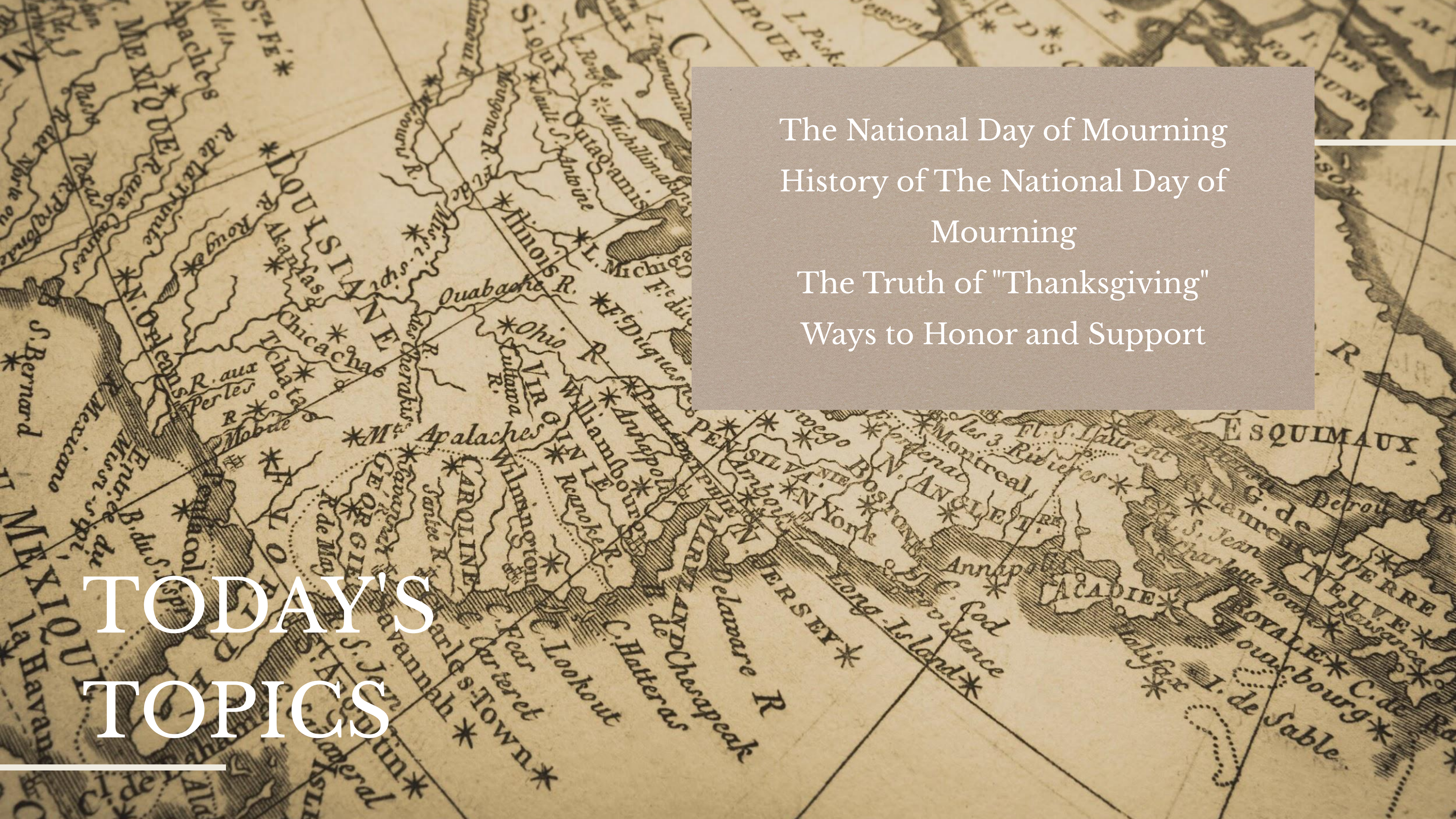




# The National Day of Mourning



November 2021 REHS Educational Resource

A historical map of North America, showing various regions and rivers. The map is aged and has a yellowish tint. A semi-transparent grey box is overlaid on the right side of the map, containing white text. The text discusses the National Day of Mourning, the history of Thanksgiving, and ways to honor and support. The map shows labels for various regions like Louisiana, Virginia, and New York, as well as rivers like the Mississippi and Ohio. The text in the box is centered and reads: "The National Day of Mourning", "History of The National Day of Mourning", "The Truth of 'Thanksgiving'", and "Ways to Honor and Support".

