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"To save their substance that they may live together": Rethinking Schooling and Literacy in Eighteenth-Century Algonquian Communities in Southern New England

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> *Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe. And he said to me, "Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the house of Israel." So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. Then he said to me, "Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it." So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth. He then said to me: "Son of man, go now to the house of Israel and speak my words to them."*
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> —Ezekiel 2:9–3:4

In December 1767, a letter written with firm and even penmanship appeared before a committee of men appointed by the Rhode Island Assembly to manage and oversee Narragansett lands in the colony. Written by Narragansett Tobias Shattock, the letter boldly informed the committee members of his community's decision "to send me to England for Redress" for the "Injuries, Violations, & Frauds done to the Indians," which Shattock assessed as "grievous, inhuman & incredible." By "having our Land Sold from us" during a "course of Years," Shattock wrote, his people now lived on the brink of despair, fearing "we must come into Bondage with our Children" or, worse still, endure their "lamentable Cry for want of Bread." The deplorable conditions and unabated loss of lands that marked the reserve had eroded the very fabric and substance of the community, Shattock insisted, as Narragansett Christians struggled to maintain the "blessed Pr[i]viledge of worshiping God together as a Ch[urch]" and to attend the newly established school in their settlement in the midst of such destitution.

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Despite the Narragansetts' repeated efforts to obtain redress from the colonial government, their pleas amounted to "little Purpose." Launching a stinging criticism against the government's ineffectual policies toward Native lands, Shattock pointed to "certain Gentlemen" who "endeavoured to advance their Interest by the poor Indians" and wrongfully assumed that the Narragansetts' "extream Poverty" would "prevent their being called into Question." Informing the committee otherwise, Shattock reminded the officials that the God he served "takes Cognizance of all their doings" and "hates Oppression" and insisted that God would lead him to "true Friends" in England, who would in turn assist him in laying his people's grievances before the Crown and Privy Council.[1]

Using blunt and forward phrases, such as "in my Sincere Opinion" and "I would inform You," Shattock crafted a complaint using the language of his Anglo-American oppressors and the format of an epistle in order to voice the interests and rights of his community, upon which officials had repeatedly trampled. The firm strokes with which Shattock addressed the letter, issued his complaint, and signed his name graphically illustrated the new tool of English literacy that many Algonquians adopted in the years following the outburst of evangelicalism in southern New England known generally as the First Great Awakening. Unlike Algonquian-speaking communities in Massachusetts, which developed vernacular literacy under the missionizing and educational imperatives of their Puritan colonizers during the previous century, Native groups living in Connecticut, in Rhode Island, and on Long Island remained largely resistant to the sporadic efforts of English missionaries to instruct them. Lacking the formal schooling that developed in the praying towns and mission settlements to the north, Algonquian communities such as the Narragansetts, Mohegans, and Pequots instead largely relied on Anglo-American interpreters, allies, and overseers to craft petitions and mediate requests before colonial authorities verbally and in writing. Such petitions and records most certainly espoused Algonquian interests and grievances, and yet they also bore the indelible fingerprints—some more obviously than others—of the colonial officials who translated and crafted the writings and requests with often ambiguous and self-serving motives.[2]

By the early eighteenth century, however, new efforts by colonial governments to "civilize" and Christianize Native peoples in Connecticut and Rhode Island brought Algonquians into growing contact with ministers and teachers who visited their settlements and offered them instruction. Although many Algonquians remained resistant to the messages of divine grace these ministers delivered, a number began to develop a growing interest in and familiarity with the English language and letters. With the outburst of the evangelical Protestant revivals known as the Great Awakening in the late 1730s and early 1740s in towns and communities throughout New England, many Natives abandoned their opposition to the Gospel message and adopted Christianity, perhaps stemming from the close parallels between the content and preaching style of Anglo-American revivalists and Algonquian concepts of power and spirituality. The emphasis on the spoken word that underscored the revival meetings that Natives attended reverberated with their own orally

based forms of knowledge, while the emotionally laden offers of salvation preached by itinerant ministers resonated with Algonquian traditions of worship and ceremony.[3] Despite the informal, emotional, and orally based nature of the revivals, however, the Great Awakening also generated a drive within both Anglo-American and Native communities to open schools and establish Christian instruction for Algonquian children.

Although many Natives initially received the word of God through preaching—often in their own language—several Algonquian communities emerged from the revival years with a growing desire to adopt English literacy. Anglo-American ministers and teachers had periodically visited Algonquian communities to offer instruction through the 1720s and 1730s, but in the decades that followed Natives increasingly voiced their interest in learning and made attempts to obtain schooling within and outside of their settlements. Perhaps demonstrative of the increasing pressures to protect their lands and the complex cultural adaptations that the Awakening produced, Native leaders and families increasingly looked toward formal education and instruction in English as tools for building and expressing their new Christian faith and defending their communities in southern New England. As Algonquians attended revival meetings and accepted the offers of salvation proclaimed in their communities, individuals and families began to pursue reading and writing skills in order to gain spiritual and practical knowledge. Requests that Algonquian communities sent to colonial officials for instruction reflected the ties between their new Christian faith and literacy because Native petitioners desired "to learn to read the Bible and to have our children learn to read it too & thereby learn to know more of the Great God & what he would have us do in this world."[4]

Non-Natives likewise desired to instruct Algonquian pupils in the tenets of the Protestant faith and English civility, and in the years following the Awakening opened schools for such purposes. With the founding of Moor's Indian Charity School in Lebanon, Connecticut, in 1754, congregational minister Eleazar Wheelock launched an educational regimen that aimed to Christianize and "civilize" Native students by severing the vital role of kin and community from the process of Native learning. Unlike the efforts of Algonquian men and women who rooted their instruction in the wigwams and communal spaces of their villages, Wheelock's program instead envisioned the education and "civilization" of Native boys and girls in isolation from the "savage" and "pernicious" influences of their families and villages, to which they would eventually return as beacons of spiritual and cultural light.[5] Drawing in Native students from Algonquian communities in southern New England and New Jersey, and from Haudenosaunee settlements in New York, Wheelock hoped his educational regimen would not only render his pupils literate in English and classical languages but also prepare them to serve as teachers and missionaries among the Six Nations and other "western tribes." As a part of their missionary preparation, Algonquian students were allegedly encouraged to retain their Native languages and learn the Iroquoian dialects of their Mohawk and Oneida classmates in order to enable them to preach effectively in the "wilderness." Native parents and colonial officials began to

enroll a growing number of Native children and youth in the school by the late 1750s, and students attended for periods that varied from only a few months to several years.

Wheelock's school and the growth of Algonquian literacy following the Great Awakening form part of a larger and longer history of Native literacy in the northern colonies in which Natives responded creatively, and often painfully, to the constraints and conditions of colonization by adopting new skills and knowledge. As scholars throughout the past several decades have aptly demonstrated, Native individuals and communities learned new skills of reading and writing in Massachusett, and later English, for a variety of purposes, whether for crafting petitions, recording land conveyances, establishing wills, or describing their beliefs and faith journeys as Christians. Building on preexisting forms of communication, oral knowledge, and writing, the types of Native literacy that developed in praying towns and mission communities of colonial New England often complemented Algonquian concepts of communication and reflected the persistence of older modes of knowledge. As David Silverman recently noted, among the Wampanoags of Martha's Vineyard "the supposed division between literacy and orality, between written authority and community memory, was far more permeable than many colonists or their historians have presumed." According to Silverman, "the Wampanoags melded their ways of speaking and remembering with the colonists' printed word until they had formed a distinctly Indian literacy."[6]

Scholars specifically examining the emergence of Wheelock's school and the development of English literacy within Algonquian communities in eighteenth-century southern New England have likewise recognized the complex ways in which Native students adapted and used their new skills, as well as the domination and ethnocentrism that underscored Wheelock's efforts to transform and erase Native cultures. James Axtell, for example, recounted the racism and subservience that characterized Wheelock's relationships with his Native pupils, while Laura Murray highlighted the rituals of domination and resistance evident in Wheelock's correspondence with his students.[7] Emphasizing the conditions and constraints under which Natives lived and learned while at Moor's and other schools, a number of scholars have pointed toward the tenuous position of literate Natives in colonial society and the brutal paths of acculturation and adaptation that many tread in order to survive. Suggesting that educated Algonquians occupied a cultural middle ground or gray area between Indian and English worlds, some scholars have described these Natives as "brokers" or "go-betweens" who straddled a cultural divide through their agency, resistance, and often-painful adaptations.[8] Although such depictions have insightfully illuminated the tensions and power struggles involved in colonial schooling and the attainment of English literacy, they tend to limit educated Natives to an intermediary or liminal position within their own communities and the wider colonial world and to suggest a fundamentally oppositional nature between Native and European cultures.

