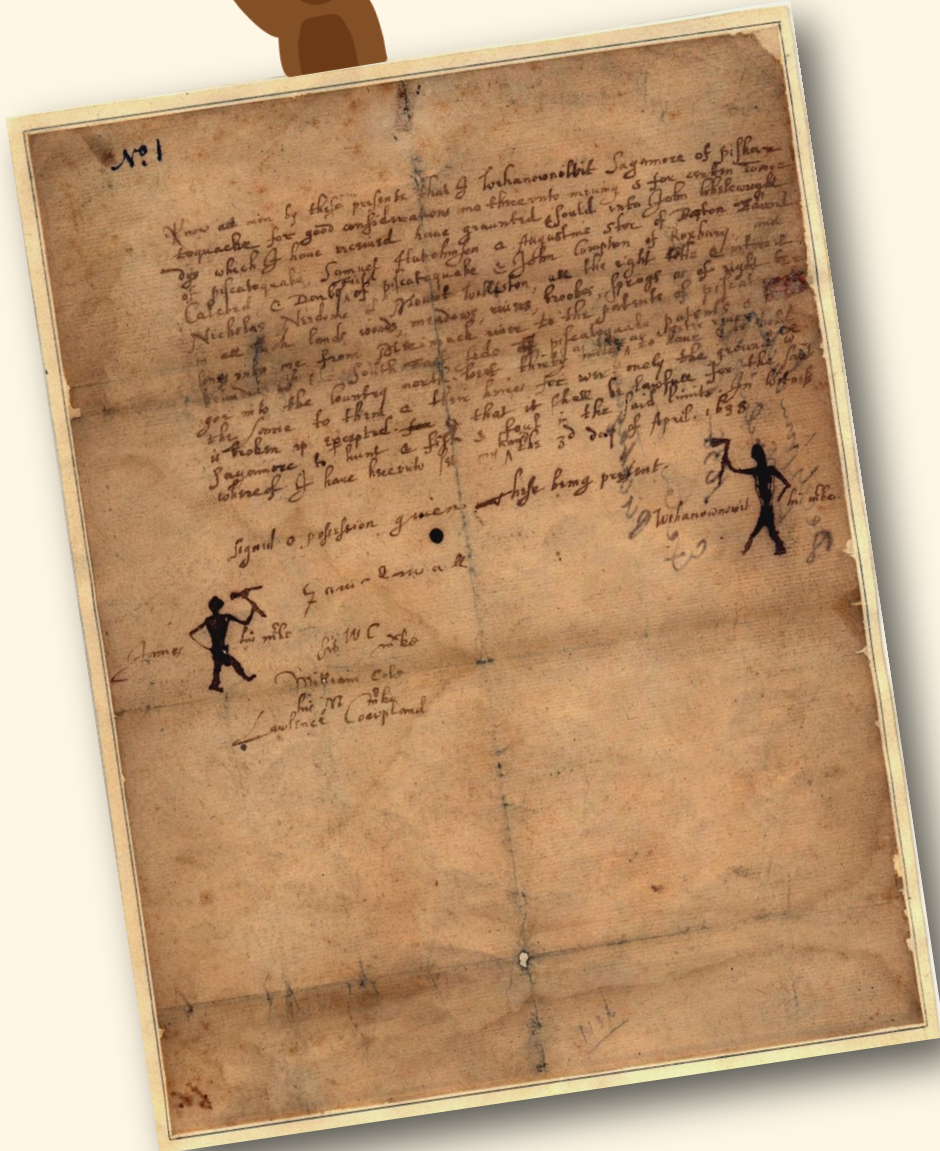




WHEELWRIGHT DEED

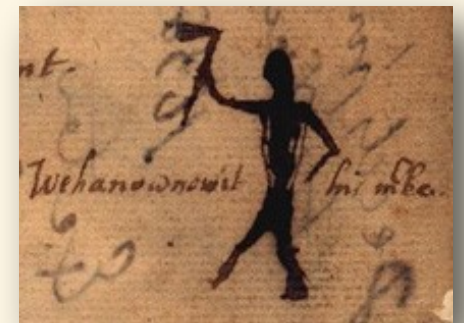


What was the Wheelwright deed?

In 1638, an English settler named John Wheelwright and an Abenaki sachem named Wehanownowit signed this deed, granting rights to Wheelwright and his friends to settle a new town at Exeter. Written treaties and land deeds were English customs, not Abenaki customs. And the English and the Abenaki weren't always clear about what these treaties and deeds meant. The two groups had different ideas about land ownership. The Abenaki shared the land and often returned to an area to hunt or fish. The English built permanent buildings and believed no one else could use the land they "owned."

To sign treaties or deeds, people had to either write their name or make a mark. The Abenaki didn't use a written language that the English were familiar with, and many of the English didn't know how to write either, so they often wrote an "X" if they didn't know how to write their names. In the Wheelwright deed, Wehanownowit drew a figure of himself to make his mark.

What would your mark look like?



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