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**INDIGENOUS LAND OWNERSHIP IN 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY MISSION  
COMMUNITIES:  
A SURVIVAL STORY FROM SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND**

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

HISTORY

by

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June 2021

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2021

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## Abstract

### Indigenous Land Ownership in 17th Century Mission Communities: A Survival Story from Southern New England

by

Taylor J. Kirsch

Beginning in the mid-seventeenth century, colonial projects in southern New England sponsored dozens of communities commonly called “praying towns.” Missionaries and colonial authorities envisioned these as bounded settlements where Indigenous people would learn to adopt Christianity and English cultural norms. However, English goals of remaking Indigenous people in their image as servants of the British Empire and Christian God were not the most important driving forces in the development of these mission communities. Rather, thousands of Indigenous people across New England drove their evolution, largely through land ownership strategies. Using the English colonial courts, they acquired and preserved secure land bases in a tumultuous borderlands region. In doing so they carved out viable spaces for themselves in the midst of European and inter-Indigenous violence, and shaped mission communities into sites of cultural, corporeal, and spiritual survival, creating a legacy of persistence that their descendants carry today. This study is the first to examine why Native people across southern New England pursued such a strategy, how they gained title to their ancestral lands under a foreign legal system, and the quintessentially Indigenous ways they managed that land once they owned it according to colonial laws. It draws on seventeenth-century documents,

archaeological studies, digital mapping, and the knowledge of present-day Indigenous people in Massachusetts to bring this survival story to light.

## Acknowledgements

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have also benefitted from the insights and moral support of my fellow graduate students. Many thanks especially to Kaleb Knoblauch, Lawrence Abrams, Muiris MacGiollabhui and Jaclyn Schultz for their feedback on my early work, and to Lisa Jackson and Kiran Garcha for the friendship and hiking sessions that have kept me sane.

I owe endless thanks to the organizations that funded my research and made my travels possible. First and foremost, I want to thank the history department at the UC Santa Cruz for believing in my project and supporting it from start to finish. Many thanks also to the American Philosophical Society and the Massachusetts Historical Society. The Massachusetts Historical Society not only provided funding, but also a formative experience working in their archives as a fellow, which has immeasurably benefitted this project.

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Finally, I want to thank my family, especially my parents LuAnn Olson and Randell Kirsch, my Grandmother Jeanne Case, and my incredible partner Paul Mangasarian. Words cannot express how much I appreciate your support – I could not have done this without you.

## A Note on Spelling and Quotations

This dissertation includes quotations from present-day and seventeenth-century texts. The original (non-standardized) spellings of seventeenth-century manuscripts and print sources have been retained, with minimal exceptions: For clarity, superscript shorthand and obsolete symbols within words have been converted express to full words.<sup>1</sup> The following letters have been replaced with those that more clearly express the meaning of the words they are used in:

U used as V (and vice versa)

I used as J (and vice versa)

VV used as W

Yt used as that

Ye used as the

Place and personal names in quotations retain their original spellings unless the above exceptions apply. When quoting from another transcription, I have copied the text exactly as the transcriber wrote it, including clarifying brackets if applicable.

Quotations from present-day sources including personal interviews and correspondence, film, print, web sources, and secondary scholarship have been transcribed here exactly as they were spoken or written. Outside of quotations, I use the names and spellings used by Native people in Massachusetts today when referring to historical and present-day Indigenous place, personal, and group names. When these are not available, I use the names and spellings most commonly used in secondary scholarship.

## Introduction

The reason why my people still exist is there have always been people in every generation that kept reminding us who we were, and that we always had one piece of land to cling on to.

– Chief Cheryl Toney Holley, Chief of the Nipmuc Nation and Hassanamisco Band of Nipmuc Indians<sup>1</sup>

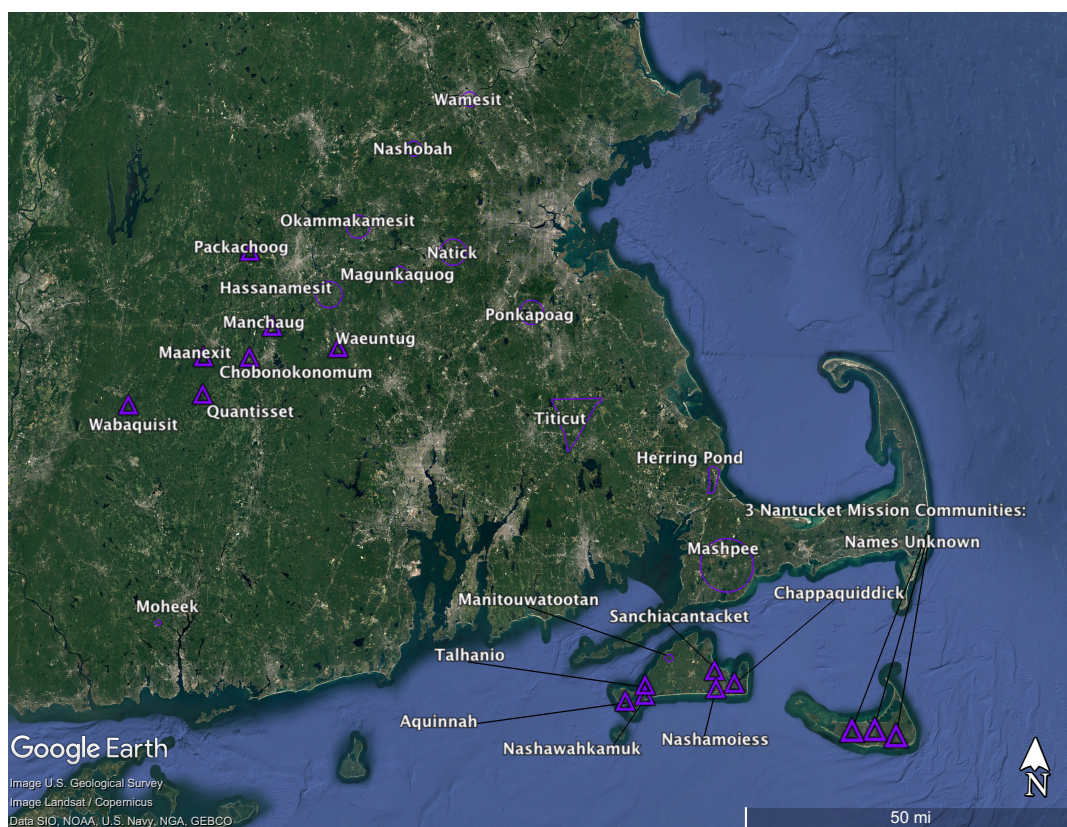
Chief Cheryl Toney Holley refers to the Hassanamisco Reservation, three and a half acres of land in Massachusetts that has been continuously managed by Indigenous Nipmuc people since time beyond memory.<sup>2</sup> It is a small portion of the land that was home to them long before legal land ownership, as we understand it today, was imposed on Indigenous people in southern New England.<sup>3</sup> In the mid-seventeenth century, Nipmuc people obtained legal title to this land and approximately eight thousand more acres adjacent to it by working with English missionaries and officials to establish the mission community known as Hassanamesit. As Toney Holley reminds us, their descendants still hold title to some of it today.

Hassanamesit was one out of twenty eight known mission communities, also called praying towns, in southern New England.<sup>4</sup> The land upon which many of them were built is still utilized today by Native communities including the Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag, Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe, Chappaquiddick



Wampanoag Tribe, Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribe, Nipmuc Nation, and Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe.<sup>5</sup> These settlements were sponsored by English missionaries and their supporters in colonial governments, as well as financial backers in England. English missionaries and colonial officials intended these towns to be insular hamlets in which Indigenous people of the area would learn to adopt Christianity and “civility,” but Native people used them for their own purposes.

By 1674 dozens of mission communities existed across southern New England, spanning four colonies and the territory of at least five Indigenous confederations.<sup>6</sup> They ranged considerably in size. Acreage is not known for every community, but mission communities as small as three hundred acres (Moheek) and as large as fifty square miles (Mashpee) have been documented. Many were similar in size to both a typical colonial English township and Indigenous sachemship – approximately six to eight square miles.<sup>7</sup>



**Figure 1: Map – Mission Communities in 1674**

Circles and polygons mark approximate acreage and area (where they were documented). Triangles mark the location of mission communities for which there is no documentation of acreage and area.<sup>8</sup>

Between the official establishment of the first mission community in 1650, and the eve of Metacom’s War in 1674, the population of Native people who lived in mission communities grew to approximately four thousand, out of a total estimated ten to eleven thousand total Native people in southern New England.<sup>9</sup> While population estimates for the Indigenous population in this time period must be acknowledged as imperfect and debated, these striking numbers raise the question: why did thousands of Indigenous people make the decision to live in communities under the authority of missionaries and colonial officials intent on converting them to

a foreign religion and way of life? Why did many of these people actively support the missions, promote the mission communities, and build them with their own hands?

Unfortunately, the Indigenous people who founded the mission communities authored no surviving documents explaining their rationale. Amid many other possible motivations for supporting mission communities, including political strategy, economic benefits, and sincere faith, the opportunity to obtain legal title to mission community land stands out as an especially compelling factor.

Indigenous people in southern New England employed multiple strategies to retain control of their land in the face of English colonial expansion in the mid-seventeenth century. Amid these, mission communities were particularly effective. Utilized strategically, they offered expedient pathways to land ownership due to a unique set of colonial circumstances and priorities that Indigenous people not only used, but molded to their advantage. Land ownership via mission communities stands out as a striking commonality across sachemships, colonies, and mission projects which were unique to one another in many other ways.

From the sixteen-fifties to the start of Metacom's War in 1675, thousands of Native people employed the same strategy as the Nipmucs did with Hassanamesit, and obtained legal title to their ancestral land by establishing mission communities upon it. Using the English colonial courts, they preserved and acquired secure land bases in a tumultuous and unstable world. In doing so they carved out viable spaces for themselves in the midst of imperial and inter-Indigenous violence, and shaped

praying towns into sites of community survival, creating a legacy of persistence that their descendants carry today.

This dissertation is the first holistic study of land ownership in the mission communities of southern New England. It explores land ownership via mission communities as a far-reaching survival strategy that many Native people employed to achieve a degree of safety, prosperity, and community autonomy in a borderlands world where these things were rare indeed. While the story of the mission communities did not end with Metacom's War, this conflict marked a profound shift in Native life and the political, social, and legal relationships between Native and English people in southern New England. Mission communities and land ownership within them were thrown into upheaval, geographically, politically, legally, and socially.

Land ownership exists alongside other possible motivations to support the mission communities. Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars as well as tribal officials and community members have noted colonial pressure, material inducement, family ties, political advantage, and sincere spiritual beliefs. It is not my intention to dispute those potential motivations. Further, faith and pragmatism need not be mutually exclusive. This project is not aimed at speculating about the internal spirituality of Indigenous people nor proving or disproving an interest in Christianity as a valid reason for supporting mission communities. Whether sincerely Christian or not, all Native people were affected by English invasion and dispossession. Whatever one's internal beliefs, land tenure was necessarily a top priority. As others have argued, there were

many potential reasons for living in a mission community. I focus on land as a key motivation not only because it deserves expanded consideration as an understudied aspect of mission communities, but because it was the foundation upon which everything else depended. Land was intimately tied to Indigenous spirituality, economy, and political life, as well as community and individual longevity.

Surprisingly, given its importance in the seventeenth century and its long-lasting impacts into the present, Indigenous ownership of mission community land has received scarce attention in existing scholarship. While it is not uncommon to see land ownership or access acknowledged as a probable motivation for Native people to live in mission communities, very few scholars go beyond that. The centrality of land to the broader Indigenous and colonial history of southern New England is widely acknowledged; the diverse mechanisms and processes by which Native people gained, kept, and utilized title to it deserve much closer scrutiny.

Since the publication of Neal Salisbury's *Manitou and Providence* and James Axtell's *The Invasion Within* in the nineteen-eighties, studies of seventeenth-century southern New England have increasingly pivoted towards engagement with Indigenous history. Works focusing on Native people or including them as key components of historical processes make up a substantial portion of scholarship on early southern New England.<sup>10</sup> Some degree of attention to praying towns is relatively common in this body of work. Discussion of the Massachusetts Bay praying towns

has even been included in much broader synthetic works on Early America, such as Alan Taylor's *American Colonies*, and John Elliot's *Empires of the Atlantic World*.<sup>11</sup>

As part of the growing historiographic turn towards Indigenous history in seventeenth-century southern New England, mission communities have received increased attention. Rigorous research on many critical aspects of mission community history exists within this body of scholarship. In particular, cultural change and continuity within mission communities has been thoroughly investigated. Several studies on broader topics include mission communities as part of their analysis of war, colonialism, language, literacy, religion, gender, and culture in seventeenth-century southern New England. In these, mission communities are most often discussed incidentally or as examples in larger arguments.<sup>12</sup> Most smaller-scale studies that engage mission communities are primarily concerned with the missions that sponsored them, the missionaries at the helm, and the ways Native people responded to both. Many of these discuss the praying towns in terms of cultural and religious change as a result of the mission projects, and/or resistance to these imposed changes.<sup>13</sup> Whether in broader works or studies focused on the missions, very little scholarship focuses on land.

To date, there have not been any studies dedicated to Indigenous land ownership in mission communities before Metacom's War. However, there are currently two studies dedicated to praying town land ownership across a broader time frame, beginning in the mid-seventeenth century: *Dispossession by Degrees* by Jean O'Brien, and "Selling The Praying Towns" by Daniel R. Mandell. Both studies

contain invaluable insights and research, which my own study draws from. In particular, the early chapters of *Dispossession by Degrees* contain thorough analysis woven into a compelling story of how Natick became a praying town owned by Native people. However, as the titles indicate, both *Dispossession by Degrees* and “Selling the Praying Towns” are primarily focused on the waves of dispossession that took place after Metacom’s War, in which Native praying town inhabitants were gradually stripped of their title to that land. While these processes are certainly crucial to our understanding of mission communities, and Early American history more broadly, they are not the focus of my study. Rather than adding to existing studies of how Indigenous people lost title to praying town land after Metacom’s War, I examine why they sought to acquire it, how they acquired it, and how they managed and used the land while it was in their possession to further the persistence of their communities.

O’Brien’s *Dispossession by Degrees* and Mandell’s “Selling the Praying Towns” both demonstrate a prevalent characteristic of scholarship on mission communities: geographic specificity. *Dispossession by Degrees* is a study of a single praying town (Natick) and “Selling the Praying Towns” focuses on four praying towns (Natick, Ponkapoag, Hassanamesit, and Chobonokonomum) within a single colony and mission – the Eliot mission in Massachusetts Bay.<sup>14</sup> Most studies of mission communities focus on a single town or mission. Among these, the Eliot mission in Massachusetts Bay colony among the Nipmuc, Massachusett, and Pawtucket confederations, and especially the praying town of Natick within that

mission, have received by far the most attention. In broader works as well as studies focused on seventeenth-century southern New England missions, the Eliot mission is at the forefront of scholarly awareness. Much less has been published about the missions in Wampanoag homelands – those in Plymouth and Martha’s Vineyard. Most works that seriously engage these geographies are temporally broad studies spanning multiple centuries.<sup>15</sup> The most comprehensive study dedicated to the seventeenth-century missions before Metacom’s War is Richard Cogley’s *John Eliot’s Mission*. This is sweeping and thorough in the scope of its subject material, and it includes a chapter on missions outside Massachusetts Bay. However, like most works on seventeenth-century mission communities, it is dedicated to the areas overseen by a single mission.<sup>16</sup> My study is the first to investigate mission community land ownership across southern New England, examining it beyond the silos of specific missions, towns, and colonies as well as within them. This dissertation covers mission communities in Pawtucket, Massachusetts, Nipmuc, Mohegan, and Wampanoag homelands and in all colonies where mission communities existed in southern New England. Doing so enables my study to draw out differences and commonalities in land ownership and management among different mission communities that are crucial to understanding how land ownership functioned legally, politically, and culturally in different spaces.

While *Dispossession by Degrees* and “Selling the Praying Towns” are the only two studies devoted to praying town land ownership, a small number of scholars include significant (if often brief) analysis of Indigenous mission community land



ownership within their broader studies. Jenny Hale Pulsipher weaves discussion of Native land ownership in Hassanamesit into *Swindler Sachem*, her biography of John Wampus. Though Pulsipher's discussion is focused on the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, the years directly following Metacom's War, it contains rare analysis of the ways land was owned and transferred in this praying town as well as surrounding non-Christian Native communities. David Silverman includes substantial analysis of both Indigenous possession and dispossession of mission community land in "The Church in New England Indian Community Life" and *Faith and Boundaries*. Both studies are primarily concerned with Native Christian communities on Martha's Vineyard, and span the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. In *Property and Dispossession*, a sweeping study on property laws and customs in Native, Spanish, French, and English early America, Allan Greer discusses Indigenous land ownership in praying towns within the Eliot mission.<sup>17</sup> All of these have been highly valuable to my own study. My work complements and expands upon the analysis of the few scholars who pay close attention to mission community land.

However, I do disagree with two of Greer's arguments regarding the southern New England mission communities: First, Greer asserts that the regulations Native people lived under in the Massachusetts Bay praying towns "left little room for natives to make use of the land as they saw fit," and that their ownership bore little resemblance to either Native or colonial land tenure. Second, Greer argues that prior to Metacom's War, only "the most demoralized and atomized societies" accepted the "praying-town regime" and that, as a rule, stronger, more cohesive confederations did

not.<sup>18</sup> While I have great respect for Greer’s scholarship, delving deeply into colonial records has led me to different conclusions. Within the constraints of colonialism, Native people in the Massachusetts Bay praying towns did indeed “use land as they saw fit” by continuing Native land management and usage practices there. Further, Indigenous land ownership in these praying towns was very similar to land tenure in autonomous Indigenous communities, and it closely mirrored property ownership in English towns.<sup>19</sup> While it is true that vulnerable polities were highly represented in mission communities, Greer’s assertion that “by and large,” only the weakest Indigenous confederations were part of these spaces is not applicable across southern New England. As English population and power skyrocketed in the mid and late-seventeenth century, Native groups that were part of powerful confederations recognized their increasingly tenuous hold on their land bases, and sought to mitigate this precarity by joining (or more often establishing) mission communities.<sup>20</sup>

People from the Massachusett, Nipmuc, Pawtucket, Wampanoag and Mohegan confederations are documented as seventeenth-century mission community landowners. These confederations were made up of smaller sachemships – groups of approximately five hundred people or fewer under a leader known as a sachem. While they paid homage and tribute to the leader of the confederation, the ketasontimoog, these groups were largely autonomous.<sup>21</sup> Within a single confederation, some sachemships and individuals supported mission communities and owned land there, while others did not. Some mission communities were

overwhelmingly populated by people from one confederation, such as the Wampanoag mission communities on Noepe. In others, such as Natick, Native people of diverse origins came together (though this town was primarily Massachusett). While documentation does not exist to confirm this, it is probable that Indigenous people from other confederations also lived in mission communities.<sup>22</sup>

Southern New England's Indigenous population was not homogenous, politically, culturally, or in any other way. There were important differences as well as commonalities between sachemships and confederations, and each utilized their local landscapes in unique ways. Yet, by the mid-seventeenth century, all Native people in the region had to navigate a world that had been upended by English invasion and epidemic disease that destroyed up to ninety percent of the Native population and suddenly upset the balance of political power. Albeit to varying degrees and at different times, Massachusett, Nipmuc, Wampanoag, Mohegan, and Pawtucket people faced the threat of violence by English colonists and powerful Native polities, especially the Mohawk, Mi'kmaq, and Narragansett. All of these factors made secure possession of familiar and defensible land critical to people's very survival, and their ability to keep communities intact. At the same time, this perfect storm of disasters made alienation from land a constant threat. Different individuals and groups dealt with these upheavals in different ways, and employed different strategies to retain control of their land bases. Many did so by establishing mission communities and owning land there under colonial laws. In this unstable

world, supporting mission communities was a risky but rational survival strategy among many uncertain options.

Between 1650 and 1669, seven mission communities (often called “old praying towns”) were established within Massachusetts Bay colony in Pawtucket, Massachusetts, and Nipmuc homelands.<sup>23</sup> An additional seven were established further west in Nipmuc territory; the first of which was established in 1669, followed by another two in 1672. The establishment dates of the remaining four are unknown, but they existed by 1674.<sup>24</sup> Exact dates of establishment for some of the mission communities in Martha’s Vineyard are elusive, partly because many of these were not newly established communities, but rather the gradual adoption of new cultural and religious practices along with legalized land ownership within existing sachemships. However, the missionary Thomas Mayhew Jr. reported that the creation of at least one town was imminent in 1652, and he requested funding to build a meeting house in 1654. Further, at least two powerful island Wampanoag sachems (Tawanquatuck and Myoxeo) were in support of the mission since 1646, indicating probable early establishment of mission communities in their respective sachemships. Aquinnah became a mission community in the late sixteen-sixties, and Manitouwatootan was formally established in 1659. By 1674, there were seven mission communities on the island of Noepe and three on Nantucket.<sup>25</sup> In Mohegan country, James Fitch began preaching at Moheek in 1671. At some point between then and 1674, Moheek became Connecticut’s only mission community.<sup>26</sup> Mashpee was formally established as a

mission community in 1665. Nearby, the establishment dates of Herring Pond and Titicut are unknown.<sup>27</sup>

Mission communities provided expedient pathways to land ownership in four politically distinct but connected colonies: Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay, Martha's Vineyard, and Connecticut. These colonies were not homogenous, and mission communities as well as Indigenous land tenure within each of them had differences. Yet, government and church leadership in all four were invested in promoting Christianity and English culture among the Native people of southern New England. Most importantly, they were willing to offer legal title to the land they claimed jurisdiction over as an incentive for Native people to make progress in these social and spiritual conversions. These imperial desires were born out in laws and political actions that resulted in thousands of acres of Native homeland becoming the legal property of Indigenous mission community inhabitants.

On the ground, the agents of this strategy were English missionaries, and their involvement was critical to the use of mission communities as an Indigenous land protection strategy. According to their own writings, many English missionaries conceived of themselves as protectors of Indigenous lands as well as souls. In scholarship and wider Indigenous discourse, the evangelists who helped found the mission communities are seen alternately as humanitarians intent on using the missions to protect Native land bases, or imperial agents on the frontlines of invasion and dispossession. These missionaries occupy an uneasy space in the history of the mission communities, to say the least.<sup>28</sup>

For understanding Indigenous land ownership in mission communities, the deep internal motivations and sincere beliefs of colonial evangelists are not relevant, but the results of their actions are. Missionaries and the government officials who worked with them to promote Christianity were active participants and promoters of English colonial projects whose ultimate goals were to turn the homelands of Native people into a “New England” where English superiority and authority reigned. Further, as the governor of Martha’s Vineyard, the missionary Thomas Mayhew Sr. used royal authority to possess Indigenous land and made land deals with sachems that their people did not always approve. Richard Bourne of Plymouth, James Fitch of Connecticut, and John Eliot and Daniel Gookin of Massachusetts Bay did what most other settlers did – acquired Indigenous land to live upon and profit from.<sup>29</sup> All were indisputably part of an ultimately destructive and exploitative colonial system. Yet, missionaries were also instrumental in protecting mission community land and helping Indigenous people gain legal title to it. English missionaries ironically functioned both as agents of dispossession, and advocates for Native land rights. The irony makes a bit more sense with the realization that this advocacy almost invariably centered on preserving the land rights of potential Christians – not Indigenous land rights holistically.

**Table 1. Mission Communities by Colony and Mission**

Colony: Massachusetts Bay	
Primary English Missionaries and Officials: John Eliot, Daniel Gookin	Ponkapoag Hassanamesit Okammakamesit Wamesit Nashobah Magunkaquog Manchaug Chobonokononum Maanexit Quantisset Wabaquisit Packachoog Waeuntug Natick
Colony: Plymouth	
Primary English Missionaries and Officials: Richard Bourne, John Cotton Jr. Thomas Tupper	Mashpee Herring Pond (also known as Comassakumkanit) Titicut (also known as Cotuhtikut)
Colony: Martha's Vineyard	
Primary English Missionaries and Officials: Thomas Mayhew Jr., Thomas Mayhew Sr., John Cotton Jr.	Nashamoiess Sanchiacantacket Manitouwatootan Nashawahkamuk Talhanio Aquinnah Chappaquiddick Nantucket (3 Unnamed praying towns on this island)
Colony: Connecticut	
Primary English Missionaries and Officials: James Fitch	Moheek

There is a relatively rich source base on mission communities written from colonial perspectives, much of which was created by evangelists. Yet, there are very few Indigenous authored documents from the time and place of my study, and none written by a Native hand that explain Indigenous rationales for supporting mission communities. From the mid-seventeenth century to Metacom's War, Indigenous people navigated complex legal and political systems not only to gain title to land, but also to shape the geographic character of the missions and the way land was managed within them. Why and how did they do this? Answers are difficult to pin down due to the limitations of available documentation. Mindful of the dearth of Indigenous sources and the inherent challenges of my source base, I employ a multidisciplinary approach in this dissertation to investigate answers to these questions, and understand mission community land ownership as a viable and logical survival strategy. To draw out an Indigenous-centered history from a problematic colonial source base, I support my historical analysis with methods and insights from the Indigenous Paradigm, borderlands scholarship, and archaeology. Overall, an action-centered framework is central to my research methods.

As an overarching methodological framework and set of principles, the Indigenous Paradigm has informed every aspect of my dissertation. Using it as a guide has helped me approach the challenge of writing an Indigenous-centered history situated in a time and place overwhelmingly recorded by English authors. Springing from the activism of the nineteen-seventies, coalescing and gaining traction ever since, the Indigenous paradigm in practice aims to decolonize Indigenous



histories and place Indigenous people, past and present, at the center of their own stories.<sup>31</sup> Susan Miller articulates that scholarship adhering to the Indigenous paradigm includes five main components: 1) Service to Indigenous communities, 2) respecting and following Indigenous protocol in conducting research, 3) critically reading current scholarship for colonial and Indigenous perspectives set forth in language and purpose, 4) incorporating Indigenous language whenever possible (eg. place names, tribal names, names of individual people, concepts,) 5) privileging Indigenous sources, scholarship, and perspectives.<sup>32</sup> These goals and principles have been ever-present in my mind during the course of my research and writing, and I have done my best to adhere to them.<sup>33</sup>

Understanding an Indigenous story through analysis of English-authored colonial sources presents an intimidating array of complexities and issues. However, discounting them because of this would be a wasted opportunity. Indeed, present day Indigenous communities and scholars in southern New England continue to use colonial sources extensively to deepen understanding of their own history, fight for land and recognition, and revive their language.<sup>34</sup> In this dissertation, I follow their lead, examining these sources critically and in conversation with historical context, archaeological evidence, and perspectives from present-day Indigenous communities and scholars.

The English colonial government and church leaders involved with the mission communities left behind substantial documentation. Court and other legal records, missionary records, and town records have been especially useful in piecing

together this history of land ownership in mission communities. Many of these documents have been published; others I found in Massachusetts archives and special collections. This documentation contains many details of Indigenous and English action, some of which I have seen referenced across multiple kinds of records. Some of the exact same land transfers, for instance, have been documented in missionary records, General Court Records, and local town records. Certain documents, especially missionary records, also explain rationales and goals of evangelists, and purport to record Native voices and opinions.

Working with this colonial source base, privileging recorded action has been invaluable to writing an Indigenous-centered history of mission community land ownership. While it is impossible to uncover firsthand Indigenous voices and perspectives from documents written by colonists, I contend that insight into their lives can be gleaned with careful and critical analysis of the things they are recorded to have done. In the absence of their own written records, we can discern much about Indigenous lives and motivation to support mission communities in records of their actions. Though recorded by colonists with their own biases and agendas, English colonial sources that documented Indigenous people selling a plot of land, moving to a mission community, getting involved in a land dispute, petitioning to form a town, signing a treaty, negotiating for mission community land, or winning a court case involving property are highly revealing. I also privilege action when focusing on English actors who did explain their motivations; for the development of mission communities, the actions these people took were far more relevant than their internal

rationales.

In prioritizing action, I do not in any way dismiss or ignore the investigations other scholars have conducted into the missionary records that claim to record Indigenous voices and perspectives. Indeed, Daniel Richter, Kristina Bross, Drew Lopenzina and Julius Rubin in particular have conducted rigorous and insightful analyses of these sources, and my project draws from their examples. Missionary and other records purporting to record Native voices are examined in this dissertation; I analyze these sources with great care, as well as advice from scholars such as Richter, Bross, Lopenzina and Rubin.<sup>35</sup>

In the absence of direct explanations by Indigenous people, a thorough understanding of the world in which mission communities were built is essential to understanding their appeal as a survival strategy, and making sense of the choice many Native people made to support them and own land there. Borderlands as a theoretical framework is a helpful lens through which to see the importance of Indigenous land ownership in southern New England mission communities. While there are many definitions of “borderlands,” it can be said that borderlands landscapes are characterized by shifting, contested, or unclear political or social borders and boundaries between cultures, identities, religions, physical territory and sovereignty in which power dynamics, politics, and personal identities were far from stable and were contested on multiple fronts. Sometimes the contested borders were the kind drawn on the maps of the time – those of perceived empires, colonies, and nations. Others were even less fixed and even more contentious.<sup>36</sup>

The southern New England borderlands embodied all of these elements, including the violent ones that made life as an Indigenous person dangerous and unpredictable. Mission communities were part of complex entangled webs of trade, war, culture and religion in contested territory with Native groups and English settlers who threatened Indigenous survival while at the same time offering protection in the form of legalized land ownership. They existed in a complex landscape of competing powers including formidable Indigenous polities like the Narragansett and the Mohawk and European empires like the English and French. Understanding these relationships and the tenuous borders of territory, sovereignty, and spirituality enables a better understanding of land's centrality in this region, and why gaining title to it was so essential.

While my study relies primarily on written documentation from the seventeenth century, it would be incomplete without the contributions of archaeology, and especially the knowledge and perspectives of present-day Indigenous communities in Massachusetts. Archaeological studies have uncovered aspects of Indigenous life in mission communities that are missing from the documentary record, and these have been key in my study. Even more importantly, immersing myself in Indigenous-authored publications and in-person events and conversations has informed my perspective on seventeenth-century sources, expanded my source base, and shaped the contours of my study as a whole.

I began my research in Massachusetts during the summer of 2015. There, I learned from Indigenous leaders, scholars, and tribal members just how intertwined

the past and present are, and how critically the writing of history has impacted the worlds of living people in their communities – for better and worse. Through conversations with tribal members and officials over several years, I have come to understand how pressing the issues of erasure and the disappearance narrative still are in the Native communities of southern New England.<sup>37</sup> I have learned of the severity of these issues and the potential for historical study to aid in solutions largely from people of the Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag, the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe, and from Indigenous scholars including Lisa Brooks and Ashley Smith during my fellowship at the Massachusetts Historical Society. My study helps to counter the pervasive disappearance narrative that continues to obscure Native survival and connection to ancestral land. This dissertation not only uncovers a hidden story of Indigenous survival via land ownership strategies in the seventeenth century, but also highlights long term historical persistence and cultural continuity on Native land. In these ways I hope that my research can be of service to the communities whose history I have been privileged to study.

Chapter one lays essential groundwork for understanding why land ownership via mission communities would have been a rational survival strategy in seventeenth-century southern New England. The historical context of the mission communities and the decades just prior to their establishment reveals the dangerous and unstable world Indigenous people had to navigate between the beginning of European incursion, and Metacom's War. Losing land could have deadly consequences for

Native individuals and communities. Further raising the stakes, epidemic disease, the looming threat of violence from English and Indigenous polities and the growing power of English colonies left certain Native groups particularly vulnerable to dispossession. By the time the first praying town was officially established in 1650, vast acreages of Indigenous land were in English hands. More and more Native people were alienated from their land as the English demand for it grew. For these people, reclaiming or protecting land by supporting a mission community was a logical choice among scarce options. There was no such thing as a perfectly safe location in this time and place, but holding on to a secure land base was one of the surest ways to preserve community cohesion, and avoid starvation and physical violence.

Chapter two examines the English colonial viewpoints and laws that made land reclamation and preservation via mission communities not only necessary, but possible. Ironically, many of the same paternalistic beliefs and policies that justified Indigenous dispossession also facilitated Indigenous land ownership in mission communities. Across southern New England colonial officials and missionaries displayed a sense of spiritually bolstered entitlement to Indigenous land that enabled them to appropriate it, and also “grant” it back to Native people who showed an interest in Christianity. Amid ambitions to possess the southern New England landscape, officials also displayed strong desires to convert Native people to Christianity and an English way of life. They were willing to leverage their power over land to try to achieve these goals. In practice, legalized land ownership through

colonial courts was used as a conversion incentive, one which Indigenous people used for their own purposes.

Chapter three shows that Native people not only lived in mission communities and owned land there, but majorly influenced and shaped the way they were built – physically, organizationally, and culturally. While supporting mission communities and prioritizing ownership of land in general, many Indigenous people also fought for particular acreages in their own homelands. Utilizing their familiarity with colonial conversion priorities and policies examined in chapter two of this dissertation, Native people negotiated with missionaries and colonial officials for land of their choosing even against the wishes of their English advocates, thus shaping the contours of the missions themselves.

Chapter four examines the various ways mission community land was legally owned and managed by Indigenous people. Land ownership in mission communities was far from homogenous across southern New England; the ways in which land was owned and used in different communities were influenced by factors unique to the Indigenous and colonial power structures and customs of each place. Legally and organizationally, mission communities in different areas of southern New England showed key differences as well as commonalities in the way land was owned. This chapter investigates the ways Native communities navigated colonial legal systems to keep land within their communities and manage it in fundamentally Indigenous ways even within the constraints of colonial rule.

Chapter five takes a temporal leap from Metacom's War into the present day. This chapter explains how Metacom's War permanently changed the ways mission communities operated and, therefore, why this conflict marks the end of my historical study. However, the majority of this chapter is dedicated to examining the ways in which Native people in Massachusetts today still utilize prior mission community land. Centuries after the mission communities were established, the descendants of the people who built them maintain connections to this land. Indigenous communities still steward these lands, live upon them, gather there for celebrations and ceremonies, and use them as centers for their own historical research and cultural revitalization and persistence. In these ways and more, this land still plays an important role in the survival of Indigenous communities.



## Chapter 1

### In A New Borderlands World: Indigenous Rationales for Supporting Early Mission Communities

As a starting point to understanding Indigenous rationales for supporting mission communities, we must immerse ourselves in the world that these places were born into and out of. When we understand how essential land was for survival, how tumultuous and dangerous southern New England had become for Native people by the mid-seventeenth century, and how much Indigenous land was already in English hands by the time the earliest mission communities were established, we can start to picture this world. As we look closer, a portrait of many Native communities and individuals striving to carve out viable spaces for themselves in increasingly creative and sometimes daring and desperate ways emerges.

Chapter one lays out the historical context of the seventeenth-century mission communities. First, it introduces the Indigenous groups that built these places. Second, Chapter one breaks down what the spiritual, political, and legal landscape of New England looked like in the early days of mission community development, and in the years and months before English tools wielded by Indigenous hands broke ground on the first praying town. In this constantly changing and dangerous borderlands region, supporting mission communities made sound logical sense as a survival strategy. After weighing difficult options, many Indigenous people had reason to believe that amid many other uncertain possibilities, securing a stable land

base via the mission communities was an avenue with favorable odds for corporeal and community persistence.

This chapter does not aim to be a comprehensive history of Indigenous southern New England in early and mid-seventeenth century. Rather, it highlights the aspects of this time and place that are most relevant to understanding the world that the Indigenous founders of the praying towns inhabited, and attempts to convey a sense of their experiences by analyzing records of their actions. Working with a dearth of Indigenous writings, we can go a long way towards understanding their decisions by gaining insight into their situation. However, understanding that situation is hardly a simple endeavor.

In order to gain the clearest possible view of mission community context, this chapter relies on a combination of documentary evidence, archaeological findings, the knowledge of present-day Indigenous people in Massachusetts, and rigorous secondary scholarship. Some of that context can be found in more targeted works engaging mission communities – Richard Cogley’s *John Eliot’s Mission*, Jean O’Brien’s *Dispossession by Degrees*, James Axtell’s *The Invasion Within* and David Silverman’s *Faith and Boundaries* are particularly useful for understanding the world surrounding the mission communities. However, works that cover Indigenous southern New England in broader ways are also necessary. In addition to my own analysis of primary source material, this chapter draws on research and insights from regional works, especially Neal Salisbury’s *Manitou and Providence* alongside Kathleen Bragdon’s *Native People of Southern New England*. While *Manitou and*

*Providence* is an older source, originally published in 1982, Salisbury's meticulous research has stood the test of time, and *Manitou and Providence* is consistently cited in recent scholarship. As a pioneering work in the nineteen-eighties, it shaped the field of Early America as we understand it today by giving Indigenous people and societies their due as key political players that shaped the trajectory of the entire region. Even though the field is in a different place today, with Indigenous scholarship and Indigenous sources increasingly visible and prioritized, *Manitou and Providence* remains an authoritative source on early southern New England.<sup>1</sup>

Among historians, the knowledge of Indigenous descendent communities has been increasingly accepted and taken seriously as primary source material, but at this point it is hardly common in the overall lexicon of early southern New England historiography. In addition to seeking out secondary sources that do prioritize this knowledge, especially those authored by Indigenous scholars, I have relied on knowledge and perspectives from present day Native individuals and communities in Massachusetts as primary sources for this chapter.

It is not an exaggeration to say that in seventeenth-century southern New England, land was everything. It was the foundation upon which all else depended, from basic subsistence, to societal structure, to spirituality and religion. It was from the land that many peoples of southern New England drew their names. As the Mashpee Wampanoag artist Ramona Peters explains:

We name ourselves after the land we live with. Because not only are we breathing in, we are also drinking from the water that is flavored by that

very land. Whatever is deposited in the soil is in that water is in us. So we are all one thing, and we name ourselves after the place that is our nurturing. That sustains our life.<sup>2</sup>

Group names commonly mean “people of” a certain place, or an important feature of the earth in that area: People of the First Light, Fresh Water People, and so on.

Because the group identities of Indigenous people were so closely connected to the land, the names of places and peoples were very often the same. Names regularly represented a sachemship’s land base, mission community, and group of people all at once. (Aquinnah is a well-known example of this.) Indigenous groups regularly shared the name of the place they lived, and the table below refers to both place names, and the names of Indigenous groups.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 2. Indigenous Place and Group Name Meanings**

Indigenous confederations known to have been represented in mission communities:

Massachusett	Great Hill, Near the Great Hill, Place of Great Hills, Place of the Foothill
Nipmuc	Fresh Water People
Pawtucket	At the water falls
Wampanoag	People of the First Light
Mohegan	Wolf clan

Indigenous Group & Mission Community Names

Natick	“Natick means “Place of Searching” though often referred to as the “Place of Many Hills” or “My Home.”
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Chobonokonomum	Divided island lake; a boundary place, or boundary fishing place
Ponkapoag	A spring that bubbles from red soil
Magunkaquog	A place of giant trees; a place of the gift
Hassanamesit	Place of small stones
Maanexit	Path; where the path is
Wabaquisit	West of the Quinebaug River
Quantisset	Long brook
Okammakamesit	At the field other side
Nashobah	Between the waters
Mashpee	Big Water
Comassakumkanit (or Herring Pond)	At the rock which stands erect
Cotuhtikut (or Titicut)	At the great tidal river
Aquinnah	The shore; The End of the Island; land under the hill
Taakemmy	Where he or she strikes it (corn processing place)
Talhanio	Low meadow
Chappaquiddick (or Tchepiaquidenet)	Place of separate island
Sanchiacantacket (or Sengekontacket)	Place where the brook flows into the river
Nashamoieess	The spirit he loves, or, he is beloved by the spirit

Nunnepog	A pond (body of unsalted water); literally means "when there is water there"
Nashawahkamuk	Between the land (common land for hunting)
Manitouwatootan	Christiantown, or God's town
Nantucket	A place in the middle of the water; at far off sea-place

The intricate cultural and political differences between the diverse peoples who built and lived in mission communities will be discussed in more detail as they become relevant to the history explored in upcoming chapters. For now, as an introduction, it is a priority to discuss the many common elements of their societies. While distinct identities were and are important, the people of southern New England also shared much that is helpful for understanding their relationships with land, with the mission communities, and with each other.

Seventeenth-century southern New England was a region of distinct peoples with important commonalities. It is imperative to remember that Indigenous societies continuously experienced change and growth countless years before contact with Europeans. The summary of regional commonalities included here does not represent a static picture of a pre-contact or post-contact culture, for no such things ever existed. At the time it began to be documented in writing, many aspects of Native life were changing rapidly. The information below is intended to help explain Indigenous life in southern New England in the decades leading up to and during mission community establishment. Even in these years of upheaval, political structure, land

use, economic patterns, gender roles, spirituality and religion shared important commonalities across the sachemships and confederations of southern New England. Understanding these common elements of the region is important for understanding the rest of this history.

In addition to the family, the most fundamental sociopolitical unit of southern New England's Indigenous people (and arguably the most important regarding questions of land ownership and usage) was the sachemship. Sachemships as political and social structures, as well as their implications for Native life, were complex. They became more so in the midst of the upheavals brought on by epidemics and colonialism. Understandably, there has been considerable scholarly debate regarding different aspects of the seventeenth-century sachemship, as most descriptions of its functionality come from English writers with their own cultural biases and varying degrees of familiarity with Indigenous social and political structures.<sup>4</sup>

At its core, a sachemship can be defined both as a specific land base, and as a population bound together by a shared identity and loyalty to that sachemship. Membership in a sachemship was a birthright, and one could also join through marriage or as an individual if the sachem and his or her council consented. "Sachem" was an inherited title and set of responsibilities and powers to lead the sachemship that could be passed to women or to men, though a majority of sachems in seventeenth-century records are identified as male.<sup>5</sup> In general, sachems were responsible for allocating land use rights to individuals and families within their sachemship, and making decisions related to justice, warfare, trade, and diplomacy.

However, despite English tendencies to identify sachems through their own cultural lens as “kings” “lords” and “princes,” the authority of a sachem was not absolute or monarchical. Sources indicate that members of a sachemship had significant voice and influence on important decisions affecting their communities.<sup>6</sup> Further, a sachem’s authority, while a birthright, had to be consistently earned by competent leadership, and legitimized by the support of a sachemship’s members, who could and did challenge sachems whose decisions went against the welfare of the community as a whole. As Kathleen Bragdon puts it: “loyalty went beyond that given to the present sachem, and rested with the sachemship as an ongoing social grouping, to whom one’s ancestors had belonged and to which one’s own posterity would be loyal.”<sup>7</sup>

Territory sizes certainly varied and shifted, but sachemships often spanned a territory of approximately six to eight miles square, similar to the area of a typical seventeenth-century English town. Most were made up of several villages, totaling five hundred people or fewer. As a spatial reference, the island of Noepe was divided into four major sachemships: Taakemmy, Nunnepog, Aquinnah, and Chappaquiddick. Smaller, less powerful sachemships (often called sub-sachemships) existed within some of their boundaries.<sup>8</sup> While a sachemship usually had fewer than five hundred members, many of these came together into confederations including those named as Wampanoag, Massachusetts, Mohegan, Nipmuc, and Pawtucket, under the umbrella leadership of ketasontimoog (“great sachems” or “paramount sachems”).<sup>9</sup>

More often than not, English records are frustratingly non-specific regarding the group identities of the people who lived in the mission communities. Sometimes



an individual might be described variously as “Pokanoket” or “one of Mittark’s men” but more frequently would be described as an “Indian” or “Praying Indian.” Despite these generalizations, it is clear from documentary records that mission communities included people identified as Massachusett, Nipmuc, Pawtucket, Wampanoag and Mohegan. It is likely that individuals from other groups, not specifically named, were also represented in mission communities. After the Pequot War, for instance, Pequot people who were not killed or sold into slavery found refuge in other Native communities. As one of the safest and most open spaces in New England, it seems highly probable that some would have gravitated toward mission communities.<sup>10</sup>

Even as new societal structures began to take shape in the form of mission communities, most if not all Native people in southern New England continued to separately or concurrently hold membership in groups structured as sachemships and confederations. Accurately describing the nature of Indigenous groups in early New England can be challenging. In this dissertation, I use the terms “sachemship” and “confederation” as descriptors for Native groups because these terms reflect how they organized themselves, and because these political groupings reflect the agency and mutability of the individuals within them. Terms that signify anthropological groupings of people into “bands” and “tribes” based on such commonalities as language and social organization often do not accurately capture the diversity of southern New England as a region, not to mention changing alliances and lifeways over time. In the present day, the terms “tribe” and “nation” are often but not universally the preferred self-identifying terms of today’s Native groups in southern

New England.<sup>11</sup> In seventeenth-century reality, membership in any group was not so rigidly bounded. It was complex, overlapping, fluid, and based on factors such as kinship and politics. For instance, Chief Cheryl Toney Holley explains that the Nipmucs of interior southern New England lived in “scattered villages” that were “linked together by kinship ties, trade alliances, and common enemies.”<sup>12</sup>

Group identities could shift as alliances did, and changes in the political power balance of the region led to the formation of new groups out of previous ones. Adding to the complexity, and reaffirming the importance of place to identity, group names could shift according to location. As the Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag’s website explains: “It is important to realize that the Indigenous bands of Massachusetts along with the rest of the native population, took their names from the place that they dwelled and not the opposite. The people who dwelled at Neponset (the Neponsets) and forced to move to Ponkapoag, were now called Ponkapoags.”<sup>13</sup>

Whichever categorical terms and group names are used, it is productive to think of mission communities, sachemships, and confederations as overlapping and intersecting communities. Native people could and did belong to multiple communities at once. For example, individuals who lived in Manitouwatootan, Noepe’s most well-documented praying town, would have been part of Manitouwatootan as a town, a member of Keteanummin’s sachemship, a Wampanoag, and part of the island’s Christian community, all at the same time. These kinds of overlapping and intersecting memberships could become less fluid in

times of intense conflict and upheaval, when people were sometimes forced to perform only one identity at a time for the sake of survival.

One source base that reveals which Native groups were represented in mission communities is the knowledge held by their descendants. Publications from the present-day Herring Pond Wampanoag, Aquinnah Wampanoag, Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag, Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, Mashpee Wampanoag and Nipmuc Nation relate their history with the mission communities. This identity and historic memory is nothing if not complex.<sup>14</sup>

While attending the annual Nipmuc Powwow at Hassanamesit, I fell into conversation with a man who identified himself as a Pokanoket. Pokanoket and Wampanoag are names that have been used to describe the same confederation in seventeenth-century documents and in the present day. However, this man dismissed the name Wampanoag, saying it was just something the English called Pokanoket people. He also forcefully assured me that “we were never part of a praying village.” Drums calling our attention to the next event in the circle cut off our conversation at that point, and I never got to ask for more details.<sup>15</sup>

This conversation lives in my memory next to a talk with Melissa Harding Ferretti, Chairwoman of the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribal Council. She told me: “We’ve always been considered the praying Indians and it’s in our history... I don’t know as if they [colonial officials] considered us a praying ‘town’ but we considered ourselves praying Indians.” She added that her Herring Pond ancestors owned land and had a church/meeting house, and that she did not think the English government

made them move like some other communities. These disparate conversations speak to the complexity of past group identities. As names, “Wampanoag” or “Pokanoket” would signal only one identity to the unfamiliar reader – one tribe. This view inevitably leads to the question of who is right about the Wampanoag’s/Pokanoket’s relationship with mission communities – the Pokanoket man who rejected the idea that his ancestors were involved with a mission, or Chairwoman Ferretti, who discussed this as part of Wampanoag history, albeit a painful chapter. In reality though, the Wampanoags/Pokanokets were not one tribe, but a confederation of largely autonomous sachemships, meaning that some groups and people within the confederation were part of mission communities and some were not. Like written documents, historical memory and oral history are not exempt from potential inaccuracies. However, because of the way Native groups were structured, both of the people I spoke to can be factually correct at the same time with no contradiction. Such is the complexity of the groups who built the mission communities.<sup>16</sup>

Across sachemships and confederations, land use was arguably the most universal regional commonality of Indigenous southern New England, and it was inextricably intertwined with the gendered, political, and spiritual aspects of society. In pre-epidemic southern New England, large populations thrived on cultivated crops combined with hunting and gathering. Archaeological and documentary evidence attests to an abundance of farmland and farming peoples, but there are also indications that livelihoods varied regionally, with some peoples relying more heavily

on the sea, or on hunting and gathering with little or no farming in their lives. Whether primarily a farming or hunting and gathering community, all peoples relied on regular and seasonal mobility to varied extents. In important ways that English settlers would often disregard and misunderstand, Indigenous women and men made use of and modified the landscape to suit the needs of their communities and families.<sup>17</sup>

Indigenous women, men, and children of southern New England all utilized and shaped their land base for the prosperity of their communities. They fed themselves and produced surpluses for trade by farming, hunting, and gathering. Far from the fictional “virgin” or “wild” southern New England that would capture European imaginations, many aspects of this landscape were skillfully cultivated by humans. Sometimes with the help of massive and elaborate fish weirs, fish were harvested from the ocean as well as an expansive labyrinth of rivers, streams, lakes and ponds. Indigenous people managed sections of the forest with controlled burns to create hunting parks and favorable conditions for wild foods to grow. Burning created fertile soil, from which grew inviting grasses for grazing animals and softened the footsteps of men as they hunted unencumbered by underbrush. Women also employed fire to clear and rotate fields in the rocky soil of New England and ensure continually fertile ground for growing corn, beans, and squash as staples.<sup>18</sup>

A discussion of early seventeenth-century Indigenous gender roles and family life in southern New England is especially challenging. Over years of scholarly investigation, and especially with the increased visibility of Indigenous scholarship

and historical memory, it has become more and more apparent that early European chroniclers were likely to misunderstand or misrepresent the roles of men and women in Indigenous society. Their accounts, while useful, must be read with this in mind. As an example, roles in the food production economy were initially misunderstood. While women's domains were the fields and the village, the hunt and the forest was primarily the purview of men. Early English observers' familiarity with hunting as a leisure activity for aristocrats in their homeland likely contributed to their view of Indigenous men as indolent. While agriculture provided the bulk of the food in southern New England, hunting was an essential economic pursuit that provided necessary nutrition and materials with which to make clothing, shelter, and ceremonial items. Men also made tools and boats, provided fish, and grew ceremonial herbs such as tobacco.<sup>19</sup>

Several early English observers including Roger Williams, Edward Winslow, and William Wood described Indigenous women's roles as agricultural producers as oppressive drudgery, and English church and government leaders characterized many familial relationships between men and women as sinful. What they did not see was that women's dominion over staple crop production, stemming from their intensive connection to the land via skill and labor, was an important source of economic and political power, as well as a key claim to land itself as a resource. As Schaghticoke scholar Trudie Lamb Richmond puts it: "Economic primacy of corn certainly reinforced women's cultural relationship to the land: because women were the primary agriculturalists in their communities, their intense use of land established and

maintained their rights to it.” In addition to misunderstanding women’s roles, many English writers were scandalized by what they saw as sinful relationships between men and women. Separation of couples was a relatively simple and permissible affair, premarital sex was not taboo, and polygamy, while not practiced by most people, was an accepted way to structure a family.<sup>20</sup>

Indigenous societies in southern New England divided labor generally along gendered lines. Some seventeenth-century documentation suggests an egalitarian relationship between men and women, while some of these sources indicate a hierarchy in which women occupied a lower status. Whatever the degree of equality most men and women experienced, it is clear that there was overlap and flexibility in societal roles. For example, war was generally the domain of men, but some women served as warriors and military leaders, and men helped with farming, though the bulk of this specialty was considered women’s work. Women and men alike inherited land rights and had a say in community decisions. Both genders lived as traders, sachems, healers and spiritual leaders.<sup>21</sup>

Religion and spirituality among the Indigenous people of seventeenth-century southern New England have a deep and complex history; this brief holistic introduction is by no means comprehensive. English settlers and Indigenous people alike carried unique spirituality that would deeply influence their relationships with one another, and with the land. As a starting point, it is important to understand that Indigenous spirituality is considered by many Indigenous people today to be a consistent way of life, and a way of relating to other humans, non-humans, and the

earth. Some would hesitate to call it a religion, while others would not; the distinction is personal. As in the present, seventeenth-century Indigenous spirituality could vary between groups and individuals across southern New England, with nuances and differences stemming from personal and cultural factors. Even considering this, many core tenets are broadly applicable to the region.

Indigenous spirituality was and continues to be deeply connected to land and place, and functions on principles of reciprocity between humans and the non-human inhabitants of the landscape. The earth itself was highly spiritualized as the foundation for all life. Particular places were (and still are) held sacred as the burial sites of ancestors. Features of the land such as hills, rivers, ponds, bays, and trees could be associated with sacred stories, or known as the dwelling places of sacred beings. Non-human beings of great spiritual power permeated the world and affected human life and the physical landscape for better and worse. Foundational to all creation was the life force of all things seen and unseen – Manitou, also called Manit. Manitou can be described as a spiritual potency that flowed through the world. Manitou could concentrate in different people, places, objects and supernatural beings at different times – these conduits were also called Manitou. Through this spiritual force, the unseen world could be accessed by humans through rituals and dreams. Some could even harness its power for good or ill. Due to a sparse and problematic source base, the complex variety of specialists who dealt with the unseen world is not fully understood by historians, but the most well-known were powwows. Powwows in this context were not ceremonial and celebratory gatherings as the term signifies



today, but individual practitioners who served as intermediaries between their communities and the spirit world. Many were also experts in using sacred herbs and other practices to heal physical ailments.<sup>22</sup>

Ojibway oral history tells that a sign was given and the people knew that a terrible thing was on its way to destroy the people. Therefore, they left and traveled west to new lands taking the sacred fire with them until it was safe to return it to the homelands. They refer to the Indians in New England as the ones that stayed behind.

- Cheryl Toney Holley, Chief of the Nipmuc Nation and Director of the Hassanamisco Indian Museum<sup>23</sup>

Neither powwows nor anyone else had the ability to stop the prophesied waves of epidemics that swept across southern New England beginning in 1616.<sup>24</sup> 1620 is one of the first dates school children still memorize as the beginning of the United States' preferred origin story (the tale of Jamestown being too unsavory for a good national creation myth).<sup>25</sup> The meeting between the "Pilgrims" and a group of Wampanoags led by Massasoit is often told as the beginning of a new world and sociopolitical reality for both English and Indigenous people in New England. But for Massasoit's people and thousands of others, this was not the beginning of their new world, only the latest development in a series of catastrophic destabilizations.

Initially, it was not European people, but pathogens carried by traders and explorers who were just passing through, that profoundly disrupted the political and social fabric of Indigenous southern New England. These same pathogens facilitated the mass dispossession that would prove so disruptive and deadly for Native people.

