

# Three Pathways, One Place: The Story of the Founding of Boston

Joseph Bagley, Thomas Green, and Jeanne Foster

© 2024

Use of this information must include credit to the authors

## Preface

The story of the founding of Boston in 1630 is the story of colliding worldviews. For the local Massachusetts Indigenous people, the concept of land ownership did not exist. Indigenous leaders, or “*Sac’hems*,” controlled various territories. People were able to live, trade, and grow food in places where they paid tribute to the local *Sac’hem*.

The Crown’s racist views of Indigenous people dehumanized them. In their eyes, there were no “people” living on or claiming ownership of land in the Americas. The Crown claimed this “*terra nullius*,” or land of no one, as their own through the act of occupying it. As the representative of the Crown, colony governors had the right to then grant land owned by the Crown to individual settlers.

William Blaxton (also known as Blackstone) moved to Shawmut from the Weymouth colony in 1625. He was not granted land by the Crown, but he was able to live on the peninsula because his colony had paid tribute to Chickataubut, the local *Sac’hem*. Both Blaxton and the Massachusetts occupied Shawmut until 1630.

The land of Boston was part of the large area given to the Massachusetts Bay Colony by the Crown through a 1629 legal charter. Governor John Winthrop arrived in 1629 to found a new colony. Their first town, Charlestown, did not have enough fresh water. Winthrop needed to move his colony to a new town, and in 1630, Blaxton suggested Winthrop move to Shawmut.

On September 30, 1630, Winthrop arrived at Shawmut and renamed the peninsula Boston. At that moment, Blaxton felt that his occupation of Shawmut as its first “person” gave him ownership of the land. Winthrop felt that he alone had the ability to grant

ownership of land due to the 1629 charter. Chickautubut felt that he had given permission for the English to live on the land, but that nobody “owned” it.

Winthrop refused to buy the land of Boston from Blaxton in 1630 because Blaxton did not own it according to the Charter. After negotiation, Winthrop granted Blaxton 50 acres in 1633, but Blaxton was still offended. Blaxton did not recognize the Massachusetts occupation as ownership but expected Winthrop to recognize his occupation as ownership.

In 1633, Blaxton sold 44 acres of land back to the colony and moved to Rhode Island. He kept six acres where his house stood. Winthrop raised a tax of 6 shillings from each landowning adult male of Boston (30 pounds total) to buy Blaxton’s land. This land, purchased by the residents of Boston, was commonly owned by them. Today, we call this land Boston Common.



Continue reading for detailed version of this story.

## Worldviews on Land

Native	The Crown	Settler
<p>Native territories in the region are administered by tribal leaders called <i>Sac’hem</i>. Sac’hems are paid tribute by the people within their territories including members of their tribes, visitors, and occupants.</p> <p>This tribute created a mutual accord of protection. All people who paid tribute were permitted to stay on the land, set up trade, build homes, and farm. This included Tribal members, people from other Tribes, and colonists.</p> <p>Territorial boundaries were well defined and known amongst Native people, but were also subject to change if Sac’hems chose to move into the territory of another Sac’hem. Sac’hems organized warriors who were expected to defend the territory from other Sac’hems.</p>	<p>The English Doctrine of Tenure states that the Crown has universal and absolute ownership of the land within its territories. This arose from the Norman conquest of England in 1066.</p> <p>English common law stated that land that is unoccupied or abandoned is land without ownership (later referred to as <i>terra nullius</i>). This land can be acquired by the Crown if they discover or occupy it.</p> <p>Racist dehumanizing of Native Americans resulted in an assumed exclusion of Native claims of territorial occupation.</p> <p>Land can be granted from the Crown, and those who receive grants have legal authority to sell or grant it, and</p>	<p>Colonies required legal authority through a charter from the Crown and investment to fund the journey.</p> <p>Charters included the right to form the colony, defined the regions within which to do so, enabled self-government, defined the length of time within which the colony would need to be established before the charter was revoked, and granted land to the colony.</p> <p>The leaders of individual colonies were given authority to divide the land within their grant to investors. Investors who emigrated expected land grants in sizes that reflected the relative investment in the colony.</p> <p>Settlers who received land grants were able to sell the land or grant it to others.</p>

<p>When the people in an area switched the Sac'hem they paid tribute to, that area became the territory of the new Sac'hem.</p> <p>Land ownership did not exist.</p>	<p>others may buy or receive it, but the Crown retains ultimate ownership.</p> <p>Native land was the land of no one. The Crown claimed it as their own and was free to grant it to others.</p>	<p>Early settlers expected that their risks in emigration and their financial backing of a colony would result in land grants upon their arrival in the New World.</p>
--	---	--



  
**Three Pathways**  




**1600-1630**

<b>Native</b>	<b>The Crown</b>	<b>Settler</b>
<p>Boston is within the territory of the Massachusett Tribe as it was in the early 1600s.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>Members of the Tribe moved seasonally, living on the coast during the summer where the growing season was longer and inland during the winters to avoid harsh weather. Chickataubet had a summer seat at Moswetuset Hummock<sup>2</sup> in Passanageset (Quincy) and a winter seat at Massawachusett (Great Blue Hill area in Canton).</p>	<p>In England, both the Church of England and the empire were headed by the Crown. Within the church were religious dissenters called Puritans. Puritans saw the Church of England as retaining too many of the more Catholic-like practices that they were supposed to have abandoned during the Reformation.</p> <p>The Puritans were nonconformists who openly criticized</p>	<p>The members of the Massachusetts Bay Colony were Puritans. Each invested in the colony.</p> <p>Their Royal Charter allowed for land claims under the same ruling power as previous colonies, reducing the likelihood of conflict over land claimed by multiple groups.</p> <p>Because the leaders of the colony traveled to America with the colony, the</p>

<sup>1</sup> (Gookin 1742: 8)  
<sup>2</sup> (Neal 1747: 216)

<p>The Massachusetts had cleared the trees from much of the peninsula<sup>3</sup> of Shawmut (Boston) to grow food and to use the wood for boats, housing, creations that they made, and fires.</p> <p>Mishawum (Charlestown), was a Massachusetts village located on the peninsula just north of Shawmut. The core of this village was near the current site of Bunker Hill Community College.</p> <p>On the Harbor Islands, Massachusetts growing fields flourished and the Massachusetts people living there and along the shore gathered clams from the mudflats at low tide to eat.</p> <p>For thousands of years the Massachusetts lived in this place and Native people from around the region would travel here for trade.</p> <p>There were two bands of the Massachusetts in the Boston area in 1600. The Pawtucket,<sup>4</sup> headed by Nanapashmet,<sup>5</sup> controlled the area from the Merrimack River to the Charles River. The Neponset, headed by Chickataubut, controlled the area south of the Charles River. Nanapashemet was also the Grand Sachem of the Massachusetts Tribe and was related to Chickataubut.</p> <p>Nanepasehmet's warriors were in a years-long conflict with tribal members to the north as he attempted to expand his territory into southern New Hampshire and Maine.