



# Terrapolitics in the Dawnland: Relationality, Resistance, and Indigenous Futures in the Native and Colonial Northeast

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“OUR people = Our Land = Our People.” Mashpee Wampanoag tribal members carried signs conveying this and other messages in October 2018 as they marched in protest of Trump administration actions threatening existential harm to their community. Walking along Great Neck Road, which follows a longstanding Mashpee pathway on Cape Cod, the marchers mobilized bodies and voices to push back against a recent US Department of the Interior decision reversing the placement of 321 acres of land into federal trust for the tribe. That land-in-trust status—an outcome of four centuries of profoundly contested legal, political, and cultural developments—is essential to the tribe’s ability to exercise fuller forms of sovereignty. Several weeks later, the tribe held a Land Sovereignty Walk in Washington, DC to bring the mounting crisis to wider attention. The protest walks emphasized an essential fact of Mashpee identity and continuity: without land, the very core of tribal existence, as well as its ability to

I thank many of the community members and scholars cited in this essay for on-going dialogues about place and past across the Native Northeast and colonial New England. I use specific tribal terminology whenever possible, and “Native” or “Indigenous” where appropriate. “Indian” I retain when used by communities themselves as a descriptor or when quoting historical and scholarly documents. I acknowledge funding support from Mount Holyoke College, Williams College, and the Newberry Library; research facilitation by staff members at the Plymouth County Registry of Deeds in Plymouth, Massachusetts; and constructive comments from *New England Quarterly* referees and editors. A selection of images accompanying this article is available at [christinedelucia.com/terrapolitics](http://christinedelucia.com/terrapolitics).

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continue into the future, becomes precarious. Mashpee Tribal Council Chairman Cedric Cromwell succinctly identified these stakes: “We don’t want America to go back to the dark ages of extermination for Indian tribes.”<sup>1</sup> Mashpee’s struggles over land and community have roots extending much deeper than 2018.<sup>2</sup> As the discussion below demonstrates, New England settler colonialism created arduous conditions for Indigenous life and networks of relations since the seventeenth century while recurrently being challenged by Wampanoag place-based resistances.

Taking Wampanoag histories and epistemologies as focal points, this essay examines the multifaceted ways that north-eastern Indigenous communities and tribal nations have understood, valued, and acted in relation to homelands and expansive visions of interrelated life in the face of settler colonial projects intended to dislocate and eradicate them. It presents a complication and challenge to “biopolitics” as an analytical framework for early American history by putting it into dialogue with “terrapolitics,” a term drawn from Australian Aboriginal contexts which argue for understanding ontologies through the lens of place. Terrapolitical thinking acknowledges that, as Morgan Brigg has written, Indigenous “traditions emphasise [*sic.*] land and ancestors to establish a politics organized through Country.” The “answer to what is ‘alive’ or sentient in Aboriginal ontology has an expansive answer which ramifies through a multiplicity of relationships in which humans are interdependent with other life.”<sup>3</sup> Concepts of interdependence and interrelatedness are powerfully present across Indigenous

<sup>1</sup>Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, “Our People Our Land: #StandWithMashpee,” organizing materials for Mashpee Wampanoag Land Sovereignty Walk, November 14, 2018, Washington, DC; Karen B. Hunter and Sam Houghton, “Walk & Rally Raise Awareness About Protecting Wampanoag Tribal Land,” *The Mashpee Enterprise*, October 7, 2018; Mary Ann Bragg, “Mashpee tribe holds march to emphasize sovereign land,” *Cape Cod Times*, October 6, 2018.

<sup>2</sup>Jack Campisi, *The Mashpee Indians: Tribe on Trial* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1991).

<sup>3</sup>Morgan Brigg, “Biopolitics meets Terrapolitics: Political Ontologies and Governance in Settler-Colonial Australia,” *Australian Journal of Political Science* 42 (2007): 403–17, esp. 404, 410.

contexts globally, including the Northeastern Dawnland. Indigenous identities and well-being have been intertwined since the beginning times with specific homelands and other-than-human beings. Outsider efforts to alienate tribal members from these home-places and extensive networks of relations can compromise health (broadly speaking) and collective futures. Settler colonial conceptions of the valuable/disposable have tended to center *human* lives and interests in ways that become costly, even fatal, to Indigenous people and their relations.

In arguing for a need to move beyond human-centered accounts of the life cycle and reproduction and instead to reckon with the full complement of relations that encompass humans and other-than-humans as mutually sustained in ties of obligation and reciprocity, this intervention engages a critique articulated in Native American and Indigenous Studies (NAIS) about the limits of Foucauldian biopolitics to explain Indigenous-settler colonial interactions. Scott Morgensen has noted that many deployments of biopower analysis overtly or implicitly assume settler colonial vantages and logics, which privilege the human as unique and dominant, rather than recognizing these categories' origins in culturally and historically specific contexts of exclusion, extraction, and dispossession.<sup>4</sup> Calling instead for "relationality" as a critical lens, René Dietrich has called out settler colonialism's "assumption that there is, at least in theory, a *geos* divorced from the *bios*, and vice versa, which can be targeted distinctly. Such a logic ultimately rests on a European tradition of thought (which is then universalized in settler colonial contexts) that land itself is not a living thing, is not animate, is not a form of life." Dietrich urges attunement to "a place-based politics . . . in which Indigenous land and all forms of life, including the land itself, make up, through their mutually constitutive relationships, the sphere of politics."<sup>5</sup> Aileen Moreton-Robinson conceptualizes relationality as "grounded

<sup>4</sup>Scott Lauria Morgensen, "The Biopolitics of Settler Colonialism: Right Here, Right Now," *Settler Colonial Studies* 1 (2011): 52–76.

<sup>5</sup>René Dietrich, "The Biopolitical Logics of Settler Colonialism and Disruptive Relationality," *Cultural Studies—Critical Methodologies* 17 (2017): 67–77, esp. 67, 68.

in a holistic conception of the interconnectedness and inter-substantiation between and among all living things and the earth, which is inhabited by a world of ancestors and creator beings.” It recognizes that “knowing is embodied in and connected to country.”<sup>6</sup>

*Country* here carries specific resonances of animacy, relationality, intertwining, responsibility, and storying. Before turning attention to terrapolitics in Wampanoag country, it is useful to acknowledge how this keyword has been understood in diverse Indigenous and non-Indigenous contexts. In Aboriginal Australia, Sally Babidge has written, *country* is a concept “in which social relatedness, the land, and creative spirits are inextricable . . . [it] conveys the sense that land is imbued with knowledge, history, kinship and spiritual life.”<sup>7</sup> *Country* can also communicate Indigenous political conceptions of place-based sovereignty, customary ownership, and usage, as Joshua Reid has demonstrated through the phrase “the sea is my country” in his study of Makah maritime histories. In writing about “Wabanaki country” and Native communities’ abiding connections to the entirety of river systems—fish, animals, soil, water, and more—Lisa Brooks reflected on processes of “negotiating rights and responsibilities among contiguous communities, thus enabling social and ecological sustainability.”<sup>8</sup> These Indigenous conceptualizations of *country* locate human beings relationally, in responsive engagement with dynamic webs of life and multi-species communities that are firmly interwoven

<sup>6</sup>Aileen Moreton-Robinson, “Relationality: A key presupposition of an Indigenous social research paradigm,” chap. 7 in Chris Andersen and Jean M. O’Brien, eds., *Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2017). On “radical relationality,” see Melanie K. Yazzie and Cutcha Risling Baldy, “Introduction: Indigenous peoples and the politics of water,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 7 (2018): 1–18.

<sup>7</sup>Sally Babidge, *Aboriginal Family and the State: The Conditions of History* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 3. See also Bawaka Country, “Everything is love: Mobilising knowledges, identities, and places as Bawaka,” chap. 3 in *Indigenous Places and Colonial Spaces: The Politics of Intertwined Relations*, ed. Nicole Gombay and Marcela Palomino-Schalscha (New York: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>8</sup>Joshua L. Reid, *The Sea is My Country: The Maritime World of the Makahs* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015); Lisa Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip’s War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 91.

with specific geographies, and have sacred dimensions bearing connections to multiple forms of power. In Euro–American contexts, by contrast, *country* has more typically been associated with a nation-state’s territory, used as a synonym for land in the sense of an environment external to humans (“the landscape spread out before one”), or understood as a signifier of non-urban locations reflecting lesser degrees of human involvement.<sup>9</sup> In 1630 the Puritan John Cotton preached a sermon to John Winthrop’s company upon its departure to colonize New England in which he cited the Christian God’s will as a rationale for taking “possession of vacant countries” and authorized colonizers to “subdue the country unto themselves” if the “natives do unjustly wrong them.”<sup>10</sup> *Country* in this respect signified terrain and resources open to appropriation and conquest by outsiders for plantations, profit, and cultivation of a Judeo-Christian promised land.

Cotton’s insistence that “vacant place[s]” were ideal targets for English colonization foregrounds foundational New England mythologies about Indigenous viability and connections to place. New England colonizers and their descendants promulgated pervasive notions of Native “vanishing” or “disappearance”: assumptions that Native people and nations failed to thrive, remain healthy, reproduce enough children, or remain situated in traditional homelands. As Jean O’Brien demonstrated in *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England*, “New Englanders scripted themselves as modern people looking toward the future, creating order out of chaos and forging modern societies and cultures that broke from the past. This story implicitly argued that Indians and Indian ways could not be acknowledged as legitimate, ongoing, and part of the landscape of the future.” Even when living side-by-side with Indigenous communities, Euro–Americans “failed to recognize New England Indians as modern peoples who

<sup>9</sup>“Country,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, <https://www-oed-com.ezproxy.lib.umb.edu/view/Entry/43085?redirectedFrom=country#eid> (accessed August 26, 2019).