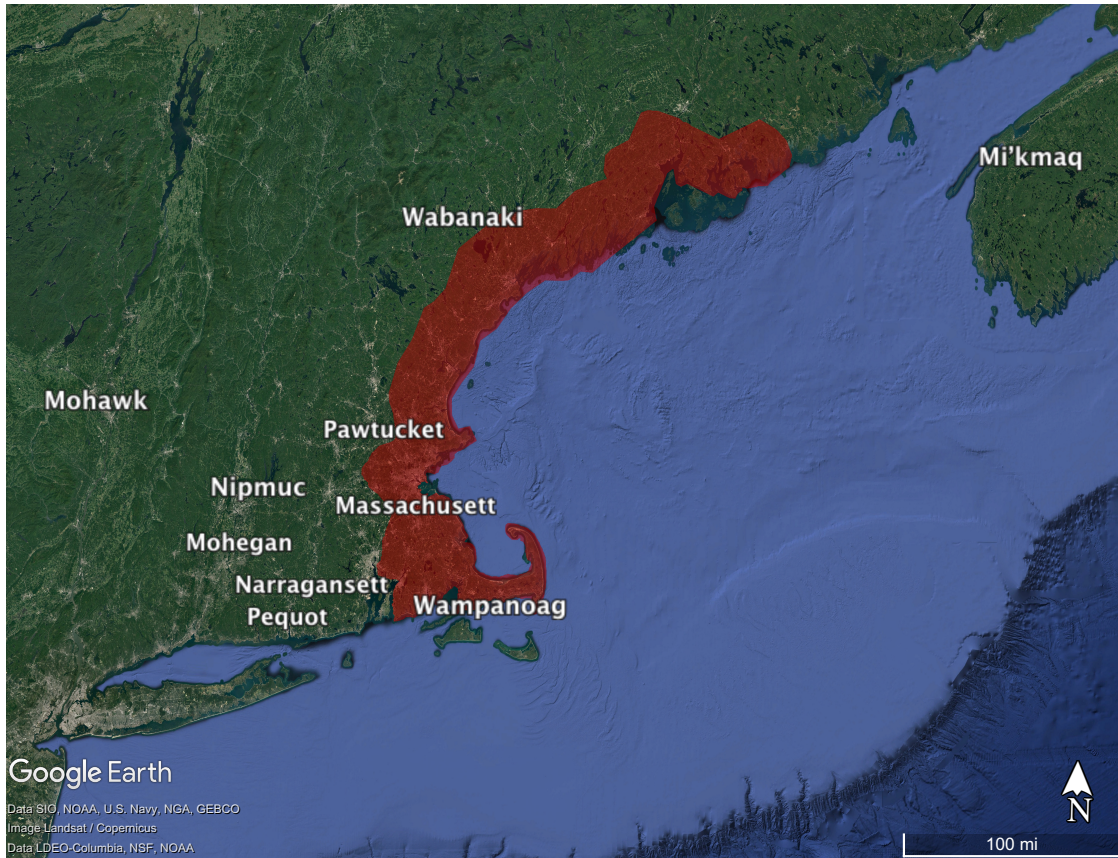
The role that disease played in the dispossession of southern New England's Indigenous people, and in their political and spiritual lives, cannot be overstated. By looking more deeply into the geography of the earliest epidemics in 1616 and 1633, we can begin to understand their political effects, and the key role they played in English appropriation of Native land. This sheds some light on which Indigenous groups were most vulnerable at the inception of praying towns, and why some would have been especially likely to see supporting them as a viable survival strategy among many uncertain options.

Archaeological and documentary evidence indicates that southern New England was densely populated in the pre-epidemic world.<sup>26</sup> Daniel Gookin's *Historical Collections* contains reports and estimates by Indigenous elders who remembered a significant pre-epidemic population, dramatically reduced by waves of disease by the time they were interviewed in the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>27</sup> Surviving accounts of the earliest European explorers in New England describe it as teeming with human life, the landscape covered in populous villages and productive farmlands. For instance, when Samuel de Champlain sailed the southern New England coast in 1604, he met many Indigenous groups each numbering in the hundreds. In 1614, John Smith (of Jamestown fame) described coastal southern New England as "planted with Gardens and Corne fields, and so well inhabited with a goodly, strong, and well proportioned people."<sup>28</sup>

The same year that Smith observed a thriving Native population in southern New England, Tisquantum, (also known as Squanto of Thanksgiving fame) was kidnapped

from his home at Patuxet by English explorers and taken to Europe to be sold into slavery. When he managed to escape and return home in 1619, he found fallow farmlands overtaken by the forest, and ruined villages littered with human skeletons that no one had been left to bury. Instead of friends and relatives to welcome him, Tisquantum found his village emptied, “scarce any left alive besides himself.” The English settlers who arrived in 1620 reported apocalyptic devastation. What Tisquantum and the settlers saw was evidence of one of the most catastrophic epidemics in human history, the first wave of multiple.<sup>29</sup>

For at least two years beginning in 1616, a violent epidemic swept through New England, reaching twenty to thirty miles inland from the sea. Europeans who witnessed the aftermath often described it as a “plague” which may have been a general term for disease, or a reference to bubonic plague. There has been much investigation but no consensus on the pathogen that destroyed so many lives. Possibilities posited by medical historians include bubonic plague, trichinosis, “leptospirosis accompanied by Weil syndrome,” yellow fever, smallpox, chicken pox, and strains of hepatitis. Whatever pathogen or combination of pathogens it actually was, estimates of overall population loss range from fifty percent to percentages in the nineties, with the coastal homelands of the Pawtucket, Massachusetts, and Wampanoag confederations hit especially hard.<sup>30</sup>

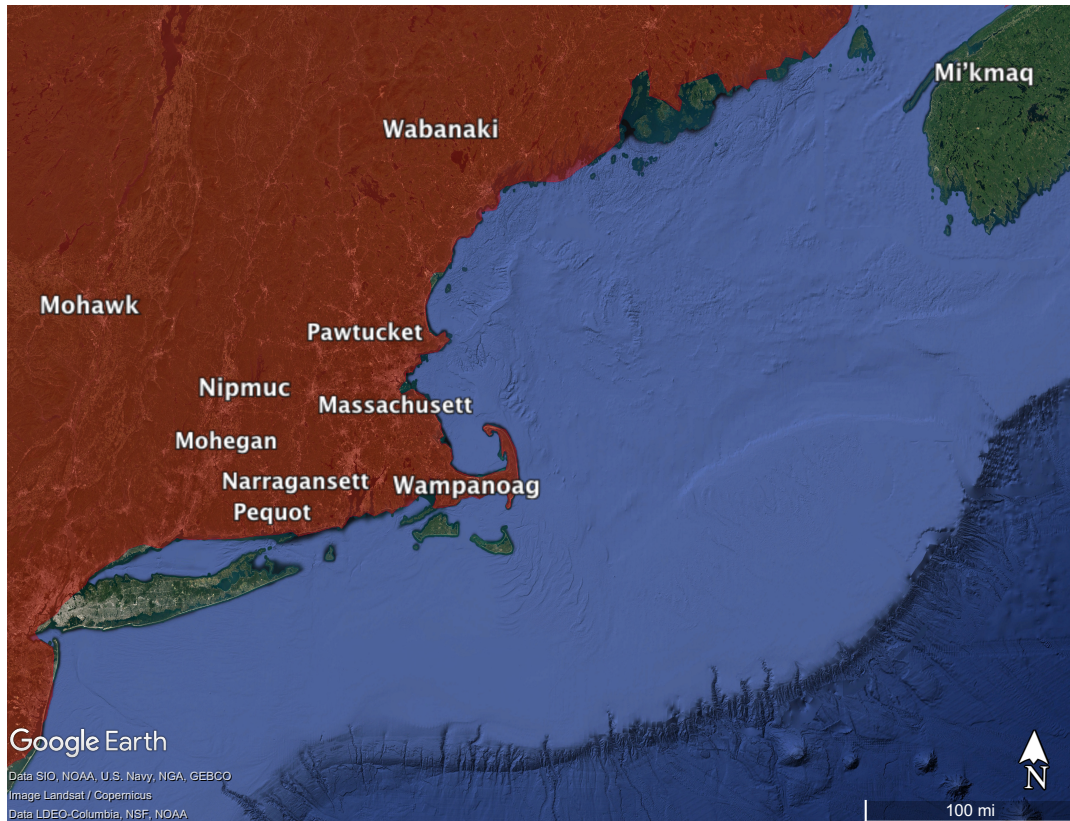


**Figure 2: Map – 1616 Epidemic Geographic Scope**

This map shows the areas and peoples reported by early settler and explorer accounts to have been affected by the epidemic that began in 1616 and lasted at least two years.<sup>31</sup> Due to source limitations, the exact mileage of the epidemic’s reach is approximate.<sup>32</sup>

In 1633, a “great mortality” in the form of smallpox devastated survivors of the first plague, and exponentially expanded its reach. This epidemic was even more destructive than the first. Accounts by European observers report it reaching all of the areas that suffered through the 1616 epidemic, plus extending as far north as Quebec, and “as farr as any Indian plantation was knowne to the west.” As a percentage, the overall mortality rate is thought to have been similar to the first plague, but it covered a much vaster geography and affected many more communities. Father Brebeuf, a

Jesuit missionary living in Huronia (home of the Huron confederation in present-day eastern Canada) described this epidemic as “so universal among the Savages of our acquaintance that I do not know if one has escaped its attacks.”<sup>33</sup>



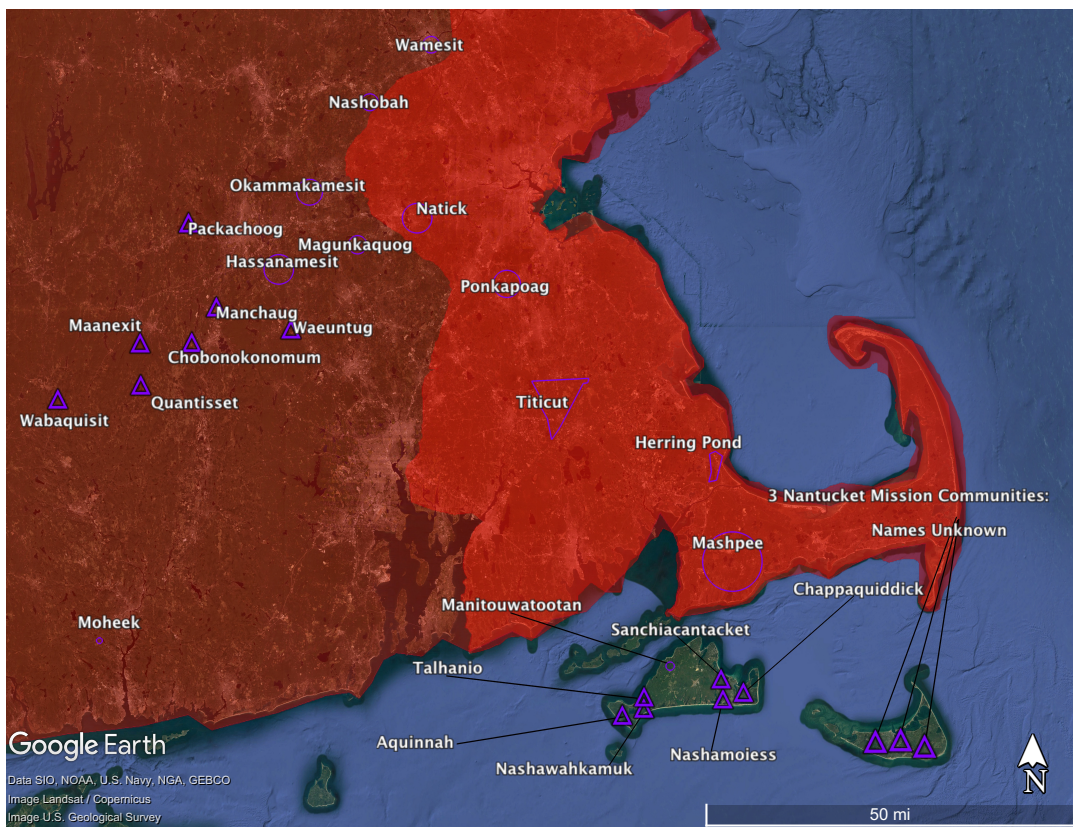
**Figure 3: Map – 1633 Smallpox Epidemic Geographic Scope**

This map shows the areas and peoples reported by early settler and explorer accounts to have been affected by the smallpox epidemic that began in 1633 and lasted at least two years. Due to source limitations, the exact mileage of the epidemic’s reach is approximate.<sup>34</sup>

The toll these epidemics must have taken on the thousands of survivors who lost loved ones and saw their communities suffer through this hell can scarcely be imagined. For many years after these first apocalyptic waves of sickness and death, Indigenous people in southern New England remained vulnerable to Afro-Eurasian



diseases to which they lacked immunity; death and disability due to these pathogens was common throughout the seventeenth century.<sup>35</sup> For the purposes of understanding the context of mission community development, the first two waves of depopulation in 1616 and 1633 require the most attention. These first two epidemics dramatically destabilized the region, upended the existing balance of political power, and opened opportunities for English colonists to seize Native land.



**Figure 4: Map – 1616 and 1633 Epidemics Geographic Scope Relative to Mission Communities**

The areas shaded in bright red are areas of documented depopulation in the 1616 epidemic and subsequently the 1633 epidemic. The areas shaded in darker red are areas of documented depopulation in the 1633 epidemic. The purple markers and white labels represent mission communities established before Metacom's war. None of these were in existence as mission communities when the 1616 and 1633 epidemics struck, but some already existed as sachemships or smaller Native

settlements.<sup>36</sup>

While all Indigenous people in New England suffered the effects of European-carried pathogens to varied extents, many people, especially within the Pawtucket, Massachusetts, and Wampanoag confederations, were put at an extreme disadvantage by experiencing these first two epidemics back-to-back. Any immunity that communities gained by going through the 1616 epidemic helped little if at all in 1633. There is considerable debate and no consensus on the identity of the 1616 epidemic, and that of 1633 has been identified as smallpox. The overwhelming likelihood is that two separate pathogens struck in 1616 and 1633. Even if, out of all diseases, smallpox was the one that struck in 1616, acquired immunity did not necessarily last a lifetime, nor were infection rates at one hundred percent in 1616; those who survived the epidemic could not acquire immunity to the disease if they were not infected. The missionary tract *The Day Breaking if Not the Sun Rising of the Gospell with the Indians of New England* reported in 1646 that among the Indigenous people of Massachusetts Bay, there were “but few that are left alive from the Plague and Pox, which God sent into those parts.” This tract lists two separate diseases, and other accounts of the 1633 epidemic make it clear that many who lived through the first epidemic died in the second. Thus, many sachemships in the Massachusetts, Pawtucket, and Wampanoag regions were depopulated twice, and were especially vulnerable in the political landscape. People from these confederations would be heavily represented in praying towns.<sup>37</sup>

The groups who experienced both epidemics faced especially high risk of

violence and dispossession, but they were not the only ones who had to navigate these challenges. In Wampanoag, Mohegan, Pawtucket, Nipmuc, and Massachusetts homelands, depopulation and political vulnerability stemming from early epidemics help to explain the process of dispossession that left many Indigenous people struggling to secure their land base by the time the praying towns were established, and why having land was so essential for survival. The cascade of disasters that resulted in mass land loss began with epidemic disease and rapid population decline, but there were other, more human factors at play. By the mid-seventeenth century, many people from the groups who would be represented in praying towns were alienated from their land (or faced that imminent threat) via the intertwined effects of English invasion, inter-Indigenous political threats, and economic pressure.

English documents from the seventeenth century contain frequent boasting that colonial dealings with “the Indians” about land were fair and just, and that all land was obtained via morally and legally upright channels. In 1653, the commissioners of the United Colonies reported that: “The English before or when they began to build seat or plant in these parts did generally purchase to themselves from the Indians the true proprietors a Just Right and title to the lands they ment to Improve if they found not the place a Vacuum Domicilium.” English colonial policies and ethics permitted them to own land in southern New England either by right of conquest in war, a grant or sale by those whom they perceived to be Indigenous owners, or via the aforementioned vacuum domicilium, a politically, ethically, and spiritually based concept used to bestow legal rights to “vacant” land upon those who



“subdued” or “improved” it.<sup>38</sup>

Prior to Metacom’s war, I have not found any evidence that English colonists used the right of conquest to claim land from populations confirmed to have been represented in mission communities. However, they did invade and claim vast acreages of Indigenous land using *vacuum domicilium*. Legally and morally under the colonial system, Indigenous land that the English perceived as vacant or unused could be justly claimed, so long as they intended to “improve” it. Land that was conceptualized and claimed this way included the hunting and gathering grounds and seasonally fallow lands that had been carefully cultivated by generations of Indigenous women and men, albeit in ways that English policy makers were willfully or mistakenly blind to. Land that had been temporarily depopulated or abandoned in the 1616 and 1633 epidemics could also fall under the category of *vacuum domicilium*. When the English claimed land that they perceived as vacant, Indigenous people were stripped of vast territories that they depended upon for subsistence and safety, whether this was “vacant” land that their communities intended to return to after regrouping from disease, or seasonal hunting and gathering grounds that the English incorrectly categorized as “unused.”<sup>39</sup>

The destructive usage of *vacuum domicilium* as well as other avenues for dispossession of Indigenous people by English colonists was greatly exacerbated by inter-Indigenous political turmoil. Though English land grabbing is better known, the role that Indigenous politics and outside threats from other groups played in Indigenous dispossession was significant. For example, in 1644, five sachems known

as Cutshamache (hereafter called Kitchemekin) Maskonmett, Wossamegon, Nashowanon, and another leader named only as “Sqa Sachim” formally submitted themselves and all the lands and people under their jurisdiction to the Massachusetts Bay colony government when they signed their marks on the following document:

Wee have & by these presents do voluntarily, & without any constraint or pswasion, but of our owne free motion, put ourselves, our subjects, lands, & estates under the government and jurisdiction of the Massachusetts, to bee governed and protected by them, according to their just lawes & orders, so farr as wee shalbee made capable of understanding them; & wee do pmise for ourselves, & all our subjects, & all our posterity, to bee true & faithfull to the said government, & ayding to the maintenance thereof, to our best ability, & from time to time to give speedy notice of any conspiracy, attempt, or evill intension of any which wee shall know or hereof against the same; & wee do pmise to be willing from time to time to bee instructed in the knowledg and worship of God. In witnes whereof wee have hereunto put our hands the 8<sup>th</sup> of the first month, 1643-1644.

CUTSHAMACHE  
NASHOWANON  
WOSSAMEGON  
MASKANOMETT  
SQUA SACHIM<sup>40</sup>

Around two months later, the sachem and renowned powwow Passaconaway added himself and his people to this same agreement. The treaty significantly limited the autonomy of these rulers and compelled them to accept missionaries into their lands. Why did they sign it? One interpretation, made famous by Francis Jennings, is that in a characteristic bid for more land and more power, Massachusetts Bay initiated negotiations for this submission agreement and pressured Passaconaway, Kitchemekin, Maskanomett, Wossamegon, Nashowanon, and “Sqa Sachim” into accepting it. However, Richard Cogley makes the convincing argument that the

impetus for this political agreement came from the sachems, rather than the government of Massachusetts Bay. Understanding why these sachems would initiate such a treaty requires piecing together the broader inter-Indigenous political landscape of the area. Colonial correspondence and court records paint a picture of the five sachems seeking security against Indigenous threats including from the Mi'kmaq, Narragansett and Mohawk.<sup>41</sup>

Passaconaway, Kitchemekin, Nashowanon, Wossamegon, Maskanomett, and “Squa Sachim” were all leaders of politically vulnerable groups in 1644, and their peoples’ survival was uncertain. Kitchemekin was the ketasontimoog (great sachem) of the Massachusett confederation. His people, as well as the Pawtucket groups led by the “Sqa Sachem” and Maskanomett are thought to have experienced population loss near ninety percent in the 1616 epidemic. Additionally, they are known to have been besieged by Mi'kmaq raids immediately following the epidemic. Passaconaway was a Pennacook sachem within the Pawtucket confederation, which was hit hard by the both the 1616 and 1633 epidemics. The identities of Wossamegon and Nashowanon are not well-documented, but their locations near present day Brookfield and Lancaster (Massachusetts) respectively, makes it very likely that they were Nipmuc. The inland location of these two sachems probably protected them and their people from the 1616 epidemic. However, this location did not shield them from severe population loss in 1633. It also placed them in a very vulnerable area for Mohawk raids, a political factor that Toney Holley credits for later Nipmuc interest in praying towns.<sup>42</sup>

The Mohawks were devastated by the 1633 epidemic and experienced mortality up to seventy five percent. But, rather than keeping southern New England's people safer from their attacks, this depopulation of the Mohawks led them as well as others of the Haudenosaunee confederation to intensify and expand their warfare and raids for captives according to the custom of "mourning war." Economic motivation and traditional enmity certainly played a role in Mohawk warfare in the mid-seventeenth century, but the loss of so many people due to epidemics was a paramount cause. As Daniel Richter puts it: "The main targets in the midcentury campaigns were native peoples who could satisfy an insatiable demand for captives to replace the mounting numbers of dead in the Five Nations. Although the quest for furs was vital, only an overriding, even desperate demand for prisoners can explain much of Iroquois behavior." In addition to weakening most of southern New England's Indigenous groups, the 1633 epidemic had the effect of giving Mohawk warriors a desperate reason to invade their land and attack their people. Along with other threats, this would lead to significant land loss, and make the loss of land especially deadly.<sup>43</sup>

In the inter-Indigenous political world, the precarious situation of many groups devastated by epidemics led to hard diplomatic decisions like the submission treaty of 1644 by Passaconaway, Kitchemekin, Nashowanon, Wossamegon, Maskanomett, and "Squa Sachim," and to sacrifices of land out of political necessity. Vulnerable groups found it necessary to seek alliance and protection from stronger groups, including Indigenous as well as English polities. Alliances of mutual need

took place almost immediately after small groups of English people began settling in the region. By the mid-seventeenth century, English colonies had the population and military power to be attractive allies, even in unequal arrangements. While some Indigenous groups brokered alliances, others placed themselves under an English colonial government and were entitled to protection as subjects. In these ways, Indigenous people in southern New England used grants and sales of their land as a diplomatic tool and survival tactic. Before and during the establishment of mission communities, the English undoubtedly claimed much land without Indigenous consent. However, many tracts were also relinquished as part of deliberate if sometimes desperate statecraft by Indigenous groups and individuals.

I have not found any treaties of alliance or submission characterized as *quid pro quo* arrangements of acreage for protection in seventeenth century southern New England. However, gifts were an important part of Indigenous diplomacy, and tribute was expected when one group submitted itself to another's authority. There was nothing the English desired from their new allies or subjects as much as ownership of their land. In treaties of both alliance and submission, it was common for grants of land to the English to be intertwined with these diplomatic arrangements. When the English population was relatively small, these land grants were more mutually advantageous than problematic. As English populations and political power grew exponentially beginning in the sixteen-thirties however, their demand for land was seemingly endless, and it increasingly impinged upon Indigenous land use and subsistence.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, submission treaties placed Indigenous land under English

authority and laws. This meant accepting the authority of the English courts to have the final word on enacting *vacuum domicilium*.

As a related diplomatic maneuver, directly granting or selling land to the English for the purpose of having settlers in close proximity served as a costly but quite effective protective mechanism. By granting strategically located land to English settlers, Indigenous sachems used English presence to deter raids by more powerful groups. Massachusetts and Pawtucket sachems did this in the early sixteenth-thirties to build a buffer against Mi'kmaq war parties. Soheage, sachem of the Wagunk people of central Connecticut also offered land to English settlers as a protective measure against their Pequot enemies, which resulted in the establishment of the English town of Weathersfield, carved out of Wagunk land.<sup>45</sup>

As English numbers and political power grew, Native people increasingly used land grants to solidify alliances or diplomatic gestures meant to protect their communities from the English themselves. Between 1638 and 1639, the Wampanoag sachems of Cape Cod parted with land that allowed the English to establish Sandwich, Barnstable, and Yarmouth in Plymouth colony. David Silverman argues that these tracts were given as a diplomatic response to the horrors of the Pequot War, by sachems who desired their people to be considered allies of the English, and not suspected as enemies who might end up on the receiving end of the kind of violence the English showed themselves capable of at the fort of Mystic. The timing of these grants, beginning soon after the Pequot war had officially ended, (and by sachems who had long refused to grant English land in their territory) is indeed striking.<sup>46</sup>

So is the timing of the island Wampanoag sachem Tawanquatuck's grant to Thomas Mayhew Sr. in eastern Noepe. Late in the summer of 1642, John Winthrop wrote in his journal that the Massachusetts Bay government received news "certifying" a broad Indigenous conspiracy to destroy the English. The response of the colonists was to "strike some terror into the Indians, to disarm such as were in our jurisdiction." Shortly after Massachusetts Bay began flexing its power by disarming Native people and arresting prominent sachems in the colony, Tawanquatuck granted Mayhew land out of his sachemship, Nunnepog. Silverman argues that this transaction was a necessary peace offering, a gesture that showed the Nunnepogs were not conspiring against the English. By offering land to his English neighbors, Tawanquatuck sought to avoid the threat of English violence by proving the friendship of the Nunnepog people.<sup>47</sup>

The saltwater barrier between the islands and the mainland shielded the offshore Wampanoags from the 1616 and 1633 epidemics. But, as Tawanquatuck's diplomatic sacrifice of land illustrates, these communities were still impacted by the regional destabilization that these epidemics wrought. Further, in 1643, Thomas Mayhew Jr. reported a "strange disease" among the island Wampanoags, followed by a "universal sickness" in 1645. These back-to-back waves of deadly illness killed as many as fifty percent of the island Wampanoags on Noepe, depopulating the island by half. This depopulation and destabilization made the island Wampanoags more vulnerable to dispossession as their political power decreased with their numbers, and

the lands formerly occupied by those lost to disease were left “vacant” in English eyes.<sup>48</sup>

Political turmoil and the threat of violence served the same function as epidemic disease where *vacuum domicilium* was concerned. Mohawk, Narragansett, and Mi'kmaq encroachment accelerated dispossession by pushing many groups into constricted territories with scarce resources, leaving the land they fled open to invasion by land hungry English settlers. Faced with raids by these more powerful groups, many depopulated peoples fled their homes on lands that were exposed to violence. They banded together in smaller, often fortified areas for safety. Doing so proved to be a necessary survival strategy, but the lands that they had temporarily abandoned were immediately vulnerable to English invasion, which was justified by *vacuum domicilium*.

A large corpus of seventeenth-century documents shows that the English frequently framed their land use and ownership negotiations with Indigenous people through their own cultural lens – as transactional. Looking at many of these early deeds, it would be reasonable to interpret them as a series of familiar buy and sell transactions – X amount of goods for X acres of land. It is possible that Indigenous people sometimes sold land for primarily economic reasons, whether they were made out of financial acumen, desperation, or both. Indigenous people quickly familiarized themselves with English legal and economic systems, and used them for their own purposes.<sup>49</sup> European trade goods were valuable and desired, and as the seventeenth century wore on they were increasingly needed to earn a living amid the social and



ecological changes that colonialism brought. However, categorically separating political and economic land loss, especially in the early and mid-seventeenth century, would be a futile enterprise. Even if we could, the results would be the same – thousands of Indigenous people faced dispossession and its frightening consequences during the years of mission community establishment.

By the mid-seventeenth century, Indigenous people in southern New England were confronted with an impossible dilemma: sacrificing land was at times necessary for survival in this new and unstable political world, but maintaining a secure land base was essential for the same purpose. Squeezed tighter and tighter by threats of violence and English encroachment, the land southern New England's Indigenous people still held became an increasingly precious resource. For reasons of subsistence and safety, alienation from land carried high risk of extreme poverty, fragmentation of communities, and even death. Whether the consequence was violence or starvation, dispossession was a very real corporeal danger.

Nowhere was completely safe in the New England borderlands, but to be alienated from one's land base and set adrift in this unstable landscape was a frightening prospect. The fear Indigenous people had of leaving their homes and losing their land lest they be killed is expressed in conversion narratives included in *Tears of Repentance* a missionary tract by John Eliot and Thomas Mayhew Jr. According to this document, in 1652, shortly after the first praying towns were established, a Native man named Antony stated in his conversion narrative that he only tolerated missionary preaching on his homeland because he feared that if he left

that place he would be killed. Another, Owussumag, stated that when Christianity first started taking root in his home: “I went away into the Country, but I could find no place where I was beloved... My fear was of man, not of God... I sought to go away afar off, but I could think of no place, but that I should be in danger to be killed.” In addition to documentation of the political turmoil of the times, the anxieties expressed by Antony, Owussumag, and others illuminate how dangerous it could be to leave one’s land. They did not specify whom they feared if they left their land, but Gookin’s accounts state that Indigenous people were threatened by hostile English individuals as well as powerful Native enemies, and risked violence by multiple parties if they left their land bases.<sup>50</sup>

Title to land in and of itself did not protect communities from attack. It did however provide a crucial measure of security because communities that owned their land according to English laws were legally protected from attempts settlers might make to force them off of it. Accounts such as those from Antony, Owussumag, and Gookin demonstrate that whatever danger Native communities faced on their own land bases, that danger was greatly amplified if they were forced to leave. Without a stable, familiar, and therefore more defensible home that could support a population large enough to offer safety in numbers, communities would be ill equipped to weather the many social and political storms of the seventeenth century.

Just as important for survival, land was the basis for subsistence and trade. Land loss due to political danger entailed economic and subsistence-related consequences that threatened livelihoods as well as lives. Post-epidemic, many

groups in southern New England lived in near constant fear of raids, especially if they were forced to live near enemy territory, and they gathered together in palisaded forts for protection. This disrupted subsistence practices quite as much as English land grabbing, mainly by forcing Native communities to live sedentary lives on smaller plots of fortified land for security. Gathering in forts was increasingly common by the mid-seventeenth century; it also led to alienation from land and its resources. Farming, hunting, gathering and fishing on this constricted resource base became increasingly difficult. Daniel Gookin described these forts as characterized by poverty, so much so that people living in these cramped areas were in danger of starving.<sup>51</sup>

It is well-documented that Indigenous people had many reasons to fear the loss of their land bases and to fight to preserve them. However, it is reasonable to ask why legal ownership of land in particular was key to its functionality as part of a survival strategy. In other historical contexts after all, legal ownership of land would not have been relevant to a person's or community's safety upon it. In seventeenth-century southern New England though, it proved to be critical. As English power and numbers grew, so did the importance of title recognized by their courts. English settlers became increasingly bold in the legal and illegal tactics they would use to try to occupy Indigenous land at the expense of the original inhabitants. In areas under colonial jurisdiction, the courts had the power to enforce just conduct regarding land rights, according to their own customs and not necessarily Indigenous ones. This meant that recognition of one's title by an English court entitled the owner to

protection of their rights under the same system. As will be discussed in detail in upcoming chapters, English courts showed a willingness to defend the rights of “landowners” according to their own definition of what that meant. This included upholding the rights of recognized Indigenous owners to preserve their property, as well as the rights of English owners to remove any Indigenous people caught “trespassing” on their claims. Mission community landowners wore an important legal armor – they could not be alienated from their land and pushed into unsafe territory at the pleasure of a landlord.

Epidemic disease, inter-Indigenous political strife, and English invasion are inseparable factors in explaining Indigenous dispossession in the decades leading up to the establishment of mission communities. Depopulation and political vulnerability accelerated Indigenous land loss in three key ways: First, fear of raids pushed demographically weakened groups off of their broader land bases, and into smaller territories that were safer due to geographic location or a concentration of people and fortifications, even as they posed the danger of scarce resources. When Native people temporarily abandoned unsafe territory, the land they fled from was undefended and vulnerable to invasion by Native and colonial groups. Second, groups weakened by demographic loss that faced aggression by Indigenous enemies often had little choice but to seek the alliance and goodwill of English colonists, and there was nothing these newcomers desired more than ownership of Indigenous land in exchange for their “friendship.” As the English grew in numbers and strength, granting or selling land to

them for diplomatic purposes became increasingly important as a political survival strategy. Third, English attitudes and religious beliefs about land rights contributed to their zeal and justifications for claiming Indigenous land in a variety of ways, including the use of *vacuum domicilium*.<sup>52</sup>

By the time the first mission communities were even proposed, Indigenous people in southern New England had already faced staggering land loss that was getting steadily worse. Added to this, in the political turmoil and ecological change of the mid-seventeenth century, land was more essential than ever to sustain one's very life. No one was entirely safe in this new borderlands world, but having a secure land base was one of the surest ways to avoid starvation and violence, and to preserve cohesive communities. Primarily due to English encroachment, this security proved elusive for many Indigenous people, who became familiar with the deadly consequences of landlessness when they or those they knew were pushed into enemy territory or onto land that could not sustain them.

Whether by diplomatic grant, sale, or invasion, many miles of Indigenous land were in English hands by the mid-seventeenth century. Yet, in an ironic turn, while English religious beliefs and attitudes towards Indigenous land led to rampant dispossession, they would also lead to opportunities for Indigenous people to claim legal title to their land via mission communities. Already familiar with the consequences of dispossession, Native people would quickly turn the beliefs, policies, and desires of English colonial officials into an avenue towards land tenure and security.

## Chapter 2

### *The Way Narrow that Leadeth Unto Life: Colonial Desire, the Civilizing Mission, and Land Grants as Evangelist Tools*

In addition to land claimed by conquest in the Pequot War, politically-necessitated grants and sales to the English steadily ate away at Indigenous land bases throughout the early and mid-seventeenth century. English colonists stood poised and eager to take advantage of the perfect storm of disasters southern New England's Indigenous people faced in Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and Martha's Vineyard, and they appropriated vast swaths of Native land for the English crown.<sup>1</sup> However, contrary to what is widely believed, not all politically weakened Native people in seventeenth-century southern New England lost their land to English colonial power. In fact, some managed to preserve land, and some of those who did lose land successfully reclaimed it using mission communities. An important contributing factor to the success of this strategy was the prominence of specific colonial desires and beliefs that seem more than a little contradictory to modern readers. This chapter examines what – at first glance – appears to be an irreconcilable irony: The same colonial desires and spiritual beliefs that facilitated the dispossession of Native people also motivated colonial officials and missionaries to “grant” them land in the form of mission communities.

Within the complexity of colonial attitudes towards Indigenous people and their land exists a pervasive through-line: A sense of spiritually-bolstered entitlement and paternalism permeated English approaches to taking Indigenous land and also

granting it back in the form of mission communities aimed at incentivizing Native conversion to a Puritan version of Christianity. These attitudes mirrored each other in English policies and actions that affected Native people in very different ways. Alongside ambitions to possess the southern New England landscape at the expense of Indigenous inhabitants, colonial leaders professed strong desires to convert their “poor Indian” neighbors to Christianity and English culture while drawing them into the British Empire as subjects. As part of their efforts to achieve this, many deliberately leveraged their power to offer and “legitimize” Native land ownership in mission communities. In practice, land ownership became a tool of colonial evangelism.

Writings by powerful colonists indicate that many saw Indigenous people much as they saw the land they lived on – as wild and sometimes innocent and pure, in need of taming and cultivation. As colonial evangelists sought to convert the land into an orderly country that both imitated and improved upon England, they hoped to transform Native people in a similar fashion. The mission communities were conceived as part of English efforts to remake Indigenous people in their image and draw them into their society as Christian subjects. From a Native perspective, these communities proved to be especially expedient as a land protection and reclamation strategy largely because they provided the means to visibly perform the social and spiritual conversions that were so clearly desired by the English authorities with the power to grant land. Mission communities provided the space, material resources, and advocates that enabled Indigenous individuals and communities to present themselves

to English authorities as qualifying for land grants on the basis of “civility,” and provided the resources necessary for communities to subsist on a smaller, non-rotational land base.

The imperial desires and beliefs that justified land theft were deeply entangled with those that facilitated Indigenous land ownership in the praying towns. Starting early in the settlement process, colonial leaders saw a connection between their version of “respecting” Native land rights, and the success of their own political and religious goals for southern New England. Beginning in the mid-seventeenth century, missions began making measurable progress, and this broad realization evolved into targeted advocacy and policy development that deliberately utilized land grants in the form of mission communities to incentivize social and spiritual conversion among Indigenous people. Native people pursued their own desires using these same spaces and institutions.

While the conscious use of mission community land grants as conversion tools in overall colonial strategy has not received the scholarly attention it deserves, historians of seventeenth-century southern New England regularly question colonial dedication to missionizing efforts here.<sup>2</sup> In their own time, the governments and churches of Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut and Martha’s Vineyard were criticized by some for their lack of progress converting Native people, and lauded by others for their evangelist efforts and accomplishments. There is a similar divide in how they are seen by scholars.



The historian Francis Jennings portrays the mission in Massachusetts Bay as ineffectual to say the least, with scant real effort being made to prioritize conversion. In Jennings' view, the mission was more propagandistic than anything else. However, he presents a much more favorable view of missionary efforts in Plymouth and Martha's Vineyard. Richard Cogley describes the relationship of the Massachusetts General Court to the mission as "benign neglect."<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, Neal Salisbury argues that Massachusetts Bay "envisioned a crucial role for the missions in its Indian policy," and that delays in establishing missions were due to the necessity of establishing colonial hegemony over an area before missionary work could begin. Regarding Martha's Vineyard, David Silverman argues that the Mayhews highly prioritized missionary efforts in their island colony, for they knew that to neglect this work courted both political and spiritual disaster.<sup>4</sup> Intentions and efforts aside, historical theologian Henry Knapp points out that "a gap existed between the stated desire of the Puritans to minister to the native population and the actual results of their efforts. However, following an embarrassing delay, the work moved forward."<sup>5</sup>

Wherever evangelist efforts truly ranked on the priority lists of colonial governments and churches in Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut, and Martha's Vineyard, they were sufficient to result in significant land reclamation openings for Native people. The recorded directives and expressed opinions of powerful actors in church and government show that, at least officially, they promoted the conversion of Indigenous people as a principal priority, and argued for the use of land grants as effective tools to facilitate this. These expressed goals were

backed up by action. Government policies and the actions of missionaries and officials show that the leverage of land ownership did indeed play a role in colonial missionizing efforts. In hopes of converting them to Christianity and an English way of life, mission community land was offered to Native populations under conditions that made these spaces particularly expedient tools for land preservation and reclamation. This was especially true for the most extensively dispossessed and politically vulnerable communities in southern New England.

Another prevalent debate centers on the spiritual and philanthropic sincerity of English evangelists, and their true motivations for trying to convert the Indigenous people of southern New England. Drawing examples from the furthest ends of the interpretive spectrum: Richard Cogley paints Eliot and Gookin of the Massachusetts Bay mission as sincerely altruistic evangelists who sought to protect and care for “praying Indians” both spiritually and materially.<sup>6</sup> By contrast, James P. Ronda describes the mainland mission as “part of a wider attack on Indian land and leadership.” Other scholars have agreed, with some, such as Julius Rubin and James Axtell, portraying missions as attacks on Indigenous culture.<sup>7</sup> While much less has been written about the Martha’s Vineyard, Connecticut, and Plymouth missions relative to Massachusetts Bay, the goals and motives of missionaries in these places are generally portrayed as less mercenary by comparison.<sup>8</sup>

While they committed many words to paper that survive for interpretation, colonial evangelists may well have kept their personal motivations to themselves.

Certainly, there were many powerful reasons besides religious dedication and charitable intentions to court Native communities for conversion. It is hard to imagine that at least some evangelists did not consider factors like diplomatic strategy, military tactics, and economic considerations.<sup>9</sup> For this story of Indigenous survival however, the sincere internal motivations of colonial players are far less relevant than official directives, expressed desires, concrete policies, and their results. Specifically, mission community land grants as an evangelist strategy resulted in legal openings that Native people used to protect their land.

To unearth that story, this chapter draws primarily on missionary publications, government documents, correspondence, and legal records from southern New England in the seventeenth century. The interpretive fulcrum of this chapter sits at the transition point between rhetoric and action. Parsing out the deep internal motivations of missionaries and officials is not very useful in understanding this chapter of Native history. Yet, the words these colonists left behind, explaining their rationales both for appropriating Indigenous land and granting it back to them in the form of mission communities, reveal important truths. Putting these scattered voices in conversation with each other reveals how colonial elites publicly conceptualized themselves, their place in the “new world,” and their image on the world stage. Performative or sincere, these self-perceptions were critical to mission community development.<sup>10</sup>

Whether these records tell us how colonial officials and missionaries truly saw themselves in relation to Native land, how they wanted to be seen, or a mixture, there is an undeniable connection between how they envisioned themselves as evangelists

and colonizers, and how they actually treated many Indigenous people and their land. Missionary publications and government documents professing benevolent paternalism towards Indigenous people as well as spiritually-backed entitlement to their land present interpretive challenges for a number of reasons, not least of which that they were written and published amid clear and present motivations to enhance the image and justify the existence of southern New England's colonies and missions.<sup>11</sup> The interpretive challenges are such that the arguments in this chapter cannot rest on these words alone.

This chapter takes a holistic and connective approach to understanding colonial beliefs, attitudes, and policies in southern New England. These are investigated as they relate to Indigenous land ownership in the colonial areas where praying towns were built – Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, and Martha's Vineyard. In addition to having their own political centers, these colonies were generally the domain of distinct missions with different missionaries at the helm.<sup>12</sup> Key differences existed between these spaces, but they are most productively discussed together for two main reasons: First, the scattered and relatively sparse nature of sources that pertain specifically to Indigenous land ownership in mission communities makes it necessary to cast a wide net and put available documents from across the English colonial world in conversation with one another. Second, these four missions and colonies were highly connected; they had much in common and their interests were very much intertwined.

Politically, the governments of Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, and Martha's Vineyard ultimately drew their authority from England and appealed to the metropole for support on many matters including "Indian affairs." They shared Congregationalist ethics and theology that heavily influenced their governance. In 1643, all but Martha's Vineyard joined the United Colonies of New England, also known as the New England Confederation, a "firm and perpetual league of friendship and amity for offence and defence, mutual advice and succor upon all just occasions both for preserving and propagating the truth and liberties of the Gospel and for their own mutual safety and welfare." The first line of their Articles of Confederation states: "We all came into these parts of America with one and the same end and aim, namely, to advance the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ and to enjoy the liberties of the Gospel in purity with peace." Representatives from churches in all of these colonies also agreed upon the Cambridge Platform in 1648.<sup>13</sup>

Missionaries and colonial officials across southern New England wrote to one another and supported each other's work by way of endorsement in publications and letters soliciting monetary and political support for conversion efforts. Missionaries in all four colonies collaborated on publications and letters to England intended to garner support for the cause of Indigenous conversion as a whole. Eliot, Fitch, Cotton Jr., Mayhew Jr., Mayhew Sr., and Bourne all contributed to Daniel Gookin's *Historical Collections*.<sup>14</sup> Eliot, Cotton Jr., Bourne, Fitch and the Mayhews all received monetary support for their missions as well as salaries from the Society for Propagation of the Gospel in New England/New England Company; these funds were

distributed by the Commissioners of the United Colonies. When Indigenous people of Mashpee petitioned to start a church in 1666, Eliot, Cotton Jr., Bourne, and Mayhew Sr. were all present to hear the confessions of the first prospective church members.<sup>15</sup>

I do not suggest that colonial officials and missionaries were of one mind or that policies across southern New England were homogenous. Pertaining to Indigenous land ownership, differences among these governments and missions are highly relevant. However, there are striking through-lines in the attitudes, policies, and beliefs that influenced Indigenous land ownership in all four colonies. They are most productively analyzed in conversation.

A key line ran through all of the above geographies: fraught relations between Native and English people regarding land. Native people across all of these colonies and mission areas felt the catastrophic effects of dispossession and navigated the tension between their own land use systems and those imposed by English colonists. While relentless English land hunger was a crisis felt by all Native people in one way or another, there was significant unevenness in whose land rights were acknowledged by the invading colonial system, and whose were dismissed and violated. Combined with colonial beliefs that asserted entitlement to Native land, and a power imbalance that increasingly favored the English as the seventeenth century wore on, deeply entrenched differences between English and Indigenous land use concepts and practices contributed to land transfers that recognized the rights of some Indigenous people while leaving many others landless and therefore destitute and imperiled.

When buying land from Indigenous people, English settlers typically sought out sachems – leaders to whom the English regularly and incorrectly ascribed monarchical authority and exclusive land ownership. As with many aspects of Indigenous society, English settlers willfully or mistakenly viewed sachems’ authority over land through their own cultural lens, and used this inaccuracy to their advantage. In Indigenous southern New England, land use was not a communal free for all, as is sometimes assumed based on romantic views of the past. The boundaries of each sachemship, while subject to fluctuations, were clearly defined and broadly understood among Indigenous communities. The members of each sachemship held rights to use that land, and the specifics of this were overseen by the sachem of that territory. He or she was in charge of allocating land rights in particular places to particular individuals and families. Still other areas were designated for common use among members of the sachemship. Often, these rights remained stable throughout generations. Under the Indigenous system, sachems had the power to allocate land usage rights, and received tribute from those who used land within the sachemship for subsistence and trade – whether they were members of the sachemship or outsiders granted usage rights. However, prior to European invasion, I have found no evidence that sachems ever alienated land in perpetuity to individuals, much less sold it to foreigners outside their community. Land sales and grants involving private and perpetual ownership were unprecedented.<sup>16</sup>

English people who bought land from sachems and other individuals did not operate under the Indigenous system in which land rights were held by all members

of a sachemship, albeit under the supervision and allocation of a sachem. Under the Indigenous system, sachems and other individuals were not recognized as being exclusive “owners” of land in the European sense. This did not stop colonists from treating individuals (primarily sachems) or even small groups of individuals as the sole owners of land they wanted to buy. Under the English system, land ownership meant exclusive ownership, and anyone found “trespassing” on land that English colonists viewed as exclusively theirs could be subjected to legal punishment and violence.<sup>17</sup>

Indigenous individuals who sold land to the English sometimes specified areas to retain, and had those rights respected. Yet, the character of Indigenous land sales across southern New England from the early to late seventeenth century shows the inconsistency of English respect for Indigenous land rights as well as the uneven distribution of whose rights were respected and whose were denied. When large areas previously used by a whole sachemship were sold by individuals, many Indigenous people were alienated from land to which they had previously held rights under their own system and that they had depended on for subsistence and security. In recorded land transactions from Indigenous individuals to English settlers throughout seventeenth-century southern New England, deeds often specifically stated that the seller was giving up not only his or her rights to that land but the rights of “all Indians.” Such was the case in 1658, when a Native man known as Joanno sold land to the town of Yarmouth in Plymouth. By signing his mark on this deed, he promised to “defend” the townsmen of Yarmouth “from all titles, claimes, and molestations



which shalbee made by any Indian or Indians to the said tract of Land, or any pte or pcell of the same, att any time hereafter.”<sup>18</sup>

In some cases, small tracts and/or certain usufruct rights were explicitly retained within land sold. The Massachusetts sachem Kitchemekin sold a tract of land to the town of Andover, but reserved the rights of a particular group of Indigenous people to fish there and stipulated that “the Indian called Roger” could continue to “enjoy four acres of ground where he now plants.” In 1644, the sachem We Bucksham preserved the rights of his people to hunt, fish, and plant on land that he sold to John Winthrop.<sup>19</sup> More often than not however, large numbers of Indigenous people were alienated from their land when English settlers claimed the rights of a whole community via the sale or grant from a single individual or handful of people.

Many colonial officials writing in the seventeenth century prided themselves on what they said was the fair and generous practice of obtaining the “consent of the Natives” even though they were already entitled to that land via royal authority and God’s will. However, this consent was anything but universal for the members of many sachemships, who found themselves alienated from their land when English settlers bought their rights to it from someone else. The specters of violence and hunger hovered over those who faced landlessness or the threat of landlessness. Reclaiming or preserving land rights would have been a difficult but necessary priority.

For English communities no less than Indigenous ones, land was essential for

subsistence and security. It was also key to the spiritual and political missions of English colonists, and they laid claim to it in multiple ways. Settlers in southern New England asserted their entitlement to Indigenous land based on three intertwined core foundations: legal government authority, religious beliefs, and securing the “Indian right” to land. Colonial officials viewed Native claims to southern New England land as inferior to those bestowed upon the colonies by royal charter and God’s will. According to their worldview, English claims trumped those of the original inhabitants. Even so, they acknowledged that Native people held some sort of right to the land they occupied, which needed to be extinguished by grant or sale before colonists could claim full title to it. They termed these somewhat ambiguous and contested claims Indian rights.<sup>20</sup> It is not possible to draw firm lines between any of the above justifications for claiming Native land; the legal, political, and spiritual were inextricably linked.

Colonial governments in southern New England asserted their rights to the soil largely based on authority endowed by English laws and political power. Massachusetts Bay obtained a royal charter granting them dominion over this colonial territory in 1629. Connecticut began as an offshoot of Massachusetts Bay, and while it began self-rule in 1636, it did not obtain a charter of its own until 1663.<sup>21</sup> Plymouth never did receive its own royal charter. However, it self-governed under patents granted by the Council for New England, a joint stock company vested by King James with the authority to oversee the governance and colonization of the region. Thomas Mayhew Sr. also obtained his rights to Noepe, Nantucket, and the Elizabeth

Islands by the authority of this council and formed the proprietary colony of Martha's Vineyard. Though these paths to colonial legitimacy varied, all traced their land rights in southern New England to authority from the metropole. As the language of the earliest land grant documents as well as later writings by colonial officials reveal, this legal government authority was intertwined with spiritual authority and divine providence.<sup>22</sup>

The bedrock relationship between the political and the spiritual is exemplified in the 1629 Charter of Massachusetts Bay, and the 1620 Charter of New England which granted authority to the Council for New England to grant patents to Plymouth and Martha's Vineyard. Both of these foundational documents made multiple references to the grace and blessing of God on their colonization efforts and professed the centrality of Indigenous conversion to their goals and reasons for settling in southern New England. The same documents that asserted English entitlement to Native land from the start also mandated a paternalistic evangelism as part of colonization efforts to tame and possess that land.



**Figure 5: 1629 Seal of Massachusetts Bay Colony.<sup>23</sup>**

The 1629 Charter of Massachusetts Bay asserted that the conversion of New England’s Indigenous people was the “principall Ende of this Plantacion” and the colony prominently displayed its paternalistic approach to this end on its seal. In the 1620 Charter of New England, King James granted his subjects permission to colonize southern New England and establish multiple colonies there “...in Hope

thereby to advance the in Largement of Christian Religion, to the Glory of God Almighty, as also by that Meanes to stretch out the Bounds of our Dominions, and to replenish those Deserts with People governed by Lawes and Magistrates, for the peaceable Commerce of all.” The same charter stated that “The principall Effect which we can desire or expect of this Action, is the Conversion and Reduction of the People in those Parts unto the true Worship of God and Christian Religion.”<sup>24</sup>

These stated goals set the tone for much of future policy in these colonies. In southern New England, officials and missionaries worked within an imperial framework that positioned Indigenous people as inferior and cherished goals of English supremacy in the region, yet envisioned a place for Native people in the landscape as Christian subjects. While colonial officials demonstrated their desire to convert Native people to an English way of life and draw them into their empire, it is important to remember that they also saw violence as a viable option to achieve their ends. As the Pequot war and many smaller conflicts prove, the colonies were not above the use of force when diplomacy and evangelism failed to obtain their political goals and fulfill their spiritual mandate to subdue the landscape and its people. In one way or another, this tension informed even the most peaceful interactions between Native and English people.

The above charters are infused with language describing the English colonial presence in southern New England and their rights to the soil as divinely ordained. As Amy Den Ouden argues, additional English writings reveal a widespread sense of godly intervention regarding colonial land claims at the expense of Native people:

“Since the English god had “reserved” North America for Englishmen, any inhabitants of that domain prior to English colonization would have no permanent claim to the land – no valid cultural grounding there.”<sup>25</sup>

Rhetoric framing English rights to Native land as providential is especially apparent in writings that describe the 1616 and 1633 epidemics. These cataclysms spared most English people while destroying countless Native lives in southern New England and beyond. For many English settlers and officials who witnessed the devastation these epidemics brought, they were anything but a secular, natural phenomenon. Permeating the English documentary record was the expressed belief that the epidemics of 1616 and 1633 were part of God’s plan to provide the English settlers of southern New England with ample land upon which to build their godly society; some even described epidemics as providential to conversion efforts. Such writings reveal a sense of spiritually ordained entitlement to Indigenous land, and a need to utilize their divine mandate to tame and cultivate the land as well as the Indigenous people who lived on it.

The 1620 Charter of New England expressed this sentiment in no uncertain terms. First, this charter asserted that the 1616 epidemic was God’s doing, and linked the resulting Native depopulation with a providential opening of land for English claimants:

Within these late Yeares there hath by God's Visitation reigned a wonderfull Plague... so that there is not left for many Leagues together in a Manner, any that doe claime or challenge any Kind of Interests therein.

Then, the charter specifically rationalized English rights to claim Indigenous land by

linking the same with their perception of God's will. According to the Charter of New England, much of the southern New England landscape had been "deserted as it were by their natural inhabitants" and opened for Puritan colonization as a result of the plague that God himself had caused:

We in our Judgment are persuaded and satisfied that the appointed Time is come in which Almighty God in his great Goodness and Bountie towards Us and our People, hath thought fitt and determined, that those large and goodly Territoryes, deserted as it were by their naturall Inhabitants, should be possessed and enjoyed by such of our Subjects and People as heertofore have and hereafter shall by his Mercie and Favour, and by his Powerfull Arme, be directed and conducted thither. In Contemplacion and serious Consideracion whereof, Wee have thought it fitt according to our Kingly Duty, soe much as in Us lyeth, to second and followe God's sacred Will.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, claiming and occupying Indigenous land for the glory of God was not only justified, but a sacred duty and obligation.

Also in 1620, after his voyage to the southern New England coast, John Smith wrote that "God had laid this Country open for us, and slaine the most part of the inhabitants by cruell warres, and a mortall disease; for where I had seene 100 or 200 people [in 1614], there is scarce ten to be found."<sup>27</sup> Smith had very little in common with the Puritan elites who sponsored the mission communities, yet he expressed a similar observation that God himself made southern New England land available for English settlers by actively removing Indigenous people.

In 1629, John Winthrop described this same 1616 epidemic that had taken thousands of Indigenous lives and destroyed innumerable communities as "miraculous." In answering the question "But what warrant have we to take that lande

which is and hathe been of longe tyme possessed by other sonnes of Adam?”

Winthrop reasoned:

That which is com[mon] to all is proper to none, these salvadge peoples ramble over muche lande without title or propertye: 2: there is more then enough for them and us; 3: God hathe consumed the natives with a miraculous plague, wherby a great parte of the Country is left voyde of Inh[abita]ntes. 4. We shall come in with good leave of the natives.<sup>28</sup>

Winthrop used God’s intervention alongside what he perceived to be logical and politically sound arguments entitling his people to Native land, and ended with the assumption that “the natives” would consent to English encroachment and land claims.

Winthrop expressed his providential view of Indigenous death even more directly in a 1633 letter to John Endicott refuting Roger Williams’ infamous criticism that English patents were illegitimate and New England land rightfully belonged to Indigenous people. First, Winthrop referenced political and legal justifications: “If our title be not good, neither by Patent, nor possession of these parts as vacuum Domicilium, nor by good liking of the natives, I mervayle by what title Mr. Williams himself holdes.” Yet, Winthrop dedicated far more space in his rebuttal to spiritual arguments:

If God were not pleased with our inheritinge these partes, why did he drive out the natives before us? & why dothe he still make roome for us, by diminishinge them as we increase? Why hathe he planted his Churches heere? Why dothe he declare his favourable presence amonge us, by makinge his Ordinances effectuall to the savinge of many soules?<sup>29</sup>

Here, Winthrop argued that God directly facilitated English settlement by removing the original inhabitants of southern New England. He interpreted this as a sign that



God was “pleased” with English ownership of Native land, and that it was God’s will for English people to multiply upon it.

Compared to those regarding the plague of 1616, recollections of the 1633 smallpox epidemic were perhaps even more explicit in their connections between God’s hand and English ownership of land at the expense of Indigenous people. In 1634, it was reported in the Charlestown Records that if God had not intervened on their behalf by sending a smallpox epidemic to kill Indigenous people, it would have been difficult or impossible for the waves of English settlers arriving in southern New England to find land to settle upon. After describing the high mortality rate and staggering depopulation the epidemic wreaked on the Native population, the records stated:

It pleased God to make room for his people of the English nation; who, after this, in the immediate years following, came from England by many hundreds every year to us, who, without this remarkable and terrible stroke of God upon the natives, would with much more difficulty found room, and at far greater charge have obtained and purchased land.

