




# American Miracles

---

Providence and the Pilgrims





# God Spares the Pilgrims on Their Trip to Holland

---

In 1609, the Pilgrims first fled the punishment of King James and sailed to Holland from England in hopes of finding a place to worship God freely. A massive storm arose and drove them just off the coast of Norway. According to Pilgrim Elder William Bradford, “when the water ran into their mouths and ears,” the captain and crew gave up and shouted: “We sink, we sink.”

But the Pilgrims prayed to God and said: “Yet Lord thou canst save, Yet Lord thou canst save,”

And then a miracle – the wind died down and they were able to slowly tack back to Holland. Had that not happened, there would have been no Pilgrims to cross the Atlantic in 1620.

Excerpt From: Thomas Fleming. “One Small Candle: The Pilgrims’ First Year in America.” Apple Books.





# The Pilgrims' Dire Situation on the Voyage to America

In 1620, having given up on Holland, they embarked on their journey to America by way of England. It took almost three months to make the North Atlantic voyage. It stormed most of the way. Gale force winds were common. The entire time was spent below decks

In one particularly bad storm, the main beam cracked. If not repaired, the ship would ultimately sink. The crew attempted a repair, but failed after many attempts. One of the Pilgrims suggested a psalm be sung. And they sang the 23rd psalm.

“The strongest men aboard - John Alden, the blasphemous boatswain’s mate, and a half dozen others - put their shoulders to the job while the freezing water poured down on them. But it was like trying to raise the roof beam of a house. The massive piece of timber only sagged a little more. A spare beam was dragged up from the hold, and the men tried using that as a ram. Again, failure...Then someone remembered a “great iron screw” they had bought in Holland to help them raise houses in the New World... Grunting and gasping, they lugged the screw up to the gun deck and placed it under the ruined beam.”

Excerpt From: Thomas Fleming. “One Small Candle: The Pilgrims’ First Year in America.” Apple Books.

The jackscrew worked. The ship was miraculously saved.





# Miracles on the High Seas

[This Photo](#) by Unknown author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#).

The immediate danger was past, but the storm did not abate. The crew wanted Captain Jones to head back to England.

“This was a question that Captain Jones and his mates must decide, and they retired to their cabin for a conference. On the gun deck, the carpenter and some sailors put additional braces under the cracked beam, and from their mutterings, it soon became obvious to the passengers that survival was by no means certain. “There was great distraction and difference of opinion amongst the mariners themselves,” Bradford tells us. Some were for going forward, but their ”

If they turned back now, halfway over, they would break their contract, forfeit their wages - and it was almost as long one way as the other. Still, some were for turning back because, in Bradford’s words, “they were loath to hazard their lives too desperately.”

“So,” William Bradford says, “they committed themselves to the will of God and resolved to proceed.”

Excerpt From: Thomas Fleming. “One Small Candle: The Pilgrims’ First Year in America.” Apple Books.



# Stuck Below Decks The Entire Voyage

“Day after day, they asked the captain or one of the mates if they could go up on deck, and the answer was always “No - too dangerous.” Seas were still running as high as the poop deck. Even with lifelines strung, the crew had to watch the water or go overboard. So the voyagers were condemned to more hours in the foul darkness of the gun deck. A hundred people crowded into a space not much roomier in total square feet than a modern house, unable to change their clothes or wash for over thirteen weeks now, with freezing sea water sloshing and dripping around them until everyone was permanently damp and chilled.”

Thomas Fleming. “One Small Candle: The Pilgrims’ First Year in America.” Apple Books

After seven weeks of the hell of being trapped in a rolling, stinking, poorly lighted, sweat soaked lower deck, John Howland could no longer stand the stench of his forced confinement below decks. Violating Captain Jones' and Elder Brewster's express orders, he opened the hatch and went above deck. He was quickly swept of the side. He hit the freezing water. The ship heeled so far over that its spars were dragging in the water. Miraculously, one snaked across his hand and he grabbed on. It is unknown how long he was in the water, but when he was hauled aboard he was blue. Sick for seven days, he ultimately recovered fully and stayed below decks for the rest of the voyage.

Only one person died on the voyage to America, William Batten, who refused to drink lemon juice and died of scurvy.





