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Introduction

In 1769 a young Narragansett woman named Sarah Simon spent an agonizing afternoon trying to explain to the white minister responsible for her Christian education just how far short of providing a new spiritual framework for her life his efforts had fallen. Her letter survives in the Dartmouth College archives. In 1794 Hendrick Aupaumut, a Stockbridge/Mahican tribal leader who had served as a go-between for the United States and certain western tribes, created a narration reflecting the oratory that was the signal feature of his diplomatic efforts among the Delawares, Miamis, Shawnees, and others. His work, discovered among private papers in the nineteenth century, can be found in the archives of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Sometime in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, an unknown Mohegan woman took an old issue of a Hartford, Connecticut, newspaper and carefully lined a wood-splint basket into which she had woven traditional colors and patterns. Her basket sits on the shelf of the Connecticut Historical Society. In the winter of 1659, a Massachusett man named Samuel Ponampam described his encounters with the Christian God to an English missionary, who included this "conversion narrative" in a printed tract touting the success of his evangelism. Sometime between 1771 and 1775, Samson Occom, a Mohegan missionary now best known for a sermon published upon the execution of a fellow Native, Moses Paul, wrote a very different sermon on drunkenness and white vices. The surviving unsigned fragment of his work is included in the Samson Occom Papers at the Connecticut Historical Society.

The written and material archive of early Native authors exists piecemeal and often overlooked in museums, manuscript collections, and print from the colonial period. Too often, access to these works is limited by outdated archiving practices, the fragility of the materials, or a history of scholarly disinterest.[1] This critical anthology seeks to address these problems in two ways: (1) by bringing together texts and images that reflect the wide range of "literacies" that represent the authorship of Algonquian peoples in southern New

1. Until relatively recently, important sources of Native writing, such as the marginalia in Indian Bibles, were liable to be viewed, at best, as unimportant or, at worst, as graffiti whose presence lowered the value of rare books. Ives Goddard and Kathleen Bragdon, editors of *Native Writings in Massachusetts*, write, "In spite of the occasional attention that the Massachusett documents had received . . . knowledge of their existence remained vague and incomplete and was confined to a few

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England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and (2) by including brief explorations of the primary texts to help close the critical gap between these resources and the contemporary reader. Thus, signatures, wills, baskets, pictographs, petitions, confessions, and sermons are paired with short essays that provide the contextual material through which they can be understood as markers of literacy in colonial New England.

The focus of this collection is the range of materials through which Algonquian individuals and communities in southern New England up to roughly the year 1800 expressed their identity in a colonial context. *Algonquian* is a (primarily linguistic) term that is understood to include Algonquian-language speakers with similar cultural backgrounds who lived along the eastern seaboard of the United States: For our purposes, we focus on the region that stretches from what we now know as Massachusetts to Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Long Island—an area that includes the Pawtucket, Massachusett, Nipmuck, Pocumtuck, Narragansett, Pokanoket, Niantic, Mohegan, Pequot, Mahican, Montaukett, and Wampanoag people. *New England* in the colonial period referred to the four colonies (Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven) brought together in a loose coalition by the Articles of Confederation in 1643. By the eighteenth century, Algonquian peoples who lived in this area were often simply called the New England Tribes, a name that recognized both the close interrelations of these tribal groups and their existence as members of a new colonial order.

We have narrowed this anthology geographically and temporally to enhance coherence of the materials and to explore the richness and variety of a group of interconnected Native cultures often flattened into a stereotype of "Indianness." We are aware that our decision to limit the materials in this way emphasizes a colonial historical narrative, reflecting the colonizers' idea of "New England" rather than the Native residents' cartography. Nonetheless, we hope that our efforts will serve as a useful corrective to colonial literary histories that have heretofore excluded Native voices. We mean to contribute to the ongoing challenge to the myth—so cherished by white Americans of the nineteenth century and so persistent even today—of the "vanishing Indian," who tragically disappeared from the eastern seaboard. By including materials from the period that is most severely underrepresented in Native American literature courses, this collection offers students the opportunity to view Native American literature not as a nineteenth- or even twentieth-century invention but as a part of

specialists and interested individuals. The information appearing in print was fragmentary, anecdotal and inaccurate" (xvii–xviii). Moreover, when older books were rebound, they were often trimmed of their marginalia (see ibid., 374, 416, 458).