In an attempt to move beyond the binary depictions of European and Indian culture that underscore notions of brokerage, a number of scholars

have offered new approaches to studying both schooling and English literacy among Native Americans that highlight the power and complex uses bound up in new languages and forms of knowledge. Several years ago, literary scholar Simon Ortiz disputed the belief that "Indian people [who] have succumbed or become educated into a different linguistic system . . . have forgotten or have been forced to forsake their native selves." Rather than signifying the loss of cultural authenticity, Ortiz instead argued that Natives adopted new languages—whether Spanish, English, or French—as tools that they used creatively on their own terms and for their own purposes.[9] Following Ortiz's lead, other scholars have more recently argued that Native communities adopted English literacy and other forms of Euro-American culture as innovative tools to protect lands and livelihoods. According to Maureen Konkle, writing offered nineteenth-century Native leaders the means to "preserve their political autonomy," while Lisa Brooks contends that writing provided "an instrument to reclaim land and reconstruct communities" among Native groups in the colonial northeast.[10]

Such critical observations invite historians to consider the ways in which Natives such as Shattock used writing and to think carefully about the meaning of schooling and English literacy within Algonquian society. Algonquians who adopted English literacy in the mid-eighteenth century joined a longer history of Native education in the northern colonies and a larger trajectory of Native efforts to use literacy in adapting to and resisting colonization. Although English literacy and education certainly served as a "colonial technology" that aimed to "re-configure aboriginal cultures and bodies in ways functional for Euramerican imperialism," the outcomes of Wheelock's ethnocentric regimen in eighteenth-century New England perhaps deserve further consideration.[11] Although Wheelock's school, as a cultural idea and a physical place, represented colonial efforts to wrest Natives from their communities and remold them into godly and "civilized" individuals, his school also represented one site—among others—where Natives interacted with each other and adopted new knowledge and skills to strengthen their own communities. Although often struggling under conditions of colonial domination and cultural loss, Natives also used new technologies of reading and writing to give voice to their enduring sense of community and place in a world that tried to silence their protests. As literary scholar Craig Womack argues, Native Americans were not "mere victims" of colonization but rather "active agents in history, innovators of new ways, of Indian ways, of thinking and being and speaking and authoring in this world created by colonial contact."[12] In his overview of the subject, Barry Powell describes writing as one of the most important technologies in human history which serves as a "lens through which literate peoples see the world, feel the world, . . . defy the world, and imagine change."[13]

By learning to speak, read, and write by using alphabetic signs and words that symbolized the English language, Algonquians such as the Mohegans, Narragansetts, and Montauketts effectively added a new "lens" to their repertoire of knowledge through which they could see, understand, and criticize the colonial world in which they lived. Writing offered Natives an innovative

way to articulate and define their relationships to kin and place that colonial officials sought to erase and a way to criticize and challenge graphically the ongoing efforts of authorities to dispossess them from their homelands. Adopting English literacy alongside new Christian beliefs and practices, reading and writing also provided Native believers with a new means to tap into spiritual power and new tools to articulate their faith journeys and question the unjust and immoral actions of their so-called Christian neighbors. By attending schools and adopting English literacy, Algonquians engaged in processes that allowed them to tell their own stories for their own purposes and to preserve their relationships to land and people.

Although writing by using alphabetic script and pen and paper represented a new form of communication for many Algonquians in the mid-eighteenth century, the act of conveying messages and information in material form was not. Before and after the arrival of European colonizers, Algonquian communities intertwined oral and written communication and knowledge in their education, political protocol, and village life. Algonquian learning began in the wigwams and fields of the village at the hands of women, as children learned practical skills by tending fields, protecting crops, and assisting in the food preparations performed by their mothers and other female kin. Upon their first menstruation, Algonquian girls learned of the power of blood and began to participate in the practice of separation and sequestration in the *wetuomémese*. While boys ventured into the forests and paddled the waterways with male kin to hunt and fish, girls learned to weave reeds into mats to hang in their wigwams and collected shellfish along the shoreline. Village sachems and leaders shared wisdom and made decisions through speeches and communal discussions that reflected a protocol rooted in ideals of consensus and reciprocity. Storytelling, formal speeches, ridicule, and practical training served to cultivate knowledge of their homelands, crucial survival skills, and a reverence for spiritual power in Algonquian boys and girls.[14] Algonquians also relied upon diverse types of written information and knowledge for communal interaction and communication. Despite Roger Williams's insistence that the Narragansetts lacked "letters," he noted that the Algonquian word *wussúckwhonck*, or "a letter," was closely related to the Native verb *wussuckwhómmin*, or "to paint," and conceded that "having no letters, their painting comes the neerest."[15]

With the outburst of evangelical religion in towns in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and other parts of southern New England by the 1740s, Anglo-American officials and ministers renewed their efforts to remedy the "lack" of "civilization" and literacy they perceived in Native communities and pushed for the creation of formal schools and Christian education in order to remove the vestiges of "savagery" that lingered on reserves. Although ministers and teachers visited Native communities at Mohegan, Mashantucket, and Narragansett with growing frequency during the 1720s and 1730s, when Algonquians began to attend the preaching of "New Light" ministers and respond to offers of salvation proclaimed at communal gatherings and in local churches, officials perceived an opening for their educational programs and "civilizing" initiatives. In the late 1730s, for example, Anglo-American

missionary John Sergeant founded the town of Stockbridge in the Housatonic Valley and established a school for the community's Mohican children with the express goal of changing their "whole Habit of thinking and acting; and rais[ing] them, as far as possible, into the Condition of a civil industrious and polish'd People." At the heart of his program, Sergeant planned to "introduce the *English Language* among them instead of their own imperfect and barbarous *Dialect*," which would complement his equally arrogant goal to "*root out* their vicious Habits" and to change "their whole Way of Living."[16]

Although colonial officials attempted to "purge" the "imperfect and barbarous" languages spoken at Algonquian communities, Native languages continued to be used alongside the newer English one. In southern New England, Natives spoke one of three eastern Algonquian languages—Massachusett, Narragansett, and Mohegan-Pequot—throughout the colonial period, and several records indicate the ongoing use of Native languages alongside a growing fluency in English. In a variety of everyday face-to-face interactions, whether communal ceremonies, church services, family interactions, or casual conversation, Algonquians communicated with each other using words and expressions that perpetuated the linguistic knowledge and traditions of their ancestors and kin.[17]

Despite the persisting use of Algonquian languages through the mid-eighteenth century, however, Natives turned increasingly toward English literacy in order to protect their lands and communities. Although colonial leaders promoted the "civilizing" mission of formal schools, Algonquians began to request and establish community schools for largely different purposes. Native leaders demonstrated a growing awareness of the precarious position they occupied in the colonial world so long as they remained illiterate in English.[18] Aware of the power bound up in English literacy, Algonquians began to seek out Anglo-American neighbors and allies to instruct them in the language and to pass on their learning to family members and fellow villagers. Mohegan Samuel Ashpo, for example, taught at the Mashantucket Pequot community in Connecticut throughout the 1750s and offered instruction in reading to his Native pupils. Ashpo, who learned to read during the 1730s through the efforts of local ministers and teachers such as Jonathan Barber, used his knowledge of English to teach as well as to interpret; he served as an interpreter for the colonial government in the late 1750s. By working with and living among his Pequot students and the wider community at Mashantucket, Ashpo's teaching efforts strengthened the leadership roles and cultural ties that connected neighboring Algonquian settlements.[19] After Ashpo left the school at Mashantucket in 1757, Pequot Samson Wobi (or Wauby) filled his position as teacher, continued the pattern of Native leadership and authority at the school, and later taught among the Pequots living in Stonington, Connecticut.[20]