## Landing Off Course for Men, Exactly the Right Spot Planned by God

---

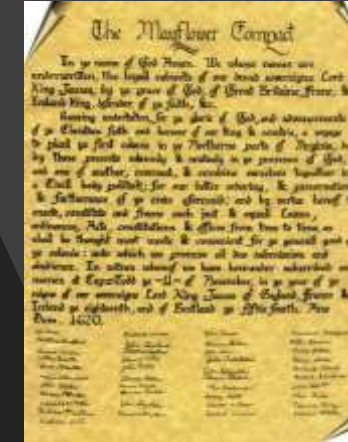
- Operating under the charter of Thomas Weston and the Virginia Company, the Pilgrims were allowed to colonize an area in northern Virginia, but no farther north than modern Westchester, New York. Blown off course by the storms, they landed instead at Cape Cod, no longer under the jurisdiction of the Virginia Company or anyone else. Pilgrim leader William Bradford later wrote, “several strangers made discontented and mutinous speeches.”
- Fearing mutiny, they quickly put together an agreement. This Mayflower Compact became the first time in recorded history that a group of free men had voluntarily and without coercion formed their own civil government.
- Just as with Jonah, the storms were the blessings of God that blew them off course. Had they not been blown off course, there would have been no Mayflower Compact.

# The Mayflower Compact

Modeled after the constitution of their church in Leyden, Holland which they had lived under by for ten years, they wrote:

*In the name of God, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the Loyal Subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord King James, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, defender of the Faith, etc.:*

*Having undertaken, for the Glory of God, and advancements of the Christian faith, and the honor of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the Northern parts of Virginia; do by these presents, solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God, and