



The Pilgrims Receiving Massasoit www.Granger.com

When the Pokanoket Chief, Massasoit or Osamequin (Yellow Feather), first met the Pilgrims in what is now Plymouth, MA in 1621, he was living forty miles to the west in an area known as Sowams. While the Massasoit presided over a confederaton of tribes extending from just south of present-day Boston to Bristol, RI and from the Atlantic coast to present day Providence, RI, his primary home was along what are now the Barrington, Kickemuit, Providence and Palmer Rivers.

Sowams was a rich land, described as “the garden of the Spatent” by Miles Standish and prized by the Native tribes for its rich soil, abundant wildlife and access to the water that provided their food. When the colonists arrived, much of the land had already been actively managed to provide good hunting and easy access to fishing.

*Your increased awareness of its history will encourage you to protect our remaining natural resources and to better understand the Pokanoket people. . .*

Though he had met briefly many times with European explorers and traders, Massasoit’s first meeting with the Pilgrims in Plymouth on March 22, 1621 began a continuous peaceful relationship that lasted past his death in 1661. However, over those forty years, some of the land over which the Massasoit presided was permitted to be used for farming by colonists in exchange for money, tools, guns and other items that the English supplied.

As more colonists encroched onto Sowams land, it became clear to both Massasoit and his sons, Wamsutta and Metacom, that they were losing control of their land and culture. Following a series of injustices, war broke out in June, 1675, in present-day Warren. Pokanoket, Narragansett and Nipmuc tribes joined forces to burn colonial villages from Dartmouth to Northampton, including all of Sowams, in an effort to force colonists

to flee. In 1676, colonial armies were able to gain the upper hand, and with help from other tribes, were able to bring the war to a close in August, 1676.

In the ensuing years, all Pokanoket land was taken over by the colonists, and all of the surviving Pokanokets either fled the area, were enslaved, or went into hiding. Over the next 150 years, towns were laid out in what was once Sowams, and nearly all traces of its original inhabitants were erased. What followed were years of continual development, the growth of towns, and the gradual loss of much of the original natural abundance that the Native people had enjoyed.

The bountiful nature of the land and water in Sowams still shines through today, and the Pokanokets still maintain an active relationship with the land. While much of the original “garden” that the English settlers described when they arrived it is now buried in asphalt, covered with urban structures, or modified to such a degree that it’s unrecognizable from what it once was, an appreciation of places like the Ten Mile River in East Providence, the Sowams Woods in Barrington or the Weypoysset Preserve in Bristol, offer revealing glimpses into the past.

In recognition of the original 1621 Treaty, you are invited to explore the many remaining locations that still give evidence of 17th century Sowams and the important events that began transforming the land into what we have today. Hopefully, your increased awareness of this history will encourage you to protect our remaining natural resources and lead you to a better understanding the Pokanoket people.



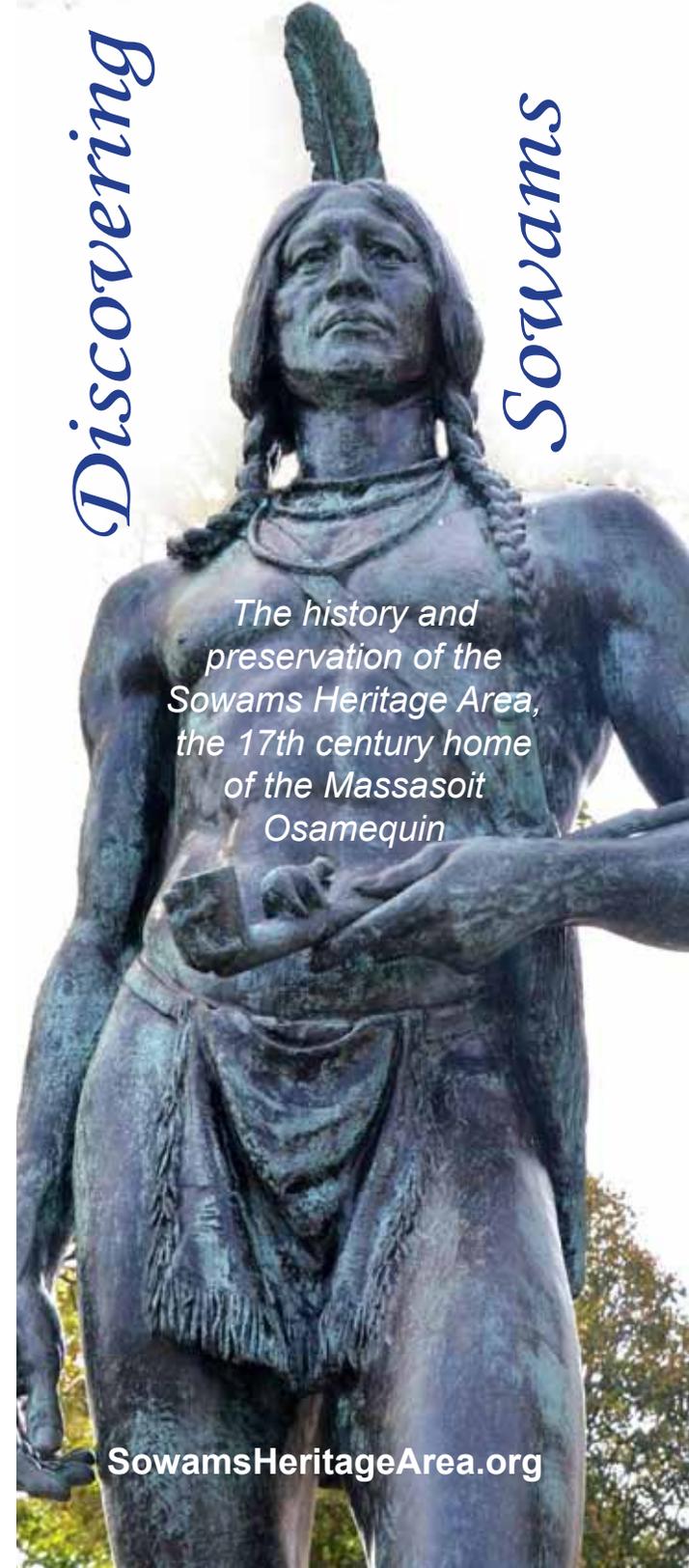
**SowamsHeritageArea.org  
and find us on Facebook**

