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Thomas Weston

the first scout and founder of Weymouth, Massachusetts

Thomas Weston was a merchant from London and his idea of a North American colonial settlement was that it be foremost a commercial venture, consisting of single, able-bodied men. This thought had brought about discord from the Plymouth colonists. But Weston was not a Puritan or a Separatist, and felt the *Mayflower* expedition was fraught with peculiar religious views and encumbered with women and children. That's how he had come to odds with the Mayflower Pilgrims. For him, that expedition did not have favorable negotiations. Weston had no return on his money, so he obtained his own land patent and set his sights on trade and investment returns in the new settlement.

The *Sparrow* sailed as forerunner from London to select the settlement site. They chose a place the natives called Wessagusset. Two months later, in late June 1622, the *Charity* and *Swan* left London to meet with Weston. The *Swan* was to be used by the colonists, and the *Charity* was to journey back and forth between America and England with supplies for the settlers and marketable products to be sold in London.

Winter arrived and supplies were insufficient. They arranged with Plymouth for the *Swan* to voyage around Cape Cod to obtain Indian corn. Richard Green, who was the leader of the Wessagusset Colony at the time, had taken sick and died. Therefore, Miles Standish, from Plymouth Colony led the trip, which yielded 26 hogsheads of corn. John Sanders [Saunders] took charge at Weymouth. After food supplies diminished, he asked Plymouth authorities for permission to take corn from Indians by force. His request was refused. He sailed north for supplies and never returned, and Thomas Morton had taken his place as the new leader of the Wessagusset Colony.

The colonists were in distress. Phineas Pratt stole away to Plymouth where he discovered the Pilgrim army of seven ready to thwart an Indian plan to destroy both settlements. Plymouth's John Winslow had cured Chief Massasoit of a serious sickness; in return the chief warned Winslow of the plan. The Weymouth massacre followed.

Some of Weston's colonists sailed north on the *Swan*, led by John Saunders; others went back to the Plymouth Colony. By summer, 1623, there was nobody left from this maiden settlement. Ten died from famine, two had been killed, and one badly wounded. The three men that sought refuge at the Indian camp were the last remaining, and were tortured to death by the Indians. Thomas Weston appeared later in Plymouth Colony, a broken man, mentally and financially. He had been shipwrecked, robbed by Indians and left to die. Arrested by Governor Gorges (who had recently arrived at Plymouth) four months after his return, Weston was charged with neglect in his colony and with selling weapons that were supposed to have been used for the defense of the colony. Weston denied the first charge, but confessed to the second. After consideration, Gorges released Weston "on his word".

Notes: Weymouth historians, over the years, feel very confident that the first settlers made

their settlement at Hunt's Hill. Click this link to see a very rough sketch of [prominent plac](#) in Weymouth, c. 1800, author unknown. This area is right off of King's Cove in North Weymouth.

Thomas Weston returned to Virginia and eventually settled at St. George's Hundred, Maryland, where he finally prospered, gaining praise and distinction. He died of the plague 1647, during a visit to England.

There are other writings in existence that give details of what had happened during this first attempt to settle in Weymouth (Wessagusset). Because of the testimony of men that survived this first wave of settlers, we do know some of the names of these 60 adventurers. More information is provided under the "Historical Sketch of Weymouth" link on this website.

Sources: 1. A Declaration of the Affairs of the English People that first inhabited New England; the declaration of accounts by Phineas Pratt, *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 4th series, Volume 4, 1858. 2. *Historical Sketch of Weymouth*, Vol.2, Gilbert Nash with the Weymouth Historical Society, 1885. 3. "The Weston Group Settles Weymouth, Mass", published in *The Second Boat* (Vol. 9).

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