one another; covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic; for our better ordering, and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony; unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.*



[This Photo](#) by Unknown author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#).

[This Photo](#) by Unknown author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#).





# The Miracle Preparation of the Land

Venturing inland, they found over fifty acres of tilled land that appeared to be an Indian farm. But no Indians were seen.

“ they found the stubble of a harvested cornfield, strawberry and grape vines, and a “great store” of abundantly laden walnut trees. They marched on and came upon two more well-gleaned cornfields, and then a place where a house had been, and four or five old planks laid together.” They also “found another huge basket, full of “very fair corn of this year . . . some 36 goodly ears of corn, some yellow and some red and others mixed with blue.”

The land had been inhabited by the Pawtuxet tribe until the tribe was wiped out by a plague. Other tribes thought the land was cursed, so did not contest the Pilgrims farming it.

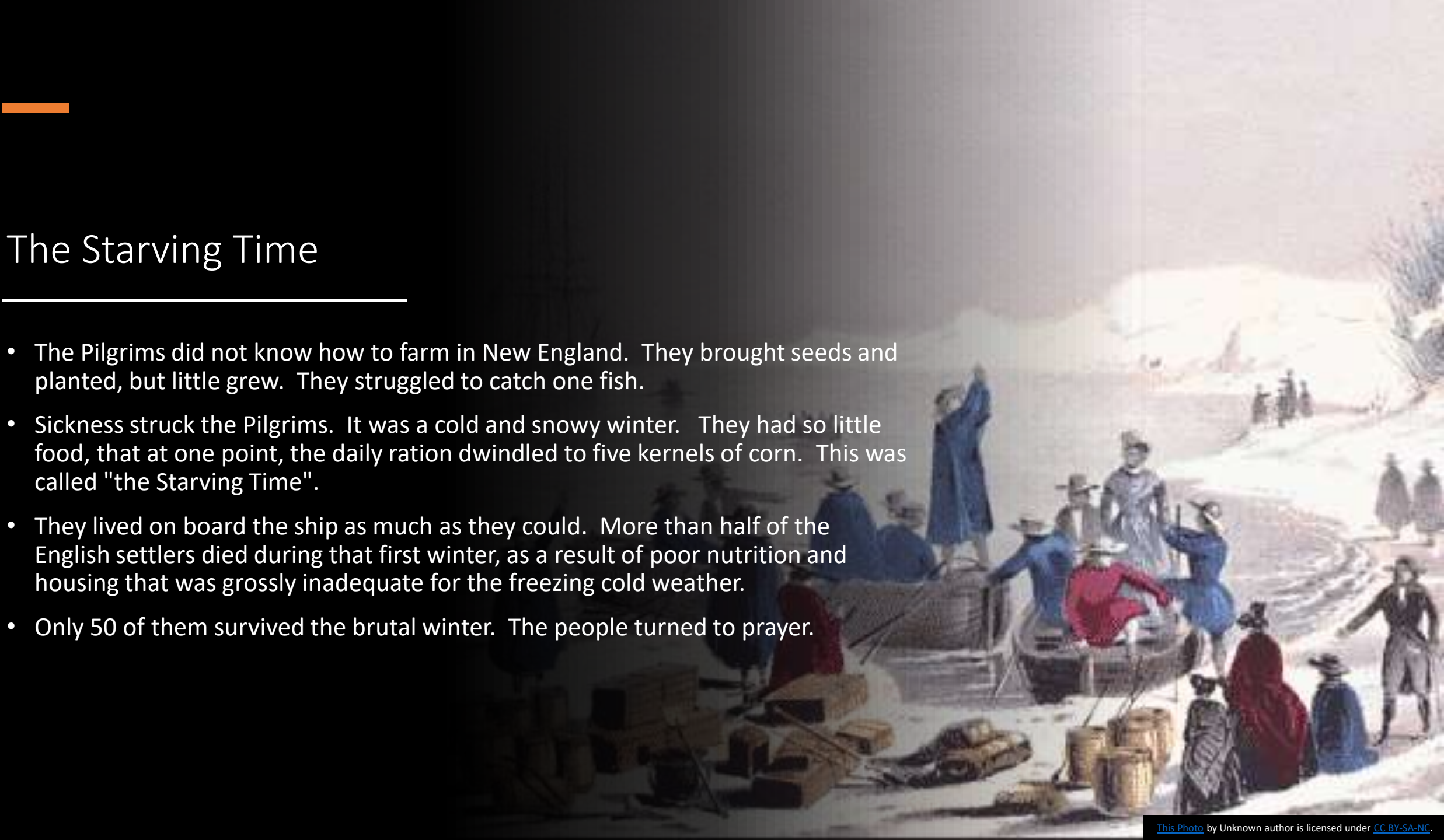
Just as the Israelites took over the farmland of the Canaanites, the Pilgrims inhabited the arable land of the Pawtuxet. "The LORD your God himself will push them out for your sake. He will drive them out before you, and you will take possession of their land, as the LORD your God promised you." Joshua 23:5



