



2017-10-27

The Digital Archive of John Wompas

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Swindler Sachem: The American Indian Who Sold His Birthright, Dropped out of Harvard, and Conned the King of England

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Pulsipher, Jenny Hale, "The Digital Archive of John Wompas" (2017). *ScholarsArchive Data*. 2.
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Data Description: The Digital Archive of John Wompas, by Jenny Hale Pulsipher

In the course of writing my book on John Wompas, *Swindler Sachem: The American Indian Who Sold His Birthright, Dropped out of Harvard, and Conned the King of England* (Yale University Press, 2018), I gathered a great deal of information on such subjects as Indian slavery, Native land sales, the Atlantic maritime trade, and Native education in Massachusetts. This information contributed to the book by providing historical context for Wompas's life, but most nitty-gritty details were tangential to the book's purpose so do not appear in it. Because those details could help other scholars working on more narrowly focused books or articles, I have placed them here where they can be accessible to anyone who has the URL.**

I also built this archive as a teaching resource. For many students starting out in the field of history, historical research is a mystery. Students read books that make arguments, but they don't always understand how the author moved from the evidence to the claim. For a book like *Swindler Sachem*, which pulls bits of evidence from a multitude of archival, printed, and nontraditional sources, arriving at a conclusion may appear even more mysterious. By placing some photos and many transcriptions of my sources on a digital archive, paired with a timeline, I provide students with a chance to examine the evidence and come to their own conclusions, which they can compare to mine. They can also examine the tables of information I have gathered, organized below under "Data on Indian Slavery and Servitude," "Data on Sales of Indian Land in the New England Colonies," "Data on Maritime New England," "Data on Indian Literacy and Education," and "Data on Native Female Property Ownership."

I. Timeline

John Wompas and Ann Prask Wompas Timeline, with Notes, Transcriptions, Scans, and Links to Primary Documents

II. Data on Indian Slavery and Servitude

- A. Indian Captives in the Pequot War, 1637
- B. Fates of Individual Captives in the Pequot War
- C. Indian Captives, Servants, and Slaves in the Era of King Philip's War, 1673-1755
- D. Instances of Slavery or Servitude in New England, Excluding Pequot and King Philip's Wars, 1630-1675
- E. Laws, Orders, and Advice Concerning Captives, Servants, and Slaves in the Era of King Philip's War, 1672-1727

III. Data on Sales of Indian Land in the New England Colonies

In order to find all of John Wompas's land transactions, I searched land deed collections throughout New England. I also wanted to test my belief, based on scattered and anecdotal evidence, that the price English people paid Indians for unimproved land was significantly lower than the price unimproved land sold for between English buyers. To do this, I began filling in tables of land sale prices, particularly in Nipmuc Country in the last quarter of the seventeenth and the start of the eighteenth century. I gathered enough data to confirm my initial judgment.

While I stopped far short of compiling all Indian land sales, I believe such a compilation could yield very interesting information. For instance, it could reveal whether particular Native groups or individuals were able to command better prices for their land than other Native groups or individuals. It could reveal which English individuals or communities paid higher or lower prices for Indian land and what the consequences of those patterns were. It could also allow scholars to examine patterns of Native land use across time, by tabulating instances where Indians reserved traditional land uses, where women signed deeds as owners of land, where sachems signed deeds signifying their traditional right to distribute land, where the consent of elders and/or community members was included in the deed, etc. With a complete compilation of land sale data, scholars could move beyond anecdotal evidence to draw well supported conclusions about patterns of land use and to identify and explain divergences from those patterns.

- A. Land Transactions of John Wompas and Ann Prask Wompas, 1662-1679
- B. Land Sales in Nipmuc Country, 1643-1724
- C. Indian Land Sales in Fairfield, Connecticut Colony, Late 17th Century
- D. Indian Land Sales in Plymouth Colony, 1641-1657
- E. Indian Land Sales in Hampden County, Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1636-1763
- F. English Transfers of Unimproved Land Near Worcester, Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1732-1733

IV. Data on Maritime New England

- A. Mariners' Wages in 17th-century Massachusetts
- B. Native Sailors in the English Fishing and Merchant Fleet, New England, 1636-1700
- C. Ships Docking in Boston and Other New England Ports, 17th Century

V. Data on Indian Literacy and Education

- A. Marks and Signatures of Native People of the Northeast, 17th Century
- B. Indian Scholars in Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1655-1672
- C. Probable Indian Scholars, Late 17th-Century Massachusetts

VI. Data on Native Female Property Ownership

- A. Inventory of the Estate of Ann Wompas
- B. Ann Wompas Inventory Compared to Those of Contemporary White Women in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Late 17th Century

VII. Bibliography for Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Swindler Sachem: The American Indian Who Sold His Birthright, Dropped Out of Harvard, and Conned the King of England* (Yale University Press, 2018).

**Please scroll to the bottom of the webpage to download the data files.