<sup>10</sup>John Cotton, “Sermon on God’s Promise to His Plantations,” *The Library of Oratory Ancient and Modern with Critical Studies of the World’s Great Orators by Eminent Essayists*, ed. Chauncey M. DePew (New York: E.R. Du Mont, 1902), 2:5.

looked to the future and instead constructed a pervasive myth of Indian extinction.”<sup>11</sup> New Englanders were keen to write Native people *out of place* in order to re-cast Indigenous homelands as giving way—innocently and legitimately—to colonizers’ claiming of these same locales.

Building upon theoretical and empirical contributions by O’Brien, Brooks, and other scholars of the Native Northeast, this essay centers evolving forms of Wampanoag terrapolitics, conceptualized here as specific efforts by tribal community members to carry forward beliefs and practices involving expansive, place-based visions of valued life, despite dispossessive and destructive colonial onslaughts. To ground these reflections, it analyzes an important yet little-considered cross-cultural encounter of the late seventeenth century in eastern Wampanoag homelands. Only a few years after a devastating regional conflict known as King Philip’s War, three Native men—Sampson, Peter, and Joshua—entered into negotiations with John Freeman, an influential representative of Plymouth Colony. The document that resulted from this interaction permits a microhistorical analysis of Wampanoag-Plymouth place dynamics while also offering a lens onto macrohistorical processes of early American settler colonialism and Indigenous place-keeping. To convey the entangled quality of these histories, the essay braids together two strands. First it considers the intricate, resilient forms of Native traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), relationality, and futurity embedded in an English legal document. Then it reflects upon evolving challenges that Wampanoag communities negotiated as Anglo-American settler colonial projects maneuvered to expand colonial authority over and profit across these contested geographies.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Jean M. O’Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 10, 145.

<sup>12</sup>My research, thinking, and writing is informed by NAIS methodologies as well as over a dozen years of work and intellectual exchanges with Native community members who continue to undertake the difficult, necessary, and transformative labor of place-keeping. As a non-Native historian who grew up along the Molôdemak (Merrimack) River and recently worked as an historian in the Kwinitekwa (Connecticut) River Valley, I am especially grateful to Elizabeth James-Perry and Jonathan Perry from the

*Ketiscocoysett: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Relational Resilience*

In February 1680, Sampson, “Indian of Pottonumacutt,” along with Peter and Joshua, “Indian[s]” “of Paomett,” were attempting to secure their relations’ ability to regroup in the aftermath of King Philip’s War, the region-wide conflict that had engulfed scores of their kin and left survivors facing daunting circumstances. By carefully taking up particular words and concepts from the document to which they affixed their “mark[s],” we can perceive the intergenerational modes of place-keeping that shaped Wampanoag strategies of terrapolitical resistance.<sup>13</sup> We can reflect, following Siobhan Senier’s critical insights on Mohegan ethnobotanical practices, on how such a documentary trace of Indigenous pushback against anthropocentric colonial place-claiming “poses serious questions about what will be sustained, by whom, how, and why.”<sup>14</sup>

Before delving into intricacies of this document’s contents, it is worth unpacking how histories of archive-formation are integrally bound up with assertions of territoriality, governance, and meaning. Today the original manuscript is housed

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Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) for insights about particular meaningful places and forms of relationality including a memorable visit to and discussion of the headwaters of the Charles River; to Linda Coombs (Aquinnah Wampanoag) for perspectives on community endurance and resistance to colonialism’s myriad pressures and dislocations; and to Tobias Vanderhoop (Aquinnah Wampanoag), who over a decade ago generously guided me and a class of other college students through the extraordinarily rich and storied homelands on the island of Noepe/Martha’s Vineyard. I also acknowledge conversations with Paula Peters (Mashpee Wampanoag), who has done intensive outreach work at historic and cultural sites throughout the region. More broadly, I am indebted to the Wampanoag interventions in interpretive spaces such as the Salt Pond Visitor Center at the Cape Cod National Seashore situated on the cusp of Nauset Marsh and Pilgrim Hall Museum in Plymouth, Massachusetts. These interventions have re-centered Wampanoag ways of knowing, being, and stewarding and carried these epistemologies and orientations to larger audiences. The analyses here are my own, and any misinterpretations or errors are my responsibility.

<sup>13</sup>No. 354, February 5, 1679 [1680], in *Indian Deeds: Land Transactions in Plymouth Colony, 1620–1691*, ed. Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2008), 514–16. Bangs’s set of edited transcriptions is likely most accessible to readers, but I also discuss and cite the document’s other forms below.

<sup>14</sup>Siobhan Senier, “Sovereignty and Sustainability in Mohegan Ethnobotanical Literature,” *The Journal of Ecocriticism* 6 (2014): 2–3.



at the Plymouth County Registry of Deeds in Plymouth, Massachusetts, the official county repository for documentation related to property as defined within state and US frameworks. Founded in 1685, the Registry describes itself as “the guardian of historical and modern land records from the Pilgrims to the present.” Upon entering the Registry’s modern, climate-controlled building—actively used by parties engaging in modern-day land transactions—visitors encounter exhibitions mounted on the walls that relate Wampanoag as well as colonial approaches to land, and reflect on evolving technologies of writing and classifying.<sup>15</sup> Upstairs I was able to consult the handwritten seventeenth-century text. This access was facilitated by John R. Buckley (Register of Deeds) and Timothy H. White (Assistant Register of Deeds), both licensed attorneys. Buckley and White provided access to as well as security for the bound volume of original deeds along with facsimiles of transcriptions created later to ease usage of originals and assist in preservation of sensitive manuscripts.<sup>16</sup> This archival setting matters to our understanding of the document: it emphasizes the placements of Wampanoag land negotiations within colonial English assertions of property ownership and the presumed *ongoing force* of centuries-old transactions as undergirding present-day land rights in the state of Massachusetts and the United States. It also illustrates how carefully regulated and mediated access to original heritage materials can be. The document, along with many others co-created and attested to by Wampanoags, is *not* archived in Wampanoag tribal offices, libraries, or cultural institutions but instead is geographically distanced from twenty-first century centers of Wampanoag governance.

<sup>15</sup>See especially “Land Transactions with the Wampanoags,” “Establishment of New Plymouth,” and “History of Recording,” Plymouth County Registry of Deeds, entry hall, visited July 8, 2019. Digitized versions of the deeds may be accessed at [plymouthdeeds.org](http://plymouthdeeds.org).

<sup>16</sup>I thank Buckley and White for their assistance in locating and reading these sources; site visit, July 8, 2019. The facsimiles of transcriptions are in *DPL (Deeds, Plymouth County)*, Vol. 4, Part 2, 1677–1681. The original manuscripts have been pasted into and bound as Plymouth Colony Records, Deeds vol. 4, Part 2, 318–19, Plymouth Registry of Deeds, Plymouth, MA.



By 1680 Wampanoags had accumulated decades of experience with English people and the modes of dwelling that expansionist colonizers prioritized. The negotiation was a revisitation of history itself, and a clarification of a previous, 1654 negotiation between Sampson and Thomas Prence, then governor of Plymouth Colony. Colonists believed that in 1654 Sampson had transferred to Plymouth “his persell of land” on Cape Cod from the place commonly known as “house point” as far west as Lowell’s Creek, together with “all the beaches fflatts waters proffitts priviledges . . . from sea to sea.” In return Sampson received an array of material goods that held a range of utilitarian, social, and cultural significances: “2 brasse kettles six Coates twelve howes 12 axes 12 knives and a box.”<sup>17</sup> For colonizers accustomed to English legal frameworks centered on affirming private property holdings and the alienability of land through sales, the agreement seemed a straightforward transaction in which a Native leader permanently ceded a specific parcel of land to English ownership and usage.

But the story is substantially more complicated: as scholars like Lisa Brooks and Alice Nash have noted, land documents from the Native Northeast recurrently *negotiated* space-sharing as Native sachems and sunksquaws (women leaders) deliberated about whether, how, and where to make room for colonial newcomers while still maintaining authority in and responsibility across traditional homelands.<sup>18</sup> Prence believed in 1654 that “there appeered Noe other Indians but the said Sampson to Lay Claime to any of the said Lands,” but it later came to the colony’s attention that the land was already encumbered: “Peter and Joshua Indians Claime parte of the said Lands.” Peter and Joshua had previously acquired the land from John Quason “by Consent and order from his father Mattaquason Sachem whose Right it was as appeers by the testimony of sundry old

<sup>17</sup>The 1654 transaction is No. 74 in Bangs, *Indian Deeds*, 277–78.

<sup>18</sup>Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*, 23; Alice Nash, “Quanquan’s Mortgage of 1663,” *Cultivating a Past: Essays on the History of Hadley, Massachusetts*, ed. Marla R. Miller (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009), 25–42; Emerson W. Baker, “A Scratch with a Bear’s Paw: Anglo-Indian Land Deeds in Early Maine,” *Ethnohistory* 36 (1989): 235–56.

Indians.” These passages acknowledge pre-existing Wampanoag sovereignties, attested to by elders’ orally transmitted knowledge, that described the appropriate conveyance of place-based rights and responsibilities through kinship networks and governance structures. For example, one role of a sachem was to ensure that protocols were followed around maintaining long-term equilibria. How the colonial government had remained ignorant of these strictures for so many years was not addressed. In any event, Plymouth representatives had become keen to clarify English title to the land, and to preserve appearances of legitimacy and Christian morality—endeavoring to “doe Noe wronge to the Indians where Right appeers and for Maintaining peace and Good agreement between the Indians and the English.” Thus Plymouth, represented by John Freeman, paid five pounds and ten shillings to Peter and Joshua in 1680.

But what had the Wampanoag interlocutors and witnesses including John Quason actually affirmed? The updated agreement was still hardly a straightforward land cession. The 1680 text laid out vital terms about ongoing Wampanoag presence in and access to homelands in a passage replete with incredible details about the area’s human and other-than-human ecologies:

excepting alwayes Reserved to the use of the said Peter and Joshua their and every of their heires and assignes for ever libertie to sett their Wigwams on the said Lands and to Cut fierwood and beach Grasse and flages for their use and to Gather wild pease hurtleberries and Cramberries and to have such Whales Blackffish porpusses and blubber as shallbe Cast on shore between the said Lowells Creeke and the Cliff aforesaid.

Usufruct (use-right) agreements became prevalent across the Northeast as colonizers aimed to secure title to Native lands. Yet the significance of the passage above transcends the English usufruct concept, which has tended to be presented anthropocentrically in terms of what humans reserved the right to *take* from the land.<sup>19</sup> The Wampanoag diplomats attested to

<sup>19</sup>William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), esp. 63–65.

wide-ranging interdependencies and mutual obligations that attained particular importance on the low-lying coastal lands of the Cape. They spoke to a complex “matrix of social and ecological relationships,” to borrow the formulation that Lisa Brooks and Cassandra Brooks have used in writing about Wabanaki homelands, laboring to carry forward a “principle of reciprocity that allowed life to thrive.”<sup>20</sup> The Wampanoags communicated profound intergenerational knowledge about *why* they would not alienate these homelands from their communities, even in an era of extraordinary upheavals.

When the Wampanoags stressed the importance of maintaining places to “sett their Wigwams,” they were articulating capacious, dynamic conceptions of home. The Cape lands, along with fresh- and saltwater areas that surrounded and coursed through them, were fertile homelands that Native inhabitants had come to know intimately over thousands of years. Wampanoag country encompassed dozens of villages of variable sizes, extending from the tip of Cape Cod in the east (where Pottunumacutt and Paomett were located), to the shore of Narragansett Bay in the west, in addition to the Islands. Villages maintained certain forms of autonomy while being linked with and responsible to the larger Wampanoag nation or Confederacy.<sup>21</sup> Each part was connected to the whole, and maintaining healthy relationships across these webs of relations—in which human beings comprised only one set of actors—required skillful knowledge about respectful ways of dwelling. Intergenerationally maintaining a group of *wetuash* required a considerable expanse of land since communities

<sup>20</sup>Lisa T. Brooks and Cassandra M. Brooks, “The Reciprocity Principle and Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Understanding the Significance of Indigenous Protest on the Presumpscot River,” *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies* 3 (2010): 11–28, esp. 12. See also Ashley Smith, “Re-Membering Norridgewock: Stories and Politics of a Place Multiple” (PhD diss., Cornell University, 2017).

<sup>21</sup>All place names have multiple spellings. I have followed the lead of present-day Wampanoags in characterizing these political and geographical formations. For a different view that treats Nauset as separate from though related to Wampanoag, see anthropologist Frank G. Speck’s “Territorial Subdivisions and Boundaries of the Wampanoag, Massachusetts, and Nauset Indians,” *Indian Notes and Monographs* 44, ed. F.W. Hodge (New York: Museum of the American Indian/Heye Foundation, 1928).

regularly shifted these intentionally mobile dwellings to different locations with the seasons. Relocating between coastal and inland areas provided protection from exposure to cold and wind and avoided exhausting local ecosystems by giving lands and waters time to rebound from human impacts.<sup>22</sup> These intentional movements were not wandering or nomadic lifeways, as numerous Euro-colonial commentators asserted. They were deliberate patterns designed to support the well-being of the whole, honed through trial and error over the *longue durée*, as well as dynamically adaptive to changing coastlines, climate patterns, and other factors. Wampanoags intended to remain in these homelands where many generations of ancestors had lived and were buried rather than exhausting the land and moving on to new frontiers.

While the three Native interlocutors in this negotiation were male—possibly reflecting colonizers’ preferences for interacting with leaders who their own patriarchal systems deemed legitimate—they articulated traditional ecological knowledge pertinent for home building that Wampanoag women closely stewarded and transmitted.<sup>23</sup> Wampanoag girls and young women learned how to gather specific reeds and grasses (“flages”) that grew along small and large waterways, which they then wove into protective *wetu* mats that covered the home frames made from bent saplings. They knew how species like eel grass could be dried, gathered, and used to insulate homes in cold seasons. Grasses held importance for the wider health of the ecosystem: in marshy areas, decaying vegetation returned vast amounts of nutrients to the water, providing essential support for a wide array of other life forms who also made “homes”

<sup>22</sup>I acknowledge Darius Coombs and the Wampanoag Indigenous Program for discussing *wetu* construction with me (site visit, Plimoth Plantation, August 2015); Kathleen J. Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England, 1500–1650* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 113–14; Francis P. McManamon, “Prehistoric Land Use on Outer Cape Cod,” *Journal of Field Archaeology* 9 (1982): 1–20; “Life in the Middle Woodland,” exhibition panel at Salt Pond Visitor Center, Cape Cod National Seashore, visited July 7, 2019.

<sup>23</sup>On gender roles, see “Woman of Patuxet” and other exhibition panels, in *Path-Founders: Women of Plymouth*, curated by Linda Coombs et al., Pilgrim Hall Museum, visited July 8, 2019.

in this place.<sup>24</sup> Wampanoag understandings of homelands encompassed many forms of plant life and reflected fine-grained knowledge of the intertwining of human and plant viability. Community members kept careful eyes on the resilience of soft- and hardwood trees to ensure ongoing access to “fierwood” for stoking cooking hearths and firing ceramics; for heating dwellings; for smoking fish and meat as a means of food preservation; and for fashioning the *mishoonash* (dugout canoes) integral to fresh and saltwater mobility.<sup>25</sup>

While the negotiation did not explicitly mention planting fields, agriculture constituted an integral component of Native lifeways by the seventeenth century. Wampanoags had become skilled agriculturalists who reliably produced not only enough to feed their communities immediately after harvest but also sufficient amounts to cache for the future. Having honed adaptive TEK systems over thousands of years, Native agriculturalists, particularly women who were caretakers of the planting lands, knew how to encourage flourishing crops of onions, artichokes, sunflowers, and especially corn, beans, and squash.<sup>26</sup> A form of beneficial polycropping, this latter “Three Sisters” triad enriched nutrients for all of the plantings and helped them physically support each other. Communities rotated planting areas to allow fields to lie fallow and recover nutrients. As Robin Wall Kimmerer, a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation as well as plant ecologist, has remarked about the human-plant symbiosis in this triad, these domesticated plants “rely on us to create the conditions under which they can grow. We too are part of the reciprocity. They can’t meet their responsibilities

<sup>24</sup>Lucianne Lavin, “Coastal Adaptations in Southern New England and Southern New York,” *Archaeology of Eastern North America* 16 (1988): 108.

<sup>25</sup>On *mishoonash*, see oral history with Jonathan Perry (Aquinnah Wampanoag) in Nancy Shoemaker, ed., *Living with Whales: Documents and Oral Histories of Native New England Whaling History* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014), 161–65.

<sup>26</sup>Russell G. Handsman, “Landscapes of Memories in Wampanoag Country—and the Monuments upon Them,” chap. 7 in *Archaeologies of Placemaking: Monuments, Memory, and Engagement in Native North America*, ed. Patricia E. Rubertone (Walnut Creek CA: Left Coast Press, 2008), esp. 165–66; Stephen A. Mrozowski, “The Discovery of a Native American Cornfield on Cape Cod,” *Arch. of Eastern N.A.* 22 (1994): 47–62.

unless we meet ours”—turning up soil, planting seeds, weeding, and saving seeds for future crops.<sup>27</sup>

Wampanoag ethnobotanical capabilities reflected generations of experience alongside flora prevalent in the northeastern coastal environment and essential to the thriving of other-than-human cohabitants. The 1680 document mentioned two kinds of wild-growing fruits: “hurtleberries and Cramberries.” Because the agreement used English rather than Wôpanâak botanical names, it is difficult to know precisely which plant(s) the former word referred to: perhaps members of the widely occurring genus *Vaccinium*, which includes blueberries, lingonberries, and huckleberries. Blueberries, preferring acidic soils, setting down shallow roots, and producing bushes that bear fruit in the summertime, thrive in northeastern bogs, forests, and lake basins. Long-lived cranberry vines flourish in the layered sand, gravel, peat, and clay of bogs that occur throughout the Cape’s glacial moraine. As Wampanoags’ ongoing cranberry harvest festivals attest, berries have long been tended, gathered, and used fresh in cooking; dehydrated into preserves to ensure year-round nutrient access; and employed as medicine rich in health-supporting vitamin C and antioxidants.<sup>28</sup> Human uses of berries constituted only a small part of the story, however. As Wampanoags well understood from everyday immersion in interdependent landscapes, the sugar-rich fruits provided attractive forage for birds, deer, bears, and other animals. These beings relied on the low-growing, easily accessible fruits to meet caloric and nutrient needs and acted as dispersers by excreting undigested seeds in different locations, encased in natural fertilizer to encourage germination. In cyclical fashion, Wampanoag hunters relied on sustainable access to these other-than-human beings. Maintaining the

<sup>27</sup>Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants* (Minneapolis: Milkweed, 2013), 128–40, esp. 140.

<sup>28</sup>Alex Elvin, “Cranberry Day Honors Ancient Wampanoag Tradition in the Bogs,” *Vineyard Gazette*, October 15, 2014; Sarah Whitman-Salkin, “Cranberries, a Thanksgiving Staple, Were a Native American Superfood,” *National Geographic*, November 28, 2013.

vitality of berry stands was a far-reaching priority that stood to affect multiple communities. Even though the land negotiation document does not explicitly name any bears, deer, or other browsing animals, Wampanoag representatives comprehended their centrality to expansive visions of thriving. A terrapolitical reading strategy thus assists us in perceiving *significance and presence* in what, on the surface, might appear textual *absence or silence*.

Looking offshore, the Wampanoag parties' mention of "Whales Blackffish porpusses and blubber as shalbe Cast on shore" signals the multifaceted importance of maritime areas and beings. The perpetually churning Atlantic manifested sacred power: Paumpágussit was "that Deitie or God-head which they conceive to be in the Sea," Roger Williams remarked, emphasizing that Wampanoag and/or Narragansett understandings of maritime spaces merited respectful protocols of engagement.<sup>29</sup> In shallow and deep water dwelled whales, who hold a central place in Wampanoag oral traditions about how the world came into being. Moshop, a revered earth-shaper or culture hero for area communities, is said to have caught whales and swung them against the shoreline of the island of Noepe. The blood "ran down into the sea and stained the water red, as the water sometimes is stained today when the surf washes against the cliffs, which have red clay deposits." This was the version of the oral tradition relayed by Helen Attaquin (1923–1993), a respected Aquinnah Wampanoag culture-keeper, connecting the form and coloration of the earth with a deep-time tradition of Moshop's care and provisioning.<sup>30</sup> Whales were traditionally understood as relations, a form of trans-species kinship explained by Ramona Peters, a present-day Mashpee Wampanoag community member with many familial ties to whaling:

<sup>29</sup>Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America: Or, An help to the Language of the Natives in that part of America, called New-England . . .* (London: Gregory Dexter, 1643), 108.

<sup>30</sup>Helen Attaquin, "How Martha's Vineyard Came to Be," in *Dawnland Voices: An Anthology of Indigenous Writing from New England*, ed. Siobhan Senier et al. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 460.



The legends, the stories, about whales—that they were the ones that traveled the planet, the whole world. So we knew, our people knew, the world was round. They knew a lot of things about the planet. Supposedly they got this information from the whales . . . our cosmology, I guess, the mind-set, or the framework of our people, the ancestors, was beyond just human-to-human communications.<sup>31</sup>

Peters emphasized that around Mashpee “when there’s a drift whale or a dying whale, we go to make offerings. There’s a prayer that a few of us know. . . . We go sometimes together or just individually.” These traditional practices of interaction reflect intergenerationally stewarded beliefs about honoring, communicating with, and maintaining reciprocal bonds with maritime beings. Perceived as holders of knowledge, whales shaped Wampanoag epistemological orientations that encompassed *many* species rather than positing humans as supreme or singular possessors of insights.

Wampanoags relied on whales’ enormous bodies to provide for communities through their meat, oil, baleen, and bone. Carefully delineated systems of “sachems’ rights” governed access to and allocation of whales’ parts, which were distributed across networks of relations, renewing and reaffirming political ties.<sup>32</sup> When whales drifted up on shore, their decaying carcasses attracted lobsters and crabs, a valued “secondary catch.”<sup>33</sup> The document’s explicit mention of “Blackfish”—long-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala melana*)—offers a lens onto the delicate intertwining of Wampanoag social formations and ecologies. This particular species of whale became stranded along the North Atlantic coast, especially the Cape and Islands, with relatively predictable seasonal and locational patterns. Wampanoag groups may have organized in particular times and

<sup>31</sup>Ramona Peters (Mashpee Wampanoag) in Shoemaker, ed., *Living with Whales*, 143.

<sup>32</sup>Elizabeth Alden Little and J. Clinton Andrews, “Drift Whales at Nantucket: The Kindness of Moshup,” chap. 3 in *Nantucket and Other Native Places: The Legacy of Elizabeth Alden Little*, ed. Elizabeth S. Chilton and Mary Lynne Rainey (Albany: SUNY Press, 2010); Williams, *Key*, 105.

<sup>33</sup>Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head, “Drift Whales,” [www.wampanoagtribe.net/pages/wampanoag\\_way/other](http://www.wampanoagtribe.net/pages/wampanoag_way/other) (accessed July 13, 2019).

places to harvest whales' huge blubber stores which needed to be processed quickly to prevent spoilage, suggesting possibly that decisions regarding the location of villages were carefully shaped in response to the behaviors of other-than-humans.<sup>34</sup> A terrapolitical reading of this passage in the document illuminates the careful mutuality and dynamism of Wampanoags' entwining with whales-as-agents—a co-constituted relationship—rather than conceptualizing cetaceans as merely *resources for or commodities acted upon by* human beings.

The significance of lateral rather than hierarchical Wampanoag relations with other species is apparent in the document's inclusion of a Native-language toponym: “the easterly end of the Cliff Called by the Indians Ketiscocoysett because Cormorants use there to Roost.”<sup>35</sup> Like many Native-language place-names, Ketiscocoysett characterized a locality in terms of its significance to other-than-human populations. The land itself attains meaning through its support of birds rather than being anthropocentrically designated by a human's personal name. Remains from *Phalacrocorax auritus* (double-crested cormorant) and *Phalacrocorax carbo* (common cormorant), along with turkey, goose, loon, duck, great auk, crow, swan, hawk, grouse, gull, heron, and many other species of fowl have been found at Native sites across the Boston Harbor Islands and Nantucket demonstrating long-standing knowledge of avian behavior and reliance on birds for food as well as materials for tools and garments (feather cloaks, bone awls and needles).<sup>36</sup> Native cormorant hunting sometimes occurred at night while the birds were asleep.<sup>37</sup> Wampanoags likely gathered protein-rich cormorant eggs, and TEK principles

<sup>34</sup>James W. Bradley et al., “Mass Strandings of the Long-Finned Pilot Whale on Cape Cod: Implications for Native American Subsistence and Settlement,” *Bulletin of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society* 59 (1998): 5–13; Nancy Shoemaker, “Whale Meat in American History,” *Environmental History* 10 (2005): 269–94.

<sup>35</sup>*Indian Deeds*, 516.

<sup>36</sup>Barbara E. Luedtke, “Archaeology on the Boston Harbor Islands after 25 Years,” *Bull. of the Mass. Arch. Soc.* 61 (2000): 6; Christian C. Medaglia et al., “Late Woodland Diet on Nantucket Island: A Study Using Stable Isotope Ratios,” *Bull. of the Mass. Arch. Soc.* 51 (1990): 50.

<sup>37</sup>Williams, *Key*, 91.

would have made them attentive to not over-harvesting unhatched young and compromising the birds' reproduction. At the same time, fowling may have helped protect fish populations, given that cormorants are large predators that consume high volumes of fish, sometimes to the point of decimation.<sup>38</sup> Wampanoags may have also gathered the copious guano that cormorants leave behind as they roost in high places, using it to fertilize fields and circulate life back into the earth.<sup>39</sup> A terrapolitical reading of "Ketiscocoysett," in other words, recognizes the pervasive interdependencies contained in a seemingly simple toponym.<sup>40</sup>

Oral traditions reflect complicated sacred relationships connecting humans, birds, and the earth. Certain birds are known as bringers of life; Roger Williams recorded in the 1630s–40s an account about crows from the Wampanoag and/or Narragansett perspective: "although they doe the corne also some hurt, yet scarce will one *Native* amongst an hundred wil kil them because they have a tradition, that the Crow brought them at first an *Indian* Graine of Corne in one Eare, and an *Indian* or *French* Beane in another, from the Great God *Kautántouwits* field in the Southwest from whence they hold came all their Corne and Beanes."<sup>41</sup> This understanding of crows as sacred providers created social constraints on the actions that humans

<sup>38</sup>Wampanoags are actively involved in planning decisions involving cormorants; see Shauna Hanisch and Brian Millsap, "Final Environmental Impact Statement: Double-Breasted Cormorant Management in the United States" (US Fish and Wildlife Service, 2003), 49.

<sup>39</sup>Nanepashemet, "It Smells Fishy to Me: An Argument Supporting the Use of Fish Fertilizer by the Native People of Southern New England" in Peter Benes, ed., *Algonkians of New England: Past and Present*, The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings, 1991 (Boston: Boston University, 1993), 42–50; Gregory T. Cushman, *Guano and the Opening of the Pacific World: A Global Ecological History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>40</sup>There is ample need for further toponymic studies in the Native Northeast and understanding of the multi-layered meanings conveyed in place-names. The Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project, wlrp.org, is presently undertaking community-centered efforts, and related projects among Narragansett, Nipmuc, and other regional communities are also in process. See *Âs Nutajuneân: We Still Live Here*, prod. Anne Makepeace (Bullfrog Films, 2010).

