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“A Country Wonderfully Prepared for their  
Entertainment” *The Aftermath of the New England  
Indian Epidemic of 1616*

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MATTHEW KRUER

# “A Country Wonderfully Prepared for their Entertainment”

## *The Aftermath of the New England Indian Epidemic of 1616*

MATTHEW KRUER

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A formidable mythology has grown up around the Pilgrims and their voyage to the New World. In the popular myth a group of idealistic religious reformers fled persecution into the wilds of the New World, braving seas, storms, winter, hunger, and death at the hands of teeming hordes of Indians, carving a new life out of an unspoiled wilderness, building a civilization with naked force of will and an unshakable religious vision. As with most historical myths, this account has been idealized to the point that it obscures the facts of the Pilgrims' voyage. When the handful of separatists stepped onto the shores of New England in 1620, they did not step into an untamed wilderness. They did not run into wild bands of ravenous savages bent on their destruction, nor did they ever have to contend with the full force of nature's fury. In fact, they walked into an abandoned village, whose inhabitants had been gone barely long enough for weeds to grow over the tilled fields of corn. They discovered caches of crops, tools, and other supplies, as if they were waiting to be found and put into use by industrious hands. They moved quietly into a graveyard and built their shining example of a city on the hill directly on the still-exposed carcasses of dead Indians.

The site they had chosen was of late the Indian village of Patuxet, which had been wiped off the face of the earth a few years earlier by a plague the likes of which the natives had never seen before. It was a virgin soil epidemic of biblical proportions, which left no aspect of Indian society untouched. Economic networks crumbled and trade routes faltered; political boundaries and military fortunes changed overnight as the relative strength of tribes fluctuated; even the religious beliefs of many Indians were undermined, such was the power of this sweeping sickness. The Pilgrims arrived into this maelstrom of terror, a world reeling from the body blow it had just received and struggling desperately to reconstitute itself. And while the epidemic had a direct and appalling effect on the destiny of the Indians, through the fate of the Indians it affected the Pilgrims as well. The Pilgrims invoked the epidemic and its cataclysmic depopulation of the countryside time and again as proof that they were destined to rule New England, and they followed suit by following an

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aggressive policy of political subjugation. At the same time, the devastation of the population and resulting demoralization caused by the ravages of an unstoppable disease first allowed the Pilgrims to gain a toehold at Plymouth, then eventually resulted in the long-term success of their designs for regional dominion.

The epidemic began no later than 1616. During that year the English explorer Richard Vines wintered at the mouth of the Saco River and there witnessed the natives suffering from a disease that his employer, Ferdinando Gorges, termed “the Plague.”<sup>1</sup> Though the epidemic affected the New England coast between the Kennebec River and possibly Penobscot Bay to the north and Narragansett Bay in the south, its effects seem to have been limited to those tribes that were involved in a loose confederation with French traders, including the Massachusetts, Wampanoags,<sup>2</sup> Pawtuckets, Pemaquids, Pennacooks, and Abenaki.<sup>3</sup> The northern Abenaki mostly hunted furs to trade for corn from the southern tribes, forming a network of trade routes that helped the disease spread from one area to another. Notably, the Narragansetts, who lived south of Narragansett Bay and traded with the Dutch, were not appreciably affected by the epidemic.<sup>4</sup>

Diagnosis of the particular malady that afflicted the Indians of the Massachusetts coast is problematic for several reasons. First, the dearth of eyewitnesses forces historians to rely mostly on second-hand reports from surviving Indians, most of whom conveyed their information through a formidable language barrier. The only two Europeans who witnessed the epidemic firsthand were Richard Vines and Thomas Dermer, of whom the latter visited the Massachusetts coast in 1619.<sup>5</sup> Vines’ original observations have not survived, and though they are reported through accounts left by Ferdinando Gorges, this diffusion of information somewhat weakens their reliability. Furthermore, the variety of sources that refer to diseases in the early days of European colonization used exceedingly vague terminology and apparently applied it more in a descriptive sense than a diagnostic one. Of the twenty-three contemporary sources cited by Herbert Williams in his analysis of the 1616 epidemic, twelve referred to the disease simply as “the plague.”<sup>6</sup> Even a glance at some of these sources

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<sup>1</sup> Ferdinando Gorges, *Sir Ferdinando Gorges and his Province of Maine*, 3 vols., ed. James Pinney Baxter (Boston: Prince Society Publications, 1890), 2:19.

<sup>2</sup> referred to as Pokanoket in some sources, after the location of the largest village. In the rest of this paper they will be referred to as Wampanoags, but the name used in quoted sources will be left intact.

<sup>3</sup> Sherburne F. Cook, “The Significance of Disease in the Extinction of the New England Indian,” *Human Biology* 45 (1973): 485-508, quoted in Timothy Bratton, “Identity of the New England Indian Epidemic of 1616-1619,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 62, no. 3 (1988): 352.

<sup>4</sup> William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation*, ed. William T. Davis (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1908), 118; Nathaniel Morton, *New Englands Memoriall*, ed. Howard J. Hall (New York: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1937), 31.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes*, 20 vols., (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1905-7), 19:128-134.

<sup>6</sup> Herbert Williams, “The Epidemic of the Indians of New England, 1616-1620,” *The John Hopkins Hospital Bulletin* 20, no. 224 (1909): 340-349.

reveals the loose sense in which the word is employed. For example, in Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana*, he refers to the same disease variously as "a sweeping mortality," "a prodigious pestilence," and "an horrible and unusual plague"—all on the same page.<sup>7</sup> In *Three Episodes of Massachusetts History*, Charles Adams commented, "In the seventeenth century the name "plague" was a convenient one, popularly used in connection with any fatal epidemic the nature and symptoms of which physicians did not understand."<sup>8</sup> Since most of the commentators were not trained physicians but explorers, farmers, and businessmen, their descriptions cannot be considered anything other than the observations of amateurs.

