STANDALONE HISTORY BOOK | The First Thanksgiving with Carl - Version 6

The First Thanksgiving with Carl

The Pilgrims, the Wampanoag, and the harvest gathering of 1621



An illustration of this coast in the early 1600s, with its shore, fields, and houses. It helps you picture the setting of the story. It is not an exact reconstruction of Plymouth or of Patuxet.

Meet Carl

Hi, I am Carl the Cardinal, your guide for this book. I am a teaching helper from today, not a person who was there in 1621. I was not at the harvest gathering, and no picture of me shows how people sat or what was served in 1621. I will ask good questions and help you tell what the record really says from what later pictures added.

For readers ages 7 to 11 reading with a grown-up. Look for Level Up boxes for ages 12 to 13.

Answer your way: on every activity you may write, speak, dictate to a grown-up, point, or draw.



Carl beside a harvest display of maize and squash, two of the Three Sisters crops you will meet in this book. The display is here for learning. It is not a picture of the 1621 menu. Carl is a cardinal.

1. The Land and Its People Before 1620

Did You Know?

Wampanoag means People of the First Light. Their homeland faces the sunrise over the Atlantic Ocean.

Long before any English ship arrived, Native people lived along the coast we now call Massachusetts. The people in this story are the Wampanoag. Their homeland included many communities in what are now southeastern Massachusetts and eastern Rhode Island. Patuxet was one of those communities. Across the homeland, dozens of connected villages stood along rivers, bays, and islands, including Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard. The wider region toward the sunrise is sometimes called the Dawnland, a name kept distinct from any one village or homeland boundary.

Villages stood near fresh water and good planting ground, close to the shore for fish and shellfish. Families lived in houses called wetus, covered with bark or woven mats. A larger village might have fields around it, paths to neighboring villages, and meeting places where leaders and families gathered.

The coast itself shaped daily life. Tides brought fish and clams. Rivers carried people by canoe between villages. Forests gave deer, wood, and nuts. The Wampanoag were not wandering without homes. They belonged to named places, and families held ties to their planting grounds and hunting areas across generations.

Led by sachems

Each village and group of villages was led by a sachem. Wampanoag leaders worked with councils and community relationships. Their government was not the same as England's monarchy. What responsibilities should any leader have?

Sachemship could pass within a family, and women could lead as well as men. A sachem settled disputes, led in hard times, and spoke for the community with other peoples. In 1620 the leading sachem in the region was Ousamequin, called Massasoit, a title meaning great sachem.

> **LEVEL UP, AGES 12 TO 13:** Leadership here rested on counsel, kinship, and the community's trust, working alongside any family claim to lead. Ask: how is leading with a council different from a king ruling alone?

Think and draw

Draw a Wampanoag coastal village. Show the wetus, the fields, the shore, a canoe, and the work people are doing. Answer your way: draw, label, or describe it to a grown-up.

DRAWING SPACE: My Wampanoag coastal village