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a continuing and living tradition that reflects earlier moments of contact and colonization.[2]

Algonquians, English, and Literacy

When the English settlers came into contact with the Algonquian people of New England in the early 1600s, a significant range of practices and beliefs both separated and united the Native inhabitants of New England. In addition, there had already been extensive contact with French, Dutch, and Spanish traders. From approximately 1616 to 1619—almost certainly as a result of these encounters, which took place shortly before the English arrived—the region was devastated by a massive epidemic; some estimates put the mortality rate at up to 90 percent.[3] Repercussions from this and other epidemics throughout the colonial period reverberated throughout Native communities of the region.

Although it is difficult to speak generally about the range of cultural practices that were already in place when the various colonists arrived, it is likely that most of these groups lived in more or less hierarchical societies where the hereditary leader, or sachem, ruled not by innate power but by consensus, and with the help of members of the elite families of the community. Hunting and farming, the primary means of sustenance, were performed through a gendered division of labor wherein men did most of the hunting and women did most of the farming. Because entire communities followed seasonal migrations within a recognized regional land base, housing generally consisted of wigwams constructed from bark and woven mats that were easily constructed and moved. The powwow, the central religious figure, was recognized for his or her ability to communicate with the spirit world. Religious practitioners also took on the role of healer.[4] Through tattooing, weaving, carving, dyeing, and countless other techniques, Native peoples marked out their relationship to kin, com-

2. Writings from this period are particularly underrepresented in literature courses. In *Teaching the Literature of Early America*, James Ruppert's essay on Native American materials devotes approximately one of its thirteen pages to historic Native American materials (that is, written texts); the rest is devoted to an introduction to oral materials. We recognize that because oral texts pose a greater challenge to scholars trained in traditional Western genres, they require extensive treatment; however, in our discussions with colleagues, we have found that even the more familiar forms of Native American Christian sermons, speeches, and confessions are perceived as difficult to integrate into new and existing courses.

3. Bragdon, *Native People*, 26.

4. In addition to subsequent chapters in this anthology, see ibid. and Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, two excellent studies of early Algonquian peoples of New England; for more detailed entries on specific groups and periods, see volume 15 of the *Handbook of North American Indians*, edited by Bruce Trigger (in a series edited by William Sturtevant).

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munity, and spirit world, communicating across time and space about all that mattered to them long before and well after the arrival of European colonizers.

Because these cultural practices were not associated with anything that clearly resembled European literacy, however, scholars have long believed that the earliest literature of colonial New England was limited to what Anglo-Americans wrote and that the indigenous cultures that Anglo-Americans first encountered in New England were strictly oral in nature. Although oral exchange certainly played a central role in Algonquian cultures of the Northeast, recent scholarship has worked to complicate this overly neat division between oral and literate culture. Certainly stories, religious beliefs, and political exchanges were expressed orally and transmitted from one generation to another in a form that was highly ritualized and clearly central to preserving the immediacy and intimacy of communal life. At the same time, material objects played—and continue to play—a significant role in Algonquian communicative practices. Burial goods, basket patterns, pictographs, mats that line the interiors of wigwams, and even utensils reinforce oral exchanges with physical inscriptions whose functions, although quite varied, always communicate something to members of the communities in which they are produced.[5] In fact, to insist on an oral/print cultural divide in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is nonsensical in any number of ways: Puritans employed oral practices (and adapted Indian oral traditions to their own literature, as Laura Arnold Leibman argues in her essay herein), and Indians used various inscription technologies from their own traditions and readily integrated these practices into pen-and-ink inscriptions.

When we shift our focus from Western cultural assumptions about the supremacy of alphabetic literacy, however, there is much debate over what actually constitutes writing: Are carvings or painted images part of literary systems? Are pictures? Clothing? Tattoos? Weaving? Is there a difference between what one study calls "complex iconography" and a "writing system"?[6] Indeed, the question of what, exactly, constitutes "reading," "writing," and even "text" is central to this collection. Our decision to include material objects as

5. Tribal historians Melissa Jayne Fawcett and Gladys Tantaquidgeon have pointed out the ways that Mohegan basket weavers, even well into the eighteenth century, communicated among themselves about community identity and the political divisions within their tribe through painted basketry motifs that represented tribal unity and dispersal ("Symbolic Motifs," 98–101, 115–16). In her brief essay about Wampanoag home-building practices, Linda Coombs, of the Wampanoag Indigenous Program at Plimoth Plantation, explains how significant meaning in Native productions is tied up in the technologies of production: "To Native thinking, the ceremonial cannot be separated from the practical. The homes are much, much more than a list of materials or the utilization of certain techniques" ("Ancient Technology").