<sup>41</sup>Williams, *Key*, 89–90. On regional archaeological interpretations of the arrival and spread of maize, see Elizabeth A. Little, "Kautantouwit's Legacy: Calibrated Dates on Prehistoric Maize in New England," *American Antiquity* 67 (2002): 109–18.

might appropriately take in relation to them. Other traditions conveyed ideas that birds are powerful beings who bridge earth and sky. Their winged forms appear on personal adornments as well as petroglyphs and pictographs across the regional earth-archive, perhaps symbolizing connection to other realms of existence and knowledge. In a form of interspecies mutability, humans at times were known to assume bird forms.<sup>42</sup>

It is challenging to recover precisely how Sampson, Peter, and Joshua understood this negotiation or what motivations they had when they entered into diplomacy with a Plymouth Colony representative. Much of the resulting document's language was boilerplate common to scores of English legal records from this era. Yet attentive, decolonizing reading makes it apparent that the Wampanoag diplomats were strategizing about community futures and what it would take to ensure collective thriving for generations to come. Their agreement to make these terms endure "for ever" signals an important temporal element of Wampanoag terrapolitics: Native leaders and their kin anticipated remaining in this place and supporting the health of a full network of relations. And they strategically leveraged English-language forms of writing to underscore and codify these intentions. Jean O'Brien, writing about a later petition composed by Natick community members to secure fishing rights in eastern-central Massachusetts, has described such documents as multi-faceted: in one respect, "Indian participation in the English bureaucracy plots power relationships as they had been transformed in the colonial context . . . the very fact of Indian participation tells us whose regulations would govern relationships between Indian and English people." Yet simultaneously such a text "offers a rich and subtle example of Indian resistance within the potentially suffocating constraints of English colonialism." She notes further, "we can certainly recognize that the Indian petitioners

<sup>42</sup>William S. Simmons, *Spirit of the New England Tribes: Indian History and Folklore* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986), 104; Edward J. Lenik, *Picture Rocks: American Indian Rock Art in the Northeast Woodlands* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2002), esp. 163.

understood the power of the written word as a weapon in a continuing legacy of Indian resistance in New England.”<sup>43</sup> To extend this important characterization of writing-as-resistance by use of the terrapolitical concept, we can perceive in such texts, using interdisciplinary forms of inquiry and sometimes controlled speculation, Native efforts to protect not only *human* livelihoods but also the integrity of the wider web of relations. Yet by the late seventeenth century, the lateral interdependencies that Wampanoag communities had come to understand and value through thousands of years of place-specific TEK and strategic adaptations faced challenging constraints.

### *John Freeman of Eastham: Settler Expansionism and Wampanoag Responses*

Colonizers held distinct visions of good life and futurity. The biography of John Freeman, the Plymouth representative who parleyed with Sampson, Peter, and Joshua, sheds light on the entanglements and collisions between Wampanoag terrapolitics and Anglo-American settler colonialism. Freeman (1622–1719) might have comprehended certain aspects of the dynamic relationality that Wampanoag signatories prioritized, but much of this interdependence would have been invisible to a newcomer with limited experience in the Cape’s ecosystems and a worldview contoured by Euro-colonial values. Freeman came to Wampanoag homelands on the *Abigail* in 1635 and followed the footsteps of his father Edmund to colonial prominence and wealth.<sup>44</sup> When the younger Freeman married Mercy Prence, he joined a politically ascendant colonial family. Mercy’s father, Thomas Prence, was a longtime governor of Plymouth Colony; her mother, Patience Brewster, was the daughter of

<sup>43</sup>Jean M. O’Brien, “‘Our Old and Valluable Liberty’: A Natick Indian Petition in Defense of Their Fishing Rights, 1748” in *Early Native Literacies in New England: A Documentary and Critical Anthology*, ed. Kristina Bross and Hilary E. Wyss (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), 124–25, 128.

<sup>44</sup>John Freeman—Eastham Land Records 1645-1750, Eastham Public Library, Eastham, MA. [easthamlibrary.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/John%20Freeman%20Land%20Records.pdf](http://easthamlibrary.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/John%20Freeman%20Land%20Records.pdf) (accessed July 13, 2019).

William Brewster.<sup>45</sup> Freeman leveraged these ties to improve his own status and wealth as well as functioning as an agent of the colony's interests—many of which anthropocentrically privileged human dominion, thriving, and profit.

The Freeman family entered a Wampanoag world in the midst of pervasive transformations. Natives had reason to be wary of outsiders in tall-masted ships: in 1614 Thomas Hunt canvassed the Massachusetts coastline, seized seven Nauset and twenty Patuxet people, and sold them into slavery in Spain. These captivities forcibly removed Native people from traditional homelands, harnessed their labor by dehumanizingly redefining them as commodities, and dispersed them across wide geographies. Most never returned home, though Tisquantum famously made his way back to Patuxet.<sup>46</sup> These kidnappings undercut the reproductive capabilities and social resilience of those community members who remained at home.<sup>47</sup> Colonization also introduced grievous epidemic diseases to Atlantic coast tribal communities. Interactions with European fisherman, crews of Hunt or Samuel de Champlain (who reconnoitered Nauset areas in 1606), *Mayflower* passengers (1620), or English survivors of the wrecked *Sparrow-Hawk* (1626) all may have been vectors of yellow fever, smallpox, or other diseases. William Bradford recalled witnessing pervasive signs of Indigenous depopulation: “the soil good and the people not many, being dead and abundantly wasted in the late great mortality . . . their skulls and bones were found in many

<sup>45</sup>On the Prence family and Freeman connections, see Eugene Aubrey Stratton, *Plymouth Colony: Its History & People, 1620–1691* (Salt Lake City: Ancestry Publishing, 1986), 340; Annie Arnoux Haxton, *Signers of the Mayflower Compact* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1968), 117–18.

<sup>46</sup>Paula Peters (Mashpee Wampanoag), “Introduction to *Captured: 1614*,” *Dawnland Voices: Writing of Indigenous New England*, <http://dawnlandvoices.org/collections/items/show/384> (accessed July 13, 2019); Alden T. Vaughan, “Norumbega’s Reluctant Guides,” in *Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500–1776* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), chap. 4. I also thank Neal Salisbury for sharing “Tisquantum, the Red Atlantic, and the Anglo-Wampanoag War, 1602–1622” (forthcoming in *Early American Literature*).

<sup>47</sup>Christine M. DeLucia, “The Red Atlantic,” part 4, in *Memory Lands: King Philip’s War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018).

places lying still above the ground.”<sup>48</sup> He linked fertile soil and extensive Indigenous mortality, optimistically connecting Massachusetts-Wampanoag population devastation with opportunities for English territorial claiming and agricultural usage in this supposed *vacuum domicilium* (empty land). New work in historical epidemiology has detailed how stressors of colonialism exacerbated epidemic effects, enabling disease to spread quickly and inflict higher levels of fatalities.<sup>49</sup> Yet as Cheryl Savageau (Abenaki) has written in a poem about smallpox, “some of us / don’t die / some of us / don’t,” stressing the importance of avoiding totalizing narratives of Indigenous mortality.<sup>50</sup>

Wampanoag survivors reckoned with how to maintain their livelihoods and ensure community futures in the face of diminished numbers. Simultaneously they confronted colonizers’ vastly different environmental regimes, arising from cosmologies rooted in Judeo-Christian notions of hierarchical human dominion over the rest of Creation. John Freeman exemplified English attempts at dramatic expansionism in the 1600s. Over his adult life he sought to increase his land claims across the Cape, especially around the growing town of Eastham. Freeman amassed land at places like Great Namskaket, Rock Harbor, Billingsgate, Boat Meadow, Namskaket, Little Billingsgate, and Little Creek. Only a few decades earlier these had been entirely Wampanoag homelands, known exclusively by Wôpanâak toponyms, and filled with Indigenous *wetuash*, cornfields, fishing weirs, and other features of interdependent dwelling. Amid these geographies Freeman and fellow colonizers began to construct timber, stone, and wooden buildings fixed to the earth and transformed other areas into English-styled pasturage and cropland. All of this activity, which fragmented the landscape through property divisions, bore serious implications for the

<sup>48</sup>*Loss of the Sparrow-Hawk in 1626: Remarkable Preservation and Recent Discovery of the Wreck* (Boston: Alfred Mudge & Son, 1865); William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620–1647* (New York: The Modern Library, 1981), 97.

<sup>49</sup>David S. Jones, “Virgin Soils Revisited,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 60 (2003): 703–42; Catherine M. Cameron, et al., eds., *Beyond Germs: Native Depopulation in North America* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2015).

<sup>50</sup>Cheryl Savageau, “Smallpox,” *Dawnland Voices*, 320.



wider web of relations and began to undermine carefully calibrated forms of interdependent thriving.