In the records, this action of God is described as “awful and admirable.”<sup>30</sup> Regarding the same 1633 epidemic, Captain Edward Johnson wrote that God had solved a dispute between English and Native land claimants by causing the smallpox epidemic: “The Indians, who had all this time held good correspondency with the English, began to quarrel with them about their bounds of Land, notwithstanding they purchased all they had of them, but the Lord put an end to the quarrell also, by smiting the Indians with a sore Disease, even the small Pox; of which great numbers of them died.” After graphically describing the gruesome violence smallpox visited

on a Native community and English efforts to aid and convert them before death, Johnson continued: “Thus did the Lord allay their quarrelsome spirits, and made room for the following part of his army. This yeare came over more supplies to forward the worke of Christ.”<sup>31</sup>

This entrenched worldview directly linked epidemic disease and the deaths of thousands of Native people with divine providence. The message promoted in town records, publications, letters, and government documents was clear. In wiping out so many Indigenous people, God had purposefully cleared the way for English ownership of Indigenous land, and shown his favor to colonial efforts. Some colonists even wrote about the providential plagues as connected to missionary work. For instance, immediately after describing the effects of the 1616 epidemic and God’s role in causing it to clear the way for English settlers, the Charter of New England revealed a sense of imperial and evangelistic optimism resulting from epidemic depopulation:

...as We trust to his Glory, Wee may with Boldness goe on to the settling of soe hopefull a Work, which tendeth to the reducing and Conversion of such Savages as remaine wandering in Desolacion and Distress, to Civil Societie and Christian Religion.<sup>32</sup>

This sentiment persisted for many years and through multiple epidemics. According to Thomas Mayhew Jr., his family’s mission on Martha’s Vineyard had been progressing slowly with modest gains up until the 1645 outbreak of an unknown pathogen devastated the island Wampanoags. He reported that “at last the Lord sent a universal sicknes” that seemed to largely spare the Wampanoags who gave their ear to missionary teachings.<sup>33</sup> Many years later, Thomas Mayhew Jr.’s grandson

Experience Mayhew reflected upon another devastating wave of disease that hit the islands in 1646, and clearly stated what Thomas Mayhew Jr. had implied with only slightly more subtlety:

Observing the Distinction which he [God] was then pleased to make betwixt those that favoured Religion, and such as did despise and reject it, they were many of them thereby put on a serious Consideration of the things which before they slighted; and some began earnestly to desire to have the Mysteries of Religion opened to them, and to hearken with great Attention to the Things that were by Mr. Mayhew and Hiacoomes Preached among them.<sup>34</sup>

Here, Experience Mayhew reported that the epidemic seemed to be less harmful among the Wampanoags who showed an interest in Christianity, and attributed substantial credit to the role of epidemic disease in facilitating conversion efforts in Martha's Vineyard.<sup>35</sup>

The way many colonial leaders interpreted God's will set the stage for both dispossession and evangelism: God intended his followers to possess southern New England and transform it from a "wild" landscape into a country of godly communities. Essential to this goal was the envelopment of Indigenous people into colonial society via their transformation into Christian subjects. If they would not enter the fold, there would eventually be no place for them in the colonial landscape.

Views of epidemic disease as providential to English land rights mesh with the oft-used *vacuum domicilium*. In southern New England, this legal concept was intertwined with spiritual beliefs, specifically, a particular interpretation of Genesis 1:28 and 9:1 and Psalm 115: 16.<sup>36</sup> This biblical interpretation, legally backed up by *vacuum domicilium*, granted its subscribers the sacred right to claim land that

was not being used or “improved,” on the condition that they themselves would use and improve it. Thus, the Indigenous crop fields, hunting parks and villages that had recently been depopulated by epidemics or temporarily deserted in the face of violence fit the definition of unused and unimproved according to colonial rationales. Even land that was being used to sustain Indigenous communities as hunting and gathering grounds but appeared “wild” to English eyes could be claimed according to this legal and spiritual framework. This bolstered English justifications that they were claiming empty, unimproved land, which was both legally and biblically permissible according to colonial English policies, spirituality, and ethics.<sup>37</sup>

Even as English colonists claimed wholesale ownership of all the land in New England by the blessings of their king and their god, they sought to legitimize their claims by obtaining the Indian right to land via grant or sale from Indigenous people. English writings on the Indian right were rife with contradiction. These contradictions betray a sense of unease about what kinds of inherent rights to the soil Native people truly possessed, and exactly what these rights meant for colonization of the region. Ultimately though, efforts to legitimize colonialism by obtaining Indian rights exemplify the paternalism many colonial leaders displayed towards Native people, and the entitlement they felt towards Native land.

For instance, the Massachusetts and New England charters specified that any of the rights to lands granted by the charters were only valid so long as they did not interfere with land “soe possessed or inhabited by such Christian Prince or State.” If it was discovered that another Christian ruler had a prior claim to the land, the one

granted in the charter would be “utterly void.”<sup>38</sup> These royal charters made no such provisions for the Indigenous people and polities who had lived on and managed New England’s landscape time out of mind.<sup>39</sup> Yet, in 1665 a royal commission under King Charles II chastised the General Court of Massachusetts Bay for violating Indigenous land rights, stating that the colony’s scriptural justifications for claiming Indian land were “against the honour of God, and the justice of the king” adding that “children of men comprehends Indians, as well as English; and no doubt the country is theirs till they give it or sell it, though it be not improved.”<sup>40</sup>

In another apparent contradiction, colonial officials frequently framed their purchase of Indigenous land as magnanimous – something that they were not legally required to do, but that they made the standard practice in their colonies for the welfare of all. Officials regularly asserted that Indigenous claims to any land that they had not improved (by English cultural standards) were “pretend,” but still urged the practice of obtaining consent and compensating those with an ancestral claim to the land. A letter of instruction from the New England Company for a Plantation in Massachusetts Bay to some of the earliest settlers in this colony concisely sums up these commonly practiced ethics, as well as the sense of entitlement English colonists displayed regarding Indigenous land:

First, the letter makes it very clear that the rights of Indigenous people to land within Massachusetts Bay’s chartered territory were not to be considered legitimate: “Wee advised you to make composition with such of the savages as did pretend any tittle or lay clayme to any of the land within the teretoryes graunted to us by his

majesty's charter, we pray you now be careful to discover & find out all such pretenders..." The council for the Company then goes on to advise colonists to negotiate with Indigenous claimants for their land rights in order to strengthen the legitimacy of colonial claims: "Make such reasonable composition with them as may free us and yourselves from any scruple of intrusion, and to this purpose, if it might be conveniently done, to compound & conclude with them all, or as many as you can at one time, not doubting but, by your discreet ordering of this business, the natives will be willing to treat & compound with you upon very easy conditions."<sup>41</sup> This sentiment and sense of entitlement was widely echoed and practiced.<sup>42</sup> After buying the patent for Martha's Vineyard, Thomas Mayhew Sr. "endeavoured to obtain the Indian right" from the sachems there, but the idea that he would vacate his proprietary colony if the sachems refused to give or sell their rights was certainly not considered.<sup>43</sup> It was also not uncommon for settlers to obtain the "Indian right" retroactively, compensating someone who they perceived as the Indigenous landowner decades after the English had already established a town on his or her land.<sup>44</sup>

Beyond the rhetoric of benevolence and fairness, there were pragmatic advantages to obtaining the Indian right to land colonists already claimed by virtue of spiritual conviction and political power. Transatlantic and local political factors made this desirable. On the world stage and to authorities in England, such rhetoric and practice certainly enhanced their image as benevolent colonizers, and helped legitimize their presence in the "new world." Locally, the tense balancing act of

obtaining Native land through political pressure backed by military might, and some form of consensual exchange and monetary satisfaction often made sound diplomatic sense from an English perspective.

Largely due to the devastation caused by epidemics, English polities steadily grew in relative power, population, and influence from the early to mid-seventeenth century in southern New England. However, their hold on the region was threatened from multiple sides, and they were far from hegemonic in the Northeast overall. Especially earlier in the settlement process, buying land from sachems or others rather than demanding it outright was politically wise for colonists who wished to avoid violent conflict with local Native groups. By the sixteen-fifties when the first praying towns were officially established, English colonies claimed jurisdiction over much of southern New England. While their relative local political power had grown tremendously at this point, the practice of compensating Native people for the land colonists settled on was still a logical peace keeping strategy. Southern New England existed in a context of transatlantic imperial struggle and powerful land-based Indigenous groups such as the Narragansett and Haudenosaunee confederations. In the midst of their goals to possess the landscape, English colonists had pragmatic reasons to try to cultivate good relationships with nearby Indigenous groups and win them to their side of any potential conflicts as allies or subjects.<sup>45</sup>

Enmeshed within this political strategy is another key motivation that is usually overlooked: some colonial leaders saw a connection between what they

perceived to be respect of Indigenous land rights, and the success of the evangelist mission mandated in their charters. They hoped this paternalistic “respect” would win Christian converts and English subjects among the Native people of southern New England. Essentially, missionizing ambitions informed colonists’ approaches to negotiating for Indigenous land.

The language of the first letter of instruction to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1629 is revealing of this government’s early viewpoints on Indigenous people and their land. In it, fair land dealings (according to English perceptions) function as part of a broader directive to win converts by way of exemplifying godly behavior and harmonious community:

Above all, wee pray you bee carefull that there bee none in our precincts pmitted to doe any injurie, (in the least kinde) to the heathen people; and if any offend in that way, lett them receive due correction...If any of the salvages ptend right of inheritance to all or any part of the lands granted *graunted* in our pattent, wee pray you endeavor to purchase their tytle, that wee may avoid the least scruple of intrusion.<sup>46</sup>

As an isolated passage, the above text could be interpreted many ways. It would be reasonable to deduce that the paramount instruction for colonists to not offend Indigenous people in any way, and to be sure to compensate them for land rights, was simply a smart diplomatic move by a fledgling colony aiming to avoid conflict with a potentially threatening Native population. However, placed in historical context and in conversation with contemporary documents, there appears to be a strong religious and missionizing layer to this passage.

In the same letter, colonists were ordered to settle disputes amongst themselves peacefully, “...soe as our government and privileges bee not brought in



contempt, wishing rather that there might be such an union as might drawe the heathen by our good example to the embracing of Christ and his gosple, then that offence should be given to the heathen, and a scandall to our religion, through our disagreement amongst ourselves.”<sup>47</sup> These instructions, in conversation with the charters of Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut, indicate that the diplomatic moves ordered herein were at least partially motivated by missionizing desires. In these charters, colonists were admonished to “be so religiously, peaceably and civilly governed, as their good Life and orderly Conversation may win and invite the Natives of the Country to the Knowledge and Obedience of the only true GOD” which was “the only and principal End of this Plantation.”<sup>48</sup> These early directives, echoed in other colonial records, state that colonists were to win Indigenous converts by virtue of their own good example and civil behavior towards each other and their Native neighbors. Such a strategy was incompatible with blatant land theft, among other offenses.<sup>49</sup>

In this context, orders to respect Indigenous “pretended” title enough to buy it and not demand it mesh with missionizing philosophy. Certainly, missionary efforts were not the only reason for these instructions, but there is compelling evidence that they played a key role. To be clear, the fact that these instructions existed does not mean that they were universally followed, as multitudinous accounts of bad behavior by settlers on an individual and government level attest. I cite them here because they are revealing of the views and desires at government level that shaped the policies that made Indigenous land reclamation via mission communities possible.

The perceived connection between diplomatic land dealings and ambitions to convert Indigenous people to English culture and Christian religion became increasingly explicit as the seventeenth century progressed. In 1664, Ferdinando Gorges (Lord Proprietor of the Province of Maine) wrote of holistic English policy towards Indigenous land as part of instructions to his deputies, commissioned to manage his affairs in southern and northern New England:

You are desired to make Inhibition & Defence to all Persons who intend to become Tenants for any of the lands of the said province, that before they have made such contracts with you they do forbear to make purchase of the pretended Title of any of the Sagamores or Indians, which is derogatory to the Grant to me made by his said late majesty but after contract made with you then if they be willing it is very acceptable to me that they give somewhat to the adjacent Sagamore or native for their consent so as it be no Considerable sum because although this be not the Practice of other nations yet the English by so doing & other their good deportment have gained much upon the affection of the natives, some of them induced not only to Imitate us in Civility but also to embrace the Christian Religion.

This 1664 admonishment from the aristocrat Gorges reveals broader official English attitudes toward Indigenous land and conversion. Gorges repeated the common sentiment that Indigenous land rights were “pretended,” but directed colonists in his jurisdiction to compensate Native owners anyway. Most importantly, at the end of this document, Gorges boasted that in contrast to other colonial powers, English policies of acknowledging Indigenous land rights had done much to further the civilizing mission of the British empire and win Indigenous Christian converts.<sup>50</sup> By 1664, missionary projects were well underway across southern New England, where Gorges’ view that Indigenous people had nothing more than pretended rights to most of their

ancestral land was commonplace. Yet, Gorges' observation that English colonial leaders saw a connection between respecting Indigenous land claims and winning "civilized" subjects and Christian converts was also true.<sup>51</sup>

The above instructions by Gorges, the letter of instruction to Massachusetts Bay, the charters, and many other writings by English officials display a clear sense of entitlement to Indigenous land, and it is not the purpose of this chapter to argue that English elites practiced equitable or truly respectful land policy with Indigenous people. Weighing English treatment of Indigenous people and land by any fair standard has shown the opposite. Rather, the salient point is that many English officials and missionaries conceptualized themselves as fair and benevolent colonizers, whose policies of "respect" for Indigenous land rights could win them converts and subjects. It was this same imperialistic and paternalistic sentiment, expressed in policy across southern New England, that thousands of Indigenous people would strategically use in tandem with the mission communities to gain legal title to their own lands, and protection over their rights as landholders.

In light of these perceived connections between evangelistic success and colonial "respect" of Native land, the idea that land grants would actively be used by colonists as conversion incentives does not seem so far-fetched. Missionaries and governments alike worked together on this missionizing strategy. Daniel Gookin's *Historical Collections*, written both from his own experience and correspondence

with other colonists, provides a telling look at one colonial government's perspective, as he explained the reasons the Massachusetts Bay government saw fit to grant land to Indigenous people for mission communities. First, Gookin specified that land was given to "praying Indians" in particular, and that there were plans to grant more land for praying towns:

The general court of Massachusetts hath bounded, stated and settled, several townships and plantations of lands unto these praying Indians...Some of these villages are of a larger; others, of lesser dimensions, according to their numbers; and as there may be occasion, the general court will grant more villages to the Indians.

Immediately following, Gookin explained the praying town land grants as part of a paternalistic strategy to ensure future harmony between English and Native subjects, reinforce English title to the lands they claimed, and facilitate social and spiritual conversions among Native communities:

The reasons inducing to this are: First, to prevent differences and contention among the English and Indians in future times about the propriety of land. Secondly, to secure unto them and their posterity places of habitation; this being a provision in all those grants, that they shall not fell or alienate any part of those lands unto any Englishman, without the general court's consent: for the Indians being poor, as well as improvident, are very prone to sell their land to the English, and thereby leave themselves destitute. A third reason is, that they may cohabit together, without which neither religion or civility can well prosper.

This passage mendaciously shifts the responsibility of dispossession from colonial settlers and governments onto Indigenous people. According to Gookin, Indigenous people could not be trusted to manage their affairs wisely regarding land sales. By placing land into Native ownership, but under the oversight of the colonial government, Gookin reasoned that Native people would be protected

from their own poor judgment. In this writing, Indigenous people were blamed for their own landlessness, and invited to protect their land by accepting the authority of colonial courts and the designation of their parcels as praying towns. In these towns, they were meant to make progress in “civility” and religion. Without cohabitation in such places, Gookin reasoned, “neither religion or civility can well prosper.”

Finally, Gookin summarized the political reasons that he and his fellow colonists were entitled to Native land, followed by the political reasons praying town land needed to be transferred back to Indigenous people through the colonial legal system. First, he rationalized English land theft while simultaneously acknowledging ancestral Indigenous land rights, pointing out that they were in possession of the land at the time of early English immigration: “If any should object, that it is not necessary, that the English should grant them land, forasmuch as it was all their native country and propriety, before the English came into America; the answer is ready.” He then gave that answer, reasoning that:

First, that the English claim right to their land, by patent from our king. Secondly, yet the English had the grant of most of the land within this jurisdiction, either by purchase or donation from the Indian sachems and sagamores, which were actually in possession, when the English came first over. Therefore the propriety is in the English; and it is necessary for the Indians, as the case stands, for their present and future security and tranquillity, to receive the lands by grant from the English, who are a growing and potent people, comparatively to the Indians.<sup>52</sup>

In this rationale, Gookin described the double-edged justifications of royal charter and land sales by Indigenous individuals that the Massachusetts Bay colonial government used to establish ownership over much of southern New England.

Gookin also made clear his knowledge that the English were in a position of power over many of the Indigenous people whose land they claimed. Yet, he reported that this power was not being utilized by the Massachusetts Bay government to strip all Indigenous people of their land.

Instead, the praying town system was established to grant some of their land back to them under the English legal system with the goal that these towns would function as centers of conversion to Christianity and English lifeways. Offering land grants through the colonial court system also allowed colonies like Massachusetts Bay an opportunity to cement their political power in the region. At least in English eyes, Indigenous communities and individuals who accepted land grants from a colonial government acknowledged colonial power over that land, and submitted to the English systems by which it was managed.

Gookin's account exemplifies the ironic views that the Massachusetts Bay government held about Indigenous land rights as well as the potential for Indigenous people to gain legal title to land under the same colonial systems that threatened their rights to the soil. As Gookin observed, the official position within the colonial government did not indicate intentions to completely dispossess or eliminate Indigenous people from the colony. Rather, the goals stated in the Massachusetts Bay and New England charters, and echoed in subsequent colonial policy, were concerned with drawing Indigenous people into the British Empire as Christian subjects. Legal and personal accounts from colonial officials and missionaries in Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Connecticut, and Martha's Vineyard strongly indicate that they viewed

land grants to Indigenous people in mission communities as facilitating these social and spiritual conversions.

In the Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, and Connecticut missions, writings and actions of missionaries and colonial officials reflect their desires to win Christian converts and English subjects among the southern New England Indigenous population. Also clear in this historical moment is a pervasive belief that official land grants to Indigenous people in the form of praying towns were a powerful means of incentivizing and encouraging their "civilizing mission." Missionaries interfaced with the public and governments in New England and across the Atlantic, promoting mission communities as effective conversion tools. This was often framed as a goal to enable converts and potential converts to securely live together on their own land bases. According to the writings of several evangelists (explored in detail below) this was a critical step because it sequestered Native people from the corrupting influence of English and Indigenous sinners in a space that was suited to the sedentary English-style subsistence and settlement patterns they were expected to adopt in order to become "civilized."

For instance, in a 1648 missionary tract published to garner support for the missions, Thomas Shepard blamed Satan's hand for preventing the establishment of praying towns in the past, because grants of land to settle these mission communities were so clearly key to spiritual and social conversion. He asked readers to consider: "what more hopefull way of doing them good than by cohabitation in such Townes, near unto good examples... what greater meanes at least to civilize them?"<sup>53</sup> In

Shepard's view, if conversion was to be successful, Indigenous people had to live in cohesive Christian communities, consistently exposed to "good examples" (English missionaries and Native Christians) who would instruct them in "the things of God." Similarly, James Fitch, who preached to a Mohegan congregation in Connecticut, gave them some of his land so they could start their own mission community like the one Shepard described. He also enlarged their land base by obtaining an English town grant on their behalf. Fitch said he did this for the "settlement and encouragement" of this nascent Christian group.<sup>54</sup>

John Eliot of Massachusetts Bay shared these sentiments. As part of a joint petition for support from London created between himself, Edward Winslow, and Thomas Mayhew Jr., Eliot wrote to the English parliament and council of state in 1648 that land for potential converts to live together and learn to adopt English lifeways was essential to the success of the mission:

A place must be found... some what remote from the English, where they must have the word constantly taught, and government constantly exercised, meanes of good subsistence provided, encouragements for the industrious, meanes of instructing them in Letters, Trades, and Labours, as building, fishing, Flax and Hemp dressing, planting Orchards, &c. Such a project in a fit place, would draw many that are well minded together.<sup>55</sup>

According to Eliot, the material needs of "praying Indians" had to be met if conversion was to take place. A stable land base that could support a substantial population was foundational to this vision.

Shortly after this letter was written, Eliot was instrumental in assisting several Indigenous communities in the legal aspects of obtaining thousands of acres of land



to start their own praying towns. As part of this effort, he solicited public funding and support, and petitioned government officials. He continually framed his advocacy and requests for land grants in spiritual terms, asserting that these grants should be made for the “encouragement” of potential and existing converts. In one petition to obtain land for the people of Natick, Eliot asked the General Court to negotiate with existing English towns and ask that they “yield up much to the Lords use.” He ended his petition by “beging the good blessing of heaven on all your holy counsels & labours.” The colony of Massachusetts Bay granted six thousand acres to the Indigenous people of Natick that same year.<sup>56</sup>

Over a decade later, a land dispute arose between the mission community of Natick the neighboring town, Dedham; Eliot forcefully defended the Indigenous community’s right to the land. He presented this argument based on multiple legal grounds, but chief to his case was the threat that if the court ruled against Natick, it would seriously undermine the missionary project and lose potential and existing converts.<sup>57</sup> After a long legal battle, Natick won the dispute. Dedham was instructed “for Christs Sake Loveingly to Grant unto the Indians the Lands now possessed by them & in question.” But, as a condition of this legal victory, it was required “that the Indians do acknowledge what is now granted unto them... to bee from the Love & Christian condesendy of the English of Dedham & not from the right of Any Indian Title outbidding theirs.”<sup>58</sup> In this case, Massachusetts Bay prioritized conversion efforts by favoring the claims of Indigenous people in a praying town at the expense of English claimants.<sup>59</sup> At the same time, they reinforced their power over

Natick's Indigenous population by compelling them to acknowledge the authority the colonial government had to dispose of that land as they wished.<sup>60</sup>

Imperial desires born out in advocacy and policy influenced not only legal decisions on a town scale, but also land policy on a larger scale. In 1652, the General Court of Massachusetts Bay issued an order laying out the conditions under which Indigenous people could be legally granted land in the colony.<sup>61</sup> Perhaps no other document so explicitly illustrates the desires of colonial officials to assert their power and control over Indigenous people by Christianizing and civilizing them, and their willingness to use legal land grants as leverage to achieve those goals. The unique characteristics of praying towns opened an expedient avenue for Indigenous people to take advantage of the conditions laid out in this court order. As it stipulated, Indigenous people could be granted legal title to land in Massachusetts Bay if they met any of the following four criteria:

First, if they owned land prior to English settlement and had not sold it, they could gain legal title to that land:

It is therefore ordred & enacted by this Court & the authority thereof, that what landes any of the Indians, within this jurisdiction, have by possession... they have just right thereunto.

For many Indigenous people, this was difficult or impossible to prove in a colonial court. Legal title held by individuals was an English concept not in existence prior to English invasion. Furthermore, vast swaths of land had already been claimed by English settlers by the time this court order was declared in 1652, and the English technically asserted ownership of all land anyway by virtue of their royal charter. This

does not mean that ancestral rights to land were never proven and recognized. They sometimes were, and sachems in particular were regularly recognized as having “possession” of land before English settlers attempted to obtain the “Indian right” from them. However, this first requirement was one that most Indigenous people would find impossible to fulfill.

Second, they could claim title to land by “improvement” and “by subdueing of the same” according to the same biblical mandate English colonists used in tandem with *vacuum domicilium* to justify taking Indigenous land for themselves. The kind of land use that colonial authorities considered “improvement” for legal purposes was generally restricted to active crop fields and occupied villages. For Native populations who had previously rotated their farming and living areas, and who had just experienced massive depopulation that left many of their existing fields with no one to tend them, “improvement” was difficult to demonstrate to the satisfaction of colonial authorities.

Additionally, intensive cultivation of land and animal husbandry was needed to sustain a family or community on a non-rotational land base. Traditional semi-mobile farming as well as hunting and gathering became increasingly difficult as more and more land was claimed and bounded by English settlers. Mission communities received assistance from the missions during the often-necessary transition to English style subsistence. This took the form of metal tools and other technologies that made farming more efficient, as well as livestock and instruction in intensive farming methods and animal husbandry.<sup>62</sup> This was, of course, incredibly

disruptive to Native lifeways and was part and parcel of English strategies for the erasure of Indigenous culture. However, strictly for the purposes of gaining land title recognized by the Massachusetts General Court, and subsistence on a restricted land base, access to these kinds of resources via missionary outreach was an undeniable advantage.

A third condition explicitly offered land as an enticement to promote Christianity:

For the further encouragement of the hopeful worke amongst them for civillizinge & helping them forward to Christianitie, if any of the Indians shall be brought to civillitie, & shall come amongst the English, to inhabite in any of their plantations, and shall there live civilly and orderly, that such Indians shall have allotment amongst the English, according to the custome of the English in the like case.

If individual Native people living amongst the English could adequately prove their “civility” and convince authorities and English neighbors that they were indeed civilized and deserving of their own property, they could be granted land among the English.

Besides the prospect of leaving one’s own community, it was difficult to win a land grant this way due to English colonial social structures and stigmas. While there were certainly pockets of amicability and trust, English distrust and hostility toward Native people generally increased after 1652. It is difficult to imagine that a typical English settlement would have included many settlers who welcomed Native neighbors, especially those who would own land at the expense of an English person. Proving “civility in this context would have been highly challenging in the face of

probable hostility, and because a Native person living in a close-knit Puritan community would have been subjected to intense scrutiny and supervision.<sup>63</sup>

The fourth condition also offered land in exchange for the social conversion that the court termed “civility.” While conversion to Christianity was not required to own land in a praying town, the General Court did stipulate that Native people had to demonstrate progress towards adopting English lifeways if they were to own land “as the English have.” The hope among missionaries and colonial officials was that these social and material conversions would facilitate spiritual ones. It was this last condition that turned out to be most crucial for land reclamation via praying towns:

It is ordered, that if uppon good experience, there shalbe a competent number of the Indians brought on to civilitie, so as to be capable of a townshipp, uppon their request unto the General Court they shall have graunt of landes undisposed of for a plantation, as the English have.<sup>64</sup>

Through the direct application of this fourth condition, fourteen praying towns were established in Massachusetts Bay Colony. “Competent numbers” of Native people formed groups and petitioned for towns of their own on the basis of their progress in the “civility” that was inexorably connected to religion.

To my knowledge, there is no court document in southern New England outside of Massachusetts Bay that lays out the conditions for land grants to Native people in such detail, or so bluntly incentivizes social and spiritual conversion with offers of land title. However, there are scattered but undeniable indications that missionizing desire found its way into legal conditions for Native land ownership in other colonies. Most explicitly, in Martha’s Vineyard’s Manitouwatootan in the sachemship of Taakemmy and in Moheek, the Mohegan mission community of

Connecticut, Indigenous land ownership was conditioned upon the continued practice of Christianity.

In the document securing the Manitouwatootan land grant, land ownership clearly functioned as a conversion incentive. Keteanummin (the sachem who held ancestral rights to the sachemship of Taakemmy) and Thomas Mayhew Sr. agreed that the one mile square of land that made up Manitouwatootan was to “remain forever in the possession of the praying men,” along with a promise to extend the town’s land base when twenty more families moved there. However, this grant came with unique strings attached. Most strikingly, the agreement stipulated that “if all doth forsake the worship of god they shall loose their predecessor’s lands” and “if the inhabitants turn from God his ways other praying indians of Taakemmy shall have their land.” If there were no Christian Wampanoags left in the sachemship of Taakemmy, the land was to go to “other praying men of this Island.”<sup>65</sup>

Among extant documentation, Manitouwatootan is a nearly unique case of Indigenous land ownership in a praying town being conditional upon the community’s continual worship of the Christian god. According to this document, ownership of land in Manitouwatootan could be legally revoked if Christianity was abandoned. Only one other mission community, Moheek, appears to have had a similar condition. The missionary James Fitch referenced this legal arrangement in a letter to Daniel Gookin: “for the settlement and encouragement of these Indians, I have given them of mine own lands, and some that I have procured of our town, above three hundred acres of good improvable lands, and made it sure to them and

theirs, so long as they go on in the ways of God.”<sup>66</sup>

In seventeenth-century southern New England, praying town land grants functioned as explicit leverage for promoting Christianity and “civility.” One could argue that English evangelists could have encouraged Indigenous people to “cohabit together” for the purposes of conversion in other ways, and that land ownership was not necessary to the civilizing mission. Yet, English officials and missionaries thought otherwise, and this opened limited but critically important opportunities for Indigenous people to seize legal title to their own land under the English system. For understanding the role colonial evangelism played in Indigenous land reclamation, the sincere internal reasons missionaries and colonial officials did what they did to facilitate Indigenous land ownership in praying towns are far less salient than the results. Indigenous communities creatively capitalized on the desires of colonial leaders to draw them into the British Empire as Christian subjects. Powerful evangelists viewed Indigenous people as potential converts, and this sometimes put them in a uniquely powerful position to protect their land using the same institutions that threatened it. As praying towns began and grew, Indigenous people not only made lives for themselves there and ensured the survival of their communities, but literally built these places, and profoundly shaped their physical, cultural, and spiritual contours.

## Chapter 3

### Indigenous People Shaping the Geographic Contours of the Mission Communities

English missionaries and colonial officials demonstrated their desire to settle Indigenous people in mission communities and their willingness to wield their legal power over land as part of a bid for potential social and spiritual converts.

Meanwhile, Native people worked through colonial institutions and exploited colonial desires to secure particular acreages that were important to them, alongside fighting for title to land in general. Through these targeted actions, they not only laid claim to specific tracts and shaped the political geography of southern New England – they also influenced the policies of English missions and the legal decisions of colonial courts.

Even among works that focus on mission communities, discussion of the actual land selection process and geographic creation of the mission communities is rare, and brief where it does exist. As is common in mission community scholarship, the majority of existing work engages with the establishment of Natick, and the broader Eliot mission to a lesser degree. In the scholarship that does include some analysis of land selection, interpretations of its significance vary widely. In *Swindler Sachem*, Jenny Pulsipher frames the “location dispute” that arose as part of Natick’s founding as a source for later discord among Native people within the town, and between them and local English settlers. In Jean O’Brien’s narrative re-creation of Natick’s site selection and bounding, Native people are seen in positions of power,



pulling the strings behind Eliot's controversial legal actions that helped them secure title to their town. Drew Lopenzina and Elise Brenner interpret the geographic structure and site selection process of the Eliot mission towns (including Natick) as oppressive, and involuntary on the part of Native people. Cogley paints those same towns and processes as indicative of accommodation by the mission project in Massachusetts Bay.<sup>1</sup>

Analysis and even description of land selection outside of the Eliot mission is even scarcer, and interpretations of its significance vary where they do exist. Jack Campisi's *The Mashpee Indians* does not include analysis of Mashpee's site selection, but focuses on Mashpee's geographic isolation as critical to its long-term success. Frances Hutchens argues that Mashpee's location was an intentional evangelist strategy orchestrated by the missionary Richard Bourne. In contrast to his bleak view of the mission project in Massachusetts Bay, Francis Jennings asserts that "on the Vineyard, Indian rights in property were fully respected" when he describes the founding of Manitouwatootan. Silverman, on the other hand, frames the establishment of this town and (to some extent) its site selection as part of an internal sachemship dispute brought on by English encroachment.<sup>2</sup> All of these scholarly perspectives capture parts of this complex and geographically sweeping story.

Documentation of the land selection process across southern New England mission communities is scattered, and definitive conclusions cannot be drawn for every settlement among the many that existed in the mid and late seventeenth century. It is not my intention in this chapter to be reductive or make assumptions regarding

the land selection processes of mission communities that remain out of our reach due to scarcity of physical and oral records. Yet, putting surviving sources in conversation provides a window into Native people shaping their own destinies and fighting for the persistence of their communities by shaping the geographic contours of mission communities across southern New England; that deserves further attention.

This chapter is dedicated to revisiting the geographic structuring of the Eliot mission and the establishment of Mashpee, Aquinnah, Manituwattoot, Natick, Ponkapoag, Hassanamesit, and Nashobah through close examination of surviving written records along with knowledge and perspectives from descendant communities. Far from being the passive recipients of change brought from without, Native people were key players in shaping the ways mission communities were built – physically, culturally, and organizationally. Indigenous people determined the geographic character of these mission communities, and in some cases reclaimed land they had lost to English invasion. Ultimately, Indigenous founders of the mission communities leveraged their knowledge of English desire and legal systems not only to acquire or preserve title to land in general, but to establish towns on land of their own choosing.

Faith and pragmatism need not be mutually exclusive. It is not the aim of this chapter to speculate about the spiritual sincerity of the mission communities' Native founders or the role Christianity played in their internal lives. The legal records and missionary accounts this chapter is largely based on cannot reveal the deeply personal and complex spirituality of the people whose stories we aim to understand. What

these records can reveal with more accuracy are the actions of those people – actions they took to secure the future of their communities on land they wanted.

As the seventeenth century progressed, many Indigenous people in southern New England increased their involvement with colonial court, church and political systems and got to know English officials quite well. Diplomacy and political entanglement as well as legal disputes brought them into close proximity from the start of English settlement. Beginning in the mid-seventeenth century, conversion efforts expanded in earnest and Native communities across southern New England encountered English missionaries. Some communities rejected this evangelist outreach, but others became intimately familiar with Congregationalist values and culture through their interactions with missionaries. Through these experiences a rising number of Native people familiarized themselves not just with English religion, but with the policies and mechanisms of their courts, and the desires of government and church officials.<sup>3</sup>

Even before such a strategy was legally codified in the 1652 Massachusetts Bay court order, several Indigenous communities began the process of securing “landes undisposed of for a plantation, as the English have” by presenting themselves as a “competent number of the Indians brought on to civilitie, so as to be capable of a township.”<sup>4</sup> Strikingly, some of the land granted to Native people for praying towns was not “undisposed of” and free of English interest. On the contrary, some mission communities were built on land that had already been granted to English towns. After

learning how many colonial authorities thought and what they wanted, Indigenous people were well equipped to visibly perform the progress towards Christianity and “civility” that English powers clearly desired in order to gain or preserve a land base, even when that meant usurping the claim of an English town. Across southern New England, relationships between Native founders and English missionaries turned out to be crucial to the success of this strategy.

Living in and supporting mission communities facilitated strategic alliances with English missionaries who testified to colonial courts that Indigenous people who followed English rules and mores were making progress in “civility,” and were therefore deserving of land grants. Invested in the goal of “helping them forward to Christianity,” missionaries like Eliot, Bourne, the Mayhews, Fitch, and Cotton Jr., as well as some officials like Daniel Gookin and Thomas Mayhew Sr. were eager to vouch for Indigenous progress toward English notions of civilization and Christianity, and even more eager to help facilitate the creation of Indigenous-owned towns dedicated to furthering English culture and religion.

The full weight of these relationships becomes apparent with an understanding of just how intertwined civil and church leadership could be. In seventeenth-century New England, prominent church leaders had considerable social standing and sway in civil affairs, including legal decisions and policy regarding Indigenous land ownership. In Massachusetts Bay, John Eliot worked closely with the courts and colonial government on many matters; his testimony, counsel, and requests permeate Massachusetts’ court and town records. Richard Bourne and James Fitch played

similar roles in Plymouth and Connecticut, respectively. Even more striking, the Mayhew family was at the head of both the mission and government on Martha's Vineyard. When Indigenous individuals and communities lived in and supported mission communities, they cultivated alliances with English missionaries who could and did influence legal matters in favor of land ownership for Indigenous people who showed an interest in Christianity.

Indigenous people not only worked with missionaries to gain legal ownership of land, they worked with them to select specific sites and shape mission communities within the contours of land that they sought title to. Sometimes this took the form of teamwork, cooperation, and fairly straightforward advocacy in the courts. In other cases, Indigenous people engaged in tense negotiation to pressure missionaries to advocate for their desires, using their withdraw-able support for the mission and positions as potential converts as leverage.

The people who made their homes in the mission communities were not passive recipients of whatever land missionaries and colonial courts saw fit to place them on. Indigenous people in mission communities across southern New England actively navigated colonial institutions to claim specific sites, and fought for legal ownership of their own ground through the missions and colonial courts. Eliot hinted at this broad non-complacency when he wrote of “converted Indians” attitudes towards the English in 1673. As he perceived it: “They have a great reverence and esteem of them... but the business about land giveth them no small matter of stumbling.”<sup>5</sup> This general tension that Eliot observed resulted in Native people taking

calculated action to control their land by establishing mission communities.

In southern New England, the most well-documented mission community land selection process involves the earliest towns of the Eliot mission in Massachusetts Bay. Even in these cases, references are scattered, and it is necessary to examine a wide range of missionary accounts, legal records, and the knowledge of present-day Indigenous communities to even approach the full picture. Piecing it all together leaves us with a troubling, multifaceted story of community survival amid colonial constraints. Close and connective reading of these sources illuminates the usefulness of mission communities as a land preservation strategy, as well as their limitations within an ultimately exploitative colonial regime.

The way the entire Eliot mission was geographically structured and built indicates powerful and extensive Indigenous influence beginning early in the mission's growth. Tracing the geographic and structural development of this mission from Eliot's early stated goals, all the way through how things actually played out shows that the Massachusett, Pawtucket, and Nipmuc groups of these praying towns had considerable say in how and where they were built.<sup>6</sup>

The first indication of Native influence in this process is a dramatic discrepancy between Eliot's original structural plans for his mission, and what actually happened. In the years leading up to the establishment of the praying towns, Eliot promoted the establishment of a single town in which Native people from all over southern New England would cluster together for their sequestered education in

Christianity and English lifeways. In these writings, Eliot referred to his planned praying town in the singular, and described his vision for a centralized mission where he would personally live and teach potential converts.<sup>7</sup> This is not how the praying towns were structured when they became a reality. Eliot's ambitions for a single large mission community under his personal oversight were never realized. Instead, over the next four decades, Eliot worked with Native communities to establish fourteen towns of varied size across Pawtucket, Massachusetts, and Nipmuc homelands. Some had neighboring praying towns within a day's journey; others were quite remote from any mission community settlement and far removed from the supervision of colonial authorities and missionaries.<sup>8</sup> Throughout this process, Indigenous communities advocated for their own interests in terms of praying town location and were involved in shaping this mission from the earliest stages of its development. Geographically, Eliot's mission was structured not according to his vision, but to the visions of many Native people whose land the praying towns were built on.

It is reasonable to question whether the Eliot mission's decentralization was due to simple numbers rather than Indigenous action. After all, the mission communities sponsored by Eliot eventually became home to approximately one thousand Indigenous people by 1674. Considering the resources and space needed to sustain such a population, splitting a growing mission into multiple towns could be seen as a pragmatic move independent of Native influence. However, two main things indicate that Indigenous action, not a simple numbers game under colonial control, was the deciding factor.

First, the establishment pattern of the mission communities is not what one would expect if towns were added simply to keep up with population growth. Many towns were built in quick succession and even concurrently, long before the first towns had any kind of chance to reach capacity and overflow. Ultimately, the towns could have supported larger populations than they did. Even by 1674, Gookin observed that the mission communities in Massachusetts Bay “generally” were “capable to receive some hundreds.” According to Gookin’s calculation, none of these mission communities were home to more than one hundred and fifty people by 1674.<sup>9</sup>

Second, Massachusetts, Pawtucket and Nipmuc people repeatedly resisted Eliot’s efforts to relocate them to a central town. Perhaps to save face, Eliot acknowledged after he had acceded to Indigenous demands that their insistence on decentralization turned out to be “by the guidance of God” and beneficial to the mission in terms of available resources.<sup>10</sup> Whether by the guidance of God or not, Native founders taking charge of the mission’s geographic structure was certainly not by the guidance of or fully under the control of any missionaries or colonial officials. Their rebellion was interpreted as God’s will only after Eliot failed to quell it. Eliot boasted that the Native people he preached to were “willing to follow my advice in any reasonable thing” and that “they will go with me any whether.”<sup>11</sup> While Native people advocated for land to build praying towns in general, records of their actions show that they were not willing to leave their land and follow Eliot “any whether” to a foreign land base – not without a fight.<sup>12</sup>



Eliot's attempts to establish a single centralized praying town failed repeatedly due to various Native groups resisting relocation. In 1648, Eliot lamented a "great impediment" to his conversion efforts: "Sundry in the Country in divers places would gladly be taught the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, and would pray unto God, if I could goe unto them, and teach them where they dwell: but to come to live here among or neer to the English, they are not willing."<sup>13</sup> In this case, Eliot blamed the incompatibility of English and Indigenous land use customs, namely that free roaming English cattle wreaked havoc on unfenced Native cornfields. While compelling, this was certainly not the only reason that Native people resisted being uprooted. As we will see, Indigenous groups were not necessarily opposed to living "among or neer to the English" when doing so meant remaining on or returning to their homelands.

Approximately a year later, Eliot wrote to the president of the Corporation for the Propagation of the Gospel (Lord William Steele) and expressed "a great desire" to build a single mission community in northern Massachusetts Bay, near or in Passaconaway's sachemship in Pawtucket homelands. However, this desire was never manifested, largely, Eliot said, because Native groups he courted in the south were "loth to go Northward." Eliot followed by essentially saying that while he was confident his Native congregation would follow him anywhere, he did not want to test that loyalty and spiritual resolve by asking them to move northward "into temptation of scarcity, cold and want, which may damp the progresse of the Gospel."<sup>14</sup> The tone of this letter betrays a sense of anxiety; what Eliot may not have dared commit to

paper explicitly were fears that the people he hoped to convert would withdraw their support and abandon the mission altogether if the praying towns were not located on land they approved of.

While we cannot know precisely what Native people told Eliot in the nascent days of his mission, the actions they took (and refused to take) made their message to Eliot quite clear: if he wanted to start a mission community, he could come to them and live on their land, not the other way around. Eliot was invited to live and preach in existing Indigenous villages, but potential converts repeatedly refused to move for the sake of Christianity, much less gather in a central town.<sup>15</sup> Eliot eventually relented and admitted that “where ever I begin the first Towne, (if I live) I must begin more townes then one.”<sup>16</sup> When he petitioned the Massachusetts Bay General Court for praying town land grants in 1654, Eliot justified his request for multiple land bases (as opposed to the single one he originally promoted) by explaining that gathering Native people into a central town was not possible: “The Praying Indians have their dwellings in sundry places, and in many respects cannot be all brought to any one place, and, in particular, not to that of Natick; it seemeth therefore very necessary to further their civile cohabitation, in sundry fitting places.”<sup>17</sup>

In the establishment of Natick and Ponkapoag (the first two towns in the Eliot mission), the tension between colonial and Indigenous desires regarding praying town land, and their respective ability to control it, are on full display. Eliot described the site selection and bounding of Natick and Ponkapoag as under the control of himself

and God. Though Eliot downplayed the importance of Native founders in shaping the geographic contours of these early towns, the Indigenous people who built them had much more influence and power than Eliot cared to acknowledge. Indeed, the Native founders of Natick and Ponkapoag molded the geographic contours of these spaces. They were determined to establish praying towns on specific tracts, whether through teamwork with Eliot and colonial officials, or by engaging in legal battles with English landowners and even going against Eliot's wishes.

To establish Natick on land they were invested in protecting, Native founders worked with Eliot to navigate the complexities of colonial land laws and the Massachusetts Bay court system. When Eliot wrote to Henry Whitfield in 1650 about the site selection for Natick, he reported a contingent of Indigenous men "describing a place to me, and guiding us over some part of it."<sup>18</sup> Aside from this though, Eliot minimized the role of Native founders. He painted the establishment of this town as very much under the control of God, himself, and the colonial order. Eliot not only asserted that God guided him and the Native men to the Natick site and directed that they build there, he also claimed that there was no English opposition to building a praying town on that site.<sup>19</sup> According to Eliot's account, Natick's acreage not only appears chosen by a higher power, but also on land unwanted by English settlers and thus a convenient parcel within colonial jurisdiction to set up a mission community. However, this land that Natick's Indigenous founders chose was not free of English interest.

Contrary to what Eliot claimed multiple times, the land Natick was built upon

was contested. It was not land that was undesirable or unclaimed by English powers, and therefore convenient leftovers upon which to settle a compliant group of Native potential converts. At best, Eliot oversimplified the status of Natick's land base to Whitfield and his readers in England. In later testimony, Eliot admitted that he knew parts of Natick fell within the bounds of Dedham, a neighboring English town. This did not prevent him from advocating on behalf of Natick's Indigenous founders to build their town there, even though he cited English land claims as reasons he did not want to build on other sites.<sup>20</sup>

Among colonial officials, the Dedham dispute also spurred conversation about ancestral rights to the Natick land base, which ultimately showed that this place was home to a strong contingent of Natick's Indigenous founders. It is unclear whether their occupation and use of this land was unbroken, or whether they had recently been forced out, but their roots there were deep. The founding members of Natick did not simply move to a site that Eliot and the colonial government set aside for them. They led Eliot to a specific acreage and fought for land that, as it turned out, was land "where some of the Praying Indians then planted, & had done of old, even beyond the memory of the oldest man alive." This longstanding connection is likely why they guided Eliot to Natick in the first place and fought to keep it despite fierce opposition from Dedham. In particular, Waban, one of Natick's most influential founders, is credited today by the Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag for working with Eliot to secure two thousand acres for Natick.<sup>21</sup> The Indigenous men who worked with Eliot to establish the boundaries of Natick thus laid claim to land upon which their people

had already lived and, as their actions indicate, wanted to legally own. They were invested in Natick from its beginning, literally building this town from the ground up on their ancestral land.

As much as any Native history can be drawn out of a colonial source base, it is clear that a group of Native founders successfully gained title to ancestral land that they desired at Natick, and that Eliot acted as an advocate to help make this happen. But there is another side to the story, and the establishment of Ponkapoag complicates the origin narrative of Natick. Natick's earliest inhabitants were not all one people from one ancestral territory – they came from various groups within the Massachusetts, Pawtucket and Nipmuc confederations, respectively. At least one contingent of these was very invested in owning a land base on the Natick site, but that was not the case for everyone.<sup>22</sup>

In a missionary tract published in 1655, Eliot said that his intention “was to have brought all the Praying Indians to Co-habit together” at Natick, but that he had failed in this “because the Cohannet Indians desired a place which they had reserved for themselves”.<sup>23</sup> Eliot said he “refused” to help them settle on their chosen acreage, because of “opposition from some English.” Skipping over any explanation of how or why this happened, Eliot continued: “They desire to make a Towne in that fore-mentioned place of their owne, named Ponkipog, and are now upon the work.”<sup>24</sup> Indigenous founders of Ponkapoag appear to have begun this praying town without Eliot's blessing or permission; perhaps Eliot was especially reluctant to help them gain ownership of contested land given his legal troubles with Dedham and Natick.

However, legal records from the neighboring town of Dorchester show that Eliot eventually agreed to assist the Ponkapoags in securing title to that land base.

On April 4th, 1657, Eliot wrote to Major Humphrey Atherton of Dorchester requesting that Indigenous ownership of Ponkapoag land be made legally airtight according to colonial laws:

My request is, that you would please to further these two motions. First, that you would please to make an order in your town secrecy, and record it in your town records, that you approve and allow the Indians of Ponkipog, there to sit down, and makes a town... My second request is, that your would appoint fitting men, who may, in a fit season, bound and lay out the same, and record that also.<sup>25</sup>

Eliot made sure to subtly point out the town's responsibility to further the mission of God on "their" land by saying "our poor Indians are much molested in most places, in their proceedings in the way of civility" and that secure land tenure would allow potential converts to "enjoy such accommodations, as may be competent to maintain God's ordinances among them another day."<sup>26</sup>

This request was evidently granted, because the Dorchester Records report that on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1657, "there was a plantation given, by the town of Dorchester, unto the Indians at Ponkipog." By 1674, Ponkapoag was a fully functioning community that encompassed six thousand acres and was home to twelve Indigenous families.<sup>27</sup> It almost certainly would not have been if a tenacious group of Native founders had not defied the wishes of one of their most powerful allies and fought for the acreage they wanted and needed.

At least part of the Ponkapoag contingent fought for ownership of land that they had lost to English encroachment. In explaining the circumstances (and perhaps

the reasoning) behind Dorchester's grant of land to Ponkapoag's Indigenous founders, the town's records recounted that "the Indians of Massachusetts Country had sold all their rights and interest in all the land in the township of Dorchester, and had no place to settle themselves in, where they might have the gospel preached to them."<sup>28</sup> In 1670, Eliot described Ponkapoag as an ancestral home that had been lost to English encroachment: "*Ponkipog*, or *Pakennit* is our second Town, where the *Sachems* of the Bloud (as they term their Chief Royal-Line) had their Residence and Rights, which are mostly Alienated to the English Towns."<sup>29</sup> According to Eliot's report, the people who lived in Ponkapoag as of 1670 were part of one or more sachemships whose territory had been alienated to English towns before the land was reclaimed for a mission community.

The present-day Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag corroborates that Ponkapoag was ancestral land for people who lived there in the seventeenth century. The tribe's official self-presented history also recounts that the intervention of Eliot through the institution of the "Praying Indian Town" was legally effective in protecting Ponkapoag as an Indigenous land base.<sup>30</sup> However, it also lays out the exploitative colonial context of this arrangement. By 1650, violent English encroachment had forced the Neponset Massachusetts people from their broader territories into a section of Neponset territory called Ponkapoag. On this smaller land base, English harassment and encroachment continued until six thousand acres of this Neponset territory passed through the English court system and into Indigenous ownership in the form of a praying town.<sup>31</sup>

Combined, colonial legal records, Eliot's reports, and the Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag's account of their history illuminate a compelling reason that this group fought so hard for a praying town at Ponkapoag, even at the risk of clashing with one of their most staunch and influential advocates. Aggressive English settlers clearly coveted their territory; by going through the legal channels the praying towns offered, the Ponkapoags were able to save a portion of their ancestral home and remain there as a community on land that they owned.

Ponkapoag's six thousand acres represent survival, resilience, and community continuity, but they are also a reminder of the English colonial regime's ultimately exploitative impacts in southern New England. The praying town of Ponkapoag was protected by English laws, but it was also through English laws that the Neponsets/Ponkapoags were forced off all their other lands and compelled to accept the authority of an English colonial court to "grant" their own land back to them. The Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag's website points out that in "giving" them ownership over the praying town of Ponkapoag, "the English Officials at Dorchester reduced lands hereto still under the control of the Indigenous Massachusetts at Ponkapoag to 6,000 acres." Today, the tribe recounts this grant as part of an overall loss, as well as a mechanism for land protection.<sup>32</sup>

While the language of the colonial source base relentlessly describes praying town land as benevolently granted from English authorities to Indigenous groups, the contested founding of Ponkapoag serves as a necessary reminder that praying towns were not gifts. Rather, they functioned as hard-won permission to keep a portion of



the land Native people had lived upon prior to English invasion and legal protection of that ownership. Even though it was part of a net loss of land and sovereignty under English colonial rule, this retained portion was meaningful and could mean the difference between life and death for people and communities.

The establishment and site selection of other praying towns in Massachusetts Bay are not as well-documented as in Ponkapoag and Natick, and the actions of Native founders outside these towns are not as visible. Still, scattered references indicate widespread Indigenous involvement in shaping the geographic contours of other praying towns, beyond insisting on decentralization of the mission overall. For instance, Eliot's writings about Ponkapoag contain indications that additional Indigenous groups were determined to settle upon land of their choosing, and that these preferences needed to be accommodated by the mission and colonial government.

In 1652, Eliot complained to William Steele that "Our work at Natick findeth difficulties and impediments on all hands." He explained that most significant issue had to do with a group of Native people refusing to settle at Natick, instead preferring a tract elsewhere that was already claimed by English settlers: "A considerable part of the Indians and they not the meanest in religion, did earnestly desire to have pitch our first stake in another place, but the English haveing some interest and grant from the Court of that place and opposing, I did not pitch there." He went on to say that this contingent had moved away and had "little or no mind to Natick."<sup>33</sup> In this letter,

Eliot does not specify where this dissenting group moved, but comparing it to Eliot's description of Ponkapoag's establishment in *A Late and Further Manifestation*, this group has many striking parallels to the founders of Ponkapoag. The overwhelming likelihood is that Eliot was referring to Ponkapoag in both accounts.<sup>34</sup> In the midst of many narrative similarities, there is a key difference between these documents that indicates that the intransigence of Ponkapoag's founders was not restricted to that town, and that this kind of resistance and negotiation resulted in plans for additional towns.

After describing the discontent some people had with the Natick site, Eliot continued to explain that as a resolution to this problematic tension, the potential converts who found Natick unacceptable would need to be offered land elsewhere:

So soone as we have planted a towne & a church in this place, we might sett upon another in a 2<sup>nd</sup> & another in a 3<sup>rd</sup> place, if we cann obtaine freedome & means. So that by that means which Satan hoped to have broken our work the same is a meanes to multiply it.

Unlike his report in *A Late and Further Manifestation*, which names Ponkapoag, Eliot's letter to Steele does not specifically name any towns besides Natick. It does however report that plans for two towns in addition to Natick were offered as a solution to the issue of Natick not being universally acceptable to the people Eliot had hoped would move there. While the second planned town was not named in this letter, it was almost certainly Ponkapoag, and the third town to be built was Hassanamesit. In addition to these, eleven more mission communities would be established in Massachusetts Bay with the help of Eliot's advocacy. Eliot blamed Satan for the actions of Native people that shaped these towns against his original

vision.<sup>35</sup>

We cannot be certain that Hassanamesit, the third town to be established, was the third planned town that Eliot described in his letter to Steele, but it is highly likely. Hassanamesit's founding is not well documented, but Eliot indirectly tells us that the town's (predominantly Nipmuc) inhabitants had an important hand in choosing the site and shaping the town. In his 1670 report to the commissioners for the Company for Propagation of the Gospel in New England, Eliot described the relationship the people who lived in Hassanamesit had with that place: "there lived their Progenitors, and there lieth their Inheritance, and that is the place of their desires."<sup>36</sup> Archaeological and historical research done collaboratively by the Nipmuc Nation and D. Rae Gould, Holly Herbster, Heather Law Pezzarossi, and Stephen A. Mrosowski, as well as an article on Nipmuc history by Chief Cheryl Toney Holley, all place Hassanamesit well within the original homelands of Nipmuc peoples. Hassanamesit was home to many Nipmucs long before the arrival of English missionaries, a home many surely desired to keep.<sup>37</sup>

Far to the northwest of Hassanamesit, the establishment of Nashobah provides a unique glimpse into one of the earliest known negotiations for praying town land. In *Clear Sunshine*, a missionary tract published in 1648, Thomas Shepard recounted Attawans, a Musketaquid Pawtucket sachem negotiating for ownership of a praying town for himself and a group of his people who reportedly expressed interest in Christianity. In conversation with historical context and legal documentation, this tract indicates that Attawans and his people utilized their knowledge of colonial

evangelist desire to successfully gain ownership of a town on their ancestral land base.