These considerations make a definitive identification of the 1616 epidemic impossible. In his exhaustive analysis of the possible candidates for the disease, however, the medical historian Timothy Bratton sets down these definitive facts: in order to cause the horrific depopulation figures reported by various authorities, the case mortality rate must have been between 50-75%; "the disease originated in Europe and represented a classic 'virgin soil' encounter between Amerindians and alien contagion"; the three definitive symptoms described by Vines, Dermer, and later Gookin were a severe headache, lingering pockmarks, and a pronounced yellowing of the skin.<sup>9</sup> With these facts, and the above considerations, in mind, Bratton produces three candidates which fit many, though not all, of the criteria for the epidemic. A diagnosis of bubonic plague is supported by the appalling mortality rate and the disease's ability to sustain its virulence through the winter, but the lack of the necessary population density or any mention of the characteristic buboes weaken this case significantly. Additionally, in the early seventeenth century Massachusetts possessed no significant rodent population and its climate was decidedly unsuitable for the *Xenopsylla cheopsis* flea, thus depriving the plague of its crucial vectors.<sup>10</sup> Bratton makes a novel case for a diagnosis of cerebrospinal meningitis, citing its extraordinary case-mortality rate (as high as 77%), the immunity of the carriers, and the incidence of both pockmarks and headaches as symptoms.<sup>11</sup> However, this leaves aside the important criterion of jaundice. More importantly: though meningitis has a high mortality rate, its attack rate—on the order of 3.5 cases per thousand even among virgin populations—is far too low to cause the depopulation described by later writers.<sup>12</sup> Smallpox, on the other hand, possesses both the necessary attack and mortality rate; its symptoms include the preceding headache and resulting pockmarks; Europeans such as Vines and his party would have been immune to its effects; and there is some paleopathological evidence of skeletal deformities consistent with smallpox attacks on children.<sup>13</sup> The most serious flaw in

<sup>7</sup> Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, (Hartford: Silus Andrus, 1820), 49. Emphasis in original.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Francis Adams, *Three Episodes of Massachusetts History*, 2 vols., (New York: Russel & Russel, 1965), 1:1

<sup>9</sup> Bratton, "Identity," 353-354.

<sup>10</sup> Bratton, "Identity," 369-372.

<sup>11</sup> Bratton, "Identity," 372-373.

<sup>12</sup> Bratton, "Identity," 374.

<sup>13</sup> Bratton, "Identity," 375-382.

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the smallpox case is the fact that a similar epidemic in 1633, described by Governor William Bradford as “the small poxe,” struck the same populations affected by the earlier epidemic.<sup>14</sup> Billee Hoornbeek points out that the survivors of an earlier epidemic would have developed an immunity to the disease, whereas the 1633 outbreak affected all ages indiscriminately.<sup>15</sup> Despite the objections to its diagnosis, however, smallpox remains the most likely candidate for the 1616 epidemic—if for no other reason than because it raises fewer objections than any other theory of contagion.

Regardless of the nature of the disease, the devastation that it caused among the affected tribes is incalculable. According to Sherburne F. Cook, “Opinion is unanimous on the part of those present at or close to the visitation of the plague that . . . the mortality was extraordinarily high. Estimates range from roughly 75 percent upward, with several flat assertions that in several places all the inhabitants died.”<sup>16</sup> Cook also notes that evidence from the writings of John Smith—though they must be accepted with a note of caution because of their imprecision—consistently describes the decrease in population by a factor of ten, a mortality figure of 90-95%. Smith’s contemporaries, including John White, Thomas Morton, and John Josselyn, provided similar estimates.<sup>17</sup>

Of course, the figures most often given by contemporary sources are in terms of depopulation since most of them witnessed only the aftermath of the disease and not its actual course through the Indian population. Thus, the figures quoted above reflect the rate of overall depopulation rather than the actual case-mortality rate of the infection. Three other factors, therefore, must be taken into account in addition to the immediate deaths due to the pathogen which caused the infection. Even assuming, conservatively, a case-mortality rate of 50%, such a massive number of casualties in the span of a few years would have caused a systemic breakdown in the functioning of society. Tribes were suddenly deprived of leadership, both politically in the form of their *sachems*, or chiefs, and spiritually in the form of their *powwows*, or medicine men. The catastrophic loss of population resulted in a disruption of food production due to a simultaneous loss of hunters and planters; moreover, the sick and dying were a drain on the productive capacity of those still well enough to work. This inevitably led to shortages, famine, and starvation.

Second, once the virulence of the contagion was fully realized, still-healthy Indians abandoned their villages, as evidenced by the vast numbers of corpses and skeletons left unburied. Thomas Morton described the scene of one long-abandoned village in these grim terms:

They died on heapes, as they lay in their houses; and the living, that were able to shift for themselves, would runne away and let them dy,

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<sup>14</sup> Bradford, *Plymouth Plantation*, 312.

<sup>15</sup> Billee Hoornbeek, “An investigation into the cause or causes of the epidemic which decimated the Indian population of New England, 1616-1619,” *New Hampshire Archaeologist*, 1976-1977, 19: 39, quoted in Bratton, “Investigation,” 376.

<sup>16</sup> Sherburne F. Cook, *The Indian Population of New England in the Seventeenth Century*, (London: University of California Press, 1976), 31.

<sup>17</sup> Cook, *Indian Population*, 31.

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and let there Carkases ly above the ground without buriall. For in a place where many inhabited, there hath been but one left a live to tell what became of the rest; the livinge being (as it seemes) not able to bury the dead, they were left for the Crowes, Kites, and vermin to pray upon. And the bones and skulls upon the severall places of their habitations made such a spectacle after my comming into those partes, that, as I travailed in that Forrest nere the Massachusetts, it seemed to mee a new found Golgotha.<sup>18</sup>

The flight of those unaffected, or those whose infection was still in the incubation stage, not only resulted in the immediate deaths of those who were too sick to care for themselves but also served to further spread the infection to new areas.

