

Name:

Date:

The Puritans, Littleton and the Native Americans

Objective:

Students will identify and evaluate the narrative told by the seal of the town of Littleton. Students will explain what happened to the “Praying Indians”.

Central Historical Question:

Is the story depicted on the seal of the Town of Littleton about Native Americans and English Settlers in the 1600s and early 1700s accurate?



"The Seal of the Town of Littleton"

Part I: Identify the message of the source

What is the message of this source about the values of Littleton?

Detail 1:

Detail 2:

Detail 3:

The seal is saying that Littleton values...

Part II: Identify source information

Author and point of view:

Date Created:

Audience:

Littleton Town Seal

In 1895, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts passed a law allowing its towns to adopt their own seal. Gertrude F. Sanderson designed the Littleton town seal, and the town adopted it as its official seal in 1898. The seal depicts our town's industries, agriculture, and horticulture; the escutcheon contains a plough on a field of azure and three apples. The drawn sword crest is taken from the seal of Massachusetts to show that Littleton is part of the state. The seal also depicts Reverend John Eliot reverently pointing

upward while handing a Bible to a Native American, who readily receives the gift. Around the outer edge are the words "Town of Littleton 1714-1715, Nashobah Plantation 1654," indicating that the town's roots began with the Indian Nashobah Plantation, created in 1654 by Reverend Eliot, and reflecting the town's incorporation in 1714 and its name change to Littleton in 1715. The final text on the seal, "One God, One Country," was suggested by Edward Frost. See Chapter 3 for a discussion of the naming of the town.



from the Littleton Historical Society collection.

*Town Seal of Littleton, Mass.
Designed in 1894 by
Miss Gertrude F. Sanderson*

Notes:

- Gertrude Sanderson was from a well established, affluent and Protestant family in town.
- Most of the town was white and Protestant during the 1890s.
- There were no known Native Americans living in Littleton at this point.

Part III- Compare the source to primary sources

Directions:

Complete the table below using the following documents AND READING 3 as evidence. You can assume these documents, both the secondary and primary sources, are reliable.

Doc. A: "Littleton and the Native Americans" by David Boudillon

Doc. B: "Divine Right to the Land" Sermon by Rev. Cotton.

Doc. C: "Praying Indians" from Daniel Boudillon's writings

Doc. D: "Indian Reservation Map."

Document A

"Littleton and the Native Americans" by Daniel Boudillon, 2009. Boudillon is a local historian.

In 1646, the General Court of Massachusetts passed an Act for the Propagation of the Gospel amongst the Indians. This act and the success of Reverend John Eliot and other missionaries in preaching the gospel to the New England tribes raised interest in England. In 1649 the Parliament in England passed an Ordination forming "A Corporation for the Promoting and Propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in New England" which raised funds to support the cause. Contributors raised approximately 12,000 pounds for investment in this goal, to be used mainly in the Colony of Massachusetts and in New York. Reverend Eliot received financial aid from this corporation to start schools for teaching the Native Americans. [Eventually, towns were formed of Native Americans who dressed in European clothing, spoke English and converted to Christianity- they were known as the Praying Indians]

On October 28, 1646, Mr. Eliot preached his first sermon to Native Americans in their own language in the wigwam of Waban who became the first convert of his tribe in Nonantum (near Newton, Massachusetts).

Eventually Christian Indian Towns were located in Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, New Plymouth, New Norwich (Connecticut Colony), and the following in Massachusetts Colony known as the Old Praying Indian Towns: Wamesit (Chelmsford), Nashobah (Littleton), Okkokonimesit (Marlborough), Hassannamesit (Grafton), Makunkokoag (Hopkinton), Natick (Natick), and Punkapog or Pakomit (Stoughton).

...

Littleton, Massachusetts was originally a Praying Indian Village. Back in 1646, Rev. John Eliot, known as the Apostle to the Indians, began an effort to organize the Massachusetts Indians into Christian Villages. With the backing of Cromwell's England and 12,000 pounds sterling, he began a long-term mission to the Massachusetts and translated the Bible into Algonquin in 1663.

