“To them and their heirs for ever”: Creating Reserved Lands in Connecticut Colony, 1636-1680

by

Maia Reumann-Moore
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Introduction

This project began in the spring of 2015 with a paper in which I tried to analyze the documents of Middletown’s early town proprietors. These records narrated the 1670s creation of several deeds that appeared to bound members of the Wangunk nation onto a “reservation.” The final “Wangunk reservation deed,” to use the name it was filed under by the archivists at the Connecticut State Library, described a land base that was reserved for Wangunks within the town of Middletown. In writing about the process of creating this deed, I thought I would look, for context, at the books and articles that had been written about the creation of early reservations in Connecticut. To my surprise, I discovered that these sources did not exist. No academic work has attempted to explain the origins of early Indigenous reservation lands in Connecticut. When discussing reservations in colonial Connecticut or New England more broadly, historians often cite an article that describes the origins of Praying Towns in Massachusetts within the settler legal system and from a settler perspective. This is a problem because the system of reserved lands in Connecticut was about land, with negligible effort by settlers to impose Christianity. This article not only did little to illuminate the situation in Connecticut, but it was also methodologically flawed. The author ignored Indigenous decisions and actions leading up to the creation of reservations and closed with the disturbing assertion that it would be a “mistake…to conclude that the system in the Bay Colony was a failure. In spite of its limited scope, the Massachusetts reservation
system nevertheless served well not only as a useful means of regulating the natives within the colony but also to protect the Indian land.”

This article assumed that settlers created reservations for Indigenous peoples without any input from them. I wanted to understand how settlers and Indigenous peoples had co-constructed and fought over this institution. This question was especially urgent to me because reservations continue to be so important today. Historically reservations have been tools of oppression, circumscribing Indigenous land claims and subsuming Indigenous politics under US control rather than allowing for a true nation-to-nation relationship between sovereign bodies. At the same time, they have become sites of cultural survival and provided a way for Indigenous peoples to retain their lands under US law. Despite the importance of reservations in the United States, it is hard to say how they came to be. Studies of later reservation lands created in the west and southwest can point to New England and Virginia to say that reservations first emerged there, without explaining where that first system came from or what changed over decades of colonial expansion. Not investigating when and how reservations were invented normalizes their existence for all of us, discouraging critical analysis and limiting our ability to imagine other possibilities.

By looking at Connecticut, this thesis contributes to the examination of how Indigenous reservation lands became institutionalized in colonial English, and later U.S., law. Connecticut’s reserved lands are particularly important because they are one of the earliest examples of this institution. Even the Praying Towns in

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Massachusetts, the subject of some excellent scholarly inquiries, have much less in
common with reservations as they exist today than reserved lands in colonial
Connecticut did. I believe that much writing about reservations, influenced by U.S.
settler hegemony, has assumed historical inevitability. Yet, as I have endeavored to
show in this thesis, reservations were a new idea that developed through time and
struggle. The first settlers in Connecticut had no centralized government and had to
negotiate with Indigenous peoples on their own terms, creating agreements in which
settlers were the ones confined to a specific plot of land. After the Pequot Massacre,
powerful settlers in Hartford began a gradual process of colonial centralization which
included an effort to record land agreements between settlers and Indigenous groups
in a way that was favorable to the colonists. Indigenous peoples participated in and
contested these agreements, turning settler record-keeping to their favor. Once
Connecticut Colony finally received a royal charter in 1662, its settlers initiated a
final push to redefine land agreements and to claim more land for the colony.
Indigenous peoples responded by using the colonial court to solidify their own land
claims and defend against encroachment. A variety of events and accidents produced
the circumstances that institutionalized reserved lands in Connecticut. Nothing about
them was inevitable.