Lastly, the Indians lacked any appropriate model of contagion and thereby persisted in practices which encouraged the spread of disease. For example, Edward Winslow describes the custom of Indians “when any, especially of note, are dangerously sick, for all that profess friendship to them, to visit them in their extremity.”<sup>19</sup> Thus, the response of Indian communities to the epidemic was to summon powwows along with the friends and relatives of the ill. All these people would be packed into a single wigwam for an extensive vigil, providing the disease ample opportunity to find new hosts. The combination, then, of a virulent disease impacting an unprotected population, social breakdown and starvation, neglect of the sick, and simple ignorance was responsible for the decimation of the Massachusetts coast Indian tribes. All this had a pronounced psychological effect on the Indians, one that is all the more important because the plague was connected from the start with Europeans. Cotton Mather reports that

A Frenchman who had not long before these transactions, had by a shipwreck been made a captive among the Indians of this country, did, as the survivors reported, just before he dyed in their hands, tell those tawny pagans, that God being angry with them for their wickedness, would not only destroy them all, but also people the place with another nation . . . those infidels then blasphemously replied, God would not kill them; which blasphemous mistake was confuted by an horrible and unusual plague, whereby they were consumed in such vast multitudes that our first planters found the land almost covered with their unburied carcasses; and they that were left alive, were smitten into awful and humble regards of the English, by the terrors which the remembrance of the Frenchman’s prophesie had imprinted on them.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan*, ed. Charles Francis Adams (New York: Prince Society Publications, 1883), 132-133.

<sup>19</sup> Edward Winslow, “Good News from New England,” in *The Story of the Pilgrim Fathers as told by Themselves, their Friends, and their Enemies*, ed. Edward Arber (London: Ward & Downey, 1897), 547.

<sup>20</sup> Mather, *Magnalia Christi*, 49.

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Though the French sailor's curse was disdained by a proud and mighty race of Indians, the epidemic that ravaged the countryside soon after was attributed to the vengeful wrath of the European God.<sup>21</sup> As a natural corollary to this supposition, the Indians believed their own gods were displeased with their sacrifices. The Wampanoags interpreted the fact that the Narragansett tribe was almost entirely unaffected by the epidemic as a sign that their enemies remained in the protective grace of their god Cautantowwit, while their own god, Kietitan, had forsaken them. In addition, Neal Salisbury contends that this formidable collusion of divine malevolence was compounded by retribution from beyond the grave. They believed that their relatives, resentful of having been abandoned and denied a dignified burial, were responsible for turning the spiritual forces in nature against them.<sup>22</sup> Thus, it was evident to the decimated tribes that an alignment of supernatural powers was responsible for their doom.

Therefore, there are two aspects to the Indians' psychological reaction which must be taken into account. First is the debilitating effects of a traumatic event, a phenomenon well-documented by modern clinical and experimental psychologists. The initial shock of a disaster on the scale of the 1616 epidemic causes a long-term psychological shift. This results in depression and anxiety; the traumatized individual becomes paralyzed with feelings of powerlessness.<sup>23</sup> The aftereffects of the epidemic were exacerbated by the view among the Indians that they had somehow brought the sickness upon themselves, and thus were ultimately responsible for their own misfortune. The interaction of these two psychological effects resulted in a profound shift in the worldview of the Indians. The proud defiance that John Smith had noted in his earlier expeditions gave way to an attitude of submission.

The Indians were defeated not only psychologically, but militarily as well—before the Pilgrims ever arrived on the shores of New England. The once mighty Wampanoags, according to Cook's analysis able to field more than 1,000 warriors, were reduced to a meager handful. Though the Wampanoags were not as heavily affected as the Massachusetts—who were reduced from a strength rivaling that of the

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<sup>21</sup> Alfred W. Crosby, "GodÉ Would Destroy Them, and Give Their Country to Another PeopleÉ" *American Heritage* 29 (1978): 6, 39; Nathaniel Morton, *New Englands Memoriall*, ed. Howard J. Hall (New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1937), 27.

<sup>22</sup> Neal Salisbury, "Squanto: Last of the Patuxet," in *The Human Tradition in Colonial America*, ed. Ian K. Steele and Nancy L. Rhoden (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1999), 28. Also, Thomas Morton mentions that the Indians usually bury their dead ceremoniously, but that the social breakdown caused by the epidemic resulted in the abandonment of those rituals. See Morton, *New England Canaan*, 132.

<sup>23</sup> Marianne Amir, Zeev Kaplan, and Moshe Kotler, "Type of Trauma, Severity of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Core Symptoms, and Associated Features," *Journal of General Psychology* 123: 4, 348. Most of the psychological literature regarding traumatic experiences has necessarily focused on the individual and attempts at rehabilitation. For the purposes of this paper, the results of studies done on individuals and isolated groups have been generalized to the level of a society, since the psychological reactions of individuals to a common traumatic event will naturally have an aggregate effect on the entire society.

Wampanoag to a pitiful 60 warriors—the decimation of their fighting population led to what Salisbury considers a militarily untenable situation.<sup>24</sup> Against the nearly unaffected Narragansetts they could not hope to maintain their previous territorial boundaries. Between 1616 and 1620 the Narragansetts became increasingly aggressive, by Russell Thornton's account advancing past the Seekonk River towards Massachusetts and Wampanoag lands. They drove the Wampanoags from several islands in the Narragansett Bay and pushed them in between the Weekapaugs and Pequots near the current border between Rhode Island and Connecticut.<sup>25</sup> The Wampanoags tried to consolidate the shattered remnants of previous bands under the leadership of strong sachems, such as Massasoit and his brother Quadaquina, but eventually they were forced to seek terms from their traditional enemies. Massasoit humbled himself before the Narragansetts, gave up his claim to the Narragansett Bay, and entered into an expensive and humiliating tributary relationship.<sup>26</sup>

The epidemic had economic implications for the Indians as well. Having barely one tenth of the number of hunters it once had, tribes found that they could not field nearly enough beaver pelts and otter skins to satisfy fur-hungry French and English traders. Salisbury maintains that, as the number of pelts available for trade dwindled, so too did the number of European traders willing to make a stop for so unprofitable a harvest, especially when there were so many rich hunting grounds as yet untapped in the vast reaches of the New World.<sup>27</sup> Though trade between northern and southern tribes still existed—they had become far too interdependent to stop the exchange of fur and corn altogether—it was an economic system that had been shattered by demographic realities, and all the tribes in the French trade coalition suffered for it. Furthermore, the Wampanoag's economic universe was not only crippled by a loss of income through trade, it was also drained of vital resources by their subordination to the Narragansetts.

