

## Hobbamock

**“a proper lustie man, and a man of accounte for his vallour & parts amongst ye Indeans”  
(Bradford)**

The Mayflower sailed across the bay and cast anchor in Plymouth Harbor on December 26, 1620. Work on the new settlement was immediately begun. The lookout hill became Fort Hill, with the cannon mounted on its top. On the sunny side of the hill, they dug shelters and built pens for the chickens, goats, and pigs. Timber was hewn from the forest, and a common house was built.

Then came the bitter cold and snow. Since there was not sufficient shelter for all the families, they remained on the Mayflower, and the men rowed back and forth each day. Many times, the stormy waters dashed over them, freezing upon them like coats of iron.

Many caught colds that turned into pneumonia. Sickness spread like an epidemic, and almost half the people aboard the Mayflower died. Sailors who had sneered at the praying church folks, and strangers who had quarreled with them, now grew close in their mutual suffering and grief.

Warm weather came at last. A half dozen cabins were completed, and by the end of March the last of the Mayflower passengers went ashore.

Friendly Indians came - Samoset, Squanto, and Hobbamock, all of whom knew some English. Chief Massasoit also came to make a peace treaty with the colonists.

Squanto and Hobbamock remained in Plymouth. Squanto went to live with William Bradford, who was now governor. (John Carver had suddenly become ill and died.) Hobbamock went to live with Myles Standish. (LDS Church, Alice Stratton)

Hobbamock (referred to in a variety of spelling derivations) was a Native American who served as a guide, interpreter, and aide to the Pilgrims of Plymouth, Massachusetts. Like Tisquantom (Squanto), Hobbamock was essential to the survival and diplomatic success of the English in New England.

Hobbamock actually played a much larger role in relations with the English than Squanto, although Squanto tends to get most of the attention in history books.

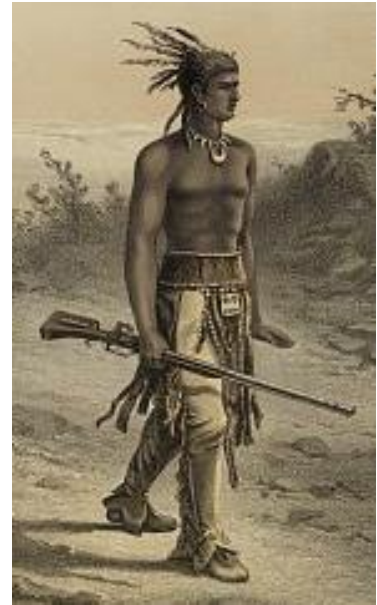
Hobbamock was a pnieise (a warrior of great courage and wisdom) who served as the sachem's counselor, collected the annual tribute from subject tribes, and advised him on decisions about going to war. The pnieise among the Wampanoag equate to the European concept of a noble knight. Winslow describes this class of warrior:

The Panieses are men of great courage and wisdom, and to these also the devil appeareth more familiarly than to others, and as we conceive, maketh covenant with them to preserve them from death, by wounds with arrows, knives, hatchets, etc., or at least both themselves and especially the people think themselves to be freed from the same.

These are highly esteemed of all sorts of people, and are of the sachems' counsel, without whom they will not war, or undertake any weighty business.

In war their sachems, for their more safety, go in the midst of them. They are commonly men of great stature and strength, and such as will endure most hardness, and yet are more discreet, courteous and humane in their carriages than any amongst them, scorning theft, lying, and the like base dealings, and stand as much upon their reputation as any men. (Winslow, noted in an Appendix in Morton's New-England's Memorial)

In 1621 a peace treaty was negotiated between John Carver, first governor of Plymouth Colony and Wampanoag sachem Ousamequin of Pokanoket, better known as Massasoit. The chief sent his trusted councilor, Hobbamock, who could speak some English, to move his large family to just outside Plymouth's palisade.



*Hobbamock*

Hobbamock was part of the Wampanoag tribe, which, in the Algonquian language, means "People of the Dawn." Other Indians feared Hobbamock so much that when they saw him in a battle, they would immediately leave

Hobbamock was specifically asked by Massasoit (the leader of the Wampanoag) to help the Pilgrims. Hobbamock became the chief interpreter because Massasoit mistrusted Squanto.

Hobbamock converted to Christianity. He once exclaimed, "Now I see that the Englishman's God is a good God, for he has heard you, and sent you rain, and that without storms and tempests, which we usually have with our rain, which breaks down our corn; but yours stands whole and good still; surely your God is a good God." (Henry White in The Early History of New England)

## **Native Americans**

Native Americans were an important part of the success of the Plymouth Colony, for it was Samoset who first paid the Pilgrims a friendly visit in the year of 1621. Massasoit, a great chief, was also a friend of the Colonists and signed a treaty with them which lasted for many years.

Hobbamock and Squanto were Indians who acted as guides for the Pilgrims and helped them in their hunting and planting. (Al Vermeer, Hoosier State Chronicles)

They not only served as interpreters and intermediaries with the other Indians, but taught the colonists how to plant and manure the native corn and where to catch fish, acted as guides about the country, and made themselves generally invaluable.