One of the important developments that made it possible for the status of
Indigenous reserved lands to emerge was a distinction between what I am calling
positive and negative land rights. When English people established their first
settlements in what would become Connecticut, settlers recognized that they needed
Indigenous permission anywhere they wanted to live. Despite what preachers and
powerful men may have claimed about the Doctrine of Discovery, English people and
Indigenous peoples alike behaved in a manner that recognized the primacy of
Indigenous land claims in the Americas. In no part of Connecticut or New England
was it possible for settlers to arrive and immediately force Indigenous people onto
reservations—rather, the settlers were the ones who agreed to build on only a small
and well-defined tract within an Indigenous landscape. Gradually, through varying
processes and strategies, settlers were able to reconceive of Connecticut as a space
completely “owned” by themselves. For English settlers at this point, any Indigenous
land rights in Connecticut were no longer positive—preeminent, natural—but
negative, carved out of English space. This shift in ways of seeing land was necessary
to the creation of “reservations,” because when settlers still conceived of Indigenous
land rights positively the institution would not have made sense. A corollary to this
point is that settlers needed the concept of the reservation for their own purposes.²
Rather than being motivated by the heroic impulse to protect Indigenous land, they
were concerned with their own town land claims, and pursued clear boundaries of
separation from Indigenous people to solidify the boundaries of English towns.

Another important framework for me has been the interpretation of
Indigenous strategies as a complicated mixture of adaptation and resistance. At the
beginning of my project I expected to find settlers gradually dispossessing Indigenous
peoples of their land until the reservations were the only tracts left. Certainly
dispossession, some of it physically violent, took place. Indigenous peoples, however,

were much more active in constructing the idea of the reservation than I initially expected. This element of the process should not have come as a surprise—reservations continue to be ambivalent places, holding both the potential for cultural regeneration and survival as well as the possibilities of oppression and violence.

Through this project, I came to appreciate the creation of reservations as a strategy directed by Indigenous people within a context of increasingly violent settler encroachment and attempts at hegemonic control. According to the documents I have examined, Indigenous diplomats were the ones who demanded that settlers recognize their land rights as collective and eternal, and agitated for the recording of this understanding into settler law. Although the creation of the category of reservation lands had many unforeseen consequences, it was also in some ways an important victory for Indigenous nations in Connecticut colony. The creation of reserved lands marked an acknowledgement from Connecticut’s colonial authorities that Indigenous peoples had a different and contradictory system of land tenure to their own Lockean one.

One category of work that has influenced the field of Indigenous studies in New England is ethnohistory. Ethnohistory is a blend between anthropology and history that aims to use anthropological techniques to study past communities, reading archeological and textual sources in a similar way as anthropologists would “read” field observations. Like anthropology more generally, ethnohistories tend to pinpoint a specific Indigenous community and analyze this group on its own terms. In Connecticut, ethnohistorical works have attempted to explain Indigenous groups’
identities and cultural practices. Ethnohistories vary in their focus on historical change: some attempt to reconstruct a static image of a community while others emphasize the ways culture and group identity changed over time. Ethnohistories of specific groups usually recognize the creations of reservations, but do not attempt to explain their origins, categorizing them as outside the scope of their studies. In his history of the Quinnipiac nation, John Menta included a footnote acknowledging that the origin of the Indigenous “reservation” in colonial Connecticut required further research, and clarifying that the word “reservation” was not only anachronistic but carried with it implications about externally imposed governance and schooling that did not apply to colonial Connecticut. Thus the ethnohistorical approach, while extremely valuable for recovering Indigenous community histories, is limited by its focus on specific communities and has not produced any attempts to explain the origins of Indigenous reserved lands. Part of this lack of discussion is due to most ethnohistorical works’ focuses on Indigenous peoples to the exclusion of settler communities, making it hard to explain institutions—like the reservation—that arose out of decades of compromise and disagreement between English towns and Indigenous nations.


Several books have dealt with the topic of New England town founding and the creation of New England culture. Some authors have tried to describe the cultural practices or labor systems built by English immigrants to New England, analyzing the ways these were influenced both by the new environment and by English culture.\(^5\) Other works have focused on towns as centers of Puritan religious practice.\(^6\) John Frederick Martin’s *Profits in the Wilderness* intervened to argue that town founding must be understood through an economic as well as a religious lens, showing that New England towns can be understood as early corporations created to help their investors get rich.\(^7\) All of these books that look at English influences on New England towns have tended to downplay the roles of Indigenous peoples in shaping New England’s culture and economy, suggesting that New Englanders somehow lived separately from Indigenous peoples and were able to construct a new society mostly outside of their influence. From my reading of the record, this interpretation is unworkable.