</p> <p>In 1619, tribal members from the north killed Nanapashemet. Leadership of the Pawtucket passed to one of its own, Nanepashemet's wife, the "Squaw Sac'hem" and Chickataubut became the Grand Sac'hem of the Massachusetts confederation. Chicataubut became Grand Sac'hem with the death of Nanapashemet in 1619.</p>	<p>the Church but did not break away from it like the Pilgrim separatists before them; however, Puritan criticism and resistance to the Church was criticism and resistance of the Crown. This resulted in oppression of Puritans by English leaders.</p> <p>John Winthrop was born in 1588 in a town northeast of London, on the Eastern coast of England. Winthrop was a deeply religious man and aligned with the Puritan nonconformist.</p> <p>Puritans including Winthrop saw the New World as a place to start a new society following their conservative lifestyle and religious practices. Earlier in 1620, the Pilgrim separatists had received a land grant from the Plymouth Company and traveled to the New World. There, they created the Plimoth Colony, their own religious utopian society and the first permanent English settlement in New England.</p> <p>John White, a Puritan cleric, was instrumental in organizing two small and ultimately failed expeditions of Puritans to Massachusetts including a small settlement on Cape Ann. He was able to successfully get a large patent (1628) and later Royal Charter (1629) for the Massachusetts Bay Company to establish a new colony that would have rights to land between the Charles and Merrimack Rivers.</p> <p>White needed sponsors and investors for the colony. Seeing the success of the Plymouth Colony separatists, multiple Puritans strategically joined the charter becoming the leaders of the Company.</p>	<p>settlers were able to maintain and self-regulate their Puritan religion and lifestyle.</p> <p>Settlers who invested in the colony and arrived early would be given grants of land, providing opportunities for wealth, space, and independence not possible in England.</p> <p>In exchange for these opportunities, settlers were expected to uphold the Puritan community covenant, defend the settlements, and follow the rules established by their founder.</p> <p>By paying tribute to local Native leaders, members of colonies were allowed to freely farm or occupy land. Most believed this permission included their right to own and sell the land they occupied upon arrival. There were two primary patterns among early 17th-century settlers in the Boston area: they either stayed in primary Colonies that had developed towns, or they ventured off alone or in small groups to areas that had not yet or no longer been occupied by English settlers.</p> <p>The first recorded description of what became Boston is by John Smith in 1616, who described the land of the Massachusetts as the "Paradise of all those parts," including corn fields, gardens, good harbors, and many Massachusetts residents.</p> <p>Members of the Plymouth colony ventured north in 1621 to meet with Massachusetts people in or around Boston, and English fishing vessels were common in Boston Harbor in the early 1620s.</p> <p>The Plymouth Colony, established in 1620, had many offshoots that traveled north to form early settlements and individual homesteads in and around what would become Boston.</p>
---	--	--

