

# Wampanoag Family Tree

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The genealogies of Wampanoag people are privately held for a number of reasons. It is a common occurrence for Wampanoag people, or for Native people in general, to get comments from other people that they (the others) also have Native blood. While this may indeed be the case, it is quickly obvious whether or not these others were brought up in or around the Native community they are claiming. Being a Native person is more than having a certain blood quantum. It is belonging to (in this case) a Wampanoag family that is part of the Wampanoag community. It is being part of that Wampanoag family as they continue traditional ways, and being part of the Wampanoag community that strives to maintain culture, lands and community in the face of today's world. All of this gives a certain life experience, perspective and world view.

If another person has the knowledge of having Native blood only, or has not lived in the Native community for even a couple of generations, then they do not have the experience of living as a Native person. This can cause a lot of confusion as to who is Native and who is not, or who can be brought onto a tribal roll or who cannot.

Also, there are still too many times when people think that the Wampanoag have all died out; or that the Wampanoag person standing before them is either just "playing Indian" or is actually 400 years old. Children, especially, can have a lot of confusion around the concept that Wampanoag still exist and are alive today. The confusion comes from very ingrained and stereotypical thinking that "Indians" are only things of the past. We often have to explain that we exist today because we have parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, great-great grandparents, and so on, just like anyone else.

Where does such ingrained and stereotypical thinking come from? What purpose does it serve? Who does it serve?



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