Other works have focused on settler-Indigenous interactions to understand New England’s history, creating a broad picture of the 17\(^{th}\) century through this lens. Alden Vaughan’s relatively early work on Puritan-Indigenous interactions showed

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colonization as a slow and complex process, but ultimately ignored Indigenous agency and settler violence to create a narrative of benevolent settler paternalism.\(^8\) Francis Jennings’ book took an opposing approach, showing the violence and unfairness of settlers in their land deals with Indigenous peoples.\(^9\) Jennings has been critiqued, however, for focusing so much on settler power that he ignored Indigenous peoples as complex actors who pursued multiple strategies.\(^10\) Neal Salisbury’s *Manitou and Providence* attempts to give an account of the same period that focused more equally on settler and Indigenous motives and strategies, emphasizing Indigenous power and autonomy in decision-making alongside settlers; regrettably, Salisbury’s book covers a shorter time span than Vaughan’s, ending with the Pequot War in 1638.\(^11\)

A few works have attempted to address questions of land deals by using deeds and local documents, with the aim of discovering how “fair” early land deals were. These authors have tended to conclude that English land deals with Indigenous peoples were largely fair and consensual, pointing to Indigenous influences on land agreements and to the peaceful cooperation that in some instances followed from deeds.\(^12\) These authors have made important contributions by showing that

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Indigenous peoples were active participants in early land agreements and that a simple narrative of English conquest cannot hold. These works, however, have focused more on the legitimacy of land acquisitions by settlers than on understanding and contextualizing Indigenous decision-making. As such, they have neglected to consider Indigenous strategies for retaining their homelands, including reservations, as well as downplaying English violence and unjust land seizures. As analyses of Indigenous land loss, these works can offer no explanation for the origin of reserved lands or for the complex ways that settlers and Indigenous peoples shared space.

Several innovative works have broadened our understanding of how colonialism operates. William Cronon’s groundbreaking *Changes in the Land* uses a materialist analysis to show that colonialism altered New England’s ecology, making it harder for Indigenous lifeways to persist even where Indigenous peoples retained a land base. Virginia DeJohn Anderson’s *Creatures of Empire* brings attention to the ways that settlers used livestock animals as tools of colonization, trampling Indigenous fields and blurring boundaries in land. Two other recent works question the centrality of land itself. Andrew Lipman’s *Saltwater Frontier* emphasizes the significance of water to Algonquian cultures, arguing that Europeans only gained hegemony in the Americas once they could navigate waterways as easily as Indigenous peoples. Katherine Grandjean’s *American Passage* argues for the idea of

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a “communications frontier,” in which settlers gained power by gradually becoming independent from a reliance on Algonquian couriers and guides to carry information between settlements.16

Other authors, while integrating new focuses on ecology, waterways, livestock, and communication, have persisted in placing land at the center of settler-colonial studies. These scholars agree with Patrick Wolfe’s definition of settler colonialism as a “structure, not an event,” a long-term process that is fundamentally oriented around settler seizure of Indigenous lands through a process of both legal and physically violent “elimination” of Indigenous populations.17 Jean O’Brien has distinguished settler-colonial studies from Indigenous studies by pointing out that Indigenous studies approaches are “placed,” oriented toward the ties of Indigenous peoples to their homelands, in contrast to a settler-colonial studies framework which may focus more on legal strategies used by settlers.18 While accepting the innovations of scholars who look at the multiple ways contests over place are established, the Indigenous studies approach to early America pioneered by authors such as O’Brien ultimately returns to land as the most fruitful category for understanding Indigenous experiences of settler colonialism.19

