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MEMORY LANDS



KING PHILIP'S WAR AND THE PLACE OF
VIOLENCE IN THE NORTHEAST

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Introduction

Placemaking and Memorializing After the Great Watershed

"[I]t is difficult to escape the shadow it casts," Colin Calloway has written of King Philip's War, the "great watershed" in New England Native and colonial history. "[W]e cannot study Indian New England prior to 1675 without the knowledge of the destruction to come; after the war, things are never the same again."¹ King Philip's War reshaped the Northeast in three years, destroying English settlements and decimating or dispersing diverse Native inhabitants from ancestral homelands, areas already affected by decades of colonial presence and epidemic disease. The conflict has lingered in collective remembrances because it forces confrontations with fundamental aspects of identity, heritage, and purpose. How do individuals and communities reckon with a past of almost unspeakable cruelties and dispossessions, the effects of which have persisted through centuries of racialized thinking and policy-making? How do they—we—conceive of ourselves as complicit in these violences, or as witnesses, victims, survivors of them? "Bitter memories of King Philip's War lingered for many years along the New England frontier," John Demos has written.² Yet scholarship has only begun to investigate the ways in which this crisis and Indigenous resistance movement entered into private and collective memories, permeating the emotional lives and shaping the political persuasions of peoples in the Northeast and beyond.³

This book is a study of the "shadow," an examination of the protracted cultural, material, socioeconomic, and political legacies of this era of struggle. It makes two principal arguments. First, it challenges the idea that the colonial period and its violences are matters of the distant past, tracking instead their enduring influence in modernity, and the contemporary persistence of settler colonialism—structures of dominance and subjugation premised on continuing

territorial dispossession of Indigenous populations. Second, it contends that remembrance of historical violence *takes place*: understandings of contested pasts take shape in relation to particular landscapes, material features of the world, and politically defined territories. Over the centuries, certain places have been deemed significant and transformed into “sites of memory,” while others (like zones of Native refuge and survivance) have been treated as marginal, eventually pushed to the sides of historical and geographical consciousness by the majority of New Englanders and scholars, though tribal descendants have frequently maintained alternative accounts. Places are intrinsically dynamic, however. They are perpetually being modified by human communities and by the earth itself, and may be reanimated after long periods of apparent dormancy. By getting back into place, into specific terrain, rivers, swamps, islands, and cities of the Northeast, we can begin to better comprehend those secret, semihidden, or willfully forgotten contours of early America that still weigh so heavily on the present.

This war and its legacies attained academic prominence in the late 1990s with publication of Jill Lepore’s *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity*.⁴ The book won the Bancroft Prize for distinguished scholarship in American history and has remained a standout reference on the topic. The study aimed high in its assessment of the war’s consequences, discerning roots of a peculiarly “American” opposition of “Indian” and “English” identities and their supposedly concomitant practices of savagery and literacy. But in its aspirations to diagnose national *mentalité* and mythos, *The Name of War* slighted the subtler shifts occasioned by this convulsion: its effects at the levels of colony, state, town, tribe, reservation, family. Its intense focus on the rhetoric of war also overlooked the manifold ways that nonlinguistic dimensions of human experience, like material culture, bodily performance, and the physical environment, have contoured grassroots senses of the past. An array of “minor” yet critical sites spread between Long Island Sound and the St. Lawrence River figured nowhere in its calculus of memory. Yet *The Name of War*’s premises have not been fundamentally challenged in the nineteen years since its publication—despite the fact that remembrance has been contested throughout the Northeast and transnationally in ways its paradigm can scarcely accommodate, and despite resounding historiographical rejections of “Indian” generalizing in Native and New England assessments of identity and place.⁵ For more than three centuries, tribal members, avocational historians, custodians of public memory-sites, and even academics have engaged in practices of recall that have little to do with elite print culture or concerns of the U.S. nation-state yet hold paramount importance for community articulations of belonging and collective purpose.

This book revisits the Northeast to track how practices of placemaking have helped conserve or erase diverse local understandings of King Philip’s War.⁶ It approaches these chorographic links between time and space through the concept of memoryscapes: constellations of spots on the land that have accrued stories over time, transforming them from seemingly blank or neutral spaces into emotionally infused, politically potent places.⁷ Moving from “time out of mind” to the early twenty-first century (with emphasis on the seventeenth), and drawing upon methodologies from Indigenous studies, ethnohistory, geography, environmental history, literary studies, and material culture studies, this book demonstrates that getting back into place—acknowledging that people produce history and memory in specific sites—is critical to understanding the divergences that distinguish community memories and identities. It is also paramount for recognizing the concrete repercussions for territorial control that are the bedfellows of *topophilia*, attachment to place. Lands and waters lay at the heart of early American encounters as Indigenous residents and European arrivals negotiated rights and struggled openly for influence over terrain. In the centuries since, these grounds have remained contested: adjudicated, managed, commodified, “improved,” moralized, aestheticized, sacralized. The fallout has been monumental. Dislocated peoples have longed and labored to recapture ancestral geographies or install spatial orders that appear more just, using tactics conciliatory and radical.

A place-based approach also restores the multidimensional quality of remembrance overlooked in histories reliant primarily on written records. Ordinary people across the region have persistently formed meaningful relationships with the past using voice, body, land, and objects, in addition to texts. To recover this unstable milieu where land is a potent vector of memory production is to restore a dimension of cultural practice oftentimes unseen and unheard. It is to access meanings negotiated not solely through words and icons but produced out on the earth itself through activities like walking, paddling, meeting, and speaking at salient points. “[W]e must return memory to the world,” philosopher Edward Casey has urged, arguing that remembrance is an irreducibly emplaced phenomenon. For historians of memory, this return can begin by working longitudinally: digging deep in small places over long time spans and engaging a more expansive source base of artifacts, dwellings, rituals, and other gestures of human expression that gather in unique contexts.⁸ By journeying through a selection of “minor” sites in the Northeast, this book probes under-recognized locales that illuminate vernacular geographies of remembrance, mourning, protest, and regeneration, all in a region still invested in a strong

self-image of historical innocence. Memory, the means by which individuals and groups conserve the past and mobilize it for present and future uses, is not treated here as an ersatz or faulty version of history. Memory has its own logic and faculties for recalling, forgetting, or silencing the past. It merits serious consideration as a form of knowledge, particularly among communities that have valued nonwritten strategies for transmitting the past to posterity.