Mohegan Samson Occom's efforts toward self-education and teaching at Montauk likewise demonstrate the attempts of Algonquians to incorporate the English language and literacy into their repertoires of knowledge. In the years following his community's failed efforts to regain tribal lands claimed by Connecticut, Occom recounted that he began to "Learn the English Letters"

and obtained a primer for that purpose. Having witnessed the pivotal role of writing and record keeping in defeating Mohegan land claims, Occom and other Mohegans set about learning the words and symbols that the colonists used to dispossess them of their homelands. Occom's desire to learn to read equally stemmed from the spiritual awakening he underwent during the revival years, as his "troubled" spiritual state propelled him to seek the instruction of his "English Neighbours" in reading, which in turn perhaps contributed to his acceptance of salvation several months later. By the early 1740s, Occom expressed his intertwined desire to "Learn to read the Word of god" and instruct his community, recalling, "I usd to wish, I was Capable of Instructing my poor Kindred, I use to think if I Coud once Learn to Read I Woud Instruct poor Children in Reading."[21] After hearing that nearby congregational minister Wheelock instructed English students, Occom expressed a "great Inclination" to obtain further learning to his mother Sarah, who in turn arranged for her son to live with and learn under the minister—an arrangement that lasted four years.

Although Occom's failing eyesight hindered his plans to attend Yale College, he remained determined to pass along his literacy skills and training to his kin and neighboring Algonquian communities. After leaving Wheelock's house in Lebanon, Occom recounted that he "endeavourd to find Some Employ among the Indians, [and] went to Nahantuck, thinking they may Want a School Master, but they [had] one; then went to Naroganset . . . and went back to Mohegan." Joining a "number of our Indians" who were traveling to Montauk, Long Island, Occom found upon arrival that members of the Montaukett community "were very desirous to have me keep a School amongst them, and I Consented." Although Occom eventually received funding from missionary societies, his initial support as a schoolmaster flowed from Algonquian notions of hospitality and reciprocity, as the Montauketts "took turns to Provide Food" for him.[22]

Before Occom took up his teaching post at Montauk in 1749, Native men and women on Long Island had endeavored to learn English and obtain instruction from missionaries and Anglo-American neighbors. Although many continued to converse, worship, and pray in Algonquian, Montaukett adults and children also began to seek out instruction in English and teach their family and friends what they learned. Similar to Occom, a number of Montauketts who accepted the Christian faith during the Awakening sought to gain spiritual knowledge by learning how to read. During the revival years, missionary Azariah Horton noted the "remarkable Forwardness in old and young to learn to read, especially in the Children" and recorded the efforts taken by Natives to obtain his instruction when he preached and visited.[23] Natives not only sought out Horton's assistance in learning to read, but also made efforts to pass on their new knowledge to their families and communities. By the winter of 1743, three Algonquian children living at the village of Quaog possessed the ability to repeat part of the catechism, spell in their psalters, and recite several psalms. The children had obtained their learning from their mother, who could "read well, and is painful, after her Capacity, in giving Instructions to her Children." Although this woman instructed her

children in new words and forms of communication, she most likely taught them in the setting of the family wigwam and upheld her role in child rearing as she introduced new survival skills to her children. Several months later, Horton observed that this Algonquian woman had expanded her teaching responsibilities to include all of the children living in the community who were interested in learning to read.[24]

Across Long Island Sound at the Narragansett settlement, Algonquian women exhibited similar leadership in providing instruction for the boys and girls living in the community. During the years following their adoption of evangelical Christianity, the Narragansetts demonstrated a growing desire to become literate in English and to have "a *School* among them, that their Children and all such as can, might learn to read." Although the Narragansetts requested a formal school through the commissioners for Indian Affairs in Boston, during the mid-1740s an "Indian Woman" taught children living on the reserve to read and offered instruction at her wigwam.[25] By merging a traditional site of learning and instruction—the wigwam—with a new language and form of instruction (English and reading), the Narragansetts continued to ascribe power to communal sites and demonstrate the ongoing role of women in introducing children to vital life skills and early instruction.

By the 1760s, however, a growing number of Mohegan, Narragansett, Montaukett, and Pequot students, among others, entered the doors of Moor's Indian Charity School to learn the English language or to hone existing skills. Although Wheelock envisioned his school as a place to "purge" the "Indian" culture from his pupils, students often renewed and created kin ties and friendships through their attendance at Wheelock's school and used their newfound English literacy to strengthen their connections to other Algonquians and to their lands.[26] Learning in an atmosphere marked by submission and surveillance, Native pupils struggled against Wheelock's efforts to remake and reform their beliefs and behavior and often acquired their knowledge of the alphabet in a setting characterized by racism and a demoralized sense of identity. Despite the attempts of colonial officials to impart particular meanings and uses of English literacy to Algonquian students and leaders who attended Wheelock's school and other local institutions, Native men and women invested their own meanings and understanding of power in the tool of literacy. Such meanings largely extended beyond the control, approval, and understanding of their instructors and benefactors, and often intertwined Algonquian traditions of knowledge and communication with English symbols and forms. Perhaps more than becoming "brokers" or cultural "go-betweens," Algonquians who became literate in English also renewed ties to both kin and their lands by using new methods and means of writing. By recognizing the practical purposes and the dynamic cultural layers that their writings reflected, scholars can instead begin to see Native men and women as members of families and communities who struggled to work out their faith and their rights to land by drawing on a new source of power.

Historians have referred to eighteenth-century colonial America as a "republic of letters" owing to the remarkable growth in public and private correspondence during this period. During the decades following the

Great Awakening in New England, itinerant ministers increasingly relied upon letters to communicate news of revivals and salvation, while individual believers corresponded to spur one another on in their faith. According to Joanna Brooks, "reading and writing personal letters assumed new value as a way for even geographically isolated Americans to cultivate a shared sense of social belonging."[27] For Algonquian men and women who became literate in English, letter writing offered a means to communicate with family and friends across the largely isolating landscape of colonial New England. Written messages were often delivered by kin and involved face-to-face interactions and oral accounts. Letters written by Algonquians alluded to these interactions, as writers made reference to "hearing" or learning about family news by word of mouth. Algonquians wrote letters for a variety of reasons, whether to share news, seek advice, request favors, plan visits, or share their spiritual struggles as Christians. Noticeably absent from the letters exchanged between Natives, however, were matters relating to tribal politics and communal struggles. Brooks has notably suggested that the near absence of political references and discussions from Native correspondence indicates a continued observance of political protocols that involved face-to-face meetings between tribal members, as well as the hesitancy of Algonquians to put into writing information and decisions that they wanted to protect from colonial officials.[28]

The letters that have survived throughout the centuries since pen was first put to paper, however, clearly reveal the vital webs that continued to bind Algonquian families and communities together across the increasingly bounded landscape of southern New England and hint toward the ongoing rhythms, knowledge, practices, and relationships that tied Natives to their homelands. Using letters and written messages to convey news of harvests, family life, or their spiritual journeys, Algonquian scribes implicitly asserted their rootedness and rights to their lands in New England in the letters they wrote. In 1757, for example, Niantic William Sobuck sent a letter to his cousin Occom while Occom was living at Montauk as the community's schoolmaster. At the time that Sobuck crafted his letter, his son Enoch was living with Occom on Long Island and attending the school at Montauk, alongside Montaukett and Shinnecock pupils. Sobuck's letter not only served to relay information to his cousin regarding the family—"we are all well Through Divine Providence"—but also to request that Occom send Enoch home to Niantic, in southern Connecticut, for a visit at "the first Oppertunity." Sobuck planned to accompany his son back to the island the following month, which would allow him an occasion to visit Occom, and notified his cousin that he "would not have him [Enoch] bring all his Cloaths with him for I Expect to Come over here my Self."[29] The letter's content, although brief and concise, conveyed important information to its recipient regarding family affairs, health, and travels and points toward the various forms of mobility and communication through which Algonquian kin and communities remained interconnected. Although Sobuck planned to make the journey across Long Island Sound to see Occom and the school, in the interim he crafted a written message to alert his cousin of his plans and orchestrate his son's trip home.

