

***Native American Connections with Places Now Called Plainfield and Cummington: an online conversation.***

Join Christine DeLucia, Rhonda Anderson and and Larry Spotted Crow Mann for a on online conversation on Native American and British/Anglo-American “ownership” of hilltown land.  
Friday 18 February, 2022, 7:00-8:30 pm, Zoom.

How did the land recruit you? How has it recruited others and who were they? What ties people to a place? What is land ownership? How did those who own land today, come to do so? Who was here before and when British and American settlers arrived and what brought them here? Did this settlement mean a complete break with the past for Native Americans? What are the relationships and connections that they have had and have now with the places we now call Plainfield and Cummington?

***Handout:*** Please read and consider the excerpts below from a report that guides current policy. The purpose of including it here is to give us a common departure point — a text to refer to — when we talk about the ways in which we think about the ownership and use of the land we now inhabit, before colonization by European-Americans as well as after that settlement had started.

*Note:* The report concerns the “corridor” formed by the communities through which Route 112 runs. Plainfield is not among them.

***Route 112 Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan*** (Franklin County Council of Governments, 2009), From [Chapter 5, Historic Resources in Hampshire County](#)

[From the Introduction]

The histories of the towns along the Hampshire County section of the Route 112 Scenic Byway have many commonalities. They were settled relatively late by the English who struck out from Cape Cod and other eastern settlements, and from towns in the Connecticut River valley to find plentiful cheap land. ... [T]hese early settlers ... found a series of trails to get into the region, trails that had been laid down by Native Americans who came to the region only for hunting and fishing but not to settle. While settlement slowed during King Philip’s War (1675-1678) and the subsequent French and Indian wars that lasted until 1763, there was not to be the conflict and displacement of the original inhabitants that took place elsewhere in western Massachusetts. [Page 5-35]

Cummington:

Contact Period and Plantation Period (1500-1675) Prior to European settlement, during the Contact Period (1500-1620) and the Plantation Period (1620-1675) the area of Cummington is thought to have been a resource for Native Americans from the Connecticut River valley, the Norwottucks who most likely fished in the Westfield and Swift rivers, raised crops along their banks and hunted in the surrounding hills. The Westfield River valley may have served as an east to west connecting road from the Connecticut to the Housatonic River valleys, but there is no historical evidence. As European settlement grew in the Connecticut River valley, it is probable that Native American seasonal settlement increased in Cummington. [p. 5-43]

Colonial Period (1675-1775) Cummington was incorporated in 1779, but it was first surveyed in 1762 as Plantation Number 5. During the Colonial Period, Route 9/112 became a secondary east-west corridor, with the primary roadway on the north side of the Westfield River, rather than its present route on the south side. A group of investors in 1762 bought the Plantation #5 and laid it out in lots according to a grid pattern. Roads today remain from that original grid among them Route 112 where it follows West Cummington Road. Within three years there were about eight families who had settled, not on the river but in the uplands crossed by Route 112. Plantation Number 5 included [parts of] what are now Plainfield and a part of Goshen. [p. 5-43]