The insistent refrain of this project is that localization is crucial to understanding historical and memorial developments. I do recognize that a few generalizations can be useful tools for orientation, given that the Native Northeast may be *terra incognita* to those outside the tribal communities who call this place home and to a circle of ethnohistorical scholars. Over the centuries, Native and non-Native approaches to reckoning with the effects of colonialism have demonstrated signal differences. During King Philip's War itself—a slippery thing to define at every turn, from its very name, to its causes, to its starting and ending points—an initial string of Native victories in 1675 and early 1676 gave way to English military successes that resulted in the death of the Pokanoket Wampanoag leader King Philip, or Metacom (sometimes spelled Metacomet), in August 1676, followed by English military dominance in southern New England. Fighting in the “eastward” parts of Wabanaki country (New Hampshire and Maine) continued through 1677 with more Native successes, before formally ceasing with a 1678 treaty.⁹ Though the war devastated dozens of English settlements and saddled survivors with staggering debts that constrained the colonies for years, Anglo-Americans profited from the war. Veterans received monetary payments and land grants for their service. Colonial settlers pushed much deeper into the interior after Native military power had been constrained, and certain tribal communities directed to remain within reservationlike enclaves. Colonial households benefited from the labor of Native prisoners-of-war put to work as slaves and servants.

Puritans and their secularized Yankee heirs mobilized their print culture resources to produce a series of published narratives about the war's meanings, notably Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682), and dueling accounts by the Massachusetts ministers Increase Mather (1676) and William Hubbard (1677). Editors published and republished their narratives well into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, adding new prefaces, illustrations, and emendations that reflected the changing values “Indian War” held for successive generations. The war retained a hold on colonial imaginaries despite the passing years, and writers developed

intense mythologies about it and the figure of Philip, using poetry, romance, novels, and printed histories to circulate often fanciful interpretations. Literary luminaries took up the war as a formative subject, along with thousands of less recognized writers. As antiquarians founded historical societies, built museums, “played Indian” in historical pageants, and installed a profusion of monuments all over the regional terrain in boulders and bronze, they also obsessively “mapped virtually every action in King Philip's War on the landscape,” and “mounted a virtual cult of King Philip” (fig. 3).¹⁰ Place-sense was



Figure 3. Euro-American antiquarians frequently gathered at sites believed to be associated with King Philip's War, as they fashioned colonial versions of local and regional memory. On these occasions they delivered orations, read poetry, sometimes collected material culture traces, and overwhelmingly attempted to inscribe these locales as sites bespeaking Indigenous downfall. In this photograph from the late nineteenth century, members of the Worcester Society of Antiquity posed with “Redemption Rock” in a commemoration of Mary Rowlandson's wartime captivity and eventual return. Whether the sizable geological formation was the actual site of this exchange in 1676, or if it attained that designation later, the place was a critical point in Nipmuc geographies near the important refuge area of Mount Wachusett. The photograph appeared in Samuel Hathaway's *History of Redemption Rock* (1898). (Image courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society)

vital to them. They sought to create cultural myths and symbolic roots for the young American republic and especially for New England, and defining the signature characteristics of regional landscapes was an expedient method.

Commentators occasionally confronted the moral quandaries posed by their founding myths. But the result was generally filiopietistic histories, colonial ancestor-worship that valorized conquest of Natives during King Philip's War, even as it dutifully lamented the scale of destruction.¹¹ Yankee communities profited materially from continuous territorial expansion into Algonquian homelands, creating atop and amid them a patchwork of towns, farms, and ports. When new waves of foreign migrants began to alter regional demography, efforts to assert Anglo-American heritage and hegemony only intensified, with xenophobic undercurrents poorly disguised. Mills, mansions, summer resorts, and other features of modernizing, industrializing New England took shape on the very grounds of historical violence, with the ironic bourgeois twist of naming exclusive privatized property after Native peoples who had been forcibly dispossessed or relocated: the Metacomet Country Club in East Providence, Rhode Island, the Wampanoag Golf Course in Swansea, Massachusetts. Owing to this casual yet endemic colonialism—which simultaneously took pride in Philip and Algonquians as cultural touchstones of the “noble savage” variety and trivialized them—today one can find room to live at the Metacom Condominiums or King Phillip [sic] Apartments, buy a car at King Philip Motors or Metacom Auto Sales, buy sporting goods at King Philip's Crossing (fig. 4), catch a game played by the King Philip Little League, go antique hunting at the King Philip Trading Post, or, in an especially unnerving twist, eat lunch at the King Philip (“KP”) Grill, where the menu has featured a cheese-steak sandwich called the King Philly.¹² This appropriative landscape rests on the premise that icons of brutal colonial conflict and Algonquian resistance are suitable fodder for marketing and consumption, and that there are not really Native people still around to be put out by it.

For Algonquian communities, the trajectory has often been different. King Philip's War wrought extraordinary damage, causing among certain groups dispersion from traditional homelands and resources, forced diaspora into domestic and Atlantic World slavery, indenture into colonial households as servants, and marginalization from the region's dominant politics and economies. A few tribal communities, like Mohegans and Pequots, briefly benefited from their wartime service as allies of and skilled scouts among English troops. But even they, and Algonquian communities who attempted to maintain wartime neutrality, were enmeshed in larger struggles with settler colo-



Figure 4. A Seekonk, Massachusetts, shopping plaza has been named “King Philip's Crossing” (shown here in 2010). This site forms one part of a multifaceted regional landscape premised on commercial invocations of Indigenous pasts, particularly the well-known figure of Philip/Metacom himself. Most signage and branding makes little reference to the realities of historical Algonquian geographies or the detrimental consequences of the conflict they promote. (Photograph by Christine DeLucia)

nialism that pressured the entire Native Northeast, regardless of status as “friend Indians.” Postwar diminishment of tribal territories through colonial purchases, *de facto* encroachment, and outright fraud impelled many members to relocate to farms, cities, and ports, taking jobs as basket makers, traveling herbalists, whalers, industrial workers, domestic laborers, and an assortment of other pursuits.¹³ Considerable numbers intermarried with neighbors of different backgrounds, including other so-called people of color. Such miscegenation tended to affect succeeding generations' physical appearances in ways that confounded non-Natives accustomed to constrained

genetic notions of “blood” and physiognomy as markers of authentic indigeneity. These movements and minglings exacerbated Indigenous language loss, while social stigmas against indigeneity sometimes led to public denials of tribal heritage. Yet through the centuries, Algonquians did not vanish. Nor did they irremediably lose or discard cultural traditions and knowledge about the past. The endurance of robust oral traditions and place-knowledge is clear in myriad places, as are newer practices that maintain cultural links to sensitive sites and stories—not dismissed here as mere “invented traditions,” but understood as evidence of the inherent malleability of culture.¹⁴ Algonquians sometimes dressed and acted in ways that directly engaged with non-Native preconceptions of indigeneity, drawing upon pan-Indian regalia and rituals to make themselves legible to Yankee neighbors.¹⁵ They also selectively used English-language literacy and Westernized institutions like archives and museums to give semipublic faces to their versions of the past.¹⁶ While certain of their accountings have been circulated and sustained within tribal communities, they have not always percolated out to the “mainstream,” and at times have been strategically concealed from those larger publics.