<sup>3</sup> (Wood 1634: 32)

<sup>4</sup> (Gookin 1742: 8)

<sup>5</sup> (Drake 1841: 41)

<p>In 1620, Chickataubut met with leaders of the Plymouth colony where he agreed to a mutual accord of protection with the Colony and limited the southern edge of the Massachusetts territory to what is today Duxbury.<sup>6</sup></p> <p>With the establishment of the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay Colonies in the 1620s and 30s, an increasing number of Native people from throughout New England were visiting the Massachusetts territory in order to trade and meet with the Mass Bay colonists.</p> <p>Though multiple tribal groups were traveling through each other's territories, there was tension among the Massachusetts and nearby Native tribes.</p> <p>In 1621, Massasoit, the Grand Sac'hem of the Pokanoket, formed a new alliance with the Pilgrims in Plymouth. Soon after, Massasoit shared a rumor of potential attack by the Massachusetts on the Plimoth-aligned colony at Wessagusset, now Weymouth.</p> <p>In 1623, Miles Standish invited Massachusetts war chiefs (Sagamores) Pecksuot and Wituwamut and other Massachusetts warriors to a summit where they were ambushed and killed in an event known as the "Massacre at Wessagusset." Standish brought the head of one of the warriors back to Plymouth where it was stuck on a pole outside of the colony walls. This attack greatly damaged the relationship between the Plymouth Colony and Massachusetts.</p> <p>In the winter of 1624 when Blaxton scouted a new home, the Ponkapoag/Neponset Band of the Massachusetts would have been at Massawachusett having harvested their crops, removed the mats and covers from their wetu frames, and moved their families inland.</p>	<p>The leaders then broke precedent, took their royal charter, and moved to the colony themselves where they were able to enforce their Puritan ideals in the Colony.</p> <p>The move began with a small group of settlers led by the Company's first governor, John Endicott. They sailed to Naumkeag where they joined the few settlers who moved there from Cape Ann. Endicott took over leadership of the colony and renamed the town Salem. He then set to work preparing for the arrival of the rest of the Massachusetts Bay Company Fleet.</p> <p>Scouts had previously identified a peninsula at the mouths of the Mystic and Charles Rivers as a suitable location for a town. At that time, the Massachusetts summer village of Mishwum had been well established and earlier English settlers had built homes there.</p> <p>With a list of passengers and housing needs in hand, Endicott realized Salem would not be suitable for the Winthrop Fleet. As a solution, Thomas Graves, an engineer and city planner, was tasked with laying out the streets of a new town in Mishawum in 1629.<sup>7</sup> The advance team laid out two-acre lots in Mishawum, created a common, and built a Great House for Winthrop.</p> <p>Back in England, King Charles dissolved Parliament in 1630 and Winthrop lost his job in a crackdown on Puritans. Winthrop became more involved in the Company than</p>	<p>The failed colony of Wessagusset (Weymouth) was reoccupied in 1622 by Plymouth Company colonists led by Robert Gorges. From here, Thomas and Jane Walford were granted permission (from Gorges) to build a home at the Massachusetts town of Mishawum (Charlestown) in 1624.</p> <p>In 1623, Reverend William Blaxton arrived at the Gorges colony of Weymouth having previously traveled to New England as part of a failed 1623 expedition to establish a colony in Maine. He was an Anglican minister, part of the Church of England, which differed from the more Puritan members of the early New England colonies.</p> <p>Blaxton became the chaplain on the ship <i>Katherine</i>, which sailed to Wessagusset to attempt a new settlement at the failed colony site that they named Weymouth.</p> <p>This new colony also failed, and nearly all of the settlers returned back to England, but several settlers, including Blaxton, remained.</p> <p>In the fall or early winter of 1624, William Blaxton took a boat and traveled up the coast looking for a new place to move to.</p> <p>At Shawmut, he found a small peninsula with few trees but good open space for a small farm. At this time of year, the Massachusetts people would have finished harvesting their fields and moved to the Blue Hills, leaving behind bare <i>wetus</i> and otherwise open, unoccupied space.</p> <p>Blaxton returned the following spring to create his home and farm, though he did not receive a land grant. Under the mutual aid and protection agreement with the Massachusetts, Blaxton and other English settlers would have been free to move onto land in the Massachusetts territory, live there, grow crops, and trade.</p>
---	---	---

<sup>6</sup> Citation needed

<sup>7</sup> (Dudley 1631:9) "began to consult of the place of our sitting down; for Salem, where we landed, pleased us not. And to that purpose, some were sent to the Bay, to search up the rivers for a convenient place; . . . we found a place . . . up Charles River; and thereupon unshipped our goods into other vessels, and with much cost and labor brought them in July to Charlestown."