This, then, was the Indian population that a threadbare group of English separatists encountered in the winter of 1620: devastated by disease, politically divided, and economically crippled. The Pilgrims, however, were by no means caught unawares by the disarray of the coastal Indians. On the contrary, certain European entrepreneurs had been eyeing New England for years and saw that the effects of the epidemic had cracked the country wide open to the opportunity for colonization. Principal among these was Ferdinando Gorges, who had sponsored several of the earlier English voyages to the area around present-day Massachusetts. Captain Thomas Dermer wrote to him that he had found "some antient Plantations, not long since populous now utterly void; in other places a remnant remains, but not free of sicknesse."<sup>28</sup> Sensing an opportunity for profit, and encouraged by reports that all along the coast the Indians were weakened by the passage of disease, Gorges sought a charter for the territory under the

<sup>24</sup> Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England 1500-1643* (New York: Oxford, 1982), 103.

<sup>25</sup> Russell Thornton, *American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 171.

<sup>26</sup> Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 105.

<sup>27</sup> Salisbury, "Squanto," 29.

<sup>28</sup> Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimes*, 129.



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auspices of a newly formed joint stock company. Salisbury explains that, after receiving Dermer's letter, "Gorges was more optimistic than ever about realizing his colonial ambitions. For what Vines and Dermer had conveyed above all was the utter weakness of the surviving coastal Indians, especially their vulnerability to European microbes and power."<sup>29</sup>

Gorges' initial attempts to found a viable New England colony consisted of entirely male crews. His attempt to maximize the military strength and potential labor power of any undertaking also undermined the cohesion of the settlement. Supporting a radical departure from this precedent, a group of adventurous financiers agreed to provide the capital for the voyage of a group of Leyden separatists to New England. They hoped that families, each an economically self-sufficient unit, would give the colony a more firm foundation. The Pilgrims were allowed to settle under an agreement that the assets and profits of their settlement would belong to the joint-stock company for seven years, at which time they would be divided among the shareholding partners.<sup>30</sup>

One hundred and two Pilgrims arrived at Cape Cod in November, 1620, but it was not until March of the following year that they were able to successfully contact the native inhabitants. The military commander of the small group of colonists, Captain Miles Standish, and several of his men encountered a few Indians and a dog in the woods while attempting to find an auspicious location for permanent settlement, but the natives fled on sight of the Englishmen. Though they attempted to follow, Standish and his men were no match for Indians traversing in their own terrain, and they gave up the chase upon finding a deserted village, complete with "new stubble" of corn, "many walnut trees full of nuts, and a great store of strawberries, and some vines."<sup>31</sup> In all of the exploratory journeys mounted by Standish and his men in the weeks that followed, they found little but small frightened bands, abandoned villages, and graves.<sup>32</sup> Though they were disappointed at their inability to make contact with the natives, the Pilgrim explorers took advantage of the provisions that had been left behind:

We marched up to the place where we had the corn formerly, which place we called Cornhill, and digged and found the rest, of which we were very glad. We also digged in a place a little farther off, and found a bottle of oil. We went to another place which we had seen before, and digged, and found more corn, viz. two or three baskets full of Indian wheat, and a bag of beans, with a good many fair wheat

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<sup>29</sup> Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 108.

<sup>30</sup> William Bradford, "Negotiations with Master Thomas Weston, Merchant; and the Adventurers in and About London," in Arber, *Pilgrim Fathers*, 305-6.

<sup>31</sup> Dwight Heath, ed., *A Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, or, Mourt's Relation* (New York: Corinth Books, 1963), 21.

<sup>32</sup> Heath, *Mourt's Relation*, 20-21, 26-29, 32, 34; Bradford, *Plymouth Plantation*, 98-100; Morton, *New Englands Memoriall*, 16-23. The sole exception is a brief attack by a small band of Nauset Indians who retreated after the first few volleys of arrows; see the account in Morton, *New Englands Memoriall*, 19.

ears. Whilst some of us were digging up this, some others found another heap of corn, which they digged up also, so as we had in all about ten bushels, which will serve us sufficiently for seed. And sure it was God's good providence that we found this corn, for else we know not how we should have done, for we knew not how we should find or meet with any Indians, except it be to do us a mischief.<sup>33</sup>

Though the Pilgrims were by nature a devoutly religious group and therefore inclined to attribute fortuitous events to the will of God, the frequent references made to divine providence in their chronicles should not be discounted as insignificant zealotry. Indeed, the Pilgrims suffered from a host of difficulties upon their arrival in New England. They had arrived several months later than intended due to some inauspicious weather, rendering impossible the prospect of planting a crop to get them through the first winter. They had brought enough supplies only for the sea voyage, and began to run low on food even as Standish's party tried to find a site well suited for settlement. According to Cotton Mather, it was only that cache of corn discovered among ruins of deserted villages that allowed them to escape "the terrible famine."<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the Pilgrims were acutely aware that they were alone in a vast and harsh wilderness, surrounded and outnumbered by barbarous peoples. The corn they found in abandoned villages, then, gave them the means to survive the first winter and to begin planting in spring, while the tangible lack of a native presence had two implications. First, even having been aware of the epidemic and the resultant mortality, the Pilgrims had expected to run into resistance of some sort, as the passage from Mourt's Relation implies. The lack of any concerted or consistent hostility allowed the tiny band of settlers to gain an early foothold in New England. Second, Indians fleeing the epidemic had left behind prime areas of real estate which the Pilgrims simply expropriated. Sites such as the one chosen for Plymouth, actually built on top of the former village of Patuxet, had exceptionally fertile land that had already been laboriously cleared by its previous inhabitants, access to fresh water, a natural harbor teeming with fish, and even a naturally defensible hill which was eventually made into a fort.<sup>35</sup>

All of these factors reinforced the Pilgrims' notion of themselves as the chosen people of God. The invocation of "Divine Providence" occurs for almost every auspicious occurrence in the early history of the Pilgrims, from the finding of corn and beans to the propitious emptiness of villages. But this is much more than simply attributing good luck to a celestial benefactor. The Pilgrims realized that their good fortune was largely due to the effects of a devastating contagion; providence had simply taken the form of an epidemic which had swept the land clean of savages in order to make room for them and their vision of a society dedicated to God. Indeed, later writers were explicit about their enthusiasm for the epidemics which so weakened the Indians. Increase Mather wrote in 1631, "About this time the Indians began to be quarrelsome touching the Bounds of the Land which they had sold to the English, but

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<sup>33</sup> Heath, Mourt's Relation, 26.