The National Day of Mourning  
History of The National Day of Mourning  
Mourning  
The Truth of "Thanksgiving"  
Ways to Honor and Support

TODAY'S  
TOPICS

## ANNUAL TRADITION SINCE 1970

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- United American Indians of New England declared US Thanksgiving Day a National Day of Mourning
- A solemn, spiritual and highly political day
- Many fast from sundown the day before through the afternoon of that day
- Mourning their ancestors and the genocide of their people and the theft of their lands
- Over the years participants have buried Plymouth Rock a number of times, boarded the Mayflower replica, and placed Ku Klux Klan sheets on the statue of William Bradford, etc.

WHAT IS  
NATIONAL DAY  
OF MOURNING?

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# WHY NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING IS IMPORTANT

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The National Day of Mourning serves as an important history lesson

- Textbooks glaze over the unjust treatment of Indigenous people.
- This day is a reminder that Indigenous people have been the recipients of a great deal of unfair treatment.

If you wish to discuss this, be mindful of the emotional and educational labor you are putting on an Indigenous person.

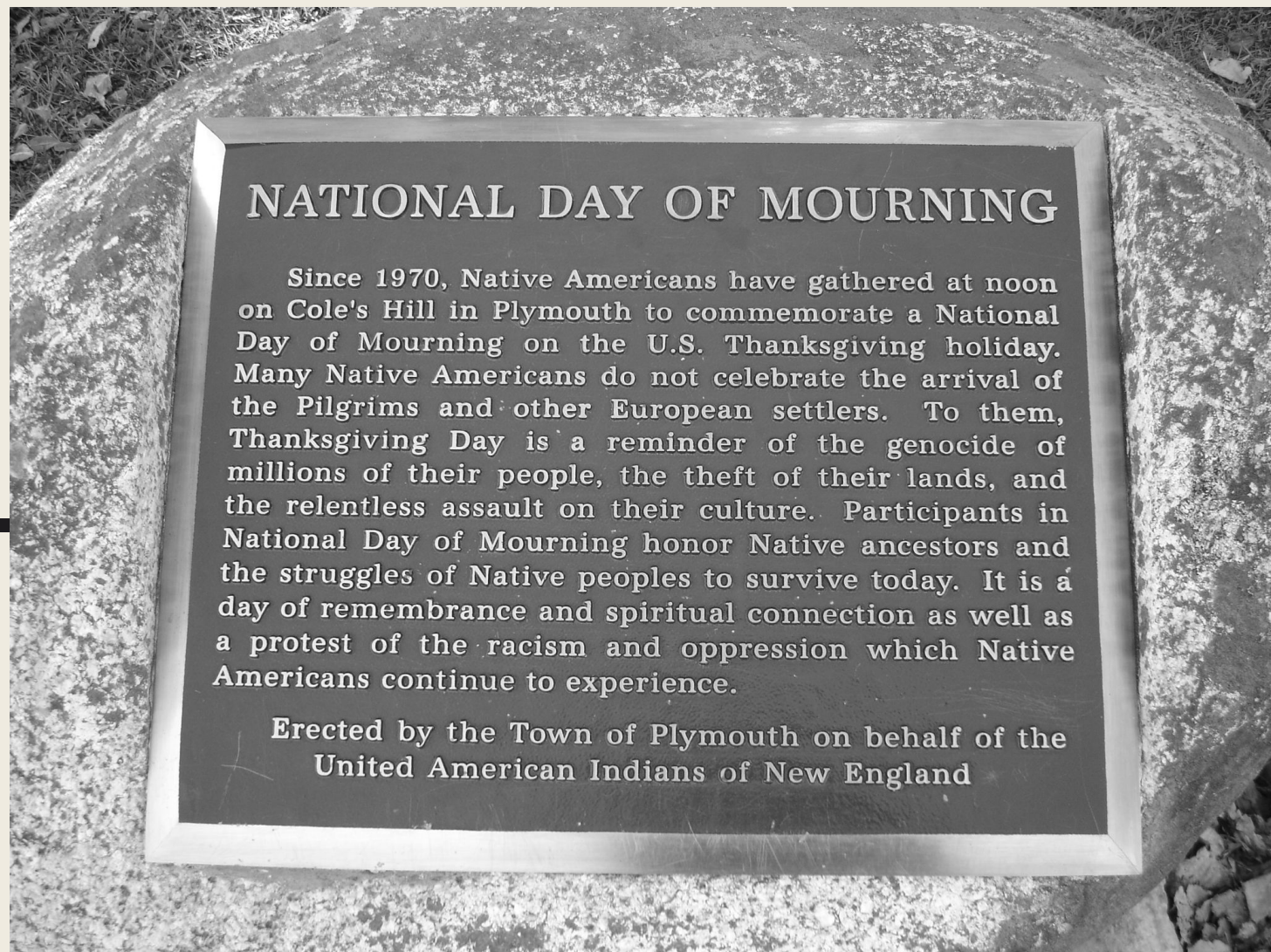
- Find and attend an event that may be offered to learn more and feel free to discuss or ask questions to the organizer/speakers.