<p>In the spring, when the oak leaves were the size of a mouse's ear, the herring would run up the Charles and the Massachusetts would return to coastal areas like Boston Common to harvest and dry large quantities of fish. In the spring of 1625, they would have either found William Blaxton already living on Shawmut, or he would have arrived shortly after their return.</p> <p>Because of the mutual accord of protection between Chickataubut and the English settlers, Blaxton was free to live, farm, and trade on Shawmut. Unlike the Massachusetts, Blaxton would stay in his home year-round during the five years he lived as the only English settler on Shawmut. While Blaxton was in Shawmut, Chickataubut would have been at Neponset (Dorchester/Milton Lower Mills), Moswetusset (Summer, Quincy) or Massawachusett (winter, Canton)</p> <p>Several individual English families began to move into the region creating fortified homes at Mishawum and on the Harbor Islands while farming and trading with the Massachusetts for furs.</p> <p>North of Boston in the Ponkapoag village of Naumkeag (Salem) a small group of fishermen from a failed 1623 settlement at Cape Ann (Gloucester) arrived in the fall of 1626. The Ponkapoag had moved inland temporarily leaving behind their village and unframed wetu homes. The English built one great house for their leader, and then they covered and reoccupied the Massachusetts wetus. They would live in these structures for the next three years, with Ponkapoag Massachusetts tribal members returning for the summer and leaving for the winter each year.</p>	<p>ever, and was elected as the leader of the fleet that would follow Endicott.</p> <p>Winthrop departed England on April 8, 1630 on the lead of four Company ships traveling in the first wave of the fleet. In total, the fleet would include 11 ships and around 700 migrants.</p> <p>Winthrop and the first ships arrived at Salem in June of 1630. Staying in the Great House and Massachusetts wetus, Winthrop decided that the conditions in Salem were unsuitable for the rest of the fleet.</p> <p>Scouts had previously identified a peninsula at the mouths of the Mystic and Charles Rivers as a suitable location for the colony. At that time, the Massachusetts summer village of Mishwum had been well established and earlier English settlers had built homes there.</p> <p>On July 12, 1630, Winthrop and about 1,000 Puritan settlers arrived at the new settlement. Winthrop named the town Charlestown.</p> <p>Roger Clap, an early visitor to Charlestown, described the buildings as "some wigwams (wetu) and a house"<sup>8</sup> indicating that like Salem, the first Charlestown settlers also occupied existing wetus when they first arrived.</p> <p>Charlestown was large enough for a colony, but the settlers soon realized there was not an adequate source of fresh water on the peninsula to support a large town. Just</p>	<p>It is possible that Blaxton lived in a wetu at first, but Blaxton lived in Shawmut with upwards of 184 books and diaries,<sup>9</sup> which are not ideal for storage in a domed-shaped home.</p> <p>More likely, Blaxton and settlers from Weymouth who likely aided in his relocation built a simple one-room log house with wooden chimney and marsh grass roof not unlike those at Plymouth Colony.</p> <p>For the four years Blaxton lived as the only English settler on Shawmut, he would have had frequent interaction and exchange with the Massachusetts. Blaxton also kept a meticulous journal during the period he lived at Shawmut.</p> <p>Throughout his time in Shawmut, he traded frequently with the Massachusetts who were also living on and around Shawmut during the summer. In addition to the food he received in trade with the Massachusetts, he established a small farm and orchard that included the first apples in the western hemisphere</p> <p>Many other early English homesteads in the area were palisaded for defense against Massachusetts raids, including Samuel Maverick's 1624 home in Winnimesset (Chelsea) and David Thompson's home on what would become Thompson's Island.</p> <p>Blaxton chose to set up his home and garden on the south slope of the trimountain near the northwest corner of Boston Common. The freshwater spring of the Frog Pond and springs on the hills north of what would be Boston Common provided water, while the Charles River provided food and transportation. The hill of the trimount provided the ability to see the surrounding area, as well as protection from nor'easter winds, and the</p>
--	---	---

<sup>8</sup> (Clapp, 1630)

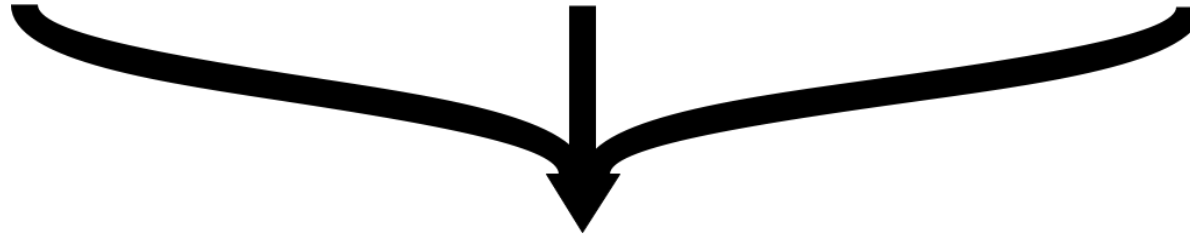
<sup>9</sup> Blaxton's inventory from 1675 contained 184 books. While it is possible that he acquired them after he left Boston, but the extreme scarcity of printing presses in America and difficulty of book acquisition at this time in America means that many if not most of these books were likely in Blaxton's possession in Boston.