While overarching narratives provide a general picture, they are only marginally useful for assessing finer-grained transformations. Tribal communities have each followed distinctive trajectories. Among the diverse Algonquian groups and nations of the Northeast—Massachusetts, Wampanoags, Narragansetts, Niantics, Quinnipiacs, Mohegans, Pequots, Schaghticoques, Pocumtucks, Pennacooks, Nipmucs, Penobscots, Abenakis, and others—some constructed monuments and museums of their own. Others did not. Some developed intricate ties with Euro-American neighbors; others kept more distance. Some have been scrutinized and written about at length by anthropologists and ethnohistorians, while others have been spared those attentions. Some had their inherent sovereignty affirmed through a tortuous process of U.S. federal recognition. Others have been denied that status or hold state-level recognition, with variable consequences for economic support, political standing, and ability to hold land. Some developed high-stakes casino gaming in the late twentieth century that rapidly reshaped tribal economies and capacities to broadcast culture to wider audiences; others have rejected gaming or been legally precluded from it. Differences cleave minutely, being distinct not only from tribe to tribe but also between families, kin-groups, neighborhoods, and individuals. Similarly localized differentiations hold for non-Indigenous communities as well.

This book is ultimately interested in the *intersections* among these groups: the sites where they encounter and challenge each other, responding dialecti-

cally to each other's heritage practices. Frequently Natives have protested non-Native ideologies and behaviors, invoking rhetoric that accentuates political, cultural, ethnic, and/or racial divides, where articulations of difference matter acutely. In other cases, surprising coalitions have taken shape to develop partially consensual interpretations of the past. “Collaboration” can seem an apt description for these latter situations. But the term is loaded. As Narragansett Tribe and Rhode Island State historic preservation officers pointed out in a coauthored essay, *Webster's Dictionary* gives multiple meanings for “collaborate,” the first two of which are: “1. to work jointly with others or together, especially in an intellectual endeavor; 2. to cooperate with or willingly assist an enemy of one's country and especially an occupying force.”¹⁷ In a region still strongly shaped by settler colonialism, “collaborative” arrangements ought to be viewed as pragmatic, time- and site-specific connections that proceed imperfectly, rather than as long-term, finalized agreements to dissolve differences—or as bids for reconciliation, a perhaps premature endeavor in places where cultural conflict still seethes and where foundational political dilemmas about the exercise of Indigenous sovereignty remain profoundly unresolved.

Whether co-construction of past, place, and memory has been openly acknowledged is a thorny matter. The actors involved have not always perceived a cross-cultural dialectic at work, or have not considered previous iterations of a memoryscape as the impetus for their revisions, preferring to view their efforts as arising *sui generis*, in an original way. Some revisions or challenges to inherited forms of remembrance have taken years, even centuries, to coalesce, meaning that a sense of back-and-forth negotiation acquired a protracted quality that is hard to perceive. Or there has been a political imperative to presenting memory and tradition as unbroken lineages rather than as relatively new or revived creations. To acknowledge interruption or forgetting can appear to undermine claims of authenticity or legitimacy. Place is a useful lens for dialectical analysis because a place never belongs to one group: there are always multiple claimants, passers-through, and understandings of the same physical setting. By structuring this study along the lines of distinctive places, I delve into these ongoing interactions and the co-construction of meaning at the most granular level: the evolving materiality and significance of this island, that swamp, those fishing places.

This granular level of analysis has not always been popular in academic history writing. While antiquarians of the nineteenth century probed corners they knew intimately, the professionalization of history as a discipline bred disdain for such postage stamp-sized perspectives. Historians pushed away

from the local in favor of larger frameworks of the nation-state, empire, hemisphere, and globe. Even the influential community studies that drove 1970s social history ultimately were interested in how small places exemplified larger processes and trends. But in the transit from the small to the large, something fell by the wayside. For early Americanists, the rise of Atlantic World frameworks audaciously spanning an ocean and several continents has been fruitful for certain inquiries, but also strikingly devoid of grounded accounts of the actual locales involved. "It is time to consider what is lost by continuing to privilege bigger histories of early America over smaller histories attentive to local and regional place," Karen Halttunen has argued, calling for early Americanists to pay better attention to the minute qualities of the place-worlds of those who inhabited them.¹⁸

Her call for (re-)localization of historical scholarship resonates with the spatial turn's insistence that we cannot think of space as a neutral or inert backdrop to the drama of history. Space has been reenvisioned as an active force in the shaping of history, and as continuously produced by history. As we now see time as having relative qualities, so too has space become reunderstood as fluid, changing over time, appearing distinctive to individuals and communities. There is not a single essential space, but multiple, proliferating, competing spaces, each brought into being through specific cultural behaviors and representational technologies. Spatially attuned historical studies realize that events happen differentially over geography—activities cluster in certain areas but not others—and, without being environmentally determinist, seek to explain the unevenness of historical action: why things happen *here* and not *there*.¹⁹ They also recognize that social power constitutes itself spatially, through the definition and policing of national and state borders, neighborhoods, reservations, and private property.²⁰ "Space" can be distinct from "place," and while scholars from multiple disciplines tangle over the terms' respective meanings, the former might denote a more abstract, geometric display, detached from the experiences of any individual or group; the latter, a complex of emotional, affective, memorial investments.²¹