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Following these interventions, a few authors have dealt directly with the creation of reservations as a “structure, not an event.” Wendy St. Jean describes the Mohegan nation’s strategy of allying with a powerful English family, pointing out that the English system of “guardianship” supposedly imposed on reservation communities in the 18th century was shaped by Indigenous decisions. 20 O’Brien’s *Dispossession by Degrees* adopts a place-based approach by focusing on one Indigenous “Praying Town,” Natick, while also examining how Natick’s Indigenous population adapted to and resisted colonial strategies to dispossess them of their land. 21 Lisa Brooks has further elaborated upon this approach in her works *The Common Pot* and *Our Beloved Kin*, in which she constructs “place-worlds” for the reader, telling a narrative history as it refracts through a specific locality rather than telling a story primarily organized by time. In *The Common Pot* Brooks emphasizes the ways Indigenous people incorporated English newcomers into their diplomatic and political structures, flipping the conventional story in which English people imposed their own practices on passive Indigenous populations. 22 In *Our Beloved Kin* Brooks looks at King Philip’s War through networks of Indigenous kinship, showing how the English failure to understand or abide by Indigenous principles of diplomacy created the conflicts that led to war. 23 In both works Brooks examines how Indigenous strategies to preserve political independence and access to homelands

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21 O’Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*.
were enacted through diplomacy with English people, and shows how this diplomacy
took place according to Indigenous principles, providing insights that have been
invaluable in deepening my understanding of my subject.

In my project on the origins of reservations, I have looked at local records and
colonial documents from Connecticut Colony between 1636 and 1685. The time
constraints of the senior thesis project led me to take a purely textual approach. Had I
had longer, I would have worked with community-based historians and linguists from
the Indigenous nations discussed in my thesis. The absence of input from these
communities makes my thesis inherently incomplete, but it is my hope that my
archival work can be taken up by others to aid research on Indigenous history in
Connecticut. While my project is an example of settler-colonial studies and is not
place-based, I have been influenced by scholars of Indigenous studies to pay attention
to place and locality. Many scholars looking at colonial Connecticut have focused on
the relatively accessible Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, transcribed and
available online. In addition to this valuable source, I have turned my attention to the
town records of a few important English towns, trying to achieve a more fine-grained
understanding of the structures of settler colonialism. While the colony’s records are
filled with wishful thinking and grandiosity, town records show how contingent the
process of colonization really was. As townspeople recorded their everyday tasks of
constructing fences, building houses, farming, and worshipping, they also
documented their everyday interactions with the peoples whose lands they were
occupying. This process of creating a “New England town” cannot be decoupled
from, and indeed is the smallest unit of, the colonial project. While all these records
are necessarily one-sided, not just in what they say but in what settlers chose to leave out, they feature a much larger Indigenous presence than many contemporary readers might assume. English settlers did not have the option of erasing Indigenous peoples from their lives—such a concept would have been unthinkable since in many ways they lived together. Lisa Brooks wrote that her decision to write about Weetamoo, a female Wampanoag leader central to the conflict now called “King Philip’s War,” was inspired by Weetamoo’s “striking presence in primary documents” despite her “conspicuous absence from many secondary sources.” An honest approach to New England’s primary documents, in which Indigenous peoples are central, calls us all to reexamine our history and to question why so many scholars have constructed an absence amidst so much presence.

I have focused my research mainly within the archives of four English towns that were all located in places important to the construction of the idea of the reservation. Middletown, where I started my research, is also Mattabessett, a center of the Wangunk community’s resistance to English authority for centuries of Connecticut history, and is the place where this project began. Stratford, in southwest Connecticut, is in the homeland of the Pequonnock band of the Paugussett nation, a group that would be especially influential in creating the idea of reservations and that is recognized by the state today as the Golden Hill Paugussett nation. New London, within historic Pequot homelands along the Long Island Sound, was the site of important negotiations between English settlers and Pequot advocates that represented new strategies of adaptation for Indigenous people. Today, New London

is near the two federally recognized Indigenous nations in Connecticut, the
Mashantucket Pequot and the Mohegans. Its records provide a useful vantage point to
understand the actions of both Indigenous groups. The final town I explored closely
was New Haven, one of the first sites of English settlement in Connecticut, within the
homeland of the Quinnipiac nation. New Haven is an interesting case because it is
sometimes credited—wrongly, I argue—with creating the “first reservation” in
English North America, and because, having been its own separate colony for thirty
years, it is a good illustration of how slow and contingent Connecticut’s process of
colonial centralization really was. These four towns, in addition to their important
places in history, also have the advantage of having well-preserved records dating
back to around the period of town founding. The Yale Indian Papers Project has also
been a valuable resource to provide some level of counterbalance to the hefty colonial
bias in the English records, providing as it does a rich collection of documents
authored by Indigenous peoples.