<sup>34</sup> Mather, Magnalia Christi, 50.

<sup>35</sup> Heath, Mourt's Relation, 41; Morton, New Englands Memoriall, 17-18.

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God ended the Controversy by sending the Smallpox amongst the Indians of Saugust, who were before that time exceeding numerous.”<sup>36</sup> Displaying similarly unabashed sentiments, Cotton Mather wrote, “The Indians in these parts had newly, even but a year or two before, been visited with such a prodigious pestilence; as carried away not a tenth, but nine parts of ten (yea, ‘tis said nineteen of twenty among them): so that the woods were almost cleared of those pernicious creatures, to make room for a better growth.”<sup>37</sup> The obvious fact that God had shown His favor for the Pilgrims at the expense of the Indians formed a critical early concept of what was and was not acceptable in the course of colonization. That God had accomplished His designs with such brutal force led the Pilgrims to believe that a similar ruthlessness on their part was merely a fulfillment of God’s intentions.

To the Pilgrims, then, the epidemic had a psychological effect every bit as powerful as it did on the Indians, only in the opposite direction. Where the established economic system of the Indians was shattered, for the pilgrims the boon of crops gave them an unexpected head start on the road towards self-sufficiency; while the Wampanoags were forced into humiliating submission to their enemies, for the Pilgrims the epidemic wiped away the native population and with them the very political force which they had feared most; and whereas the Wampanoags saw an alliance of spiritual forces against them, the Pilgrims saw themselves as the vanguard of divine will. The auspicious events of the founding of Plymouth provided a crucial psychological stimulus, steeling their collective will to endure the harsh winter ahead.

That first winter was a brutal one, costing the colony half its population through hunger, exhaustion, and various diseases of which scurvy was the most deadly.<sup>38</sup> At times during the winter there were as few as six or seven men among the Pilgrims well enough to care for the sick—which, of course, means that only that many would have been available to defend the colony in case of an attack.<sup>39</sup> Such a tiny contingent, even with their terrifying firearms, could not hope to defeat the nearby Wampanoags under Massasoit. The heart of the historical problem lies here, in the grip of that terrible winter, during the Pilgrims’ moment of greatest weakness. Why didn’t the Wampanoags attack their enemies when they were most vulnerable? There was certainly ample reason for the Wampanoags to make themselves enemies of the Pilgrims; their hatred of the English stemmed from repeated violations at the hands of earlier explorers. For example, in 1615 Captain Thomas Hunt was left behind in New England to finish gathering a catch of fish and haul it back to Spain. In addition to the fish, Hunt kidnapped twenty Wampanoags from Patuxet and seven Nausets, later selling them into slavery.<sup>40</sup> So it was not indifference, and certainly not kindness, which spared the Pilgrims. If even a decimated Indian population could have turned

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<sup>36</sup> Percy Ashburn, *The Ranks of Death* (New York: Coward McCann, 1947), 22.

<sup>37</sup> Mather, *Magnalia Christi*, 49.

<sup>38</sup> Morton, *New Englands Memoriall*, 22.

<sup>39</sup> Bradford, *Plymouth Plantation*, 108; Mather, *Magnalia Christi*, 51; Morton, *New Englands Memoriall*, 22.

<sup>40</sup> Heath, *Mourt’s Relation*, 52.

Plymouth into another lost colony like Roanoke, what kept them from wiping Plymouth off the face of New England?

Instead of fighting them, Massasoit chose to forge an alliance. His tribe watched the Pilgrims struggle through the winter, keeping a cautious distance. They decided to break the impasse in March of 1621. One day the Pilgrims marveled at the sight of a tawny Indian strolling into Plymouth, asking in plain English for beer, biscuits, butter, cheese, pudding, and duck.<sup>41</sup> This was Samoset, a Wampanoag who had learned English among the fishermen along the coast of Maine. He, along with a captive from Patuxet named Tisquantum (or, more commonly, Squanto), served the critical role as translators and diplomatic liaisons between the Pilgrims and various native groups. Beginning with the exchange of small gifts such as hunting knives and beads, the Pilgrims attempted to open a dialogue with the local sachem through their new found English-speaking assets. Squanto eventually arranged a meeting between some of the Pilgrim leaders and Massasoit for the purpose of drawing up a treaty of nonaggression:

1. That neither he [Massasoit] nor any of his should injure or do hurt to any of our people.
2. That if any of his did any hurt to any of ours, he should send the offender, that we might punish him.
3. That if any of our tools were taken away while our people were at work, he should cause them to be restored; and if ours did any harm to any of his, we would do the like to them.
4. If any did unjustly war against him, we would aid him; if any did war against us, he should aid us.
5. He should send to his neighbor confederates, to certify them of this, that they might not wrong us, but might be likewise comprised in the conditions of peace.
6. That when their men came to us, they should leave their bows and arrows behind them, as we should do our pieces when we came to them.

Lastly, that doing thus, King James would esteem of him as his friend and ally.<sup>42</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that Massasoit was ever under the illusion that the treaty with the Pilgrims made his people an equal partner in a military alliance. On the contrary, the Wampanoags sought out the Pilgrims in order to transfer their tributary allegiance from the Narragansetts to the Pilgrims. Salisbury's analysis asserts that, in the final calculus of power politics, the Pilgrims demanded less tribute, subjected them to less humiliation, offered more gifts and prestige, allowed a superior level of military protection, and strengthened the Wampanoag's tribute-collecting powers among neighboring tribes.<sup>43</sup> With their strength so drastically diminished by

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<sup>41</sup> Heath, Mourt's Relation, 51.

<sup>42</sup> Heath, Mourt's Relation, 57.

<sup>43</sup> Salisbury, Manitou and Providence, 116.