Occom likewise wrote extensive letters to Native family and friends, as well as non-Native acquaintances, and sent information conveyed in epistles when face-to-face conversations were not possible. After leaving on a journey to central New York in the summer of 1763, Occom sent a hastily scrawled missive to his wife Mary, living at Montauk, which included brief instructions regarding the upcoming harvest as well as his devotion to her as a husband. Although several words in the letter are illegible, Occom's brief message signaled the subsistence patterns that underscored life at Montauk and the faith that he and others placed in God to sustain them and provide in the midst of growing impoverishment. Reminding his wife that "as soon as grass is fit" she should "hire hands" to cut "5 loads of hay," Occom informed Mary that he had left money for the family, and that they should trust in God during his absence. While living at Montauk, the Occoms owned a horse and cow, and also kept five pigs to sustain their large family, along with the crops of corn, beans, potatoes, and other vegetables that they planted.[30] The hay Samson reminded his wife to have cut would have been crucial to their livestock during the winter months and needed to be cut before the Montaukett community relocated from their planting fields east of Lake Montauk to the "North Neck," a more heavily forested area from which the community obtained their wood. Occom concluded his letter by encouraging his wife to "Remember God and trust in him at all times." Following on the heels of his directions regarding harvest, Occom's invocation to trust in a greater spiritual force linked the family's material provision to spiritual power and indicated that, for believers such as Occom, their faith remained intertwined with the physical places and lands that sustained them.[31]

While maintaining contact with kin and acquaintances, Algonquians used letter writing to seek advice and work out spiritual struggles as Christians. In the late summer of 1763, Sarah Wyacks sent a letter to her brother, Occom, in which she shared her spiritual burdens regarding her own Christian faith and that of her mother. Like the letter that Occom sent to Mary earlier in the summer, Sarah's writing reveals the seasonal rhythms that rooted Mohegans to the fields and forests where they lived and the subsistence patterns that marked the passing of a year. Welcoming Occom back from his trip to New York, Sarah quickly looked ahead to the possibility that her brother and his family might move from Montauk to Mohegan, writing, "Mother say's if you intend to come over and live, to come over in season in sowing time & geting hay." Informing Samson that their brother Jonathan had been struggling with a prolonged bout of illness, had recently improved, and now could walk with less difficulty, Sarah went on to request Samson's prayers for their family. Desiring her brother to provide her with "some good wholesome councils & advices," Sarah shared that she had "been much troubled last springe in [my] mind, as to my spiritual state but [it] is a little easier, [but] my Burden is not quit[e] removed" and asked Samson for earnest prayers at the "Throne of Grace." Hoping that she would be able to "bear up under my afflictions," Sarah confessed that she felt "much troubled as to mothers condition" and worried because "she dont goe to meeting as formerly." Sarah and Samson's mother, Sarah, had joined the Montville Congregational Church near

Mohegan sometime following the evangelical upsurge of the late 1730s, but perhaps she abandoned the congregation as did several other Mohegans after the church's minister, David Jewett, expressed his support of Connecticut's claims to Native lands.[32]

Algonquian parents and students affiliated with Wheelock's school likewise directed letters to the minister in which they requested education for themselves or their family members, inquired about the progress of children, or questioned the educational regimen under which the students worked. Using letters as a vehicle through which they could assert their own voices, opinions, and knowledge against that of Wheelock, Algonquians in some cases proposed alternative "designs" for their children's future or their own future that often stood at odds with Wheelock's allegedly "grand" one. In the fall of 1767, for example, Narragansett John Daniel sent a letter to Wheelock regarding his son's training at the school. Daniel had enrolled his son, Charles, at Moor's in 1765, and as his letter outlined, his "Chief motive" in enlisting Charles had been to "advance [him] in Christian Knowledge" and "not to learn . . . how to Farm." Questioning the amount of labor his son, along with the other students, performed for Wheelock, Daniel pointedly stated that he did not "consent" to a program in which his son had spent most of the past two years farming, especially when "I can as well learn him that myself and have ye prophet of his Labour, being myself bro't up with ye best of Farmers." Daniel went on to suggest a desirable solution to the problem, concluding that he was "willing he [Charles] shou'd continue with You two or three years longer to be kept to School." Although no written response from Wheelock exists in the minister's extant correspondence and records, by the end of the year Daniel had removed his son from Moor's, suggesting that Wheelock either disputed or ignored the counsel he received from the Narragansett man.[33]

Although Algonquians used letters and messages to maintain kin connections, seek advice, and request favors, they also crafted their own formal petitions and pleas to express corporate and communal concerns, particularly in regard to their land. Paralleling the efforts of Natives elsewhere in the northeast who used writing as a vehicle of protest, by the mid-eighteenth century Algonquian communities in Connecticut, in Rhode Island, and on Long Island had begun to write their own petitions in order to challenge the encroachment and dispossession they suffered. Directing their memorials to Anglo-American allies and colonial assemblies, such writings were often accompanied by oral explanations and accounts by those who delivered the documents and served as visual records of their face-to-face meetings and requests. Lisa Brooks argues that although English colonists understood petitions as prayers, Natives traditionally understood prayers as the "pitiful application to a being that held *Manitou*." As a result, Brooks writes, Native petitions represented an "intriguing form in which a community use[d] a tool that ha[d] power, writing, to make a 'prayer' to a political body that ha[d] power in relation to themselves."[34] Perhaps more significantly, the petitions that Algonquian communities wrote and delivered to colonial officials and assemblies throughout the mid-eighteenth century commonly made

reference to the Christian God in whom many Algonquians believed and appealed to a Christian moral code in complaining against colonial injustices. In some cases more bluntly than others, Algonquian petitioners wrote of the power of God, not only as the Creator of all, but also as the One who called into account those who oppressed and mistreated His children. Aligning their rights to their lands with their faith in the God who created them, Algonquian petitioners invoked a Christian morality in their writings and implicitly asserted that supreme judgment and justice lay beyond the power of the colonists. Although Native communities certainly sought relief and intervention from colonial powers in order to alleviate their impoverishment and dispossession, as Brooks has suggested, their references to God's power and sustenance in their pleas indicates that they perceived God, rather than the colonists, as possessing the ultimate Manitou.