They remained the only English settlers in Naumkeag until 1629 when Governor Endicott arrived in the first of wave of Massachusetts Bay Colony ships.

months after arriving in Charlestown, the Winthrop colony was ready to move again.

south-facing slope of the hill provided increased sun and warmth.

In 1630, William Blaxton wrote to his friend in Charlestown, Isaac Johnson, describing the good living conditions of his home on Shawmut, inviting the Charlestown community to join him across the Charles River.



## One Place: Boston

Winthrop decided to move the majority of the residents of Charlestown to Shawmut, and on September 7, 1630 he renamed it Boston.

Earliest land transfers in Boston rarely were recorded on paper, however numerous land conveyances were made by livery of seizen or "turf and twig" ceremony. Because medieval land transfer required an actual physical transfer this English traditional ceremony consisted of the handing over of a fragment of turf and a twig from the property to its new owner in the presence of a witness. This tradition continued well into the 17th century and was frequently noted in deed records of Boston.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> [Suffolk County Deed Records Volume 1](#)

Early September marked the completion of the corn harvest.<sup>11</sup> At this time, Chickataubut's people would have finished their use of their summer homes and growing fields and either be entirely away from Boston or in the process of leaving. The Charlestown residents and Blaxton would themselves be finished with their harvests. This marked the longest period of time in the year when the colonists could reestablish their homesteads without interrupting their food production. It also gave them additional opportunities to occupy any open wetus in Shawmut.

William Blaxton never received an explicit land grant for Shawmut, now Boston. This created immediate tension as Blaxton claimed his ownership of the entire Shawmut peninsula through occupation. The Grant was given to Winthrop by the Crown to be inclusive of all land between the Merrimack and Charles Rivers including land and islands within Massachusetts Bay and land extending three miles north of the Merrimack River and three miles to the south of the Charles River or Massachusetts Bay.<sup>12</sup>

Though William Blaxton and Governor John Winthrop frequently interacted with Massachusetts people on the land they occupied, neither man acknowledged that Native presence or use of the land represented "occupation" before or after their arrival. There are no records that Blaxton or Winthrop discussed the move of the community from Charlestown to Shawmut with Chickataubut.

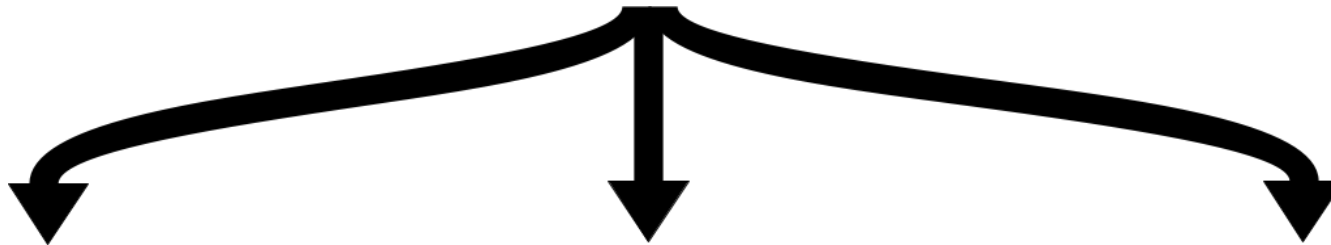
In 1633, Governor Winthrop and the General Court ordered William Blaxton to be granted 50 acres of land that he occupied, now Boston Common, establishing his official ownership of the land for the first time under English law.