6. Boone and Mignolo, *Writing without Words*, 6.

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well as products of "pure" alphabetic literacy reflects our sense that an overly strict definition of literacy unnecessarily restricts the full exploration of all early American literature, especially early Native literature. Moreover, it is important to recognize the fluid intersections of various ways of writing. As Lisa Brooks argues, "Transformations occurred in Native writing when the European system of recording and sending words entered Native space. Birchbark messages became letters and petitions, wampum council records became treaties, journey pictographs became written 'journals' that contained similar geographic and relational markers, and finally, histories recorded on birchbark and wampum became written communal narratives."[7] Most of the texts included in this anthology register such transformations. It is our contention that new scholarship must open the door not only to markers of such re-visioning but also to evidence of new uses of Western modes of writing.

A History of Early Native Alphabetic Literacy in New England

Whereas today we may recognize various structures of literacy embedded within Algonquian culture, English colonists showed less interest in exploring such alternative forms. Because indigenous systems were illegible to colonists, the colonizers dismissed and diminished such markers, as they destroyed, outlawed, or co-opted relics, ceremonial practices, hand-crafted goods, and technologies. The attempted erasure of indigenous literacy systems is one of the terrible legacies of conquest. However, the persistence of such systems and their integration into European models of literacy, as seen in journals, baskets, artifacts, wills, petitions, and other texts included in this collection, is a testament to the cultural resilience of the Algonquian people of New England. As it turns out, 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.

Incorporating new forms of literacy was no small task for indigenous people in colonial New England, and the fact that, among others, Mohegans, Narragansetts, Pequots, and Wampanoags maintained their indigenous cultural practices in the face of English (and later U.S.) colonialism is nothing short of remarkable. As students of the "New England tribes" know well, Christian evangelism, particularly as practiced by Puritan missionaries such as John Eliot, was one of the most potent forces working against Indian cultural survival. Eliot immigrated to Massachusetts in 1631 and shortly after his arrival became the minister at Roxbury, where he served until his death in 1690. Although

7. L. Brooks, "The Common Pot," 12.

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missionaries argued that theirs was an errand of Christian benevolence, their work was made possible by (and helped to justify) military conquest. Some scholars have argued that the devastating Pequot War of 1636 to 1637 cleared the way for Eliot's evangelism by breaking Indian resistance to the colonizer's presence and by completing the devastation of kinship ties and other means of cultural stability begun by the waves of disease introduced by contact with the earliest European explorers.[8] Indeed, Eliot's first Indian translator was a Pequot War captive.[9]

Eliot began his evangelical work among Indians in the mid-1640s. He believed, as did most leading Puritans in New England, that his evangelical project had to be accompanied by a "civilizing" mission: that Indians had to be humanized before they could be Christianized. To that end, he helped to institute laws meant to supplant traditional customs and settle converts and their kin into "praying towns," which the English intended as communities that would give praying Indians limited self-rule while ensuring colonial control over a previously "wild" people. Between 1650 and 1671, some fourteen praying towns, including Natick, were established.

This phase of evangelical colonization in New England came to an end in 1675 with King Philip's War. During this widespread conflict (some 5 percent of settler colonists and up to 40 percent of Native residents were killed),[10] Native alphabetic literacy came under intense colonial scrutiny. For some colonists, the conflict proved the folly of Eliot's attempts to Christianize a "savage" people. In his history of the war, the Reverend William Hubbard recommended the extermination, rather than the attempted assimilation, of Indians. Indeed, for some colonial observers, the fact that enemy Indians employed their literacy skills in service to King Philip became proof positive that Indians would turn the most Christian of skills to diabolical ends.

Setting aside such Indian-hating judgments, what can we see as the legacy of the earliest Native alphabetic literacy in New England? Eliot believed (in good Protestant style) that literacy would be an important and effective evan-

8. The Pequot War, although brief, was decisive, ending in a massacre of Pequot women, children, and noncombatant men at present-day Mystic, Connecticut. Colonial law forbade Pequot survivors to identify themselves as Pequots, and captives were sold into slavery; many were shipped away from their homes to the West Indies. For a general history of the war, see Cave, *The Pequot War*. For arguments by scholars who contend that the Pequot War and the colonial mission effort were bound together, see Jennings, *The Invasion of America* (especially "'We Must Burn Them'" and "Apostles to the Indians"), and Salisbury, "Red Puritans," 31. On conversion as a response to death and disease, see D. Morrison, "A Remnant Remaines," in *A Praying People*, and Robert James Naeher, "Dialogue in the Wilderness."