Place matters for remembrance of any violence, as studies about the Shoah, the U.S. Civil War, the western "Indian Wars," and other sites of struggle attest.²² What makes place an especially powerful lens in the case of King Philip's War is that the conflict itself involved major questions of territorial authority. The massive Indigenous dispossessions and diasporas that took place in its lead-up and aftermath meant that the war's violences were bound up with fundamental questions of *where*: where certain people could legitimately live,

where they could safely access lands and waters, where they could conduct ceremonies and pursue sustenance. Since the Northeast is not yet a postcolonial region—the colonizers came, stayed, and put down roots—remembrance has unfolded within a framework of ongoing dispossession and continuance of a dominant spatial order of privatized property and state control that runs counter to many tribal communities' own sensibilities about homelands.²³

In reckoning with human connections to place, I emphasize deep-seated ties that Algonquians have maintained with their homelands, despite colonial intrusions and appropriations. While Euro-American settlers also formed profound ties, Native place-connections have added intensity because they involve conceptions of *arising from* particular landscapes at creation, or having migrated there in "time out of mind," as relayed in origin stories—sacred, transhistorical, cosmological dimensions. Yet it is important to avoid characterizing Indigenous people as inextricable from place, effectively locked into single locales or diminished and inauthentic if they exercise mobility. The equation of Natives with stasis and Westerners with mobility is a pernicious commonplace, Arjun Appadurai has argued: "Natives are in one place, a place to which explorers, administrators, missionaries, and eventually anthropologists, come. These outsiders, these observers, are regarded as quintessentially mobile; they are the movers, the seers, the knowers. The natives are immobilized by their belonging to a place. Of course, when observers arrive, natives are capable of moving to another place. But this is not really motion; it is usually flight, escape, to another equally confining place."²⁴ Appadurai's contention, which criticizes the unwavering theoretical alliance of indigeneity and place as "incarceration," complements the emphasis on real, ingrained relations with earth and its beings. As this study demonstrates, many Northeastern Natives moved away from traditional homelands and reservations in an underrecognized "Algonquian diaspora," set in motion to a large degree by King Philip's War and related conflicts, but also propelled by their own volition and strategic adaptations to shifting circumstances. Far-flung sites like Wisconsin, Québec, Bermuda, the West Indies, and North Africa thereby came to figure into Algonquian postwar geographies, along with smaller intraregional migrations that brought them to new ports, cities, suburbs, rural areas, and tribal homelands. At the same time, Algonquians have cultivated ties to older homelands through commemorations, rituals, periodic visitations, and imaginative journeys, demonstrating that movement itself, and the paths and routes that underpin it, can constructively contribute to culture instead of undercutting or degrading it.²⁵

If “space” and “place” are volatile terms, so are “memory” and “history” commonplace yet contentious words. Since the rise of “memory studies” as a discrete field in the late twentieth century, they have frequently been characterized as oppositional. Memory can be the antihistory: local, vernacular, lived, animate, unfootnoted, quasi-religious, a presentist lens that refracts the past to suit contemporary needs. History can be academic, objective, dispassionate, footnoted, resolutely secular, un beholden to contemporary concerns in its treatment of the past.²⁶ Some academic historians delight in dismantling popular memory, using document-based research to poke holes in easy truisms and bring to light historical actualities that challenge sanguine folk views of the past. Or they critique memory as an ally of profiteering, disparaging the so-called “memory boom” and its tendencies to commodify the past through entrepreneurial pursuits like pricey museums and “tragedy tourism.”²⁷ This book proceeds partly in that vein, showing, for instance, how Yankee antiquarians conveniently ignored empirical information about enduring Natives in favor of simplistic “memory” of their vanishing, and profited from the display and interpretation of Native artifacts and knowledge. But that deconstructive—even destructive—approach to popular memory is not the whole story. And in almost every case, stark binaries pitting memory against history rapidly break down.²⁸

I view memory and history in the Northeast as mutually constitutive, operating in complex feedback loops. Memory can prod history into confrontations with uncomfortable chapters of the past. There are instances in which community memory kept alive the brutalities of colonialism, for example, while academic history sidestepped reckoning with them in favor of more palatable narratives. Memory can conserve real information that no documentary record has registered. Archaeologists frequently have consulted oral traditions about the locations of certain events when determining where to conduct their field surveys. In some communities history is trusted, verifiable, authoritative, while memory is untrustworthy, overly emotional, merely anecdotal. In others, memory holds more cultural currency and authoritative clout than written history, which is distrusted as out of touch with lived experiences, based on a woefully small subset of information that captures only a sliver of reality. While memory frequently is ascribed to Indigenous peoples (or “Others” aligned with oral modes of knowledge transmission), and history to Euro-Americans, those boundaries routinely collapse as well.

This book demonstrates how memory has shaped the writing of history, and vice versa, in such intricate ways that by the early twenty-first century they

are thoroughly intertwined. While it treats memories seriously, as legitimate ways of apprehending the past, it does not take them at face value, but instead explores their origins, transformations, and cultural functions within and beyond their home communities. This is thus a book about epistemology as well: how we know what we know about early American pasts. Unexpectedly, it developed into an investigation of the sources and sites that inform scholars and everyday people about that past. I realized en route that locating the materials of memory—the stories, anecdotes, heirlooms, monuments, maps, and other vernacular items that recall King Philip’s War in one way or another—ought to involve a truly widespread mode of research. Early Americanists tend to gravitate to a handful of archives in southern New England to conduct their research. I too have worked profitably at these venues. Yet much more lies in the “minor” archives of the Northeast, the hundreds or thousands of tiny public libraries, tribal museums, and local historical societies, which range from well-endowed institutions to trailers scarcely able to pay their electric bills. More than 140 of these sites have informed my analyses. These modest “memory houses” hold the manuscripts and ephemera hauled down from family attics that exist nowhere else. Their collecting practices are distinctive, and their cataloging systems even more so. As the label on one cabinet in the history room of the Conway, New Hampshire, public library candidly classifies its holdings: “Wicked Nifty Stuff.” More common are the “Indians” files, folders into which every manner of material on Native topics has been stuffed over the years—surely an instructive lens into mainstream mentalities about historicity and its actors.