---

<sup>11</sup> Govenor Winthrop mentions the corn harvest in past tense twice in his journal, once on September 14, 1632 and the second entry written between August 6 and September 4, 1633

<sup>12</sup> The Charter of Massachusetts Bay 1629





## Aftermath

<b>Native</b>	<b>The Crown</b>	<b>Settler</b>
<p>Realizing his people were threatened by disease and territory loss, In 1633, Chickataubut signed a treaty with the Massachusetts Bay colonists reserving the area of Ponkapoag (Canton), for his people.</p> <p>That same year, a second smallpox epidemic ravaged the Native community killing Nanapashemet's surviving sons and Chickataubut.</p> <p>Chickataubut's son, Wompatuk, was still a child in 1633, so Kichamakin, Chickataubut's surviving brother, took over as Sac'hem of the Neponset Band and Grand Sac'hem of the Massachusetts Confederation. Kichamakin favored the Puritans and converted to Christianity. He took over the parenting of Wompatuck and raised him as Christian in the Lower Mills area of Dorchester until Wompatuck came of age and became Sac'hem.</p> <p>The remaining leaders of the Massachusetts Confederation, including the Squaw Sachem and Wompatuck, were faced with unimaginable challenges. Their communities were decimated by disease, alliances and protections were being forged or broken at a rapid pace between neighboring Native communities and settlers, suspicious settlers worried of the threats to their communities by a scorned Native community following the Pequot Wars to the south in 1636-1637,</p>	<p>At this point, Winthrop had grown weary of concentrating his colony in any one place given the vulnerability caused by the limited fresh drinking water along the coast, the many Massachusetts people and villages in the area, and the ability to feed his colony as they approached fall without establishing farms.</p> <p>1630 saw the founding of many towns that would eventually become Boston. In June 1630, a ship landed in what is today Columbia Point and those aboard formed a small settlement of Dorchester near what would become Edward Everett Square. Not all of Winthrop's settlements in Charlestown moved to Boston. Instead, the townspeople dispersed, founding multiple smaller villages including New Town (Cambridge), Roxbury, Medford, and Watertown, and joining the small existing settlement in Dorchester. Roger Clap describes landing a boat on the Charles between Cambridge and Watertown, stating "there were hard by us three hundred Indians," and the following day a small group</p>	<p>In 1633, William Blaxton formalized his ownership of 50 acres of land where he had lived since 1624.</p> <p>Frustrated by the increasing population of the town and his land dispute with leaders of Boston, Blaxton sold 44 acres of the land back to the town. He received 30 pounds for the land, paid for by a tax of 6 shillings from each landowner of Boston. This land, paid for by the townspeople, became a trainingfield, and later "common" land owned by all residents of the town. Today, the land is Boston Common.</p> <p>Blaxton left Boston in 1635 and moved to what is today Cumberland, Rhode Island.</p>

<p>and there was pressure from tribes to the north and south on their historical territory.</p> <p>In 1639, the Squaw Sachem deeded the lands of what would become Cambridge and Watertown, including portions of what is today Boston's Allston and Brighton neighborhoods, to the Massachusetts Bay Colony.<sup>13</sup></p> <p>In an effort to preserve the lives and safety of their people in the face of suspicious colonists, in 1644, Kichamakin, the Squaw Sac'hem, and three other regional sac'hems submitted their remainings lands and people under the jurisdiction and laws of the Massachusetts Bay colony.</p>	<p>of Massachusetts offered Clap and the others with him food and were friendly.<sup>15</sup></p> <p>All of these towns grew rapidly as the thousands of Puritans arrived over the next few years. Portions of Cambridge would become the Allston/Brighton neighborhood of Boston, with Roxbury and Dorchester dividing into smaller communities over the 17th century and eventually being annexed as multiple neighborhoods of Boston in the mid 19th century.</p>	<p>The year after he resettled, Roger Williams established Providence Plantation.</p> <p>Blaxton lived in a homestead at what was called "Study Hill" and continued to read and farm. He married Sarah Fisher Stevenson in 1659 and they had a son named John.</p> <p>Sarah died in 1673 and John died in 1675 at the age of 80. That year</p>
---	--	--

<sup>13</sup> Middlesex County Deeds, Volume 1, pages 174-176

<sup>15</sup> <https://americainclass.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Roger-Clap-Memoir-Mass-Bay-1630.pdf>

#### Work Cited

Clapp, Roger

1630 [Memoirs of Roger Clap](#), published by David Clapp, Jr. in 1844.