After visiting Nonantum to hear Eliot preach, Attawans gathered his people and argued their case for a mission community on a specific acreage within their homeland. On behalf of his group, Attawans said that he wanted “a Towne given to them within the bounds of Concord” and for Eliot to come preach there. This land was already granted to the English town of Concord, and it was unlikely that the town was eager to part with it. When Attawans “was demanded why he desired a towne so neare, when as there was more room for them up in the country” he replied that taking his people away from Concord would be detrimental to the spiritual and social conversion process. In Shepard’s recollection of the negotiation, Attawans said that “he knew that if the Indians dwelt far from the English, that they would not so much care to pray, nor so ready to hear the word of God, but they would all be one Indians still; but dwelling near the English he hoped it might be otherwise.” According to Shepard’s perception, Attawans “desired to become more like to the English, and to cast off those Indian wild and sinfull courses they formerly lived in.”<sup>38</sup>

Attawans reportedly desired a town to settle his people in order to “heare the word of God” and “become more like the English” and desired a particular acreage already claimed by an English town in order to further those goals. One reason I trust Shepard’s report to the extent that I do is because this would have been an entirely logical land reclamation strategy on the part of Attawans and the Musketquids, given the position they were in. As Cogely points out, the Pawtucket confederation in and

around Concord had been extensively dispossessed prior to this point.<sup>39</sup> In *Clear Sunshine*, Shepard described the Musketquids as from the “Concord side,” and several publications referred to Attawans as “the Sachem of Concord.”<sup>40</sup> Cogley estimates that Nashobah was approximately ten miles from Musketquid, but Herbert Harwood describes Concord and Musketaquid as the same place.<sup>41</sup> Collectively, these sources indicate that the Musketaquids were working to secure title to land their people had lost to English invasion. They most likely fought for that land in particular because it was their home, but the reasons that Attawans reportedly gave for wanting this land were well-tailored to the desires and policies of English colonizers and evangelists.

Attawans was most likely well-equipped to speak to these desires due to his prior interactions with English people and colonial systems. In addition to spending time at Nonantum during Eliot’s early missionary efforts there, Attawans had dealings (including land transactions) with the English dating back to at least 1635. By the time he negotiated for a praying town, he was likely familiar with the way English officials thought about Indigenous land and conversion.<sup>42</sup> Attawans very clearly spelled out a desire to make progress in civility and said that this was unlikely to happen if he and his people were not granted ownership of the land they asked for. Despite Concord’s prior claim, Attawans won the argument, and his people won the land he negotiated for on their behalf.<sup>43</sup>

Much of the visible Indigenous advocacy for land ownership (and choice of land) was done through missionaries, with Eliot and others serving as intermediaries

between Indigenous people and English legal systems. The founding of Nashobah, sparse as sources on it are, may offer a glimpse into another layer of Indigenous involvement in fighting for praying town land. *Clear Sunshine* does not explicitly say whom Attawans negotiated with, but according to Cogley's interpretation of this document, Attawans was the one who "requested and obtained permission from the selectmen of nearby Concord to establish an English-style town." While the document does not explicitly say this, neither does it report that a missionary acted as an intermediary in this negotiation. In support of Cogley's interpretation, another part of the document (which describes more specifically the land base the Musketaquids as a group desired) was reportedly transcribed by Captain Simon Willard of Concord, not a church official.<sup>44</sup> Further, when Eliot did petition on Nashobah's behalf at the General Court of Massachusetts Bay in 1654, his language suggested direct relations between Nashobah's people and the English authorities of Concord: "though Concord have some conditional grant of lands that way, yet I understand, that we shall have a loving and Christian agreement betwixt them and the Indians."<sup>45</sup> If these records are accurate, Eliot was not the only one who successfully leveraged the promise of conversion for praying town land when dealing with English officials in Massachusetts Bay.

Shepard's account, and all missionary records professing to quote Indigenous words and opinions, must be interpreted with caution partially because tracts like this one were used by missionaries as propaganda to secure funding. Still, the role this document was meant to fill, as an advertisement of missionary and colonial success,

makes the story within all the more compelling. Taking into account the typical English emphasis on obedience as a virtue of their Christian subjects, especially “friend Indians,” this tract describing English missionaries deferring to demands of an Indigenous leader is unexpected. It also suggests the possibility that Attawans understood and used the nuances of colonial evangelistic goals as leverage in his negotiation for legal ownership of Nashobah.

Far to the south, the Wampanoags of Mashpee, Manitouswatootan, and Aquinnah forged alliances with missionaries and established mission communities not to regain land they had lost, but to protect land that was still in their possession. The colonial governments of Plymouth and Martha’s Vineyard played key roles in protecting mission community land from English encroachment, but this involvement did not look the same as it did in Massachusetts Bay. Rather than colonial governments directly granting land to these mission communities, the officials of Plymouth and Martha’s Vineyard acknowledged and legally codified existing Native land tenure in Aquinnah, and supported the transfer of land from sachems to groups of Wampanoag people who wished to start mission communities in Manitouswatootan and Mashpee. As in Massachusetts Bay, they did this in the hope of winning Indigenous converts to Christianity and colonial society. Native people in these mission communities thus gained legal title to ancestral homelands, shielding these acreages from the rampant dispossession that surrounded them.

Of the three mission communities within Plymouth, Mashpee, the current

home of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, is by far the best documented. Mashpee was not a “town” in the sense that the mission communities of Massachusetts Bay were. Rather, what we now know as Mashpee was a large tract of land that spanned “ten miles in length, and five in breadth” according to the missionary Richard Bourne. This land base encompassed several already-existing Wampanoag villages including Mashpee proper, Santuit, Cotuit, Waquoit, Weesquabs, Ashimuit, and Paupoesit.<sup>46</sup> In its early days, this mission community was large, populous, and sparsely documented. Though there is much about this early space that is unknown, surviving documents testify to the Native-influenced structure and location of Mashpee.

In terms of geography, the bounds of Mashpee were decided by the sachems who held rights to that territory – Wepquish, Tookenchosin, and Quatchatisset. In 1665 and 1666, these sachems went through English legal channels to transfer their land rights directly to the people who would later be known as Mashpee Wampanoags but were then described in legal records as “South Sea Indians.” What the Wampanoags of Mashpee gained by establishing a mission community was much more than a nebulous “Indian right” – their title to this land was legalized in a deed and confirmed by the Plymouth government.<sup>47</sup>

Russell Peters, (president of the Wampanog Indian Tribal Council from 1974-1980, and Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Chairman) credits Richard Bourne and his son Shearashub with ensuring that the deeds to Mashpee were recorded in the Plymouth court, and describes Richard Bourne as a staunch ally for land preservation



in Mashpee.<sup>48</sup> Bourne was certainly an advocate for the people of Mashpee, and there is much to suggest that he assisted with overall establishment and protection of the Mashpee land base. However, the people of Mashpee did not always act through a missionary intermediary.<sup>49</sup> As required for all land transactions in Plymouth colony, the land deeded by Wepquish and Tookenchosin to “the South Sea Indians” in 1665 and confirmed by Quatchatisset in 1666 was acknowledged by officials in Plymouth’s Court of Assistants in 1667 and 1672. In contrast to common practice in Massachusetts Bay, the Plymouth court record detailing this process makes no mention of church or missionary advocacy.<sup>50</sup>

Further, when Governor Thomas Hinckley confirmed this same land base in perpetuity to “the South Sea Indians” in 1685, the language of the court record suggests direct involvement of Native Mashpee people with the court. In contrast to the several Massachusetts court documents issuing land grants “at the motion of Mr. Eliot,” the Mashpee tract was confirmed “on the motion & request of the principle men among the Indians commonly called the South Sea Indians, living about Satuite Pond, Marshpey, & places adjacent.” It is highly likely that Bourne provided assistance in navigating colonial legal structures, and he certainly advocated for Mashpee’s interests. At some points however, Mashpee’s people were evidently handling things directly to make sure their title was secure.<sup>51</sup>

The Mashpee tract deeded by Wepquish, Tookenchosin, and Quatchatisset, encompassed several pre-existing Wampanoag villages; people within them claimed title to land they already lived on and presumably wanted to keep. As an expert

witness in the *Mashpee Tribe vs. Town of Mashpee* land rights trial of 1977-1978, James Axtell testified that according to his research, the people today known as Mashpee Wampanoag had occupied that land base “time out of mind, essentially.”<sup>52</sup> In *The Common Pot*, Lisa Brooks describes the status of Mashpee in the mid-nineteenth century: “The Mashpee village was established within Wampanoag territory as a haven for Native people who embraced Christianity, but it had become a refuge for the dispossessed.”<sup>53</sup> Taking into account the context of dispossession and encroachment on nearby Wampanoag land in the seventeenth century, Mashpee’s residents were most likely a combination people who had lived there “time out of mind” and gained title to land they already occupied, and people from without who saw Mashpee as a “refuge for the dispossessed” long before the time of Brooks’ study.

On the island of Noepe no less than on the mainland, English authorities routinely treated sachems as though they held absolute title to their peoples’ land and had the authority to alienate it to English buyers. This policy was highly disruptive to island Wampanoags. Though they outnumbered English settlers by well over one thousand to approximately two hundred even in the early sixteen-seventies, colonial land encroachment was an alarming reality that only got worse from the mid to late-seventeenth century.<sup>54</sup> Sachems on the islands, as elsewhere in southern New England, faced pressure to sell or grant land to English neighbors for diplomatic reasons as they dealt with threats to life and livelihood from English and Narragansett forces.<sup>55</sup> Even as sachems sold or gave significant acreages to colonists, primarily to

the governor Thomas Mayhew Sr., many communities defended their existing land bases by creating mission communities within their sachemships.<sup>56</sup>

One striking example is Aquinnah. Situated on a peninsula on the furthest western side of Noepe, Aquinnah was relatively isolated from the epicenter of missionary activity on the eastern end of the island in the sachemships of Nunnepog and Chappaquiddick. Its people were some of the latest to accept Christianity into their sachemship.<sup>57</sup> David Silverman argues that the looming threat of Narragansett raids and an actual raid by French warships combined with overall threats to land from English colonialism finally convinced the Aquinnahs to become a Christian community starting around 1667. Aquinnah's sachem, Mittark, had tried to promote Christianity and alliance with English Christians several years earlier. For these efforts, his sachemship expelled him from the community. Mittark spent three years in exile before returning and finally convincing his sachemship to adopt a policy of Christian alliance, and to protect their land by establishing a mission community there.<sup>58</sup>

How Mittark felt about the new religion on a personal level is something we cannot know. However, it is possible to see a powerful motivation for establishing a mission community within his sachemship through records of his actions, and those of the ketasontimoog (paramount Wampanoag sachems) Massasoit and Wamsutta. Mittark was relatively powerful on Noepe, but he along with all other Wampanoag sachems deferred to the ketasontimoog of their confederation. The English practice of vesting sachems with the power to alienate land in perpetuity put Aquinnah at risk,

not because Mittark would sell this land, but because his superior sachem could. In 1653, Massasoit sold land in Chilmark, opening the territory on Aquinnah's doorstep to English settlement. Even more alarming, Massasoit's successor Wamsutta sold land within Aquinnah's boundaries in 1661.<sup>59</sup>

By the time Aquinnah as a whole started to come around to Christianity, Metacom had succeeded his brother Wamsutta as the ketasontimoog to whom they owed tribute and allegiance. Aquinnah supporting the mission project on Noepe and promoting Christianity within Aquinnah did not erase Metacom's authority over their land base. Metacom could have offered Aquinnah to English buyers at any point, and he broadly faced intense pressure from colonial powers to yield Wampanoag land to English authority and ownership.<sup>60</sup> What an alignment with Christianity offered the Aquinnahs was a key change in status with the English authorities of Martha's Vineyard.

Most of the governmental authority in Martha's Vineyard was consolidated in the hands of Thomas Mayhew Sr. The Mayhew family was highly invested in the success of their Christian mission, and demonstrated their desire to propagate the gospel in their colony.<sup>61</sup> By expressing interest in Christianity and promoting it among his people, Mittark drew Noepe's colonial government to his side of potential land conflicts. Thomas Mayhew Sr., at least officially, could not stop a ketasontimoog from offering up land. He could however prevent English settlers from owning specific lands within his jurisdiction, and choose not to exert political pressure on Metacom to sell it.<sup>62</sup> This strategy was successful in keeping the sachemship of

Aquinnah intact. By supporting the mission project, Mittark and the Aquinnahs raised an effective barrier against English encroachment. In establishing a mission community within their sachemship, they drew a line of legal protection around the land of their ancestors.<sup>63</sup>

While the people of both Aquinnah and Manitouwatootan in the sachemship of Taakemmy strategically used mission communities to protect their ancestral land, they did so under very different circumstances. Both involved a sachem clashing with his sachemship, albeit in nearly opposite ways. Mittark temporarily lost his peoples' support and his ability to rule when he tried to promote Christianity in their sachemship. The sachem of Taakemmy, Keteaummin, had no interest in Christianity, and fell into conflict with his followers when he showed himself to be either unable or unwilling to ensure the perpetuation of their land tenure in the face of English invasion. In response, a faction of Taakemmy Wampanoags appealed to Mayhew's authority and missionizing priorities to ensure that a portion of their sachemship was reserved for them as a praying town.<sup>64</sup>

Before asking for Mayhew's intercession, the Takemmies attempted to protect their land in other ways. In 1658, the inhabitants of Manitouwatootan agreed to pay Keteaummin twenty shillings per year as a "quit-rent" for that land. By doing so they committed to writing Keteaummin's traditional right and responsibility to allocate land to his followers, and their obligation to pay him tribute.<sup>65</sup> In 1699, Keteaummin testified that when he gave that land approximately forty years prior: "There was only known but four Praying Indians in my Sachimshipp Whose names

was Pamick my uncle and Nonoussa, and Tahquanum & Poxsin. Then I gave one mile square of land... of Taukemey to be a Township for them.”<sup>66</sup> A 1702 deed by Keteaummin’s son, enlarging Manitouwatootan, states that his father reserved the land for Manitouwatootan “according to the usual custom of the time” (which was probably a verbal agreement) but also requested that Governor Mayhew “commit the same to writing” for “the better affirmance therof.”<sup>67</sup>

Keteaummin assigning land at Manitouwatootan apparently was not enough to put its inhabitants at ease regarding the security of their tenure. Alarmed by the English buying significant tracts of nearby Taakemmy land from Keteaummin, a group of Takemmies including Pamick, Nonoussa, and Tahquanum demanded in 1664 that Keteaummin alienate no more land without the consent of essentially everyone in the sachemship, and empowered Thomas Mayhew Sr. to enforce this:

There shall be noe land sold within the bounds of Takemie without the consent of the two sachims aforesaid, that is Wanammahut, Keteaum and the rest of the sashims or gentlemen and common Indians of Takemie. And they all agree that Thomas Mayhew shall have power and that hereby full power is given him both by the foresaid gentlemen or sachims, Wanamanhut and Keteaum and the rest of the inhabitants to hinder the sale of any or all of the said land of Takemie that he please, without the sachims and people do agree together with sachims to sell land... This power to Thomas Mayhew is irrevocable soe long as he lives.<sup>68</sup>

Keteaummin did not honor the wishes of his sachemship. Neither did Thomas Mayhew Sr., as evidenced by him approving the sale of Taakemmy land to English settlers in 1668.<sup>69</sup> The Takemmies must have felt that their land security was imperiled, because in March 1669, they drew up another agreement prohibiting land

sales without significant oversight and approval from the sachemship. This time, fines were to be imposed if land was sold without approval, and both Thomas Mayhew and Keteanummin signed the document.<sup>70</sup>

Perhaps because the founders of Manitouwatootan were prominent Christian leaders, Manitouwatootan was not infringed upon during this period of rampant land alienation elsewhere in Taakemmy. Even so, the people of this town felt the need to take additional steps to secure their land tenure here, and leaned heavily into alignment with the English government and their status as Christians in order to do so. In May 1669, Thomas Mayhew Sr. testified that Keteanummin “did in my presence give the Praying Indians a Tract of Land for a Town and Did Committ the Government Thereof into my hand and Posterities forever.” In this same document, Mayhew confirmed the boundaries of Manitouwatootan in writing.<sup>71</sup> In January of 1670, Keteanummin and Thomas Mayhew Sr. formally agreed:

The town of mannitootan in Takemy shall remain for ever in the possession of the praying men That is thus that if the inhabitants turn from God his ways other praying Indians of Takimmy shall have their Land if their be any. If not then other praying men of this Island. Further Kochanominn saith that when 20 families are settled in this town it shall be enlarged with Land the same say I it is fit it should. This town for the government of it was put by ye sachims Kochanomin and Wanamanhut into the hand of Thomas Mayhew and his posterity forever. The meaning is if all do forsake the worship of God they shall loose their predicesor’s lands.

This legal agreement was more airtight than the 1664 and 1669 documents intended to limit land sales in Taakemmy overall. Ownership of Manitouwatootan was secured to its inhabitants in perpetuity with the promise of expansion. No approval from

sachems, English authorities, or anyone else could legalize the sale of it unless one crucial condition was abandoned – the practice of Christianity on this land.<sup>72</sup>

The eternal possession of Manitouwatootan by its Indigenous inhabitants was conditioned upon the continued practice of Christianity. In *Faith and Boundaries*, David Silverman suggests the possibility that this condition was legalized at the behest of the town's original founders – Pamick, Nonoussa, Tahquanum and Poxsin.<sup>73</sup> This is indeed possible. As men of status in the sachemship, founders of Manitouwatootan, and some of the first converts in the area with standing among English and Taakemmy communities, they would have had considerable say in the town's legal affairs and property management. Further, including a provision requiring that landholders keep to the Christian faith would make sense if these founders wanted to preserve Manitouwatootan as a Christian community as well as an Indigenous space for present and future generations.

It is just as likely that Mayhew insisted on this condition. His expressed commitment to furthering Christianity within his jurisdiction attests to this likelihood, but alone would not explain the existence of this legalized condition. After all, the same kind of evangelistic rhetoric permeates the records of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay, where no such condition existed.<sup>74</sup> Further, no surviving documentation shows similar conditions in any of the other mission communities in Mayhew's jurisdiction. From a coldly expedient standpoint as the ruler of a proprietary colony invested in English settlement, it would have made sense for Mayhew to inject this condition into the preservation of Manitouwatootan.



Theoretically, all he would have to do in order to clear that land for English settlement was determine that Manitouwatootan's inhabitants were not adequately performing Christianity according to his standards. However, as long as he lived, he never did this. Even as vast acreages of Taakemmy were opened up to English settlement within Mayhew's jurisdiction, Manitouwatootan was untouched.<sup>75</sup>

Mayhew was not opposed to the sachems of the Noepe granting and selling land to facilitate English settlement there; he actively and even aggressively promoted it.<sup>76</sup> Yet, he remained steadfastly invested in ensuring that Christian communities within his jurisdiction were secure in their land tenure. According to Eliot, Mayhew viewed protecting the land of Christian Wampanoags as one of his core responsibilities when he took over the mission upon the death of his son. In addition to promising that Native converts would "always have his counsel, instruction, and management in all their Church affairs" Mayhew saw that his role was to "stand their Friend, and do them good, to save them from the hands of such as would bereave them of their Lands."<sup>77</sup> By appealing to Mayhew's missionizing goals, the Aquinnahs and the Takemmies succeeded in protecting their ancestral land and securing it for their communities. For the Takemmies much more than the Aquinnahs, this meant accepting a significant degree of English oversight.

There are myriad probable reasons that different Indigenous groups in southern New England fought for ownership of one tract of land over another in the mid to late seventeenth century. Viability for farming, fishing, hunting, and other

kinds of subsistence, proximity to kin and or allies, defensibility, access to trails and waterways to facilitate trade and travel – all were potential factors. We must also consider the importance of land to group and personal identity and spirituality. There is a powerful continuity between seventeenth-century records on Indigenous founders fighting for specific land bases through the mission community system, and the ways many of their descendants currently conceptualize their relationship to their traditional homelands.<sup>78</sup>

From the far north and west in Pawtucket and Nipmuc territory, through Massachusetts homelands, all the way to the furthest southeast island Wampanoag settlements, Native people likely held the same powerful motivations to try to gain legal title to their land, and to prioritize securing particular places for their communities. Though the avenues to legal title looked different in Martha's Vineyard, Plymouth, and Massachusetts Bay, respectively, many Native people across southern New England successfully claimed ownership of land they wanted via mission communities. Once they owned it according to colonial laws, they continued to manage mission community land in fundamentally Indigenous ways. They did so while navigating complex colonial legal systems, inter-Indigenous politics, and the looming threat of colonial violence.

## Chapter 4

### Christian Sachemships and Indigenous Townships: Diversity and Continuity in Mission Community Land Ownership and Management

While it is true that many Indigenous people shaped mission communities by establishing them on lands of their choosing, the years between the first praying town's establishment in 1650 and Metacom's War in 1675 were marked by staggering dispossession across southern New England's Indigenous territories. In the colonies of Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, and Martha's Vineyard, Native communities saw their land bases steadily and swiftly eroded by English encroachment. In the midst of this catastrophe, thousands of Native people protected or repossessed their homelands by establishing mission communities in those spaces. Even as they endured the constraints of colonialism within these places, Native people continued pre-colonial forms of land management and kept their communities alive. With great tenacity and ingenuity, they succeeded in doing this by navigating Indigenous and English political realms as well as the complex legal mechanisms of multiple English colonies.

The importance of a stable land base to community cohesion and survival cannot be overstated; in understanding the mission community story, it is imperative to understand the legal and political mechanics by which Indigenous people managed to protect their land and communities. This chapter examines the diverse ways that mission communities were secured and kept under Native ownership within the legal parameters of Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, and Martha's Vineyard. Equally

importantly, it shows how Native communities continued to manage mission community land according to their own societal structures and customs even while navigating the changes imposed by colonial rule.

The ways in which Indigenous people legally owned mission community land before Metacom's War were far from homogenous. While there was political diversity between both Indigenous and English groups, the most distinct differences in mission community land ownership can be seen between English colonies. For instance, people of the Wampanoag confederation were the predominant mission supporters in Plymouth Colony and Martha's Vineyard. Wampanoag land ownership in mission communities was structured very differently in these two colonies. In the Martha's Vineyard mission communities, individual sachems were the legally recognized owners of their peoples' land, while in Plymouth, mission community land was owned communally by all inhabitants. In the Massachusetts Bay mission communities, Massachusett, Nipmuc, and Pawtucket people legally owned their land in the same manners as English settlers and were organized into English style townships.<sup>1</sup> Here, as in English towns, some land was held privately by individuals and some was owned in common.

Amid these legal differences were key commonalities that turned out to be crucial for the cultural and corporeal survival of Native people in mission communities. In Massachusetts Bay, Martha's Vineyard, and Plymouth, Indigenous people succeeded in maintaining a significant degree of continuity in the ways they used and managed their land. Upon close inspection, it is clear that the diverse legal

ways that Native people owned land in the mission communities all had one critical common aspect – quintessentially Indigenous forms of land management persisted in these spaces, even within colonial legal frameworks and amid colonial efforts to replace Native ways with English ones. This can be seen across colonies and is primarily visible in the functional persistence of the sachemship as a social institution and framework for communities to manage their land.<sup>2</sup> Native individuals and communities secured ownership of their land through legal structures imposed by colonial governments. Whether they continued to be recognized as sachemships in colonial documents as on Martha’s Vineyard, or legally reinvented themselves as townships as in Massachusetts Bay, foundational elements of sachemship-style land management can be seen in mission communities across southern New England.

One of the most important functions of the sachemship was its position as a structure for land management within Indigenous communities. With limited and problematic sources, details of Native land tenure systems in southern New England before and during European contact are difficult to determine. Today, we rely on a combination of colonial records, archaeology, and the knowledge of descendant communities to form an understanding of how Native land use functioned before and during English colonialism. In mission community history, the most important point of uncertainty in the collective body of knowledge on Native land use systems and social structures concerns the degree to which land rights were hierarchical within a sachemship – specifically, how much power to determine land use rights was concentrated in the office of the sachem vs. the broader community. Scholars

generally agree that it was the privilege and responsibility of a sachem to assign land rights within his or her sachemship, and that this was done with the input of the community at large and a core group of elite counselors. What is not completely agreed upon is the power a sachem had to go against the wishes of his or her counselors and community when the final decisions were made. In short, did the sachem have full authority and essentially “ownership” of the land, or was the sachemship as a whole vested with a kind of collective sovereignty over it, represented by the sachem?

At one end of the interpretive spectrum, Lisa Brooks and William Cronon argue that a sachem’s possession of the land in his or her sachemship was symbolic in a way that represented the “entire group’s collective right.” At the far other side, Peter Jakob Olsen-Harbich offers an argument more aligned with seventeenth-century colonial perceptions; access to land and its resources followed an established hierarchy with sachems at the top enjoying paramount authority over the land, and an underclass called the *matnowesuónckane* at the bottom with no claim of their own to sachemship land and its resources.<sup>3</sup> However, a wide body of scholarship, including works by Brooks, Cronon, and Olsen-Harbich acknowledges the complexity and source issues surrounding this topic. Most scholars fall somewhere in the middle of the spectrum, reconciling the archaeological and documentary sources pointing towards social stratification of southern New England’s Indigenous societies with the ample evidence that suggests diffused rights, responsibilities, and agency surrounding sachemship land.<sup>4</sup>

Even considering inevitable uncertainties attached to the many complexities and issues with the source base, there are some fundamental aspects of sachemship land systems that are all but universally accepted. First, most if not all people within a given sachemship held rights to use that sachemship's land for their livelihoods. Second, sachems were in charge of allocating usage rights for lands used in common as well as specific areas assigned to families or individuals. While sachems traditionally had the authority to assign land use rights, a sachem's ability to alienate land in perpetuity, especially to outsiders, appears to have been a power invented and imposed by colonial authorities. Third, when making important decisions including those regarding land use, sachems typically considered input from a core group of counselors as well as the broader sachemship community. Fourth, the office of sachem typically but not universally followed hereditary patterns, with father to son being the most common form of inheritance.<sup>5</sup>

Two examples from opposite corners of southern New England are especially helpful for understanding core commonalities in land tenure systems among distinct confederations. The first concerns Wampanoag groups to the far south and east of southern New England on the island of Noepe. The second is from Nipmuc country, far to the north and west. Mission communities were established in both of these areas, and both shared common elements of land tenure that persisted in mission communities. Though the documents detailing these cases were written well into the colonial period by English authors, echoes and strong through lines of fundamentally Native ways can be seen. As Indigenous land management systems in Nipmuc

country and on Noepe interacted with English ones, it is possible to see that sachems had special privileges to manage the land, but “common Indians” held strong rights to it as well.

Matthew Mayhew, son and eventual successor of Noepe’s first English missionary Thomas Mayhew Jr. recorded his understanding of Wampanoag social structure on Noepe. His most useful observations for understanding land systems concern the rights, responsibilities, and privileges of people he described in hierarchical categories as “princes” (sachems), “yeomen” and “strangers and foreigners.” Matthew Mayhew first described a large category of people within a sachemship who were entitled to use of the land under their sachem’s rule: “Their Yeomen were such who having no stamp of Gentility, were yet esteemed as having a natural right of living within their Princes Dominion, and a Common use of the Land; and were distinguished by two Names or Titles, the one signifying Subjection, the other, Tiller of the Land.”<sup>6</sup>

Matthew Mayhew also described people of the lowest status who did not hold the same land rights as the “yeomen.” “There lived among them many Families, who although the time of their Forefathers first inhabiting among them, was beyond the Memory of man, yet were known to be Strangers or Forreigners, who were not Priviledged with Common Right, but in some measure Subject to the Yeomanry, nor were not dignified, in attending the Prince, in Hunting or like Exercise; unless called by particular favour.”<sup>7</sup> Some scholars interpret this class of people as being servants or slaves, and that their status was one of landlessness.<sup>8</sup> According to Mayhew, the



sachem was the “absolute lord on the land” but everyone except those of the lowest social status inherited a “common right” to land within the sachemship.

In the opposite corner of southern New England, a heated dispute over who had the right to alienate Nipmuc land sheds light on how land rights were held in the sachemships of Nipmuc country. In the period of restricted Indigenous freedoms after Metacom’s War, Native survivors residing in Ponkapoag, Natick, and Wamesit sought to legally settle any land claims that were in doubt and be compensated for land taken from them illegally. In May of 1681, twenty-two Native men submitted a petition to the Massachusetts General Court claiming rights to land in Nipmuc country by virtue of their ancestral “Naturall Right.”<sup>9</sup> Several months later in September 1681, a court was held at Natick to help settle a dispute about who exactly held the right to alienate a large portion of that land base. Before his death, John Wampus, a Nipmuc man, had claimed exclusive rights to thousands of acres there, and now the English beneficiaries of his will had come to collect it.<sup>10</sup> In this court, several “aged and principal Indians” gave their testimony as to why Wampus had no right to bequeath that land.<sup>11</sup> They testified that:

John Woampas was no sachem, and had no more Right [*word illegible*] title to Any lands in the Nipmuck County within [*words illegible*] of Massachusetts, than other comon Indians had... now hee is deceased without children, what right he had in common with other Indians; belongs to his kindred and next Heirs as wee conceive, And we further say that there is about on[e] hundred Indians young and old; living among the Christian Indians, that have right and title to those lands in the Nipmuck Country aforesaid as much as ever John Woampas had.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the Native witnesses who testified in this court implied that sachems had unique rights to the land in their sachemship, and that they did indeed have the

right to alienate land. This implication conforms to English expectations and makes sense in 1681 considering the nearly ubiquitous practice over several decades of colonial authorities treating sachems as though they did have that right. However, the testimony's insistence that "common Indians" had specific rights to the land as well is something English legal documents from Massachusetts Bay usually ignored or glossed over.

Yet in this case Daniel Gookin agreed with the testimony and affirmed the rights of "common Indians" when he testified to the events of another "court among the Indians" dealing with John Wampus' land claims. In September 1681 he recalled the court session held in 1677 when Wampus was still alive and present at the court. Here, Wampus was challenged by other Native people when he tried to claim as his own and sell "a great tract" of land in Nipmuc Country. Gookin recalled that Wampus "could not so prove or demonstrate any Right hee had in Lands there more than other como[n] Indians hadt."<sup>13</sup> In 1677 and 1681, those who testified against Wampus did not argue that he had zero right to land in Nipmuc Country. Rather, they argued that Wampus did have an ancestral right to the land because all "common Indians" did. What he did not have as a "common Indian" now subject to the colonial legal system as well as the customs of his sachemship was the right to allocate, sell, or bequeath it.

The witnesses who testified against Wampus stood to lose thousands of acres of Nipmuc homeland to English settlers if they did not successfully disprove Wampus' claims. Some of them also used rather strong language against his character, calling him "evel minded" and saying that "all hee aimd at was to gett

mony to be drunke and to spend upon his [*word illegible*].” This last illegible word cannot have been flattering. The bias of the witnesses against Wampus and his claims to Nipmuc land do not invalidate the larger point. In order to prove that Wampus was “no sachem” and therefore could not alienate land, the witnesses did not need to repeatedly assert the rights of “common Indians” and remind the court that hundreds of people existed who held rights to Nipmuc land through their status as such. Further, Gookin did not need to validate these assertions when he discussed Wampus’ rights. The diffused and widespread rights of non-sachems were a separate fact of life in Nipmuc country, one that Mayhew also observed on Noepe – the opposite end of southern New England.<sup>14</sup>

The rights of “common Indians” to their land bases were increasingly threatened by English encroachment throughout the seventeenth century as their sachems faced ever more pressure to alienate land to colonists. Sachemships without land could not continue to function as sachemships, and they faced threats to their people’s safety as well as the threat of disintegration. In Wampanoag, Nipmuc, Pawtucket, and Massachusetts homelands, striking survival stories show “common Indians” as well as sachems leading their communities to protect their land by supporting mission communities. Amid the societal changes and sacrifices communities made in order to do this, they retained core aspects of sachemships as they managed their land.

On Noepe, the term “sachem rights” developed as a descriptor for the sole ownership colonists chose to believe sachems had over their sachemships’ lands. David Silverman calls it “a term that encapsulated the colonist’s assertion that the sachems were kings and the sachem’s belief that they were the sole proprietors of their people’s land, even as it violated the traditional Wampanoag expectation that the sachem’s rights came with community responsibilities.”<sup>15</sup> For sachems and their people to accept this definition when they took part in legal land transactions was a double-edged sword. On the one hand, for a sachem to assert sachemship rights meant that his or her rights to land were legally acknowledged by the colonial government of Martha’s Vineyard – at the very least he or she would be entitled to compensation if pressured to sell it. On the other hand, it vested rights to a whole sachemship’s land in a single person, who could legally alienate land without his or her people’s approval and sell it from beneath their feet. Throughout the seventeenth century, thousands of acres of Wampanoag land were alienated when colonists acquired the “sachem rights” to it. In this way, the legal concept facilitated mass dispossession.<sup>16</sup>

Despite the imposition of this intrusive legal concept, several sachemships on the island of Noepe successfully protected much of their land base throughout the pre-war period by establishing mission communities within their sachemships. On Noepe, sachemship land was technically owned in fee simple by the sachem because that was how the colonial government of Martha’s Vineyard perceived it.<sup>17</sup> Yet, in several Christian sachemships and mission communities, sachems continued to treat

“their” land as they had in pre-colonial times and manage it with the input of their communities for the benefit of the entire sachemship. They could and did assert their legalized “sachem rights” to keep land-hungry settlers at bay and enforce land management decisions that the colonial government would recognize.

Noepe was divided into four major Wampanoag sachemships: Nunnepog, Chappaquiddick, Taakemmy, and Aquinnah. All were home to mission communities.<sup>18</sup> During the mission community era prior to Metacom’s War, Nunnepog was ruled by Tawanquatuck, Chappaquiddick by Pahkehpunnassoo, Aquinnah by Mittark, and Taakemmy by Keteannummin. In all but Taakemmy, sachems played a deliberate and major role in encouraging Christianity in their jurisdiction, and they continued to rule there as sachems.<sup>19</sup> In these Christian sachemships, there was significant continuity regarding who managed the land as well as how it was managed.

In Nunnepog, Chappaquiddick, and Aquinnah, sachems continued to perform their pre-colonial roles, receiving tribute from their followers and allocating land within their sachemships. Their ability to do so was backed by colonial recognition of their “sachem rights,” and was strengthened through English legal channels by a government invested in promoting Christianity. Though they were connected to English legal systems, and had their lives upended by colonial invasion, these sachems made decisions regarding their mission communities’ lands with minimal interference from colonial authorities. While Thomas Mayhew Sr. was invested in obtaining Native land for English settlements and pursued this aggressively, he did

not seek to usurp sachems' roles on land they still held. Matthew Mayhew said that his grandfather Thomas Mayhew Sr. promised the sachems of Noepe that he had no intention of undermining their leadership:

He therefore prudently lets them know, that by order from his Master the King of England, he was to Govern the English which should inhabit these Islands; that his Master was in Power far above any of the Indian Monarches; but that as he was powerful, so was he a great lover of Justice; that therefore he would in no measure invade there Jurisdictions; but on the contrary Assist them as need required; that Religion and Government were distinct things.<sup>20</sup>

This approach went beyond mere rhetoric. Given how dramatically Wampanoags outnumbered English on Noepe, Mayhew had good pragmatic reason to tread lightly, and Christian sachemships on Noepe managed their own affairs regarding land tenure in their communities. As Wampanoag mission communities continued to align more closely with the colonial government, people in traditional positions of power such as sachems, their counselors, and others from elite families were vested with additional authority in official church roles, and as magistrates who were part of the colonial legal systems. In these capacities, they continued their prior leadership roles, including land management, in addition to enforcing the new codes of behavior that were part of Christianity. While some "common Indians" like Hiacoome rose in status and acquired power via these new mechanisms, sachemships typically chose their existing leaders to be church officials and magistrates.<sup>21</sup>

Legally, sachem rights could be sold or granted to anyone, including colonists. Many English communities acquired Indigenous land by purchasing sachem rights in Martha's Vineyard.<sup>22</sup> However, Tawanquatuck, Pahkehpunnassoo, Mittark, and other

leaders of their sub-sachemships passed down their rights to mission community lands to blood heirs according to Wampanoag tradition rather than selling or granting them to colonists or other Wampanoags. While this was not incompatible with English customs, it was also the way sachemships had practiced leadership transfer time out of mind. Tawanquatuck was a leading Christian and the sachem of Nunnepog, which contained the mission communities of Nashamoies and Sanchiacantacket. He transferred sachem rights along with the powers and responsibilities of the sachem's office to his son during his lifetime, and to his grandchildren upon his death.<sup>23</sup> Pahkehpunnassoo did likewise in Chappaquiddick, passing these privileges and obligations along with land title to his son Seeknout.<sup>24</sup> Sanchiacantacket was a sub-sachemship as well as a village-sized mission community; here leadership and land passed from father to son.<sup>25</sup> Upon his death, Mittark of Aquinnah passed his sachem rights to his son Joseph Mittark.<sup>26</sup>

In September 1675, Mittark's elder brother Omppauhinnit reappeared in Aquinnah after a long absence to collect his due inheritance as the oldest son. He asked for land, or alternatively, for Mittark to step down and give him the sachemship. The arrangement they came to was a land transfer, recorded as a report of Native court proceedings and a subsequent deed confirmation. In this transaction, the people of Aquinnah utilized colonial legal systems to strengthen and reinforce their own customs and decisions.

In settling this issue, Mittark showed respect for the Wampanoag tradition of hereditary leadership by acknowledging his older brother's claim to the sachemship,

even though Omppauhinnit had been away for years and Mittark was well-established as the sachem. To make the decision, Mittark called upon his “chief men, and also the (common) people.” The report of Native court proceedings reported that they:

...appointed a great court and we called the sachems of this island and the people as far as the mainland. We sought whatever would be right concerning us and Omppauhinnit, concerning his asking for land or the sachemship.<sup>27</sup>

A jury of prominent Native men were empowered to decide to outcome of the case:

We formed or sent out a jury. They were to be the ones to judge what (“right”) Omppauhinnit had at Gay Head, and we [woul]d do it. We gave them complete (?) power that whatever they did, we would confirm.

This jury ultimately decided that Omppauhinnit would receive one quarter of the Aquinnah sachemship for “he and his posterity forever.”<sup>28</sup>

By calling a “great court” and empowering a “jury” of prominent Wampanoag men to decide the outcome of the case, Mittark and his people demonstrated their adoption of English legal structures in this decision regarding sachemship land.<sup>29</sup> They also employed a deed to further legalize the transfer of land to Omppauhinnit. Yet, this was not a case of English systems overwhelming Wampanoag ones in a mission community. Rather, this is an example of colonial structures being used to strengthen Wampanoag decisions, customs, and land claims.

The language of the document reporting the court’s decision as well as the deed confirming the land to Omppauhannit attest to the continuation of Wampanoag land management systems in Aquinnah. These documents were written in the Wampanoag language, and the involvement of Mittark’s “chief men” and “common



people” can be seen throughout the decision-making process. In the document reporting the court proceedings, Mittark said that “we” appointed the court, “we” called the sachems of the island and mainland, “we” sought a fair compromise between the sachemship and Omppauhannit, “we” held the court in September 1675, “we found thus in our court,” “we” formed a jury and gave them decision making power, “we” would confirm the court’s decision, etc.<sup>30</sup>

The confirmation of Omppauhannit’s deed also shows that as part of his land management strategy, Mittark shared the power to alienate land with his people:

The division shall be measured by wise and great English gentlemen... By right his belongs to Ompahinit, him and all his posterity forever. And we Indian sachems and chief men and all (common) people of this gay Head have given him this deed... In addition, we ask of you honorable English Gentlemen that this deed that Ompahinnit now has you shall confirm (?) to him so that [Ompannit] Omppahinit may (“safely”) hold his land, he and all his posterity. Now we Indian sachems and chief men do confirm this deed of Omppahinnit’s.<sup>31</sup>

Mittark and the Aquinnahs employed English colonial authorities to execute their decisions by measuring out the division and recording/confirming the deed. At no point in these records however, were English authorities visibly involved in any of the decision making. Mittark retained this power because he retained legal title to the land; he chose to share it with his “chief men” and the people of the sachemship overall.<sup>32</sup>

In 1675, Mittark and others were well aware that the transfer of “sachem rights” could have reverberating regional consequences if the holder of those rights sold the land to colonists. According to Wampanoag custom, Mittark would have been expected to take his community’s input into account when making land

management decisions. By colonial law however, Mittark held the “sachem rights” to Aquinnah and was not obligated to involve other Native people and communities in these decisions. Yet he did so, and, like several other Noepe leaders, fulfilled a sachem’s traditional role of “seeking whatever would be right” for his community in the process of transferring part of his sachem rights to Omppauhannit.

The seventeenth-century mainland Wampanoag mission communities in Plymouth were more sparsely documented than those of either Martha’s Vineyard or Massachusetts Bay, but they were just as critical to Native persistence in the region. While land scarcity due to English encroachment was not as extreme in Plymouth as it was in Massachusetts Bay, tensions over land use were very much on the rise by the time mission communities were established here in the sixteen-fifties and sixteen-sixties. Mainland Wampanoag people increasingly had to defend their land bases from English land hunger.<sup>33</sup> Some did so by making these land bases home to mission communities that were owned in common by the inhabitants, legally under the colonial English system.

Indigenous people who supported the mission communities in Plymouth were overwhelmingly Wampanoags, and they were scattered in many villages across the region. In 1674, Richard Bourne wrote to Daniel Gookin and described no less than twenty-two villages where “praying Indians” lived within Plymouth Colony.<sup>34</sup> John Cotton Jr. reported an additional two.<sup>35</sup> Bourne also reported that three parcels of land were “preserved for them and theirs forever, under hand and seal” by the Plymouth

colonial government near Mashpee, Comassakumknat (Herring Pond), and Cotuhtikut (Titicut).<sup>36</sup>

Of these three mission communities, by far the most thoroughly documented in the seventeenth century is Mashpee.<sup>37</sup> Though Mashpee is often referred to as a praying town, it was actually a tract of approximately fifty square miles that encompassed several Wampanoag villages. Russell Peters said of his people's past: "If they were to survive, they had to learn the ways of the white settlers. This included learning the English language and accepting the Christian religion. The only path to survival was for the natives to give up many of their traditions and culture."<sup>38</sup> In the midst of that upheaval and sacrifice however, they successfully preserved important aspects of their way of life, including core elements of land tenure and community structure. As they navigated the complexities and strictures imposed by English colonialism, Native people in the Mashpee villages maintained an important degree of sovereignty over their land and their lives upon it.

At the urging of Richard Bourne, the Plymouth General Court sanctioned the establishment of an Indigenous government over Mashpee in 1664. By the very act of approving the establishment of this government, the Plymouth authorities asserted an important degree of control over Mashpee's affairs. Yet, the way the court sanctioned the new government was more deferential to Native power structures than it was invested in supervising Native governance over the Mashpee villages:

Paupmunnucke, Kenncomsett, Watanamatucke, and Nanquidnumacke, Kanoonus, and Mocrust, to have the cheife inspection and management therof, with the healp and advise of the said Richard Bourne, as the matter may require; and that one of the aforesaid Indians bee by the rest

instaled to acte as a constable amongst them, it being alwise provided, notwithstanding, that what homage accustomed legally due to any superior sachem bee not heerby infringed.<sup>39</sup>

Some scholarship on Mashpee refers to this moment as a turning point in which Mashpee's government structure became part of the colonial system, and more English in nature."<sup>40</sup> However closely this government was actually tied to the colonial system, it also closely resembled the leadership structure of a sachemship. In particular, Mashpee's government featured a core group of leaders – one of whom was vested with additional authority, and all of whom owed "homage" to a "superior sachem."<sup>41</sup> It is also telling that the Plymouth General Court explicitly instructed Mashpee's government to respect the authority of their "superior sachem" as they managed their villages. No similar provisions were made that required Mashpee's Native rulers to defer to colonial leaders or laws, and Bourne's role was in a supportive advisory capacity, not one of official authority.<sup>42</sup>

No surviving documents attest to the intimate day-to-day details of internal land management of Mashpee's seventeenth-century government before Metacom's War. However, the way the land was granted by sachems Wepquish, Tookenchosin, and Quatchatisset, along with later colonial reports, all offer key insights. These three sachems deeded the Mashpee land base to "the South Sea Indians" collectively, under the management and protection of five Native men, William Pease, Kanoonus, Ashuwaham, Wonbees, and Compocknet, who were expressly forbidden from alienating the land to outsiders. The land was given unconditionally and in perpetuity, "from generation to generation." In 1665, Wepquish and Tookenchosin specified that

none of the land they granted was to be sold to outsiders without the unanimous consent of everyone in the community:

We freely give these lands forementioned unto the South Sea Indians and their children forever: and not to be sold or given away from them by anyone without all their consents thereunto.<sup>43</sup>

Quatchatisset took this provision a step further in 1666:

I Quichatasset do freely give from my self and my Children for ever unto the South Sea Indians and their Children for ever for a possession for them and their Children for ever not to be sold or given or alienated from them or any part of these lands.<sup>44</sup>

In his deed, Quatchatisset stated that the lands he granted to the “South Sea Indians” were not to be sold or alienated out of the community – period.

Titicut is less thoroughly documented than Mashpee, but it was owned by its inhabitants in a similar manner. In 1664, the sachem Wampatuk gave land “unto the Indians living upon the Catuhkut River (viz) Pompanohoo Waweavs and the other Indians living there.” A deed legally sealing this agreement was recorded by the Plymouth General Court and witnessed by Richard Bourne.<sup>45</sup> This land then became the mission community of Titicut. In 1686, Wampatuk’s son and successor (called Josias on this document) reaffirmed his father’s grant and added the provision that Titicut’s land was not to be sold or given to any English colonists – ever.<sup>46</sup> Many decades later in 1759, a petition from the Native preacher John Simon to the General Court of Massachusetts referenced the safeguards against land alienation that were present in Titicut’s early days. In his petition, Simon described the “care that was taken by our antient ancestors to prevent our selling of land and coming to want.”<sup>47</sup>

After establishing Mashpee as a mission community and owning land there as such, the “South Sea Indians” retained the settlement structure they had before this legal change. The 1665 and 1666 deeds from Wepquish, Tookenchosin, and Quatchatisset indicate that at the time of these land grants, the grantees were living in long-established scattered villages within the tract granted in the deed. When Richard Bourne reported to Daniel Gookin regarding Mashpee’s status in 1674, this had not changed.<sup>48</sup> They owned Mashpee communally throughout the colonial period, and continued to hunt, fish, and farm on a small scale.<sup>49</sup> Native people within mission Plymouth’s mission communities also continued to maintain kinship ties and mobility across southern New England.<sup>50</sup> Exactly how they allocated land use rights within the community before Metacom’s War is not known, but the apparent lack of engagement with colonial authorities in this process suggests that the villages in Mashpee managed this process independently, as they had done before they became part of a mission community.<sup>51</sup> Working from eighteenth-century records of land tenure systems in Mashpee, Jack Campisi infers that Mashpee’s earlier land allocation system “represented no major departure from custom. Aboriginal land practice provided for the allotment of parcels of land for agricultural use by members of the extended family... it did not disturb or alter existing land practice.”<sup>52</sup>

On paper, Indigenous people who established or joined mission communities in Massachusetts Bay underwent a more radical change in land tenure than those in Plymouth and Martha’s Vineyard. In 1652, the General Court of Massachusetts Bay

ordered that groups of Indigenous people who proved their “civility” could petition for townships of their own, as English settlers did, and that they were to own land there in the same fashion “as the English have.”<sup>53</sup> This meant organizing themselves into English style townships and forming their own town governments subject to the authority of the General Court. On the surface of the documentary record, it looks like Indigenous people who joined mission communities in Massachusetts Bay left the sachemship behind in favor of the township. Yet, upon close examination and comparison of available records, we can see that sachemships continued to exist within townships, and Indigenous ways of managing their land continued within the mission communities. The ways in which they did this, while owning land “as the English have” are complex, and require deep immersion in the legal records of Massachusetts Bay.

Owning land in the same manner as English settlers represented a loss and a gain for Native people who secured title to their land through the Massachusetts Bay court system. By doing so, they acknowledged the power of colonial authorities to make legal decisions about Native land. The same court order that guaranteed their rights to petition for and be granted townships ended with the qualification that any land that did not fall under the court approved conditions of Native ownership would automatically be considered the “just right” of English settlers who could claim land on the basis of biblical authority, court approval, and acquisition of the “Indian right.” In 1652, this signaled an intention by colonial authorities to assimilate Native land and people into their cultural, legal, and political sphere of influence.<sup>54</sup>

With few options, the people of the mission communities had a bitter pill to swallow, knowing that their strategy of claiming the praying towns strengthened colonial claims to other Native lands. Yet, gaining English title to land carried crucial pragmatic advantages in the face of exploding English population and demands for land in the mid and late seventeenth century. Native people whose ownership of praying town land was legalized in colonial courts now claimed the trifecta of English entitlement. Standing behind their land title were the three layers of ownership English settlers based their claims on: English political power, biblically based entitlement, and the “Indian right.” This is what it meant to hold townships in the same legal fashion as English settlers.<sup>55</sup>

For an English township to be established in Massachusetts Bay, a group or individual (most often a group) had to petition the General Court for a grant of land on which to build their town. It was required that at some point, the town would also acquire the “Indian right” to that same land. In practice, this was not a prerequisite to settling and building a town – many Native people were compensated (usually far less than an English landowner would have been paid) for their rights to ancestral land years and even decades after English people settled there.<sup>56</sup> Once the land was legally granted by the General Court, the inhabitants of the township were empowered to establish their own local government and to allocate land. Town governments were responsible for designating some of their township’s land to be used in common and to remain open for future expansion as “undivided commons.” They also had the



power and obligation to “graunt lotts” for private fee simple ownership to the inhabitants of the town.<sup>57</sup>

When a town was established, its founders became “proprietors.” Alan Greer defines proprietor in this context as “anyone who lived in the town and had held lands there” and who was “entitled to a share in future land distributions when portions of the undivided commons were divided.” Proprietors were also understood as having a voice in local government. Some towns accepted new proprietors for several years after the original founders established the town, but eventually most towns “closed” this option. At this point, newcomers who were accepted into the town would be granted or sold land and had standing in the community and its affairs. But, although they were landowners, they had no entitlement to future ownership of the undivided commons.<sup>58</sup>

In Massachusetts Bay, praying towns were legally defined as townships, and land there was held by Native people according to the same structure that English people held their land. But, one anomalous aspect of mission community land ownership was not completely equivalent to typical English land ownership. Though this was not included in the court order that provided umbrella policy for mission community land ownership, provisions were regularly included in praying town grants and boundary-determining documents that prohibited the sale of praying town land to settlers without the express permission of the General Court. These provisions were included as early as 1654, when Nashobah, Hassanamesit and Okommakamesit were granted to Native founders.<sup>59</sup> Such provisions were supported by Eliot. In a 1659

petition to the General Court regarding the boundary determination of several mission communities, he requested that “the Indians may not have power to [word illegible] to sell away their lands as to alienate them from the Townes, nor to have power to sell their intrest in the comon land in the Townes, before it be divided out unto them.”<sup>60</sup>

The committee that laid out Natick’s boundaries in 1659 ordered that “none of the Indians or theire successors shall have power to sell, alienate, give, or dispose of any the said lands.” However, they also specified that this order did not apply to sales “from one Indian to another.”<sup>61</sup> These provisions demonstrate an additional layer of paternalistic control that the colonial government held over mission community lands. Gookin rationalized these provisions as protection for Native people, who he described as “poor, as well as improvident” and “very prone to sell their land to the English, and thereby leave themselves destitute.” Eliot, Gookin, and the General Court also knew that colonial town governments and individual settlers were likely to take any opportunity to pressure Native people into selling praying town land. If the mission community land base disintegrated, the mission would fall apart; they were not willing to take that risk.<sup>62</sup>

For understanding how closely land ownership in praying towns and English towns paralleled one another in actuality, it is important to note that township grants to English settlers from the General Court were not free of provisions and limitations on what they could do with that land. Indeed, certain restraints on land alienation when land was granted in fee simple were allowed under English law.<sup>63</sup> As an example, towns were commonly required to develop the land they were granted and

settle a prescribed number of families by a certain deadline, or the grant would be rescinded.<sup>64</sup> In the very same court session that granted lands for the praying town of Wamesit, the General Court granted nearby land to a group of English petitioners to establish a town there. But, if the founders did not “within two years, settle a competent number of families there, by building and planting upon the said tract of land twenty families or upwards, so as they may be in capacitie of injoying all the ordinances of God there, then the graunt to be void.” Individual landowners in many English towns were unable to sell or rent their land without permission from the town, and some were allocated land for specific uses only. Some towns even repossessed land that was left alone too long by individual grantees.<sup>65</sup> While requiring the General Court’s permission to sell land to settlers was a restriction placed ubiquitously on praying town landholders and not on English ones, both had to contend with limitations and conditions that were imposed by the colonial government and designed to further its broader goals.

The General Court’s directive that praying towns were to be owned by Native people in the same fashion that English settlers owned their townships was not empty rhetoric or an unfulfilled promise. It was followed through in practice, and the legal records that attest to this are scattered but abundant. Even more importantly, many of the same documents that show legal parallels between English and Native townships also show that in the latter, legal ownership of praying town land was widespread

amongst inhabitants; mission communities were used by significant numbers of Native people to gain secure title to their land.

This was a crucial avenue to land ownership for thousands of Native people whose land rights were gone or imperiled. Regardless of how the English perceived their “Indian right” Indigenous individuals and communities could acquire legal title through the institution of the township. Several legal records refer to Native people in mission communities as proprietors.<sup>66</sup> Whether all Native landholders in the mission communities of Massachusetts Bay held the status of proprietor is not clear, but one did not need to be a founder or proprietor to own land in a praying town. Further, ownership of praying town land was not a privilege reserved for those who could prove they held an “Indian right” by virtue of an elite bloodline. Legally, any town inhabitant could secure title to a lot of their own as well as entitlement to the resources of the commons.<sup>67</sup> Much like in a sachemship, people within a township held rights to use town lands for their livelihoods as inhabitants and members of the community. Just as colonial English townships left significant land open for future expansion, praying towns were granted extensive acreage with the understanding that these undivided commons would be granted to future Native inhabitants.<sup>68</sup>

Broadly, the language used by officials who referenced the Massachusetts mission communities indicates widespread ownership of land within these townships. In 1674, Daniel Gookin summarized what he considered to be some of the most important laws made by the General Court “relating unto the Indians.” Among others: “The civil Indians to have lands granted them for towns.” He also recalled that “the

general court of Massachusetts hath bounded, stated and settled, several townships and plantations of lands unto these praying Indians... as there may be occasion, the general court will grant more villages to the Indians.”<sup>69</sup> Gookin also described the process by which Natick was established: “The land was granted to the Indians, at the motion of Mr. Eliot, by the general court of Massachusetts; and in the year 1651, a number of them combined together, and formed a town.”<sup>70</sup> Here Gookin described the petition process in general terms, and affirmed that land in the praying towns was owned “by the Indians.” In 1665, the General Court responded to a royal inquiry asking them to account for their progress propagating the gospel. They said that “there are sixe tounes of Indians within this jurisdiction, who professe the Christian religion, who have lands & tounships set forth & appropriated to them by this Court.”<sup>71</sup>

These summary accounts reflected legal reality on the ground in Massachusetts. Throughout the mid and late seventeenth century, the General Court issued directives, made laws, and documented legal decisions that made it very clear that praying towns in this colony were owned by “the Indians.” Such ownership and responsibility for mission community land was diffused among the inhabitants of the townships themselves – not to a specific individual, elite group, or English guardian. Land belonged to the town and some was distributed by the town government to individual landowners while some was held in common. The language of legal records involving mission communities repeatedly affirms this reality. This began as early as 1646, in the foundational General Court order which appointed a committee

to identify and purchase land “for the incuragement of the Indians to live in an orderly way amongst us.”<sup>72</sup> When Eliot (frequently) appeared in legal records as advocating for praying town land throughout the seventeenth century, it was “in behalf of the Indians.”<sup>73</sup> As a representative for Native praying town founders Eliot repeatedly and successfully petitioned the General Court for land, but the court made it clear that the townships Eliot requested were not being granted to him. Rather, Native people were officially vested with ownership of the new towns.<sup>74</sup> Such terminology is consistent in the legal records surrounding praying town land and establishment throughout the seventeenth century. When the General Court issued orders to lay out the official boundaries of specific praying towns, the orders specified a number of acres to be laid out “to the Indians.”<sup>75</sup> When the General Court approved the creation of Nashobah, Hassanamesit, and Okommakamesit, it was recorded in two separate volumes of General Court records. In one entry, it was the “inhabitants” of these mission communities who were vested with the right and responsibility to “erect several Indian towns in the places propounded.” In the other, land was granted “to the Indians, to make a town there.”<sup>76</sup> When the General Court recorded its judgment in the Dedham/Natick land dispute, they ordered that: “the Indians be not dispossessed of such lands as they at present are possessed of there.”<sup>77</sup>

Many legal records, especially those documented by the General Court, attest to Native ownership of praying town land, and the diffusion of legal ownership among each town’s inhabitants. Less numerous but just as important are legal documents that reveal specifics of the way land was owned on a local level within

these towns. Those that do exist show that the General Court's order for mission community inhabitants to own land "as the English have" was born out in practice on a local level well beyond the granting process. Even more specifically, they reveal that some land was held privately in fee simple, while other land was designated for common use in the mission communities of Massachusetts Bay.