Drawing on the multitudinous holdings of these heterogeneous archives, libraries, and museums, this study is also *about* those sites: how repositories originated, how collections developed, who has arbitrated what belongs inside, and what is not a rightful part of the official story. “There is no political power without control of the archive,” Jacques Derrida contended in *Archive Fever* about these acts of gatekeeping.²⁹ Archiving has been a cornerstone of New Englanders’ claims to territorial and political authority. From land deeds they semicarefully preserved, to sheaves of manuscripts that affirmed Anglo-American versions of Native-settler relations, to census records that selectively tabulated or erased tribal populations, Puritan and Yankee archivists used control of paper trails to bolster real-world hegemony. By developing a critical genealogy of archiving, this study demonstrates that the very sources upon which scholars rely to reconstruct Northeastern pasts have been inflected by historical contingencies and settler colonialism: papers and artifacts destroyed

intentionally and accidentally; curators who decided to not collect, or to deaccession, certain materials; the alienation of tribal communities from their own heritage objects, claimed and controlled by outsider repositories. Scholars recognize repositories in other parts of the world as politically fraught “imperial archives,” and that lens can also be productively turned on Northeastern sites.³⁰ At the same time, a smaller but notable group of Native repositories have also developed alternative practices of collection, management, interpretation, and access, implementing Indigenous preservationist and pedagogic sensibilities.³¹ All of these inform this book.

In *The Name of War*, Jill Lepore highlighted the transformative role language played in the war’s waging and remembrance, investigating how “acts of war generate acts of narration.”³² Written at a high point of the twentieth century’s “linguistic turn,” it made detailed contributions to understandings of the narrativization of violence. Indeed, it homed in on King Philip’s War as a convenient case study for observing the mechanisms of language’s relations to violence and race. “I’m interested in our capacity to justify acts of tremendous, unspeakable cruelty,” Lepore later remarked. “It’s not obvious, at least not to me. And the way I have always tried to puzzle it out is by thinking mainly about language. What, literally, is the vocabulary of justification?”³³ There was a casualness in the approach, at times more invested in the compelling narrative qualities and tropes of King Philip’s War than the particular conditions of colonialism and resistance in the Northeast: “In the end, of course, it is just another story about just another war. Happily, along the way it’s also a murder mystery, an adventure story, and a tale of peril on the high seas. King Philip’s War, like most bulky chunks of the past, is filled with fascinating characters, bizarre happenings, and strange tales.”³⁴

Yet language, especially as expressed in Western alphabetic form, is only a part of human experience. Alphabetic literacy was one among *many* modes of communication in early America, as a provocative wave of recent scholarship has amply demonstrated. Wampum belts, knotted string *quipus*, birch-bark scrolls, deerskin maps, brush heaps, petroglyphs, megaliths, and an immense array of other media also constituted crucial modes of signification and recollection—objects touched, held, recited from, visited, carefully maintained from one generation of knowledge-keepers to the next.³⁵ As a result of focusing tightly on narrative language, Lepore’s constrained methodology foreclosed important avenues of inquiry. “How those Algonquians who survived King Philip’s War commemorated and remembered the war is, sadly,

mere speculation,” *The Name of War* lamented.³⁶ This is misleading. Rich strands of evidence shed light on how diverse communities responded to and remembered the war, from its immediate aftermath onward. This evidence is readily available in documentary collections as well as more arcane unpublished materials, and in a plethora of sources that require different methodologies to unfold than textual close reading.

Consider: remembrance of King Philip’s War has taken place through oral accounts relayed through face-to-face encounters; performances, embodied and enacted; tangible and visible creations including public artwork, monuments small and large; layers of so-called graffiti; the material record explored by archaeologists; and especially human entanglements with physical surroundings—paths walked over and over, burial and sacred sites regularly visited, familiar rivers, ponds, and coastlines waded and paddled. Rituals of mourning, protest, solidarity, and conquest have been crucial aspects of negotiating this past, involving bodies in motion that sometimes leave behind few lasting imprints.³⁷ Artifacts and human remains circulated domestically and transatlantically—both real and specious ones, including King Philip’s alleged “war club” and “battle ax,” his samp (corn) bowl, his silver cup, his sash and mantle, the sword used to behead him, and parts of his bodily remnants. Though the war itself did not attain immediate visualization, the prolonged postwar period brought an efflorescence of illustrations, paintings, engravings, murals, public sculpture, even graphic novels and films. Visuality and materiality create unique fields of engagement that are distinct from the relationship of a solitary reader with a written text, and these relations cannot be simplistically distilled to discourse or narrative.³⁸

My particular interest is in the materiality of remembrance and the transformation of landscapes, which draws on the aforementioned objects and behaviors by considering how they function *in situ*. The production of landscape and memory has been dialectical, an ongoing reverberation between communities and places that builds, accretes, responds, generates new formations.³⁹ This dialectic has taken shape over a very long time span, though certain eras have seen frenzies of land clearing and monument erecting that briskly altered the morphology, or form and spatial structure, of landscape. Such things have been happening since “time out of mind,” as some tribal traditions describe their ancient pasts. When colonists and tribal members marked and recalled violences, they did not interact with a *tabula rasa*, *vacuum domicilium*, or pristine “wilderness.” The Northeast was already memorial terrain and had been for millennia. Origin stories about earth-shapers who created giant

landforms, navigational markings, stone and brush cairns, petroglyphs, megaliths, and ceremonial sites all contoured and animated the earth, and the memoryscapes of 1675–1678 took shape within those matrices. Consider the Wampanoag memorial practices described by English colonist Edward Winslow in 1624:

Instead of Records and Chronicles, they take this course, where any remarkable act is done, in memorie of it, either in the place, or by some path-way neere adjoining, they make a round hole in the ground about a foote deep, and as much over, which when others passing by behold, they enquire the cause and occasion of the same, which being once knowne, they are carefull to acquaint all men, as occasion serveth therewith. And lest such holes should be filled, or growne vp [with vegetation] by any accident, as men passe by they will oft renew the same. By which means many things of great Antiquitie are fresh in memory. So that as a man travelleth, if he can vnderstand his guide, his journey will be less tedious, by reason of the many historical Discourses [that] will be related to him.⁴⁰

Envision that. A vast memorial terrain dotted with holes in the earth, continuously being cleared, refreshed, and narrated by those who walked by, powerfully linking together ancestors and their descendants. While Natives were fluent in these mnemonic practices, Winslow was one of the rare colonial observers of Native landmarking to attribute to these constructions a legitimate status within systems of recording and knowledge-keeping.⁴¹ But overall these long-standing memoryscapes have remained undervisible to outsiders. Given that academic historians tend to work in diminutive increments of years or decades, reperiodizations are needed to accommodate these *longue durée* dialectics of place development.⁴²