For example, in 1667 Eastham officials ordered “that every housekeeper shall kill, or cause to be killed, twelve blackbirds, or three crows.”<sup>51</sup> Other English towns passed similar bounties, reflecting anthropocentric concern about how birds affected individual colonists’ and towns’ productivity. John Winthrop Jr. aired his detestation for “Crowes, Sterlings, and other Birds” in 1678 describing what he perceived as their detrimental impact upon agriculture, particularly on corn cultivation: “These Birds especially Sterlings come in greate flights into the fields, when the Eare beginneth to be full, before it hardneth, and being allured by the Sweetness of the Corne, will sitt upon the stalke” and attempt to eat the kernels.<sup>52</sup> Mentalities like this and the avicidal bounties that resulted exemplified “a utilitarian view of wildlife,” as one scholar has put it. “Animals were judged by their economic impact . . . colonists . . . viewed wilderness and wildlife as obstacles that had to be overcome before the colonists could create their utopian civilization.”<sup>53</sup> Even more indicative of English colonial values was William Wood’s 1634 commentary on cormorants. Wood regarded cormorants with disgust and advised prospective colonists to avoid this “worst of fowls for meat, tasting rank and fishy.”<sup>54</sup> Yet while he deemed them “not worth the shooting,” he encouraged destruction through other means: “No ducking ponds can afford more delight than a lame Cormorant and two or three lusty Dogges.” This delight in blood-sport might have horrified Wampanoags living in intimate proximity with Ketiscocoysett.<sup>55</sup> Euro-Americans decimated northeastern cormorant populations by

<sup>51</sup>Frederick Freeman, *The History of Cape Cod: The Annals of the Thirteen Towns of Barnstable County* (Boston: Geo. C. Rand & Avery, 1862), 2:364.

<sup>52</sup>Fulmer Mood, “John Winthrop Jr., on Indian Corn,” *The New England Quarterly* 10 (1937): 126.

<sup>53</sup>Michael Conover, *Resolving Human-Wildlife Conflicts: The Science of Wildlife Damage Management* (Boca Raton: Lewis Publishers, 2002), 26.

<sup>54</sup>Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 65.

<sup>55</sup>Wood’s *New England’s Prospect* (Boston: John Wilson and Sons for The Prince Society, 1865), 33.

targeting their breeding colonies and indiscriminately egging at their nests.<sup>56</sup> Species-hostile mentalities took temporally limited, colonist-centered views of causality, overlooking or discounting birds' life-giving roles within robust ecosystems.

As a settler colonial endeavor—an ongoing process of expansionism into Native homelands that concomitantly attempted to displace or destroy Native people living in these areas—Plymouth Colony began eyeing lands farther from the initial nucleus of colonial presence at Patuxet, where colonizer families promulgated forms of dwelling that exerted detrimental pressures on the fuller web of Native relations.<sup>57</sup> Plymouth men practiced monocropping that regularly exhausted the soil;<sup>58</sup> colonists drained wetlands to create more acreage for plow agriculture; they waded into bogs to extract bog iron for refining;<sup>59</sup> they cut and burned large swaths of forests, accelerating soil erosion and devastating woodland animal habitats while sawmills choked regional waterways;<sup>60</sup> and they over-hunted deer and beaver, the latter of which maintained hydrologic equilibrium through damming, and decimated shellfish beds.<sup>61</sup> Some colonists did incorporate

<sup>56</sup>Linda R. Wires, *The Double-crested Cormorant: Plight of a Feathered Pariah* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 53. *Voyages of Samuel de Champlain* (1604–1610), trans. Charles Pomeroy Otis (Boston: The Prince Society, 1878), 2:13.

<sup>57</sup>J. Kēhaulani Kauanui, “‘A Structure, Not an Event’: Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity,” *Lateral: Journal of the Cultural Studies Association* 5: (Spring 2016), <http://csalateral.org/issue/5-1/forum-alt-humanities-settler-colonialism-enduring-indigeneity-kauanui> (accessed July 3, 2019).

<sup>58</sup>Carolyn Merchant, *Ecological Revolutions: Nature, Gender, and Science in New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

<sup>59</sup>Robert S. Cox and Jacob Walker, *Massachusetts Cranberry Culture: A History from Bog to Table* (Charleston, SC: American Palate, 2012), 37.

<sup>60</sup>T. Parshall et al., “Long-Term History of Vegetation and Fire in Pitch Pine-Oak Forests on Cape Cod, Massachusetts,” *Ecology* 84 (2003): 736–48; Daniel Vickers, “Those Dammed Shad: Would the River Fisheries of New England Have Survived in the Absence of Industrialization?” *WMQ* 61 (2004): 685–712.

<sup>61</sup>Thomas M. Wickman, *Snowshoe Country: An Environmental and Cultural History of Winter in the Early American Northeast* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 80; Christopher L. Pastore, *Between Land and Sea: The Atlantic Coast and the Transformation of New England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 151–52; Strother E. Roberts, “The Commodities of the Country: An Environmental Biography of the Colonial Connecticut Valley” (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2011). On later transformations, see Matthew McKenzie, *Clearing the*

limited Indigenous TEK into their foodways and pharmacopoeia and fostered traditions of sustainable land-stewardship that recognized vital constraints on human activities;<sup>62</sup> yet anthropocentric English practices more often vastly altered the interdependent, reciprocal relationships that Wampanoags had learned through painstaking trial and error, and labored for generations to balance.

Colonial authorities strategized over how to attain what they understood as clear legal title to Native lands. Many colonizers contended that Native homelands were underused, thereby legitimizing, in their eyes, the appropriation of it for greater “improvement” by colonial farmers.<sup>63</sup> Native people, including prominent Wampanoags, proceeded with caution in response to these demands and coercions, recognizing that epidemics had reduced many tribal communities’ strength, that English colonizers were willing to exercise genocidal violence against them, and that provisional tribal alliances with English colonizers could provide useful leverage against other polities. In the plethora of land and political negotiation documents that survive in varying degrees from this era, many attest to Native efforts to maintain traditional place-keeping and transform English legal instruments for their own protective purposes. Near Eastham, for example, George, who succeeded Aspinet as sachem, reserved Pochet Island while other Wampanoags asserted continuing use of a neck of land for corn cultivation, along with claims to shellfish and a proportion of beached whales.<sup>64</sup> In 1666 Sampson asserted his claim to a “small island near Pochet called Squanacut Island” in the course of

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*Coastline: The Nineteenth-Century Ecological & Cultural Transformation of Cape Cod* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2010).

<sup>62</sup>Jane Strickland Hussey, “Some Useful Plants of Early New England,” *Economic Botany* 28 (1974): 311–37; Brian Donahue, *The Great Meadow: Farmers and the Land in Colonial Concord* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

<sup>63</sup>Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 56; Jane Mt. Pleasant (Tuscarora), “A New Paradigm for Pre-Columbian Agriculture in North America,” *Early American Studies* 13 (2015): 374–412.

<sup>64</sup>Simeon L. Deyo, ed., *History of Barnstable County, Massachusetts* (New York: H.W. Blake & Co., 1890), 720–21; Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), “MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Eastham,” 1984, 6.

negotiations with John Freeman on behalf of Eastham, in which Freeman had sought to secure colonial rights to whales and blubber along certain sections of coastline. (Later Freeman assumed the role of Eastham's "Inspector of Whales," underscoring divergences between English managerial surveillance of whales-as-commodities and Wampanoags' sense of kinship relationality.)<sup>65</sup> But Native-secured rights suffered as colonizers depleted cetacean populations.<sup>66</sup> Whale parts themselves became physical boundary markers as colonists asserted town lines: close to "Ketsconcoyet," the cormorant cliff, a "Jaw Bone of a Whale" became "set in the Ground" as a boundary designation clarifying human ownership of the locale.<sup>67</sup>

For many years Freeman served as assistant to his father-in-law, Governor Prence, and as a representative to the Plymouth General Court. Two examples from his tenure illustrate how tensions escalated because of Wampanoags' bids to maintain autonomy and place-based well-being and colonizers' intentions to amass, privatize, and transform ever-larger tracts of land. In 1670 the court heard a case brought by James Cudworth of Scituate alleging that near the end of the hay harvest in 1669 John Williams "did pull or beate downe a wigwam, or Indian house, which an Indian sett up for his shelter, which Indian was hiered by the said Cudworth to cut coard wood on [Gulfe Island], by which meanes the Indian was forced from his worke."<sup>68</sup> The proceedings demonstrate how some Native people were turning to wage labor to pay debts to colonizers because of their separation from traditional resources. While it

<sup>65</sup>Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England, Court Orders, 1678–1691*, 6 (Boston: William White, 1856): 251. For an early mention of English desires to exploit whale populations off the Cape and make "a very rich return"—profit—see *Mourt's Relation: A Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth*, Ed. with an intro. and notes by Dwight B. Heath from the original text of 1622 (Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 1963), 16.

<sup>66</sup>W. Jeffrey Bolster, *The Mortal Sea: Fishing the Atlantic in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012), 70–72.

<sup>67</sup>*The Acts and Resolves, Public and Private, of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay: . . .* (Boston: Wright & Potter, 1922), 21:852.

<sup>68</sup>Court at Plymouth, March 1670, *Recs. of New Plymouth, Judicial Acts, 1636–1692*, 7:164–65.

is important to recognize Native agency in participating in this labor market, it is critical to note the economic risk to Indigenous people, their dwellings, and belongings, not to mention the withdrawal of tribal members from vital activities within their kinship communities. The Native man involved—left unnamed in the legal archive—appears as a transient laborer on colonial property rather than as someone with deep intergenerational ties to and TEK within these homelands. Cudworth's lawsuit appears to have been motivated partly or even predominantly out of self-interest for the productivity of his farmland as he had been “disappointed of a considerable quantity of the wood that would have supplied his necessity.” While the court initially granted Cudworth five pounds in damages plus the charge of the lawsuit, the defendant Williams petitioned for a review of the case and had a subsequent jury find in his favor. These proceedings indicate a colonial court's willingness to condone violence toward a Native person rendered vulnerable by the pressures of colonialism.

