his men, seeking to parley with the Pilgrims and wishing to trade and have peace with the settlers. In response to this request, Edward Winslow went as diplomatic ambassador, bringing gifts and telling Massasoit that "King James saluted him with words of love and Peace, and did accept him as his Friend and Alie [sic]" and that the governor of Plymouth colony wanted to meet with him. Amid the fanfare of a trumpet, drum, and a few musketeers, Governor John Carver and Massasoit kissed each other's hands and sat down to sign the treaty. The

main points of the treaty were that there would be no harming each other, anything taken would be restored, they would help each other if attacked, and they would not carry weapons when visiting each other. The treaty was quite beneficial to both sides, allowing the pilgrims to peacefully establish Plymouth Colony, and providing Massasoit and the Wampanoags a strong ally against their enemies, particularly the Narragansetts. Perhaps more significant than the treaty itself, was the gesture from Massasoit it represented. He and his people could have likely destroyed the fledgling Plymouth Colony, thus preserving all the Wampanoag territory, but instead Massasoit reached out and sought to become allies.

It is said that until after the time of Massasoit's death, the relationship between the Wampanoags and the Pilgrims was quite peaceful and productive. Massasoit and the leaders of the Plymouth Colony agreed to set up trade between the natives and the Pilgrims. In exchange for the expertise of the Wampanoags in getting food in the region, as well as for goods, the Pilgrims traded manufactured goods and tools from England. Massasoit sold several tracts of land to the Plymouth colony, and maintained friendships with its leaders. In 1623, when Massasoit was gravely ill, so he sent for help from his new friends. Edward Winslow went to visit him, bringing some remedies, including sassafras tea, to treat him. When Massasoit recovered, he said, "Now I see the English are my friends and love me. And whilst I live I will never forget this kindness they have showed me." He certainly showed that for the rest of his life, preventing disputes about land and other matters from escalating, and maintaining peaceful relations with the English.

Throughout Massasoit's life, he demonstrated noble character and great service in his relationship with the *Mayflower* passengers, and the colony may not have survived without him.

### **Bibliography**

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