In 1675, the General Court approved an exchange of land between Natick and the English town of Sherbourne. The General Court "gave leave to the people of Sherborne to purchase, by way of exchange, from the people of Natick a quantity of land belonging to Natick." Here, the land is referenced as belonging to the town, and to the people of the town. Natick exchanged four thousand acres of land for an equal amount of Sherbourne's land, along with two hundred bushels of grain, and the promise that a Native Natick farmer named Peter Ephraim would be allowed to keep and enlarge his "lott" that fell within the tract given to Sherborne. This is an example of private individual ownership – Peter Ephraim had a "lott" of his own that he had invested time and labor in transforming into a farm while he was an inhabitant of Natick. When that land became part of the township of Sherborne, his private ownership persisted, though he and his land were now part of Sherborne instead of Natick, and "under the government of the township of sherbourne, as the english are."<sup>78</sup>

This document also reveals details of how land allocation was managed in Natick. The signatories of the articles of agreement were Daniel Morse, Thomas Eames, Henry Leland, and Obadiah Morse "in the behalf of the town of sherborne"

and Waban, Pyambow, Thomas Tray (rulers of Natick), and John Awooseamoge, sen, Peter Ephraim, and Daniel “on behalf of the town of Natick.” Here and other places in the document, these men are listed as acting on behalf of their towns, and “on behalf of the rest” of each of their town’s people. In this transaction, English and Native town governments appear to have been following equivalent procedures. Overall, this document shows that like an English town, Natick’s land was held by the town as a patchwork of common land and individually owned land.<sup>79</sup> A very similar deed of land exchange was recorded between the English town of Chelmsford and the praying town of Wamesit in 1660.<sup>80</sup>

In May of 1677, after Metacom’s death but before the official end of the war, a group of twelve Native proprietors signed a deed of a gift for one hundred acres of Okommakamesit land to Daniel Gookin.<sup>81</sup> The land granted was “one parcel of land, heretofore broken up by us and our predecessors” but Gookin was also granted usufruct rights to land held by the town in common. This intriguing deed reveals much about the way land was owned in the mission community of Okommakamesit. In contrast to the exchange between Sherbourne and Natick, this was not a case of town leaders disposing of land and acting on behalf of the town’s inhabitants. In this Okommakamesit deed, inhabitants directly transferred land they owned privately. The group alienating their Okommakamesit lands included five women; while women could be sachems according to Indigenous customs, they were barred from holding official leadership positions in praying towns. These women were Sarah Conomog, Elizabeth Solomon, Assoask, Mary David and Sarah Naaskomit. Two of these



women deeded the land on behalf of their children. One of the male signatories, James Speene, did so on behalf of his wife.<sup>82</sup>

Whether the deed's signatories owned individual parcels adjacent to each other totaling one hundred acres or had collective rights to that area is not clear in this deed. It is clear however that the land legally belonged to each of them. In the deed, they described themselves as "true proprietors, possessors, and improvers of the lands called Whip Sufferage alias Okonomesit." They also asserted that "we have due right and privildge in law to give and grant the forementioned premises, not only as it is our natural right and possession according to God's word and the laws of the land, but as it is confirmed to us by grant from the General Court of Massachusetts in New England." Here they claimed the trifecta of English colonial entitlement.<sup>83</sup> The deed was confirmed by the General Court, and English as well as Native leaders signed the deed as witnesses.<sup>84</sup>

In 1681, the General Court gave Sarah Onnamaug permission to sell up to one hundred acres of her late husband's land in Okommakamesit. Sarah Onnamaug was the widow of Onnamaug, referred to in this document as "late ruler and sagamore" of Okommakamesit. Onnamaug was a Nipmuc sachem and a ruler in Okommakamesit until his death in 1674.<sup>85</sup> This deed is especially revealing. First, it is evidence of private ownership – the "home lot and orchard, with about sixty acres of woodland and meadow" were clearly the property of Onnamaug. He was referred to not only as a ruler but as the Sagamore of Okommakamesit.<sup>86</sup> In this English legal document, Onnamaug is named as sachem of a mission community legally defined as an English

style township, while also owning land there “as the English have” and serving as a ruler of the town under the missionary-introduced government structure.<sup>87</sup>

While English authorities intended Massachusetts Bay praying towns to be places of cultural assimilation and placed emphasis on a changing relationship with the land, Indigenous inhabitants turned the towns into something quite different. Close inspection of these places reveals that owning land according to colonial legal customs did not eliminate the kinds of land tenure systems present in sachemships. Land allocation processes in townships and sachemships actually mirrored each other in fundamental ways, and Native systems of land use persisted within the colonial legal framework. This was possible partly due to a degree of overlap between Native and English societal land use practices. As seen in the examples above, some land in mission community townships was held communally, while other land was assigned to individuals and families. This contradicts neither Indigenous nor English customs.

In mission communities across Massachusetts Bay, pre-colonial systems of land tenure and allocation survived within English-style townships. In a sachemship, the sachem was in charge of deciding how land was allocated. In English-style townships including praying towns, the town leadership did this. Praying town government structure was loosely modeled after an old-testament biblical example. It was a tiered system in which Native men were elected by praying town inhabitants as rulers of one hundred, rulers of fifty, and rulers of ten. Rulers of one hundred each had authority over one hundred people, rulers of fifty answered to the rulers of one

hundred, etc. They managed town affairs together like the proprietors of English towns did.<sup>88</sup> Though this system was certainly foreign, it was not incompatible with Native leadership structures. In many mission communities in Massachusetts Bay, town inhabitants chose their existing sachems and other elites to rule the town and perform their traditional land management roles. By selecting sachemship leaders to rule praying towns, inhabitants chose to perpetuate their sachemship community within their townships, and largely relied on their traditional leaders to manage their land. This can be seen in the Wamesit and Chelmsford land exchange of 1660, for example. Of the eight Wamesits who signed this deed, at least three were traditional leaders who appear elsewhere in the historical record.<sup>89</sup> As town rulers, they made decisions about land allocation. The presence of five other Native signatures indicates an element of shared decision-making in Wamesit, which was common in sachemships as well as townships.<sup>90</sup>

The continuity of sachemship leadership transferred to praying town leadership can be seen in many Massachusetts Bay mission communities. Mission communities commonly voted for sachems and others from elite families to hold leadership positions in the township. Of thirteen total “rulers of one hundred,” the highest office in a praying town, seven were sachems in 1674. Additionally, former counselors and members of elite families were frequently chosen for other town and church leadership positions.<sup>91</sup> Eliot never intended rulership in the praying towns to be based on lineage, but on several occasions the inhabitants voted for those who would have been successors to the sachemship. For example, the Pawtucket sachem

Attawans was the first ruler of Nashobah, the mission community built on the land he negotiated for. When he died, his son John Attawans was elected ruler of Nashobah.<sup>92</sup> Wampatuk, successor to the Massachusetts sachem Chickataubut, was chosen by the Ponkapoags as chief ruler. After Wampatuk rejected praying town life and moved with some of his followers to Matakesset in the mid sixteen-fifties, he was succeeded by his young son Jeremy. Wampatuk's brother, Squamaug, ruled the mission community as regent.<sup>93</sup> Based on leadership transfers recorded primarily by Eliot and Gookin, it is clear that many sachemships in Massachusetts Bay chose to envelop their communities within English townships and keep their existing rulers as land managers.

In Massachusetts Bay, Indigenous people used praying towns both to reclaim land they had lost to English invasion, and to shield what land they still had from the same fate. Close examination of Natick's origins offers a window into an uncommonly well-documented example, and potential reasons for employing this strategy. In Natick, different Native groups claimed legal title as founders of the same town. One, a Massachusetts sachemship led by Kitchemekin, used Natick to gain ownership over their former sachemship lands, which had been alienated to English colonists years earlier. A second group, the Speene family, still held their Indian right to much of Natick's land base up until they transferred these rights in order to establish this praying town. Though their ancestral rights were acknowledged by the Massachusetts Bay government, the Speenes chose to give these Indian rights to

Natick as a town, and to own allotments there in the English style.<sup>94</sup> Though their legal claims to Natick were very different before this land base became a praying town, Kitchemekin's people and the Speenes both recognized the precarity of their access to ancestral land, and worked to gain secure title "as the English have."<sup>95</sup>

Kitchemekin inherited a sachemship in crisis when his brother Chickataubut died in the smallpox epidemic of 1633. Two years before Kitchemekin assumed his new leadership role, Thomas Dudley reported that only between fifty and sixty people remained alive in the Massachusetts sachemship, representing a possible ninety percent population loss. Probably due to political vulnerability stemming from this catastrophe, Kitchemekin was one of the earliest sachems to submit to the Massachusetts Bay government in 1644. In the wake of the two epidemics that devastated his people, Kitchemekin saw vast swaths of Massachusetts land appropriated by English settlers through *vacuum domicilium*. In the sixteen-thirties and sixteen-forties, Kitchemekin sold or gave his Indian right in most of his sachemship's remaining land to Massachusetts Bay in order to secure political protection from Indigenous and English threats. These sales and grants added to the portions of the sachemship English settlers had already obtained from Chickataubut and claimed through *vacuum domicilium*. By the time Natick was established, all but forty acres of Kitchemekin's sachemship were in English hands, including much of the land Natick would be built upon.<sup>96</sup>

Faced with this rapid dispossession, the faction of Massachusetts people who became Natick's founders took matters into their own hands by working with Eliot

and Gookin to establish Massachusetts Bay's first praying town and to secure land there. Kitchemekin was apparently reluctant to take this route, but the people of his sachemship pursued it anyway. After all, they had no legal claim to Natick's land according to English laws, and what remained of their land base was shrinking as the English population grew. In English accounts, Kitchemekin is described as ambivalent towards Christianity at best, and he was a latecomer to the mission project relative to his people. Yet, he eventually joined them in supporting the praying towns and the establishment of Natick, and he owned land there just as they did.<sup>97</sup>

By applying for a township at Natick through the colonial court system, this Massachusetts group gained legal title to a significant part of the sachemship they had lost. Although Eliot doubted the sincerity of Kitchemekin's Christianity, Natick's founders voted for him to become the preeminent leader of their town as a ruler of one hundred in 1651, and Eliot accepted their decision.<sup>98</sup> They likely did this in order to keep their sachemship as unified and intact as possible on land they knew and loved. As Eliot put it simply: "he was the chief sachem, and therefore chosen as the chief [of Natick]."<sup>99</sup> Accepting his position as ruler of Natick meant that Kitchemekin's power as a sachem was circumscribed by English laws and expectations, but Eliot insisted that "all the time Kitchemekin lived" Natick's inhabitants "did always honor, obey, and pay tribute to him."<sup>100</sup> More importantly, Kitchemekin joined his people in reclaiming and managing a stable land base out of the sachemship he inherited, re-expanding their lands from forty acres to six thousand.<sup>101</sup>

In contrast to Kitchemekin's sachemship, the Speene family's ancestral land rights were acknowledged by the Massachusetts Bay government at the time of Natick's founding. These rights had not been alienated to English settlers, and the Speenes' Indian right had not been extinguished.<sup>102</sup> Eliot himself acknowledged "all those Lands, or a great part at least, which belong to Natick, were the inheritance of John Speene and his brethren and kindred."<sup>103</sup> Yet, instead of continuing to legally hold that land based on their ancestral right, they sought to own it in the English style and did so by helping to establish Natick.

In 1650, Eliot reported: "publicly and solemnly before the Lord and all the people, John Speen and his kindred, friends, and posterity gave away all their Right and interest, which they had formerly had in the Land, in and about Natick, unto the public interest of the towne of Natick, so that the praying Indians might then make a towne." By doing this, the Speenes relinquished their birthright to Natick's land. But they got something else, possibly more valuable, in return. According to Eliot, the Speenes reserved an "interest" in their fishing weirs and received "a gratuity unto their good contentment" when they transferred their land rights to the township of Natick. Much more importantly, the Speenes became some of Natick's most influential founders and chose to "take up lots, as others did, by the publick order and agreement of the towne."<sup>104</sup> Once Natick was officially granted to its inhabitants by the Massachusetts General Court, the Speenes owned land in Natick in the same manner that English people owned property in their townships.

By applying for a township at Natick through the colonial court system and transferring their ancestral rights to the town, the Speenes obtained land title “as the English have,” and helped to secure the same for many other Native people.<sup>105</sup> In addition to owning land under the English legal system, many of the Speenes also became influential leaders and teachers in Natick and in other praying towns. They replaced their birthright to leadership and control over their ancestral sachemship with elected leadership positions and legal ownership of smaller portions of their land under colonial law.<sup>106</sup> In addition to providing rare information about the ways land ownership was structured in Natick, Eliot’s account of the Speenes’ decision raises an important question: why did they give up their ancestral rights to most of Natick in exchange for English-style ownership of much smaller allotments within this mission community?

As part of his “public confession” in the missionary tract *A Further Account of the Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians In New England* John Speene provides a glimpse into his reasons for giving up his birthright as a sachem’s son in exchange for land ownership in Natick “as the English have.”<sup>107</sup> John Speene reportedly testified: “I therefore prayed, because many English knew me, and that I might please them; and because I saw that the English took much ground, and I thought if I prayed, the English would not take away my ground.” If these words are accurate, John Speene did not trust that his ancestral rights to Natick as the son of a sachem were sufficient to protect him from dispossession. While English authorities of the time insisted upon the consensual nature of their land transactions with Native



people, John Speene was aware that his ancestral tenure could be threatened by English expansion. He was also aware that English authorities could be “pleased” by his interest in Christianity, and that this could lead to land protection. John Speene replaced what he considered to be a precarious claim based on his Indian right with secure title as part of an English township, even though that meant a net loss of acreage.<sup>108</sup>

While missionary tracts like the one above must be interpreted with critical caution, John Speene’s situation makes the reasons he purportedly gave for embracing Christianity and supporting mission communities entirely plausible. John Speene and his family’s location put them on the frontlines of English expansion in Massachusetts Bay, as well as in close proximity to missionizing efforts. As English actions throughout the seventeenth century repeatedly demonstrated, a sachem’s ancestral rights being acknowledged by the English government did not free him or her from political pressure to alienate that land to a growing number of settlers. The colonial government in Massachusetts Bay had acknowledged the rights the Speenes held to Natick by virtue of their ancestry, but this family understandably sought additional protection through the praying town to secure their title.

Native people in Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth and Martha’s Vineyard navigated different legal pathways to mission community land ownership. While their ownership of that land looked different in each colony, all retained core elements of Indigenous land management customs and leadership within their mission

communities. Amid the tumult and sacrifice Indigenous people endured in order to make their lives in praying towns, they held fast to important aspects of their pre-colonial social and spiritual lives, and selectively integrated useful colonial introductions. A stable land base facilitated the kind of community cohesion necessary for this to happen. Mission community land was key to community survival in the seventeenth century, and it remains so today.

## Chapter 5

### *The Ground Still Remains:* Native People and Mission Community Lands Today

Beginning with the establishment of the first praying town in 1650, Indigenous people across southern New England achieved a remarkable measure of stability and security on mission community land that lasted approximately twenty-five years. By supporting mission communities and owning land there, Native groups created viable places for themselves in the unstable borderlands of southern New England. There, on their own ground, they furthered Indigenous identity and community even amidst intense adaptations. Though life in praying towns was circumscribed by English dominance, these places provided a way for thousands of Indigenous people to live in relative safety and prosperity in a chaotic and perilous new world. This hard-won stability was shattered with the outbreak of Metacom's War in 1675.

As apocalyptic and world-altering as it was, Metacom's War was not the end of the praying town story. While it caused catastrophic population loss, it did not end Native presence in southern New England. Many mission communities were destroyed or depopulated, but many also survived or were rebuilt. Though the war hastened in a new age of dispossession, it did not end Native people's presence on and connection to praying town land. This land was home to Indigenous people long before the praying towns were formed and it would remain so centuries after the war that upended them. New chapters are added to the Indigenous story of praying town

land every day.

The beginning of this chapter delves into key impacts of Metacom's War specifically relating to mission communities, with particular emphasis on this war's consequences for land ownership. The rest of the chapter is dedicated to highlighting some of the ways that Native people are connected to mission community land today. Though they are powerful and fascinating in their own right, I include these stories here largely because they are the logical "end" point of this study on praying town land. While this dissertation is necessarily bounded and static, mission community lands are not; they are still part of a living story that began thousands of years before the praying towns and continues with each new generation. The examples included here are far from exhaustive, and this chapter is not a comprehensive overview of all mission community land use by Native people in the present day. Rather, it is an invitation to conceptualize present-day southern New England as an Indigenous landscape, to encourage and support further research, and to cultivate broader awareness of Native presence in these places.

In 1675, tensions that had been simmering for decades over English demand for land and exploitative colonial policies towards Indigenous people finally erupted into one of the most destructive wars in America's history. Tensions between the Wampanoag confederation and Plymouth provided the catalyst for war, but the conflict and its causes were much bigger than these two polities. The diplomatic relationship that Massasoit and the earliest English settlers had worked to cultivate in the early seventeenth century progressively disintegrated as English population and

power grew. By the time Massasoit's son Metacom (also known as King Philip) became the Wampanoag ketasontimoog in 1662, aggressive colonial encroachment had pushed Native people and English colonists to the brink of war. As Indigenous land bases steadily eroded in the face of relentless English expansion with no end in sight, Native people became increasingly desperate in what they were willing to do to protect what territory they had left.

Whether or not Wampanoags and other Native groups in southern New England were actually preparing for war with the colonies in the sixteen-sixties and early sixteen-seventies is a matter of debate, but colonial authorities certainly suspected it, especially in Plymouth. In response, they flexed their power in attempts to overawe the Wampanoag confederation in particular, insisting on humiliating displays of submission and disarmament, and overstepping their authority by interfering in Wampanoag affairs. The final straw in a series of tense interactions was the suspicious death of a Native Christian named John Sassamon in the winter of 1675. Sassamon had close ties with the English and a troubled relationship with Metacom. When he was found dead in a frozen pond, several colonists and Native Christians suspected foul play and accused three Wampanoag men (all advisors to Metacom) of his murder. Although they were Metacom's subjects, these men were tried and executed by the Plymouth colonial government. Within days of their execution, a group of Wampanoags attacked an English town in Plymouth. Whether they acted alone or under Metacom's authority is uncertain, but English forces began clashing with warriors led by Metacom shortly after these first episodes of violence.<sup>1</sup>

This conflict permanently altered the social and political landscape of southern New England. The violence spread across like wildfire far beyond Wampanoag homelands; Mohegans, Nipmucs, Massachusetts, Pawtuckets, Narragansetts, Wabanakis and Mohawks were drawn into the fighting. Many Native groups fought to drive the English out of southern New England; others sided with colonial forces. By the official end of Metacom's war in 1678, forty to fifty percent of the region's Indigenous population had been killed. Hundreds more Native people, some of them Christians, were sold into slavery in the Caribbean after being captured or surrendering to colonial authorities.<sup>2</sup> Innumerable Indigenous villages were razed by English colonists and their Indigenous allies, and many families were permanently separated. On the colonial side, nearly half of English towns suffered attack by Native forces, and many were destroyed altogether. Proportionate population loss on the English side was far less than Native people experienced, estimated between two and six percent of the region's settlers. This relatively small percentage was made up of thousands of lost lives, and the terror of the war left deep scars on the colonial population which had dire consequences for Indigenous survivors. During and after the war, the English population overall displayed intense hostility towards Native people, even those who had fought on the English side, and those who lived in and supported mission communities.<sup>3</sup>

Different mission communities handled the devastating war in different ways, some siding with Metacom, others casting their lot with the English, and still others struggling to stay neutral and avoid the bloodshed that swept across the region. All

found themselves suspected as enemies and traitors by both Metacom's followers and English colonists. Every mission community was impacted by the war, but their experiences could differ drastically depending on which colony they were located in.

In wartime Massachusetts Bay, Indigenous people within the praying towns had no good options, and they were vulnerable to violence from English and Indigenous forces. Many praying town communities fragmented, with some individuals staying on their land, and others fleeing or fighting. Some fought with the English, while others joined Metacom in battle. Those who remained on their land and pledged their loyalty to Massachusetts Bay colony faced violence by angry English settlers and found their liberty increasingly restricted by colonial officials who suspected them of aiding Metacom. Most Native people who remained in the praying towns were arrested by colonial authorities and deported to the infamous Deer Island, a bleak windswept islet near Boston. It is estimated that at least half of the approximately five hundred people imprisoned on Deer Island lost their lives there due to starvation and exposure, neglected and persecuted by their English allies.<sup>4</sup> Among many Native people in Massachusetts today, the name of Deer Island is spoken with grief and reverence. The place itself is a reminder of the atrocities the people of the praying towns endured at the hands of their supposed protectors. Memorial journeys on foot and by canoe are undertaken today by Native people in Massachusetts on the routes their ancestors were forced to take to their island prison.<sup>5</sup> On their tribal website, the Natick Praying Indians relate the story of their ancestors' ordeal on Deer Island:

Holding their Bibles and with Eliot seeking to comfort them, they were taken to Deer Island in Boston Harbor where they were confined... Abandoned by their colonial Christian brethren, the Natick Praying Indians were left unprotected on the frigid Island...through little clothing, starvation and enforced deprivation such as being forbidden to light fires, hunt game or build shelters, most lives were lost. The young, the old, the pregnant and the weak could not survive. Most of the Indians died of cold and starvation.<sup>6</sup>

Missionaries like John Eliot and some Massachusetts Bay government officials such as Daniel Gookin continued to advocate for the people of the praying towns throughout the war. However, their attempts to prevent violence against praying towns by hostile settlers proved futile. Numphow and John Lyne, the Native rulers of Wamesit, testified to this impotence in a letter to English authorities, explaining why they would not return to their mission community after a deadly attack by an English mob:

We cannot come home again... the reason is, we went away from our home, we had help from the Council, but that did not do us good... We are not sorry for what we leave behind, but we are sorry the English have driven us from our praying to God and from our teacher. We did begin to understand a little of praying to God.<sup>7</sup>

A peaceful policy by the English colonial government and pleas for restraint from sympathetic missionaries were not nearly sufficient to protect the Wamesits and other praying town inhabitants from harassment and murder by English settlers. The deportation to Deer Island, ostensibly for the protection of Native Christians, was itself a violent act that resulted in many deaths.<sup>8</sup>

The war turned in favor of the English in the spring of 1676, at which time the Massachusetts Bay government finally released the surviving Native people imprisoned on Deer Island. After Metacom was killed that summer and hostilities



declined, Indigenous survivors, Eliot, and Gookin made efforts to revive the praying towns in Massachusetts Bay. However, when Native people attempted to return to their land in the mission communities, many faced threats and intimidation by English settlers who had taken over praying town land and material wealth in the absence of the legal owners. Mohawk raiding parties also took advantage of the wartime chaos, making returning to more remote praying towns extremely dangerous.<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps seeking safety in numbers and centrality, most of the survivors of Deer Island eventually settled in Natick or Ponkapoag. Others risked scattered habitation in other praying towns, re-creating small communities there and carving out livings in the colonial town economy. In 1677, the Massachusetts General Court ordered that with the exception of servants and apprentices in English households:

All other Indians that are admitted to live within this jurisdiction, as well such as are called Praying Indians, as well as others, shall be reduced to inhabitt in fowr places for the present, viz. Natick, Punkapaug, Hassanamesit, & Wamesit, & within the limitts of those townships as they are graunted to them by the Generall Court.

While this order proved hard to enforce and some Native people defied it, many survivors were again alienated from their land in other praying towns, though they legally still owned it. This forced separation facilitated an extensive series of legal and illegal takeovers of praying town land by English settlers in Massachusetts Bay.<sup>10</sup>

Mission communities in Plymouth avoided the worst impacts of Metacom's War. Gookin noted that during the war, the "Cape Indians" "through God's favor, have enjoyed much peace and quiet by their English neighbors." The Mashpees along

with several other Native groups in Plymouth had pledged allegiance to the colony in 1671. This political assurance soothed English fears to an extent, but geographic factors were likely more important in shielding Mashpee from the atrocities that the praying towns of Massachusetts Bay suffered. Mashpee was comparatively isolated. It was far from potentially hostile and vindictive English settlers, and much further from Mohawk territory than the Massachusetts Bay towns. This distance provided protection, though life in wartime had significant hardships. Some mission community inhabitants fought in the war on the English side and suffered its violence on the battlefield. The seasonal economy was also disrupted, since no one could travel to perform wage labor that had become essential to obtaining English goods.<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, Mashpee and Herring Pond were used as detention centers, akin in some ways to Deer Island, where Native people from elsewhere in Plymouth were confined to prevent them from joining Metacom or being subjected to vigilante violence by settlers. Unlike Deer Island, Mashpee and Herring Pond were fully functional and adequately provisioned towns capable of sheltering and feeding their increased population. This major difference meant that they did not experience the suffering and mortality that the prisoners on Deer Island did.<sup>12</sup>

Gookin said of the Martha's Vineyard mission communities: "These Indians have felt very little of this war comparatively; for the English that dwell upon those Islands have held a good correspondency with those Indians all the time of the war, as they did before the war began."<sup>13</sup> Remarkably, English and Native islanders maintained a tense peace with each other throughout the war and survived the conflict

without striking against one another. They came dangerously close at several points, but skillful diplomacy between the island sachems and Thomas Mayhew Sr. ultimately prevailed over the kind of wartime hysteria that engulfed Massachusetts Bay's settler communities.<sup>14</sup>

Native Christians on the islands were never disarmed or imprisoned. Instead, they negotiated with Thomas Mayhew's government and were furnished with additional ammunition to help defend the islands against potential attacks by Metacom's forces. Though Matthew Mayhew attributed it solely to "the effect of the bringing the Gospel of Peace among them, Viz. a Peace-bringing Gospel," this shared dedication to truce was likely also influenced by an awareness of mutually assured destruction, whoever struck first. According to Matthew Mayhew, armed Wampanoags outnumbered armed English people by twenty to one on the islands. For their part, Wampanoag leadership was well aware of the reinforcements that could overwhelm the islands should the settlers there call for aid.<sup>15</sup>

In Plymouth and on the islands, settler hostility towards Native people never erupted into violence against mission communities, as it did in Massachusetts Bay. Praying towns here remained intact, and people continued to live in them during Metacom's War and after. Yet in all three colonies, mission communities never regained the stability they had enjoyed before the war. From their inception, mission communities had to contend with suspicion and even harassment by English neighbors, despite the support they received from missionary and government allies. This grew exponentially worse after the war. Matthew Mayhew recalled that with the

war, “an Evil Spirit possessed too many of our English, whereby they suffered themselves to be unreasonably exasperated against all Indians” whether or not they were Christian.<sup>16</sup>

For the people of every mission community, Metacom’s war marked an end to life as they knew it and hastened in a new wave of dispossession to which the praying towns were vulnerable. Metacom’s war was an irreversible turning point and paradigm shift in southern New England, after which the praying towns operated under a very different set of political conditions. Life in praying towns became considerably less autonomous, and many of the relationships and power dynamics that had served to protect land there before the war were weakened or destroyed.

In the decades following Metacom’s War, several factors emboldened colonists to act on their ill will towards mission communities whether by petty harassment, physical violence, or dispossession. Collective outrage over the war, the staggered deaths of key English mission community supporters like John Eliot, Daniel Gookin, Thomas Mayhew Sr. and Richard Bourne, and the reduction of overall Native populations due to the violence of war and new waves of epidemic disease all played parts in eroding the protection mission communities formerly offered. After the war, praying towns were subjected to increased English surveillance and interference in their affairs. Much more disastrous were the shifting English practices towards praying town land. By a multitude of methods, legal and illegal, colonists chipped away at Indigenous-owned mission community land after Metacom’s War. These practices continued into the eighteenth, nineteenth, and

twentieth centuries until very little of this land base remained in Native ownership.<sup>17</sup>

Mission community history between the end of Metacom's War and the present day is a story of resilience in the face of ever more challenging conditions. For hundreds of years, Native people have fought to retain connection to and regain control over their ancestral homes in mission communities. These stories are rich and many, reflecting complex strategies that engaged changing legal social and cultural perceptions across the centuries.<sup>18</sup> The rest of this chapter is focused on ways that Native people are connected to mission community land today. Many Indigenous groups and individuals currently use that land to hold powwows and ceremonies, to tell stories of the past and present, to worship together, to organize help and services for those in need, and to conduct archaeological and historical research, to name a few examples.<sup>19</sup> In addition to my own research and my education through reading Indigenous-authored publications, I have had the privilege of walking upon mission community land, attending powwows and church services held there, and speaking with the descendants of praying town founders in their homes and sacred places. Again and again, I have seen the centrality of mission community land to present day life in several Native communities. I have learned of its sacredness, and the diversity of what that means to different people.

Currently, there are only two federally recognized tribes in Massachusetts – The Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribe and the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe. Because of this designation, these tribes are able to exercise sovereignty over small reservations

carved out of their ancestral homelands. While that land is held in trust by the United States federal government, the tribes are recognized as holding governmental jurisdiction over the land, with rights to manage and steward it. Crucially, many other tribes are not federally recognized but still live as cohesive communities and retain connections to their ancestral lands.<sup>20</sup> Some of these are recognized by the state of Massachusetts, and some are not. Tribes that are not federally recognized are not entitled to the kind of government recognition and protection that facilitates control over ancestral land.<sup>21</sup> Yet, they still find ways to gather there, and it remains meaningful to community cohesion and individual identity.

Today Natick is not tribally owned or managed, but this town carries the same Indigenous name that it did as a seventeenth-century praying town, and Indigenous people still live there and worship on the same site that Natick's founders did. While no longer a praying town, Natick is still home to a community of people whose Massachusetts ancestors built the original mission community – the Natick Praying Indians.<sup>22</sup> On their tribal website, the Natick Praying Indians articulate their identity as drawing from both spiritual and physical roots: “Although we are not the only descendants, we are the only existing Praying Indian Tribe. The blood of a praying Indian is both physical and spiritual. Our lineage of both is unbroken.”<sup>23</sup> Among other places, the Eliot Church in South Natick is especially sacred to this tribe. In the words of Naticksqw Chief Caring Hands, leader of the tribe: “The Church began with the sacredness of the ground upon which it was built. Since the ground still remains, the sacredness still remains.”<sup>24</sup>

On Sundays, the Eliot Church is home to a Unitarian congregation, but one Saturday each month, the Natick Praying Indians gather here to pray, sing, drum, dance, and worship the Creator. These services are open to the public; while there I met people who identified as Mohawk, Cherokee, and Lakota, to name a few, as well as the local Naticks, Ponkpaogags, and non-Native people. I have been privileged to attend two of these church services and the potluck-style feasts that followed. While they were very similar to one another, they were unlike any religious service I have been to before or since. On my last visit to the church in 2018, the attendees were welcomed from the pulpit by Tatalen, the husband of Chief Caring Hands. One of the first things Tatalen said to us was “We welcome you to this sacred land!” We then honored the four directions before lining up youngest to oldest and circling the church in a procession, marching to the beat of a resounding drum. Tatalen explained that we did this to “honor this land and the ancestors who came before.”

The service then began with a story about the founders of Natick, and how they used to worship on the very spot we were standing. Following this there was much drumming and dancing, as well as song and prayer in the Massachusett language and in English. Chief Caring Hands says she has never in her life prepared a sermon ahead of time, that it is all given to her by the Father, and the words come. This particular time she spoke about the unity and connection of humanity, calling our empathy and attention to people suffering in the aftermath of recent hurricanes. During the service, a bowl filled with slips of paper was passed around and we were invited to write down our prayers. Later, Tatalen held the bowl up and the church

prayed communally over it. Near the end of the service everyone was invited to participate in the Eucharist ceremony. It was emphasized that no one had to do this in the traditional Christian way who did not wish to; we were invited to stay and “break bread” whatever our individual beliefs were. Throughout the service, children ran around the church and played – they were not required to be quiet or sit still.<sup>25</sup> The services I attended were unique to the land we stood on, and the people who have lived on it for generations. They were simultaneously and unapologetically Indigenous and Christian.

In 2015 a Natick Praying Indian wedding was held at the Eliot Church site for the first time in three hundred and forty years. It was officiated by Chief Caring Hands. The groom, a descendant of Natick’s Massachusetts founders, said: “To stand here, to get married here, where John Eliot preached, where my ancestors worshipped, is extremely meaningful... This is not only for me but for my future and my children so that they too can now get married here.” The ceremony in the Eliot church was private, but another public ceremony for the bride and groom was held during the Natick Praying Indian Powwow at Lake Cochituate State Park, land that is sacred to this tribe.<sup>26</sup>

While in Massachusetts I learned that powwows here serve as important opportunities for Native people across the region to come together, host others from further-flung tribes, and provide an educational experience for outsiders like myself to learn about the Indigenous past and present of the area. The significance and purpose of the Natick Praying Indian powwow is best explained by the tribe:



Although the powwow originally was a sacred gathering today it has become much a social gathering. The powwow retains its sacredness in respect to the land and cultural ways of the people... The powwow is an opportunity for cultural education and sharing for Native people of the land, the indigenous, with their non-Native brothers. It is also a time of intertribal sharing and honoring of the brotherhood amongst all Native people. This time of great coming together before the Creator eyes warms His heart and insures the blessing of the wigwam.<sup>27</sup>

Denise Garrow-Pruitt – who is both Ponkapoag Praying Indian and Lumbee – has been going to powwows at Lake Cochituate State Park since she was a child and has attended the Natick Praying Indian Church for several years. She emphasized that sacred Indigenous land exists everywhere in her ancestral home of Massachusetts, and also that:

With all powwows, the places that they are held, they are held there for a reason, and part of what we do when we make our sacred circle, and we dance, we are dancing for our past and we want to summon those ancestors to come back and join us. Even though they are not there in body we hope that they are there in spirit, and being there on sacred land helps us to believe that they are there with us.<sup>28</sup>

Another powwow is held every year on three and a half acres of Hassanamesit – now known as the Hassanamisco Reservation.<sup>29</sup> When I attended this powwow in the summer of 2017, the host who stood in the center of the ceremonial circle emphasized the importance of the sacred land we were on, and reminded us that it has “never left Nipmuc oversight and ownership.”<sup>30</sup> This land is central to the Nipmuc community. They are the ones who own and steward it, but other Native people are connected to it too. Throughout the course of the powwow, people from tribes across New England entered the ceremonial circle to dance, listen to the drummers and singers, and take part in ceremonies such as naming. Secure, tribally owned land is

rare in Massachusetts, and the availability of Hassanamesit as a place to gather is meaningful for the many Native people who come to take part in the powwows, as well as the Nipmucs who host everyone and use the land on a more regular basis.<sup>31</sup>

Connor Garrow-Pruitt, a Mohawk man who has been attending the Natick and Ponkapoag Praying Indian church for several years, said of the Hassanamisco Reservation: “the spirituality there, the feeling from the land is unbelievable.”<sup>32</sup>

Hassanamesit and Magunkaquog land holds even more than memories, ancestors, and a sacred sense of place. Underground, the earth contains centuries worth of material culture, including artifacts from the praying town period before Metacom’s War. It is overwhelmingly likely that this is true of all former praying town sites, but Hassanamesit and Magunkaquog are rare resources because agricultural and urban development has long since destroyed or paved over potential archaeological sites at most former praying towns.<sup>33</sup> Beginning in 2003, the Nipmuc Nation and the Fiske Center for Archaeological Research began a collaboration. Stephen Mrowzowski led the archaeological team, and Rae Gould, the Nipmuc tribal historic preservation officer as well as an archaeologist, served as the liaison between the tribe and the Fiske Center.<sup>34</sup> This partnership resulted in new digs on mission community land as well as fresh analysis of material culture previously found at Hassanamesit and Magunkaquog.<sup>35</sup>

The work that the Nipmuc Nation and Fiske Center conducted on mission community land has resulted in scholarship that highlights Native persistence in the area, from the seventeenth century and beyond.<sup>36</sup> Archaeological studies of

Hassanamesit and Magunkaquog provide windows into seventeenth-century praying town life not visible in the documentary record, particularly regarding culture and spirituality. Overall, the findings show that these mission communities were not sites of cultural erasure, but of innovative cultural survival. They bolster awareness that Native identity and community persisted here in the seventeenth century and continue to do so today.

At the Magunco Hill site in Magunkaquog, Indigenous lithic technology was found with English tools and other artifacts. Rae Gould, Stephen Mrozowski, and Heather Pezzarossi assert that this combination suggests blending and selective use of older and newer technologies in everyday life.<sup>37</sup> Archaeologists also uncovered the foundations of a building constructed in 1650. It is thought to be a meetinghouse (a church as well as gathering place ubiquitously seen in English Christian towns of seventeenth-century Massachusetts), or a dwelling where Ponhamen (the spiritual leader of Magunkaquog) or Job (Magunkaquog's resident teacher) lived. It may also have been a place where valuables were stored, and where Indigenous women were taught to sew using English materials, based on the wealth of English and Indigenous artifacts found there. Mrozowski, Gould and Pezzarossi argue that it was most likely used for all these things.<sup>38</sup>

In this structure with strong English as well as Christian associations, archaeologists found quartz crystals built into the foundations of the building. Quartz has been found in other spiritually significant Indigenous sites in New England such as burials, and it may have been an important part of Southern New England

Indigenous spiritual traditions for at least four thousand years. If this is indeed the case, quartz built into a structure with so much English cultural and spiritual significance suggests the presence of Indigenous spiritual practices in this Christian space.<sup>39</sup>

Sewing implements found at the Magunco hill site have been interpreted by both Magdalena Naum and Mary C. Beaudry as material manifestations of failed attempts by English missionaries to change Indigenous lifeways.<sup>40</sup> The thimbles found were too small for most adult fingers, suggesting they were intended for girls and young women. Teaching women to adopt English notions of femininity and gender roles was a critical part of English missionization; early indoctrination of young girls would have been especially important. The introduction of English tools such as metal needles and thimbles to Indigenous women in praying towns facilitated training for their new expected roles in the “civilized” domestic sphere. However, the sewing tools unearthed at Magunco Hill showed little to no wear or evidence of use. Naum and Beaudry both contend that the women and girls who lived in Magunkaquog either rarely used, or simply discarded these implements meant to “reduce them to civility.”<sup>41</sup> Indigenous people in praying towns adopted English tools and customs selectively and strategically. At Magunkaquog, Native women and girls may have refused to use sewing implements, but other English technologies were used advantageously, sometimes in ways not intended by English distributors. English pottery unearthed at Magunkaquog, for instance, shows signs of being placed directly in fire, an Indigenous method of preparing food.<sup>42</sup>

Existing archaeological studies do not represent anything close to exhaustive excavation and study of praying town land.<sup>43</sup> Yet, they all demonstrate one critical reality: The presence and incorporation of English material culture, missionaries, politics and customs in praying towns did not stop Indigenous people from retaining their cultural and spiritual practices. As the Fiske Center's website proclaims, "the continuing role of quartz crystals, lithic technologies, and foodways practices suggest a deeper cultural continuity that runs counter to the notion that Native American identities were lost as a direct result of cultural assimilation."<sup>44</sup> Collaborative efforts such as the one between the Fiske Center and Nipmuc Nation are especially promising for bringing this awareness to the fore of the mainstream narrative. This collaboration is yet another powerful example of how praying town land is being used in the present by Native communities.

Chief Cheryl Toney Holley of the Nipmuc Nation reported that she was initially highly skeptical of collaboration with an archaeological team. She remembered thinking that "all this digging would not turn out well for the tribe" and expressed particular concern that archaeologists might disturb the graves of her ancestors. Eventually, she changed her mind. For Toney Holley and many other tribe members, building trust took years of consistent ethical work by the archaeologists involved, close collaboration with a diligent Nipmuc liason and scholar (Rae Gould), and a leap of faith by the Nipmuc Nation.<sup>45</sup> While the choice to trust academic researchers to help tell their stories was a risky one, the Nipmuc Nation is now part of a partnership that enriches understanding of Nipmuc history in academic and public

spheres, and may help in the process of gaining federal recognition.<sup>46</sup>

The collaborative research at Hassanamesit and Magunkaquog has produced a more complete knowledge of Nipmuc history, and enriched our understanding of Indigenous life in this area. This research is valuable not only for what it has produced, but for how it was conducted. A long history of exploitative ethics on the part of archaeologists, historians, and others who study Native peoples' stories has made Indigenous distrust of researchers commonplace. Slowly, these fraught relationships have begun to mend in many places, benefiting academic institutions as well as Indigenous communities and resulting in more complete, higher-quality scholarship. The collaborative work between the Nipmuc Nation and the Fiske Center is a hopeful example of how this can be accomplished.<sup>47</sup> In the process of working together, everyone involved learned new things about Nipmuc history via knowledge-sharing and the "braiding together of indigenous and Western thoughts and epistemologies."<sup>48</sup> This work has provided a "model for a decolonized method of archaeology" and helped to create ripple effects of heightened awareness and more complete knowledge in academic communities and the wider world; mission community land is at the very heart of it.<sup>49</sup>

While there are many examples of Native cultural continuity from the beginning of mission communities to the present, much has also been lost. Over centuries, some ancestral knowledge and lifeways slipped away as communities lost elders and faced increasing pressure to conform to the non-Native culture that surrounded ever-smaller pockets of Indigenous-owned land. Many Native

communities in Massachusetts today are committed not only to continuing traditional ways, but to recovering that which has been lost.

Sometimes these efforts are intertribal, such as the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project.<sup>50</sup> This organization is dedicated to “bringing back to life the tribes' sacred privilege and right – our ancestral language.”<sup>51</sup> Jesse Little Doe Baird – Mashpee Wampanoag linguist and founder of the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project – frames their work as a spiritual, cultural, and scholarly pursuit that is helping to heal intergenerational suffering:

Reclaiming our language is one means of repairing the broken circle of cultural loss and pain. To be able to understand and speak our language means to see the world as our families did for centuries. This is but one path which keeps us connected to our people, the earth, and the philosophies and truths given to us by the Creator.<sup>52</sup>

The Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project is a collaborative effort between the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribe, Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe, and Assonet Band of Wampanoag. All besides the Assonet Band are headquartered on former mission community land.

It is on this land that the revived language is taught to children and adults, in homes as well as formal school and community class settings.<sup>53</sup> One Wampanoag tenth-grader had this to say when ancestral language courses were offered at his high school in Mashpee:

I live, breath Wampanoag, so it's very important we keep our language alive and going... This is more than just a class or language, this is our culture. So, it's important that we, the youth, bring it back and teach it to the older kids, and everyone should know it.

The language is now being widely taught in southern New England, with the goal of

cultivating a generation of fluent speakers.<sup>54</sup>

This language revitalization is possible largely because of the vast collections of ancestral language documents that grew out of missionary efforts to promote literacy as part of their overall religious and cultural mission. The bible translated in the early sixteen-sixties by John Eliot and Native men including John Nesutan and James Printer is core to this body of knowledge.<sup>55</sup> By now it is not surprising that something introduced in part to promote English culture was and is utilized by Native people to keep their own culture vibrant. Language reclamation is only one of many ways that the people of Mashpee, Aquinnah, and Herring Pond are persisting on mission community land.

Most of the present-day Cape Cod town of Mashpee has been built on land originally deeded by Wepquish, Quatchatisset and Tookenchosin to the “South Sea Indians” in 1665 and 1666 for a mission community.<sup>56</sup> The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe currently exercises sovereignty over one hundred and fifty acres of that land, but Wampanoag people live throughout a much larger zone.<sup>57</sup> On this reservation as well as the greater Mashpee area, the tribe provides a myriad of services for its community of two thousand-six hundred enrolled citizens. This includes healthcare services, housing assistance, a food pantry, and emergency management. The emergency management department most recently worked with FEMA and other organizations to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Mashpee’s tribal community.<sup>58</sup>

Mashpee serves as a place to address the corporeal needs of the Mashpee



Wampanoag community, and is also central to community cohesion and cultural persistence. A powwow is held every year in Mashpee “honoring our spiritual leaders and future generations.” There is a tribal museum housed in the homestead built by Richard Bourne’s great grandson, a language department, and an historic preservation department. The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe’s natural resources department is dedicated to “providing training and employment opportunities to tribal members in the environmental and natural resources field, and continuing our role as stewards of our ancestral lands.” Their community and government center provides a place for the tribe to gather and to access resources and services all in one place.<sup>59</sup>

Offshore on Martha’s Vineyard, the Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribe exercises sovereignty over nearly five hundred acres of what used to be mission community land. Most of that land is in Aquinnah, but the tribe also holds parcels in Christiantown (Manitouwatootan) and Chappaquiddick, both former mission community sites. Tribal members live throughout the island and some even live on the mainland.<sup>60</sup> On ancestral land, the Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribe has organized to serve its community of over one thousand members with wide-ranging social, financial, and cultural programs and resources.<sup>61</sup>

The Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribe particularly emphasizes environmental stewardship of its land using modern and traditional methods to maintain the natural resources and beauty of the island. The tribal website states: “These Lands are culturally essential to the Tribe, and as such the environmental health of these lands is critical.”<sup>62</sup> Projects include monitoring and maintaining healthy fisheries, habitat

restoration, monitoring air and water quality, implementing hunting regulations, and public outreach aimed at preventing environmental damage. Tribal members continue to hunt, fish, and gather on tribal lands, which is “critical to the economic and cultural life of the Tribe.”<sup>63</sup>

The Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe is not federally recognized and thus cannot exercise governmental sovereignty over a land base like the Mashpees and Aquinnahs do; they have had to connect with and steward their ancestral land in different ways. Several former mission community sites within the present-day towns of Bourne and Plymouth are sacred to the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe today. In particular, three cemeteries serve as resting places for ancestors, and have been community gathering places for generations. When the tribal chairwoman Melissa Harding Ferretti showed me one of these burial grounds, she made clear that it was a sacred place – one not only of reverence, but of joy and community. Growing up, she enjoyed playing with other Herring Pond Wampanoag children there while her mother tended the graves and planted flowers. Her mother and sister are now buried there alongside their ancestors.<sup>64</sup> Chairwoman Ferretti and other tribal members continue to care for and maintain the sacred sites, but this has not always been possible.

Until 2018, one of these burial grounds was private property, not owned by the tribe. According to Ferretti, “it was somewhere where we were not allowed to go even though it was part of our original reservation.”<sup>65</sup> When graves were discovered there as part of a development project, the property was transferred to the town of

Plymouth, not to the tribe. For years, tribal members and officials lamented that their ancestors' graves were not being tended, and that this sacred place had fallen into overgrown disrepair. The Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe eventually determined that to care for this site as it deserved, they had to own it. After rallying support from local Plymouth officials, navigating some legal hurdles, and weathering a nerve-wracking technicality where the property had to be put up for auction before the tribe could purchase it, the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe was deeded back six acres of their ancestral land, including the neglected burial ground. This became the first time any land had been deeded back to the Herring Pond Wampanoag tribe.<sup>66</sup> Since gaining ownership, the tribe has been working to restore the burial ground, using meticulous analysis of the landscape to protect and restore ancestral graves while also preserving and respecting the plants and animals that live at the site.<sup>67</sup>

Many education and cultural revitalization efforts within the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe are intimately connected to the land. For instance, the tribe is working to create a Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) education program. This program is particularly aimed at nurturing tribal values among their youth, especially “respect, reciprocity, and responsibility, which are essential to relationships among human communities and between humans and the natural world.” Much of this education will take place on prior praying town land, sometimes on the trails that wind through the six acres and burial ground that Herring Pond now owns. Herring Pond also plans to use a three-year grant from the Sheehan Family to expand environmental stewardship on prior mission community land. The tribe aims to:

...preserve tribal community-based knowledge of the land and its ecologically significant areas; promote tribal values, especially concerning the cultural, historical, ecological and spiritual significance of the land, water, and wildlife in the region; and create opportunities for collaborations with other environmental and cultural organizations.<sup>68</sup>

The goals of these initiatives are at once ecological, cultural, and spiritual.

This chapter has focused on the legacies that Indigenous founders set in motion when they protected their lands by building mission communities upon them. This study overall is concerned primarily with the praying town period before Metacom's War, with the Native people who shaped these towns, and with the lands that became mission communities. Yet, the big-picture reality is that these places cannot be reduced to that title or contained in that chapter of history. These sites were home to Indigenous people long before praying towns and long before colonialism; some of them still are today. Hundreds of years after Metacom's War shattered the fragile stability of the mission communities, southern New England remains an Indigenous landscape.

## Conclusion

This dissertation began with a single burning question: why did thousands of Native people – Wampanoags, Massachusetts, Nipmucs, Pawtuckets and Mohegans – choose to support mission communities, and live there under colonial constraints? As I pursued my investigation, I saw several compelling potential reasons. Among them, however, land stood out. Land was the foundation upon which all else rested, and for thousands of Native people, access to their ancestral land was imperiled by English colonization. Joining a mission community was one of the few ways an Indigenous person could secure legal title to their land – title that was recognized by colonial courts.

I did not originally plan to write a survival story, but studying land ownership in seventeenth-century mission communities swiftly opened a window onto episodes of Indigenous perseverance and survival in the face of incredible odds. While stories of Native persistence in the past and present are plentiful, they are still largely absent from mainstream awareness – a legacy of the disappearance narrative that continues to have disastrous impacts on Native communities. During my time with Native communities in Massachusetts, and immersing myself in Indigenous-authored books, articles and presentations, the need for more Indigenous survival stories to be brought out of the shadows and into the spotlight was continuously impressed upon me. I wrote this dissertation with the intertwined goals of exploring a foundational yet

understudied aspect of Early American History and sharing a truly incredible Indigenous survival story.

I am aware that some might (and do) dismiss the importance of mission community land ownership as a survival strategy, for in the forms that it took before Metacom's War, it was relatively short-lived. I understand this critique, but it is important to emphasize that while many mission communities were destroyed in Metacom's War, others survived or were rebuilt. These communities remained owned by Native people centuries after the war ended, albeit on shrinking land bases and under less autonomous circumstances. Some of that land is owned by Native communities today. Perhaps more importantly, Native people persist today because they and their ancestors have fought for survival and resisted erasure in multitudinous ways, employing survival tactics that sometimes lasted for decades, and sometimes only months before they had to invent a new strategy. Bold military action such as Metacom's war was one way – a way repeatedly seen across America over several centuries. Using the tools of their oppressors for their own purposes, as Native people did in the mission communities, is another way Indigenous people have persisted.

Amid the relentless land hunger and institutionalized prejudice of English colonials and then the United States' citizens, these episodes of strategic accommodation, adaptation, and resistance were always temporary. But as soon as one method was destroyed or rendered ineffective, Native people found or created another way to survive. Mission communities in the form that they took before Metacom's War did not last, but Indigenous people of southern New England have,

and so has their connection to the land. Indigenous survival up into the present is made up of these episodes of resistance. When we string them all together, we can see why, despite the best efforts of hundreds of years of oppressive colonial rule, Indigenous cultures and peoples are still here. Every link in that chain of survival stories is crucial – for our understanding of American history as well as the persistence of Native communities. Each one deserves our continued and expanded attention.

## Appendix 1. Mission Community Population in 1674

Drawing from historical and archaeological sources, scholars have continuously debated about the actual population of Indigenous people in southern New England before and during the colonial period. Amid the demographic upheavals that the people of this area went through in the seventeenth century, precise population figures would be difficult to calculate even if present-day organizational frameworks and technology had been available at the time. A problematic colonial source base for existing estimates further muddies the waters. Acknowledged as imperfect, a commonly accepted estimate is that approximately ninety thousand Indigenous people lived in southern New England prior to the destruction that accompanied European colonization in the forms of epidemic disease and armed invasion. Some scholars estimate close to ninety percent mortality from multiple waves of disease, and that between 1650 and 1674, there were ten to eleven thousand Indigenous people alive in southern New England.<sup>1</sup>



### Mission Community Populations in 1674

Area	Estimated Population	Date & Author of Estimate
Massachusetts Bay Colony	1,100	1674 – D. Gookin
Connecticut	30	1674 – J. Fitch
Noepe & Chappaquiddick	1,200-1,500	1674 – T. Mayhew Sr. & 1676 C. Mather
Nantucket	300-450	1674 Assasammoogh, Weekochisit, J. Cotton & 1670 J. Eliot
Plymouth Colony	959	1674 – R. Bourne

**Total: 3,589 – 4,039**

The above table lays out population estimates for mission communities in 1674, reported by church and government officials. Superintendent of Indians Daniel Gookin estimated 1,100 Indigenous people in Massachusetts Bay colony praying towns by 1674.<sup>2</sup> Cotton Mather estimated that by 1676, there were around 1,500 island Wampanoags professing Christianity on Martha's Vineyard.<sup>3</sup> Matthew Mayhew later confirmed that this was not an overestimation.<sup>4</sup> Governor Thomas Mayhew Sr. estimated 240 Christian families on Noepe and Chappaquiddick.<sup>5</sup> Using Gookin's computation of a five person family average, Mayhew's estimate of 1,200 Christians nearly lines up with Cotton Mather's.<sup>6</sup> The missionary John Cotton Jr.

estimated 300 Indigenous Christian men and women on Nantucket Island in 1674.<sup>7</sup> That same year, reports by an Indigenous pastor of Nantucket, Assasammoogh (English name John Gibbs) and teacher Weekochisit (English name Caleb) listed the same numbers, though a 1670 letter from John Eliot asserted 90 families (or 450 individuals, using Gookin's estimate that each family was made up of approximately five people).<sup>8</sup> Missionary Richard Bourne reported 959 “praying Indians” in Plymouth Colony in 1674.<sup>9</sup> That same year, thirty adults were reported in Moheek, the only praying town in Connecticut, established by a group of Mohegans and Reverend James Fitch.<sup>10</sup>

## Appendix 2.

### A Note on Mapping Mission Communities

The maps in this dissertation are all of my own creation. They are meant to provide a visual aid in understanding key geographic factors that influenced the mission communities. Further, they are designed to bring some organization to a highly complex geography in order to reveal southern New England as an Indigenous landscape where mission communities were an important part of the social and physical geography. I strongly believe in the power of maps to spatially analyze and visually explain Indigenous history and persistence in New England, and in their potential as tools for decolonizing Indigenous History.

Maps have not typically been thought of as decolonizing technology, largely because mapping as we know it has been widely used as a tool of colonization – bounding, surveying, etc. to extend empires and invade Indigenous spaces. Maps from seventeenth-century New England, for example, were created by Europeans. These were indisputably tools of empire building, and they tend to highlight aspects of the landscape and people that were most relevant to European concerns and perspectives, not Indigenous ones. Most current maps have a similar tendency to gloss over Indigenous spaces and presence.

However, the use of mapping to aid in decolonization is increasing. The maps produced by Native Land Digital, an Indigenous led Canadian organization, and The Decolonial Atlas are powerful and rapidly evolving examples of this in action.