Turning toward materiality brings challenges, certainly. In speaking of historical trauma, particularly of war and its extravagant brutalities, the notion of the “trace” can be consolatory, even seductive. It implies constraint upon remembrance, appearing to possess an irrefutable factuality that sets limits upon what can be said, or denied, about the past. When conventional written archives are absent or compromised, the material (especially landscape) trace may seem the lone remaining testament to what transpired at a site, an ineradicable witness exempt from coercion or faulty recollection. Landscape, as opposed to edited texts or airbrushed photographs, can “feel immutable,” Claudia Koontz has argued, giving an “impression of fixity.” Channeling

Maurice Halbwachs’s work on collective memory, she valued landscapes as historical artifacts for their apparent stability: “space is a reality that endures.”⁴³ Kent Ryden’s assessment of New England folkloric terrain echoed this conviction. The destruction of environmental traces is distressing, he wrote, because “stories cling to place, with such tenacity that the destruction of place threatens the entire structure—the fear is that stories will fly away unanchored, memory will dim, emotion will fade, identity will become tenuous if the geographical root is cut.”⁴⁴ This desire for the solid, witnessing trace may be a phenomenon of late modernity, or an inclination intensified by the twentieth century’s special violences and subsequent injunctions against forgetting and denial; or by the specter of unchecked renarrations of the past. There has been a surge of interest in what establishes the contours of historical writing: wariness of notions that “the past somehow speaks for itself,” but endorsement of the “conviction that the room for maneuver allowed to practicing research historians is not open or unbounded and it is the past’s traces that supply the confinement.”⁴⁵ “Artefacts matter,” Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan have argued: in “their absence . . . , memory work is much more arduous. Artefacts related to place enable the retrieval of dense memory traces, because they create ‘extrinsic context dependency.’”⁴⁶ In *The Archive of Place*, William Turkel tracked “the ways people retrieve the past from a place” and found that peculiar weight has been accorded to material traces to buttress claims to social memory.⁴⁷ Traces can carry outside authority to bear witness to a supposed past.

This book takes seriously the distinctive nature of the material trace as compared to language. But it also contends that traces of violence are not self-evident or self-explanatory. The presumed stability of the material trace may be more illusory than actual, as traces do not emerge from the earth so much as they are produced through historically, culturally specific actions of individuals and communities. This can seem counterintuitive. How could anyone argue with the foundation stones of a house, with charred kernels of corn at the bottom of archaeological test pits, with a line of metal bullets embedded in the ground? Surely these remnants must confirm that *here it was, here it happened*. Yet the very visibility and legibility of such traces depends on culturally inflected ways of seeing; on the tools used and questions asked by archaeologists, preservationists, community members; and on the meanings these groups seek to ascribe to physical remains and earthly features. It is possible to work toward greater inclusion of materialities in accountings of violence while steering away from mystification of how they “hold” memory or truth. Across the Northeast, harsh winters, humidity, and acidic soils all hasten

decay in distinctive ways. And the past four centuries have brought intensive remodeling of natural and built environments, accelerated in the twenty-first century, as construction of residential developments, highways and roads, shopping plazas, and industrial areas have all but bulldozed numberless soil layers. Yet archaeologist James Deetz has urged more creative searching for even the subtlest signs of past peoples: “in theory almost every person who lived in America left behind some trace of their passing. Perhaps a personal possession, now broken and buried, or a slave cabin in the forest covered with Virginia creeper, or a gravestone tilted by time but still speaking to us across the centuries, or something as humble as the remains of a meal consumed and forgotten—it is all there and we must not disregard it.”⁴⁸

Finally—crucially—materiality is not everything. Countless practices of placemaking hinge on *invisible* qualities, aspects of human connection to place that are not readily apparent to investigative eyes and leave no marks or only transient ones: walking, moving, enacting ritual. By overfocusing on the durable, visible, and tangible, Lisa Prosper has argued about Indigenous landscapes in First Nations / Canadian contexts, preservationists and critics “run the risk of paving over difference by overlooking the experience of those social actors whose relationship to the landscape is not materially evident,” when measured against conventional Western modes of assessing heritage value, like a fixation on ruins.⁴⁹ “*Any thing*—anything in the world, even the frailest footprint—can become memorial: can become a bearer of memories with as much right as a monument built to stand forever,” Edward Casey has written.⁵⁰ Extending the purview of memory studies to encompass this fuller range of memory-sparks, from the durable to the utterly ephemeral, invites reconsideration of the means through which Northeasterners pursued (or were pursued by) the past and its things.⁵¹

In 1786, historian Jeremy Belknap proclaimed that scholars of New England needed to immerse themselves in the grounds about which they wrote: “To be a true Geographer it is necessary . . . to be a Traveller & a Surveyor. To depend on distant & accidental Information is not safe & there is a material difference between describing a Place that We have seen & one that We have not seen.”⁵² His call for eyewitnessing is worth heeding. Becoming deeply immersed in land and water is an incomparable way of seeing sites’ nuances, webs of relations, and terms of human engagement. Places are always in flux, as this book emphasizes, so naively projecting present conditions upon the past can distort views of earlier environments. But the current state of affairs

in situ can be illustrative nonetheless. Based on a conviction that fieldwork ought to be an integral part of researching place and memory, I undertook an extensive journey. In the past dozen years, especially regular travels between 2007 and 2016 and a concentrated fifteen-month stretch of 2010 and 2011, I have sought out memoryscapes of the Northeast across tens of thousands of miles. I have generally submerged discussion of these itineraries to avoid the confessional excesses of travel memoirs, which tend to reveal more about authors’ neuroses (and automobile woes) than their subject matter. Yet personal attunement to the phenomenology of place unavoidably shapes the nature of research, thinking, and writing.⁵³

The following pages probe a dense map of sites, and I have attempted to visit as many as has been feasible. This meant climbing mountains, mucking through swamps, sliding across frozen streams, venturing down dirt roads and wooded paths, enduring island ferries with seasick tourists. Paddling canoes, getting mired in mud looking for garrison houses, bushwhacking through overgrown colonial cemeteries, gingerly stepping across abandoned beaver dams. I have skirted the margins of golf courses, been chased by dogs and trailed by security officers, slid down snow-covered hillsides, scrambled over seaside cliffs, navigated hairpin turns, swatted mosquitoes in archaeological sites—with a camera in hand when appropriate, which I used to visually document these sites in upward of thirteen thousand photographs. Some places were fresh to me. Others I knew previously but learned radically anew through the research process. Sometimes I walked and drove alone. Other times I traveled and listened in the company of townspeople, archaeologists, interpreters, landowners, tribal historians, and community members. When possible, I dwelled long enough in a given area to sense how the salt-marsh grass appears in the midday sun and in the failing dusk-light when the tide starts to change and the wind picks up. Many of the places featured here cannot be “seen” from the archives or the comfort of a computer chair. These environs have not all been photographed or imaged by satellites, despite the digital age’s pretensions to universal availability of information. Seeing them requires bodily exertion, dislocation from familiar habits of movement, and time-intensive immersion in the lived qualities of diverse worlds.

