

MASSASOIT MAKES HISTORIC ALLIANCE

MASSASOIT, also called Ousamequin, a leader of the Native Wampanoag people, yesterday completed a historic agreement with the English settlers of Plymouth Colony, *writes our senior chronicler, March 23, 1621.*

The Wampanoags, whose name means “People of the First Light,” have made an alliance of mutual support with the small community of English Separatist settlers.

They have Tisquantum and Samoset to thank, acting as envoys for Massasoit, who

lives in a village called Pokanoket. Samoset, an Abenaki man, learned some English from visiting fishermen; Tisquantum or “Squanto,” a Patuxet man, is fluent in English.

At a ceremony, the Plymouth Governor John Carver kissed the hand of Massasoit, who returned the honor.

Massasoit weighed the possibility of whether to ally with the Narragansett or the English. He has now made a calculated decision to side with the English. The

Wampanoag people inhabit the coastal areas where the settlers have chosen to make their colony. But they have been weakened by disease, struggling to defend themselves against the powerful Narragansett people, who have been largely unscathed by the epidemic of the great dying.

The settlers also see opportunity. They believe the agreement with the Wampanoag people provides the best chance of ensuring the colony’s future prosperity.