As writings that represented corporate interests, petitions likewise enabled Algonquians to demonstrate their ongoing ties to their lands, resources, and sacred spaces as communal entities, rather than as individuals, and to fight for the unity and protection of their villages and settlements. Representatives from the Mohegan community, for example, delivered letters and petitions to Sir William Johnson, the superintendent of Indian Affairs for the northern colonies, in the early 1760s in which they requested his aid and advice regarding the political factions that divided their community. By the 1730s, the Mohegan community had formally split into two separate camps or towns, known respectively as "Ben's Town" and "John's Town." The geographic separation between the towns signaled the political and ideological rifts that had emerged on the reserve, as members of Ben's Town supported sachem Ben Uncas II and his successor, Ben Uncas III, and their acquiescence with Connecticut's claims to tribal lands, while members of John's Town contested the legitimacy of the sachems and continued to battle for justice and the reclamation of ancient homelands.[35]

When sachem Ben Uncas III began to make decisions regarding tribal lands arbitrarily without the consent of his council, several Mohegans used their literacy in English to seek advice and assistance from Anglo-American allies. In the spring of 1759 and 1760, Henry Quaquaquid, a former counselor to the sachem, journeyed to Sir William Johnson's residence in central New York carrying "letters" for the superintendent to read and received "encouragement" from Johnson that he would extend his influence and "interest" to the Mohegans' communal dispute. In May 1760, Ashpo also traveled to Johnson Hall to deliver a "fresh packquet" of writings on behalf of the Mohegans who opposed the sachem's leadership. Although the contents of these written pleas remain unknown, they most likely asserted the struggles the Mohegans faced as their sachem and colonial officials trampled on traditional political protocol and colonists continued to encroach on their lands.[36]

Several years later, Occom drafted another petition for Johnson on behalf of the Mohegans that outlined the community's grievances and sought to "^make^ our Cries in your Ears."[37] Occom began his plea to Johnson by describing the God he served as the "Supream being" and "the Governor of all Worlds" and by noting that God had given Johnson "great Wisdom and

understandg and Sent you in these parts of the World." Claiming that their overseers and by extension, the Connecticut Assembly, wielded "arbitrary Power" over the Mohegan community and intended to "root us out of our land ^root & Branch^," Occom insisted that colonial officials "have indeed us'd Ben Uncas as a Tool in their Hands." Not only had the Mohegan sachem recently "Cast of[f] his Councel," but also Occom reported that colonists had assumed the right to interfere in tribal politics and that "the English intends to Continue him as a Sachem ov[e]r us." Challenging these efforts toward colonial control, the Mohegan petition asserted the legitimacy of the community's political protocol apart from Anglo-American interference, stating "we have a Law and a Custom to make a Sachem over us Without the help of any People or Nation in the World." Depicting his fellow Mohegans as organically and vitally attached—literally growing from—their lands, Occom requested Johnson's advice in protecting the Mohegans from being "rooted out" and ripped from the soils and waters that sustained them.

Seeking to "know from Your Hon. Which seems to be Honest in your View," and his "advice Where to Stear," Occom and the Mohegans used their written plea to obtain the support of one upon whom God had bestowed wisdom and honor. Like the previous Mohegan "letters" and "packquets," the petition that Occom sent Johnson operated alongside oral reports and served as a visual record and reminder of the requests the community laid before him. Although Occom endeavored to explain the Mohegans' divisions and grievances in his petition, he noted that "Deacon Henry Quaquaquid," the bearer of the plea, would "Relate the Whole Matter to Your Honor" upon arrival. Drawing on a tool deemed to be legitimate and powerful by colonists, the Mohegans used writing in an effort to resolve the grievances and disunity in their community and to prevent the further loss of communal lands.[38]

Members of the Montaukett community likewise drew upon their growing English fluency and literacy in order to complain about the oppressive conditions they endured on Long Island. In 1764 Silas (or Cyrus) Charles followed in the footsteps of Mohegan emissaries and traveled to central New York to seek redress from colonial authorities. In a petition he presented before the lieutenant governor of the colony, Charles related the grievous circumstances facing the approximately thirty Montaukett families residing on the eastern end of the island. Although the authorship of the petition remains unclear, at the time of its writing the Montauketts had become increasingly familiar with and literate in English through the school and church located in their community. Charles, who was a leading member of the community and referred to as an "Indian teacher" in colonial records, most likely drafted the petition owing to his fluency in English and status at Montauk.[39] Emphasizing that in recent years the Montauketts had "discontinued their ancient Barbarian way of living, and are become, not only civilized, but christianized," Charles in turn pointed to the ungodly behavior of their English neighbors at nearby East Hampton, "who deny them necessary Fuel, and continually incroach upon their Occupations, by fencing in more and more of the Indian's Lands." As a result, Charles warned, the Montauketts were "in Danger of being crowded out of all their ancient Inheritance, and of being rendered Vagabonds upon

the Face of the Earth." Beseeching the lieutenant governor to "grant and confirm" to the Montauketts the unsold lands on Montauk Point and to "give Directions for Prosecutions of Intrusion" against colonists living on lands west of Montauk Point, Charles hoped that the lieutenant governor, and the King he represented, would provide "competent Protection" to the Montaukett community.[40]

The years leading up to the crafting of the petition were filled with growing conflict between the Montaukett community and colonists at East Hampton over land rights and the subsistence patterns of the Natives. Not only had colonists continued their efforts to monitor and restrict Montaukett lifeways and movement on their lands, whether slaughtering their dogs, counting their pigs, or prohibiting their access to wood, but also at times the colonists had demanded that the Natives remove their settlement at Indian Fields and relocate to the only other land, known as the North Neck, that the colonists permitted them to use. Such interference undoubtedly led to outright conflict between the communities. In 1753, for example, the English trustees appointed to manage Montaukett lands noted that "Sirus Indian," most likely the same person as the petitioner Silas Charles, had agreed to pay them eleven pounds five shillings "for killing ye hors[e] called the Mulford stallon," an act that perhaps he perpetrated in resistance and opposition to colonial oppression and interference.[41] As the 1764 petition pointed out, the "contempt" that East Hampton residents repeatedly directed toward the Montaukett community interfered with their efforts to forsake "the Idolatry of their Fathers" and to live as "civilized Subjects." Charles's petition suggests, moreover, the power and authority the Montauketts increasingly accorded to written records in counteracting the dispossession and injustices they suffered. Noting that in the past the "unlettered State of the American Indians, rendered it impossible for them to keep Records," Charles explained that as a result the Montauketts could not fully "ascertain what Lands have been, or remain still unsold," which enabled their Anglo-American neighbors to encroach on their lands "under Pretence of Sales made by their Ancestors." Seeking to obtain a "Royal Grant and Confirmation" of their lands "to them and their Heirs" in order to protect them against trespassers, Charles attached a spatial authority and power to writing that he envisioned would confirm the Montauketts' rights to their homelands on the island and protect them from being rendered landless "vagabonds."

Fears of landless impoverishment similarly spurred members of the Narragansett community to seek redress from members of the Rhode Island Assembly and other colonial authorities. Facing conditions that closely paralleled the communal struggles and division at Mohegan, by the mid-1760s the Narragansetts had split into two groups—the "King's Council," which supported the leadership of sachem Thomas Ninigret, and the "Tribe's Council," closely affiliated with the Narragansett church, which opposed his policies of selling communal lands in order to remit his debts. Those who opposed the sachem actively petitioned colonial authorities to protest the assembly's ongoing allowance of Ninigret's land sales, and when they obtained no relief, sought the assistance of Sir William Johnson. Until the 1760s, many

Narragansetts remained unable to read and write in English. Although the sachem had attended a formal school in Newport, few Narragansetts possessed more than a cursory level of English literacy by midcentury.[42] Many of the petitions and pleas the Natives presented before colonial authorities, as a result, relied on records made by Anglo-American scribes. By the mid-1760s, however, members of the council who opposed Ninigret began to seek formal education and use their knowledge of English to defend the tribe's land and autonomy. Councilors John and Tobias Shattock enrolled in Wheelock's school and, according to one report, made "great proficiency" in reading and writing.[43] After studying at Wheelock's for only a matter of months, Tobias returned to Narragansett and informed Wheelock that "Tis owing to the bad conduct of the Sachem" that he had left the school prematurely and was determined "to exert myself to do somthing in their [the Narragansetts'] favour, to save their Substance that they may live together."[44]