9. See Tooker, *Eliot's First Indian Teacher*.

10. On the devastation of the war, see Salisbury's introduction to Rowlandson's *Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, 1.

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gelical tool. Working with his Indian "assistants" John Sassamon, Job Nesuton, and James Printer, he created a written form of Massachusett, along with an accompanying grammar primer, which was widely used well after his particular mission ended and which made possible many of the materials collected in this anthology. Indeed, the achievements of Eliot and his translators in the mission field most notably include the publication of an "Indian library," made up of religious documents—including the first Bible printed in North America—in the Massachusett language.

For Eliot and other New England missionaries, appropriate conversion involved replacing Native religious and cultural practices, which missionaries either misunderstood or devalued, with English Protestant religious practices, civil organizations, and English ideologies. David Hall's *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment* and works by other scholars have emphasized the link between alphabetic literacy and Christianity in Protestant New England, where primers served as catechisms and the Bible was an introductory reader.[11] For white Protestants in New England, religion was linked to literacy, which was linked to culture or, more specifically, to English culture. Not surprisingly, then, given the close connection between Christianity and literacy training, many of the Native-authored documents of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are religious in nature. From marginalia in the Massachusett-language Bible to church records to Native confessions, Christianity suffuses much of the written work of early Native authors.

It is tempting to dismiss such texts as inauthentic and reflecting solely the English colonial perspective. Yet as culturally arrogant as Eliot and other missionary writers were, their work provided a means by which Christian Indians could speak their experiences in ways that ensured their survival and continue to make those experiences available to modern readers. Thus, whatever the intentions of English missionaries may have been, along with the particular set of publications that Eliot and his cohort produced, what emerged from the attempt to codify the Massachusett language in the mid-seventeenth century was a mechanism useful to Native communities that existed within a colonial world. Indeed, as Ives Goddard and Kathleen Bragdon, modern scholars of the Massachusett language, argue in *Native Writings in Massachusett*, "From the time of their first introduction in the mid-seventeenth century . . . the functions of reading and writing were modified [by Native readers and writers] to fit native needs, and defined according to traditional concepts."[12]

11. See for example, Patricia Crain's *The Story of A* and E. Jennifer Monaghan's *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America*.

12. Goddard and Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusett*, 20.

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A variety of Native-authored works were produced throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the alphabetically rendered Massachusett language. Despite the preponderance of religious texts, moreover, some of the most intriguing documents from the period are those that merge various systems of literacy in secular productions such as treaties, deeds, and wills. Unlike their English neighbors, Massachusett speakers imbued many of their documents with distinctly oral elements. Thus, although such legal documents met the criteria for validity under English law, they also contained elements of traditional Native practices,[13] making them in many ways multicultural documents legible within several cultural systems. These elements are particularly evident in the Wampanoag communities of Martha's Vineyard, which were at once enmeshed in the colonial world and developing in their own particular way on an island occasionally removed from such devastating events of colonial history as King Philip's War. In 1727 the missionary Experience Mayhew produced an unprecedented biographical study of more than one hundred Wampanoag residents of Martha's Vineyard;[14] this work together with the carefully maintained land deeds and other transactions between the Wampanoag population and the colonial settlers number among the extraordinarily rich resources of Martha's Vineyard for the study of Algonquian literacy practices, both written and other.

Even after the practice of translating and printing Massachusett-language texts slowed almost to a standstill in the early eighteenth century and as Algonquian communities became increasingly fragmented through devastating economic hardship, disease, and the relentless encroachments of English colonists, alphabetic literacy in Algonquian communities persisted. Handwritten documents in Massachusett continued to be exchanged for much of the rest of the century and traces of a literacy practice that was valued in Algonquian communities are evident in the English-language petitions included in this anthology.

Our focus on the usefulness of literacy to Algonquians who lived under colonization in no way mitigates the violence that underpinned English efforts to bring literacy to Native individuals and their communities. However well Indian writers deployed their new literacies, we must recognize the strong elements of colonial exploitation that circumscribed English efforts. Especially

13. Ibid., 14–16.

14. See Leibman's forthcoming edition of Experience Mayhew's *Indian Converts* and Silverman's *Faith and Boundaries*.

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in the transcribed and translated documents that characterize much Native writing from the colonial period, we must be alert to questions of coercion. As David Murray argues in his essay herein, "Even in cases involving the most honest and benevolent intentions, the act of 'speaking for' brought with it the limitations and contradictions of the paternalistic and protective stance that successive white authorities adopted." Certainly such limitations and contradictions are present in the statements that most obviously reflect the mediation of English writers: testimony in criminal trials and confession narratives in which white writers paraphrased or transcribed the statements of Native peoples. Even here, however, we may find valuable additions to the early archive of Native literature.

