**Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site**244 Central Street, Saugus, MA 01906  
781-233-0050 <http://www.nps.gov/sair>

# Teaching with Historic Places Lesson Plan

## Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site

**Sources:** Saugus Iron Works  
Saugus High School  
Veterans Memorial School

**Subject:** Social Studies

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**Grade:** 5-12

### Introduction:

We see this lesson as part of a middle grades unit about early colonial settlements, focusing on the interactions between the Native Americans and the first English settlers in the Massachusetts Bay area. This lesson would assume that the class had just been taught about some of the Native tribes and their distribution throughout southern New England. We also assume that the class would have some background information about first contact with some of the earliest European explorers to the region such as the Vikings, Basque fishermen,



The Saugus Iron Works

Verrazano (1524), and French traders (1568). This lesson would be followed by one to learn about the archeological and historic evidence known of the Massachusetts tribe Natives at the Saugus Ironworks site. As part of this, students would learn about Native metalwork before English settlement and how and why the Natives adapted to using iron tools. Later lessons would be to learn about and compare the cultures of the Massachusetts and the Wampanoag tribes to see how and why the experiences of the Saugus and Plymouth settlements differed. This would lead to a study of King Philip's War in 1675.

### Objectives:

By the end of this lesson the children will be able to:

- complete a time line correctly marking at least 5 main events in the early settlement of the Massachusetts Bay area.
- write a short paragraph to explain at least 2 reasons why the Massachusetts tribe disappeared.

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## Initiating Activities:

- The teacher will indicate to the class that, to understand the relationships between the Native population and early English settlers, the class will participate in a representational tug-of-war. Five students will be chosen to be the Natives and five more to be English settlers. Before the tug-of-war starts, the teacher will ask if the teams show a true representation of the situation at first contact. Since the Natives greatly outnumbered the English, the teacher will add five to the Natives' side and remove four from the English side, making the balance 10 to 1.
- There will now be some discussion as to how the English would act if this was the case. It will be pointed out that, when Bartholomew Gosnold explored the coast in 1602, he had friendly contact with the natives along the Maine to Connecticut coast. At this point it was estimated that there were about 3,000 Massachusetts tribe Natives living in the region. (There will be more information given about this and other events in the second part of the lesson.)
- The founding of Jamestown, Virginia in 1607 will be mentioned to show that the English, led by Gosnold, were interested in establishing settlements, though usually further south than New England.
- The mapping exploration of John Smith in 1614 will also be mentioned as his enthusiastic descriptions of New England interested future settlement here.
- Now there will be mention of a wave of smallpox epidemics which struck from 1614 - 1617, wiping out about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the Native population. Only about 500 - 800 Massachusetts tribe members were left in the area after this. Seven of the Native tug-of-war team can sit down, leaving a 3 to 1 balance.
- There were wars between the Native tribes as some were weakened more than others in the "sickening time". One more on the "Native" team can sit down. (2 to 2)
- In 1620 the Pilgrims settled on the south shore of Massachusetts, followed by settlements on the north shore in Gloucester in 1623 and Salem (which was at that time the capital of the Massachusetts Bay Colony) in 1626. Add two to the English team. (2 - 4)



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Stone-age tools

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- In 1630, Governor Winthrop established Shawmut (Boston) as the new capital and the “Great Migration” from England began, adding about 1,700 Englishmen to the area that year. (Add 2 more to the English team, making the balance 2-6.)
- Another 1,350 had arrived by 1633. (Add 2 more to the English team, 2 - 8.)
- At the end of 1633 another wave of smallpox hit the Natives, reducing their number even more as about 1,400 more arrived from England. Change the balance again so that it now stands 1 - 10 in favor of the English.
- By the time of the English Civil War (1642), about another 20,000 English had settled in Massachusetts. Add about 10 - 15 more to the English team. This is an approximation of how the population numbers compared at the time the Saugus Ironworks was established in 1646.
- As the sides now balance at about 1 Native to 20 - 25 Englishmen we can see that a tug-of-war would be pointless. The teams can sit down and proceed to review and discuss the implications of this exercise.

## Secondary Activity:

There will now be a review of the main concepts presented as the teacher draws a timeline on the board and the children copy it and take notes. It should include the following:

**Pre-1600:** Some initial Native American contact with Europeans

**1602:** Contact with Natives by Bartholomew Gosnold. (Gosnold gave the names to Cape Cod and Martha’s Vineyard and has a village named after him in the Elizabeth Islands off of Cape Cod.) There were about 3,000 Massachusetts tribe Natives living in the Saugus region. It will be pointed out that, though the English had some powerful weapons, they were not inclined to use them and the Natives gave them no cause to as they were friendly and not concerned about these temporary visitors, having traded with European explorers before.

