

My Heritage Lineage with Trees

In June, I was at a family gathering in New Hampshire, at the homestead of my maternal great grandmother, Lois Warren Shaw. Our last living Warren family relative, Margo Warren, came from D.C. to be with us. We enjoyed reconnecting with her. She's researching our Warren family history, particularly Cornelia Warren (1857- 1921), a remarkable social service philanthropist who lived in Waltham, MA.^{1 2} Margo organized a group of us cousins to visit Cedar Hill in Waltham, the Warren Family Estate. Through Cornelia Warren's bequest, Cedar Hill is now home to the Girl Scout Museum, and also to Camp Cedar Hill, a 75-acre girl scout camp. Cornelia Warren's father was Samuel D. Warren, brother of Lois Warren Shaw's grandfather. He was my great-great-great-uncle. S. D. Warren owned S. D. Warren Paper Company, in Westbrook, ME, through which he amassed a fortune. During our trip to Cedar Hill we learned that it was S. D. Warren who first transitioned from using cotton rags to trees for paper manufacture. I was fascinated by Cornelia Warren's life as a social philanthropist. I was taken aback to learn it was our ancestor, S. D. Warren, who initiated this massive cause of deforestation worldwide, a major detrimental contribution to climate change. Furthermore, my grandfather, Lawrence Shirley, owned a lumber company in Goffstown, NH, West Side Lumber Company. Our family is very proud of this well-run family business. The lumber company helped pay my college tuition. Now, since I have spent several years raising awareness about deforestation and the critical importance of mature forests to reversing climate change, it seems to be part of my karma to help heal the deforestation of virgin forests that settlers wrought upon this country. There's so much people don't understand about trees. Without mature biodiverse forests, we won't survive. The health of all life on Earth depends on forests.

Meanwhile, I recently learned that on my maternal great-grandfather Winfield Shaw's side (Lois Warren Shaw's husband), it is likely that we are direct descendants of Chief Samoset Abenaki,³ the first Indian the Pilgrims made contact with, when he walked out of the forest, and greeted them in English. A relative sent us this genealogy chart. It is difficult to verify. I don't wish to claim Native heritage, I am more curious. I want to learn more about Chief Samoset's life; what was his life mission. is there a way I might embody and carry on his work? Do I have a DNA purpose embedded in me? I've spoken to very few people about this. I spoke to Grandmother Tatiana Cady at a recent Sunray Elders Gathering. She told me it was a common practice, when a tribe met a new tribe that was unknown to them, to give a son or daughter to be married into that tribe, because, if you are related, it is more likely you will keep good relations between the

¹ "Cornelia Warren." Wikipedia, 19 Jul 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornelia_Warren

² Stein, Aviva. "Cornelia Warren: A Local Heroine." 2021, <https://corneliawarren.wordpress.com/>.

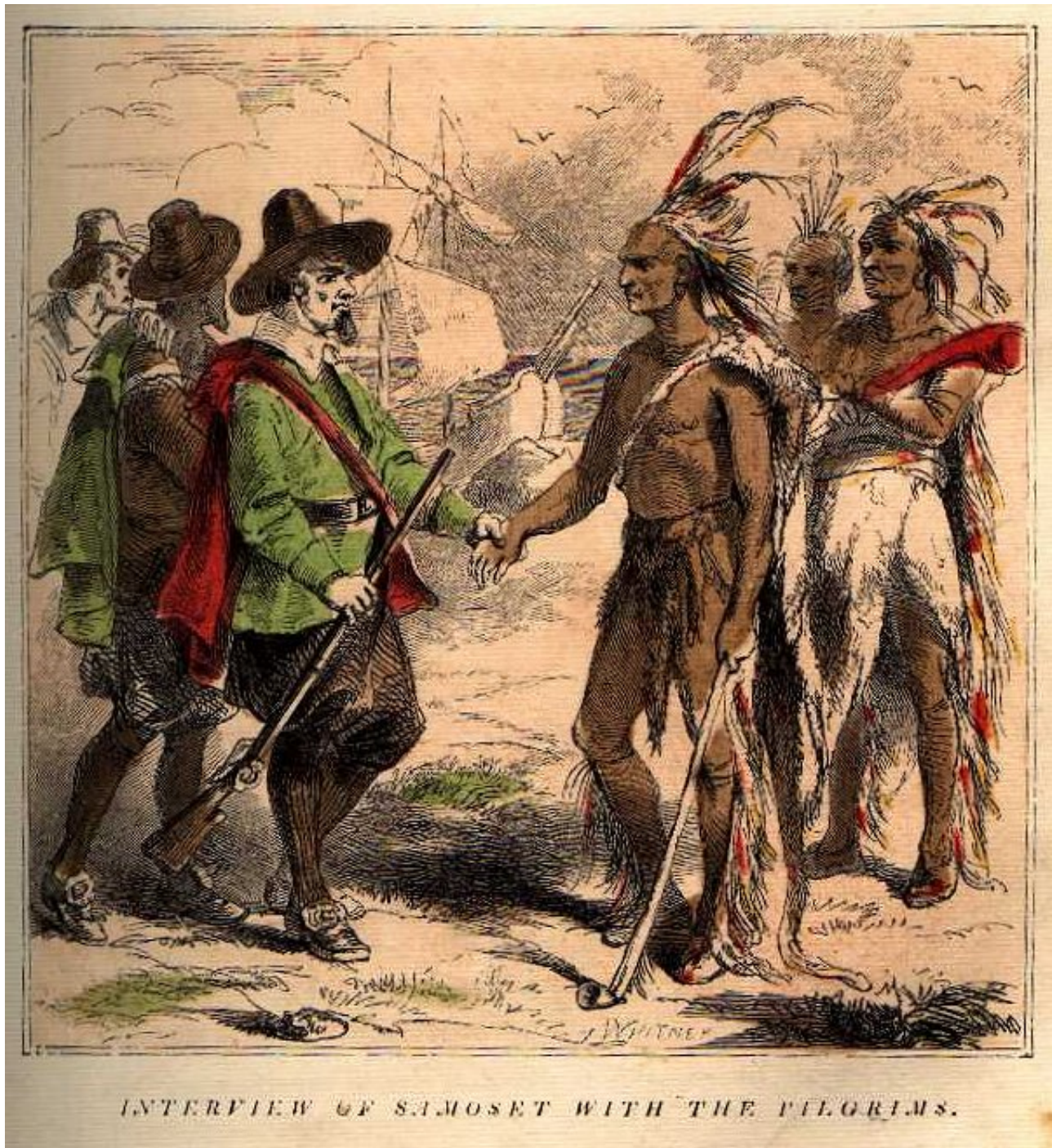
³ "Samoset." Wikidepia, 23 Aug 2022, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samoset>

two communities. There is less likelihood of conflict. Grandmother Cady is also the Keeper of a Tree Song, which she has promised to teach me.

I believe I have a purpose in restoring understanding of the importance of trees. As an artist, I can assist in finding ways to help this become common knowledge. It is the gift I can give back to the community of trees.



Cornelia Warren, 1871 by Alexandre Cabanel



"Interview of Samoset with the Pilgrims", book engraving, 1853