

A Portrait of the Massasoit Ousamequin



“Gifts for Massasoit, c.1621”

A contemporary painting by artist Ruth Major of [the Massasoit Ousamequin](#), who met the Pilgrims in 1621, and who was [reburied at Burr’s Hill Park](#) in Warren, RI in 2017, is currently on display at the Rogers Free Library in Bristol, RI.

In the portrait, we see the following as [described by Pilgrim Edward Winslow in 1621](#) and published in London in [Mort’s Relation](#) in 1622:

- a red horseman’s coat given to him as a gift in the spring of 1621 by Edward Winslow and Stephen Hopkins on behalf of the Plymouth colonists;
- “in his bosom hanging in a string, a great long knife”;
- a great chain of white bone beads about his neck”;
- a copper jewel chain”;
- his face was painted with a sad red like murry”;

And, as described in a letter by Emmanuel Altham in 1623:

- “a black wolf skin he wears upon his shoulder”;
- “about the breadth of a span he wears beads about his middle”.



(Above) Pilgrim Edward Winslow visited the Massasoit Ousamequin at Somams (now Warren) in July, 1621 and again in April 1623.



The Massasoit was reburied in Burr’s Hill Park in Warren in 2017 after having been exhumed in 1913 by Librarian Charles Carr.

Since 1990, artist Ruth Major’s historical paintings and portraits have been exhibited on Martha’s Vineyard, where she lives, and in Maine, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York and Illinois. Ms. Major has a Masters degree from the Mass College of Art and Design and is currently a fine artist and author. She has worked with several archaeologists and historians on the development of historical paintings and is descended from a long line of merchant mariners, artists, scientists and writers who taught her to be a keen observer and to honor her ancestors. More about the artist can be found at [ruthmajor.com](#).

More information may be found at [www.SowamsHeritageArea.org](#)