This thesis argues that the institution of the reservation emerged gradually
through varying strategies mobilized by Indigenous peoples and English settlers. The
product of both Indigenous defenses of communal land rights and English efforts to
obliterate them, reservations evolved slowly and have not stopped evolving since.
When settlers first arrived in the area that would become Connecticut Colony, they
negotiated relatively consensual agreements with Indigenous nations based on
Indigenous conceptions of shared land use. Only gradually did settlers begin to
reinterpret their agreements with Indigenous peoples, requiring Indigenous
populations to innovate new strategies to protect their lands and their access to
waterways. For this study, I am defining a “reservation” as an area of land recognized by the settler government to belong exclusively and in perpetuity to an Indigenous nation. Unspoken within this definition of a reservation is the understanding that other lands, at least within the settler legal system, do not belong to Indigenous peoples but to the settler state. Thus, the process of creating and defining reservations is a process of establishing hegemony and of solidifying settler land claims, while it is also a process of defending and recording Indigenous land claims against settler encroachment.

Chapter One of this thesis looks at “town founding” and attempts to untangle later narratives that describe instant settler dominion from what actually happened at the time. The first agreements about land in what would become Connecticut were treaties of mutual obligation between Indigenous nations and groups of settlers. Attempting to meld Indigenous and English understandings of how people related to land, these agreements set aside certain areas for the specific use of English people, protected other regions for exclusive Indigenous use, and designated other areas as shared zones in which both groups could hunt, fish, and travel so long as they did not interfere with their neighbors’ abilities to do so. Two significant traumatic events shaped the contexts in which these treaties were created: the epidemics of 1633-34, before which no permanent English settlements had existed in Connecticut, and the Pequot War/Massacre of 1637, which helped facilitate settlement much farther south along the coast of the Long Island Sound. By highlighting the context of Indigenous

__25__ My understanding of colonializers’ strategy of reinterpreting existing treaties according to changing political developments was informed by William C. Wicken, *Mi'kmaq Treaties on Trial: History, Land, and Donald Marshall Junior* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).
deaths and settler violence in which these settlements were created, this chapter shows that although these early agreements were shaped by Indigenous conceptions of land use they also occurred within constrained circumstances, in which settlers attempted to seize as much power as they could.

Chapter Two is organized thematically rather than narratively to describe the interaction and interconnectivity between Indigenous hosts and settler plantations in Connecticut. By relying on records created by towns and by individual settlers, this chapter illustrates just how closely early settlers lived to Indigenous neighbors. Although such interactions were not always peaceful or fair, settlers depended upon Indigenous peoples in important ways, and Indigenous nations benefited from their treaties with settler communities. At the same time, this proximity did not always happen through agreement—some Indigenous peoples were forcibly enslaved in English households, and settlers began to violate treaties about shared land use by building on or allowing their livestock to trample into lands Indigenous peoples needed for subsistence. Indigenous peoples, meanwhile, attempted to practice traditional modes of hospitality with guests who were sometimes unwilling to participate.

Chapter Three returns to a narrative structure, describing how, as settlers and Indigenous peoples planted, fished, hunted, traded, traveled, spoke, ate, and struggled with one another, powerful settlers labored to turn a scattered collection of English settlements into a colony. In pursuing the aim of colonial centralization, toward the ultimate goal of receiving an official charter from the King of England, these colonialists incentivized settlers to separate themselves from their Indigenous
neighbors. Demanding written deeds describing territorial boundaries, the self-proclaimed colonial leaders at Hartford encouraged settlers to reinterpret their treaties according to the needs of the new colony. Indigenous peoples reasserted the nature of these documents as treaties, not deeds, but used the opportunities of this wave of settler record-keeping to record their own land claims counter to settler authority. At the same time, led by leaders in Hartford and New Haven, settlers attempted to separate themselves socially from Indigenous peoples out of fears based on religious purity. The structure of congregationalism, or “Puritanism,” motivated settlers to oversee one another’s religious practice and to scrutinize their own Christian goodness, leading to an emerging consensus that interactions with Indigenous peoples could be harmful to Christian communities. These two overlapping types of separation, drawing boundaries in land and between categories of people, led settlers to violate treaties and shun Indigenous neighbors even while they remained reliant upon them.

