

Probing Questions About the 1621 Harvest Celebration

The few lines with which Edward Winslow describes the 1621 harvest celebration provide some important details, but the passage leaves many questions unanswered.

When did this event take place?

Who was there?

- How did the Wampanoag learn about what was happening?
- Why did Massasoit come?
- Were the Wampanoag invited?
- Was Massasoit visiting other Wampanoag villages, or did he come just to visit the English at Plymouth?
- What other Wampanoag were present in addition to Massasoit's group?
- Did this group include women? Children?

What and how did they eat?

- Where did everyone eat? In houses? Outside?
- How many meals took place?
- Who ate with Governor Bradford and Massasoit?
- Did Massasoit's wives eat with him?
- How were people divided to eat?
- Who did the cooking? Where?
- Besides venison and wildfowl, what else did they eat?
- Did the people they thought were most important eat together?

What were the "recreations"?

- What were the "other recreations"?
- Did both English and Wampanoag participate in these recreations?
- Was there music? Dancing?

What else happened?

- Was there prayer or thanks given? By whom?
- Why did the men go hunting?
- What "others" received deer?
- Were the deer a gift?
- Who dressed and butchered the deer?
- Where did everyone sleep in a town with only seven houses?
- Did the Wampanoag build shelters near the town?

How did the Wampanoag and English get along with each other?

- How did Massasoit and his men approach the English town?
- Would Massasoit and his men have been armed?
- Where did Governor Bradford greet Massasoit?
- Who was with Governor Bradford?
- Was there a military salute?
- What did the military display look like?
- Was it meant to intimidate Massasoit?
- Were the English and Wampanoag friendly or wary of each other?
- How much interaction was there between the two cultures?