These services were not regarded wholly with favor by some of the Indians who were opposed to the whites, and the settlers had to teach the sachem (chief) Corbitant a sharp lesson, to make them leave their two Indian friends alone. (Adams, The Founding of New England, Atlantic Monthly Press, 1921)

As noted by Bradford and Winslow,

Thus ther peace & acquaintance was prety well establish wth the natives aboute them; and ther was an other Indean called Hobamack come to live amongst them, a proper lustie man, and a man of accounte for his vallour & parts amongst ye Indeans, and continued very faithfull \_and constant to ye English till he dyed.

He & Squanto being gone upon business amonge ye Indeans (Bradford)

[W]e found it true that Massasoit was put from his country by the Narragansets. Word also was brought unto us that Corbitant, a petty sachem or governor under Massasoit (whom they ever feared to be too conversant with the Narragansets), was at Nemasket ...

... who sought to draw the hearts of Massasoit's subjects from him, speaking also disdainfully of us, storming at the peace between Nauset, Cummaquid, and us, and at Squanto, the worker of it; also at Tokamahamon, and one Hobomok (two Indians, or Lemes, one of which he would treacherously have murdered a little before, being a special and trusty man of Massasoit's).

Tokamahamon went to him, but the other two would not, yet put their lives in their hands, privately went to see if they could hear of their king, and lodging at Nemasket were discovered to Corbitant ...

... who set a guard to beset the house, and took Squanto (for he had said, if he were dead the English had lost their tongue). Hobomok, seeing that Squanto was taken, and Corbitant held a knife at his breast, being a strong and stout man, broke from them and came to New Plymouth, full of fear and sorrow for Squanto, whom he thought to be slain. (Winslow)

[A]t their returne (whether it was out of envie to them or malice to the English) ther was a Sachem called Corbitant, alyed to Massassoite, but never any good freind to ye English to this day, mett with them at an Indean towne called Namassakett 14. miles to ye west of this place, and begane to quarell wth them, and offered to stabe Hobamack ...

Hobbamock, being a very powerful man, broke away and escaped. The next day, breathless and terrified, he reached Plymouth, reporting what had happened. On their journey they had entered a wigwam at Namasket, when suddenly the hut was surrounded by a band of armed Indians.

Corbitant himself, brandishing a knife, approached Squanto to kill him, saying, "When Squantum is dead the English will have lost their tongue." Just then Hobbamock escaped, and, outrunning his pursuers, reached Plymouth, not knowing the fate of his companion. (Abbott) Bradford then notes,

... but being a lusty man, he cleared him selfe of him, and came runing away all sweating and tould ye Govr what had befallne him, and he feared they had killed Squanto, for they threatened them both, and for no other cause but because they were freinds to ye English, and servisable unto them. Upon this ye Gover taking counsell, it was conceivd not fitt to be borne ...

... for if they should suffer their freinds & messengers thus to be wronged, they should have none would cleave unto them, or give them any intelligence, or doe them serviss afterwards; but nexte they would fall upon them selves. (Bradford)

## The March of Myles Standish

Upon this news the company assembled together, and resolved on the morrow to send ten men armed to Nemasket, and Hobomok for their guide, to revenge the supposed death of Squanto on Corbitant our bitter enemy, and to retain Nepeof, another sachem or governor, who was of this confederacy, till we heard what was become of our friend Massasoit. (Winslow)



The morning of the 14th of August was dark and stormy. Regardless of wind and rain Captain Standish led his men in single file through the narrow and dripping paths of the forest. It was late in the afternoon when they reached a secluded spot within four miles of Namasket. (Abbott) Winslow notes,

There we consulted what to do, and thinking best to beset the house at midnight, each was appointed his task by the captain, all men encouraging one another to the utmost of their power. By night our guide lost his way, which much discouraged our men, being we were wet, and weary of our arms, but one of our men, having been before at Nemasket, brought us into the way again.

Before we came to the town, we sat down and ate such as our knapsacks afforded. That being done, we threw them aside, and all such things as might hinder us, and so went on and beset the house, according to our last resolution. (Winslow)

At a signal, two muskets were fired to terrify the Indians, and Captain Standish, with three or four men, rushed into the hut.

Through Hobbamock, Captain Standish ordered every Indian to remain in the wigwam, assuring them that he had come for Corbitant, the murderer of Squanto, and that, if he were not there, no one else should be injured.

Terrified by the midnight surprise, and by the report of the muskets, the Indians were bereft of reason. Many of them endeavored to escape, and were severely wounded by the Pilgrims in their attempts to stop them.

At last order was restored, and it was found that Corbitant was not there, but that he had gone off, with all his train, and that Squanto was not killed. (Abbott) Winslow notes,

At length perceiving our principal ends, they told us Corbitant was returned with all his train, and that Squanto was yet living, and in the town, offering some tobacco, other such as they had to eat. In this hurly-burly we discharged two pieces at random, which much terrified all the inhabitants, except Squanto and Tokamahamon, who, though they knew not our end in coming, yet assured them of our honesty, that we would not hurt them.