Hearing Indigenous perspectives on their own terms, on their own grounds, is an especially critical movement toward the kinds of “decolonizing methodologies” that early Americanist studies and American history urgently need.⁵⁴ The term “research” itself “is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary,” Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith has

argued. “When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful.”⁵⁵ In Western contexts, research about Indigenous people, across a spectrum of academic disciplines, has long been intertwined with imperial and colonial projects, and has been complicit in damages, dislocations, and losses that still bear effects on communities today. Tuhiwai Smith urges a foundational rethinking of what constitutes research, along with the ethical considerations involved in choosing to examine Indigenous people, past and present. While there is no single decolonizing methodology—instead, a range of approaches that vary across disciplines, and from project to project—there are several common commitments that have shaped my own outlook and process. Decolonizing methodologies do not seek to unilaterally extract information from communities or construct narratives and analyses about them without input and accountability. Instead, they strive to recognize that knowledge is multi-sited, existing in *many* locales, including the oral traditions and lived experiences of past-keepers. (A tactic of “braiding knowledge,” which “brings distinct forms of knowledge together” in order to “present a multifaceted view of the past” is how Sonya Atalay, an Anishinaabe community member and professional archaeologist, has conceptualized this.)⁵⁶ They aim to understand phenomena through communities’ own cosmologies and intellectual frameworks, to cultivate meaningful relationships between scholars and descendant communities, to share works in progress and final products in reciprocal ways, and to pursue inquiries that are both intellectually rigorous and careful about not inflicting new harms on communities that have already endured tremendous stresses. They acknowledge that access to archives, museums, and other repositories containing historical sources can be uneven, meaning that academically based scholars with formal credentials and research budgets (however modest in an age of austerity) sometimes make headway in manners tribal members cannot. And they realize that the very act of telling stories about the past carries consequences for the present and future.

For the discipline of history, the need for decolonizing methodologies proceeds partly from Indigenous communities’ own insistence that the versions of the American past most often taught in schools and other public venues tend to be enormously misaligned with complex historical realities. “The population at large has been lied to or misinformed about the history of this nation,” Dawn Dove, a Narragansett tribal elder and educator, has commented about the teaching of history in New England classrooms, including King Philip’s War specifically. “We have raised a society that does not even know that we, the

Indigenous people of this land, still exist.”⁵⁷ Dove’s critique could also apply to a wave of scholarly articles and monographs produced in recent decades about Natives and colonists in early America. While I am indebted to much of this work for opening up compelling windows onto formative interactions among these groups, it is still rare that a scholarly study in these fields encompasses substantive acknowledgment of—never mind engagement with—present-day tribal descendant communities. Perhaps there is a nod to them in the preface or epilogue. This strikes me as a major missed opportunity to develop more sensitive, capacious, and culturally informed analyses. To put it another way, in order to write (and teach) histories that are more fully consonant with the complicated, violent, dynamic past of the Northeast, it is essential to encompass other voices, other sources, other places, and other modes of inquiry than those that have conventionally undergirded this region’s and nation’s dominant stories. My own methods have evolved significantly since I commenced this project many years ago, and they remain imperfect works in progress. They continue to change as my comprehension of Native-colonial relations in this region deepens—what may well be a lifelong endeavor. Perhaps more than anything, I aspire in these alternative methods to be in responsive conversation with both the real people and real places of the Northeast.

The many place-visits I have undertaken for this book gave me insights that no archive could in isolation. They convinced me of the durability of antiquarians’ monuments, remarkably resistant to collapse even when grievously neglected—yet recurrently challenged in important ways. They drove home how access to place hinges upon social and environmental factors, denoted by those two ubiquitous New England signs: PRIVATE PROPERTY: NO TRESPASSING and CLOSED FOR THE SEASON. (Maybe FROST HEAVES as well.) Most sobering, they underscored the socioecological brink on which much of the Northeast stands. Signs in four languages warn against consuming fish from the Sudbury River. Boston Harbor churns with motor oil and sewage outflow. Beer cans and discarded tires litter parts of Great Swamp, while industrial corridors remain soaked in carcinogens. I grew up by Amoskeag Falls on the Merrimack River in Manchester, New Hampshire, near the bank where sizable gatherings of Algonquians camped, fished, and socialized for thousands of years. Only recently has the Merrimack been resuscitated after industrialization exhausted it (fig. 5). Jeremiads about degradation are age-old, from Wampanoags’ protesting destruction of their cornfields by roving English swine, to present-day “Save the Bay” activists’ rallying around the Narragansett watershed. They can easily slip into stagnating nostalgia, as antiquarians demonstrated in their bids to recapture a fictive age where

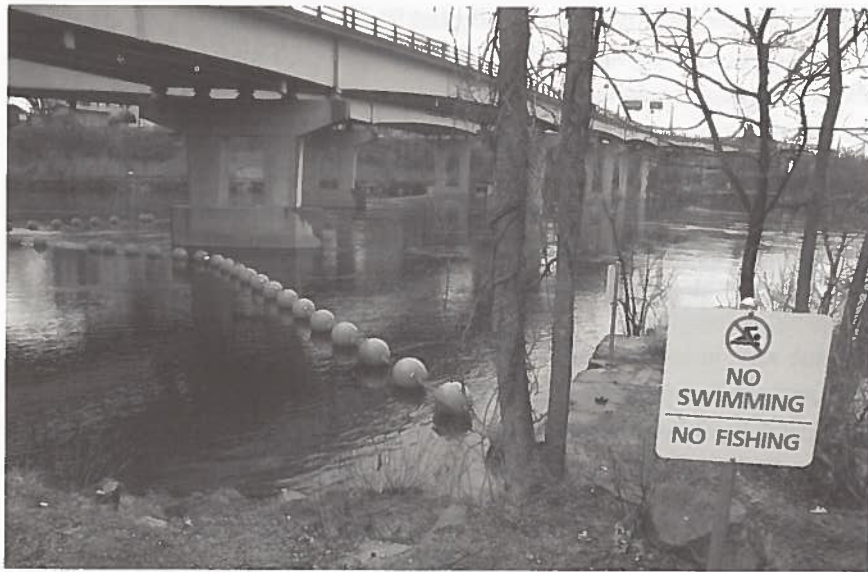


Figure 5. The waterfalls at Amoskeag, which are located just below this point in the Merrimack River, exist within Pennacook lands that were critical refuges for Algonquians relocating from war-torn southern New England. The falls supported a major Indigenous fishing and gathering area for thousands of years, as archaeology and oral traditions have attested. In intervening centuries the riverscape has been substantially transformed by industrialization and curtailing of certain activities, including fishing. Construction of a bridge access route in the mid-twentieth century leveled part of a bluff known to contain rich material traces of Indigenous presence.

