

History & Art: New Bedford artist William Allen Wall's "Gosnold at Smoking Rocks" depicts landing near Palmer's Island

This famous William Allen Wall painting "Gosnold at Smoking Rocks" depicts the arrival of the first European to set foot in New Bedford. It can't be proven, but it is said that he made "...landfall on the west side of the Acushnet River, somewhere around the South Terminal, northwest of Palmer's Island in a spot called the 'Smoking Rocks.'"

Some historians believe it is more likely that they landed at Sconticut Neck or West Island in Fairhaven. Either way, he explored the area for only a short period of time before moving on. There is mention of his meeting of some local Wampanoags before setting sail back to the Old World.

He did not return to the New World until 1607 where he helped set up the first English colony at Jamestown, Virginia. This visit would be his last, as most of the colonists, including Gosnold would perish at the colony over the course of the next 2 years.