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the demographic implosion in the wake of the 1616 epidemic, the Wampanoags knew they could not rule their neighbors as they once had. Left with the choice of submission to a traditional rival, the Narragansetts, or to the Pilgrims, the Wampanoags chose the Pilgrims. Massasoit's actions were a direct and calculated response to a political crisis caused by the disastrous epidemic. He chose to ally with the Pilgrims, rather than destroy them, because they seemed to be an insignificant threat compared to the Narragansetts. Governor Bradford himself implied in his *History of Plymouth Plantation* that Massasoit had acted strategically in response to the Narragansett threat by taking shelter with the English.<sup>44</sup>

From the point of view of the Indians, to whom treaties were dynamic agreements based on shared hospitality and mutual obligation, the agreement with the Pilgrims was nothing out of the ordinary. It pledged that both sides would remain at peace with each other, honor each other's laws, and defend each other against mutual enemies. But the Pilgrims had a very different interpretation of the treaty. After listing the provisions of the agreement in *New Englands Memoriall*, Nathaniel Morton continues matter-of-factly, "All of which he [Massasoit] liked well, and withall at the same time acknowledged himself content to become the Subject of our Sovereign Lord the King aforesaid, His Heirs and Successors; and gave unto them all the Lands adjacent, to them and their Heirs forever."<sup>45</sup> Having no experience with written documents or English law, Massasoit could not have realized that in agreeing to the last clause of the treaty he was, in the eyes of the Pilgrims, ceding his territory and his authority to King James. While he may have understood the treaty to be placing his people in a subordinate position, he could not have known that the Pilgrims meant that he was ceding his sovereignty to King James forever. As the Pilgrims understood it, Massasoit acknowledged himself to be a loyal subject of the King in perpetuity; there would be no renegotiation of terms, no alteration in status as the Wampanoags regained their former strength. Though in this case these mutually incompatible definitions were merely a case of cultural misunderstanding, the Pilgrims' concepts of sovereignty, and their strategy in drawing the Indians into a treaty, reflected their overarching designs for political supremacy of the region surrounding Plymouth.

The roots of the Pilgrims' political strategy lay in their desire for territorial security. Whereas the French and Dutch traders that had been in contact with the New England Indian tribes for decades had established an extensive trade network, from the start the English were more interested in direct exploitation of resources. According to Salisbury, the English focused primarily on commodities such as sassafras and fish, with the eventual goal of bringing Indian land under their cultivation; they therefore had little use for extensive cooperative trade with the natives and looked at goods like beaver pelts as little more than supplementary income.<sup>46</sup> As a result, the Pilgrims' colonial strategy was largely an insular one, aiming at long-term self-sufficiency with trade flowing towards Europe, not the Indians. The Pilgrims and the Indians were thus at odds, each group static and impermeable, by necessity competing for survival in a

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<sup>44</sup> Bradford, *Plymouth Plantation*, 126.

<sup>45</sup> Morton, *New Englands Memoriall*, 24.

<sup>46</sup> Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 85.

zero-sum game. In an environment where cooperation was impossible, or at the very least unthinkable, a successful economic operation required control of local tribes.

The alternative to cooperation and coexistence was outright oppression in the style of the Spanish conquistadores. Standish based his military strategy on the assumption of a population besieged by numerically superior natives, much like John Smith, who Salisbury maintains emulated the infamous conquistador Hernan Cortes.<sup>47</sup> Smith based his argument on the assumption that the English would be transposing their society more or less intact, without extensive commingling of populations. Salisbury elucidates the tacit assumption behind these beliefs: if the first settlers were vastly outnumbered by the Indians, they would have to rely on brute force and even terror to maintain control.<sup>48</sup> Like Smith, Standish was a military man, a soldier with extensive experience in the Dutch wars, to whom the conquistador model—in which coercion and even outright slavery are the only methods which yield results—seemed natural. Of course, Smith concocted this strategy based on observations made in 1614, before the epidemic hit New England and the coastal tribes were at the height of their military strength. So when Standish drafted this policy into action, it succeeded beyond his wildest dreams, largely because the population was too sparse to put up even a fraction of the resistance that Smith had anticipated.

In 1621 the Wampanoags were shattered and feeble, completely unable to defend themselves against their traditional enemies. The Pilgrims exploited the military vulnerability of the Wampanoags, as well as their desire for allies against the Narragansetts, first to ensure their survival and then to gain the upper hand. This was a subtle transformation of policy, and the shift from avoiding hostilities to coercing supplies and eventually enforcing obedience occurred in increments. The first step was simply placing the Indians in a binding treaty in which several clauses make it clear that the Indians are inferior to the Pilgrims. For example, the second clause, reading, “if any of his did any hurt to any of ours, he should send the offender, that we might punish him,” essentially insists that the Wampanoag sachem enforce English law among the natives of his own tribe as well as those of his neighbors. This includes a provision by which rule-breakers would be handed over to the Pilgrims to be dealt with by their own justice.<sup>49</sup> The Pilgrims thus simultaneously empower Massasoit by giving him authority, in their name, over various neighboring tribes, and then limit that authority by disallowing him to administer punishments. In essence, argues Salisbury, this turns Massasoit into an agent of political control.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> John Smith, *Travels and Works of John Smith*, ed. Edward Arber, 2 vols. (New York: Burt Franklin, 1910), 2: 600-601. Smith reveals his admiration for Cortes in his reference to the latter's conquest of Tenochtitlan. He goes on to describe a similar, though hypothetical, conquest of New England with 300 men, which relies heavily on military force and the effects of terror on the native population.

<sup>48</sup> Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 99-100.

<sup>49</sup> Heath, *Mourt's Relation*, 57.

<sup>50</sup> Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 115.

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But the machinations of the Pilgrims were not all Machiavellian intrigue; part of their strategy included outright bids for dominance. In the tender days of the colony this dominance manifested itself as little more than a cavalier disregard for native customs. For example, one of the first acts of the Pilgrims upon striking land was to rifle mass graves in search of food and seed, an act that no one could seriously have believed would go unnoticed.<sup>51</sup> Other actions were not quite so flagrantly offensive to religious sensibilities, but just as effectively breached the code of conduct among allies that the Indians inextricably associated with friendly conduct. The Pilgrim insistence on near total segregation, for example, by refusing to lodge traveling Indians in Plymouth, offended the notion of reciprocal hospitality by which dynamic treaties were upheld among Indians.<sup>52</sup> This essentially gentle claim to dominance through independence soon transformed into a policy of coordinated oppression.