Reading early church, court, and execution statements against the grain for evidence of the experiences and even authorship of Native peoples is an exercise in caution. Every word can be seen alternatively as a marker of self-expression—buried though it may be—or as a signal of white biases and audience expectations. Even so, the struggle to understand these texts as part of the corpus of early Native writings can focus contemporary readers on the need for constant attention to such issues in this and all early modern literature. In fact, even texts that individuals wrote themselves, which seem to meet Western standards of authorship or form, should be read as part of a continuum that contains many other forms and means of expression, unquestionably including autonomous writings. Obviously coerced statements, on one hand, can be read for traces of resistance and, on the other, can alert us to the limitations that seemingly independent writers faced.

Nowhere is this reading practice more important than with documents produced by students or former students in the missionary boarding schools of New England. Arguably the most significant—certainly the most widely known—examples of early Native writing come from these schools. These institutions, infamous in the nineteenth century for their cruelty, were introduced quite early in New England as a "solution" to what the English perceived as the unsettled lifestyles of Indians. Nothing short of the erasure of indigenous culture was contemplated. In 1734 John Sergeant, a missionary to the Mahicans (later known as the Stockbridge Indians in western Massachusetts), devised a boarding school plan whose purpose was (in his own words) "to take such a *Method* in the Education of our *Indian Children*, as shall in the most effectual Manner change their whole Habit of thinking and acting; and raise them, as far as possible, into the Condition of a civil industrious and polish'd People."[15]

15. See Sergeant, *Letter to Dr. Colman*.

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In 1754, the white minister Eleazar Wheelock founded a charity school in Lebanon, Connecticut, based on Sergeant's (unsuccessful) plan. Wheelock's enthusiasm was drawn in part from his previous success with a Native pupil, the young Samson Occom. Disregarding the fact that Occom had come to him of his own volition as a nineteen-year-old already familiar with reading, writing, and the tenets of Christianity, Wheelock became convinced of the utility of a school like Sergeant's. He writes, "I am fully perswaded from the Acquaintance I have had with them [Indians], it will be found to be very difficult if not impossible to cure them of such savage and sordid Practices, as they have been inured to from their Mother's Womb, and form their Minds and Manners to proper Rules of Virtue, Decency and Humanity, while they are daily under the pernicious Influence of their Parents Example."[16] Wheelock's solution was to limit contact between parents and children, educate Native children alongside white charity students, and turn himself into the patriarch and disciplinarian of all—but especially his "Indian children."

Letters from Wheelock's students at Moor's Charity School in Lebanon, Connecticut, and later in Hanover, New Hampshire, have been preserved by Dartmouth College. The bulk of the letters are written by the boys and young men who were students in Wheelock's school and who eventually became teachers in Native communities: Among them are such figures as Joseph Johnson (Mohegan), David and Jacob Fowler (Montaukett), and Hezekiah Calvin (Delaware). Some letters also exist from the young women who attended the school for a certain period. These serve as a moving testament to the loneliness and other difficulties experienced by the students in Wheelock's school. Whatever his own assessments were, it is clear from these surviving letters that the Native perspective was quite different.

Wheelock's school, which was hardly an ideal situation for Native Americans, was the most visible and active missionary effort to reach Native populations in the mid-eighteenth century. It came as a shock, then, when (in the early 1770s) Wheelock publicly pronounced the effort a failure, moved his school to Hanover, New Hampshire, and focused on educating white students as missionaries in the newly founded Dartmouth College. His decision prompted reactions of surprise and dismay from many, not least his former student Samson Occom, who accused Wheelock of misappropriating funds and betraying Indians generally. It was arguably as a response to this betrayal that Joseph Johnson, Samson Occom, and other of Wheelock's former students went on to found a Native Christian community called Brotherton in upstate New York in the 1770s and early 1780s. This community, which found a home on

16. See Wheelock, *Plain and Faithful Narrative*, 25.

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land donated by the Oneida Tribe, was formed explicitly to give voice to Native Christians without the dominance of white missionaries.

