

# Eastham's efforts to honor First Encounter should be applauded

[Cape Cod Times](#) | [Page A12](#)

Sunday, 13 December 2020

## Ideas & Opinions Section

Over the past year, I've closely followed the efforts of the Eastham 400 Commemoration Committee, Eastham Public Library and town of Eastham as they prepared to mark the anniversary of the storied 1620 First Encounter between arriving English Separatists-Adventurers and the Nauset Wampanoag. It has been a remarkable undertaking, a sustained collaboration by a diverse group of citizens, businesses, scholars, students and civil servants, all deeply committed to broadening our collective understanding of that event and to amplifying the indigenous perspective.

From a specially commissioned book written by a regional historian to a comprehensive website, from an impressive YouTube series featuring more than 100 videos to introspective community conversations held virtually, this yearslong commemoration — which could have easily slipped into the kitschy realm of one-sided, myth-perpetuating, Pilgrim pride — was rooted in cultural humility, respect and a sincere desire to re-examine the past in order to make sense of the present. And, perhaps, even to recalibrate toward a more sustainable, inclusive future.

How moving it was, then, to watch the live-streamed world premier of the film "Eastham 400: Our History Restored," and to be present for a Zoom video discussion that included a proclamation for tribal rights in Eastham for the Wampanoag Nation.

Eastham, the wider world could well learn from your open-minded, open-hearted example of curiosity, self-scrutiny, community engagement and quiet pride of place. Thank you.

**Tara Chhabra, Saratoga Springs, NY, and Eastham**