The day highlights how painful the "Thanksgiving" holiday is for some Indigenous people.



**teen**VOGUE

# MASSACHUSETTS AND THE HISTORY OF NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING



Wamsutta, an Aquinnah Wampanoag man, had been asked to speak at a Commonwealth of Massachusetts banquet celebrating the 350th anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims.

Wamsutta agreed. The dinner organizers asked for a copy of the speech he planned to deliver. Within days Wamsutta was told he would not be allowed to give the speech. The

reasoning was:

"...the theme of the anniversary celebration is brotherhood and anything inflammatory would have been out of place."

What they were really saying was that in this society, the truth is out of place.

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# UAI AND THE HISTORY OF NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

Instead of speaking at the dinner, Wamsutta and hundreds of other Native people and their supporters from throughout the Americas gathered in Plymouth, Mass and observed the first National Day of Mourning.



United American Indians of New England have returned to Plymouth every year since to demonstrate against the Pilgrim mythology

**ABOUT THE DOCUMENT:** *Three hundred fifty years after the Pilgrims began their invasion of the land of the Wampanoag, their "American" descendants planned an anniversary celebration. Still clinging to the white schoolbook myth of friendly relations between their forefathers and the Wampanoag, the anniversary planners thought it would be nice to have an Indian make an appreciative and complimentary speech at their state dinner. Frank James was asked to speak at the celebration. He accepted. The planners, however, asked to see his speech in advance of the occasion, and it turned out that Frank James' views — based on history rather than mythology — were not what the Pilgrims' descendants wanted to hear. Frank James refused to deliver a speech written by a public relations person. Frank James did not speak at the anniversary celebration. If he had spoken, this is what he would have said:*

I speak to you as a man -- a Wampanoag Man. I am a proud man, proud of my ancestry, my accomplishments won by a strict parental direction ("You must succeed - your face is a different color in this small Cape Cod community!"). I am a product of poverty and discrimination from these two social and economic diseases. I, and my brothers and sisters, have painfully overcome, and to some extent we have earned the respect of our community. We are Indians first - but we are termed "good citizens." Sometimes we are arrogant but only because society has pressured us to be so.

It is with mixed emotion that I stand here to share my thoughts. This is a time of celebration for you - celebrating an anniversary of a beginning for the white man in America. A time of looking back, of reflection. It is with a heavy heart that I look back upon what happened to my People.

Even before the Pilgrims landed it was common practice for explorers to capture Indians, take them to Europe and sell them as slaves for 220 shillings apiece. The Pilgrims had hardly explored the shores of Cape Cod for four days before they had robbed the graves of my ancestors and stolen their corn and beans. Mourt's Relation describes a searching party of sixteen men. Mourt goes on to say that this party took as much of the Indians' winter provisions as they were able to carry.

Massasoit, the great Sachem of the Wampanoag, knew these facts, yet he and his People welcomed and befriended the settlers of the Plymouth Plantation. Perhaps he did this because his Tribe had been depleted by an epidemic. Or his knowledge of the harsh oncoming winter was the reason for his peaceful acceptance of these acts. This action by Massasoit was perhaps our biggest mistake. We, the Wampanoag, welcomed you, the white man, with open arms, little knowing that it was the beginning of the end; that before 50 years were to pass, the Wampanoag would no longer be a free people.