This shift towards an increasingly overt domination of the Indians was occasioned by a perceived shift on the part of the Indians towards greater hostility. The aggressiveness and intransigence of the English position could not help but arouse native anger. Moreover, the Wampanoags were not united in espousing a policy of coexistence. Far from enthusiastically welcoming them, many of the Wampanoags held to their earlier enmity towards the English, resenting the Pilgrims' presence so much that they were willing to join with their previous enemies, the Narragansetts. Under Massasoit's leadership they accepted the terms of political subordination offered by the Pilgrims, but it took only a charismatic personality to convince them that the Pilgrims needed to be destroyed. Driving Massasoit out of his village, an Indian named Corbitant challenged the Pilgrim position in New England by capturing their two most essential allies, their translators Squanto and Hobbamock, and holding the former prisoner at Nemasket. The latter escaped and informed the Pilgrims of Corbitant's intentions to form a Wampanoag-Narragansett alliance to destroy the Pilgrims, whereupon Standish mounted an emergency rescue on Squanto's behalf and extracted an apology (in absentia) from Corbitant.<sup>53</sup> The Pilgrims' reaction to this brief insurrection was to tighten their control over friendly tribes. Shortly after the Nemasket incident, the Pilgrims pressed their neighboring tribes into a far more explicit acknowledgement of English authority. "Several of the Indian Sachems"—some of the most prominent of the surrounding area, in fact, including the recalcitrant Corbitant, Massasoit's brother Quadaquina, Canacum of Monomet, and Epenow, who had been responsible for Captain Dermer's death the previous year—"came unto the Government of New-Plimouth, and acknowledged themselves to be the Loyal Subjects of our Sovereign Lord King James, and subscribed unto a Writing to that purpose with their own hands."<sup>54</sup>

Whereas the Pilgrims were able to take advantage of the Wampanoag's weakness to craft an alliance in which they were the dominant partner, to deal with the Narragansetts they were forced to rely on intimidation and fear. For, as previously

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<sup>51</sup> Heath, Mourt's Relation, 21, 26-29, 34; Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 99-100.

<sup>52</sup> Heath, Mourt's Relation, 58.

<sup>53</sup> Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 119-120; Morton, New Englands Memoriall, 31-32.

<sup>54</sup> Morton, New Englands Memoriall, 29.

noted, the Narragansetts were largely untouched by the epidemic and retained their military strength. Indeed, into the vacuum left behind by the dying and scattered tribes the Narragansetts expanded their influence until they were the dominant power in the region. They naturally viewed the Pilgrims as political rivals and wanted the English presence broken so that they would be able to continue dominating the coastal tribes. Bradford wrote that the Narragansetts "(since the death of so many of the Indians,) thought to dominire and lord it over the rest, and conceived the English would be a bar in their way."<sup>55</sup> The failure of Corbitant's coup made it clear that the Pilgrims were neither an insignificant nor transitory regional power, and soon after the Narragansetts made overtures towards more explicit hostilities. The Narragansett sachem Canonicus sent to Governor Bradford a bundle of arrows wrapped in snake-skin, a symbol that Squanto informed them was a traditional challenge. In reply, Bradford stuffed the snakeskin with gunpowder and shot and returned it to Canonicus.<sup>56</sup>

Nothing ever came of the Narragansett challenge. Whether they were afraid of the Pilgrims or calculated that the cost of fighting them was not worth the potential benefits, it is impossible to know; there is no direct evidence left by the Narragansetts as to what informed their decision, and the Pilgrim chroniclers did not bother to speculate. What is known is that Canonicus refused to accept Bradford's counter-challenge and in so doing gave up the Narragansett claim to tributary rule over the Wampanoags, formally abandoning them, Salisbury explains, to the Pilgrims' sphere of influence.<sup>57</sup> In response to the threat of Indian attack, Standish militarized the fledgling colony, organizing every able-bodied man into a militia and erecting a defensive perimeter around Plymouth.<sup>58</sup> He also redoubled his efforts to cow the Indians into submission, relentlessly bullying them to capitulate to English demands. For example, while Standish tried to procure corn from the Indians at Mattachiest, one of them stole some beads from him. Standish responded by threatening to massacre the whole tribe unless his property was immediately restored.<sup>59</sup> Though it should be said in his defense that the Pilgrims never shed civilian blood in order to accomplish political goals, the consistent threat of violence cannot be considered anything other than terrorism.<sup>60</sup>

Whether he carried out his threats or not, Standish's repressive regime had the intended effect. His bullying tactics and the perpetual threat of violence placed further strain on a psychologically exhausted Indian population. After withstanding the full force of an epidemic and the resulting social collapse, political upheavals and demographic shifts, they now had to deal with a ubiquitous sense of fear that Standish and his men worked hard to instill. As modern social psychologists have noted, the propagation of a regime based on fear crystallizes the population in a state

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<sup>55</sup> Bradford, *Plymouth Plantation*, 126.

<sup>56</sup> Winslow, "Good News," 517-20; Morton, *New Englands Memoriall*, 33.

<sup>57</sup> Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 122.

<sup>58</sup> Bradford, *Plymouth Plantation*, 126; Morton, *New Englands Memoriall*, 37.

<sup>59</sup> Winslow, "Good News," 543.

<sup>60</sup> Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 123.



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of permanent anxiety, helplessness, and vulnerability.<sup>61</sup> The sociologist Theodore Kemper has proposed a model of structural emotions to explain the effective subjugation of one group by another. According to this theory, an attitude of subjection ensues in a group which views the insufficiency of its power vis-à-vis the dominant group to be their own fault. A similar view of the inferior group's status results in depression. Both emotions contribute to social paralysis and effective dominance by the more powerful group.<sup>62</sup>

The Pilgrims' native allies, as well as the Narragansetts, were responsible for the Pilgrims' reactionary tightening of control. Squanto made the best of his privileged position with the Pilgrims to warn them of conspiracies among the Wampanoags, Narragansetts, and Massachusetts, apparently attempting to reconstitute the survivors of Patuxet into a single band under his leadership.<sup>63</sup> Simultaneously, among the Wampanoags Squanto claimed that the English controlled the disease and that he could persuade them to direct it at his enemies.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, other Wampanoags, including Hobbamock, manipulated the Pilgrims into believing that Squanto was betraying them to enemy tribes. Thus, the Pilgrims were caught in the middle of competing Indian intrigues, various factions playing on their fears of conspiracy and attack in order to advance their own interests. In the end this was a disastrous policy for all the Indians involved, for the Pilgrims reacted not by decisively siding with any of the factions but by adopting a bunker mentality towards all natives, reinforcing their perceived imperative for absolute control of the territory surrounding Plymouth in order to ensure their survival.