Specific to seventeenth-century southern New England, the pioneering work of Wabanaki scholar Lisa Brooks has demonstrated the exciting potential for decolonizing the past and foregrounding an Indigenous-centered seventeenth-century landscape via map-making, even when working with a predominantly colonial source base. In her book *Our Beloved Kin* and its in-depth complimentary website, Brooks and her GIS team have created an array of maps that help readers reconceptualize New England as an Indigenous space.<sup>11</sup>

When mapping technology is creatively synthesized with the documents, oral histories, and archaeological sources that help us to interpret past Native worlds, we can create maps that reveal a decolonized, Indigenous-centered history. At first, it may not seem that new maps would change our understanding of history, but they can and they must. We are so accustomed to looking at European maps of seventeenth-century New England, with European names, towns, landmarks and priorities, that it is difficult not to internalize that landscape as a European (particularly English), space. By creating and utilizing maps that foreground Indigenous names and places of importance, we visually reframe Early America as the Indigenous space it was. Indigenous places with deep history and present-day relevance permeate New England – my maps aim to show some of them and prioritize Indigenous language toponymy.

I created all maps in this dissertation using Google Earth Pro, and they are based on data from primary and secondary historical sources as well as archaeological studies and the knowledge of present-day Indigenous communities in Massachusetts.

For the place-name labels, I use the spelling that is used by present-day Native groups in Massachusetts as much as possible, as I do with tribal and personal names throughout this dissertation. If these are unavailable, I use the most commonly used spelling. I have marked these maps as precisely as possible utilizing available documentation, but it is important to note that maps are only as accurate as the data and sources they are based on. In seventeenth-century New England, interpreting legal documents and other sources to map property boundaries is often difficult to the point of comedy. For instance, while searching the Dorchester Town Records to learn more about the bounds of Ponkapoag, an adjacent mission community, I encountered many boundaries that sounded more like seventeenth century inside jokes than anything else. My personal favorite in the Dorchester Town Records: “Item: John Hoskeines senior to have 4 acres of medow in the necke where the dogg was killed.” Therefore, these maps should be considered approximate.<sup>12</sup>

To plot the locations of the twenty-eight recorded mission communities in southern New England, I relied on a combination of primary sources, secondary historical and archaeological scholarship, and information provided by present-day Indigenous communities. For the sake of transparency and to aid in future research, I am including an explanation of the sources I used to determine the approximate location of each mission community, and some of the complexities and interpretations involved. Some of these were quite straightforward and explanations are brief. Others are more complicated.

## **1 – Natick**

Daniel Gookin reported the location and area of this town in some detail, saying it was about “six thousand acres” and “It lieth upon Charles river, eighteen miles south west from Boston, and ten miles north west from Dedham.” I also visited the Eliot Church in Natick, which the members of the Natick and Ponkapoag Praying Indians informed me is located on the original mission community land grant. The work of Catherine C. Carlson in the “Archival and Archaeological Research Report on the Configuration of the Seven Original 17<sup>th</sup> Century Praying Indian Towns of the Massachusetts Bay Colony” was also used.<sup>13</sup>

## **2 – Ponkapoag**

Gookin reported that “this town is situated south from Boston, about fourteen miles. There is a great mountain, called the Blue Hill, lieth north east from it about two miles: and the town of Dedham, about three miles north west from it... The quantity of land belonging to this village, is about six thousand acres.” I also used information published by the Massachusett Tribe at Ponkapoag, and Carlson’s “Archival and Archaeological Research Report.”<sup>14</sup>

## **3 – Hassanamesit**

To plot the location of Hassanamesit, I used information published by the Nipmuc Nation, and Carlson’s “Archival and Archaeological Research Report.” I also utilized *Historical Collections* by Gookin, in which he wrote of Hassanamesit: “this

place lieth about thirty-eight miles from Boston, west fourtherly... The dimensions of this town is four miles square; and so about eight thousand acres of land.”<sup>15</sup>

#### **4 – Okammakamesit**

In the “Archival and Archaeological Research Report,” Carlson reports that this mission community was located in the present-day town of Marlborough. Gookin wrote that Okammakamesit was “situated about twelve miles north north east from Hassanamesitt, about thirty miles from Boston wetherly... The quantity of land appertaining to it is six thousand acres.”<sup>16</sup>

#### **5 – Wamesit**

Wamesit was located “where Concord river falleth into Merrimak river” and “about twenty miles from Boston, north north west” according to Gookin in *Historical Collections*, within the present day towns of both Lowell and Belvidere. Gookin reported that “the quantity of land belonging to it is about twenty five hundred acres. The Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag places Wamesit “near Tewksbury,” which shares a border with Lowell in the present day. To determine the location of Wamesit, I also consulted Carlson’s “Archival and Archaeological Research Report.”<sup>17</sup>

## **6 – Nashobah**

According to Carlson’s report, Nashobah was located in the present-day town of Littleton, Massachusetts. According to Gookin: “This village is situated in a manner in the centre between Chelmsford, Lancaster, Groton, and Concord. It lieth from Boston about twenty five miles, west north west... The dimensions of this village is four miles square.” Gookin also noted the presence of “good ponds for fish.”<sup>18</sup>

## **7 – Magunkaquog**

To determine the location of Magunkaquog, I consulted both Gookin and Carlson. Totalling approximately three thousand acres, this town was located in present day Ashland. According to Gookin: “it lieth west southerly from Boston, about twenty four miles, near the midway between Natick and Hassanamesitt.”<sup>19</sup>

## **8 – Manchaug**

In *Historical Collections*, Gookin reported that Manchaug “lieth to the westward of Nipmuck river, about eight miles; and is from Haslsanamesitt, west and by south, about ten miles; and it is from Boston about fifty miles, on the same rhumb.” According to the historical archaeology research team that wrote *Historical Archaeology and Indigenous Collaboration*, it was located in the present-day town of Oxford, which lines up with Gookin’s report.<sup>20</sup>



## **9 – Chobonokonomum**

According to Gookin's *Historical Collections*, Chobonokonomum was located approximately five miles from Manchaug, and "fifty five miles, west and by south, from Boston." *Historical Archaeology and Indigenous Collaboration* corroborates this, and places Chobonokonomum in the present-day town of Dudley.<sup>21</sup>

## **10 – Maanexit**

Maanexit was located "about seven miles westerly from Chabanakongkomum" and was "distant from Boston about sixty miles, west and by south" according to Gookin.<sup>22</sup>

## **11 – Quantisset**

Gookin said that Quantisset "lieth about six miles to the south of Maanexit." Though this places Quantisset in present day Connecticut, it was under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts in 1674 when Gookin made his report.<sup>23</sup>

## **12 – Wabaquisit**

Wabaquisit was also in present day Connecticut but was under the jurisdiction of Massachusetts in 1674. Gookin reported Wabaquisit as "about nine or ten miles from Maanexit, upon the west side... distant from Boston west and by south, about seventy two miles."<sup>24</sup>

### **13 – Packachoog**

Gookin reported that Packachoog “lieth from Manchage, north west, about twelve miles” and that it was “about eighteen miles, west southerly, from Marlborough; and from Boston about forty four miles.”<sup>25</sup>

### **14 – Waeuntug**

Gookin reported that Waeuntug was located approximately ten miles south of Hassanamesit, “against an English town called Mendon.” It was located in the present-day town of Uxbridge.<sup>26</sup>

### **15 – Mashpee**

The present-day town of Mashpee and the headquarters of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe are well known to exist upon the original mission community land grant. However, the exact area Mashpee spanned in the seventeenth century is not entirely certain. The present-day Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe reports that their original grant from tribal leaders in 1665 encompassed twenty-five square miles. An additional deed was granted to Mashpee in 1666 by Quatchatisset. Like many seventeenth-century deeds, both of these deeds describe the land given in terms of landmarks – many of which no longer exist or are imprecise. As a result, exact area calculations are difficult. According to Bourne, Mashpee’s tract was “near ten miles in length and five in breadth” or nearly fifty square miles. The Bureau of Indian Affairs reports that the deed from Quatchatisset granted additional land to Mashpee,

while historian Jack Campisi asserts that Quatchisset's grant was for the same land that had already been granted by Wepquish and Tookenchosin in 1665. If Quatchisset's grant did enlarge the Mashpee's land base, Bourne's approximate report of fifty miles square is feasible and that is what is marked on my map.<sup>27</sup>

## **16 – Herring Pond**

According to the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe, the Herring Pond mission community spanned approximately three thousand acres. I also consulted secondary historical sources and Channing Howard's 1952 map, included in the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe's presentation "Listening to our Ancestors, Protecting our Homeland."<sup>28</sup>

## **17 – Titicut**

In 1674, Richard Bourne wrote to Daniel Gookin that lands were set aside for "praying Indians" at Cotuhitikut, more commonly known as Titicut.<sup>29</sup> On June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1664, the Massachusetts sachem Wampatuk formally gave "vnto the Indians liuing vpon Catuhkut Riuer (viz) Pompanohoo and the other Indians liuing there; that is three miles vpon each side of the Riuer (excepting the lands that are alreddy sold to the English either Taunton Bridgewater or to the Major)." The deed was witnessed by Richard Bourne. In 1686, years after Wampatuk's death, his son Josias confirmed his father's deed, and stated the boundaries of the Titicut grant as:

All Lands of all sorts that are and lye on the Northeasterly side of a direct line from the ffort that is now standing on the Hill above said

Tittecutt wear and on the southeasterly side of the river unto the place where the line between Middleborough land and Tittecut land doth cross the path that leadeth from the said Tittecut to Middleborough mill that is to say All the lands called Tittecut lands on the Southeastwardly side of Tittecut River and on the Northeastwardly side of sd line that are not already disposed unto the English.<sup>30</sup>

In 1982, the Massachusetts Historical Commission State Survey Team noted a fish weir on the Taunton (or Catuhkut) River, which serves as the border between Bridgewater and Middleborough in an area occupied by Native people for at least five thousand years according to archaeological findings. This is probably the “wear” that Josias mentioned.<sup>31</sup> Nearby in northern Middleborough along the Taunton River, archaeologists have found the remains of a palisaded fort built on a hill containing Indigenous and European made material, including weapons. It is likely that this is the fort the younger Josias described.<sup>32</sup>

The above primary sources, secondary historical sources, and archaeological studies have helped me to plot the approximate location and area of Titicut. So has a very useful series of maps created by the Massachusetts Historical Commission State Survey Team, especially Arthur J. Krim’s “Map 6: Plantation Period Political Boundaries” in *Historic & Archaeological Resources of Southeast Massachusetts*. I also consulted “Map 1: Contour Diagram, Titicut Site” in Maurice Robbins’ overview of the Titicut archaeological site.<sup>33</sup> *Historical Collections* lists Cotuhtikut (Titicut) as “part of Middleborough” but the Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag states that this Indigenous settlement “became a praying town, now at Bridgewater.” The above sources I consulted confirm that both are actually correct, and the settlement spanned part of both present-day towns.<sup>34</sup>

**The Islands: Chappaquiddick, Nashamoies, Sanchiacantacket,  
Nashawahkamuk, Talhanio, Aquinnah, Manitouwatootan & Nantucket**

The sources I used to map the ten Wampanoag mission communities on the islands off New England's southern shore are most productively discussed together. In 1674, John Cotton Jr. wrote to Daniel Gookin stating that when he lived on the island of Noepe, "the praying towns were Chappaquidgick, Nashamoies, Sengekontakit, Toikiming, Nashuakemmiuk, Talhanio." The approximate locations of three of these – Chappaquiddick, Nashamoies, Sanchiacantacket, Nashawahkamuk – are noted in *Historical Collections* and on the map of Noepe created by Charles Banks. I also consulted a map published on the official website of the Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribe to plot the locations of Chappaquiddick and Nashawahkamuk. Marking the approximate locations of Chappaquiddick, Nashamoies, Sanchiacantacket, Nashawahkamuk was thus a relatively straightforward process.<sup>35</sup>

Mapping the other two towns Cotton reported, "Toikiming" and "Talhanio" presented challenges. In *History of Martha's Vineyard*, Charles Edward Banks said of Talhanio:

This last name is an undoubted misreading for some locality not now known in that form... As no mention is made of Christiantown, where a "praying town" had been granted several years before this, we may suppose that Onkokemmy may be intended.<sup>36</sup>

While Banks' tentative theory about Talhanio is in disagreement with more recent publications by James P. Ronda and Frederick L. Weiss, it is indeed reasonable to deduce that Cotton must have been calling Manitouwatootan (also known as Christiantown and Onkokemmy) by a different name when he wrote to Gookin. After

all, this praying town was established with a land grant from Keteannummin in 1659, long before Cotton left Noepe for the mainland in 1667. He was certainly aware of it. Manitouwatootan also had several monikers, and it is reasonable to think not all survived in available documentation.<sup>37</sup>

However, I argue that the place Cotton called Talhanio was not Manitouwatootan. Rather, “Toikiming” was.<sup>38</sup> First, Talhanio is noted in *Historical Collections* as probably being part of Chilmark, which is nowhere near Manitouwatootan. Second, the place Cotton calls Toikiming has alternate spellings including “Taacame” and “Takame,” which are very close in phonetics and spelling to Taakemmy, a Wampanoag sachemship near present day West Tisbury. The sachem of Taakemmy in the mid and late sixteen hundreds was Keteannummin – he was not a Christian sachem and his territory never became a Christian sachemship after the fashion of Aquinnah. To my knowledge, there was no mission community called Taakemmy or Toikiming documented anywhere other than Cotton’s letter to Gookin. However, Keteannummin did give one mile of land in his sachemship to a group of Wampanoags who wished to establish a mission community – Manitouwatootan. This was the only known mission community in Taakemmy.<sup>39</sup>

For these reasons my map places Talhanio near Chilmark and equates Toikiming with Manitouwatootan. To determine the approximate location and area of Manitouwatootan, I consulted maps published by the Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribe, the Office of Geographic and Environmental Information in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, David Silverman, and

Charles Banks. Further, present-day sources note the location of the Mayhew chapel, which sits on the original Manitouwatootan land base.<sup>40</sup>

In his 1674 letter to Gookin, Cotton also reported three praying towns on the island of Nantucket. He did not name them. In September of 1674, Gookin spoke with Assasammoogh, pastor of the Wampanoag church on Nantucket, and one of the teachers there, Weekochisit. They informed Gookin that “there is about three hundred Indians, young and old, who pray to God and keep the sabbath upon that island: that they meet to worship God at three places, viz. Oggawame where the church meets, at Wammasquid, and Squatesit.” It is possible that these three places were the three praying towns Cotton reported. Since that is not explicitly stated however, I left these towns unnamed on the map; we know nothing more of their location other than that they were located on Nantucket.<sup>41</sup>

Cotton’s letter to Gookin did not list Aquinnah as a praying town. However, Cotton probably did not live on Noepe long enough to see Aquinnah become a mission community. Cotton evidently left Noepe for Plymouth in November of 1667. During this time Aquinnah was only just beginning to come around to Christianity after a long period of staunch objection. If Cotton had lived among the island Wampanoags longer, he undoubtedly would have listed Aquinnah among the praying towns that existed there because like the others he names, it did become a mission community.<sup>42</sup> The location of Aquinnah is marked on the maps published by David Silverman, Charles Banks, and the Aquinnah Wampanoag Tribe.<sup>43</sup>

## 28 – Moheek

Moheek was the only known mission community under the colonial government of Connecticut. It was overseen by James Fitch, a missionary who wrote to Gookin in 1674 that he had secured land for the Mohegan inhabitants: “I have given them of mine own lands, and some that I have procured of our town, above three hundred acres of good improvable lands.” Fitch, the pastor of the English church at Norwich, signed his letter "JAMES FITCH, senior. From Norwich, Novem. 20th. 1674." While some individuals owned land further flung from their habitation, it is reasonable to imagine that the land Moheek was based on was probably not far from Norwich, since the land was granted by that town and by James Fitch, who lived and worked there. In *Historical Collections*, Moheek is noted as being in the present-day town of Montville, which is twelve miles from present-day Norwich. The approximate location of Moheek is marked here on my maps.<sup>44</sup>



### Appendix 3.

#### Sources for Table 1. Indigenous Place and Group Name Meanings

Indigenous confederations known to have been represented in mission communities:

Massachusett	Great Hill, Near the Great Hill, Place of Great Hills, Place of the Foothill <sup>45</sup>
Nipmuc	Fresh Water People <sup>46</sup>
Pawtucket	At the water falls <sup>47</sup>
Wampanoag	People of the First Light <sup>48</sup>
Mohegan	Wolf clan <sup>49</sup>

#### Indigenous Group & Mission Community Names

Natick	“Natick means “Place of Searching” though often referred to as the “Place of Many Hills” or “My Home.” <sup>50</sup>
Chobonokonomum	Divided island lake; a boundary place, or boundary fishing place <sup>51</sup>
Ponkapoag	a spring that bubbles from red soil <sup>52</sup>
Magunkaquog	A place of giant trees; a place of the gift <sup>53</sup>
Hassanamesit	Place of small stones <sup>54</sup>
Maanexit	Path; where the path is <sup>55</sup>
Wabaquisit	West of the Quinebaug River <sup>56</sup>
Quantisset	Long brook <sup>57</sup>
Okammakamesit	At the field other side <sup>58</sup>

Nashobah	Between the waters <sup>59</sup>
Mashpee	Big Water <sup>60</sup>
Comassakumkanit (or Herring Pond)	At the rock which stands erect <sup>61</sup>
Cotuhtikut (or Titicut)	At the great tidal river <sup>62</sup>
Aquinnah	The shore; The End of the Island; land under the hill <sup>63</sup>
Taakemmy	Where he or she strikes it (corn processing place) <sup>64</sup>
Talhanio	low meadow
Chappaquiddick (or Tchepiaquidenet)	Place of separate island <sup>65</sup>
Sanchiacantacket (or Sengekontacket)	Place where the brook flows into the river <sup>66</sup>
Nashamoieess the	The spirit he loves, or, he is beloved by spirit <sup>67</sup>
Nunnepog	A pond (body of unsalted water); literally means "when there is water there" <sup>68</sup>
Nashawahkamuk	Between the land (common land for hunting) <sup>69</sup>
Manitouwatootan	Christiantown, or God's town <sup>70</sup>
Nantucket	A place in the middle of the water; at far off sea-place <sup>71</sup>

## Appendix 4.

### Side by Side Transcriptions: *A Late and Further Manifestation* and Eliot to Steel

John Eliot, *A Late and Further Manifestation of the Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England*, 1655, in *The Eliot Tracts*, ed. Michael P. Clark (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 303-304.

We accordingly attended thereunto, to search for a fit place, and finally, after sundry journeyes and travels to severall places, the Lord did by his speciall providence, and answer of prayers, pitch us upon the place where we are at Natick. Unto which place my purpose at first was to have brought all the Praying Indians to Co-habit together: But is so fell out (by the guidance of God, as it now appeareth) that because the Cohannet Indians desired a place which they had reserved for themselves, and I finding that I could not at that time pitch there without opposition from some English, I refused that place, and pitched at Natick, where I found no opposition at present. This choyce of mine did move in the Cohannet Indians a jealousie that I had more affection unto those other Indians, then unto them. By which occasion (together with some other Providences of God, as the death of Cutshamoquin, and the coming of Josias, to succeed in the Sachemship in that place) their minds were quite alienated from the place of Natick, though not from the work, for they desire to make a Towne in that fore-mentioned place of their owne, named Ponkipog, and are now upon the work.

John Eliot to William Steele 8 October 1652, in *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*. Vol. 36, 295-296. Boston: David Clapp and Son, 1882. Internet Archive.

Our work at Natick findeth difficulties and impediments on all hands, the impediments among the Indians are sundry, but the chiefest of them are such as I doe see, will, by Gods goodnesse tend to the enlargment of the work, for a considerable part of the Indians and they not the meanest in religion, did earnestly desire to have pitch our first stake in another place, but the English haveing some interest and grant from the Court of that place and opposing, I did not pitch there, but in this place where in my first beginnings I found no opposition, but the Indians tooke it rather, from a greater favor I had to such Indians as had reference to that place & so some emulation is moved & such as adhere to that part have little or no mind to Natick, but the issue of the matter will be this & allready worketh that so soon as we have planted a towne and a church in this place, we might sett upon another in a 2<sup>nd</sup> & another in a 3<sup>rd</sup> place, if we cann obtaine freedome and means. So that by that means which Satan hoped to have broken our work the same is a meanes to multiply it.

## Abbreviations

MAC	Massachusetts Archives Collection
MVP	Martha's Vineyard Papers, 1600-1899
RCP	Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England
RMB	Records of The Governor & Company of The Massachusetts Bay In New England
RTD	Early Records of the Town of Dedham Massachusetts

## Notes

### A Note on Spelling and Quotations

<sup>1</sup> For a translation of these symbols and abbreviations, see Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of The Governor & Company of The Massachusetts Bay In New England Vol. 1 1628-1641* (Boston: William White Press, 1853), xiii, Internet Archive.

### Introduction

<sup>1</sup> Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Swindler Sachem: The American Indian Who Sold His Birthright, Dropped Out of Harvard, and Conned the King of England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 224

<sup>2</sup> Cheryll Toney Holley, “Forward,” in *Historical Archaeology and Indigenous Collaboration: Discovering Histories That Have Futures*, ed. D. Rae Gould, Holly Herbster, Heather Law Pezzarossi, and Stephen A. Mrozowski (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2020), 7.

<sup>3</sup> In this dissertation, I do my best to use the terminology that present-day Indigenous communities use to describe their histories and identities. Native people in Massachusetts use “Indigenous” as well as “Native” to describe themselves and their ancestors. I follow their lead in this study and use these terms interchangeably to describe multiple Native groups at once, and when specific names are not available to describe communities and individuals.

<sup>4</sup> The terms “mission communities” and “praying towns” are both used by different Native communities in Massachusetts today. I generally use the term mission communities to describe these places as a whole, because not all of them were actually “towns.” Some, like Mashpee, actually encompassed several Indigenous settlements. Others, like Aquinnah, were sachemships that were not structured like English towns. For communities that were specifically referred to as towns in firsthand accounts, and/or where township structure was adopted, such as the “old praying towns” in Massachusetts Bay, the term praying town is used here interchangeable with mission community as a descriptor. See Appendix 2 for a discussion of the complexities involved in counting and locating the twenty-eight mission communities referenced here.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 5 for more details on present-day Indigenous connections to prior mission community land.

<sup>6</sup> These colonies were Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Martha’s Vineyard, and Connecticut. The Indigenous confederations were Massachusett, Wampanoag, Nipmuc, Pawtucket, and Mohegan.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections of the Indians in New England* (Boston: Apollo Press by Belknap and Hall, 1792), 40-69, Evans Early American Imprint Collection; David J. Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries: Colonists, Christianity, and Community among the Wampanoag Indians of Martha’s Vineyard 1600-1871* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 123-124; Edna Scofield, “The Origin of Settlement Patterns in Rural New England,” *Geographical Review* 28, no. 4 (October 1938): 658-659. The sachemship was the core social and geographic organizational unit of Indigenous people in southern New England. For detailed discussion of sachemships see Chapter 1, 32-41 and Chapter 4.

<sup>8</sup> For sources used to create this map, see Appendix 2.

<sup>9</sup> Metacom’s War is also known as King Philip’s War. Here I use “Metacom” because while “King Philip” was the name English colonists knew this *ketasontimoog* by, Metacom was his Wampanoag name. See Appendix 1 for details and sources on mission community population.

<sup>10</sup> For more details on this historiographic direction, see: Alyssa Mt. Pleasant, Caroline Wigginton, and Kelly Wisecup, “Materials and Methods in Native American and Indigenous Studies: Completing the Turn,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 75, no. 2 (April 2018): 207-236. For key works on Native

history in seventeenth-century southern New England, see: James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Neal Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence: Indians, Europeans, and the Making of New England, 1500-1643* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); William S. Simmons, *Spirit of the New England Tribes: Indian History and Folklore 1620-1984* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1986); William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang (1983) 2003); Michael Leroy Oberg, *Uncas: First of the Mohegans* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003); Ronald Dale Karr, "Why Should You Be So Furious?": The Violence of the Pequot War," *The Journal of American History* 85, no. 3 (December 1998), 876-909; Ann Marie Plane, *Colonial Intimacies: Indian Marriage in Early New England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Subjects Unto the Same King: Indians, English, and the Contest for Authority in Colonial New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); Michael L. Fickes, "They Could Not Endure That Yoke": The Captivity of Pequot Women and Children after the War of 1637," *The New England Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (March 2000); Pulsipher, *Swindler Sachem*; Lisa Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip's War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018); Kathleen J. Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999); Kathleen J. Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1650-1775* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009); James D. Drake, *King Philip's War: Civil War in New England 1675-1676* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999); Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*; Patricia E. Rubertone, *Grave Undertakings: An Archaeology of Roger Williams and the Narragansett Indians* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001); Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998); Margaret Ellen Newell, *Brethren by Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015); Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975); Colin G. Calloway and Neal Salisbury ed., *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience* (Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 2003), Colonial Society of Massachusetts Online Publications; David J. Silverman "We Chuse to Be Bounded": Native American Animal Husbandry in Colonial New England," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 60 no. 3 (July 2003): 511-548; Alan Greer, *Property and Dispossession: Natives, Empires and Land in Early Modern North America* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

<sup>11</sup> Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 197-199; John Elliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 73-75, 85, 187, 189.

<sup>12</sup> Axtell, *The Invasion Within*; Pulsipher, *Subjects Unto the Same King*; Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*; Drake, *King Philip's War*; Jennings, *The Invasion of America*; Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1650-1775*; Drew Lopenzina, *Red Ink: Native Americans Picking Up the Pen in the Colonial Period* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012); Heather Miyano Kopelson, *Faithful Bodies: Performing Religion and Race in the Puritan Atlantic* (New York: New York University Press, 2014); Plane, *Colonial Intimacies*; Neal Salisbury, "Embracing Ambiguity: Native Peoples and Christianity in Seventeenth-Century North America," *Ethnohistory* 50, no. 2 (Spring 2003); Ives Goddard and Kathleen J. Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1988).

<sup>13</sup> Kathryn N. Gray, *John Eliot and the Praying Indians of Massachusetts Bay: Communities and Connections in Puritan New England* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2013); Jason Eden, "Therefore Ye Are No More Strangers and Foreigners": Indians, Christianity, and Political Engagement in Colonial Plymouth and on Martha's Vineyard," *American Indian Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (Winter 2014): 36-59; Kristina Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons: Praying Indians in Colonial America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Francis Jennings, "Goals and Functions of Puritan Missions to the Indians," *Ethnohistory* 18, no. 3 (Summer 1971): 197-212; James P. Ronda, "We Are Well As We Are": An Indian Critique of Seventeenth-Century Christian Missions," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (January 1977): 66-82; Henry M. Knapp, "The Character of Puritan

Missions: The Motivation, Methodology, and Effectiveness of the Puritan Evangelization of the Native Americans in New England,” *The Journal of Presbyterian History* 76, no. 2 (Summer 1998), 111-126; Harold W. Van Lonkhuyzen, “A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians: Acculturation, Conversion, and Identity at Natick, Massachusetts, 1646-1730,” *The New England Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (September 1990): 396-428; Richard W. Cogley, “Idealism vs. Materialism in the Study of Puritan Missions to the Indians,” *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 3, no. 2 (1991): 165-182; James Axtell, “Some Thoughts on the Ethnohistory of Missions,” *Ethnohistory* 29, no. 1 (Winter 1982): 35-41; Elise M. Brenner, “To Pray or to Be Prey: That Is the Question Strategies for Cultural Autonomy of Massachusetts Praying Town Indians,” *Ethnohistory* 27, no. 2 (Spring 1980): 135-152; Henry W. Bowden and James P. Ronda ed. *John Eliot’s Indian Dialogues: A Study in Cultural Interaction* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1980); Dane Morrison, *A Praying People: Massachusetts Acculturation and the Failure of the Puritan Mission, 1600-1690* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1998); Richard W. Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission to the Indians Before King Philip’s War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Julius Rubin, *Tears of Repentance: Christian Indian Community and Identity in Colonial Southern New England* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013); Neal Salisbury, “Red Puritans: The “Praying Indians” of Massachusetts Bay and John Eliot,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (January 1974); William S. Simmons, “Conversion from Indian to Puritan,” *The New England Quarterly* 52, no. 2, (June 1979): 197-218.

<sup>14</sup> Jean M. O’Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees: Indian Land and Identity in Natick, Massachusetts, 1650-1790* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, (1997) 2003); Daniel R. Mandell, “Selling the Praying Towns: Massachusetts and Nipmuc Land Transactions, 1680-1730,” *Northeast Anthropology* 70 (2005).

<sup>15</sup> While vastly understudied compared to the Elliot mission, several works include deep analysis of the Plymouth and Martha’s Vineyard missions. For publications that include significant engagement with the seventeenth-century Plymouth mission communities, see: Patrick Cesarini, “John Eliot’s “A Breif History of the Mashpeog Indians,” 1666,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (January 2008): 101-134; Jack Campisi, *The Mashpee Indians: Tribe on Trial* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1991); Francis G. Hutchins, *Mashpee: The Story of Cape Cod’s Indian Town* (West Franklin: Amarta Press, 1979), Internet Archive; Russell Peters, *The Wampanoags of Mashpee: An Indian Perspective on American History* (Produced at Action Media), Massachusetts Historical Society Special Collections, Box-L 1987, Massachusetts Historical Society; David J. Silverman, “The Church in New England Indian Community Life” in *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience*, ed. Colin G. Calloway and Neal Salisbury (Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 2003), Colonial Society of Massachusetts Online Publications; Mary Farwell Ayer, “Richard Bourne, Missionary to the Mashpee Indians,” in *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, vol. 62 (Boston: Published by the Society, 1908), Google Books. Eden, “Therefore Ye Are No More Strangers and Foreigners.” For publications that include significant engagement with the mission communities of Martha’s Vineyard, see: David J. Silverman, “Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation: Creating Wampanoag Christianity in Seventeenth-Century Martha’s Vineyard,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (April 2005): 141-174; Silverman, “The Church in New England Indian Community Life”; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*; Charles E. Banks, *History of Martha’s Vineyard, Dukes County, Massachusetts*, vol. 1, *General History* (Boston: George H. Dean, 1911), Internet Archive; James P. Ronda, “Generations of Faith: The Christian Indians of Martha’s Vineyard,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (July 1981); Eden, “Therefore Ye Are No More Strangers and Foreigners”; Laura Arnold Leibman, “Introduction,” in *Experience Mayhew’s Indian Converts: A Cultural Edition* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008); Jennings, “Goals and Functions”; Salisbury, “Red Puritans”; Simmons, “Conversion from Indian to Puritan,” 197-218.

<sup>16</sup> Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, for material focusing on mission communities outside of Massachusetts Bay, see Chapter 7, “Missionary Work outside Massachusetts Bay.”

<sup>17</sup> Jenny Hale Pulsipher, “One Piece of Land to Cling To” in *Swindler Sachem: The American Indian Who Sold His Birthright, Dropped Out of Harvard, and Conned the King of England* (New Haven:

Yale University Press, 2018), see especially 233-235, 244-245; Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 10, 229-234; Silverman, "The Church in New England Indian Community Life"; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*.

<sup>18</sup> Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 231-234.

<sup>19</sup> For further discussion, see Chapter 4, 159-173.

<sup>20</sup> In Martha's Vineyard, for example, Wampanoags outnumbered English colonists by twenty to one. They, like many Wampanoags in Plymouth, claimed title to their lands in by establishing mission communities there, and the process by which they did so will be discussed throughout this study. While few Mohegans joined mission communities, some did, as evidenced by the settlement of Moheek in Connecticut. Matthew Mayhew, *The Conquests and Triumphs of Grace* (London: Princes Arms, 1695), 40-42, Early English Books Online; Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 93, 233-234.

<sup>21</sup> A ketasontimooq was also called a "great sachem" or "paramount sachem" in the English language. Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*, 141.

<sup>22</sup> See Chapter 1, 33-34.

<sup>23</sup> Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 106, 140-147; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 40-56.

<sup>24</sup> Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 154-159.

<sup>25</sup> John Eliot and Thomas Mayhew Jr., *Tears of Repentance*, 1653, in *The Eliot Tracts*, ed. Michael P. Clark (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 257; Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 175, 180; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 64-67; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 45-46; "Conveyance of Land in Tisbury in 1699," Martha's Vineyard Papers 1600-1899: Geographical Series, Box 13 Vol. 17: Tisbury, p. 103-104, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>26</sup> Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 184; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 68-69.

<sup>27</sup> "Copy of a Deed from Quichataset to South Sea Indians, November 20, 1666," Yale Indian Papers Project: New England Indian Papers Series, Yale University Library Digital Collections, <https://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:1018367>; "Deed from Weepquish and Tookonchasun to the South Sea Indians, December 11<sup>th</sup> 1665," Miscellaneous Bound Manuscripts Collection: 1629-1908, Massachusetts Historical Society. A transcription of this deed can be found in Hutchins, *Mashpee*, 47-48. See also: "Copy of the Indian Deed relating to the Petition of Reuben Cognehew, November 20, 1666," Yale Indian Papers Project: New England Indian Papers Series, Yale University Library Digital Collections, <https://findit.library.yale.edu/catalog/digcoll:1018371>; Nathaniel B. Shurtleff ed., *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England: Court Orders Vol. 6 1678-1691* (Boston: William White Press, 1856), 159-160, Hathi Trust Digital Library; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, "A Brief Timeline of Wampanoag History," accessed April 25, 2020, <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/timeline>

<sup>28</sup> See Chapter 2 for further discussion.

<sup>29</sup> For Mayhew Sr., see Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries* and Banks, *History of Martha's Vineyard*, vol. 1. For Eliot and Gookin, see Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*. For Fitch, see John T. Fitch, *Puritan in the Wilderness: A Biography of the Revered James Fitch 1622-1702* (Camden: Picton Press, 1993). For Bourne, see Hutchins, *Mashpee*, and Campisi, *The Mashpee Indians*.

<sup>31</sup> In this context, Miller defines decolonization as "a process designed to shed and recover from the ill effects of colonization." She further states that "Indigenous communities and nations decolonize their collective identity and their institutions, and individuals decolonize their minds and their ways of interacting and participating in institutions. Decolonizing projects include both the recovery of lapsed Indigenous practices and the utilization of non-Indigenous practices for Indigenous purposes." See Susan Miller, "Native America Writes Back: The Origin of the Indigenous Paradigm in Historiography," in *Native Historians Write Back: Decolonizing American Indian History*, ed. Susan Miller and James Riding In (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2011), 14. See also Susan Miller, "Native Historians Write Back: The Indigenous Paradigm in American Indian Historiography" in *Native Historians Write Back*, 34. Decolonization scholarship and scholarship adhering to the Indigenous paradigm are presently symbiotic and intertwined in their goals and overall effect on the discipline of History. Both provide local, global, and transnational frameworks through which to study commonalities and differences in Indigenous experiences. Further, decolonization as a framework and



a goal works effectively with the Indigenous Paradigm in revising histories previously told only from a colonial perspective. For more on decolonizing scholarship in American and international contexts, see: Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London UK: Zed Books, 2012); Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Winona Stevenson, "Calling Badger and the Symbols of the Spirit Language: The Cree Origins of the Syllabic System," in Miller and Riding In, *Native Historians Write Back*; Donna L. Akers, "Decolonizing the Master Narrative: Treaties and Other American Myths," *Wicazo Sa Review* 29 no. 1 (2014); Michael Yellow Bird and Angela Cavender Wilson ed., *For Indigenous Minds Only: A Decolonization Handbook* (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2012); Miller, "Native Historians Write Back"; Miller, "Native America Writes Back"; Jennifer Nez Denetdale, *Reclaiming Diné History: The Legacies of Navajo Chief Manuelito and Juanita* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007); Waziyatawin Angela Wilson, "Decolonizing the 1862 Death Marches," in Miller and Riding In, *Native Historians Write Back*; Waziyatawin Angela Wilson, *Remember This! Dakota Decolonization and the Eli Taylor Narratives*, trans. Wahpetunwin Carolyn Schommer (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005); Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, "The Lewis and Clark Story, the Captive Narrative, and the Pitfalls of Indian History," in Miller and Riding In, *Native Historians Write Back: Decolonizing American Indian History*; Lisa Brooks "Our Beloved Kin: Remapping a New History of King Philip's War," Accessed April 20, 2021, <https://ourbelovedkin.com/awikhigan/index>.

<sup>32</sup> Miller, "Native America Writes Back"; Miller, "Native Historians Write Back."

<sup>33</sup> For examples of early scholarship that the Indigenous Paradigm has built upon, see: Jeannette Henry and Rupert Costo, *A Thousand Years of American Indian Storytelling* (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1981); Rupert Costo, *Indian Treaties: Two Centuries of Dishonor* (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1977); Rupert Costo and Jeannette Henry, *Natives of the Golden State, the California Indians* (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1995); Jeannette Henry, *Textbooks and the American Indian* (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1970); Vine Deloria Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1969); Vine Deloria Jr., "The United States Has No Jurisdiction in Sioux Territory," in Miller and Riding In, *Native Historians Write Back*. The Indigenous Paradigm also draws from decolonizing activism in practical and political arenas, the most famous example being the powerful assertion of Indigenous rights and identity in the American Indian Movement.

<sup>34</sup> For examples, see Chapter 5.

<sup>35</sup> Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 110-129; Kristina Bross, "Come over and Help Us": Reading Mission Literature," *Early American Literature* 38, no. 3 (2003): 395-400; Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons*; Rubin, *Tears of Repentance*; Lopenzina, "Praying Indians, Printing Devils", in *Red Ink*. See also O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 52-54.

<sup>36</sup> For scholarly debates and perspectives on defining borderlands, and the use of borderlands as a framework, see: Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Jorge Cañazares-Esquerro, "Entangled Histories: Borderland Historiographies in New Clothes?" *American Historical Review* 112, no. 3 (2007); Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History," *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (1999); Nathaniel Millet, "Borderlands in the Atlantic World," *Atlantic Studies* 10, no 2 (2013); David J. Weber, "The Spanish Borderlands, Historiography Redux," *The History Teacher* 39, no. 1 (2005); Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, "On Borderlands," *Journal of American History* 98, no. 2 (September 2011).

<sup>37</sup> For more on the disappearance narrative in New England, see Jean M. O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

## Chapter 1

### In A New Borderlands World: Indigenous Rationales for Supporting Early Mission Communities

<sup>1</sup> Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*. For additional thorough overviews of seventeenth-century Indigenous southern New England, with varying interpretations of its history, see: Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*; Alden T. Vaughan, *New England's Frontier: Puritans and Indians 1620-1675* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, (1965) 1995); Jennings, *The Invasion of America*.

<sup>2</sup> Siobhan Senier ed., *Dawnland Voices: An Anthology of Indigenous Writings from New England*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 431.

<sup>3</sup> This compilation of definitions in Table 2 privileges Indigenous sources, particularly tribal websites and other publications that identify the meaning of their names. Primary and secondary linguistic sources are also used. Many of these places had more than one spelling. Whenever possible, I use the spelling used by present day Native communities. When this spelling is not available, I use the most commonly used spelling. For a version of this table with sources listed, see Appendix 3.

<sup>4</sup> For further discussion, see Chapter 4.

<sup>5</sup> Overall, English accounts from seventeenth-century southern New England name and discuss far more male sachems than female ones. This indicates that more men than women were sachems, but such a view could be slanted by English cultural biases. According to their own customs, English colonists were more likely to be on the lookout for men when they sought out leaders. The 1644 submission treaty discussed in this chapter is an example of English tendencies to gloss over female leadership. In this treaty, all men are named, but the one woman who signed the treaty is referred to only as a “sq̄a sachim.” See Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of The Governor & Company of The Massachusetts Bay In New England Vol. 2 1642-1649* (Boston: William White Press, 1853), 55, Internet Archive.

<sup>6</sup> It is likely that English observers exaggerated the monarchical authority of sachems in order to legitimize the land deals they made with them. Casting sachems as absolute lords of the land enabled English colonists to justify obtaining large land bases through a contract with one person, though that land was used by the whole sachemship. For further discussion, see Chapter 2 and Chapter 4, 149-155.

<sup>7</sup> Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*, 140-155; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 123-126.

<sup>8</sup> Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 123-124; Scofield, “The Origin of Settlement Patterns in Rural New England,” 658-659.

<sup>9</sup> Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*, 24-25, 150.

<sup>10</sup> Salisbury, “Red Puritans,” 35; Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 40-41, 105-106, 140-146; Jedidiah Morse and Elijah Parish, *A Compendious History of New England* (Amherst: Joseph Cushing, 1809), 207-213, Google Books; Fickes, “They Could Not Endure That Yoke”; Pulsipher, *Swindler Sachem*.

<sup>11</sup> The *Dictionary of Cultural Anthropology* defines a band as: “A small and mobile social group, often organized around kinship ties, that forms the basic unit of many (but not all) foraging societies. Bands are typically characterized by egalitarian social relations, collectively held land rights, nomadic movement, and shaman-centred religious practices.” The term tribe was defined in the mid-twentieth century as “a non-centralized political unit between a band and chiefdom” but the term has since come under scrutiny and been critiqued as overly simplistic and static. Despite this, many Native political organizations and communities in Massachusetts self-identify as tribes today. See: Luis A. Vivanco, *A Dictionary of Cultural Anthropology*, (Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 2018), sv. “Tribe” and “Band,” <https://www-oxfordreference-com.oca.ucsc.edu/view/10.1093/acref/9780191836688.001.0001/acref-9780191836688-e-384>.

For more information on some of the debates about characterizing and defining southern New England's historical Indigenous groups, see Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*, 40-43.

<sup>12</sup> Cheryll Toney Holley, "A Brief Look at Nipmuc History," Nipmuc Nation, accessed December 12, 2020, <https://www.nipmucnation.org/our-history>

<sup>13</sup> The Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, "Life of the Indigenous Massachusetts at Ponkapoag Plantation," accessed August 21, 2019 <http://massachusettstribe.org/life-of-the-indigenous-massachusetts-at-ponkapoag-plantation>

<sup>14</sup> Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag, "Our History," accessed August 20, 2019, <https://natickprayingindians.org/history.html>; Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe, "Our History," Accessed October 5, 2019, <https://www.herringpondtribe.org/our-history/>; Holley, "A Brief Look at Nipmuc History"; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, "Wampanoag History," accessed October 5, 2019, <https://www.wampanoagtribe.org/wampanoag-history>; Peters, *The Wampanoags of Mashpee*; The Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, "Chronological Listing Of Historically Important Events at Ponkapoag Plantation," Accessed April 24, 2020, <http://massachusettstribe.org/chronological-listing-of-historically-important-events-at-ponkapoag-plantation>

<sup>15</sup> Field Notes: Nipmuc Powwow July 7, 2017

<sup>16</sup> Melissa Harding Ferretti, interview by Taylor Kirsch, August 2, 2017; Field Notes: Nipmuc Powwow July 7, 2017

<sup>17</sup> Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 37-39.

<sup>18</sup> O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 14-20; Lisa Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 168; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 17, 30-34; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 28, 41-53; Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 37-40.

<sup>19</sup> Kitt Little Turtle, "Seasons of the Nipmuc: Spring Planting Moon Marked the Beginning of New Year," *Nipmucspohke* 3, no. 2, accessed June 8, 2019, [http://nipmucspohke.homestead.com/Vol.III\\_Is.2.pdf](http://nipmucspohke.homestead.com/Vol.III_Is.2.pdf); Jason Eden, "Gender and the Puritan Mission to the Native People of New England, 1620-1750," *Priscilla Papers* 24, no. 4 (Autumn 2010); Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*, 169-183; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 44-48; Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 37-39; Todd R. Romero, *Making War and Minting Christians: Masculinity, Religion, and Colonialism in Early New England* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011), 82-84.

<sup>20</sup> Jean M. O'Brien, "Divorced from the Land: Accommodation Strategies of Indian Women in Eighteenth-Century New England," in *Gender, Kinship, Power: A Comparative and Interdisciplinary History*, ed. Mary Jo Maynes, Ann Waltner, Birgitte Soland, and Ulrike Strasser (New York: Routledge, 1996), 319-321; Trudie Lamb Richmond and Amy E. Den Ouden, "Recovering Gendered Political Histories, Local Struggles and Native Women's Resistance in Colonial Southern New England," in Calloway and Salisbury, *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience*; Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*, 169-183; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 30-41; Eden, "Gender and the Puritan Mission"; Romero, *Making War and Minting Christians*, 82-84; For more on Native marriage, also see Plane, *Colonial Intimacies*.

<sup>21</sup> Richmond and Den Ouden, "Recovering Gendered Political Histories"; Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*, 169-183; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 30-41; Eden, "Gender and the Puritan Mission."

<sup>22</sup> "Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag, "Moskhet Kutoo," accessed August 8, 2019, <https://natickprayingindians.org/moskhet.html>; Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*, 17-18, 184-230; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 17-18, 34-39; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, "Ancient Ways: The Creation of Noepe," accessed August 29, 2019, <https://www.wampanoagtribe.org/ancientways>; Kitt Little Turtle, "Seasons of the Nipmuc: Winter and the Nipmuc Calendar," *Nipmucspohke* 3, no. 4, accessed June 8, 2019, [http://nipmucspohke.homestead.com/Vol.III\\_Is.4.pdf](http://nipmucspohke.homestead.com/Vol.III_Is.4.pdf); Eagle Sun, "Sesquana Kesswush," *Nipmucspohke* 5, no. 3, Summer 2001, [http://nipmucspohke.homestead.com/Vol.V\\_Is.3.pdf](http://nipmucspohke.homestead.com/Vol.V_Is.3.pdf);

Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 27-28.

<sup>23</sup> Holley, "A Brief Look at Nipmuc History"; Morgan Rousseau and Daily News Staff, "For Area Nipmucs, Culture is their Lifeline," *The Metro West Daily News*, December 18, 2011, <https://www.metrowestdailynews.com/article/20111218/news/312189959?template=ampart>

<sup>24</sup> The most commonly referenced date for the first epidemic in southern New England is 1616. However, different primary sources sometimes report other start dates, differing by approximately one year. This one-year window of variations in date reporting can also be seen in sources that describe the 1633, 1643, and 1645 epidemics discussed in this chapter.

<sup>25</sup> See Karen O. Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

<sup>26</sup> The debate over exactly how many people were in southern New England before the epidemics, and therefore how many were killed by these devastating pathogens will most likely never end. Amid the demographic upheavals that the people of this area went through in the seventeenth century, precise population figures would be difficult to calculate even with present day institutions and technology. An often-problematic colonial source base for these estimates further muddies the waters. For the purposes of this chapter, the takeaway point is much more certain: Pathogens to which Indigenous people had no immunity killed a staggering percentage of southern New England's people, and this devastation had world-altering consequences on personal, political, ecological, cultural, and spiritual levels. For overviews of the population debate and some generally accepted figures, see: Gideon A. Mailer and Nicola E. Hale, *Decolonizing the Diet: Nutrition, Immunity, and the Warning from Early America* (New York: Anthem Press, 2018), 94-100; Patrick M. Malone, *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics Among the New England Indians* (Lanham: Madison Books, 1991), 103; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 21-30; Timothy L. Bratton, "The Identity of the New England Indian Epidemic of 1616-1619," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 62, no. 3 (Fall 1988): 352; Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*, 25-28; Michael P. Clark, "Introduction," in *The Eliot Tracts* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 25-28.

<sup>27</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 7-9.

<sup>28</sup> Giovanni da Verrazano, "Giovanni Verrazano to King Francis I of France, July 8<sup>th</sup> 1524" trans. Susan Tarrow, in *The Voyages of Giovanni da Verrazano, 1524-1528*, Lawrence C. Wroth ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), Columbia University Online Documents, 133-143; Samuel De Champlain, *Voyages of Samuel De Champlain Vol. 1 1567-1635*, trans. Charles Pomeroy Otis (Boston: Prince Society, 1880), 63-71, Hathi Trust Digital Library; Samuel De Champlain, *Voyages of Samuel De Champlain 1604-1618*, ed. W.L Grant (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), 65-71, Internet Archive; John Smith, *A Description of New England*, in *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith President of Virginia and Admiral of New England 1580-1631*, ed. Edward Arber (New York: Burt Franklin, 1910), 192-208, Google Books.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Morton, *The New English Canaan of Thomas Morton*, ed. Charles Francis Adams (Boston: The Prince Society, 1883), 130-134, Internet Archive; Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 19; William Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1856), 95-99 Internet Archive.

<sup>30</sup> For more information on this first epidemic, see: David S. Jones, *Rationalizing Epidemics: Meanings and Uses of American Indian Mortality Since 1600* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 28-35; Alan C. Swedlund, "Contagion, Conflict, and Captivity in Interior New England: Native American and European Contacts in the Middle Connecticut River Valley of Massachusetts 1616-2004," in *Beyond Germs: Native Depopulation in North America* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2015), 152; John S. Marr and John T. Cathey, "New Hypothesis for Cause of Epidemic among Native Americans, New England, 1616-1619," *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 16, no. 2 (February 2010); Dean R. Snow and Kim Lanphear, "European Contact and Indian Depopulation in the Northeast: The Timing of the First Epidemics," *Ethnohistory* 35, no. 1 (Winter 1988): 22; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 101-105; O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 5; Bratton, "The Identity of the New England Indian Epidemic of 1616-1619"; John White, *John White's Planter's Plea 1630*, ed. Marshall



H. Saville (Rockport: The Sandy Bay Historical Society and Museum, 1930), 25, Hathi Trust Digital Library; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 85-91.

<sup>31</sup> Information used to create the political aspect of this map was sourced from: Lisa Brooks, *Map 4* and *Map 6*, in *The Common Pot*; Lisa Brooks, *Map 1: Native Homelands of the Northeast*, “Navigate Alongside the Book: Introduction,” *Our Beloved Kin: Remapping a New History of King Philip’s War*, accessed July 9, 2019, <https://www.ourbelovedkin.com/awikhigan/introduction?path=navigate-alongside>); Sondra Jarvis, *Native people and polities in southern New England circa 1620* [map], in Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*, 24; *Key to Tribal Territories* [map], in *Handbook of North American Indians Volume 15: The Northeast*, ed. Bruce G. Trigger (Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 1978), ix; Bert Salwen, *Tribal Territories About 1630* [map], in Trigger, *Handbook of North American Indians Volume 15*, 161.

<sup>32</sup> Many contemporary European accounts as well as interviews with Indigenous elders attest to a coastal mainland epidemic, the reach of which is shown here as precisely as possible given the historical and archaeological descriptions available. I have marked the longitudinal limits of this epidemic based on John White’s report in *The Planter’s Plea* that this outbreak reached no more than “twenty or thirty miles up into the land” as well as primary and secondary sources that describe the epidemic as a coastal phenomenon and/or described specific peoples affected. For these sources as well as latitudinal data, see: White, *Planter’s Plea*, 25; Phineas Pratt, “A Declaration of the Affairs of the English People That First Inhabited New England,” in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, ser. 4, vol. 4 (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1858), 479, Hathi Trust Digital Library; Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation*, 95-99, 102; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 7-9; Ferdinando Gorges, “A Brief Narration of the Original Undertakings of the Advancements of Plantations into the parts of America,” in *Sir Ferdinando Gorges and His Province of Maine*, vol. 2, ed. James Phinney Baxter (Boston: The Prince Society, 1890), 19, Internet Archive; Penobscot Nation, “Penawahpskewi Indian Nation,” Accessed September 9, 2019, [http://www.penobscotculture.com/?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=58&Itemid=72](http://www.penobscotculture.com/?option=com_content&view=article&id=58&Itemid=72) linked from the Penobscot Nation official website:

<https://www.penobscotnation.org/departments/cultural-historic-preservation>; Thomas Dermer to Samuel Purchas 27 December 1619, in *Hakluytus Posthumus*, vol. 19, ed. Samuel Purchas (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1905), 129-130, Internet Archive; Edward Winslow, “Visits to Massasoit,” in *New England’s Memorial*, Nathaniel Morton (Boston: Congregational Board of Publication, 1855), 361-362, Internet Archive; Morton, *The New English Canaan*, 130-134, Swedlund, “Contagion, Conflict, and Captivity in Interior New England”; Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 81-82; O’Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 5; Snow and Kim Lanphear, “European Contact and Indian Depopulation in the Northeast”; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 101-105; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 85-91; Sherburne F. Cook, “The Significance of Disease in the Extinction of the New England Indians,” *Human Biology* 45, no. 3 (September 1973): 487; Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*, 25-28; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 5-6, 22. Note: The Jesuit Pierre Biard’s 1616 relation reported Indigenous population loss in coastal New France beginning with French contact, but did not specify exactly which areas were hit by disease. It is likely that Biard was referring to parts of the expansive Wabanaki country, which other sources confirm experienced epidemic depopulation. However, though Salisbury and Cook disagree with this possibility, it is possible that additional coastal peoples in New France including the Mi’kmaq may have been affected by the same disease that depopulated coastal New England in 1616. Cronon argues that Biard’s description suggests significant mortality in the north, but that the spread-out population of the more mobile, hunting oriented population there halted the spread of many diseases and prevented population loss from reaching the proportions seen in southern New England. Jones and others note that the far northeast including Mi’kmaq territory had already experienced European diseases before southern New England did. Due to the uncertain nature of the 1616 epidemic’s reach and impact north of Mt. Desert Island, I have chosen to not include that geography in this map. See: Pierre Biard, “Relation of New France,” in *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents Vol. 3 Acadia 1611–1616*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers Company, 1898), 97-113, Creighton University

Online Documents; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 103; Cook, "The Significance of Disease," 487; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 86-87; Jones, *Rationalizing Epidemics*, 28-30; Bruce J. Bourque and Ruth Holmes Whitehead, "Tarrentines and the Introduction of European Trade Goods in the Gulf of Maine," *Ethnohistory* 32, no. 4 (Autumn 1985): 337.

<sup>33</sup> John Winthrop, *The Journal of John Winthrop, 1630-1649*, ed. Richard S. Dunn, James Savage, and Laetitia Yeandle (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press), 105-106, 108-109; Jean Brebeuf, "Relation of what occurred among the Hurons in the year 1635," in *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents Vol. 8: Quebec Hurons, Cape Breton 1634-1636*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers Company, 1897), 87-89, see also 71-73, 133, Hathi Trust Digital Library; Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation*, 315, 325-326. For more information on this epidemic see: Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 58-60; Swedlund, "Contagion, Conflict, and Captivity in Interior New England," 146-147, 152-153; Jones, *Rationalizing Epidemics*, 28-31; O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 5; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 85-90; Bratton, "The Identity of the New England Indian Epidemic of 1616-1619."

<sup>34</sup> This epidemic was so expansive, many accounts report in general terms about broad swaths of the northeast being affected, while others list specific locations and peoples. Some small pockets of the Indigenous population reportedly avoided this epidemic, namely east of Pascataquack and Noepe, with the sea acting as a shield. If any other enclaves in the scope of this map avoided the epidemic, they were likely islands. Because I did not find any sources specifically discussing islands as afflicted, and because two island areas are reported as spared, I did not include island in the epidemic range on this map. I also did not include Mi'kmaq territory because while the reach of this epidemic is described as near universal, Mi'kmaq territory is not specifically mentioned. This is possibly because they were among the first people in the Northeast to experience European diseases and may have developed some group immunity to smallpox by 1633 (see Chapter 1 note 32.) It is well-documented that all the peoples of mainland southern New England, and many in Huronia, Iroquoia, New Netherland, and New France were affected. This map was created using data from: Brebeuf, "Relation of what occurred among the Hurons," 87-89, see also 133; Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library, "Canada, ou Nouvelle France, &c." New York Public Library Digital Collections, accessed September 1, 2019, <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47da-f0f9-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>;

Winthrop, *The Journal of John Winthrop*, 105-106, 108-109; William Hubbard, *A General History of New England from the Discovery to 1680* (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1848), 106-108, Google Books; "The Charlestown Records," in *Chronicles of the First Planters of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay from 1623-1636*, ed. Alexander Young (Charles C. Little and James Brown 1846), 386-387, Internet Archive; Bradford, *History of Plymouth Plantation*, 315, 325-326; Swedlund, "Contagion, Conflict, and Captivity in Interior New England," 146-147, 52; Jones, *Rationalizing Epidemics*, 28-31; Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 58-60; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 5-6, 22.