## The suppressed speech of Wamsutta Frank B. James Wampanoag







# The Harsh Truth About Thanksgiving

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## "PILGRIMS"

- ✓ Earlier English speaking colony, Jamestown, was not spoken about because the white settlers turned to cannibalism to survive. Not a great story to tell the kids in school.

## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

- ✓ The pilgrims didn't call themselves that and they already found religious freedom in Holland. They came here as part of a commercial venture.

## ARRIVAL

- ✓ They introduced sexism, racism, anti-lesbian and gay bigotry, jails, and the class system to these shores. When they arrived on Cape Cod they robbed Wampanoag graves at Corn Hill and stole as much of the Indians' winter provisions as they were able to carry

The Truth

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## TREATMENT

They were no better than any other group of Europeans when it came to the treatment of the Indigenous people here.



## PLYMOUTH ROCK

They did not land at the sacred shrine called Plymouth Rock, a monument to racism and oppression which UAINÉ buried in 1995.



## COMMON PRACTICE

Even before the Pilgrims landed they captured Indians, took them to Europe and sold them as slaves for 220 shillings apiece. (Tisquantum, also known as Squanto, was of the Patuxet tribe and was kidnapped in 1614 by English explorer Thomas Hunt. He was brought to Spain where he was sold into slavery.)

# The Truth

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# 1637

First official "Day of Thanksgiving" proclaimed by Governor Winthrop to celebrate the safe return of men from Massachusetts who had gone to Mystic, Connecticut

# 700

Pequot women, children, and men were massacred by those men

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# "NEW ENGLAND"

EUROPEAN STRANGERS WOULD NOT HAVE SURVIVED THEIR FIRST SEVERAL YEARS WERE IT NOT FOR THE AID OF WAMPANOAG PEOPLE

What Native people got in return for this help was genocide, theft of their lands, and never-ending repression.

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# TIMELINE



1620

## Pilgrims arrived

English separatist Puritans, who had broken away from the Church of England, land at Plymouth Rock. Today we refer to them as Pilgrims

1970

## National Day of Mourning Began

The first annual protest for the National Day of Mourning takes place

1997

## Protests got violent

State troopers use force against protesters who gathered together to observe the 28th annual National Day of Mourning

1998

## No permit needed

UAINC receives permission from local authorities to march in protest without having to obtain a permit



# **NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING**

## **Thursday, November 25, 2021**

### **12 Noon - Cole's Hill (above Plymouth Rock)**

### **Plymouth, Massachusetts**

Join us as we continue to create a true awareness of Native peoples and history. Help shatter the untrue image of the Pilgrims and the unjust system based on racism, settler colonialism, sexism, homophobia and the profit-driven destruction of the Earth that they and other European settlers introduced to these shores.

**Dedicated to Moonanum James, Bert Waters,  
others who have returned to the ancestors.**

**Solidarity with Indigenous struggles throughout the world!**  
**We welcome all our relations crossed by the US border & ICE.**

In 2021, while some supporters will attend in person, we will also livestream the event in Plymouth and have substantial additional online content, with messages from many struggles as well as music.

**United American Indians of New England (decolonizing since 1970)**

[info@uaine.org](mailto:info@uaine.org) [www.uaine.org](http://www.uaine.org) [facebook.com/groups/Uaine](https://www.facebook.com/groups/Uaine)

Facebook event: <https://bit.ly/NDOM2021>

Donate: <https://gofund.me/bf557f97>

**Masks required! No social, but light box lunches available.**

**#MasksUpMayflowersDown #NDOM2021**

**#NoThanksNoGiving #FreeLeonardPeltier #KeepItInTheGround**



Union labor donated [Fin21]

# WAYS TO HONOR AND SUPPORT

Livestream from Plymouth

As well as messages from Indigenous struggles in  
many homelands!

Donations

Monetary donations are gratefully accepted to  
help defray the costs of the day and of UAINEs  
many other efforts during the year: 2021 Fall

GoFundMe Fundraiser

Facebook group

Please join for updates on National Day of  
Mourning this year



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