The high point of crisis occurred soon after the founding of the neighboring English colony of Wessagusset (also known as Weymouth). In 1622 Thomas Weston, who had helped the Pilgrims find financial backers for their voyage to New England two years earlier, called in Plymouth's debt by requesting their aid in the establishment of a colony of adventurers. A poorly organized scheme composed mostly of profit-seeking bachelors, the Wessagusset colony began inauspiciously and quickly deteriorated to the point of crisis. Sixty men arrived just north of Plymouth destitute of food or any other vital supplies, calling upon the Pilgrims to lend them the necessary provisions. At this time the Pilgrims were still dependent on Indian corn procured through trade or coercion, as they would continue to be for a further year, and were hardly in a position to take on the burden of so many unproductive adventurers. Though Plymouth complied with the demands, the men of Wessagusset soon ran out

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<sup>61</sup> Sofia Salimovich, et. al., "Victims of Fear: The Social Psychology of Repression," in *Fear at the Edge: State Terror and Resistance in Latin America*, ed. Juan E. Corradi, Patricia Weiss Fagen and Manuel Antonio Garret—n (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 74-54, 89; Harry C. Halloway and Carol S. Fullerton, "The Psychology of Terror and its Aftermath," in *Individual and Community Responses to Trauma and Disaster: The Structure of Human Chaos*, ed. Robert J. Usano, Brian G. McCaughey, and Carol S. Fullerton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 40.

<sup>62</sup> Theodore Kemper, *A Social Interactional Theory of Emotions* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978), 56-58, 63-65.

<sup>63</sup> Salisbury, "Squanto," 31-33; Morton, *New Englands Memoriall*, 35; evidence, 123.

<sup>64</sup> Bradford, *Plymouth Plantation*, 128; Morton, *New Englands Memoriall*, 35.

of corn and resorted to stealing from nearby Indians in order to survive. Any semblance of law and order disintegrated, Governor John Sanders lost control of his colony, and some of the men began plotting to attack the nearby natives and take their corn by force. A message asking for Governor Bradford's advice aroused the suspicions of the Massachusetts that the Pilgrims would cooperate in such an attack. Consequently, the Indians of Monomet refused to trade their customary supply of corn, leading to Pilgrim suspicions of a conspiracy among the Indian tribes. Indeed, Massasoit confirmed Winslow's fears by telling him of a vast Massachusetts coalition that involved all of the Indian tribes of Cape Cod, Capawak (Martha's Vineyard), and even tribes as far north as Agawam (Ipwich). Standish's response was swift, brutal, and precise. Acting on Massasoit's advice, he assassinated seven leaders of the Massachusetts, including Wituwamet and Pecksuot.<sup>65</sup> In fine English style, Wituwamet's head became an ornament for the spikes of the Pilgrims' new fortress.

The effect of the Wessagusset incident was decisive on Pilgrim-Indian relations. The Wessagusset colony disbanded, and Standish used the ostensible uprising as a pretext to impose even more rigid terms of Pilgrim authority. Already militarily crippled by disease and now deprived of their leadership, the Indians of the Cape Cod area were in no position to resist the expansion of the Pilgrim's political sphere. As for the Wampanoags, though Massasoit won them the Pilgrims' esteem for their loyalty, in the end they were no better off than any of the other Indian tribes. As the Pilgrims slowly grew stronger, continually reinforced by supplies and colonists from Europe, the Wampanoags were left with no choice but to accept the terms of an increasingly lopsided alliance. Once they tied their political fortunes to the Pilgrims in hopes of winning reprieve from the domination of the Narragansetts, the Wampanoags could not then abandon their alliance without reverting back to Narragansett control. Slowly, but inexorably, they slid into oblivion as their fierce independence faded into a feeble subservience to a power they dared not desert.

The 1616 epidemic had two profound effects on the Indian population of Massachusetts, both of which in turn profoundly affected the fledgling colony of English separatists. First, the contagion scoured the land practically clear of its previous inhabitants, allowing the settlers to establish themselves at Plymouth. The Pilgrims, in essence, arrived into a vacuum. Though small in number and weakened by hunger and disease, they survived largely because they faced no resistance from any hostile natives and were able to occupy superior land. Second, the plight of the Wampanoags in the aftermath of the epidemic left them in a profoundly demoralized state, seemingly locked in political subjection to an enemy tribe. Demographic and military realities led them to seek an alliance with the Pilgrims that would allow them to escape the political orbit of the Narragansetts. Once allied to the Pilgrims, however, they were riding on the proverbial tiger's back. They could not turn against the Pilgrims, even as the settlers grew stronger and more demanding, for that would make them vulnerable to the Narragansetts once again. As a result, they tolerated the Pilgrims' belligerent conduct because they had no better alternative.

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<sup>65</sup> Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, 128-144; Winslow, "Good News," 529-534, 544-546, 558-569; Morton, *New Englands Memoriall*, 40-43.

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For the Pilgrims, the epidemic was nothing less than the handiwork of God. Cotton Mather summed up their attitude elegantly in *Magnalia Christi Americana*: "The good hand of God now brought them into a country wonderfully prepared for their entertainment, by a sweeping mortality that had lately been among the natives."<sup>66</sup> Had it not been for the corn they discovered, there would have probably been famine; had it not been for the cleared fields they found, their crops would likely have failed; had it not been for Massasoit's sheer political desperation, they would have been annihilated during the first winter. As they began asserting themselves as a regional power, they were successful primarily because of a combination of fear and calculation on the part of the Indians. Enemies like the Narragansetts hesitated before attacking what appeared at times to be an imposing foe, and neighboring tribes such as the Wampanoags willingly entered into an alliance which would slowly turn them from ostensible partners into tributary subordinates. The Wampanoags' actual inferiority to rival tribes, combined with their perceived inferiority to the Pilgrims, locked them into their alliance with the Pilgrims. Thus, the success of Plymouth, and especially the effectiveness of their strategy for regional domination, was largely due to the complex cascade of effects that rippled through Indian society in the wake of the epidemic of 1616.

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<sup>66</sup> Mather, *Magnalia Christi*, 49.

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