(Photograph by Christine DeLucia)

people and land lived more harmoniously, or as “ecological Indian” stereotyping simplistically posited about Indigenous earth-stewardship.⁵⁸ There nevertheless is urgency to confronting settler colonialism’s dominant modes of land use and water use, and contemporary disintegrations of local attachments, vernacular knowledge, and place-respect—qualities that can seem ever more fragile in globalizing, commercializing, homogenizing, amnesiac America.⁵⁹

The most crucial dimension of this study may be its assessment of how memories of devastation exist *relationally* alongside those of regeneration. A participant remarked to me one year at a commemoration at Deer Island, site of a Native wartime internment camp in the harbor waters by Boston, that historians seemed to be compelled by accounts of the conflict—but less interested in what came before and after, and how Indigenous people survived ex-

treme pressures.⁶⁰ I have long ruminated on these comments because they encapsulate the conundrum of choosing to focus on conflict. Historians are partly beholden to conflict for creating sources, admittedly. When people bring each other to court, they generate legal records. When they gather at barricades or in town meetings, newspaper records emerge. Contestation tends to generate archival trails, though unevenly for the parties involved. Violence can silence certain voices, as Karl Jacoby notes in his study of memory in the aftermath of an Apache massacre.⁶¹ But in focusing on conflict, we run the risk of overstating conflict’s significance in the long lives of Northeastern communities. By opening up a scale of inquiry that encompasses the *longue durée*, we may be able to better contextualize these heightened moments of overt struggle within stretches of relative stability and continuity. Memory itself has a weedlike quality, a resilient way of branching out from trauma into other realms of experience. Memories of a 1675 massacre at Great Swamp intertwine with memories of other swamps, hunting, sovereign resurgence, while a 1676 massacre at a waterfall rolls into recollections of fishing, ethno-genesis, regathering, and ceremony. The study of memory, then, can do more than reinscribe trauma onto the historical geographies of the Northeast. It can accommodate other pasts—and futures—even while acknowledging Chickasaw scholar Jodi Byrd’s trenchant remark in *The Transit of Empire* about Indigenous dispossessions: “there is a difference between recovered and having never lost in the first place.”⁶²

In turning my attention to King Philip’s War, I set out to write about upheaval, destruction, the centuries-long fallout of extraordinary violence, and ongoing colonialism that haunts everyday habits. These exist in staggering quantities, and I have been distressed by colonial mentalities and practices still present in subtle and egregious forms throughout a region that prides itself on supposed progressiveness. But along the way, through many cycles of the seasons, the historic and contemporary people of the Northeast have also shown me the converse: spots of critical reflection, ethical reckoning, political resistance, regathering, recovery, regeneration. Disturbed soil, as those who work the earth well know, can be fertile ground for new growth.

Note on Organization, Terminology, and Imagery

This book is arranged around place, a structure that intentionally challenges many academic historians’ preferences for straightforward chronology as an organizing scheme. Each section examines a place in the Northeast and

Atlantic World that has been significant in the waging and remembering of King Philip's War, tracking its material and conceptual evolution from deep time to the present, and its complex links to other places. In many standard historical texts, "colonial New England" refers to the era of European, primarily English, presence on the northeastern Atlantic seaboard and near interior prior to the American Revolution (ca. 1608–1776). As used here, this also refers to historical *and* contemporary New England, which is still a region of settler colonialism. "Northeast" encompasses Native as well as colonial spaces. It is used here to cover the area between Long Island Sound and the St. Lawrence River, including parts of Canada that have historically been linked to areas presently claimed by the New England states, New York, and United States.

There is not a single, universally used Algonquian-language word for this region, though occasionally commentators use "Dawnland." Indigenous toponyms are used when possible for local geographies, and the very process of name-changing is discussed as a feature of both colonization and decolonization. Both "Indian" and "Native" or "Native American" are commonly used in the United States, as well as "Indigenous," while "First Nations" occurs in Canada. In some situations "Indian" refers more to Euro-American representations of Indigenous people, while "Native" indicates actual Indigenous people. Tribally specific names are used when possible, or "Native" when individuals or groups of multiple, or indeterminate, tribal heritages are involved. Several Northeastern tribal communities are in the midst of language revitalization projects, which involve important considerations around access and use of Indigenous-language words and translations.⁶³ In selected places I have incorporated such words, since language is a major conduit for cultural knowledge, though overall I have exercised caution in respecting those boundaries since I am not a tribal community member.

When including direct quotations from historical sources, I have generally maintained the original spelling and punctuation. I hope readers will grapple with the complexities of historical language, including the strategic use of English by Native people who were often multilingual. The communities discussed in this book have reckoned with the passage of time in diverse ways. In English and American colonial contexts, dating systems have changed over time, shifting the start of the new year to January 1 instead of March 25 and transitioning from a Julian to Gregorian calendar. To avoid confusion between "Old Style" and "New Style" systems, in some instances dates are denoted in a split form (for example, January 10, 1675/76).

Because a monograph has finite limits, I have chosen a discrete number of "places" to examine, and thereby set aside a formidable volume of research and site notes. The entirety of King Philip's War and the seventeenth century deserves thorough revisiting, from multiple scholarly and community-based perspectives. I hope future studies will take up other dimensions, geographies, narratives, documents, objects, and analytic frameworks. A number of illustrations and maps have been included to allow the reader more direct access to specific areas, events, and objects under discussion. I am keenly aware of sensitivities around visualization, particularly pertaining to locales that could be put at risk for looting or vandalism; to Indigenous human remains and ceremonial/sacred objects, including those in museums; and to living persons who may wish to maintain privacy or anonymity. I have endeavored to maintain intellectually robust as well as respectful practices around all of these. Any misjudgments are my responsibility.