

displaced by other Indians who had formed alliances with the Dutch of New Netherland or with the Massachusetts Bay Colony.⁵⁵ The Pilgrims' principal alliance was with the Pokanoket Indians, whose leader Massasoit Osamequen was recognized as a superior by the leaders of several affiliated groups from Plymouth south and westwards.⁵⁶ His dominance was insecure, as Corbitant's insubordination had indicated.

The Pilgrims' alliance with the Pokanokets required that they take a defensive and antagonistic attitude towards the Pokanokets' enemies, especially the Narragansetts but also any other groups that rejected Massasoit Osamequen's dominance. He sent messages to the Pilgrims by Hobbamock to let them know that a band of Massachusetts 'Indians, together with Nauset Indians on Cape Cod, were attempting to foment a rebellion to wipe out the Wessagusett colony, then to destroy the Pilgrim colony, and finally to attack the consequently weakened Pokanokets.

Winslow reports that while he was returning to Plymouth from visiting Massasoit Osamequen at Pokanoket he learned that Standish had left for Wessagusett. But, the journey incomplete, bad weather drove Standish back to Plymouth, where Winslow talked to him on his return.

Wessagusett was a rival trading settlement located in Massachusetts land, financed by Weston. Despite the competition, John Sanders, the leader, was running out of supplies and had appealed to Plymouth for food and assistance. Standish had apparently been attempting to bring relief to Wessagusett. Bradford and Allerton reported to London (six months after the attack) that Weston's dissolute men had "so exasperated the Indians against them as they plotted their [Wessagusett's] overthrow," secretly instigating "other peoples to conspire against us also, thinking to cut off our shallop abroad, and then to assault us with their force at home."⁵⁷ But Massasoit Osamequen had warned them through Hobbamock. A separate

⁵⁵ Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs, *Indian Deeds, Land Transactions in Plymouth Colony, 1620-1691* (Boston, Massachusetts: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2002), 16-7, 222; *Bradford's History "Of Plimoth Plantation."*, 370-5, 405-7.

⁵⁶ This was not, however, a Wampanoag imperium. The name "Wampanoag" is not recorded as a name used by the Pokanokets or their allies. It appears first on a mid-seventeenth-century Dutch-made map. Evidently the Dutch asked Natives in the area of New Netherlands what the nations farther east were called. The answer was "Wampanoos," meaning "people from the east," now poetically translated as "people of the dawn."

⁵⁷ Bradford, William, and Isaac Allerton, R. G. Marsden (ed.), "A Letter of William Bradford and Isaac Allerton, 1623," *The American Historical Review* 8 (1903), 294-301, specifically 298-9. The letter is dated September 8, 1623.