<sup>35</sup> Jones, *Rationalizing Epidemics*, 31-32; James B. Petersen, Malinda Blustain and James W. Bradley, "Mawooshen" Revisited: Two Native American Contact Period Sites on the Central Maine Coast," *Archaeology of Eastern North America* 32 (2004): 7; Eliot and Mayhew Jr., *Tears of Repentance*, 292-294; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 22-23.

<sup>36</sup> For sources and methods for this map, see Appendix 2 and Chapter 1 notes 32 and 34.

<sup>37</sup> Anonymous (possibly Thomas Shepard), *The Day Breaking, if Not the Sun-Rising of the Gospel with the Indians in New England*, 1647, in *The Eliot Tracts*, ed. Michael P. Clark (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 94; Bratton, "The Identity of the New England Indian Epidemic of 1616-1619," 366-377; Snow and Kim Lanphear, "European Contact and Indian Depopulation in the Northeast," 22-26.

<sup>38</sup> David Pulsifer ed., *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England Acts of the Commissioners of the United Colonies of New England Vol. 2 1653-1679*, 13, (Boston: William White Press 1859), Hathi Trust Digital Library.

<sup>39</sup> John Winthrop, “Reasons to be Considered for Justifying the Undertakers of the Intended Plantation in New England,” in *Life and Letters of John Winthrop, Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Company at their emigration to New England, 1630*, ed. Robert C. Winthrop (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1864), 309-313, Internet Archive; Winthrop, *Winthrop’s Journal*, 122, 527; John Peacock, “Principles and Effects of Puritan Appropriation of Indian Land and Labor,” *Ethnohistory* 31, no. 1 (Winter 1984): 40-41; James W. Springer, “American Indians and the Law of Real Property in Colonial New England,” *The American Journal of Legal History* 30, no. 1 (January 1986): 55-58.

<sup>40</sup> Note: Cutshamache is known today by the Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag as Kitchemekin, and he is referred to by that name hereafter. Kitchemekin is also commonly called Cutshamekin. See: “The Removal of the Neponsetts To Ponkapoag,” accessed April 24, 2020, <http://massachusettstribe.org/the-removal-of-the-neponsetts-to-ponkapoag>; Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*; RMB vol. 2, 55.

<sup>41</sup> Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 235; Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 30-40.

<sup>42</sup> Holley, “A Brief Look at Nipmuc History”; Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 30-40.

<sup>43</sup> Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse*, 58-66. According to Cogley, Passaconaway is “usually classified as a member of the Pennacook branch of Pawtuckets.” See: Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 36.

<sup>44</sup> Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 86-94; Winthrop, *Winthrop’s Journal*, 133-135; 190-192; Frank G. Speck, *Territorial Subdivisions and Boundaries of the Wampanoag, Massachusetts, and Nauset Indians* (New York: Museum of the American Indian Heye Foundation, 1928), 103, 117, 40-44, Hathi Trust Digital Library; Samuel G. Drake, *Biography and History of the Indians of North America, From Its First Discovery* (Boston: Benjamin B. Mussey & Co., 1848), 46-47; Hathi Trust Digital Library; Masconomet, “Deed of Masconomet to John Winthrop, Jr., June 28, 1638,” Papers of the Winthrop Family Vol. 4: Winthrop Family Papers Digital Edition, Massachusetts Historical Society Digital Collections, <https://www.masshist.org/publications/winthrop/index.php/view/PWF04d036>; Masconomet, “Acknowledgment of Masconomet, March 13, 1639,” Papers of the Winthrop Family Vol. 4: Winthrop Family Papers Digital Edition, Massachusetts Historical Society Digital Collections, <https://www.masshist.org/publications/winthrop/index.php/view/PWF04p105>; RMB vol. 2, 55; Salisbury, “Red Puritans,” 35-37.

<sup>45</sup> Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 32; Winthrop, *The Journal of John Winthrop*, 49-50, 55, 251-253; The Native Northeast Research Collaborative, “Wagunk,” Native Northeast Portal, accessed September 12, 2019, <http://nativeneortheastportal.com/bio-tribes/wagunk>; The Native Northeast Research Collaborative, “Sowheage,” Native Northeast Portal, accessed September 12, 2019, <http://nativeneortheastportal.com/bio/bibliography/sowheage-1649>

<sup>46</sup> Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 6-7.

<sup>47</sup> Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 6-7, 26; Winthrop, *The Journal of John Winthrop*, 406-407.

<sup>48</sup> Henry Whitfield, *The Light appearing more and more towards the perfect Day*, 1651, in *The Eliot Tracts*, ed. Michael P. Clark (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 177-178; Experience Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, in *Experience Mayhew’s Indian Converts: A Cultural Edition*, ed. Laura Arnold Leibman (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), 171; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 22, 74.

<sup>49</sup> For a selection of examples, see: Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*; David Pulsifer ed., *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England Deeds &c Vol. 1 1620-1651: Book of Indian Records for Their Lands* (Boston: William White Press, 1861), Hathi Trust Digital Library; Sidney Perley ed., *The Indian Land Titles of Essex County Massachusetts* (Salem: Essex Book and Print Club, 1912), Internet Archive; Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs, *Indian Deeds: Land Transactions in Plymouth Colony 1620-1691* (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2002); Harry Andrew Wright ed., *Indian Deeds of Hampden County* (Springfield: Springfield, 1905), Internet Archive; Charles J. Hoadly ed., *Indian Deeds of the Plantation of New Haven*, Massachusetts Historical Society Special Collections, Box 1857, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Martha’s Vineyard Papers 1600-1899, Massachusetts Historical Society; Don Gleason Hill and William Hill ed., *Ancient Deeds from the Indians to the Town of Dedham* (Dedham: Office of the Town Clerk of Dedham, 1881), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100011227>

<sup>50</sup> Eliot and Mayhew Jr., *Tears of Repentance*, 292-294.

<sup>51</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 22-24.

<sup>52</sup> Chapter 2 examines this factor in more detail.

## Chapter 2

### *The Way Narrow that Leadeth Unto Life: Colonial Desire, the Civilizing Mission, and Land Grants as Evangelist Tools*

<sup>1</sup> Note: Here, I choose to foreground the jurisdictional borders drawn across southern New England by English colonists. While this dissertation is an Indigenous-centered history, this chapter is dedicated to the English perspectives that would influence the Indigenous action discussed in other chapters. Therefore, it is productive to focus attention on the boundaries and conceptual spaces that mattered most to English people of the time.

<sup>2</sup> I have not found any scholarship analyzing the ways in which colonial authorities and missionaries actively wielded mission community land ownership as a conversion incentive. However, Richard Cogley does point out one key role that mission community land played in the minds of some evangelists when he explains: “Eliot expected proselytes to live in praying towns because stability of residence and sedentary agriculture were important components of civilized life.” See: Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 237.

<sup>3</sup> The Massachusetts General Court was the main governing body of the Massachusetts Bay colony. It served both legislative and judicial functions and drew its authority to rule from the 1629 Massachusetts Bay royal charter. See: Diane Rapaport, *New England Court Records: A Research Guide for Genealogists and Historians* (Burlington: Quill Pen Press, 2006), 153; William Francis Galvin, “Records of the Governor & Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England,” Massachusetts Archives Division, accessed April 27, 2021, <https://www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/arcdigitalrecords/mbcolony.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Jennings, “Goals and Functions”; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 19-20; Salisbury, “Red Puritans,” 29-31. Richard Cogley argues that missionary work was certainly not a “main end” or top priority for Massachusetts Bay colony, though it did become so for John Eliot, Daniel Gookin, and some of their family members. See: Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 231, 249.

<sup>5</sup> Knapp, “The Character of Puritan Missions,” 116. Knapp lays out potential reasons for the ineffectiveness of the early Puritan missions on pages 113-116. Kristina Bross offers analysis of transatlantic factors contributing to the delay. See: Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons*, 4-11. For further discussion, and the proposal that conversion efforts of “passive seduction, not active reduction” preceded the more visible missionary work of the sixteen-forties and onward, see Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 218-220 and Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 228-229, 232-239, 245-249. For a brief overview of positive perceptions of missionaries and their motives in early-twentieth century histories, see Salisbury, “Red Puritans,” 28. See also: Ronda, “We Are Well As We Are,” 66; Lopenzina, *Red Ink*, 94.

<sup>7</sup> Ronda, “Generations of Faith,” 370. See also: Rubin, *Tears of Repentance*, 12-13; Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 177-178; Amy E. Den Ouden, *Beyond Conquest: Native Peoples and the Struggle for History in New England* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 48, 50-54; Salisbury, “Red Puritans,” 27-29; Jennings, “Goals and Functions”; Elise Brenner, “Strategies for Autonomy: An Analysis of Ethnic Mobilization in Seventeenth Century Southern New England” (PhD dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 1984), 118.

<sup>8</sup> For examples, see: Ronda, “Generations of Faith,” 370; Jennings, “Goals and Functions”; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*; Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 172-179, 184, 193-195; Leibman, “Introduction”; Campisi, *The Mashpee Indians*, 76-79; Hutchins, *Mashpee*, 34-51, 59-60.

<sup>9</sup> For more on the importance of missionary work in diplomacy, see Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*.



<sup>10</sup> My analysis of missionary records and publications in this chapter is informed by the methods and insights of literary scholars who engage deeply with these sources, often in a transatlantic context. See: Bross, “Come over and Help Us”; Hilary Wyss, “Introduction” and “Literacy, Captivity, and Redemption: The Christian Indians of King Philip’s War” in *Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity, and Native Community in Early America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000); Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons*; Gray, *John Eliot and the Praying Indians of Massachusetts Bay*, see especially Chapter 2, “Dedicated Dignitaries and the Christian Reader: Reading the Mission in England,”; Cesarini, “John Eliot’s “A Breif History of the Mashepog Indians””; Lopenzina, *Red Ink*.

<sup>11</sup> For further analysis on the role of missionary work in transatlantic correspondence and politics, see Gray, *John Eliot and the Praying Indians of Massachusetts Bay*, 1-52. See also Rubin, *Tears of Repentance*, 25-27.

<sup>12</sup> For a breakdown of which missionaries headed each mission, see Table 1.

<sup>13</sup> *The Articles of Confederation of the United Colonies of New England May 19, 1643*, The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy, Yale Law School Lillian Goldman Law Library, [https://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject\\_menus/17th.asp](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/17th.asp); Alden T. Vaughn and Deborah A. Rosen ed., *New England and Middle Atlantic Laws*, vol. 17, *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws 1607-1789*, ed. Alden T. Vaughn (Bethesda: Congressional Information Services Inc., 2004), 65; Henry Wilder Foote, “The Significance and Influence of the Cambridge Platform of 1648,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 69, (October 1947): 92-93; Cambridge Synod, *The Original Constitution Order and Faith of the New-England Churches Comprising the Platform of Church Discipline Adopted in 1648*, (Boston: Belcher and Armstrong, 1808), Early American Imprints ser. 2, no. 25138.

<sup>14</sup> For examples, see: William Kellaway, “Missionaries and Indians, 1646-1690,” in *The New England Company* (New York: Barnes & Noble Inc., 1961); John Eliot, *A Brief Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England, in the Year 1670*, in *The Eliot Tracts*, ed. Michael P. Clark (Westport: Praeger, 2003); Edward Winslow, *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians of New England*, 1649, in *The Eliot Tracts*, ed. Michael P. Clark (Westport: Praeger, 2003); John Eliot, “A Breif History of the Mashepog Indians,” in Cesarini, “John Eliot’s “A Breif History,”” 122-124; John Eliot to Jonathan Hanmer 19 July 1652, in *John Eliot and the Indians 1652-1657* ed. Wilberforce Eames (New York: The Adams and Grace Press, 1915), 8, Internet Archive; Gookin, *Historical Collections*; Michael P. Clark, ed., *The Eliot Tracts* (Westport: Praeger, 2003); Commissioners of the United Colonies to Mr. Richard Lloyd 26 September 1658, in *Some Correspondence Between the Governors and Treasurers of the New England Company in London and the Commissioners of the United Colonies in America, The Missionaries of the Company and Others, Between the Years 1657 and 1712*, ed. Company for Propagation of the Gospel in New England and the Parts Adjacent in America (London: Spottiswoode & Co., 1896), 4, Google Books; John Eliot to the Commissioners of the United Colonies 4 July 1671, in *Some Correspondence Between the Governors and Treasurers of the New England Company*, 44.

<sup>15</sup> William Kellaway, *The New England Company* (New York: Barnes & Noble Inc., 1961), 46, 62, 80, 93-105; Eliot, “A Breif History of the Mashepog Indians,” 101-134. For further examples see Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 238-239.

<sup>16</sup> For further discussion, see: Pulsipher, *Swindler Sachem*, 97-109; Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 27-28, 38-43; Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*, 43-45, 136-139, 141-148. Cronon, *Changes in the Land*; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 124-126; Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1650-1775*, 113-118; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Ancient Ways: Tribal Landmarks,” accessed June 16, 2020, <https://wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/ancientways>; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Ancient Ways: Land Use,” accessed June 16, 2020, <https://wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/ancientways>

<sup>17</sup> The ways Indigenous land use systems interacted with English ones are covered in-depth in Chapter 4.

<sup>18</sup> Nathaniel B. Shurtleff ed., *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England: Court Orders Vol. 3 1651-1661* (Boston: William White Press, 1855), 145, Hathi Trust Digital Library. For further

examples of this kind of legal language, see: William Blake Trask ed., *Suffolk Deeds Liber 2 1653-1656* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill City Printers, 1883), Internet Archive, Documents 51, 52, 92; “Deed from Wesamequen and Wamsutta to William Bradford, Captain Standish, Thomas Southworth, John Winslow, John Cooke etc., New Plymouth, November 29<sup>th</sup> 1652,” in D. Hamilton Hurd ed., *History of Bristol County, Massachusetts* (Philadelphia: J.W Lewis and Co., 1883), 49, Internet Archive; William Blake Trask ed., *Suffolk Deeds Liber 1* (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill City Printers, 1880), Internet Archive, Document 34; “Deed from John Magus and Sara Magus to Daniel Fisher, Thomas Huller, Richard Ellice, and Nathaniel Bullard, Agents of the Town of Dedham, March 26 1700” in Hill, *Ancient Deeds from the Indians to the Town of Dedham*, 5-6.

Perley, *Indian Land Titles of Essex County*, 23-32, 44-45, 93-95; Wright, *Indian Deeds of Hampden County*, 27, 33-35, 37-38, 51-52, 57-59, 63-64. Note: Many other deeds from Indigenous grantors to English grantees in these collections explicitly nullified the rights and claims of all other “persons whatsoever” to the property being sold. I have cited only those that specifically nullified the rights and claims of all “Indians.” See also James Springer’s discussion of early land transactions between Indigenous people and English settlers: Springer, “American Indians and the Law of Real Property,” 25-58.

<sup>19</sup> For a selection of examples, see: Nathaniel B. Shurtleff ed., *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England: Court Orders Vol. 2 1641-1651* (Boston: William White Press, 1855), 130-131, Hathi Trust Digital Library; “Deed from Wamsutta to Thomas Willet, April 10<sup>th</sup> 1666,” in Hurd, *History of Bristol County*, 508; Wright, *Indian Deeds of Hampden County*, 17, 33-35, 37-38, 69-70; Perley, *Indian Land Titles of Essex County*, 39; “Articles of agreement betweene Theophilus Eaton & John Davenport & others..., 24<sup>th</sup> of November 1638,” in Hoadly, *Indian Deeds of the Plantation of New Haven*.

<sup>20</sup> See page 85-87 for more detail on this term.

<sup>21</sup> *Charter of Connecticut 1662*, The Avalon Project; *The Charter of Massachusetts Bay*, The Avalon Project; *The Charter of Massachusetts Bay 1629*, The Avalon Project; Vaughn and Rosen, *New England and Middle Atlantic Laws*, 240.

<sup>22</sup> Note: Plymouth was absorbed into the fold of Massachusetts Bay’s royal charter in 1691, after the period of the Dominion of New England. Massachusetts Bay was originally settled by the authority of the Council for New England before it gained its own royal charter. See: Vaughn and Rosen, *New England and Middle Atlantic Laws*, 1-2; *Charter of the Colony of New Plymouth Granted to William Bradford and His Associates 1629*, The Avalon Project; *William Bradford &c. Surrender of the Patent of Plymouth Colony to the Freeman March 2D*, The Avalon Project; *The Charter of New England 1620*, The Avalon Project; “The Pierce Patent, 1621,” The Plymouth Colony Archive Project, University of Virginia, accessed March 10, 2020,

<http://www.histarch.illinois.edu/plymouth/piercepat.html>

<sup>23</sup> “Massachusetts Bay Colony Seal, 1629,” Wikimedia Commons, accessed June 14, 2020, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Massachusetts\\_Bay\\_Colony\\_Seal\\_1629.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Massachusetts_Bay_Colony_Seal_1629.jpg) For analysis on the meaning of the seal for colonial identity and goals in Massachusetts, see Bross, “Come over and Help Us.”

<sup>24</sup> *The Charter of New England 1620*; *The Charter of Massachusetts Bay 1629*.

<sup>25</sup> Den Ouden, *Beyond Conquest*, 42-43.

<sup>26</sup> *The Charter of New England 1620*.

<sup>27</sup> John Smith, “New England’s Trials, 1622,” in Arber, *Travels and Works of Captain John Smith*, 259.

<sup>28</sup> John Winthrop, “General Observations for the Plantation of New England,” Papers of the Winthrop Family Vol. 2: Winthrop Papers Digital Edition, Massachusetts Historical Society Digital Collections, 113, 117, <http://www.masshist.org/publications/winthrop/index.php/view/PWF02p114#PWF02d072n6>

<sup>29</sup> John Winthrop, “Gov. Winthrop’s letter to Mr. Endicott about Roger Williams January 3<sup>rd</sup> 1633” in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society Vol. 12, 1871-1873* (Cambridge: John Wilson and Son, 1873), 345, 485, Hathi Trust Digital Library

<sup>30</sup> “The Charlestown Records,” 386-387.

<sup>31</sup> Edward Johnson, *Johnson's Wonder Working Providence 1628-1651*, ed. J. Franklin Jameson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 79-80, Google Books Thomas Prince ed., *Annals of New England Vol. 2*, (Boston: John Eliot, 1818), 4, 67, Hathi Trust Digital Library.

<sup>32</sup> *The Charter of New England 1620*. For more on the role of epidemic disease in the Martha's Vineyard mission in the sixteen-forties, see: Ronda, "Generations of Faith," 370-371; Leibman, "Introduction," 27-31.

<sup>33</sup> Whitfield, *Light appearing*, 178; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 22-26, 74.

<sup>34</sup> Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 171. Hiacome, also known as Hiacoomes, is thought to be the first island Wampanoag to convert to Christianity. He was a missionary in his own right who preached to Native congregations, and worked closely with the Mayhews to promote Christianity on the islands. See: Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, "Ancient Ways," accessed May 1, 2021, <https://www.wampanoagtribe.org/ancientways>

<sup>35</sup> Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 171, see also 99. In his addendum to *Indian Converts*, the minister Thomas Prince even more explicitly credited epidemic disease as providential to missionary efforts: "But that which especially favoured the Progress of Religion among them, was a universal Sickness, wherewith they were visited in the following Year; wherein it was observed by the Heathen Indians themselves that those who hearkened to Mr. Mayhew's pious Instructions did not taste so deeply of it, and Hiacoomes and his Family in a manner nothing at all. This put the Natives who lived within six Miles of the English upon serious Consideration about this Matter, being much affected, that he who had professed the Christian Religion, and had thereby exposed himself to much Reproach and Trouble, should receive more Blessings than they." Thomas Prince, "Some Account of those English Ministers," in *Experience Mayhew's Indian Converts: A Cultural Edition*, ed. Laura Arnold Leibman (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), 358.

<sup>36</sup> Genesis 1:28: "And God blessed them, and God said to them, Bring forth fruit, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule over the fish of the sea, and over the fowle of the heaven, and over every beast that moveth upon the earth." Genesis 9:1: "And God blessed Noah and his sonnes, and said to them, Bring forth fruit, and multiply, and replenish the earth." Psalm 115:16: "The heavens, even the heavens are the Lords: but he hath given the earth to the sonnes of men." See: *The Bible that is, the Holy Scriptures Contained in the Old and New Testament* (Amsterdam: Christopher Barker, 1640), Early English Books Online.

<sup>37</sup> RCP Acts of the Commissioners vol. 2, 13; Winthrop, *The Journal of John Winthrop*, 122, 527; Peacock, "Principles and Effects of Puritan Appropriation of Indian Land and Labor," 40-41; Springer, "American Indians and the Law of Real Property," 55-58; Winthrop, "Reasons to be Considered for Justifying the Undertakers," 309-313. It should be noted that Winthrop may share credit for some of the ideas in this document with other authors. The version most certainly attributed to Winthrop is thought to have been written in the spring of 1629, approximately one year before he set sail for Massachusetts. See Winthrop, *Life and Letters of John Winthrop*, 317-319.

<sup>38</sup> This quote is from the Massachusetts Bay Charter. The language in the Charter of New England is the same in meaning but the language is slightly different: "Provided always, that the said Islands, or any of the Premises herein before mentioned, and by these Presents intended and meant to be granted, be not actually possessed or inhabited by any other Christian Prince or Estate." See: *The Charter of New England 1620; The Charter of Massachusetts Bay 1629*.

<sup>39</sup> It should be noted that the claim of a Catholic "Prince or State" would not have been respected purely on moral grounds. John Winthrop describes the English colonization of New England as an explicitly anti-Catholic enterprise: "It will be a service to the Church of great consequence to carry the Gospell into those parts of the world, to help on the cominge in of the fulnesse of the Gentiles and rayse a Bulworke against the kingdom of Antichrist which the Jesuites labor to rear up in those parts." The Charter of New England barred Catholics from the region on the grounds that they would interfere with missionary efforts: "...because the principall Effect which we can desire or expect of this Action, is the Conversion and Reduction of the People in those Parts unto the true Worship of God and Christian Religion, in which Respect, Wee would be loath that any Person should be permitted to pass that Wee suspected to affect the Superstition of the Chh of Rome, Wee do hereby declare that it is our

Will and Pleasure that none be permitted to pass, in any Voyage from time to time to be made into the said Country, but such as shall first have taken the Oathe of Supremacy.” See: Winthrop, “Reasons to be Considered for Justifying the Undertakers,” 309; *The Charter of New England 1620*. For more information on the Oath of Supremacy and its importance for New England’s religious identity, see Charles Evans, *Oaths of Allegiance in Colonial New England* (Worcester: The Davis Press, 1922) 4-7, Hathi Trust Digital Library.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Danforth, “Thomas Danforth Notebook, 1662-1666,” Massachusetts Historical Society Special Collections, Massachusetts Historical Society; “Danforth Papers: Document No. XV,” in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, ser. 2, vol. 8 (Boston: Nathan Hale 1826), 86, Hathi Trust Digital Library; The Native Northeast Research Collaborative, “Nicholls, Richard,” Native Northeast Portal, accessed November 21, 2019,

<https://nativeneortheastportal.com/bio/bibliography/nicholls-richard-1624-1672>

<sup>41</sup> Note: In middle English, the term composition, also spelled composicioun, meant: “an agreement between parties, such as a treaty, truce, contract, or regulation,” “the terms of an agreement” and/or a document embodying an agreement.” See: The Middle English Compendium (University of Michigan Library)

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED8755>

<sup>42</sup> RMB vol. 1, 400. See also: RMB, vol. 1 394; *Second Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston Containing the Boston Records, 1634-1660, and the Book of Possessions* (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill City Printers, 1881), 6,11, Hathi Trust Digital Library; Ferdinando Gorges, “A True Copy of the Tenth Article in the above Gorges Instructions Dated June 21 1661, Joseph Moody Reg. Superscribed to Capt. William Thomas at Boston,” June 21 1664, William Cushing Papers: 1664-1814, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>43</sup> “Lycence for Mr. Thomas Mayhew to Purchase Land etc., July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1671,” MVP: Chronological Series, Box 3 Vol. 6, 1600-1699, IMG 21, Massachusetts Historical Society; Banks, *History of Martha’s Vineyard*, vol. 1, 81, 84; Leibman, “Introduction,” 52-53.

<sup>44</sup> “Indian Deed of Medfield, 1685,” in *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, vol. 7 (Boston: Samuel G. Drake, 1853), 301-303, Google Books; “Quitclaim deed for the peninsula of Boston, Massachusetts, from Charles Josias and the Massachuset Indians to the inhabitants of Boston, 19 March 1685,” MHS Collections Online, Massachusetts Historical Society Digital Collections, [http://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?item\\_id=808&img\\_step=1&mode=transcript#](http://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?item_id=808&img_step=1&mode=transcript#); Perley, *Indian Land Titles of Essex County*, 54-60, 64-74, 77-85, 88-91, 120-127, 131-133; Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 141-142; Pulsipher, *Swindler Sachem* 101-103.

<sup>45</sup> This strategy failed on a disastrous scale in 1675, when Metacom’s War broke out largely due to English disrespect of Native land rights. Remarkably, Noepe remained peaceful during the war. See: David J. Silverman, “The Lord Tests the Righteous” in *Faith and Boundaries: Colonists, Christianity, and Community among the Wampanoag Indians of Martha’s Vineyard* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>46</sup> RMB vol. 1, 394. See also “The Company’s First General Letter of Instruction to Endicott And His Council,” in *Chronicles of the First Planters of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay from 1623-1636*, ed. Alexander Young (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1846), 159, Internet Archive.

<sup>47</sup> RMB vol. 1, 390.

<sup>48</sup> Note: This quote is from the Charter of Connecticut. A nearly identical quote exists in the Charter of Massachusetts Bay. See: *Charter of Connecticut 1662; The Charter of Massachusetts Bay 1629*. See also “The Company’s First General Letter Of Instruction to Endicott And His Council,” 142.

<sup>49</sup> For more examples, see: Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 5-6; Fickes, “They Could Not Endure That Yoke,” 68.

<sup>50</sup> Gorges, “A True Copy of the Tenth Article”; Ferdinando Gorges, “Commission of Ferdinando Gorges to Francis Champernoun, Hentry Josselyn, et. als., June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1664,” in James Phinney Baxter, *Sir Ferdinando Gorges and His Province of Maine*, vol. 3 (Boston: Prince Society, 1890), 303-15, Internet Archive; *Grant of the Province of Maine 1639*, The Avalon Project.



<sup>51</sup> As another example in addition to those discussed in this chapter, Alden Vaughn and Deborah Rosen argue that the overall paternalism of the colonial courts in Connecticut “would have been seriously undermined if the Indians lost their lands and merged with the general population or migrated out of the colony.” They do not make a specific argument regarding Christianity, but as many colonial records reveal, conversion efforts across southern New England were part of a paternalistic partnership between church and state. See Vaughn and Rosen, *New England and Middle Atlantic Laws*, 247.

<sup>52</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 39.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas Shepard, *The Clear Sun-shine of the Gospel breaking forth upon the Indians in New-England*, in *The Eliot Tracts*, ed. Michael P. Clark (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 114.

<sup>54</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 69.

<sup>55</sup> Winslow, *Glorious Progress*, 152, see also 159.

<sup>56</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 40-41; Eliot, *Brief Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel*, 405; Don Gleason Hill ed., *Early Records of the Town of Dedham Massachusetts 1659-1673*, vol. 4 (Dedham: Office of the Dedham Transcript, 1894), 241-242, Google Books. See also John Eliot to Jonathan Hanmer 19 July 1652, 7; John Eliot, “Petition of John Eliot to the Massachusetts General Court, October 23, 1651,” The Native Northeast Research Collaborative,

<https://nativeneortheastportal.com/digital-heritage/petition-john-eliot-massachusetts-general-court>

<sup>57</sup> RTD vol. 4, 255-261.

<sup>58</sup> RTD vol. 4, 247-250.

<sup>59</sup> It should be noted that there is no indication in the Dedham Town Records or Massachusetts General Court Records that any English settlers were removed from the disputed tract of land. Rather, the contested area appears to have been designated for common usage, with the option for future generations to expand into this area. For more on the ways town commons were used in southern New England, see Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 210-211.

<sup>60</sup> There were more layers to this dispute and to Natick’s eventual victory than missionary desire. Yet, the language discussed above as well as other elements of the dispute are revealing of the paternalistic and religious elements of this legal battle. The outcome of this case was in large part determined by English desires to convert Indigenous people combined with the belief that a legally granted land base was key to these conversions. For detailed analysis of the Dedham vs. Natick land dispute, see O’Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 33-42.

<sup>61</sup> Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of The Governor & Company of The Massachusetts Bay In New England Vol. 3 1644-1657* (Boston: William White Press, 1854), 281-282, Internet Archive.

<sup>62</sup> Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 68, 107, 178; Kellaway, *The New England Company*, 91-110.

<sup>63</sup> Approximately three hundred Pequot captives, overwhelmingly women and children, were bound to English households as slaves or servants in the years following the Pequot War. However, most escaped English settlements and joined other Indigenous communities at the earliest opportunity and were not integrated into English society long-term when or if their period of captivity ended. Consequently, few in this population would have been positioned to take advantage of the third condition in the Massachusetts Bay court order of 1652, even though they had already lived among the English and their captive condition was not necessarily permanent. See: Fickes, “They Could Not Endure That Yoke,” 73-80; Newell, *Brethren by Nature*, 86-94.

<sup>64</sup> RMB vol. 3, 281-282.

<sup>65</sup> Kochanomin and Thomas Mayhew, “The 9th day of January 1670 agreed by my self and Kochanomin that the town of Mannitootan in Takemmy shall remain for ever in the possession of the praying men,” Edward E. Ayer Manuscript Collection: Newberry Library, American Indian Histories and Cultures, <https://www.newberry.org/american-indian-histories-and-cultures>

<sup>66</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 69

## Chapter 3

### Indigenous People Shaping the Geographic Contours of the Mission Communities

- <sup>1</sup> Lopenzina, *Red Ink*, 97-106; Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 52, 65-66, 105-106, 140-141, 281; O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 32-43; Pulsipher, *Swindler Sachem*, 53-54; Brenner, "Strategies for Autonomy," 118.
- <sup>2</sup> Campisi, *The Mashpee Indians*, 77-78; Hutchins, *Mashpee*, 41; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 46-47; Jennings, "Goals and Functions," 200. Note: Jennings does not name the town, but based on the context he gives and the source he uses, it is certainly Manituwatootan.
- <sup>3</sup> See Chapter 1, 50-58 and Chapter 2 for further discussion.
- <sup>4</sup> RMB vol. 3, 281-282. The significance of this court order is discussed in Chapter 2, 99-102.
- <sup>5</sup> John Eliot, "An Account of Indian Churches in New-England, in a Letter Written A.D. 1673," in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, ser. 1 vol. 10 (Boston: Munroe, Francis and Parker, 1809), 124, Hathi Trust Digital Library.
- <sup>6</sup> People from the Massachusett, Nipmuc, and Pawtucket confederations are well-known to have lived in and founded mission communities in Massachusetts Bay. However, parsing out exact group identities is difficult, largely because of the major social and political disruptions that came with European invasion and epidemic disease. It is probable that Indigenous people from outside these groups were also involved. For more information, see Chapter 1, 33-34 and O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 42-43.
- <sup>7</sup> Winslow, *Glorious Progress*, 152, 158, 159; Whitfield, *Light appearing*, 189, 198; John Eliot, *A Late and Further Manifestation of the Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England*, 1655, in *The Eliot Tracts*, ed. Michael P. Clark (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 303.
- <sup>8</sup> For overviews of these mission communities including geographic information see: Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 40-55; Eliot, *Brief Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel*, 400-406; Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 105-171. See also Figure 1 and Appendix 2.
- <sup>9</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 45, 55, 40-55.
- <sup>10</sup> Eliot, *Late and Further Manifestation*, 303-304.
- <sup>11</sup> Winslow, *Glorious Progress*, 158; Whitfield, *Light appearing*, 189.
- <sup>12</sup> Elise Brenner argues that the praying towns were decentralized and scattered across southern New England at the behest of colonial authorities as part of a "divide and rule" policy. Brenner further argues that praying towns overall necessitated displacement: "The native community was forced to relinquish its residential and economic arrangements to make way for English settlers" and movement to praying towns was part of this strategy. According to Brenner, this "residential segregation" was intended to pit Native people against each other and keep them separated so that they would be unable to "unite and challenge their mutual domination by the colonists." Brenner's interpretation places the location and geographic structure of the mission communities firmly in the control of colonial powers. By contrast, Richard Cogley argues that the failure of a centrally located mission was due to "logistical problems." He explains that Eliot "abandoned the idea because he could not find a suitable location and because the natives preferred to live in places of their own choosing. Cogley's description would indicate that Eliot easily catered to the preferences of potential converts as he planned the mission communities. I argue that the reality lies between these interpretive poles, and that Indigenous people were more enmeshed in the site selection process than either scholar indicates. Documentary evidence points to Indigenous communities strategically driving the decentralized nature and respective locations of the towns, against Eliot's vision. Site selection for the Massachusetts mission communities was more complex and contested than Cogley's assessment implies, and more under the control of Indigenous groups than Brenner argues. See: Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 65-66, 281; Brenner, "Strategies for Autonomy," 118.
- <sup>13</sup> Winslow, *Glorious Progress*, 152.

<sup>14</sup> Eliot to Steele, 295; Whitfield, *Light appearing*, 189.

<sup>15</sup> Whitfield, *Light appearing*, 188-190; Winslow, *Glorious Progress*, 152; Shepard, *Clear Sun-shine*, 114.

<sup>16</sup> Whitfield, *Light appearing*, 189.

<sup>17</sup> John Eliot, "The Humble Petition of John Eliot, in Behalfe of some Indians," in Lemuel Shattuck, *A History of the Town of Concord* (Boston: Russell, Odiorne, and Company, 1835), 26-27, Google Books.

<sup>18</sup> In this document, there is no mention of women joining the group, which would fit with the patriarchal goals of Eliot's mission. However, it is highly likely that Indigenous women were in communication with the delegation of men that accompanied Eliot and had a say in the land selection process. See Chapter 1, 38-40 for more details and sources on gender roles in southern New England's Indigenous communities.

<sup>19</sup> Whitfield, *Light appearing*, 201; Eliot, *Late and Further Manifestation*, 303-304.

<sup>20</sup> Eliot, *Late and Further Manifestation*, 303-304; O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 34.

<sup>21</sup> Whitfield, *Light appearing*, 201-202; RTD vol. 4, 255; The Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, The Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, "The Removal of the Neponsetts To Ponkapoag." For detailed analysis of the Dedham/Natick land dispute, see: O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 32-42.

<sup>22</sup> The praying towns' population in Massachusetts Bay colony was diverse. The limitations of the source base make it impossible to be certain of every group or individual's priorities regarding mission community location. Some Native praying town founders fought for land ownership in Natick, but others were resistant to moving there and their stories are equally critical for understanding the mission communities as Indigenous spaces. For further analysis on the contested details of advocacy for and reaction to differing settlement plans on a group and individual level when Natick and Ponkapoag were in progress, see: Lopenzina, *Red Ink*, 97-106; Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 52, 65-66, 105-106, 140-141; O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 32-43.

<sup>23</sup> People described in this document as "Cohannet Indians" are described as Neponsetts elsewhere. Many if not all Neponset people of the Massachusetts confederation founded Ponkapoag. For alternative names see Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 254.

<sup>24</sup> Eliot, *Late and Further Manifestation*, 303-304.

<sup>25</sup> In 1793, the transcriber of this letter wrote that the word "secrety" may have been a misspelling of "certify." The reference librarian at the Massachusetts Historical Society generously sent me a scan of the manuscript letter from the archives there. To my eyes and his, there is no indication in Eliot's (refreshingly clear) handwriting of what "secrety" could actually mean. In the manuscript, it bears a close resemblance to "secretly" and "secrecy," which would have some very interesting implications. Dan Hinchon, email message to author on August 19, 2019.

<sup>26</sup> John Eliot to Major Atherton 4 April 1657, in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, ser. 1 vol. 2 (Boston: Munroe & Francis, (1793) 1810), 9, Hathi Trust Digital Library.

<sup>27</sup> Eliot to Atherton, 9. See also: James Blake, *Annals of the Town of Dorchester*, no. 2, *Collections of the Dorchester Antiquarian and Historical Society*, (Boston: David Clapp Jr., 1846), 20, 91, Google Books; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 44.

<sup>28</sup> "Records of Dorchester for the year 1707," in Daniel T. V. Huntoon, *History of the Town of Canton*: (Cambridge: John Wilson and Son University Press, 1893), 12, Google Books.

<sup>29</sup> Eliot, *Brief Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel*, 403.

<sup>30</sup> The Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, "Chronological Listing Of Historically Important Events at Ponkapoag Plantation."

<sup>31</sup> The Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, "Life of the Indigenous Massachusetts at Ponkapoag Plantation"; The Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, "The Removal of the Neponsetts To Ponkapoag."

<sup>32</sup> The Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, "The Removal of the Neponsetts To Ponkapoag."

<sup>33</sup> Eliot to Steele, 295.

<sup>34</sup> Comparing the language and content between these two accounts, it is highly likely that Eliot was describing the Ponkapoag founders in both documents. Eliot did not give a specific date that Ponkapoag began as a town in *A Late and Further Manifestation*. He did say that "they are now upon

the work” and the tract was printed in 1655. Cogley notes that Ponkapoag was established in 1653. See Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 142. See Appendix 4 for side-by-side transcriptions of these two accounts: Eliot to Steele, 295-296; Eliot, *Late and Further Manifestation*, 303-304.

<sup>35</sup> Eliot to Steele, 295-296; Eliot, *Late and Further Manifestation*, 303-304; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 44-45.

<sup>36</sup> Eliot, *Brief Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel*, 403.

<sup>37</sup> D. Rae Gould, Holly Herbster, Heather Law Pezzarossi, and Stephen A. Mrozowski ed. *Historical Archaeology and Indigenous Collaboration: Discovering Histories That Have Futures* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2020); Holley, “A Brief Look at Nipmuc History.”

<sup>38</sup> Shepard, *Clear Sun-shine*, 114; Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 58.

<sup>39</sup> Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 59; Herbert Joseph Harwood, “The Indians of Nashobah: Read before the Society at their field meeting, June 17, 1895,” in *Proceedings of the Littleton Historical Society*, no.1 (Littleton: Littleton Historical Society, 1896), 97, Google Books; Trask, *Suffolk Deeds Liber 1*, Document 34.

<sup>40</sup> Shepard, *Clear Sun-shine*, 113-114; Daniel Gookin, *An Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England in the Years 1675, 1676, 1677 in Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society Volume II* (Cambridge: Printed for the Society at the University Press, 1836), 482, Google Books; Lemuel Shattuck, *A History of the Town of Concord* (Boston: Russell, Odiorne, and Company, 1835), 28, Google Books; Alfred Sereno Hudson, *Colonial Concord*, vol. 1, *The History of Concord Massachusetts* (Concord: The Erudite Press, 1904), 383, Google Books.

<sup>41</sup> Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 145; Harwood, “The Indians of Nashobah,” 96-97.

<sup>42</sup> Trask, *Suffolk Deeds Liber 1*, Document 34; Harwood, “The Indians of Nashobah 96-97; Hudson, *Colonial Concord*, 383.

<sup>43</sup> Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of The Governor & Company of The Massachusetts Bay In New England Vol. 4 – Part 1 1650-1660* (Boston: William White Press, 1854), 192, Internet Archive; RMB vol. 3, 348.

<sup>44</sup> Cogley, *John Eliot’s Mission*, 58; Shepard, *Clear Sun-shine*, 114-116; Eliot, “The Humble Petition of John Eliot, in Behalfe of some Indians,” 26-27.

<sup>45</sup> Eliot, “The Humble Petition of John Eliot, in Behalfe of some Indians,” 26-27.

<sup>46</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 56-59; Hutchins, *Mashpee*, 51. Note: Paupoesit is also known as Codtanmat. See: Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 57.

<sup>47</sup> “Deed from Weepquish and Tookonchasun to the South Sea Indians,”; Hutchins, *Mashpee*, 47-48; “Copy of a Deed from Quichataset to South Sea Indians.” See also: “Copy of the Indian Deed relating to the Petition of Reuben Cognehew”; RCP Court Orders vol. 6, 159-160; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “A Brief Timeline of Wampanoag History.”

<sup>48</sup> Peters, *The Wampanoags of Mashpee*, 20-21, 83; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “Past Leaders,” accessed December 23, 2020, <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/past-leaders>

<sup>49</sup> Cogley and Kawashima both state that Bourne used his own money to buy land from a local sachem in 1660 to start Mashpee as a praying town. However, after examining their sources, I am not convinced that there is sufficient evidence to back up this statement. Kawashima cites Frederick Wies’ “The New England Company of 1649 and its Missionary Enterprises.” In this source, Wies does not provide citations except for a reference to another of his own works, which also does not provide citations. Cogley cites Mary Ayer’s “Richard Bourne, Missionary to the Mashpee Indians” but the court records Ayer cites refer to land acquired by Bourne and other English men “to him and his heirs forever.” These include no indications of intentions to donate it to Native people for a mission community. Bourne acquired many tracts of land for himself as well as other English people and towns in the seventeenth century. Ayer’s inference that Bourne charitably spent his own money to secure land for “praying Indians” is echoed by Frederick Freeman in 1858 and Hannah Smith Bourne Dykes in 1919. These authors both assert that Bourne bought the land from Quatchataset “and others”. These assumptions are not surprising given the dates they were written; hagiographic recollections of missionary work in New England are standard up through the mid-twentieth century.



However, I have not found any evidence that can verify Freeman and Dykes' assertions. The 1665 and 1666 deeds from Wepquish, Tookenchosin and Quatchisset make no mention of Bourne paying for any of Mashpee's land – rather, the sachems explicitly gave it freely to the “south sea Indians.” See: Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 194; Yasuhide Kawashima, *Puritan Justice and the Indian: White Man's Law in Massachusetts, 1630-1763* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1986), 58; Frederick Weis, “The New England Company of 1649 and its Missionary Enterprises” in *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts Volume 38: Transactions 1947-1951* (Boston: Published by The Society, 1959), 148, Colonial Society of Massachusetts Online Publications; Frederick Weis, *The Colonial Clergy and Colonial Churches of New England*, (Lancaster: Society of the Descendants of the Colonial Clergy, 1936), 36, Hathi Trust Digital Library; Ayer, “Richard Bourne, Missionary to the Mashpee Indians,” 140; Nathaniel B. Shurtleff ed., *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England: Court Orders Vol. 4 1661-1668* (Boston: William White Press, 1855), 3, Hathi Trust Digital Library; Nathaniel B. Shurtleff ed., *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England: Court Orders Vol. 5 1668-1678* (Boston: William White Press, 1856), 3-4, Hathi Trust Digital Library; RCP Court Orders vol. 3, 193-194, 201; Frederick Freeman, *History of Cape Cod: The Annals of Barnstable County, Including the District of Mashpee Vol. 1*, (Boston: Geo. C. Rand & Avery S. Cornhill), 677-680, Google Books; Hannah Smith Bourne Dykes, *History of Richard Bourne and Some of His Descendants* (Cleveland: Privately Printed by Benjamin F. Bourne, 1919), 4, Internet Archive.

<sup>50</sup> The deed by Wepquish and Tookenchosin was acknowledged in 1667, and the confirmation by Quatchisset was acknowledged in 1672. For more details on this transaction, see RCP Court Orders vol. 6, 159. For more details on the structure of the courts, and laws relating to land transactions in Plymouth Colony, see Christopher Fennel, “Plymouth Colony Legal Structure,” The Plymouth Colony Archive Project, University of Virginia, see especially section II F, accessed January 2 2021 <http://www.histarch.illinois.edu/plymouth/ccflaw.html#Ib>

<sup>51</sup> RCP Court Orders vol. 6, 159-160.

<sup>52</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 56-59; Campisi, *The Mashpee Indians*, 77, 167; “Jury to Get Indians' Cape Cod Land Case,” *New York Times Digital Archive*, January 2, 1978, <https://www.nytimes.com/1978/01/02/archives/jury-to-get-indians-cape-cod-land-case-wednesday-historians-were.html>; “Cape Cod Indians Show Their Tribe Once Owned Land,” *New York Times Digital Archive*, October 31, 1977, <https://www.nytimes.com/1977/10/31/archives/cape-cod-indians-show-their-tribe-once-owned-land.html>

<sup>53</sup> Brooks, *The Common Pot*, 167.

<sup>54</sup> Ronda, “Generations of Faith,” 370; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 130.

<sup>55</sup> Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 41; Leibman, “Introduction,” 52-53; David J. Silverman, “Deposing the Sachem to Defend the Sachemship: Indian Land Sales and Native Political Structure on Martha's Vineyard, 1680-1740,” *Explorations in Early American Culture* 5 (2001): 14.

<sup>56</sup> For further discussion of island mission communities besides Aquinnah and Manitouwatootan, see Chapter 4, 149-155.

<sup>57</sup> For further details on Aquinnah's establishment, see Appendix 2.

<sup>58</sup> Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 116-117, 223-224; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 39-46; Silverman, “Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation,” 157, 169; Ronda, “Generations of Faith,” 372-373.

<sup>59</sup> Charles Edward Banks, “The Annals of West Tisbury,” in *The History of Martha's Vineyard, Dukes County, Massachusetts*, vol. 2, *Town Annals* (Boston: George H. Dean 1911), 7, Internet Archive; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 42-43.

<sup>60</sup> David J. Silverman, “Natural Inhabitants, Time Out of Mind”: Sachem Rights and the Contest for Wampanoag Land in Colonial New England,” *Northeast Anthropology* 70 (Fall 2005): 3-5.

<sup>61</sup> For further details, see Chapter 2, 66, 75, 83-84, 97, 102-103.

<sup>62</sup> Mayhew, *The Conquests and Triumphs of Grace*, 38-39; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 43; Silverman, “Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation,” 142, note 1; Leibman, “Introduction,” 53; Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 136-137.

<sup>63</sup> Mittark, “Petition from Gay Head Sachem Mittark, 1681” in Senier, *Dawnland Voices*, 435-436; Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 7-8.

- <sup>64</sup> For further analysis and context on this process including what happened to Manitouwatootan in the period after Metacom's War, see: Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 46-47, 121, 131-136; Eleanor Mayhew, "The Christiantown Story," *The Dukes County Intelligencer* 1, no. 1 (August 1959); Banks, "The Annals of West Tisbury," 117-133. See also Appendix 2.
- <sup>65</sup> "23 February 1658, Dukes Deeds, iv, 173," MVP: Geographical Series, Box 13 Vol. 17: Tisbury, p. 4, Massachusetts Historical Society.
- <sup>66</sup> "Conveyance of Land in Tisbury in 1699," 103.
- <sup>67</sup> "Conveyance of Land in Tisbury in 1699," 103; "Deeds. I. 417. 18 August 1702," MVP: Geographical Series, Box 13 Vol. 17: Tisbury, p. 105, Massachusetts Historical Society.
- <sup>68</sup> "Dukes Deeds, I. 58, 22 August 1664," MVP: Geographical Series, Box 13 Vol. 17: Tisbury, p. 6, Massachusetts Historical Society. Note: the personal name spellings are different in this document: PAMEK, Nanaso, Toquanan.
- <sup>69</sup> "Dukes County Deeds, I, 239," MVP: Geographical Series, Box 13 Vol. 17: Tisbury, p. 7, Massachusetts Historical Society; "The Testimony of Joseph Merry, March 1698/9," Miscellaneous Bound Manuscripts Collection: 1699-1705, Massachusetts Historical Society; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 46-47; Silverman, "Natural Inhabitants, Time Out of Mind," 3.
- <sup>70</sup> "Dukes Deeds, I. 402, 16 March 1669," MVP: Geographical Series, Box 13 Vol. 17: Tisbury, p. 8, Massachusetts Historical Society.
- <sup>71</sup> "Suffolk Court File 72789, Evidence in Case Allen v. Rogers," MVP: Geographical Series, Box 13 Vol. 17: Tisbury, p. 9, Massachusetts Historical Society.
- <sup>72</sup> Kochanommin and Mayhew, "The 9th day of January 1670." See also "1669. Superior Judicial Court Files, #4714. Deposition of James Skiffe," MVP: Geographical Series, Box 13 Vol. 17: Tisbury, p. 12, Massachusetts Historical Society.
- <sup>73</sup> Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 47.
- <sup>74</sup> See Chapter 2.
- <sup>75</sup> "1669-1670, The Testimony of Joseph Daged," MVP: Geographical Series, Box 13 Vol. 17: Tisbury, p. 8a, Massachusetts Historical Society; "Dukes County Deeds, I. 33," MVP: Geographical Series, Box 13 Vol. 17: Tisbury, p. 9, Massachusetts Historical Society; "Tisbury Records p. 15," MVP: Geographical Series, Box 13 Vol. 17: Tisbury, p. 10, Massachusetts Historical Society; "Abstract of deed from Josias to James Allen," MVP: Geographical Series, Box 13 Vol. 17: Tisbury, loose leaf, Massachusetts Historical Society; "Tisbury Records, p.19," MVP: Geographical Series, Box 13 Vol. 17: Tisbury, p. 11, Massachusetts Historical Society; "Supreme Judicial Court files, no. 4974" MVP: Geographical Series, Box 13 Vol. 17: Tisbury, p. 17, Massachusetts Historical Society. According to Silverman, Keteannummin and English buyers began violating the 1669 agreement in the early sixteen-eighties after Thomas Mayhew Sr.'s death, which sparked a tense legal battle. Eleanor Mayhew states that Keteannummin violated the 1669 agreement before Mayhew's death. However, she does not cite a source, and I have not found any documentation showing that the 1669 agreement was broken prior to Mayhew's death. Accordingly, I use Silverman's research alongside my own. See: Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 131; Mayhew, "The Christiantown Story," 3.
- <sup>76</sup> For specifics on how the early English towns of Noepe were established with Mayhew's help, see Charles Edward Banks, *The History of Martha's Vineyard, Dukes County Massachusetts*, vol. 2, *Town Annals* (Boston: George H. Dean 1911), Internet Archive.
- <sup>77</sup> Eliot, *Brief Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel*, 401.
- <sup>78</sup> See Chapter 5.

## Chapter 4

### Christian Sachemships and Indigenous Townships: Diversity and Continuity in Mission Community Land Ownership and Management

<sup>1</sup> People of the Massachusett, Nipmuc, and Pawtucket confederations are documented as mission community landowners in Massachusetts Bay. It is possible but not proven that people from other Native confederations owned land there as well. See Chapter 1, 33-34.

<sup>2</sup> For additional background information on sachems and sachemships, see Chapter 1, 32-41.

<sup>3</sup> Brooks, *The Common Pot*, 67-69; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 58-66; Peter Jakob Olsen-Harbich, "Usufruct in the Land of Tribute: Property, Coercion, and Sovereignty on Early Colonial Eastern Long Island" (MA thesis, College of William and Mary, Fall 2016), 8-40.

<sup>4</sup> See: Pulsipher, *Swindler Sachem*, 96-100; Jean O'Brien, "Peoples, Land, and Social Order" in *Dispossession by Degrees*, see especially 20-21; Faren R. Siminoff, *Crossing the Sound: The Rise of Atlantic American Communities in Seventeenth-Century Eastern Long Island* (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 16-23, 114-116; Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 41-43; Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*, 43-45, 140-150; Olsen-Harbich, "Usufruct in the Land of Tribute," 8-40; Brooks, *The Common Pot*, 67-69; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 58-66; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 42-43, 118-119; Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 1-4; Leibman, "Introduction," 52-53; Silverman, "Natural Inhabitants, Time Out of Mind," 3-5; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 124-126; Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 136-137. For further analysis of Indigenous New England social structure and stratification, see: Daniel Richter, "Stratification and Class in Eastern Native America," in *Class Matters: Early North America and the Atlantic World*, ed. Simon Middleton and Billy G. Smith (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2008), 35-61.

<sup>5</sup> Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 27-28, 38-43; Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*, 43-45, 136-139, 141-148; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 124-126; Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1650-1775*, 113-118; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, "Ancient Ways: Tribal Landmarks "Ancient Ways: Tribal Landmarks"; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, "Ancient Ways: Land Use"; O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 20-21; Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 1-4; Silverman, "Natural Inhabitants, Time Out of Mind," 3-5.

<sup>6</sup> Mayhew, *The Conquests and Triumphs of Grace*, 14-15; The Native Northeast Research Collaborative, "Matthew Mayhew," accessed November 12, 2019, <https://nativenortheastportal.com/node/16990>

<sup>7</sup> Mayhew, *The Conquests and Triumphs of Grace*, 14-15.

<sup>8</sup> Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 3. See also: Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*, 47, 143, 169; Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America* (Bedford: Applewood Books, 1997), 5, Google Books; Siminoff, *Crossing the Sound*, 29; Olsen-Harbich, "Usufruct in the Land of Tribute," 31.

<sup>9</sup> The petitioners specifically excluded from their claims any "towns Granted to the prayeing Indians in that Country." They acknowledged that those lands belonged to the Native inhabitants who had petitioned the General Court for those townships, or joined them later. These twenty-two petitioners wished the court to acknowledge their ancestral rights to lands illegally claimed by English settlers. According to the 1652 court order, this was within the realm of legal ways Native people could petition for legalized ownership, though most ancestral rights were recorded for the purposes of legitimizing their alienation to English recipients. See "Document 4, May 11, 1681: Praying Town Remnants Demand Rights to Nipmuc Land," in Daniel R. Mandell ed., *New England Treaties, Southeast, 1524-1761*, vol. 19, *Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws 1607-1789*, ed. Alden T. Vaughn (Bethesda: Congressional Information Services Inc., 2004), 495-496, Internet Archive.

- <sup>10</sup> For background and analysis of these Nipmuc land transactions and John Wampus' role, see: O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 74-78; Pulsipher, "One Piece of Land to Cling To."
- <sup>11</sup> These men were Waban, Piam-bow, Nowanit, Jethro, William, Anthony Tray, and Tom Tray. See "Document 5, September 14, 1681: Christian Indian Elders Reject John Wampus Claims," in Mandell, *New England Treaties, Southeast*, 497.
- <sup>12</sup> "Document 5, September 14, 1681: Christian Indian Elders Reject John Wampus Claims," 497.
- <sup>13</sup> "Document 6: Daniel Gookin on Indian Rejection of Wampus in 1677," in Mandell, *New England Treaties, Southeast*, 498.
- <sup>14</sup> "Document 6: Daniel Gookin on Indian Rejection of Wampus in 1677," 498.
- <sup>15</sup> Silverman, "Natural Inhabitants, Time Out of Mind," 5-7.
- <sup>16</sup> For a detailed discussion of "sachem rights" see Silverman, "Natural Inhabitants, Time Out of Mind," 1-10.
- <sup>17</sup> For more on fee simple ownership, or private heritable and alienable land rights in English and colonial English law, see: A.W.B. Simpson, *An Introduction to the History of the Land Law* (London: Oxford University Press, (1961) 2011), 56, 67, 89-90; Silverman, "Natural Inhabitants, Time Out of Mind," 1-10; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 136; Springer, "American Indians and the Law of Real Property," 28.
- <sup>18</sup> Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 7; Banks, *History of Martha's Vineyard*, vol. 1, 27-39.
- <sup>19</sup> The exception to this rule is Taakemmy, discussed in Chapter 3. In this sachemship, the praying town of Manitowatootan distanced itself from its non-Christian sachem Keteannummin, and accepted more oversight from the colonial government than any other mission community within Martha's Vineyard. Yet, the people of Manitowatootan continued to owe Keteannummin tribute, and he retained the sachem rights to Manitowatootan until his eldest son Zachariah Pooskin inherited them. Zachariah Pooskin transferred sachem rights to Manitowatootan's leaders in 1702. See also: Daniel R. Mandell, *Behind the Frontier: Indians in Eighteenth-Century Eastern Massachusetts* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 63-64; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 134-135; "Conveyance of Land in Tisbury in 1699," 103.
- <sup>20</sup> Mayhew, *The Conquests and Triumphs of Grace*, 39. See also Prince, "Some Account of those English Ministers," 367-369.
- <sup>21</sup> Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 119 note 122; Ronda, "Generations of Faith," 372-374, 380; Silverman, "The Church in New England Indian Community Life," 268-270; Silverman, "Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation," 164, 166-168; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 38, 43. For additional information on the English introduction of juries and trials, see: Mayhew, *The Conquests and Triumphs of Grace*, 44. For another example of less-powerful Wampanoag elites in Nashuakemmiuk and Talhanio who rose in status through the mission system, see Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 42.
- <sup>22</sup> Silverman, "Natural Inhabitants, Time Out of Mind," 3-5.
- <sup>23</sup> "Document no. 70" in Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 242-245; Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 173-174 note 304, 173-176; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 64.
- <sup>24</sup> Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 149.
- <sup>25</sup> Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 138-139; Mayhew, *Indian Converts*, 167-168.
- <sup>26</sup> Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 7.
- <sup>27</sup> "Document no. 17" in Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 82-85.
- <sup>28</sup> "Document no. 17" in Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 82-85.
- <sup>29</sup> Mayhew, *The Conquests and Triumphs of Grace*, 39-40.
- <sup>30</sup> "Document no. 17" in Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 82-85.
- <sup>31</sup> "Document no. 18" in Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 86-89.
- <sup>32</sup> For additional context and analysis on other important aspects of this episode, see: Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 105-106; Charles Edward Banks, "The Annals of Gay Head," in Banks, *History of Martha's Vineyard*, vol. 2, 7-8.