**1607:** Founding of Jamestown, Virginia. The English, led by Gosnold, were interested in establishing settlements, though usually further south than New England. That same year, it will be noted, an English settlement on the Sagadahoc (now Kennebec) River in Maine was established, but it failed in 1608, confirming for many Englishmen that New England had weather too harsh in which to settle.

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**1614:** Exploration and mapping of the New England coast by John Smith, explorer, adventurer, and former Governor of the Jamestown colony. His positive descriptions led many to believe that they could settle New England.

**1614 - 1617:** Smallpox epidemics. At least three waves of smallpox swept through and killed  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the Native population.

**1615:** War between New England tribes. The Tarratines (MicMac) of northern Maine fought the Penobscots. Massachusetts Sachem, Nanepashemet, supported the Penobscots and was hunted down and killed in 1619 by the Tarratines for that support.

**1619:** Death of Nanepashemet. Squaw-Sachem (Nanepashemet's wife) assumes leadership role of weakened Massachusetts federation. Several tribes had left Nanepashemet's federation during the years he was in hiding from the Tarratines. Some estimate the number of Massachusetts Natives to be 500-800 at this time. Squaw-Sachem's three sons assumed their roles as sagamores ("princes") of three of the four areas which remained loyal to Squaw-Sachem. The oldest, Wonohaquaham ("Sagamore John") lived in the area around modern Charlestown to Chelsea. He was well-liked by the English settlers and adapted to their ways fairly quickly. The middle son, Montowampate ("Sagamore James") lived in the area of modern Nahant, Marblehead, Lynn, and Saugus. He is the Native shown on the Saugus Town Seal. The youngest brother ("Sagamore George") lived in the area of modern Salem. When the two older brothers died, Sagamore George inherited their tribal lands. There was one sister, Ya-wata. She may be the mother of Quannapowitt, whose name lives on as the lake from which the Saugus River, which powered the Ironworks, flows.

**1620:** Founding of Plymouth, Massachusetts. Pilgrim separatists settled at the site of a Wampanoag village which had been destroyed by the smallpox epidemics a few years before.

**1623:** Founding of Gloucester, Massachusetts.

**1626:** Founding of Salem, Massachusetts. Under Governor John Endicott, Salem becomes the capital of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

**1629:** Founding of Saugus, Massachusetts.

**1630:** Founding of Boston, Massachusetts. Governor John Winthrop chooses to move the capital from Salem to the peninsula and harbor at Shawmut (Boston) feeling it will be more suitable for the wave of immigrants that are coming from England.

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**1630 - 1642:** The Great Migration. As many as 24,000 Englishmen immigrate to Massachusetts during this time.

**1633:** Smallpox epidemic. Many of the remaining Massachusetts tribes die, including Sagamore John and Sagamore James, both in December. Sagamore George catches the disease, but survives, though he may have lost his nose as a result. Some estimates say that no more than 300 tribe members were left. According to one primary source, the two elder Sagamores, John and James, “command(ed) not above thirty or forty men” by 1630.

**1642:** English Civil War and end of the Great Migration.

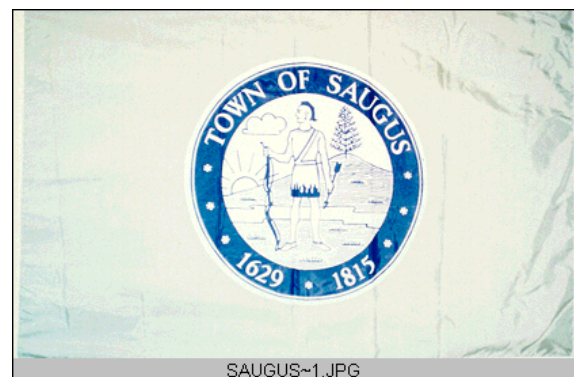
## Culminating Activity:

To complete the lesson the students will discuss what happened to the Massachusetts federation. They should conclude that smallpox epidemics played a large part in reducing their numbers. They should also note that, being so quickly outnumbered, those who were left were soon assimilated into English culture. Many of that and the next generation assumed English-sounding names and converted to the English religion. By 1800 there were none left who were recognized to be of the Massachusetts tribe. It should also be pointed out that Nanepashemet’s lack of leadership, as he hid from the Tarratines from 1615 - 1619, his death, and the assumption to power of his wife caused a breakdown in the structure of the Massachusetts federation. Although Squaw-Sachem (the only name by which she is known) appears to have shown wisdom in dividing power among her sons, she was only holding the tribe together loosely after the smallpox deaths of Sagamore John and James in 1633.

## Assessment:

The students will create their own timelines the next day as a review activity, matching at least five dates and events correctly and listing them in order.

The students will also write a short paragraph giving at least two reasons why the Massachusetts tribe no longer exists.



SAUGUS~1.JPG  
Official flag of Saugus, Massachusetts