Those boys that were in the house, seeing our care of women, often cried, "Neen squaes," that is to say, "I am a woman"; the women also hanging upon Hobomok, calling him Towam, that is, "friend."

In the meantime Hobomok got on the top of the house and called Squanto and Tokamahamon, which came unto us accompanied with others, some armed and others naked. Those that had bows and arrows, we took them away, promising them again when it was day. The house we took for our better safeguard, but released those we had taken, manifesting whom we came for and wherefore. (Winslow)

Many of these Indians were friendly to the English, and they, with the earliest light of the morning, gathered around Captain Standish. The hostile Indians, who belonged to the faction of Corbitant, fled during the night. It seemed, however, that a majority were disposed to be friendly, for a large group gathered around Captain Standish, with pledges of their good will.

He addressed them in words of conciliation, and yet of firmness, assuring them that, though Corbitant had for the present escaped, if he continued his hostility he could find no retreat from the avenging hand of the white man. He also assured them that if the Narragansets continued their assaults upon Massasoit or upon any of his subjects, the white men would punish them by the utter overthrow of their tribe.

He expressed much regret that any of the Indians had been wounded, but told them that it was their own fault, as he had assured them that they should not be harmed if they would remain in the hut. He also offered to take home with him any who were wounded, that they might be carefully nursed. Two of the wounded availed themselves of this offer. The surgeon of the Pilgrim company, Mr. Samuel Fuller, tenderly cared for them. (Abbott)

On the next morning we marched into the midst of the town, and went to the house of Squanto to breakfast. Thither came all whose hearts were upright towards us, but all Corbitant's faction were fled away.

There in the midst of them we manifested again our intendment, assuring them, that although Corbitant had now escaped us, yet there was no place should secure him and his from us if he continued his threatening us and provoking others against us, who had kindly entertained him, and never intended evil towards him till he now so justly deserved it.

Moreover, if Massasoit did not return in safety from Narraganset, or if hereafter he should make any insurrection against him, or offer violence to Squanto, Hobomok, or any of Massasoit's subjects, we would revenge it upon him, to the overthrow of him and his.

As for those were wounded, we were sorry for it, though themselves procured it in not staying in the house at our command; yet if they would return home with us, our surgeon should heal them.

At this offer, one man and a woman that were wounded went home with us, Squanto and many other known friends accompanying us, and offering all help that might be by carriage of any thing we had to ease us. So that, by God's good providence, we safely returned home the morrow night after we set forth. (Winslow)

Captain Standish led his triumphant little band back, accompanied by Squanto, and many other friendly Indians. The heroic achievement taught the friendly Indians that they could rely upon the protection of the white men, and was a loud warning to those who were disposed to be hostile. The enterprise occupied but two days.

As the result of this adventure, many Sachems sent in the expression of their desire to enter into a friendly alliance with the Pilgrims. Corbitant himself was frightened by such an exhibition of energy, and by his own narrow escape. He sought reconciliation through the intercession of Massasoit, and subsequently signed a treaty of submission and friendship. (Abbott)

Rose, the first wife of Myles Standish, died at Plymouth, January 29, 1621, about a month after the landing. She was among the first to succumb to the privations of that terrible first winter. He married a second wife (Barbara), who survived him.

After his second marriage, Standish moved to his house on Captain's Hill in Duxbury, and here he drew around him a devoted class of friends, among whom were the elder Brewster, George Partridge, John Alden, Mr. Howland, Francis Eaton, Peter Brown, George Soule, Nicholas Byrom, Moses Simmons, and other settlers of Duxbury.

The Indians also loved as well as feared him, and the faithful Hobbamock ever kept near to minister to his wants and was the faithful guide in his travels.

This devoted Indian died in 1642, having faithfully served with Standish for twenty years. He is supposedly buried on the south side of Captain's Hill, near the great rock called 'The Captain's chair.' Tradition fixes his wigwam between two shell mounds on the shore near the Standish place, till taken home to the house of Standish, where he became a resident until his death. (Abbott)

Information here is from Bradford; Winslow; Henry White, *The Early History of New England*, Al Vermeer, *Hoosier State Chronicles*; John Abbott, *Miles Standish the Puritan Captain*; Morton's *New-England's Memorial*; Adams, *The Founding of New England*, Atlantic Monthly Press)

In an effort to provide a brief, informal background summary of various people, places and events related to the Mayflower, I made this informal compilation from a variety of sources. This is not intended to be a technical reference document, nor an exhaustive review of the subject. Rather, it is an assemblage of information and images from various sources on basic background information. For ease in informal reading, in many cases, specific quotations and citations and attributions are often not included – however, sources are noted in the summary. The images and text are from various sources and are presented for personal, noncommercial and/or educational purposes. Thanks, Peter T. Young