Chapter Four covers the twenty years after Connecticut received its charter in 1662. Newly armed with imperial legitimacy, colonists began to style themselves as the hosts and Indigenous peoples as their unwanted guests. Indigenous peoples adapted their strategies to the new ideas developed by colonists, continuing to defend their land claims and to make arguments based on original treaties by demanding that colonists put Indigenous land claims in writing along with settler ones. Settlers, however, had begun to use increasingly aggressive strategies of encroachment through violence, both economic and physical. In 1675, the contest between Indigenous and settler demands for land turned deadly in the Plymouth and
Massachusetts Bay colonies, bringing Connecticut and its Indigenous populations into a conflict known as King Philip’s War. In the aftermath of this conflict, colonists claimed new levels of authority but also began to experience extreme paranoia about the potential dangers of proximity to Indigenous peoples. As settlers attempted to continue their aggressive practices of land seizure, now hostile to ideas of shared or neutral land, Indigenous peoples demanded that their remaining lands be recognized as belonging to a separate category than settler territories, agitating for the settler record to reflect the fact that Indigenous lands were communally organized and not subject to sale. The compromise resulting from this activism marked the first recognition by English settlers in Connecticut that Indigenous peoples had wholly different practices around land usage. This ruling that Indigenous lands were reserved to their communities forever established one of the key aspects of what would become the reservation system in the English colonies, and later the United States.
Chapter One: Indigenous settlements and colonial town founding, 1614-1650

Introduction

From 1633 through 1650, English settlers established their first settlements in what is now Connecticut. Despite the wishes of some powerful men based in modern-day Hartford and New Haven, Connecticut was not yet really a colony during this period—it remained a thoroughly Indigenous place with a few English settlements. As Indigenous peoples reckoned with the results of devastating epidemics, and the first war broke out between the Pequots and the English, different nations had different approaches to interacting with settlers. English settlers never tried to establish towns far from Indigenous settlements. Instead, each town founding consisted of negotiations about how settlers and their Indigenous hosts would share the land, creating treaties that constructed obligations on both sides. These agreements were sometimes articulated in the form of a land “sale” but, even if wampum or other goods were exchanged, agreements about land were always diplomatic agreements. Algonquians agreed to allow English people to live among them in exchange for economic alliance or military protection. Some historians have erroneously referred to the early documents where settlers recorded agreements about sharing land with Algonquians as establishing reservations, but it is incorrect to interpret any reservations as existing during this time. Rather this period of settlement was characterized by colonial dependence on Algonquian neighbors and riven with disagreements, misunderstandings, and dishonesties about ownership of land.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of Indigenous politics and cultures immediately prior to English arrival in the land that would become known as
Connecticut. Because Indigenous cultures are dynamic and respond to historical change just as much as European ones, I have avoided providing a long-term overview of Indigenous history and culture in Connecticut, as it is outside of my focus and impossible to do justice to in this space. This section will instead address some of the existing systems of land ownership at the time that European arrived, to contextualize discussions of future land transactions and political agreements. From there this chapter will move to an account of the first English trading posts established in the Connecticut River Valley in the early 1630s, stressing ways these outposts differed from residential towns. The next section will cover how the founding of English trading posts in Connecticut led to a smallpox epidemic in 1633, which the English viewed as an opportunity to expand further into Connecticut with not just trading posts but actual towns. Finally, this chapter will explain the process of town founding in chronological order for four English towns in different parts of Connecticut: New Haven at Quinnipiac, Stratford at Pequonnock, New London at Nameag, and Middletown at Mattabessett. In examining the founding documents related to these English plantations, this chapter will argue that all these towns were established through treaties with Indigenous peoples that required shared use and mutual negotiation.