Drake, Samuel

1841 [The Book of the Indians. Or, Biography and History of the Indians of North America, from Its First Discovery to the Year 1841](#). Antiquarian Bookstore, Boston.

Dudley, Thomas

1631 "Gov. Thomas Dudley's [Letter to the Countess of Lincoln](#). March 1631. Joshua Scottow Papers.

Gookin, Daniel

1742 [Historical Collections of the Indians in New England](#). Belknap and Hall, Boston,

Neal, Daniel

1747 [The History of New England Vol. II](#), Ward, London,

Wood, William

1634 [New England's Prospects](#).

This agreement included explicit language promising that there would be no conspiracy or threats to the settlers and their communities would submit to conversion to Christianity. In trade, the agreements to allow English settlers into increasingly larger areas of Massachusetts tribal territory ensured support and protection against outside raids from nearby Native communities.

Because it quickly grew as a trading, transportation, and cultural hub, Boston became a place for local and non-local Native people to live, trade, and travel through. One particular Boston Common neighbor exemplifies the complexity of Native presence in Boston.

John and Ann Waumpas purchased a home facing the eastern end of Boston Common in 1666.<sup>14</sup> John Waumpus was a member of the Nipmuc Tribe. The Nipmuc were the Massachusetts's neighbors to the west. Ann Prask, Wompas's wife, was one of numerous Pequot Tribal members who were taken captive during the Pequot War (1636-1638) and enslaved in and around Boston. Ann was a child when she was captured and given to Joshua and Mary Hewes of Roxbury. John Winthrop Jr., son of the former Governor, witnessed the deed transfer, and the couple's 1661 marriage is the only Native marriage recorded in 17th-century Boston. John Waumpas, who was a graduate of Harvard College, met King Charles II twice, and part of his estate is today the Hassanamisco Reservation in Grafton, Nipmuc land that has never left ownership by the Tribe.

Fearing the Native people of their community, in 1675, the Massachusetts Bay Colony banned Native people from Boston without the guard of two musketeers. Additionally, they voted to form a series of concentration camps on Deer Island, Long Island, and Great Brewster Island in Boston Harbor where the Massachusetts and Nipmuc people in nearby Praying Indian Towns were forcibly taken. Around 1,000 people were brought to the islands in the winter of 1675-1676 where they were forced to remain without food and shelter resulting in many deaths.

during the King Philip's War, Pequot warriors burned Blaxton's house, including his library and the journals he kept of his time in Boston.

<sup>14</sup> [Suffolk County Deeds Volum 5 Page 491](#)

<p>The survivors were first moved to Milton and then returned to Ponkapoag in 1676. The surviving members of Chickataubut's Neponset band of the Massachusett continued to live in and around Ponkapoag for centuries.</p> <p>In the 1680s, the surviving members of the Massachusett made a claim to Deer Island and other islands in Boston Harbor.</p>		
<p>In 1680, Charles II revoked the Massachusetts Bay Colony Charter, threatening all legal claims the colonists had on land grants issued under the Charter. In response, the town of Boston paid Wampatuck (II), aka Charles Josias or Josias Wampatuck, grandson of Sac'hem Chickataubut, an undisclosed amount of money to formally and officially purchase the town of Boston, or Shawmut, and the Boston Harbor Islands, with the agreement that the Massachusett relinquish any claim to ownership of the land. The Massachusett Tribe would continue to exist, and their members continue to live in and around the area of Boston to the present day.</p>		

Acknowledgments: This document was written in 2024 and is the product of a collaboration between Jeanne Foster and Thomas Green, enrolled members of the Massachusett Tribe at Ponkapoag and Joseph Bagley, City Archaeologist of Boston, all three members of the Research Working Group of the Friends of the Public Garden's Monument & Memory initiative. Much of the tribal historical narrative is based on multiple conversations within the Research Working Group in 2024 supplemented by primary sources researched by Foster. Uncited tribal historical data should be considered oral history contributed by Green during the work of the Research Working Group.

Winthrop, John 1630-1649 [\*Journal "History of New England"\*](#)