Although he was a Puritan, Eliot was also a humanitarian and he felt that the best way to assure their survival in the midst of heavy English land-pressure was to organize the Indians into English towns and lifestyles. They were to convert to Christianity, have deeded towns, live in English houses, wear English clothes, and worship Puritan style in Meeting houses.

Between 1651 and 1658, Eliot and his assistant Daniel Gookin organized seven Praying Indian Villages in Massachusetts Bay Colony, and Nashoba was the sixth. All told there were at least 14 such villages in Massachusetts with between 45 to 60 inhabitants each.

In an interesting twist, Eliot allowed the Indians to choose the sites of their new Villages. The

local Concord Indians led by an early convert, their Sachem Tahattawan, requested the "nashope" lands close by. With such latitude to location, it would not be unexpected for the Indians to choose places that were special or important to them. It is also known from Eliot that "nashope" was Tahattawan's main residence, again marking these lands as desirable.

The Indian Plantation of Nashoba [also spelled Nashobah] was formally granted by General Court in 1651 and was laid out in a lozenge-shape carved from a gore of unsettled lands situated between Groton, Chelmsford, Concord, and Lancaster. Its sides were approximately 3 x 4 x 4 x 4 miles in length and the area encompassed most of current day Littleton and a portion of Boxborough (which was formerly Littleton).

Document B

"The Divine Right to the Land" by John Cotton in 1630. Cotton was a Puritan minister and leader like John Eliot. In this excerpt, he was giving a sermon to an audience of fellow Puritans. Keep in mind that the white settlers of Littleton were also Puritans.

Now, God makes room for a people three ways:

First when He casts out the enemies of a people before them by lawful war with the inhabitants...

Second, when He gives a foreign people favor in the eyes of any native people...

Third, when He makes a country, though not altogether void [empty] of inhabitants, yet void [empty] in the place where they reside. Where there is a vacant place, there is liberty for the sons of Adam or Noah to come and inhabit, though they neither buy it nor ask their leaves. So that it is free from that common grant for any to take possession of vacant countries.

Indeed, no nation is to drive out another without special commission from Heaven and then they may right themselves by lawful war and subdue the country unto themselves.

Document C

"Praying Indians," another excerpt from local historian Daniel Boudillon's writing (2009)

The Village thrived until King Phillip's Indian War in 1675-76, when the Nashobas were rounded up and dumped on Deer Island in Boston Harbor to freeze and starve. Only a handful survived to return. The Plantation was rapidly sold to English settlers seeking land and by 1714, it was completely in English hands as the Town of Nashoba, and re-incorporated as the Town of Littleton in 1715. The surviving Indians were given the Indian New Town, a 500 acre tract of rocky hill between and including portions of Nagog Pond and Fort Pond (which was named after the Indian fort there). [However, most of them never returned to Littleton]

“Indian Reservation Map”

(Handwritten map notes)

Norfolk
to the south

The Blackwell
Bay

J. Marston

D. Henchman 1686

Westerly

Pond

90 Rods East

279 Rods

520 Rods

Vagay Pond

321 Ld.

To the Mercuries & John Pomeroy presentment &c and

284 Rods
500 Acres Land.
Indian Reservation.
sold by consent of Genl Court
for the maintenance of Sarah
Doubt the only known heir,
to Christopher Jones & Mr Tenny
A.D. 1734 annexed to him, and
called Newtown.

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for a particular document or reading.

| Document | Support the message of the seal? Explain. | Does not support the message of the seal? Explain. |
|-----------|---|--|
| Doc. A | | |
| Doc. B | | |
| Doc. C | | |
| Doc. D | | |
| Reading 3 | | |

Is the story depicted on the seal of the Town of Littleton about Native Americans and English Settlers in the 1600s and early 1700s accurate?

Claim:

Supporting Detail 1:

Supporting Detail 2:

Supporting Detail 3:
