

Seaconke Wampanoag Tribe

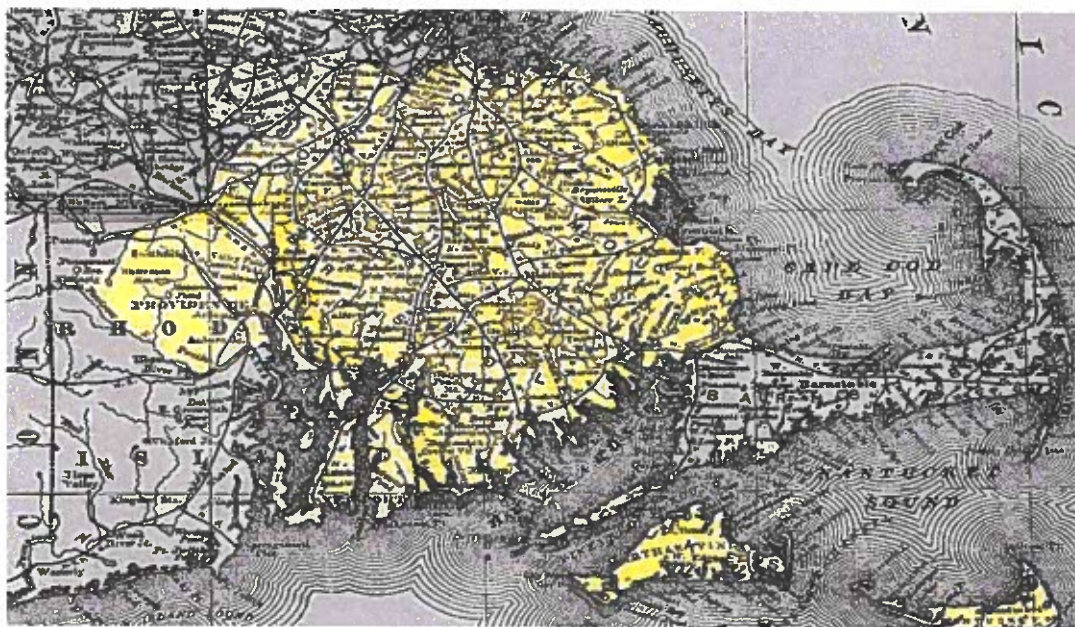
History Department 10 Feb 2022 Report 2.5



Building of the First Free Methodist Church 1924

Wampanoag: *people of the east. The people to see the first light of dawn.* In the 1600's the Wampanoag were a confederation of Tribes. They had self governance, institutions, education, religious, political, and monetary systems. Governments made war and agreed on peace treaties. The Wampanoag confederation of tribes spoke the Massachusetts dialect of the Algonquin language. Algonquin is a descriptive language with no written text.

Pokanoket: *"Place of Clear Land"* The largest tribe in the Wampanoag Confederation in both population and size is the Pokanoket. From west to east approximately Burrillville, R.I to the Atlantic Ocean. From North to South approximately Dedham, Ma. to the shores of the Narragansett and Buzzards Bays. In the 1600's Pokanoket was the seat of leadership in the confederation. Ousamequin The Massasoit lived in Sowams.' Which was bordered to the North and west by an open treeless plain known as Seaconke.



Pokanoket Wampanoag Territory

Seaconke: *black goose; at the mouth of the river.*

Seaconke is the place of "place of clear land". Seaconke makes up the northern and western most part of the Pokanoket territory in the Wampanoag Confederation of tribes. The peoples that lived on the Seaconke plain grew crops to feed and store. In and about Seaconke were storage facilities to lay in corn, squash, and beans for the winter. Annawan, friend and brother-in-law to Massasoit, was the tribal Chief of the Seaconke people.

The Seaconke people served also as warriors led by Annawan They served as a buffer to any attack on Sowams the home of Massasoit, the capital of Pokanoket and Wampanoag proper. Being that Seaconke was a vast open plain any enemy from the west or north would have to cross the plain and its many villages.

Some of those villages were;

Seaconke - at the mouth of the 10 mile river was a central place to import and export product, food and goods down the coast of the bay, into the northeast part of Pokanoket, or across the bay to Moshassak or Coheasett. The Purchase accounted for 10 sq miles. The Population of the Seaconke village moved across the river to Moshassuck.

Pawtucket - was situated at the falls where the Blackstone River flowed in the Seaconke River. This place was the narrowest point where an enemy could cross from west to east.

Wochomoquet - at the high point of Seaconke, where the current Washington bridge crosses into Providence. From this point you can see west into the western parts of Pokanoket and where the Seaconke and Moshassuk Rivers flow into the Providence River. This point would provide defense of Sowams from any large army approaching the Seaconke Plain.

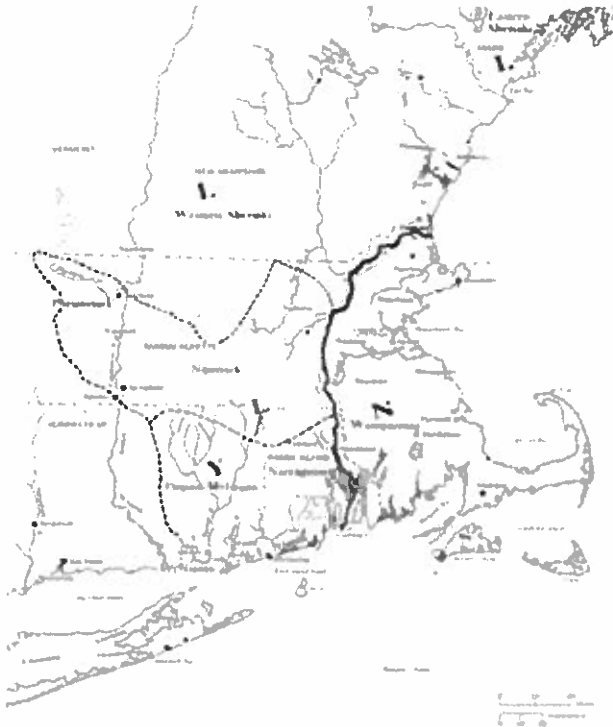
Wannamoisett - a place of many fertile fields of corn, beans, and squash. The Seaconke people that lived here were moved to the north into the lands that would make up the North Purchase.

Moshassuck - Lands between the Moshassick and Seaconke Rivers. Which make up the marsh lands and large estuary where both rivers flow into the Providence. The tribal people that were in Moshassuck moved East back to Seaconke.

Wawepooseag - Village located on today's blackstone river, named the Pawtucket river by the indigenous population. The Village was pointed out in the original North Purchase 1661 deed.

Historical Record: On Thursday 24 April 1524 Giovanni Da Verrazano would sail up what is today called the Narragansett Bay. He describes in his ships log those twenty small boats pulled up alongside and "among them were two kings more beautiful in form and stature than can be described." These kings were the Wampanoag King and his brother. They allowed Verrazano and his men to travel from the shore to the interior. Verrazano found the "country as pleasant as was possible to conceive." Although mostly dense forests they also found an open plain 20-30 leagues (40-60 miles) and "adapted to cultivation of every kind." This Plain was Seaconke. " There is no question that the Wampanoags were the first inhabitants of "Old Seacunke" Dr John G Erhardt. Over the next 100 years the Wampanoag would be visited by explorers and

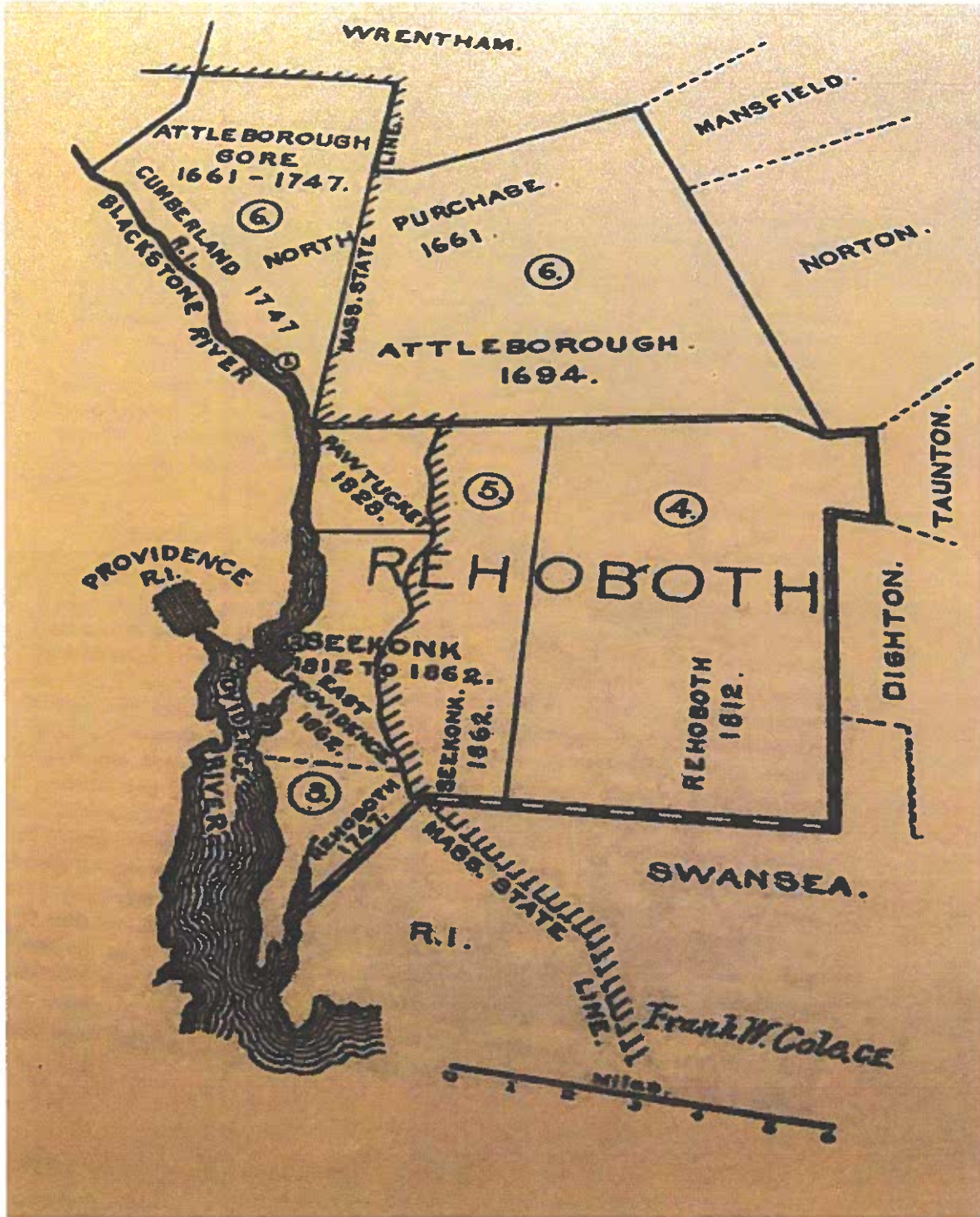
they would trade with the Europeans. The average Wampanoag knew more of the Europeans than the average European knew of the Wampanoag.



Wampanoag Nation Tribal and Linguistic Territory about 1630

Plague, Famine, Peace and War: In 1618 plague and famine nearly killed off the Wampanoag, disrupting the balance of power between the Wampanoag and Narragansetts. With only a few warriors it would soon be impossible for Massasoit to defend Wampanoag territory. The Narragansetts were seeking to fill the void and pushing Massasoit to pay tribute to them. In November of 1620, the Pilgrims arrived on the Wampanoag shores. In the Spring of 1621 Massasoit went to Plymouth, formerly the Wampanoag village of Pawtuxet. There he signed a mutual defense agreement. Thus if the Pilgrims should be attacked the Wampanoag would support the emerging colony.