<sup>33</sup> Peters, *The Wampanoags of Mashpee*, 10-13,16; Silverman, “Natural Inhabitants, Time Out of Mind,” 2-6; Hutchins, *Mashpee*, 23-27; Cesarini, “John Eliot's “A Breif History of the Mashepeg Indians,” 108-109; Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, 49-50.

<sup>34</sup> Many, but not all of the villages Bourne and Cotton mentioned fell within the Mashpee tract. See: Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 56-58.

<sup>35</sup> Note: this number excludes places that Cotton reported preaching but did not explicitly say praying Indians lived. Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 60. See also John Cotton to The Commissioners of the United Colonies 7 September 1671, in *The Correspondence of John Cotton Jr.*, ed. Sheila McIntyre and Len Travers (Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 2009), 84-85, Colonial Society of Massachusetts Online Publications.

<sup>36</sup> For further discussion on the location of these mission communities, see Appendix 2.

<sup>37</sup> For overviews of the mission projects in Plymouth, including missionary work by Thomas Tupper in Herring Pond, Samuel Treat in Eastham, William Leveridge, and John Cotton Jr., see: H. Roger King, *Cape Cod and Plymouth Colony in the Seventeenth Century* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1994), 227-234, Google Books; Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 12-13; Silverman, “The Church in New England Indian Community Life,” 264-298; Eden, “Therefore Ye Are No More Strangers and Foreigners,” 38-40; Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, 50-53; Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 193-196; For overviews of Mashpee in the seventeenth century, see: Joan Tavares Avant (Granny Squannit), “Wampanoag: Introduction,” in Senier, *Dawnland Voices*, 429-432; Campisi, *The Mashpee Indians*, 76-81; Cesarini, “John Eliot's “A Breif History of the Mashepeg Indians,” 101-134; Peters, *The Wampanoags of Mashpee*, 10-21; King, *Cape Cod and Plymouth Colony*, 227-234; Laura E. Conkey, Ethel Boissevain and Ives Goddard, “Indians of Southern New England and Long Island: Late Period,” in Trigger, *Handbook of North American Indians Volume 15*, 179 ; Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 12; Freeman, *History of Cape Cod* 667-680; Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, 52-53; Hutchins, *Mashpee*, 35-61.

<sup>38</sup> Peters, *The Wampanoags of Mashpee*, 16.

<sup>39</sup> RCP Court Orders vol. 4, 80.

<sup>40</sup> Campisi, *The Mashpee Indians*, 78-79; Peters, *The Wampanoags of Mashpee*, 16; Hutchins, *Mashpee*, 50.

<sup>41</sup> Metacom was the ketasontimoog (or paramount sachem) of the Wampanoag confederation in 1665, but there could also have been other sachems under him to whom the leaders of Mashpee owed allegiance. Francis Hutchins argues that traditional village leaders were instrumental in Mashpee's establishment and likely its later governance. See: Hutchins, *Mashpee*, 41-43, 49-50. See also Cesarini, “John Eliot's “A Breif History of the Mashepeg Indians,” 112, 130 notes 31, 33.

<sup>42</sup> Note: Other general laws were set down that applied to all “Indians” in Plymouth's jurisdiction in 1671, but the code of laws pertaining to “Indian Affairs” in Plymouth did not include provisions for oversight of Christian Indian communities until 1685. See: “Document 52: Laws to Govern Indians” and “Document 83: Laws to Govern Indians” in Vaughn and Rosen, *New England and Middle Atlantic Laws*, 35-37, 56-60. This approach contrasts with Massachusetts Bay, where a superior English magistrate supervised all the Native magistrates of the praying towns. It is worth noting that colonial supervision and interference in Indigenous affairs increased in Plymouth the very same month Metacom's War began – June 1675. With the implementation of a new law, an English magistrate, Thomas Hinkley, was empowered to “call and keep Courts among the said Indians att such times and in such places of the Government; as hee shall thinke meet; and for such end; and does heerby Impower him; together with the heads or cheife of the Indians In the severall places to make orders, respecting the Government of the said Indians; and to punish them for misdemenors except in cases capitall, and to issue amongst them all civill controversies provided that the said Indians, shall have libertie, to make their appeales from that power to our Court of New Plymouth if they see reason to do so.” See: Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 37-38; “Document 63: Law to Resolve Christian Indians' Disputes” in Vaughn and Rosen, *New England and Middle Atlantic Laws*, 42; Pulsipher, *Subjects Unto the Same King*, 101-111.

<sup>43</sup> “Deed from Weepquish and Tookonchasun to the South Sea Indians”; Hutchins, *Mashpee*, 47-48; RCP Court Orders vol. 6 159-160. See also “Document 154” in Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 373; Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 275.

<sup>44</sup> “Copy of a Deed from Quichataset to South Sea Indians.” See also: “Copy of the Indian Deed relating to the Petition of Reuben Cognehew”; RCP Court Orders vol. 6, 159-160.

<sup>45</sup> This sachem is known as Wampatuk to the Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag today, so that is how he is identified here. Wampatuk is also commonly called Josias Wampatuck or Josias Chickatabut. He is referred to as “Josias allies Chickatabutt” on this deed. “Wampatuck, Josiah,” Native Northeast Portal, accessed May 8, 2021, <https://nativeneortheastportal.com/bio/bibliography/wampatuck-josiah-1669>; The Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, “The Removal of the Neponsetts To Ponkapoag”; For the deed, see RCP Deeds &c. vol. 1, 238; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 26.

<sup>46</sup> RCP Deeds &c. vol. 1, 233-234.

<sup>47</sup> “The Petition of John Simon for himself and in behalf of the Titicut Indians Sept. 12 1759,” vol. 32, Massachusetts Archives Collection, p. 419-420a/IMG 197-201, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9Y5-73ZT?i=196>

<sup>48</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 56-59; “Deed from Weepquish and Tookonchasun to the South Sea Indians”; Hutchins, *Mashpee*, 47-48; “Copy of a Deed from Quichataset to South Sea Indians.” See also: “Copy of the Indian Deed relating to the Petition of Reuben Cognehew”; RCP Court Orders vol. 6, 159-160; Campisi, *The Mashpee Indians*, 78-79; Hutchins, *Mashpee*, 51.

<sup>49</sup> Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 13; Conkey, Boissevain and Goddard, “Indians of Southern New England and Long Island,” 179; Peters, *The Wampanoags of Mashpee*, 36-37; Hutchins, *Mashpee*, 51.

<sup>50</sup> Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 13; Cesarini, “John Eliot’s “A Breif History of the Mashepog Indians,” 109; Eliot, “A Breif History of the Mashepog Indians,” 122; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 59-60.

<sup>51</sup> I have not found any sources that can confirm exactly how land allocation functioned in the seventeenth century prior to Metacom’s War. However, around 1723 the people of Mashpee officially formed a proprietorship under which to manage their affairs, and engaged with colonial authorities as such. Under this system, land was still owned communally. The tribe owned the land and allocated it to proprietors. Lands allocated in this way could be passed down through generations, but the land reverted back to the tribe if a proprietor died without any heirs. Every family was allocated an equal share, and only Native members of the Mashpee community could be proprietors. It is reasonable to surmise that land was managed similarly before 1723. For information on this proprietary system from the perspective of the Mashpees in the eighteenth century, see: “To the honr general Court to bee held at Sep 8 on the 1753,” MAC, vol. 32, p. 415-416/IMG 189-191; “The Petition of the Indian Proprietors of Mashpee, so Called, in the County of Barnstable Dec 29, 1753,” MAC, vol. 32, p. 424-426a/IMG 207-212; For more information and context on this proprietary system see: Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, 89-91; Campisi, *The Mashpee Indians*, 82-83.

<sup>52</sup> Campisi argues: “the same holds true for the adoption of a proprietary; it was a change that made sense to the English and little difference to the Mashpees.” Mandell on the other hand, sees the adoption of a proprietary system in the early seventeen-twenties as a movement away from Indigenous customs and emphasizes similarities with colonial English customs. See: Campisi, *The Mashpee Indians*, 82-83; Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, 91.

<sup>53</sup> RMB vol. 3, 281-282.

<sup>54</sup> RMB vol. 3, 281-282.

<sup>55</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>56</sup> Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 202-207, 378-380; Pulsipher, *Swindler Sachem*, 101-104; O’Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 23; Simpson, *An Introduction to the History of the Land Law*, 56, 67, 89-90; Springer, “American Indians and the Law of Real Property,” 28.

<sup>57</sup> RMB vol. 1, 172; Kawashima, *Puritan Justice and the Indian*, 49, 54; O’Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 22-23; Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 202-204, 208; 378-379.

- <sup>58</sup> Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 211-212; Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *New England's Generation: The Great Migration and the Formation of Society and Culture in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 97-99, Google Books. For further detailed discussion on the roles proprietors played in the land allocation of townships in New England more broadly, see Roy Hidemichi Akagi, "Part 1: The Town Proprietors" in *The Town Proprietors of the New England Colonies: a Study of Their Development, Organization, Activities and Controversies, 1620-1770* (Gloucester: P. Smith, 1963), Hathi Trust Digital Library.
- <sup>59</sup> RMB vol. 4 part 1, 192. See also: RMB vol. 3, 348; RMB vol. 4 part 1, 362-363, 409-410; Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of The Governor & Company of The Massachusetts Bay In New England Vol. 4 – Part 2 1661-1674* (Boston: William White Press, 1854), 109-110, 431-432, Google Books.
- <sup>60</sup> "The humble petition of John Eliot of Roxbury in the behalf of the poore Indians, to this honor'd Gen: Court, this 20 of the 8<sup>th</sup> 59," MAC, vol. 30, p. 81/IMG 19.
- <sup>61</sup> Note: Sales between Native people did require the "approbation" of magistrates who dealt with local government issues. Daniel Gookin frequently served as a magistrate in this capacity. See RMB vol. 4 part 1, 409.
- <sup>62</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 39. For further discussion on English paternalism and mission community land, see Chapter 2.
- <sup>63</sup> Simpson, *An Introduction to the History of the Land Law*, 89-90.
- <sup>64</sup> Akagi, *The Town Proprietors of the New England Colonies*, 31-32, 34-35; Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 208; RMB vol. 4 part 1, 136.
- <sup>65</sup> RMB vol. 4 part 1, 136-137. See also: RMB vol. 3, 301; Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 208-209.
- <sup>66</sup> Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of The Governor & Company of The Massachusetts Bay In New England Vol. 5 1674-1686* (Boston: William White Press, 1854), 216-218, 275, Google Books; "The Humble Address of Daniel Gookin & John Eliot on Behalfe of the poor Christian Indians belonging to the Colony of Massachusetts in New England," MAC, vol. 30, p. 285-286/IMG 708; For more information on the context of this document, see: O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 78-81; Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, 33-34; Samuel A. Green, *The Boundary Lines of Old Groton* (Cambridge: University Press, 1885), 26-28, Internet Archive. For more on this episode of English encroachment on a praying town after Metacom's War, see Green, *The Boundary Lines of Old Groton*, 19-31; Wilson Waters, *History of Chelmsford, Massachusetts* (Lowell: Courier-Citizen Company, 1917), 477-478, Google Books; Roy Hidemichi Akagi, *The Town Proprietors of the New England Colonies: A Study of their Development, Organization, Activities and Controversies, 1620-1770* (Gloucester: P. Smith, 1963), 42, Hathi Trust Digital Library.
- <sup>67</sup> Note: Mandell notes that only men were proprietors in Natick. See Daniel Mandell, "To Live More Like My Christian English Neighbors": Natick Indians in the Eighteenth Century," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (October 1991): 558.
- <sup>68</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 45.
- <sup>69</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 38-39.
- <sup>70</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 40-41.
- <sup>71</sup> RMB vol. 4 part 2, 199.
- <sup>72</sup> RMB vol. 2, 166. See also RMB vol. 3, 281-282, 85,
- <sup>73</sup> Note: In 1674, the General Court finally insisted that petitions for praying town land be made directly by Native town founders themselves, without an intermediary: "In answer to the petition of Mr. John Eliot, in behalf of the Indians at Natick, etc. so far as it concerns the Indians having plantations granted them, the court declares that when the Indians themselves make application to this Court, under their hands, for plantations, the court will then consider thereof, to give such answer for encouragement of the Indians as they shall judge meet and suitable." Though Eliot regularly acted on their behalf, there are indications that Native people from mission communities sometimes interacted directly with the General Court prior to 1674. See: RMB vol. 4 part 2, 465; RMB vol. 5, 10.



- <sup>74</sup> RMB vol. 3, 246, 301, 348; RMB vol. 4 part 1, 11, 75-76, 136-137, 192, 317, 362-363; RMB vol. 4 part 2, 109-110. For more information on Putikookuppog see: Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 54; Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 258.
- <sup>75</sup> RMB vol. 3, 246, 301; RMB vol. 4 part 1, 75-76, 136-137, 317, 362-363; RMB vol. 4 part 2, 16.
- <sup>76</sup> RMB vol. 3, 372; RMB vol. 4 part 1, 192.
- <sup>77</sup> RMB vol. 4 part 2, 49.
- <sup>78</sup> Note: The articles of agreement detailing this transaction were finally recorded in 1679. See RMB vol. 5, 37, 227-231.
- <sup>79</sup> RMB vol. 5, 37, 227-231.
- <sup>80</sup> RMB vol. 4 part 1, 430-432. Note: Wamesit was also known as Pawtucket. See: Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 47.
- <sup>81</sup> The timing of this deed is intriguing. This land was signed over to Gookin on May second, mere weeks before all "Praying Indians" were ordered by the General Court on May twenty fourth to be confined to the limits of four mission communities – Natick, Ponkapoag, Hassanamesit, and Wamesit. See RMB vol. 5, 136.
- <sup>82</sup> RMB vol. 5, 216-218.
- <sup>83</sup> RMB vol. 5, 216-218.
- <sup>84</sup> RMB vol. 5, 216-218.
- <sup>85</sup> Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 61, 143, 254-257.
- <sup>86</sup> Sagamore and sachem are terms often used interchangeably in seventeenth-century records from southern New England.
- <sup>87</sup> RMB vol. 5, 315.
- <sup>88</sup> Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 78, 111-112, 168.
- <sup>89</sup> The Wamesit signatories of the deed were Puntahhun, John Tohatowon, Kussinauscut, Pannobotiquis, Nomphon, Peter, Nonnoit, and Wompannooun. Nomphon is an alternate spelling of Numphow, who was the ruler of Wamesit, and, according to Gookin "one of the blood of their sachems." Puntahhun was also known as Sagamore John. Though there are several Indigenous men known by this name in colonial records, the overwhelming likelihood based on context is that Puntahun was the Sagamore John who was a sachem of the area and eventually a town leader at Wamesit. John Tohatowon (more commonly spelled Tahattawan, or Attawans) was the son of the Musketaquid Pawtucket sachem Attawans, was and identified by Gookin as a sachem in his own right and a leader at Nashobah. See: Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 46; Robert Alexander Douglass Lithgow, *Dictionary of American Indian Place and Proper Names in New England* (Salem: The Salem Press Co., 1909), 334, Google Books; Lisa Brooks, "Sarah of Wamesit," accessed August 26, 2020, <https://ourbelovedkin.com/awikhigan/sarah-of-wamesit>; Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 253, 254, 257.
- <sup>90</sup> RMB vol. 4 part 1, 430-432.
- <sup>91</sup> Susan L. MacCulloch, "A Tripartite Political System Among Christian Indians of Early Massachusetts," *The Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers* 34, (Spring 1966): 66-70. See also Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 305, note 58.
- <sup>92</sup> Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 145, 256; See Chapter 3, 124-128 for more detail on Attawans and the Musketaquids.
- <sup>93</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 26; Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 141; Jeremy was eventually succeeded by Ahawton, who appears on land transfers and is named as a counselor and guardian to Josias (also called Charles Josias), Wampatuk's son. See: "Quitclaim deed for the peninsula of Boston"; "Indian Deed of Medfield, 1685," 303. For more examples of rulership in mission communities based on hereditary status see: Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 144; MacCulloch, "A Tripartite Political System," 66-70.
- <sup>94</sup> For more on the Indian right as a legal concept, see Chapter 2, 75-85-87.
- <sup>95</sup> This chapter compares the Speenes with Kitchemekin and his sachemship. For an additional example, see discussion of Attawans and the Musketaquids in Chapter 3.
- <sup>96</sup> Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 30-33, 57. Dedham and Natick argued over which portions of Kitchemekin's sachemship belonged to their respective towns. See RTD vol. 4, 259, 261.



<sup>97</sup> O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 42-43, 49; Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 40-43, 51, 54-57, 106, 111-113, 198-199.

<sup>98</sup> Men of the town were eligible to vote for their leaders, with women, children, and servants "virtually comprehended in their father's covenant." See: O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 48.

<sup>99</sup> Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 56; O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 42-43, 48-49.

<sup>100</sup> Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 199; O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 49-51.

<sup>101</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 40. Referring to Kitchemekin, Cogley argues that English policies had "inflated that sachem's authority beyond traditional limits" and that Natick as a mission project was successful partly because Massachusetts people there desired to use the praying town institution to redefine and curtail Kitchemekin's power and "return the office of the sachem to a more consensual form." Jean O'Brien emphasizes the continuity of Native leadership in terms of cultural structure and actual leaders in Natick, with Kitchemekin as a prime example. See: Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 54-56; O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 48-49.

<sup>102</sup> The sachem known as "Old Speene" was the sachem on Natick's land prior to English invasion, and his family held ancestral rights there based on his rulership. Eliot and colonial officials may have been especially eager to document the land claims of the Speenes because this family facilitated and supported the establishment of Natick as a praying town. See: The Native Northeast Research Collaborative, "Speen, Anthony," Native Northeast Portal, accessed January 20 2021, <https://nativenortheastportal.com/node/7757>; The Native Northeast Research Collaborative, "Old Speen," Native Northeast Portal, accessed January 20 2021, <https://nativenortheastportal.com/bio/bibliography/old-speen-1685>; The Native Northeast Research Collaborative, "Speen, James," Native Northeast Portal, accessed January 20 2021, <https://nativenortheastportal.com/node/7756>

<sup>103</sup> John Eliot, "Natick Archives, 1650," in William Biglow, *The History of the Town of Natick* (Boston: Marsh, Capen, and Lyon, 1830), 21-24, Google Books.

<sup>104</sup> Eliot, "Natick Archives, 1650," 21-24. See also: Duane Hamilton Hurd, *History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, Volume 1* (Philadelphia: J.W. Lewis & Co. 1890) 516, Google Books; Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission*, 105.

<sup>105</sup> Greer, *Property and Dispossession*, 202-208, 378-379; RMB vol. 2, 166; RMB vol. 3, 246.

<sup>106</sup> Eliot and Mayhew Jr., *Tears of Repentance*, 285; John Eliot, *A Further Account of the progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New England*, in *The Eliot Tracts*, ed. Michael P. Clark (Westport: Praeger, 2003), 368; Eliot, *Brief Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel*, 403; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 44-53; Mandell, "To Live More Like My Christian English Neighbors," 559-560.

<sup>107</sup> John Speene was a son of "Old Speene" a Natick sachem. See The Native Northeast Research Collaborative, "Old Speen."

<sup>108</sup> Eliot, *A Further Account of the progress of the Gospel*, 387.

## Chapter 5

### *The Ground Still Remains:*

#### Native People and Mission Community Lands Today

<sup>1</sup> For further discussion of the events leading up to Metacom's War, as well as more details on the war itself, see: Lisa Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*; Lepore, *The Name of War*; Daniel R. Mandell, *King Philip's War: Colonial Expansion, Native Resistance, and the End of Indian Sovereignty* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); Drake, *King Philip's War*; Daniel Richter, "Planters Besieged," in *Before the Revolution*; Jill Lepore, "Dead Men Tell No Tales: John Sassamon and the Fatal Consequences of Literacy," *American Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (December 1994): 479-512.

<sup>2</sup> Note: Metacom was killed in battle in 1676, but fighting between Native people and colonists continued. The war officially ended with a peace treaty in 1678, but the “end” of the war was not a straightforward event, and the English did not “win” in every region of New England. For discussion of this process and its complexities, see Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*, 7-8, 302, 342-346.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Ellen Newell, “The Changing Nature of Indian Slavery in New England, 1670-1720,” in Calloway and Salisbury, *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience*, 111-116. Hutchins, *Mashpee*, 58-59; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 112-113, 104. For additional information on Metacom’s War in a broader context, see: Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*; Lepore, *The Name of War*; Drake, *King Philip’s War*; Mandell, *King Philip’s War*.

<sup>4</sup> Gookin, *Doings and Sufferings*; “Document 82: Law to Restrict Friendly Indians to Islands,” in Vaughn and Rosen, *New England and Middle Atlantic Laws*, 131-132; “The Labors of the Pilgrims and Early Settlers of the Plymouth Colony for the Instruction and Conversion of the Indians,” in Morton, *New England’s Memorial*, 387-392; Drake, *King Philip’s War*, 87-88, 102-104; O’Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 60-62; Pulsipher, *Subjects Unto the Same King*, 140-155; Lepore, *The Name of War*, 136-159; Lauren Benton, “Traucherous Places: Atlantic Riverine Regions and the Law of Treason,” in *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400-1900* (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 40-104; Hutchins, *Mashpee*, 58; Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*, 218-219, 225, 246-247; Julianne Jennings, “Deer Island, A Human Tragedy Remembered,” *Indian Country Today*, September 12, 2018, <https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/deer-island-a-history-of-human-tragedy-remembered?redir=1>; Chief Caring Hands, interview by Taylor Kirsch, September 24, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Chief Caring Hands, interview; Donna Laurent Caruso, “Sacred Run and Sacred Paddle Provide Solemn Memorial for Massachusetts Natives,” *Indian Country Today*, September 13, 2018, <https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/sacred-run-and-sacred-paddle-provide-solemn-memorial-for-massachusetts-natives>; Martin Blatt, “King Philip’s War and the Cultural Landscape of Boston,” *Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities*, September 20, 2018, <https://masshumanities.org/ph-king-philips-war-and-the-cultural-landscape-of-boston/>

<sup>6</sup> Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag, “Our History.” See also Gookin, *Doings and Sufferings*.

<sup>7</sup> Gookin, *Doings and Sufferings*, 483.

<sup>8</sup> Gookin, *Doings and Sufferings*; Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag, “Our History”; Holley, “A Brief Look at Nipmuc History.”

<sup>9</sup> O’Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 62-66; Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, 22-27; Gookin, *Doings and Sufferings*, 456, 517, 519-521; Chief Caring Hands, interview.

<sup>10</sup> RMB vol. 5, 136; O’Brien, “Friend Indians,” in *Dispossession by Degrees*; Holley, “A Brief Look at Nipmuc History”; Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*; Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag, “Our History.”

<sup>11</sup> RCP Court Orders vol. 5, 70-71; Gookin, *Doings and Sufferings*, 434-435; Peters, *The Wampanoags of Mashpee*, 16-17; Campisi, *The Mashpee Indians*, 79-80.

<sup>12</sup> RCP Court Orders vol. 5, 183; Hutchins, *Mashpee*, 57-58; Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, 22-23.

<sup>13</sup> Gookin, *Doings and Sufferings*, 433-434.

<sup>14</sup> For a detailed account of Martha’s Vineyard during Metacom’s War and a thorough analysis of reasons they avoided internal bloodshed, see Silverman, “The Lord Tests the Righteous.”

<sup>15</sup> Mayhew, *The Conquests and Triumphs of Grace*, 40-42; David Silverman, “The Lord Tests the Righteous,” in *Faith and Boundaries*.

<sup>16</sup> Mayhew, *The Conquests and Triumphs of Grace*, 40.

<sup>17</sup> See: Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, chapters 2-6; O’Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 3-6; Mandell, “Selling the Praying Towns”; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, chapters 4-5; Campisi, *The Mashpee Indians*; Hutchins, *Mashpee*, chapters 3-9; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “A Brief Timeline of Wampanoag History”; Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe, “Our History”; Holley, “A Brief Look at Nipmuc History.”

<sup>18</sup> For more information and studies of mission community history between Metacom’s War and the present day, see: Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag, “Our History”; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay

Head Aquinnah, “Wampanoag History”; Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe, “Our History”; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “A Brief Timeline of Wampanoag History”; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “Past Leaders”; Holley, “A Brief Look at Nipmuc History”; Mandell, “Selling the Praying Towns”; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*; Gould et. al., *Historical Archaeology and Indigenous Collaboration*; O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*; Peters, *The Wampanoags of Mashpee*; Campisi, *The Mashpee Indians*; Hutchins, *Mashpee*; Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*; Ronda, “Generations of Faith”; “Nipmuc,” in *Dawnland Voices*.

<sup>19</sup> A note on terminology: Present-day Indigenous relationships with prior mission community land are complex and in some ways contested. For some Native people, the praying town period is thought of as a painful one they would rather not emphasize. For others, it is sacred and central to their identities even though it is intertwined with painful colonial history. Using the terms “mission community land” and “praying town land” in this section on the present-day helps to distinguish these land bases from others that never became mission communities and are thus not part of this particular study. However, I respect and acknowledge the perspectives of Native people today who choose to foreground other aspects of their ancestral lands’ past, just as I respect and acknowledge the perspectives of those who remember their praying town heritage with pride.

<sup>20</sup> Native communities in Massachusetts not recognized by the United States Federal Government include: The Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe, Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag, Chappaquiddick Wampanoag Tribe, Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, Seaconke Wampanoag Tribe, Nipmuc Nation, Chaubungagungamaug Nipmuc, Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation, The Pocasset Wampanoag Tribe of the Pokanoket Nation, and Chippi-Ayeuonk (also known as the Chappiquiddic Tribe of the Massachusetts Nation).

<sup>21</sup> Bureau of Indian Affairs, “Indian Entities Recognized by and Eligible To Receive Services From the United States: A Notice by the Indian Affairs Bureau,” *Federal Register: The Daily Journal of the United States Government*, February 1, 2019,

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/02/01/2019-00897/indian-entities-recognized-by-and-eligible-to-receive-services-from-the-united-states-bureau-of->

[Bureau of Indian Affairs, “The Nature of Federal-Tribal and State-Tribal Relations” BIA FAQ, accessed December 25, 2020](https://www.bia.gov/frequently-asked-questions)

<https://www.bia.gov/frequently-asked-questions>; Bureau of Indian Affairs, “Tribal Government: Powers, Rights, and Authorities,” BIA FAQ, accessed December 25, 2020,

<https://www.bia.gov/frequently-asked-questions>; Bureau of Indian Affairs, “Why Tribes Exist Today in the United States,” accessed December 25, 2020, <https://www.bia.gov/frequently-asked-questions>

<sup>22</sup> For geographic and historical reasons, this tribe is more completely identified as the Praying Indians of Natick, Praying Indians of Ponkapoag, and Praying Indians of Nashobah. Because Natick is the “Mother Praying Indian Village of all,” the short title “Natick Praying Indians” is accurate and used when speaking about the people of Natick. Chief Caring Hands, email message to author on December 23, 2020.

<sup>23</sup> Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag, “Our History.”

<sup>24</sup> Chief Caring Hands, email message to author on December 23, 2020. Note: Chief Caring Hands’ full title is “Massachuset Kechesonsq Naticksqw Chief Caring Hands She Who Speaks for her People, and Sachem Guardian of the memory of the Praying Indian martyrs and survivors of the Deer Island tragedy.”

<sup>25</sup> This information comes from my visit to the Eliot church on October thirteenth 2018. The only exception is Chief Caring Hands’ note about sermon preparation, which I heard on my first visit to the church on July eighth, 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Cynthia Chen, “With Wedding, Natick Praying Indians Celebrate Renewal,” *Boston Globe*, November 12, 2015, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/regionals/west/2015/11/12/with-wedding-natick-praying-indians-celebrate-renewal/oTzJLvdV9US8SjE1GM7HgO/story.html>; Amanda Beland, “Natick Praying Indians Celebrate a Wedding for the History Books” *Portland Press Herald by Metrowest Daily News*, October 10 2015, <https://www.pressherald.com/2015/10/10/natick-praying-indians-celebrate-a-wedding-for-the-history-books/>

- <sup>27</sup> Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag, “Powwow,” accessed December 26, 2020, <https://natickprayingindians.org/powwow.html>
- <sup>28</sup> Denise Garrow Pruitt and Connor Garrow Pruitt, interview by Taylor Kirsch, July 12 2017.
- <sup>29</sup> Field Notes: Nipmuc Powwow July 7, 2017, National Park Service, “National Register of Historic Places Program: National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month Hassanamisco Reservation, Worcester County, Massachusetts,” accessed December 9 2020, [https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/indian/2011/hassanamisco\\_reservation.htm](https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/indian/2011/hassanamisco_reservation.htm); Holley, “Forward,” 7; Hassanamisco Indian Museum, “Gatherings,” accessed December 9, 2020 <https://www.nipmucmuseum.org/gatherings/>
- <sup>30</sup> Field Notes: Nipmuc Powwow July 7, 2017
- <sup>31</sup> Field Notes: Nipmuc Powwow July 7, 2017
- <sup>32</sup> Garrow Pruitt, interview.
- <sup>33</sup> Catherine C. Carlson, *Archival and Archaeological Research Report on the Configuration of the Seven Original 17<sup>th</sup> Century Praying Indian Towns of the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Archaeological Services, 1986).
- <sup>34</sup> D. Rae Gould and Stephen A. Mrozowski, “Introduction: Histories That Have Futures,” in *Historical Archaeology and Indigenous Collaboration: Discovering Histories That Have Futures*, ed. D. Rae Gould, Holly Herbster, Heather Law Pezzarossi, and Stephen A. Mrozowski (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2020), 15.
- <sup>35</sup> For more information on this project, see: Gould et. al., *Historical Archaeology and Indigenous Collaboration*; Fiske Center for Archaeological Research, “Magunkaquoq, Ashland MA” accessed December 8, 2020, <http://www.fiskecenter.umb.edu/Projects/Magunkaquoq.html>; Fiske Center for Archaeological Research, “Hassanamesit Woods, Grafton MA” accessed December 8, 2020, <http://www.fiskecenter.umb.edu/Projects/Hassanamessitt.html>
- <sup>36</sup> For multidisciplinary analysis dedicated primarily to Nipmuc life at Hassanamesit and Magunkaquoq after Metacom’s War, see: Gould et. al., *Historical Archaeology and Indigenous Collaboration*.
- <sup>37</sup> Stephen A. Mrozowski, D. Rae Gould, and Heather L. Pezzarossi, “Rethinking Colonialism: Indigenous Innovation and Colonial Inevitability,” in *Rethinking Colonialism: Comparative Archaeological Approaches*, ed. Craig N. Cipolla and Katherine Howlett Hayes (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2015), 127-130.
- <sup>38</sup> Fiske Center for Archaeological Research, “Magunkaquoq, Ashland MA”; Mrozowski, Gould and Pezzarossi, “Rethinking Colonialism,” 129; Stephen A. Mrozowski, Holly Herbster, David Brown and Katherine L. Priddy, “Magunkaquoq Materiality, Federal Recognition, and the Search for a Deeper History,” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 13, no. 4 (December 2009) 454-456.
- <sup>39</sup> Fiske Center for Archaeological Research, “Magunkaquoq, Ashland MA”; Mrozowski et al., “Magunkaquoq Materiality,” 454-455; Mrozowski, Gould and Pezzarossi, “Rethinking Colonialism,” 127-130.
- <sup>40</sup> Magdalena Naum, “Re-emerging Frontiers: Postcolonial Theory and Historical Archaeology of the Borderlands,” *Journal of Archaeological Method Theory* 17, (Spring 2010): 101-131; Mary C. Beaudry, *Findings: The Material Culture of Needlework and Sewing* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 112-114.
- <sup>41</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 60; Naum, “Re-emerging Frontiers,” 119-121; Beaudry, *Findings*, 112-114; Fiske Center for Archaeological Research, “Magunkaquoq, Ashland MA.”
- <sup>42</sup> Naum, “Re-emerging Frontiers,” 121; Fiske Center for Archaeological Research, “Magunkaquoq, Ashland MA.”
- <sup>43</sup> For discussion of some of the difficulties with archaeological study of mission community land, see Carlson, *Archival and Archaeological Research Report*.
- <sup>44</sup> Fiske Center for Archaeological Research, “Magunkaquoq, Ashland MA.”
- <sup>45</sup> Holley, “Forward,” xi-xiii.
- <sup>46</sup> Fiske Center for Archaeological Research, “Magunkaquoq, Ashland MA.”
- <sup>47</sup> For more information on collaborative and decolonizing archaeology in Indigenous contexts, see: Sonya Atalay, *Community-Based Archaeology: Research with, by, and for Indigenous and Local*



*Communities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Craig N. Cipolla “Native American Historical Archaeology and the Trope of Authenticity,” *Historical Archaeology* 47, no. 3 (2013); Margaret M. Bruchac, Siobhan M. Hart and H. Martin Wobst ed., *Indigenous Archaeologies: A Reader on Decolonization* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2010); Jordan E. Kerber ed., *Cross Cultural Collaboration: Native Peoples and Archaeology in the Northeastern United States* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006); Stephen W. Silliman ed., *Collaborating at the Trowel’s Edge: Teaching and Learning in Indigenous Archaeology* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008); “Decolonizing Archaeology,” special issue, *American Indian Quarterly* 30, no ¾ (Summer-Autumn 2006).

<sup>48</sup> Holley, “Forward,” xi-xii; Gould and Mrozowski, “Introduction: Histories that Have Futures,” 9, 21, 23, See also Atalay, *Community-Based Archaeology*, especially x, 27, 62, 76, 82, 207-208 for more on “braiding knowledge.”

<sup>49</sup> Gould and Mrozowski, “Introduction: Histories that Have Futures,” 22-23.

<sup>50</sup> Note: The language that is being revived and reclaimed via the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project brings together multiple dialects historically spoken by several Native groups in southern New England. For additional information on these dialects see: Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project, “Project History,” accessed December 14, 2020, <https://www.wlrp.org/project-history>; Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag, “Our History”; Ives Goddard, “Eastern Algonquian Languages,” in *Handbook of North American Indians Volume 15: The Northeast*, ed. Bruce G. Trigger (Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 1978), 72; Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*, 29; Kathleen Joan Bragdon, “Another Tongue Brought In: An Ethnohistorical Study of Native Writings In Massachusetts,” (PhD dissertation, Brown University, 1982), 1-2, 16-30.

<sup>51</sup> Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project, “Home.”

<sup>52</sup> Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project, “Home”; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “Tribal Council,” accessed December 14, 2020, <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/council-members>; MacArthur Foundation, “Jesse Little Doe Baird, Indigenous Language Preservationist, Class of 2010,” accessed December 14 2020, <https://www.macfound.org/fellows/class-of-2010/jessie-little-doe-baird>

<sup>53</sup> Nitana Hicks Greendeer, “Indigenous Feminism and Language Reclamation” (Presentation, University of California, Santa Cruz, March 12, 2019); *We Still Live Here (Âs Nutayuneân)*, directed by Anne Makepeace, (2011, Independent Lens), film.

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<https://wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/after-school-program>; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah,

“Wampanoag History”; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “Reclaiming a Lost Language: New School’s

Goal to Teach Children Wampanoag Tribes Native Tongue,” accessed December 14, 2020,

<https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/language-school-news/2018/1/27/reclaiming-a-lost-language-new-schools-goal-to-teach-children-wampanoag-tribes-native-tongue>; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe,

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Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “Language Department,” accessed December 14, 2020, <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/language>

<sup>54</sup> Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “Mashpee High School Offers First-Ever Native American Language Course”; Greendeer, “Indigenous Feminism and Language Reclamation”; “We Still Live Here (Âs Nutayuneân).”

<sup>55</sup> Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag, “Our History”; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe,

“Wampanoag Language Reclamation Project,” accessed December 14, 2020,

<https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/about-wlrp>; Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project, “Project History.”

<sup>56</sup> See Chapter 3, 129-159.

<sup>57</sup> Note: In 2007 after a decades-long struggle, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe won federal recognition, which has enabled them to have sovereignty over this one-hundred-and-fifty-acre parcel

of Mashpee since 2015. Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “Home,” accessed August 21, 2019, <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/>

<sup>58</sup> Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “Home”; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “Food Pantry,” accessed December 13, 2020, <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/food-pantry/>; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “Housing Department,” accessed December 13, 2020, <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/housing/>; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “Health and Human Services,” accessed December 13, 2020, <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/health-and-human-services/>; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “Emergency Management Department,” accessed December 13, 2020, <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/emergency-preparedness/>; FEMA, “One Tribal Nation Winning Against COVID,” Release Date, December 2 2020, [https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20201202/one-tribal-nation-winning-against-covid?fbclid=IwAR3Di4rMcc1akJaACltNpzMyYrgqIXqeEmrF1\\_zbns0266qS7RxHDINJLTM](https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20201202/one-tribal-nation-winning-against-covid?fbclid=IwAR3Di4rMcc1akJaACltNpzMyYrgqIXqeEmrF1_zbns0266qS7RxHDINJLTM)

<sup>59</sup> Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “99<sup>th</sup> Annual Powwow Cancelled,” accessed December 13, 2020, <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/powwow-info/>; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “Mashpee Wampanoag Museum,” accessed December 13, 2020, <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/museum/>; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “Natural Resources Department,” accessed December 13, 2020, <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/natural-resources/>; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, Historic Preservation and NAGPRA, accessed December 13, 2020, <https://mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/historic-preservation-nagpra/>; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Historic Preservation Department, “About,” Wampum Memories, accessed December 13, 2020, <https://mwthpd.wordpress.com/about/>; Mary Ann Bragg, “Wampanoag Community Rejoices as Mashpee Headquarters Opens,” Cape Cod Times, March 30, 2014, accessed December 13, 2020, <https://www.capecodtimes.com/article/20140330/NEWS/403300342>

<sup>60</sup> Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Natural Resources Management,” accessed December 15, 2020, <https://wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/natural-resources/>; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Wampanoag History.”

<sup>61</sup> Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Membership,” accessed December 15, 2020, <https://wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/membership-1/>; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Social Services,” accessed December 15, 2020, Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Emergency Response,” accessed December 15, 2020, <https://wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/social-services/>; <https://dan-martino-935b.squarespace.com/emergency-response/>; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Health,” accessed December 15, 2020, <https://wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/health/>; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “After School Program,” Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Education,” accessed December 15, 2020, <https://wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/education/>; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Tribal Historic Preservation,” accessed December 15, 2020, <https://wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/tribal-historic-preservation/>; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Wampanoag History”; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Ancient Ways”; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Member Events,” accessed December 15, 2020, <https://wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/member-events/>

<sup>62</sup> Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Natural Resources Management.”

<sup>63</sup> Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Hunting, Fishing, Gathering,” accessed December 15, 2020, <https://wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/huntingfishinggathering/>; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Natural Resources Management”; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Environmental Protection” accessed December 15, 2020, <https://dan-martino-935b.squarespace.com/environmental-protection/>; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Past Projects,” accessed December 15, 2020, <https://dan-martino-935b.squarespace.com/projects/>; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Wampanoag Environmental Laboratory,” accessed December 15, 2020, <https://wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/lab/>; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Wampanoag History”; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Ancient Ways.”

<sup>64</sup> Ferretti, Interview; Pine Barrens Alliance, “One Landscape, Multiple Stories: Indigenous Ecological Knowledge in Southeastern Massachusetts,” August 7 2020, <https://pinebarrensalliance.org/one-landscape-multiple-stories-indigenous-ecological-knowledge-in-southeastern-massachusetts/>

<sup>65</sup> WCVB Channel 5 – Chronicle, “Labors of Love interview with Ted Reinstein and the Herring Pond Wampanoag,” October 24, 2020, <https://www.herringpondtribe.org/2020/10/24/wcvb-channel-5-chronicle-labors-of-love-interview-with-ted-reinstein-and-the-herring-pond-wampanoag/>

<sup>66</sup> Note: The land is technically owned by the tribal non-profit, for the benefit of the whole tribe. Ferretti, Interview; Frank Mand, “Herring Pond Wampanoag Asking for Six Acres in South Plymouth,” *Wicked Local*, September 25, 2018, <https://plymouth.wickedlocal.com/news/20180905/herring-pond-wampanoag-asking-for-six-acres-in-south-plymouth>; Emily Clark, “Herring Pond Wampanoag Win Bid for their Burial Ground,” *Wicked Local*, October 16, 2019, <https://www.capecodtimes.com/article/20140330/NEWS/403300342>; Emily Clark, “Herring Pond Wampanoag Burial Ground Comes Home,” *Wicked Local*, December 5, 2018, <https://plymouth.wickedlocal.com/news/20181205/herring-pond-wampanoag-burial-ground-comes-home>

<sup>67</sup> WCVB Channel 5 – Chronicle, “Labors of Love interview; Clark, “Herring Pond Wampanoag Burial Ground Comes Home”; Clark, “Herring Pond Wampanoag Win Bid for their Burial Ground,”

<sup>68</sup> Melissa Harding Ferretti, “Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe of Plymouth Receives Grant from Sheehan Family Companies for Land Stewardship and Youth Ecological Knowledge Education,” *What’s Going On At The Pond?* March 1, 2020, <https://www.herringpondtribe.org/2020/03/01/herring-pond-wampanoag-awarded-156000-project-grant-for-land-stewardship-and-youth-traditional-ecological-knowledge-tek-education-program/>; Press Pool, “Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe of Plymouth Receives \$156,000 Grant from Sheehan Family Companies,” *Indian Country Today*, March 2, 2020, <https://indiancountrytoday.com/the-press-pool/herring-pond-wampanoag-tribe-of-plymouth-receives-156000-grant-from-sheehan-family-companies>; Emily Clark, “Herring Pond Wampanoag Awarded Sheehan Family Grant,” *Wicked Local*, March 2, 2020,

<https://plymouth.wickedlocal.com/news/20200302/herring-pond-wampanoag-awarded-sheehan-family-grant> Note: Links to the news articles cited in this analysis of present-day Herring Pond Wampanoag land were all posted on the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe’s official website. While these articles were not created by the tribe, they were curated and included on their website as informational resources for the tribe as well as outsiders. See Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe, “What’s Going on at the Pond?” accessed December 17, 2020, <https://www.herringpondtribe.org/whats-going-on-at-the-pond/>

## Appendices

<sup>1</sup> For overviews of the population debate and commonly accepted figures, see: Mailer and Hale, *Decolonizing the Diet*, 94-100; Malone, *The Skulking Way of War*, 103; Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 21-30; Bratton, “The Identity of the New England Indian Epidemic of 1616-1619,” 352; Clark, “Introduction,” 16, 42-43; Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England 1500-1650*, 25-28. For a detailed breakdown of population estimates by tribal group and geographic area, see: Sherburne Friend Cook, *The Indian Population of New England in the Seventeenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976). For further discussion of the early epidemics, see Chapter 1, 42-53.

<sup>2</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 55; Matthew Mayhew, *A Brief Narrative of the Success Which the Gospel Hath Had, among the Indians, of Martha’s-Vineyard (and the Places Adjacent) in New-England* (Boston: Bartholomew Green, 1695), 24.

<sup>3</sup> Cotton Mather, *The Triumphs of the Reformed Religion in America* (Boston: Benjamin Harris and John Allen, 1691), 112.

<sup>4</sup> Mayhew, *A Brief Narrative of the Success Which the Gospel Hath Had*, 24.

<sup>5</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 65.

<sup>6</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 40-55.

<sup>7</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 64, 67.

<sup>8</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 66; Eliot, *Brief Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel*, 401 .

- <sup>9</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 58.
- <sup>10</sup> Company for Propagation of the Gospel in New England and the Parts Adjacent in America, *Some Correspondence Between the Governors and Treasurers of the New England Company*, xviii; Gookin, *Historical Collections* 68-69.
- <sup>11</sup> Native Land Digital “About,” accessed March 31, 2021, <https://native-land.ca/about/>; The Decolonial Atlas, “About,” accessed March 31, 2021, <https://decolonialatlas.wordpress.com/about/>; Brooks “Our Beloved Kin: Remapping a New History of King Philip’s War,” Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*.
- <sup>12</sup> Fourth Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston 1880: Dorchester Town Records (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill City Printers, 1896), 6, Hathi Trust Digital Library. For more on the difficulties of ascertaining accurate property boundaries in seventeenth-century New England, see Carlson, *Archival and Archaeological Research Report*, 1, 4-5; Greer, *Property and Dispossession*
- <sup>13</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 40; Carlson, *Archival and Archaeological Research Report*, 26-41; Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag, “Our History.”
- <sup>14</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 44; Carlson, *Archival and Archaeological Research Report*, 42-49; The Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, “The Removal of the Neponsetts To Ponkapoag”; The Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, “Chronological Listing Of Historically Important Events at Ponkapoag Plantation”; Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, “Our History,” accessed April 11, 2021, <http://massachusettstribe.org/our-history>; Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, “We Are The Massachusetts,” accessed April 11, 2021, <http://massachusettstribe.org/we-are-the-massachusetts>
- <sup>15</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 44-45; Carlson, *Archival and Archaeological Research Report*, 50-58; Holley, “A Brief Look at Nipmuc History.”
- <sup>16</sup> Carlson, *Archival and Archaeological Research Report*, 59-69; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 45.
- <sup>17</sup> Carlson, *Archival and Archaeological Research Report*, 70-85; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 46; Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, “We Are The Massachusetts.”
- <sup>18</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 48; Carlson, *Archival and Archaeological Research Report*, 86-99.
- <sup>19</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 48-49; Carlson, *Archival and Archaeological Research Report*, 100-104.
- <sup>20</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 49; Holly Herbster, “The Documentary Archaeology of Magunkaquog,” in Gould et al, *Historical Archaeology and Indigenous Collaboration*, 84.
- <sup>21</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 49; Herbster, “The Documentary Archaeology of Magunkaquog,” 84.
- <sup>22</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 50.
- <sup>23</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 49-50.
- <sup>24</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 49-50.
- <sup>25</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 52.
- <sup>26</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 54.
- <sup>27</sup> See: Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “A Brief Timeline of Wampanoag History”; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 58; Campisi, *The Mashpee Indians*, 78; Bureau of Indian Affairs, “Summary Under the Criteria for the Proposed Finding on the Mashpee Wampanoag Indian Tribal Council, Inc.,” approved March 31 2006, [https://www.bia.gov/sites/bia.gov/files/assets/as-ia/ofa/petition/015\\_mashpe\\_MA/015\\_pf.pdf](https://www.bia.gov/sites/bia.gov/files/assets/as-ia/ofa/petition/015_mashpe_MA/015_pf.pdf); Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 12; Conkey, Boissevain and Goddard, “Indians of Southern New England and Long Island,” 179.
- <sup>28</sup> Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe, “Listening to our Ancestors, Protecting our Homeland,” 5, accessed March 30, 2021 <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/557eec20e4b020deb8e746b6/t/5f524ca1b126a663b3a8494e/1599229094622/HP+Wampanoag+Tribe+Presentation+9-3-20.pdf>; Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe, “Our History”; Conkey, Boissevain and Goddard, “Indians of Southern New England and Long Island,” 179; Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts: Part 1*, 13; Speck, *Territorial Subdivisions*, 88-89.
- <sup>29</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 58.



- <sup>30</sup> RCP Deeds &c. vol. 1, 233-234, 238; see also Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs, *New Light on the Old Colony: Plymouth, the Dutch Context of Toleration, and Patterns of Pilgrim Commemoration* (Leiden NL: Brill, 2020), 76-77. Note: Wampatuk is referred to as “Josias allies Chickatabutt” on this deed. See The Native Northeast Research Collaborative, “Wampatuck, Josiah.”
- <sup>31</sup> Neill DePaoli et al., *Historic & Archaeological Resources of Southeast Massachusetts: A Framework for Preservation Decisions* (Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Commission, (1982) 2007), 34, 36; Maurice Robbins, “The Titicut Site,” *Bulletin of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society* 28, nos. 3 and 4 (April-July 1967): 35, 60.
- <sup>32</sup> William B. Taylor, “The Fort Hill Bluff Site,” *Bulletin of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society* 38, nos. 1 and 2 (October 1976): 7-10; *MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Middleborough* (Boston: The Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1981); Taunton River Stewardship Council, “The Indian Fort at Fort Hill,” accessed April 6 2021, <http://tauntonriver.org/forthill.htm>
- <sup>33</sup> DePaoli et al., *Historic & Archaeological Resources of Southeast Massachusetts*, 34, 48, 53, 63, see especially Arthur J. Krim, *Map 6: Plantation Period Political Boundaries*, 53; Robbins, “The Titicut Site,” 35.
- <sup>34</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 58; Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag, “We Are The Massachusett.”
- <sup>35</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 64; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Wampanoag Ways,” accessed March 30, 2021, <https://wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/wampanoagways>; Banks, *History of Martha’s Vineyard*, vol. 1, 41.
- <sup>36</sup> Banks, *History of Martha’s Vineyard*, vol. 1, 240. For works that disagree with Banks and place Talhanio in Chilmark, See: Ronda, “Generations of Faith,” 380; Weis, “The New England Company of 1649,” 160, 197.
- <sup>37</sup> “Conveyance of Land in Tisbury in 1699,” 103; “Collection Description,” *John Cotton Diary and Indian Vocabulary, 1666-1678: Guide to the Collection*, Massachusetts Historical Society Digital Collections, <http://www.masshist.org/collection-guides/view/facotton>
- <sup>38</sup> Frank Waabu O’Brien of the Aquidneck Indian Council does not include a location for Talhanio in his *Understanding Indian Place Names in Southern New England*, but he does equate Toikiming with Christiantown. See: Frank Waabu O’Brien, “Appendix 2” in *Understanding Indian Place Names in Southern New England* (Boulder: Bauu Institute Press, 2010), Scribd.
- <sup>39</sup> “Conveyance of Land in Tisbury in 1699,” 103; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 64; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Wampanoag Ways.” See also Chapter 3, 133-138 for more details on Manitouwatootan’s establishment.
- <sup>40</sup> Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 18; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Wampanoag Ways,” Banks, *History of Martha’s Vineyard*, vol. 1, 41; “Original Vineyarders: The Island’s First Settlers,” *New York Times Archives*, 2006, [http://www.mvlandbank.com/img/prop\\_maps/Christiantown%20Woods%20Preserve%2009.pdf](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/fodors/top/features/travel/destinations/unitedstates/massachusetts/marthasvineyard/fdrs_feat_617_9.html?n=Top%25252FFeatures%25252FTravel%25252FDestinations%25252FUnited+States%25252FMassachusetts%25252FMartha%252527s+Vineyard; Martha’s Vineyard Land Bank Staff, <i>Christiantown Woods Preserve West Tisbury, Massachusetts</i> [map], Office of Geographic and Environmental Information in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, accessed March 30, 2021 <a href=)
- <sup>41</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 66-67.
- <sup>42</sup> “Collection Description,” *John Cotton Diary and Indian Vocabulary*; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 45-46; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 64; Avant, “Wampanoag: Introduction,” 443.
- <sup>43</sup> Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 18; Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Wampanoag Ways,” Banks, *History of Martha’s Vineyard*, vol. 1, 41.
- <sup>44</sup> Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 68-70.
- <sup>45</sup> Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag, “Our History,”; Chappiquiddic Tribe, First People of Chappaquiddick, “The Pokanok, People of the Bays,” accessed August 8, 2019, <http://chappiquiddic.org/index.html>; Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project, “Fun With Words,” accessed August 8, 2019, <https://www.wlrp.org/fun-with-words>

- <sup>46</sup> Holley, “A Brief Look at Nipmuc History.”
- <sup>47</sup> O’Brien, “Appendix 2.”
- <sup>48</sup> “Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Wampanoag Ways”; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “Home”; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 19.
- <sup>49</sup> Mohegan Tribe, “The Mohegan Tribe’s History,” accessed January 27, 2021, <https://www.mohegan.nsn.us/explore/heritage/our-history>
- <sup>50</sup> Praying Indians of Natick and Ponkapoag, “Our History,”; Gookin, Historical Collections, 40.
- <sup>51</sup> O’Brien, “Appendix 2”; J. Hammond Trumbull, *Indian Names of Places, Etc., in and on the Borders of Connecticut: With Interpretations of Some of Them* (Hartford: Case, Lockwood & Brainard Co. 1881), 9, Google Books.
- <sup>52</sup> The Native Northeast Research Collaborative, “Ponkapoag,” Native Northeast Portal, accessed January 20, 2021, <http://nativenortheastportal.com/bio-tribes/ponkapoag>; Gookin, Historical Collections, 44.
- <sup>53</sup> Mandell, *Behind the Frontier*, 76; Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 48; O’Brien, “Appendix 2.”
- <sup>54</sup> Donna Rae Gould, *Contested Places: The History and Meaning of Hassanamisco* (PhD dissertation, University of Connecticut, 2010), 11, 55, 123, Research Gate.  
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- <sup>55</sup> O’Brien, “Appendix 2”; Trumbull, *Indian Names of Places*, 28.
- <sup>56</sup> O’Brien, “Appendix 2.” For alternate possibilities, see: Trumbull, *Indian Names of Places*, 76.
- <sup>57</sup> O’Brien, “Appendix 2.” For alternative possibilities, see: Lincoln N. Kinnicutt, *Indian Names of Places in Worcester County Massachusetts: With Interpretations of Some of Them* (Worcester: The Commonwealth Press 1905), 42.
- <sup>58</sup> O’Brien, “Appendix 2.” For alternate possibilities, see Kinnicutt, *Indian Names of Places in Worcester County*, 33.
- <sup>59</sup> Littleton Historical Society, “Freedom’s Way Connecting Communities Walk & Talk at Sarah Doublet Forest Featuring Quiet Storm, Nashobah Native American,” *Littleton Historical Society Newsletter*, accessed September 1, 2020, <https://www.littletonhistoricalsociety.org/home/newsletter/freedoms-way/>; O’Brien, “Appendix 2.”
- <sup>60</sup> Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project, “Fun With Words.”
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- <sup>62</sup> O’Brien, “Appendix 2.”
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- <sup>68</sup> Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Wampanoag Ways”; Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries*, 19.
- <sup>69</sup> Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah, “Wampanoag Ways”; Gookin, Historical Collections, 64.
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