**Algonquian social and political structures in Connecticut**

When English people began settling at Plymouth in 1614, the area that roughly corresponds to present-day Connecticut had an Indigenous population of
about 30,000.\textsuperscript{26} Most Indigenous peoples in what would become Connecticut spoke languages in the Algonquian language family, and communities dwelling in different places were often interrelated through kinship networks. Algonquians had practiced horticulture for hundreds of years and had developed an effective method of living in the southern New England climate. Homelands were usually centered around a specific river or watershed.\textsuperscript{27} In the south along the coast of the Long Island Sound, Indigenous groups such as the Quinnipiac, Mohegan, Pequot, Paugussett, and Niantic settled around estuaries where a mixture of salt- and freshwater created an especially rich environment for planting. People living in coastal areas, while they had specific territories of their own, often moved around during the year to access the best sites for planting or fishing. Further north, nations in the Connecticut River Valley centered their populations around river floodplains. These inland groups, including the Connecticut “River Indians” like the Wangunk, Podunk, Saukiog, and Tunxis, relied more heavily on agriculture and thus had more concentrated sedentary villages.\textsuperscript{28} The Paugussett Confederation to the southwest was settled in the lower Housatonic River Valley where it met the Long Island Sound.\textsuperscript{29}

While networks of kinship and trade connected Indigenous peoples throughout the area that would become Connecticut, different communities still occupied distinct places and lived differently. The Connecticut River groups were closely interrelated, but the different nations were not homogenous.\textsuperscript{30} By the time

\textsuperscript{26} Salisbury, \textit{Manitou and Providence}, 30.
\textsuperscript{27} Cronon—look in brooks to find
\textsuperscript{29} Wojciechowski, \textit{Ethnohistory of the Paugussett Tribes}, 11-18.
\textsuperscript{30} Bragdon, \textit{Native People of Southern New England, 1500-1650}, 95-96.
English settlers arrived in the 1620s, eastern Algonquians, including the Pequots led by Tatobem, were more hierarchically organized and could claim authority over several smaller bands, including the Mohegans. The western Algonquians, including the Connecticut River groups and those on the western coast, lived in closely intertwined independent village groups. While Tatobem could exert more direct control over a huge swath of the eastern coast, small groups in western Connecticut lived autonomously but maintained diplomatic relationships through frequent trade and intermarriage.\textsuperscript{31} The Pequots, as well as the Narragansetts, who lived even further east along the Long Island Sound, had consolidated their power recently through their role as intermediaries in the wampum trade.\textsuperscript{32} Wampum was important for Indigenous diplomatic networks and had sacred significance. It was created from the shells of quahogs, and the weaving of purple and white wampum beads produced a form of writing that could tell histories or cement alliances. Before Connecticut Colony existed, the Connecticut River connected a vast network of wampum exchange and interdependence, with wampum producers along the Long Island Sound creating the beads that would travel into Wabanaki country and to the lands of the Haudenosaunee peoples.\textsuperscript{33}

Indigenous groups in Connecticut did not define property in land the same way that English people did, but they were not nomadic or unable to conceive of boundaries. Algonquian polities had their own specific territories. Unlike English people, who were accustomed to using rivers as boundaries between plots of land,

\textsuperscript{31} Andrew Lipman, \textit{The Saltwater Frontier}, 43-47.
\textsuperscript{32} Brooks, \textit{The Common Pot}, 56.
\textsuperscript{33} Brooks, \textit{The Common Pot}, 54-55.
Algonquian nations used mountain ranges as boundaries while rivers were the center of a group’s territory. Algonquians used a system of toponyms to identify political and social claims to specific sites. Toponyms reflected ancestral claims, group identity, and important historical events. At the same time as Indigenous peoples maintained sovereignty over their homelands, however, they also negotiated shared use with other communities. These negotiations were continually renegotiated at “councils” where Indigenous diplomats agreed to allow neighboring communities access to important sites while retaining autonomy over their lands.