Land for Peace: Over the next 40 years the Seaconke Lands would be sold or transferred to the colonies. First to put a buffer between the Wampanoag and its enemies to the North and west and then to settle disputes between colonists and the Wampanoag. The largest 4 transfers of property were Moshassuck 1636, Seaconke 1641, Wannamoisett, 1643 and eventually the North purchase 1661. The North Purchase eliminated the last natural home of the Seaconke people. By Deed the Seaconke were allowed to "Sojourn" in the lands Purchased. These lands make up today, Attleboro, North Attleboro, Plainfield, Ma. The purchase also claimed Cumberland and a portion of Woonsocket, R.I.



North Purchase April 8 1661, Wamsutta sold to Captain Thomas Willett a tract of land that included what is now Attleborough, Mass., and Cumberland R.I., and also parts of the present towns of Mansfield and Norton. Indian History, Biography, and Genealogy; Pertaining to the Good Sachem Massasoit of the Wampanoag tribe and His Descendants pg 3

Wampanoag Lands - Existing in Present day Rhode Island

East Providence - Seaconke Purchase 1641 conveyed by deed

Pawtucket - Seaconke Purchase 1641 conveyed by deed

Wannamoisett - 1645 conveyed by deed

Providence (east side) - Mooshasuck gift of Massasoit to Roger Williams 1636

Cumberland - North Purchase 1661 conveyed by deed

Woonsocket - North Purchase 1661 conveyed by deed

Lincoln - purchased from Massasoit directly (unk)

Smithfield - spoils of war 1675/1676

North Smithfield - spoils of war 1675/1676

Barrington - Sowams Purchase 1653 conveyed by deed

Warren - Sowams Purchase 1653 conveyed by deed

Bristol - spoils of war 1675/1676

Metacomet: succeeded his brother and father. He saw that the land for peace policy would only work "Until he had no country" to give. In 1675 he led a war for Wampanoag freedom. This war began, was mostly fought, and ended in Seaconke. Annawan, the War Chief of Metacomet, Friend and brother-in-law to Massasoit, was the tribal Chief of the Seaconke people. He was captured in Seaconke by Captain Church in August 1676 thus ending the "King Phillip" war.

The period between August of 1676 and October of 1696 was a dark age in Seaconke History. Wampanoags became refugees, were sold into slavery, and shipped to Bermuda or were killed. Not allowed to be an active tribal nation. The remnant Seaconke people not killed or suppressed survived by working in the homes, on the farms, and in the businesses of the colonies. The new governors of Seaconke. Without a center of leadership clans carried on the culture and traditions of Wampanoag. During this period, the Seaconke people were in but not a part of this new World.

01 Oct 1996: the descendants of the Seaconke people stood up and made clear that they were an organized part of this world. That they would no longer be suppressed. That they have been, still are and always would be the Seaconke Wampanoag Tribe.

Citations

Historical and Architectural Resources of Cumberland R.I. 1998

Before European settlement, the general vicinity of present-day Cumberland was part of a large tract of Wampanoag territory called Pawunawket or Pokonaket. pg. 3

By the 1640s, Native American Wampanoags living in the area began to sell off lands in Cumberland to European settlers who were eager to exploit the rich hunting and fishing grounds of the Blackstone River Valley. In 1661, Captain Thomas Willett purchased a large tract, known as the Rehoboth North Purchase, from Wamsutta, oldest son of

Massasoit, the Wampanoag leader. This Plymouth Colony territory included present-day Cumberland and adjacent parts of Woonsocket. In 1694, it became part of Attleborough known since 1914 as Attleboro when that settlement was incorporated as a township. It was known as the "Attleborough Gore" until it was annexed to Rhode Island in 1747 and renamed for William, Duke of Cumberland. The last boundary change in the political development of Cumberland occurred on January 31, 1867, when the northwest corner of the town was set off to form part of Woonsocket. pg. 6