The second example occurred in 1671 when Freeman and the court imposed a fine on Phillip, a Native man, amounting to eight and a half bushels of corn, to be paid to John Hathway of Taunton “for damage done by the said Indian Phillip unto [his] swine.”<sup>69</sup> The ruling demonstrates how the English legal system placed burdens upon Native people by ignoring the ways in which domesticated animals imported through the Columbian Exchange had disturbed Indigenous practices of cultivation and caretaking. Roaming, rooting swine were particularly detrimental, as Virginia DeJohn Anderson has shown.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, English legal practices changed in the colonial setting alongside these “habits of open-range husbandry,” Allan Greer has demonstrated, as New England courts placed more onus on *planters* to fence in their croplands rather than

<sup>69</sup>Court at Plymouth, October 29, 1671, *Recs. of New Plymouth, Court Orders, 1668–1678*, 5:80.

<sup>70</sup>Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*. On Wampanoags' strategic adoption of livestock, see David J. Silverman, “We Chuse to Be Bounded”: Native American Animal Husbandry in Colonial New England,” *WMQ* 60 (2003): 511–48.

fining owners for their animals' destructive behavior.<sup>71</sup> Phillip may have physically pushed back against livestock incursions in an effort to re-balance and protect the complex network of relations, but he suffered a penalty that expropriated substantial food stores that could have been used to support his own kin or ensure future crops.

### *King Philip's War: Multi-Tribal Repression and Resurgence*

By the 1670s conflict over sovereignty, place-keeping, religion, and economics had raised tensions between the Wampanoag Confederacy and English colonies to a boiling point. The onset of war in summer 1675 presented Freeman and fellow colonizers with opportunities to suppress Indigenous resistance against New England's United Colonies and to expand personal wealth through land aggrandizement. For Wampanoags, Narragansetts, Nipmucs, Wabanakis, and other Indigenous peoples, however, the conflict bore very different consequences. Despite repeated attempts at peacemaking by Wampanoag leaders, war broke out in the homelands of the Pocasset sunksquaw Weetamoo and her relation Metacom, the Pokanoket sachem, who assumed the name King Philip during his adulthood. Native communities across the region faced difficult choices about whether to enter the conflict alongside Native relations, remain neutral, or strategically align themselves, at least for appearances' sake, with the English military and political forces. Along the Cape and on the Islands, the Wampanoag communities deliberated over these options. Some had affiliated with Christianity by this point drawing themselves into closer relationships with Englishmen and becoming at odds with the missionary-rejecting King Philip. They were also conscious of having to protect themselves from violence and prevent further dislocation from their homelands. Many Native communities along the Cape eventually moved toward

<sup>71</sup>Allan Greer, *Property and Dispossession: Natives, Empires, and Land in Early Modern North America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 260.

neutrality or an English alliance, precipitating divisions within the Wampanoag Confederacy.<sup>72</sup>

As news of the escalating conflict reached places like Potanumacut and Paomet, Wampanoag residents would have heard of the grievous situations faced by their relations elsewhere in the region. This included colonial leaders' deliberate targeting of Native food resources. Without reliable access to plentiful, nutritious foods and clean water, a community cannot long maintain its health or support new generations. Lack of calories and nutrients limited energy, inhibited resistance to diseases, endangered the young and elderly, and undermined reproduction and infant nursing. Colonial imposition of food insecurity had precedents in the brutal Tudor conquest of Ireland, and in the American Northeast colonizers enacted similar forms of violence.<sup>73</sup> At the Great Swamp, where hundreds of Narragansetts and Wampanoags had taken shelter, colonial troops breached the defenses in December 1675 and "burnt above 500 houses, left but 9, burnt all their corn, that was in baskets, great store. . . . We fetch in their corn daily and that undoes them."<sup>74</sup> Colonists acted upon a deadly calculus: by destroying Native communities' intended harvests and food stores, they presented the immediate threat of starvation and undermined the momentum toward multi-tribal resistance. Moreover, these destabilizing attacks compromised Natives' ability to use cached corn over the coming winter and destroyed kernels set aside for the following year's crops.<sup>75</sup> To conceptualize this in

<sup>72</sup>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, 2010), 99–113.

<sup>73</sup>Christine M. DeLucia, "Locating Kickemuit: Springs, Stone Memorials, and Contested Placemaking in the Northeastern Borderlands," *EAS* 13 (2015): 482–83; Kevin McBride et al., "Site Identification and Documentation Project: The Battle of Great Falls/Wissantinnewag/Peskeompskut, May 19, 1676," National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program, Technical Report GA-2287-16-006, January 19, 2017, 52; Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 192.

<sup>74</sup>Letter, Capt. James Oliver, 1675, in George Madison Bodge, *Soldiers in King Philip's War, Being a Critical Account of that War with a Concise History of the Indian Wars of New England from 1620–1677* (Boston: Printed for the Author, 1906), 174.

<sup>75</sup>DeLucia, *Memory Lands*, Part 2 and 214.



terrapolitical terms, colonial strategists understood that unraveling a complex, interdependent fabric of place-based relations would eventually undermine Indigenous communities' resilience.

Freeman held leadership roles in the colonial militia, participated in the extraordinary violence inflicted at Great Swamp, and reaped family benefits from the conflict. As a reward for his services at Great Swamp, Freeman, like scores of colonial veterans, received a land grant in northern Wabanaki country. That land descended through the Freeman family, increasing their land-based wealth through successive generations.<sup>76</sup> Freeman also played a direct role in one of the war's most notorious symbolic acts: he wrote to Josiah Winslow following King Philip's death in August 1676 informing Winslow that he had requested retrieval of the sachem's dismembered head.<sup>77</sup> Colonists at Plymouth mounted the head outside their palisade, creating a horrifying monument to Indigenous suffering as well as a place-based assertion of colonial conquest. Finally, Freeman's participation at Great Swamp brought him into intimate involvement with the enslavement of Native people. Colonial militia units took hundreds of Native prisoners at the swamp and dispersed them throughout New England and Atlantic World slave markets.<sup>78</sup> These diasporas commodified Indigenous people for the English who benefitted from their sale. The seizure of Native children and their placement into colonial households posed especially daunting obstacles to tribal futures. These dislocations made it difficult for Native survivors to maintain political coherence especially when kinship and governance structures were deliberately undermined by English leadership intent on forestalling further resistances.

<sup>76</sup>On the "Narragansett Townships" allotted to colonial veterans of the Great Swamp massacre, see Katharine B. Lewis and Hugh D. McClellan, *History of Gorham, ME* (Portland, ME: Smith and Sale, 1903), 501; DeLucia, *Memory Lands*, 140–41.

<sup>77</sup>Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Knopf, 1998), 309n7.

<sup>78</sup>Bodge, *Soldiers in King Philip's War*, 174; Margaret Ellen Newell, *Brethren by Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

Moreover, they ripped key community members away from the homelands in which they had long sustained themselves and other-than-human beings, altering the very nature of interdependent relationality.

### *Intertwined Legacies of Violence and Resilience*

King Philip's War transformed many dimensions of the Native Northeast, not least of all tribal communities' relationships with customary places and intimately known webs of relations. But Native people and polities did not disintegrate or vanish. Their endurance, resilience, and changing forms of terrapolitical assertion challenge colonial histories and mythologies that presented the war as a watershed spelling Indigenous downfall. A critical counter-narrative reveals Native communities' return to valued places or their establishment in new locations, using inventive techniques for rebuilding and experimenting with different strategies for countering the new phases of colonial hegemonic assertions over place.

The war and its aftermath brought increased security and status for John Freeman. He remained in the Wampanoag homelands where he continued to increase his landholdings, part of the wave of colonial expansionism across the Northeast that accelerated in 1676–1678.<sup>79</sup> Among his claims was a 1680 acquisition of a lot at the “old Indian Field at Satucket”—a colonial takeover of fertile land previously cultivated by Wampanoag women. By the time of Freeman's death in 1719, he had amassed an estimated 155 acres of land plus 112 acres of wood lot. A significant section of Freeman's will attested to the fact that some of his wealth came through slaveholding. He belonged to a growing segment of New England Anglo-Americans who claimed ownership of people of color—of African as well as Indigenous descent—relying on unfree, racialized labor to perform agriculture, domestic care, and commodity production. In his will Freeman manumitted “Negroes Toby and

<sup>79</sup>On Paomet/Eastham, H. Roger King, *Cape Cod and Plymouth Colony in the Seventeenth Century* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994), 184.

Bess,” and transmitted to Toby four acres of land to plant, a hoe and ax, and cow pasturage.<sup>80</sup> The lives of enslaved and free African Americans deserve reckoning on their own terms, along with interrogation of how colonial archives have rendered important facets of their experiences difficult to access. This includes relationships among Indigenous and Black inhabitants of the region, which spanned a spectrum from intimate family ties to social frictions. Freeman’s will also presents questions about how on one hand Toby’s land acquisition made him a participant in the ongoing colonization of Wampanoag homelands while on the other, he, as a Black man, remained restricted by exclusionary Massachusetts laws and practices.<sup>81</sup>

Comparing Freeman’s will to a similar legal instrument composed four years later for Menekish, an elderly Native from nearby Monomoyick, sheds further light on Wampanoag endurance and strategic place-keeping in the early eighteenth century. A later antiquarian concluded from this document that Menekish had “adopted the English style of life,” as supposedly evidenced by “his house and barn, his cows and sheep, his horse, his chest and his canoe.”<sup>82</sup> But this simplistic reading falls into colonialist assumptions about Indigenous assimilation. In actuality Menekish, who is identified elsewhere as a sachem (indicating an ongoing governance role for a collective body of Wampanoags), seems to have maintained extensive relations and essential access to maritime spaces while selectively taking up and indigenizing new technologies and goods. Menekish’s twenty-acre farm bordered English farms on some sides and salt water on another, giving him frontage for coastal and deep-water fishing and other forms of harvesting,

<sup>80</sup>“Probate Records of John Freeman (1626–1719) of Eastham, Mass., Part 1,” *Genea-Musings*, April 24, 2017, <https://www.geneamusings.com/2017/04/amanuensis-monday-probate-records-of.html> (accessed July 13, 2019).