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Discovering

Sowams



*The history and preservation of the Sowams Heritage Area, the 17th century home of the Massasoit Osamequin*

**SowamsHeritageArea.org**



It can be argued that Sowams was the pivotal place of cultural exchange between indigenous people and colonizing settlers in North America. Few people realize that there was a treaty between the Pokanoket Tribe and the Pilgrims signed on April 1st, 1621. This peace treaty stood for over 50 years before it was broken during the conflict known as King Philip's War in 1675. The initiation and duration of the peace is unique among the colonial patterns of interaction across the New World. The eventual conflict was costly to both populations, and the impact of this clash of cultures continues to this day.

*... these lands and waters have proven to be a bountiful resource for those making this area their home.*

From the time of the last glacial retreat, approximately 12,000 years ago, these lands and waters have proven to be a bountiful resource for those making this area their home. The land came to be known as Sowams or 'south country'. The original Algonquian people were known as the Pokanoket, which refers to the "place of the cleared land", and later as the Wampanoag, "people of the early light".

The web site, [SowamsHeritageArea.org](http://SowamsHeritageArea.org) is designed to identify the locations that reveal the first steps in 17th century colonial occupation that started to transform Sowams into what we have today. Many pages describe these historic locations while other pages describe the Pokanoket Tribe today, provide links to videos of recent presentations, and describe the development of a Sowams Heritage Area through an ongoing blog, links to documents and brochures, and a listing of upcoming events.



## 52 Sowams Heritage Area Sites

- 1st Mass. Baptist Church, Barrington
- Abram's Rock, Swansea
- Allen-West House, Barrington
- Anawan Rock, Rehoboth
- Ancient Oak Trees, Barrington/Warren
- Bold Point, East Providence
- Bridgham Farm, East Providence
- Burial Place Hill, Rehoboth
- Burr's Hill Burial Ground, Warren
- Cahoon Brickworks, Swansea
- Church of Christ, Swansea
- Elm Farm, Bristol
- First Congregational Church, Bristol
- Haile-Nunes Farmhouse, Warren
- Hampden Meadows Greenway, Barrington
- Hugh Cole Well, Warren
- Hunt's Mills/Ten-Mile River, E. Providence
- India Point, Providence
- John Martin House, Barrington
- Joseph Reynolds House, Bristol
- Kee Farm, Warren
- Kickemuit Cemetery, Warren
- King Philip's Seat, Mt. Hope, Bristol
- King's Rock, Swansea/Warren
- Kingsley House, Rehoboth
- Little Neck Cemetery, E. Providence
- Margaret's Rock, Swansea
- Martin Farm, Swansea
- Massasoit Spring, Barrington
- Massasoit Spring, Warren
- Myles Garrison, Swansea
- Nathaniel Bosworth House, Bristol
- Nathaniel Daggett House, E. Prov.
- Neutaconkanut Hill, Providence
- Newman Cong. Church, E. Providence
- Nockum Hill Cemetery, Barrington
- Obadiah Bowen Lot Cemetery, Warren
- Osamequin Nature Trails, Barrington
- Palmer's River Cemetery, Rehoboth
- Phillip Walker House, E. Providence
- Rehoboth Village & Dam, Rehoboth
- Roger Williams Nat'l Memorial, Providence
- Royal Charter of 1663, Providence
- Sowams Woods, Barrington
- Tobey Site on the Palmer, Rehoboth
- Tyler Point Cemetery, Barrington
- Wannamoisset Marker, E. Providence
- Weybosset Bridge, Providence
- Weypossett Preserve, Bristol
- William Hunt House, Seekonk
- Ye Olde Eddy Burial Ground, Swansea



Find descriptions of each place by clicking on the interactive map at [SowamsHeritageArea.org](http://SowamsHeritageArea.org)