

Who were the Pilgrims' first friends?

Indians were the Pilgrims' first—and best—friends.

On March 16, 1621, three months after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, a tall Indian walked into the village.

He was “stark naked,” wrote Edward Winslow, “only a leather about his waist.”

“Welcome, Englishmen,” the Indian said, and he held out his hand in a friendly way.

The boys and girls of Plymouth had never seen an Indian before. Now an Indian was standing right next to them! And he was speaking English! His name was Samoset.

He told the Pilgrims that he had learned English from visiting English fishermen.

He told the Pilgrims all about the Indian tribes nearby. The place the Pilgrims called Plymouth was

called *Patuxet* by the Indians. About four years before, a strange sickness had killed everyone in the Patuxet tribe.

But there were other Indians nearby. Samoset himself was visiting the Wampanoag Indians, ruled by wise Chief Massasoit.

Samoset spent the night in Plymouth. When he left, the Pilgrims gave him a knife, a ring, and a bracelet.

Two days later, Samoset was back. He brought five Indians with him—five hungry Indians. The Pilgrims gave them food, and in return, the Indians sang and danced.

Samoset came back four days later. This time he brought along an Indian named Squanto.

Squanto stayed in Plymouth. He stayed with the Pilgrims for the rest of his life.

It was lucky for the Pilgrims that he did. Squanto was the Pilgrims' best friend.