Rhode Island Historical Preservation commission

The History Of Cumberland

The North Purchase was, in 1694, incorporated into a separate town, and took the name of Attleborough. This was also divided in 1746, and that which was formerly called the Gore, became Cumberland. Up to 1812, the original town continued, when it was again divided, and Seekonk became a separate township, retaining, however, its original Indian name. pg. 110

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In 1661 this name is first mentioned in the Plymouth records, in describing the boundaries of the 'North Purchase'; viz., 'From Rehoboth, ranging upon the Pawtucket River, to a place called by the natives Wawepooseag, where one Blackstone now sojourneth.' pg 110

The History Of Rhode Island with Illustrations

Rhode Island Reading Room

Indian History, Biography, and Genealogy ...

It was upon such evidence as this that the English held their "land title" to the township of Rehoboth from Nov 1 1642, until March 30 1668, when a "quit claim" in form and writing was obtained of King Phillip, son of the deceased chieftain Massasoit, of whom it was claimed by the English that the purchase had long been made. pg 34

March 9, 1653, Massasoit who was then called Ousamequin, and his son Wamsutta, conveyed by deed to the English, several parcels of land lying on the south-easterly side of Sinkunke, alias Rehoboth, bounded by a little brook called Moskituash westerly and so running by the dead swamp eastward and soe maked by trees unto the great river... Pg 34-35 Indian History, Biography, and Genealogy, Pertaining to the Good Sachem Massasoit, The Wampanoag Tribe, and His Descendants

Property Owners Guide

Cumberland's first human inhabitants were the Nipmuc, Wampanoag, and Narragansett Native American tribes. Pg 3

Cumberland Historic District Commission

Preliminary Survey Report

NATIVE AMERICANS

Northern Rhode Island, before European settlement, was the territory of three Algonquin tribes. The Narragansetts, whose principal settlements were in the southern part of the state, were the most powerful tribe in Rhode Island. The northeastern part of present-day Rhode Island, including North Smithfield, was the western edge of the territory of the Wampanoags, an important tribe which was well established in southeastern Massachusetts and along the eastern shores of Narragansett Bay. They also exerted control over the Nipmucs, an insignificant group which occupied the northwestern part of Rhode Island and much of Worcester County. These Indians hunted, fished, gathered nuts and other forest products, and probably planted some crops in clearings in the woods. Several references to Indians which appear in old deeds mention "Indian fields" and "Indian grounds," and these are often in connection with boundaries of land purchased by early white settlers. There were some Indian settlements nearby, including Douglas and Uxbridge, Massachusetts, but there is little evidence that these semi-migratory people were well established in North Smithfield. Settlements were most likely temporary, based on the seasonal patterns dictated by nature. The Native American use of the land was a major aspect of the cultural history of the community. From evidence gathered, along the Branch River in the way of artifacts--an ax head, a hand spear, hide scrapers, and arrow heads--it is apparent that the Indians were quite familiar with that river valley; and the discovery of a stone pot, or basin, near Cherry Brook, south of Union Village, suggests that the smaller waterways were also used by the Indians. However, little professional archeological investigation has been done in the town; consequently, accurate knowledge of the life of North Smithfield's earliest inhabitants is sketchy at best.

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations Preliminary Survey Report

Town of Smithfield

A limited number of pioneering spirits ventured from the nucleus settlement of Providence into the wilderness of the outlands. In the beginning, these peoples coexisted with the Wampanoag tribe who utilized this vast area for hunting and fishing. The Smithfield of today was called Wionkhiege. The King Philip's War in the late 1600's defeated the Indians and destroyed the unity of their tribal structure. The opportunity for a development pattern of increased white inhibition was created.