Shortly after the American Revolution, Brotherton was joined by the community of New Stockbridge, led by Hendrick Aupaumut. Aupaumut, born in 1757, was not a boarding school student; he was a member of the Native community of Stockbridge in western Massachusetts to which Sergeant had ministered until his death in 1749 and in which Sergeant had attempted (and failed) to establish his own boarding school. Although the town had been formed explicitly as an experiment in cross-cultural exchange, the experiment quickly unraveled as white landowners sought to expand their holdings through shady transactions that were to the distinct disadvantage of their Indian neighbors. Shortly after the American Revolution, and after years of growing tensions between the English settlers and the Native population of Stockbridge, Aupaumut and most of the remaining Stockbridge Indians concluded that their future was no longer in that community; they believed that it lay instead in the Christian Indian community then being formed in upstate New York.

Any exploration of early Native literacies in New England must recognize above all the extraordinary contribution of the Brotherton and New Stockbridge founders to early literature. Their writings included here illustrate how effectively these indigenous leaders used their familiarity with English cultural practices (most notably alphabetic literacy) to forge what they saw as a stronger, "better" Indian community that could balance various knowledge systems, including more traditional literacies. It is with these writers that our brief chronology of early Native literacies ends. It is, however, one goal of this collection to persuade readers that the significance and vitality of early Native texts has never ended. The texts and essays in this collection attest to the many ways that Native literacies were, are, and will continue to be an important part of American culture and literature. Although the texts in this anthology have heretofore rarely counted as literature, it is our strong belief that they should.

Structure of the Anthology

We began our introduction by noting the fragmented nature of the early Native archive, the many special collections, museums, and state archives where early Indian materials can be found today. Modern anthologies cannot (and this collection does not aim to) bring together scattered materials into one "master" archive. The ongoing work of tribal historians, academic scholars, linguists, and others, however, attests to the fact that new understanding can

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come from unexpected places. Literary scholars can learn about Native tropes from discussions of baskets; Wampanoag linguists can revitalize their twenty-first-century language by drawing on Eliot's mission writings of the 1660s.[17] We hope, then, that by presenting a range of materials for our readers, we expand the ways of knowing not only about the Native past of New England but also about the basis for its future.

The reader will encounter the primary texts collected in this anthology in three or four ways. First, we have organized the selections into chapters focused on separate tribal groups. From the many ways that we could have organized these texts (chronologically, generically, and so forth), we have chosen to group two or three texts with their accompanying essays in their specific cultural context. Each chapter, then, can serve as a free-standing exploration of the literary practices of a particular group, set within the more comprehensive study of early New England Native literacies that the collection presents as a whole.

Within these chapters each document or artifact is prefaced by a brief headnote describing its physical characteristics or the means of its production. The headnote is followed by the edited text, which is sometimes accompanied by a photograph of the original. Finally, each text is accompanied by a short critical essay that situates the text in its cultural, historical, and literary context and offers an expert reading of the text. The accompanying essays, which are intended as a means for the uninitiated to explore these materials, also provide strategies for introducing them into the classroom. None of the essays is meant to offer the final word on any text; they represent, instead, a variety of approaches and interpretations—even some that conflict.[18] Although we perceive this collection as speaking most directly to students of literature, the contributors are drawn from a variety of disciplines, and even those scholars who are most closely aligned may differ in their approach to mediation, the definition of literacy, or the glossing of primary texts. The result is a productive friction that suggests possible readings of long-neglected primary texts, inviting new readers of the texts to construct their own understanding of early Native literacies.

We have asked the contributors to use as light a hand as possible in editing the primary texts. In general, spelling and punctuation have been preserved. For manuscript materials, insertions and strikeouts have been indicated. The result may at times seem inelegant, but we believe that minimal editorial in-

17. See Hinton and Hale, *Green Book*.

18. For ways of theorizing alternative Native literacy systems, see Warkentin, "In Search of 'The Word of the Other,'" 1–27; Boone and Mignolo, *Writing without Words*; McMullen and Handsman, *Key into the Language of Woodsplint Baskets*.

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tervention yields a primary text that allows readers and researchers to gain the clearest and closest view of the original document.[19]

Finally, those who are interested in a Native past must look to modern Native communities. From the Internet to books, articles, film, novels, powwows, community ceremonies, and many other forms, Native people of contemporary New England have much to say about the ways the past informs the present and the future. We hope that this anthology will serve in some small way to educate all of us to listen and learn in that ongoing conversation.

19. For a comparison of different editorial styles, contrast the edition of Samson Occom's "Temperance and Morality Sermon" prepared by Heather Bouwman and included herein with the version that Bouwman edited with several graduate students included in the Early Americas Digital Archive.

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