# The Starving Time

---

- The Pilgrims did not know how to farm in New England. They brought seeds and planted, but little grew. They struggled to catch one fish.
- Sickness struck the Pilgrims. It was a cold and snowy winter. They had so little food, that at one point, the daily ration dwindled to five kernels of corn. This was called "the Starving Time".
- They lived on board the ship as much as they could. More than half of the English settlers died during that first winter, as a result of poor nutrition and housing that was grossly inadequate for the freezing cold weather.
- Only 50 of them survived the brutal winter. The people turned to prayer.



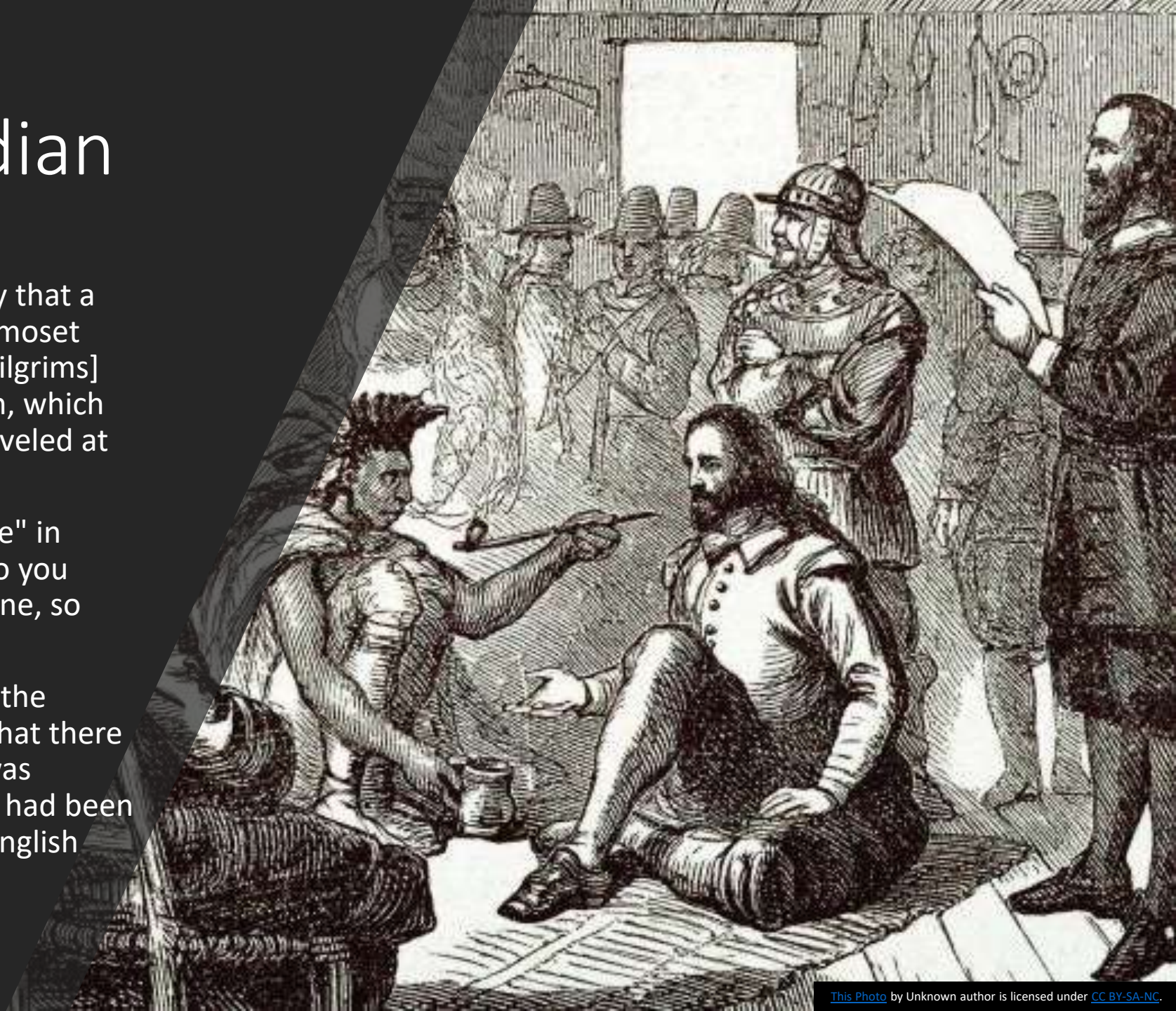


# The Helpful Indian

William Bradford records in his diary that a Wampanoag Indian chief named Samoset “came boldly amongst [a group of pilgrims] and spoke to them in broken English, which they could well understand but marveled at it.”

Samoset came in and said "Welcome" in perfect English. Then he added, "Do you have any beer?" There beer was gone, so they offered him brandy.

He sat and made conversation with the Pilgrims for awhile then told them that there was another Indian “whose name was Squanto, a native of this place, who had been in England and could speak better English than himself.”