Using his new knowledge of English, in 1767 Shattock wrote a bold statement directed to colonial authorities on behalf of the Narragansetts, which placed the greedy interests of colonial officials at the mercy of the "Supreme God [who] takes Cognizance of all their doings." Shattock's memorial noted that although the Narragansetts' previous petitions to the Rhode Island Assembly had amounted to "little Purpose," the tribe had received the "direction" of Sir William Johnson in their efforts to protect their lands and had decided to send Tobias, along with his brother John, to England to seek redress for the "Injuries, Violations & Frauds done to the Indians." Like the Mohegan and Montaukett petitions, Shattock's letter not only emphasized the authority of the "Supreme God" over Native lands, but also pointed out that colonial interference and dispossession "hindred" the Narragansetts' efforts to worship God and practice their Christian faith. Although Shattock wrote his memorial to inform the committee appointed to manage tribal lands that the Narragansetts would call upon the authority of the Crown to execute justice on their behalf, the writing illustrates that in Shattock's view, the ultimate power, or Manitou, remained in God's hands. Insisting to his recipients that "God, who hates oppression, will raise me true Friends to lay our Miseries before his most Sacred Majesty," Shattock's letter placed divine authority and power over that of the colonists who stole Native lands, the acquaintances and allies he would make in England, and the King. In traveling to England to present his petition, Tobias, like other Native emissaries, planned to draw upon his oral recollections and accounts of his community's struggles as well as a written record and plea to present his case before the Crown.[45]

The Narragansett visit to England produced tragic results, as Tobias contracted smallpox and died in Edinburgh in the spring of 1768. Despite the journey's unfortunate outcome, however, the Shattock brothers' efforts powerfully attest to the uses Natives made of schooling and literacy in order to defend tribal lands and autonomy and the complex combination of oral and written knowledge that made such pleas possible. Although Tobias did not live to lay the Narragansetts' grievances before the Crown or to return to the homelands he so passionately defended, his brother John continued on their mission to London and offered a petition to the King. The memorial he laid

before King George III not only recounted the tribe's loyalty to the English and their resilience as a people but also related the "wretched and deplorable situation" the Narragansetts currently faced on account of colonial greed. Shattock's missive implored the King to "Issue an Instruction to the Governor and Government of Rhode Island to restore your Petitioners to their Lands and all that they have lost, and to forbid the said Lands [from] being purchased for the future." Although the Crown declined to intervene in the Narragansetts' struggle against their sachem, the efforts of Algonquians such as the Shattock brothers to experiment and use a new language and a new form of communication demonstrated the resolve of Native men and women to remain on their lands and to maintain the integrity and autonomy of their communities. Insisting, as did John Shattock in his petition before the Crown, that the Narragansetts had lived on their lands from "time immemorial," Natives used writing to resist the colonization of their lands and their minds and to articulate and assert their "own stories" to those who would listen.[46]

Several months after John Shattock presented his memorial to the British Crown, Occom crafted an autobiographical account of his life and mission work that similarly asserted his own story regarding the abuse and prejudice he suffered at the hands of missionary societies. Occom's second draft of his narrative, which he composed in September 1768 in one of the professional journals he maintained throughout his career as a teacher and minister, has received extensive scholarly recognition and analysis as a text representative of early Native writing and of the "precarious position of the Christian Indian 'between two worlds.'" Although a number of scholars have emphasized the tensions and prejudice that marked the colonial world in which Occom wrote his autobiography and served as a minister, Joanna Brooks insightfully notes that the Mohegan minister "strategically crafted this narrative to respond to the ongoing controversy about his identity among white ministers, missionary societies, and audiences." Recently returning from a two-year-long fundraising tour in Britain on behalf of Wheelock's school, Occom had faced allegations from missionary societies (namely the Boston board of the Society for Propagating the Gospel) before and during his trip that he had misrepresented his identity "as a recently converted Mohegan" and had failed to recognize fully their financial support of him. One of many writings that he composed during his life, Occom used his autobiographical narrative not only to defend himself against these allegations, as well as accusations that he lived "extravagantly" while teaching at Montauk, but also to indict the missionary societies that supported him for their inadequate pay and discriminatory policies. By recounting his acceptance of Christianity at Mohegan during the evangelical revivals, subsequent training under Wheelock, and tenure as schoolmaster and minister at Montauk, Occom used his written account as a vehicle to correct the "gross Mistakes" that missionary boards and Anglo-American ministers had concocted about him and to let his readers "know the ^Truth^ Concerning me."[47]

Providing his critics with an accurate account of his life and career as a minister, Occom's autobiography likewise served as a tool to expose and condemn the prejudicial treatment and attitudes he suffered from fellow

ministers and Christians. Noting how non-Native missionaries received vastly greater financial support than himself, despite the fact that he "was both a School master, and Minister to the Indians" as well as "my own Interpreter" while at Montauk, Occom concluded that such financial discrepancies ultimately stemmed from colonial prejudice—"I believe it is because I am [a] poor Indian." By highlighting his extensive labors for the spiritual and temporal well-being of the Montauk community and the impoverishment he and his family suffered during his tenure on Long Island, Occom's writing powerfully reversed the charges against his own character by instead pointing to the discriminatory practices that characterized so-called Christian mission organizations. "Now You See What difference they made between ^me^ and other Missionaries," Occom informed his potential readers, offering them the opportunity to judge "whether I ought not to have had half as much" compensation as his non-Native contemporaries. Although Occom's narrative remained unpublished until the twentieth century, and perhaps largely unread by his intended audience, his writing nonetheless reflected the ways in which Natives used literacy to critique and condemn the colonial society in which they lived and to seek justice within a world marked by power imbalances and prejudice.[48]

Although the efforts of Occom, the Shattock brothers, and other Native petitioners often failed to alleviate the discrimination and encroachment they and their communities suffered, by the early 1770s members of Algonquian communities in southern New England drew upon their literacy skills to enact a plan of relocation in order to resolve their temporal and spiritual needs. Drawing on previous relations with Haudenosaunee communities in New York, Native leaders such as Occom, Joseph Johnson, David Fowler, and others envisioned a new Christian settlement on Oneida lands free from colonial infringement and impoverished conditions. Putting the plan into action by the eve of the American Revolution, Algonquians sent letters and messages between their villages to inform potential migrants of the removal venture and to recruit representatives for diplomatic meetings in New York, while Native leaders used written requests and petitions to solicit support and favors from colonial authorities in their relocation efforts. The letters and messages exchanged between Native communities and individuals not only strengthened communication and ties between Algonquian settlements and made the eventual relocation to their new homeland after the revolution possible but also confirmed to the many Algonquians who relocated to Brotherton, New York, the possibilities and power available with the tool of literacy. Within the first few years of settling at Oneida, the Algonquian pilgrims erected a schoolhouse that served as a place of learning as well as a gathering spot for Sabbath services and worship and requested that Occom serve as the town's teacher.[49] Although the new community in New York would not be free from struggles over land, governance, and non-Native encroachment in the years that followed, reading, writing, and dynamic forms of education would continue to serve as a vital means by which Natives maintained relationships with family and friends, structured their new community's governance, and protested against ongoing injustice.[50]

NOTES

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1. Tobias Shattock, Petition to the Committee Appointed to the Honorable Assembly, 8 December 1767, Paul Campbell Research Notes, MSS 369, box 1, folder 11, Rhode Island Historical Society (hereinafter referred to as RIHS); John Russell Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, in New England*, vol. 6 (1859; repr., New York: AMS, 1968), 533.

2. See, e.g., David Murray, "Letter of Instruction from Oanhekoe, Sachem of the Mohegan Indians, 14 July 1703," in *Early Native Literacies in New England: A Documentary and Critical Anthology*, ed. Kristina Bross and Hilary E. Wyss (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), 21–22.

3. For more on Algonquian participation in the Great Awakening, see William DeLoss Love, *Samson Occom and the Christian Indians of New England* (1899; repr., New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 30–36; William S. Simmons, "Red Yankees: Narragansett Conversion in the Great Awakening," *American Ethnologist* 10, no. 2 (1983): 253–71; Margaret Connell Szasz, *Indian Education in the American Colonies, 1607–1783* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 191–217; Margaret Connell Szasz, "Samson Occom: Mohegan as Spiritual Intermediary," in *Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker*, ed. Margaret Connell Szasz (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 61–78; Laura Murray, ed., *To Do Good to My Indian Brethren: The Writings of Joseph Johnson, 1751–1776* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 40–45; Laura Murray, "What Did Christianity Do for Joseph Johnson? A Mohegan Preacher and His Community," in *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 88–108; Joanna Brooks, ed., *The Collected Writings of Samson Occom, Mohegan: Leadership and Literature in Eighteenth-Century Native America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 13.