<sup>81</sup>On the complexity and limitations of “settler colonialism” as an analytical framework in contexts where categories other than Indigenous/Euro-American operate, see Stephanie E. Smallwood, “Reflections on Settler Colonialism, the Hemispheric Americas, and Chattel Slavery” and Tiya Miles, “Beyond a Boundary: Black Lives and the Settler-Native Divide,” *WMQ* 76 (2019): 407–26.

<sup>82</sup>William C. Smith, *A History of Chatham, Massachusetts, Formerly the Constablewick or Village of Monomoyt* (Hyannis, MA: F.B. & F.P. Goss, 1917), 3:265–66.

mobility, and sustenance. He was survived by his wife Martha and two daughters whose marriages strengthened their tribal kinship networks. Naomi married Thomas Quansett (a Potowamacut Native) and had a son, Jeremiah Quansett; Leah married William Cauly (also Potowamacut), and her daughter married Richard Atteman (another Potowamacut). This genealogy demonstrates the continuation of kinship ties that crisscrossed traditional homelands and shaped forms of terrapolitical relationality sustaining important ancestral place-connections while reflecting difficult constraints of colonization and land fragmentation.

Menekish's decision to call upon the services of Joseph Lord, colonial minister at Chatham, to compose his will points to a major postwar development: strategic uses of Christian affiliation and English literacy and legality to protect home and community. In undeniable ways Protestantism undercut traditional spiritual practices and modes of governance as missionaries attempted to supplant them with Anglicized lifeways and attempted to reorganize Native people into conscribed "praying villages" that intensified affiliates' alienation from key sources of sustenance and TEK. Yet Native enclaves and networks endured at Meeshawn, Punonakuit, Potonumacut, Nawsett, Manomoyik, Sawkattukett, Nobsquassit, and other communities throughout the Cape, where they maintained ancestral forms of place-keeping in many domains. When a meeting house was constructed at Potanumacut in 1691, the choice to locate it by a fertile pond suggests the potent blending of longstanding Wampanoag pathways and sustenance sites with English-style architecture and beliefs.<sup>83</sup> Native congregants often encountered Christian scripture through tribal ministers

<sup>83</sup>Delores Bird Carpenter, *Early Encounters: Native Americans and Europeans in New England: From the Papers of W. Sears Nickerson* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994). On demographics at Potonumacut in 1762, see Franklin Bowditch Dexter, ed., *Extracts from the Itineraries and Other Miscellanies of Ezra Stiles, D.D., LL.D., 1755-1794, with a Selection from His Correspondence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916), 59; Charles Francis Swift, *Cape Cod, The Right Arm of Massachusetts: An Historical Narrative* (Yarmouth, MA: Register Publishing Company, 1897), 334.

fluent at mediating between spiritual systems.<sup>84</sup> They rapidly indigenized English reading and writing tools to protect their most valued places and resources, as scholars like Kristina Bross and Hilary E. Wyss have emphasized—“the Algonquians of early New England were remarkably adept at incorporating new forms of literacy and adapting their own familiar forms to new materials and concepts.”<sup>85</sup>

At Mashpee in 1767, to take just one example, Zachary Houssueit, a Wampanoag minister on Noepe, challenged paternalistic English forms of guardianship and land tenure.<sup>86</sup> He addressed a colonial committee dispatched to Mashpee by the Company for Propagation of the Gospel in New England in early autumn when Native people from the Cape and Island gathered together. Houssueit preached a sermon and assisted in administering the sacrament to a “great

<sup>84</sup>Edward E. Andrews, *Native Apostles: Black and Indian Missionaries in the British Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

<sup>85</sup>Kristina Bross and Hilary E. Wyss, “Introduction,” *Early Native Literacies in New England*, 5. See also Lisa T. Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 224–26; Hilary E. Wyss, *English Letters and Indian Literacies: Reading, Writing, and New England Missionary Schools, 1750–1830* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), especially regarding “Readerly” and “Writerly” Natives; Steffi Dippold, “A Prince Went Up a Tree and Climbed into Colonial Typography: or Reversing Lettered and Unlettered in the Wampanoag Bible,” *NEQ* 92 (2019): 6–45; and 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), 145.

<sup>86</sup>“Report of a Committee on the State of the Indians in Mashpee and Parts Adjacent,” *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 3, 2nd ser. (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1815): 12–17. Houssueit’s name and those of his descendants are spelled variably (e.g., Osooit, Howwaswee). On his career, multilingual fluency, and advocacy continued by kin, see also E. Jennifer Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press in association with American Antiquarian Society, 2005), 77; Sarah Rivett, *Unscripted America: Indigenous Languages and the Origins of a Literary Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 68; 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): 9–44, esp. 37; “Resolve on the Petition of Zaccheus How-was-wee and others, Indians and People of Color of Gay Head,” April 9, 1839, chap. 75. *Acts and Resolves Passed by the Legislature of Massachusetts, in the Year 1839* (Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, 1839), 108; “How the Wampanoag Indians Took Back Gay Head,” *New England Historical Society* (n.d.), <http://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/wampanoag-indians-took-back-gay-head/> (accessed September 14, 2019).

number of Indian communicants.” Later during the committee’s visit Houssueit and his extended kinship network, including his sister Hephzibah Augooche, confronted the colonial visitors with a set of needs and grievances. Houssueit informed the committee “that to this day some English people hold lands at a place called Deep Bottom” which had previously been leased to them by a set of English “guardians to the Indians,” even though “the leases have been expired some time.” Describing colonist Elijah Luce’s continued claims and occupation of land on Noepe, Houssueit stated unambiguously that Wampanoags “desired that they might have no more guardians,” and sought to be emancipated from restrictive, frequently exploitative surveillance and management regimes as well as conversion of Wampanoag lands to English private property. Houssueit and his descendants joined an extensive lineage of Indigenous protestors and petitioners who leveraged colonial expressive modes to render their advocacy legible to Euro-Americans and colonial legal systems in order to maintain connections to the most meaningful places. While the tangible results of this advocacy varied widely over time, individual Wampanoag leaders pursued different and evolving tactics for their interactions with colonial authorities in ways that sometimes enhanced certain tribal members’ personal wealth, underscoring intergenerational Wampanoag efforts to protect the integrity of their homelands and ability to continue in these locales.<sup>87</sup>

Just over two hundred fifty years separated Houssueit’s critique and Mashpee protestors’ taking to the streets to affirm “Our People = Our Land = Our People.” During this time enormous changes and challenges shaped northeastern tribal nations’ interactions with evolving forms of New England settler colonialism. In different times and places, Native people contended with cultural, political, legal, and other forms of

<sup>87</sup>On efforts to make regional Indigenous petitioning more visible to communities and researchers through the recently developed “Digital Archive of Native American Petitions in Massachusetts,” see “Digitizing Native American Petitions,” *The Harvard Gazette*, January 8, 2016, [news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2016/01/digitizing-native-american-petitions](https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2016/01/digitizing-native-american-petitions) (accessed July 13, 2019).

attempted erasure and denial of their very existence: in 1819, the town of Orleans (formerly part of Eastham), petitioned the Massachusetts General Court “for leave to sell all the remaining Indian lands . . . which had belonged to the Potanumaquut tribe.” The sale went through for \$300.<sup>88</sup> “Menekish Lane” is now a tiny road with million-dollar homes and privatized property in Chatham, lying thirty miles east of the reservation trust land at Mashpee. “Potonumecot Road,” which memorializes a Wampanoag place- and community-name, is similarly constituted. But excessively focusing on developments like these distracts from centuries-long histories of tribal place-keeping. These histories bear witness to community members’ inventive uses of the instruments at their disposal to pursue the collective stewardship of vital locales and act as responsible agents within complex Indigenous systems of relationality. “For the Mashpee Wampanoag, we *belong* to the land,” tribal member Hartman Deetz has written in an essay about contemporary food sovereignty efforts. “For the people who see the world as something that belongs to them, the river, the fish, and the land is a commodity to be used. For those of us who belong to the land, we must defend it as our mother. The fish and trees as our brothers and sisters. If we are not here in Mashpee, who is left to defend our relatives?”<sup>89</sup>

<sup>88</sup>Freeman, *History of Cape Cod*, 2:729.

<sup>89</sup>Hartman Deetz, “More Than a Bingo Hall: A Story of Mashpee Land, Food, and Sovereignty,” *Dismantling Racism in the food system* (Food First Institute for Food & Development Policy) 3 (Summer 2016): 5. For an overview of wider efforts, see Devon A. Mihesuah and Elizabeth Hoover, *Indigenous Food Sovereignty in the United States: Restoring Cultural Knowledge, Protecting Environments, and Regaining Health* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019).

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