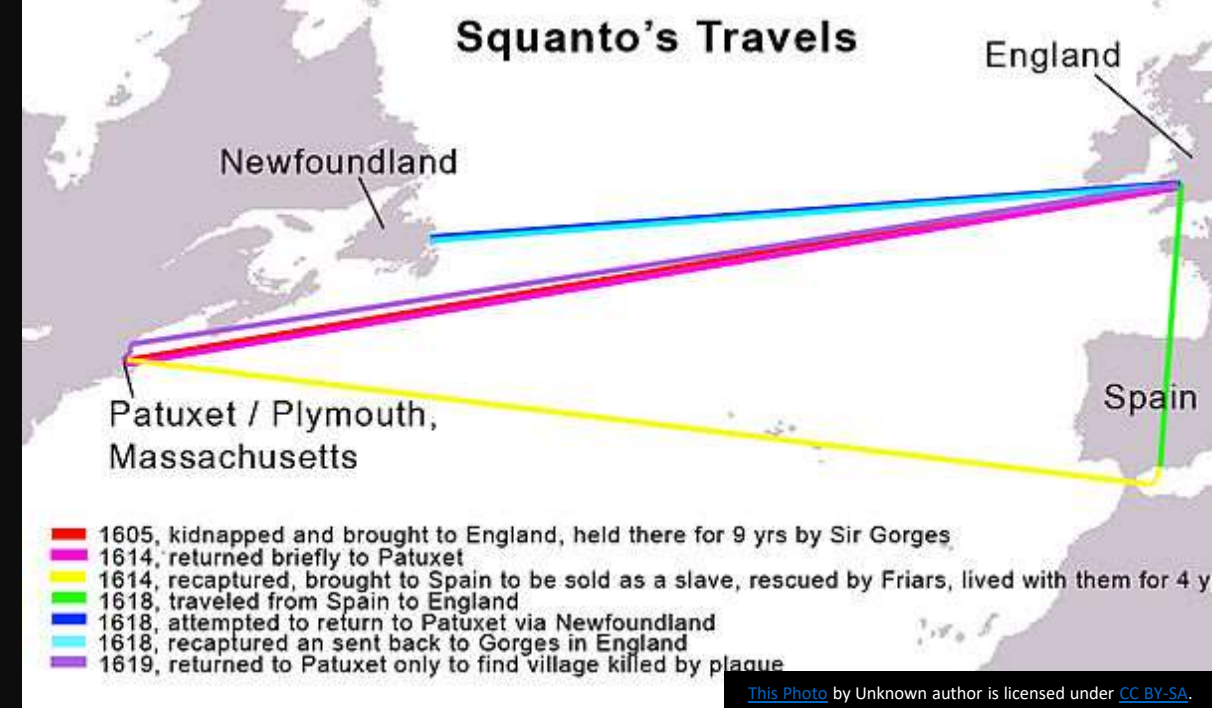
# Then God Sent A Man

"His name was Tisquantum, but he was called Squanto. He was the only living member of the Patuxet tribe, having survived, ironically, through the treachery of Captain Hunt, who had carried him and the other braves away to Spain to be sold into slavery.

Years before, in 1605, Squanto had already made a trip to England with another early visitor to Plymouth harbor, Captain George Weymouth. He had returned to the New World with Captain John Smith when that doughty explorer had mapped the coast of New England. Squanto was thus prepared to shift for himself, and when he was sold as a slave in Málaga, he quickly talked his way into the hands of the local Catholic friars who decided he was an excellent prospect for conversion.

Somehow, in the course of a year or two, Squanto managed to attach himself to an Englishman traveling in Spain, and he arrived in England, where he was well received by many people, including the powerful Sir Ferdinando Gorges, head of the Council for New England. Thanks to Gorges, Squanto had been sent back to his native land with Captain Dermer in 1619 but had arrived to discover that his family and entire tribe had been wiped out by the plague."

Thomas Fleming. "One Small Candle: The Pilgrims' First Year in America." Apple Books.



# Squanto and Joseph

"What you intended for harm, God intended for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." Genesis 50:20





# The Miracle of Squanto

- He spoke fluent English
- He spoke several Indian tongues
- He knew the other tribes and brokered peace deals
- He knew the land
- He trained the Pilgrims to farm, fish, and hunt
- He remained loyal to the Pilgrims
- The Pilgrims would not have survived without him.
- William Bradford call Squanto: " A special instrument sent of God for our good, beyond our expectations."





# Thanks to God

Squanto worked hard to prove his value to the Pilgrims as not only a vital communicator but also an expert on resources. So he taught them how to cultivate crops that would help them get through the next brutal winter.

He taught them to plant five kernels of corn with a fish head in the middle. He showed them how to fish and how to catch eels. The Pilgrims found that corn and squash were ideally suited for the Massachusetts climate.

The Pilgrims demonstrated their gratitude by inviting Squanto and close to 100 Wampanoag Indians to celebrate their first successful harvest in America.

This first "Thanksgiving" lasted three days sometime between September and November, 1621. They feasted on fowl, deer, and popcorn, among other items.

One course was five kernels of corn, so they would remember the "Starving Time".







# Squanto Died in 1622

In November 1622, Squanto succumbed to a fatal disease while visiting Indians in Monomoy, near modern day Pleasant Bay. He died while serving as a guide to William Bradford.

Bradford wrote in his journal: “In this place Squanto fell sick of an Indian fever, bleeding much at the nose (which the Indians take for a symptom of [impending] death) and within a few days died there; desiring the Governor [Bradford] to pray for him, that he might go to the Englishmens God in heaven, and bequeathed sundry of his things to the sundry of his English friends, as remembrance if his love, of whom they had a great loss.”

# God's Providence

If the Pilgrims had arrived on Cape Cod in 1619, they would have missed Squanto. They would not have made it through the first winter.

If they had not been delayed by problems, they would have missed the North Atlantic storms and missed Squanto.

If the Pilgrims had arrived in 1622, Squanto would have been dead. They would likewise not have survived.

But they set out on their voyage at the exact right time and were driven by God's winds to the exact right place that had been prepared beforehand for them so that we would have this great nation in which to live.

"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Rom 8:28