4. Pequot petition to the Connecticut Assembly, 5 May 1742, Connecticut Archives, Indian Papers, ser. 1, vol. 1: 239, Connecticut State Library.

5. Eleazar Wheelock, *A plain and faithful Narrative of the original design, rise, progress and present state of the Indian Charity-School at Lebanon, in Connecticut* (Boston: Richard and Samuel Draper, 1763), 25–26.

6. David Silverman, "'We Chief Men Say This': Wampanoag Memory, English Authority, and the Contest over Mittark's Will," in Bross and Wyss, *Early Native Literacies*, 173. For excellent studies on the history and nature of Native literacy in the northeast, see Ives Goddard and Kathleen Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusett*, vols. 1 and 2 (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1988); Helen Jaskoski, ed., *Early Native American Writing: New Critical Essays* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Hilary Wyss, *Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity, and Native Community in Early America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000); David Silverman, "The Church in New England Indian Community Life: A View from the Islands and Cape Cod," in *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience*, ed. Colin Calloway and Neal Salisbury (Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 2003), 264–98; Robert Warrior, *The People and the Word: Reading Native Nonfiction* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2005), 1–47; Bross and Wyss, *Early Native Literacies*.

7. See, e.g., James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 133–42, 211–15; James Axtell, *After Columbus: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 48–57; Laura Murray, "'Pray Sir, consider a little': Rituals of Subordination and Strategies of Resistance in the Letters of Hezekiah Calvin and David Fowler to Eleazar Wheelock," in Jaskoski, *Early Native American Writing*, 19, 35–36.

8. Margaret Connell Szasz's scholarship on indigenous schooling and the life of Mohegan Samson Occom, e.g., draws on a model of "cultural brokerage" in order to emphasize the tenuous position of educated Christian Natives in colonial society. According to Szasz, individuals such as Occom lived in "two worlds"—one "white" and one "Indian"—and moved across a "cultural divide" through their mission activities in the northern colonies. Tammy Schneider's writing on Mohegan Joseph Johnson and other Native students who attended Moor's Indian Charity School in Connecticut echoes the interpretation put forth by Szasz by suggesting that Native students remained stuck between two worlds. Describing the struggles of students such as Johnson to "refashion" Christian beliefs in keeping with their Native identity, Schneider concludes that in the end such individuals "were not quite Indian and not quite white." Hilary Wyss's study of literate Christian Natives in colonial New England also addresses the constrained positions of Native missionaries and teachers who struggled to balance their Native identity with the conditions and new adaptations of the colonial world in which they lived. Looking at the lives of Native interpreters and "praying Indians" in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Wyss argues that Christian Natives often "straddled the two cultural systems" and suffered the mistrust of both their English and Indian neighbors. See Szasz, "Samson Occom," 75, 77; Szasz, *Indian Education*, 6–7; Wyss, *Writing Indians*, 38; Tammy Schneider, "'This Once Savage Heart of Mine': Joseph Johnson, Wheelock's 'Indians,' and the Construction of a Christian/Indian Identity, 1764–1776," in *Reinterpreting New England Indians and the Colonial Experience*, ed. Colin Calloway and Neil Salisbury (Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 2003), 251–52. For further scholarship that emphasizes the struggles, agency, and constraints faced by literate Natives, and their "in-between" or brokering role, see Michael Elliot, "'This Indian Bait': Samson Occom and the Voice of Liminality," *Early American Literature* 29, no. 3 (1994): 234, 247; Bernd Peyer, *The Tutor'd Mind: Indian Missionary-Writers in Antebellum America* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 1, 15–20, 54; Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 25–45; Keely McCarthy, "Conversion, Identity, and the Indian Missionary," *Early American Literature* 36, no. 3 (2001): 354, 359.

9. Simon Ortiz, "Towards a National Indian Literature: Cultural Authenticity in Nationalism," *Melus* 8, no. 2 (1981): 10.

10. See, e.g., Joel Martin, *Sacred Revolt: The Muskogees' Struggle for a New World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 160; Maureen Konkle, *Writing Indian Nations: Native Intellectuals and the Politics of Historiography, 1827–1863* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 7, 38; Lisa Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xxii, xxxi, xxxv. See also Frank Lambert, "'I Saw the Book Talk': Slave Readings of the First Great Awakening," *The Journal of Negro History* 77, no. 4 (1992): 186–87, 191. Lambert's study of African American participation in the Great Awakening similarly argues that reading

and English literacy brought power to the slaves who participated in the revivals. According to Lambert, although the "spoken word" and preaching were central to the salvation of enslaved men and women, the ability to read—which many began to learn by the mid-eighteenth century—also contributed to their spiritual transformation and new faith. As African Americans began to form their own churches and teach each other to read in the aftermath of the revivals, Lambert contends that reading became a "direct avenue" to emancipation for those who suffered enslavement.

11. Laura Donaldson, "Writing the Talking Stick: Alphabetic Literacy as Colonial Technology and Postcolonial Appropriation," *American Indian Quarterly* 22, nos. 1–2 (1998): 47–48.

12. Craig Womack, *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 6. Other scholars echo Womack's arguments for recognizing the innovative (and long-standing) uses of literacy within Native communities and the concerns Natives have articulated through written forms. As Robert Warrior has insightfully noted, Native writings are "part of larger processes of social and political engagement, and they are processes that Native people experience." See Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 28; Warrior, *The People and the Word*, xxix.

13. Barry Powell, *Writing: Theory and History of the Technology of Civilization* (Chichester, UK, and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 7, 11.

14. Kathleen Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 107–23; Roger Williams, *A Key into the Language of America*, ed. John J. Teunissen and Evelyn J. Hinz (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), 117, 128, 170–71, 180–82, 207, 224–26; Szasz, *Indian Education*, 11–21.

15. Williams, *A Key into the Language*, 138. Before the arrival of Europeans, Lisa Brooks contends that Natives in the northeast developed a "spatialized writing tradition" that was based on "cartographic principles" and expressed through birch bark scrolls and wampum strings and belts. Algonquians inscribed pictographic symbols onto birch bark in order to remember songs, record stories, or relay information to kin and allies about hunting or traveling routes. Wampum beads that Algonquians gathered along the coast and traded throughout the Northeast were woven into patterned belts that served to represent and recall alliances between nations and to record communal commitments and histories. In the mid-eighteenth century, Algonquian communities in southern New England continued to exchange wampum strings in order to communicate their commitment to Native allies and their decisions regarding colonial warfare. E.g., during the Seven Years' War the Mohican community at Stockbridge, MA, sent a "Large Belt" of wampum to the Mohegans in an effort to seek their alliance in the conflict. Mohegan leaders "Signified their hearty Agreement" to the alliance and sent several men to fight alongside the Mohicans and Mohawks on behalf of the English. Brooks, *The Common Pot*, 8–13; *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society*, vol. 17 (Hartford: Connecticut Historical Society, 1918), 338–39.

16. John Sergeant, *A Letter From the Revd. Mr. Sergeant Of Stockbridge, To Dr. Colman Of Boston* (Boston: Rogers and Fowle, 1743), 3–5. For an insightful comparison of the Mohican mission communities at Stockbridge, MA, and Shekomeko, NY, see Rachel Wheeler, *To Live Upon Hope: Mohicans and Missionaries in the Eighteenth-Century Northeast* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008). Wheeler emphasizes the varying approaches of English Congregationalists and German Moravians in Christianizing

their Mohican adherents and the importance that Congregational missionaries at Stockbridge placed on education, "civilization," and literacy that was largely absent at the Moravian missions.