Town of Smithfield Website

LINCOLN RECONNAISSANCE REPORT

BLACKSTONE VALLEY HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

Rhode Island's Blackstone Valley is located in the northern part of the state and comprises cities like Providence and Pawtucket as well as small towns. The rich natural resources of this region attracted and supported Native Americans for thousands of years. Narragansetts, Nipmucks and Wampanoags moved through the area fishing along the rivers, hunting in the uplands, and establishing

settlements where they cultivated crops and left behind burial and ceremonial sites. Pg 4

NATIVE AMERICAN OCCUPATION Before 1620

The lands comprising present-day Barrington were occupied by Native Americans for at least 8,000 years prior to European arrival in the area, as evidenced by the archaeological record. Just prior to and during the period of colonization by European settlers in the seventeenth century, the inhabitants were the Wampanoag people. pg 5

At the time of English settlement at Plymouth in 1620, many coastal villages were deserted and the major Wampanoag settlement was located in the Barrington Warren-Bristol locale. The landscape encountered by the new settlers reflected, however, long and continuous Indian use; areas were cleared for garden plots, villages, and camps, and a network of trails already existed. pg 5

The Native American term Pokanoket had various meanings, referring either to all of the Wampanoag lands, or to the area comprising the present towns of Bristol, Warren, Barrington, and East Providence, Rhode Island, and parts of Seekonk, Rehoboth, Swansea, and Somerset, Massachusetts, which was the most densely settled. Pg 5 In 1641, Plymouth paid Massasoit for the rights to a tract of land corresponding to the present towns of Rehoboth and Seekonk, Massachusetts, together with the Rumford and Watchemoket sections of East Providence and the eastern half of Pawtucket, Rhode Island. A band of settlers came to this tract in 1643. They first called their town by the Indian name for the region, Seacunke, but changed its name to Rehoboth two years later. Pg 6

The colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations claimed a large territory east and northeast of Narragansett Bay, based on the land grant outlined in its charter of 1663. In 1741 a royal commission ordered the transfer of portions of this region from Massachusetts to Rhode Island, a grant confirmed by the king's Privy Council in May 1746. By this award, Rhode Island received the Massachusetts towns of Little Compton, Tiverton, and Bristol; the northwestern part of Attleboro known as Attleboro Gore, now the town of Cumberland, Rhode Island; and portions of Barrington and Swansea. Barrington, as incorporated in 1717, was subdivided; the northwestern corner of the town now Riverside was added to Rehoboth and the northeastern corner around Barneyville Road reverted to Swansea. At the same time a portion of Swansea from the Palmer River east to the mouth of Cole River was turned over to Rhode Island. In January 1747, the portions of the former Barrington and Swansea that were ceded to Rhode Island were incorporated as the Rhode Island town of Warren. pg 6

he eighteenth-century censuses also record small but significant populations of "Negroes" and "Indians" in Barrington. The Native Americans were presumably

Wampanoags who remained on their ancestral lands, some as independent landowners, but more commonly as servants in the households of prosperous families. In 1774, there were 18 Native Americans in Barrington. Africans and African Americans, of whom there were 41 in town in 1774, came to Barrington under the duress of slavery, though a number of individuals were free before the abolition of slavery in 1784. The census records indicate that, whether free or slave, African Americans lived primarily within white households. pg 11
Historic and Archeological Resources
Of Barrington R.I.

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LINCOLN RECONNAISSANCE REPORT
BLACKSTONE VALLEY HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY
By Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission &
Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission

Woonsocket R.I.
Before the arrival of European settlers in northern Rhode Island during the 17th century, today's Woonsocket region was inhabited by three Native American tribes: the Nipmuc (Covesett), Wampanoag, and Narragansett.[5]
Woonsocket, R.I.
By Wikipedia

Historic and Archeological Resources
Of Barrington R.I.
By Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission 1993

Genetic Heritage and native identity of the Seaconke Wampanoag Tribe
By Sergey Zhadanov, Michael Markley et al.

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Rhode Island Atlas of Historical Boundaries
Warren's History - Town of Warren R.I. website
Town of Smithfield History - Town of Smithfield website

Maps & Picture
Pic 1 FFMC collection of Michael Markley
Pic 2 Pokanoket Territory - Wikipedia
Pic 3 Wampanoag Linguistic Territory Jessie Little Doe Baird
Pic 4 Old Seaconke