17. William Simmons, *Spirit of the New England Tribes: Indian History and Folklore, 1620–1984* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1986), 11. On eastern Long Island, e.g., while missionary Azariah Horton attempted to preach to the Montauketts and other Algonquian communities in English, he often relied on interpreters to relay his messages of grace. Although Horton strove tirelessly to instruct the Montauketts in English literacy, many learned and accepted the Gospel message through their own language. Mainland communities likewise maintained Algonquian linguistic traditions in their family and communal interactions. At the Narragansett settlement in Rhode Island, the Narragansett language continued to permeate village celebrations and church services throughout the mid-eighteenth century. When missionary David McClure visited the Narragansett church in the late 1760s, he was amazed to hear the linguistic chaos that marked their worship service. According to his account, about "50 Indians were present" at the meetinghouse and joined in singing, prayer, and exhortation. When the congregation prayed, McClure observed that "all spake audibly, some in english & some in Indian. It was indeed a confused noise." Algonquian words also continued to shape the contours of worship services and family life at the Mohegan settlement in the years following the Great Awakening. At an evening gathering held in a local home in 1771, spiritual leader Henry Quaquaquid, among others, exhorted those who attended the service to acknowledge that they had "no Excuse" for remaining "impenitent" as they "may hear of Jesus Christ" in their "own Language." See *The Christian Monthly History*, no. 5 (Edinburgh: R. Fleming and A. Alison, 1744), 49, 53, 56; David McClure, *Diary of David McClure, Doctor of Divinity, 1748–1820*, ed. Franklin B. Dexter (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1899), 189; Murray, *To Do Good*, 101–2.

18. At the Mohegan community, Anglo-American deception regarding Native lands and the Mohegans' unsuccessful efforts to seek justice in the ongoing "Mason case" brought into glaring relief the way in which colonial officials manipulated and took advantage of Natives who did not read or understand English. With the reopening of the land dispute in the late 1730s, several Mohegans reported that the governor of Connecticut had tricked them into acknowledging Ben Uncas as their sachem by having them sign an agreement written in English, the content of which few Mohegans understood. In a declaration drafted in 1738, several Mohegans stated that after renouncing Ben Uncas as their sachem in 1736, Governor Talcott sent a letter to the tribe (which many signed), which effectively reinstated the sachem into his leadership role and enabled him to oppose Mohegan efforts to reclaim tribal lands. According to the disgruntled community members, the letter arrived "in a time when we thought ourselves in *danger of losing our* lives by means of the eastward Indians coming [u]pon us, and his honour the *governor writing a letter to us*, we thought nothing more thereby only to give his honour an account of the number of our soldiers." At the Narragansett settlement in Rhode Island, growing land loss and the greed of colonists likewise fueled a desire for English literacy and education. In the years following the Great Awakening, the Rhode Island Assembly permitted sachem Thomas Ninigret to sell increasing amounts of tribal lands in order to absolve his debts and repealed colonial laws put in place to limit such sales. A number of Narragansetts opposed

the sachem's dissolution of reserved lands and began to protest his sales before the colonial assembly. In one petition directed to the governor, several Narragansetts bemoaned the impoverished conditions many Natives faced and coupled their list of grievances with a request that the "free school" promised by the assembly be established in their community. *Governor and Company of Connecticut, and Mohegan Indians, By their Guardians, Certified Copy of Book of Proceedings Before Commissioners of Review, 1743* (London: W. and J. Richardson, 1769), 3–9, 218; Narragansett petition, 15 October 1765, MSS 181, Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, Archives and Special Collections. For a further discussion of the Mason case, see Amy Den Ouden, *Beyond Conquest: Native Peoples and the Struggle for History in New England* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 91–141. For more on the political divisions and struggles over land among the Narragansetts during the mid-eighteenth century, see William S. Simmons and Cheryl L. Simmons, eds., *Old Light on Separate Ways: The Narragansett Diary of Joseph Fish, 1765–1776* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1982); John Wood Sweet, *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730–1830* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2003), 15–57.

19. James Dow McCallum, ed., *The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock's Indians* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College, 1932), 33; Love, *Samson Occom,* 75–76.

20. Jacob Johnson to Eleazar Wheelock, 3 February 1757, The Papers of Eleazar Wheelock (hereinafter referred to as WP), 757153, courtesy of Dartmouth College Library; Eleazar Wheelock to Andrew Oliver, 3 December 1760, WP, 760653, courtesy of Dartmouth College Library.

21. Brooks, *The Collected Writings*, 53–54.

22. Ibid., 54–55.

23. *The Christian Monthly History*, no. 5, 37.

24. Ibid., no. 6, 35, 37–38.

25. *The Christian History; Containing Accounts of the Propagation and Revival of Religion in Great Britain and America etc., For the year 1744* (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1745), 26–28.

26. Margaret Connell Szasz, *Scottish Highlanders and Native Americans: Indigenous Education in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 141–42.

27. Brooks, *The Collected Writings,* 61–62. For more on the role of print culture in connecting believers and disseminating evangelical teachings and conversion accounts following the Great Awakening, see Frank Lambert, *"Pedlar in Divinity": George Whitefield and the Transatlantic Revivals, 1737–1770* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994). See Susan O'Brien, "A Transatlantic Community of Saints: The Great Awakening and the First Evangelical Network, 1735–1755," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 811–32, for more on the transatlantic nature of the evangelical movement and religious correspondence.

28. Brooks, *The Collected Writings*, 63–64.

29. William Sobuck to Samson Occom, 12 September 1757, WP, 757512, courtesy of Dartmouth College Library.

30. Brooks, *The Collected Writings*, 56–57.

31. Ibid., 70.

32. Sarah Wyacks to Samson Occom, 2 August 1763, Samson Occom Papers, Connecticut Historical Society.

33. John Daniel to Eleazar Wheelock, 30 November 1767, WP, 767630.3, courtesy of Dartmouth College Library.

34. Brooks, *The Common Pot*, 225.

35. *Governor and Company of Connecticut, and Mohegan Indians*, 12–13.

36. Ben Uncas and Council to the Assembly, 20 May 1760, Connecticut Archives, Indian Papers, ser. 1, vol. 2: 103, Connecticut State Library.

37. Brooks used the carets to designate interlineations in the original writings, and I, in turn, quoted her transcriptions accordingly.

38. Brooks, *The Collected Writings*, 144–45.

39. John Strong, *The Montaukett Indians of Eastern Long Island* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 72–73.

40. E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., *The Documentary History of the State of New York*, vol. 3 (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Co., 1850), 236–37.

41. *Journal of the Trustees of the Freeholders and Commonalty of East Hampton Town*, vol. 1 (East Hampton, NY: 1926–27), 115.

42. Joseph Park to Andrew Oliver, 17 September 1757, Miscellaneous Bound Manuscripts Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society.

43. Eleazar Wheelock to the Narragansett tribe, 3 March 1767, WP, 767203.2, courtesy of Dartmouth College Library.

44. Tobias Shattock to Eleazar Wheelock, 2 October 1767, WP, 767552, courtesy of Dartmouth College Library. See also Sweet, *Bodies Politic*, 15–57.

45. Tobias Shattock, Petition to Committee Appointed to the Honorable Assembly, 8 December 1767, Paul Campbell Research Notes, MSS 369, box 1, folder 11, RIHS.

46. John Shattock, Petition to Crown, 1768, MSS 369, Paul Campbell Research Notes, box 1, folder 11, RIHS.

47. Brooks, *The Collected Writings*, 42–43, 52, 57.

48. Ibid., 58. See also Elliot, "'This Indian Bait'"; Eileen Razzari Elrod, "'I Did Not Make Myself So…': Samson Occom and American Religious Biography," in *Historicizing Christian Encounters with the Other*, ed. John C. Hawley (London: Macmillan Press, 1998), 135–49; McCarthy, "Conversion, Identity, and the Indian Missionary."

49. Brooks, *The Collected Writings*, 308–9, 402.

50. For more on Brotherton history and Native writings in planning the relocation, see Love, *Samson Occom*, 207–30, 299–315; Murray, *To Do Good*, 168–74; Wyss, *Writing Indians*, 123–53.