Within political territories, Algonquians also maintained separate use of land for family dwellings and agriculture. These land usage agreements were not based on simplistic claims of total ownership, but on a claim to the usufruct rights of a plot of land. Such usufruct rights were overseen by the leader of the group, but they functioned on a basis of communal organization and consent. Thus, land rights, while not distributed in an egalitarian manner, were bounded by community decision-making processes and by the community’s ability to depose a leader they disagreed with. Like land agreements between different nations, the process of allotting land use within Indigenous communities was continual, and could be altered based on seasonal changes, ecological shifts, and the community’s changing needs.

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37 Bragdon, Native People of Southern New England, 1500-1650, 137-139.
38 Brooks, The Common Pot, 68.
English settlers brought assumptions about their use of Indigenous land that did not work in an Algonquian context. Within their own communities English settlers, like Algonquians, distributed plots of land in a manner that was hierarchical but oriented toward the function of the entire community—however they organized this system based on how much money settlers had invested in the town.\textsuperscript{39} The concept of buying a plot of land for exclusive use and therefore removing one’s land ownership from communal oversight was just as alien to the earliest settlers as it would have been to Indigenous people. While the differences in intra-community distribution of land were less stark, the difference in the way each group viewed land diplomacy with other nations was drastic. While Indigenous peoples negotiated land use with other polities—including, at first, the English—using principles of shared rights and alliance, English settlers hoped to claim control of Algonquian lands.\textsuperscript{40} The English did not view Indigenous peoples as having polities of equal value to their own and saw themselves as the rightful stewards of the land because of their Christian faith. English people did acknowledge an Indigenous right to jurisdiction in specific areas, but they saw only themselves as possessing overarching sovereignty.\textsuperscript{41}

In addition, English settlers misunderstood Algonquian government structures as they related to land rights. The English hoped to negotiate with individual Indigenous leaders as though they were kings who possessed coercive power over their “subjects.” In reality the Algonquian leaders called “sachems” or “saunkskwas” depending on their gender were actually closer to “ambassadors” who conveyed a

\textsuperscript{39} O’Brien, \textit{Dispossession by Degrees}, 23.
\textsuperscript{40} Brooks, \textit{The Common Pot}, 67-69.
\textsuperscript{41} Banner, \textit{How the Indians Lost their Land}, 14-16; Cronon, \textit{Changes in the Land}, 68.
decision reached by their council to another nation.\textsuperscript{42} Decisions about land usage, and about how to share land with other communities, were only valid insofar as they expressed the entire group’s wishes.\textsuperscript{43} This disagreement about how authority worked made it hard for Indigenous peoples and English communities to communicate clearly about land usage.

Although English people arrived with the conviction that America was rightfully theirs, the reality of course was much more complicated. Puritans had to contend with the existing governments and societies by engaging in diplomacy if they wished to settle anywhere in New England. Existing Indigenous practices around land ownership and political authority meant that, from the perspective of Indigenous peoples, English settlers had to be incorporated into networks of relationality and kinship in order to settle in Algonquian land.\textsuperscript{44} When English people began to settle in Connecticut, they had to cooperate with the Indigenous peoples who were already there.

**English traders establish posts in Connecticut**

While the settlers who founded the Plymouth Colony began to establish themselves in the 1620s, and other settlers founded Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630, the area between the Massachusetts Bay and the Long Island Sound remained an Indigenous stronghold, free of English settlement. Through the 1620s and early 1630s, some English and Dutch people traveled south from Massachusetts or east

\textsuperscript{42} Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*, 34.
\textsuperscript{43} Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 66-67.
\textsuperscript{44} Brooks, *The Common Pot*, 7.
from New Amsterdam to trading posts along the coast, but there was no concerted effort to build permanent European towns in Connecticut. The English had a lot to manage in their first settlements, and they had little understanding of the political organization of the populous Indigenous peoples along the Long Island Sound or inland along its tributary rivers. Starting in 1630, however, waves of new settlers came over as whole family groups, hoping to establish themselves in English-style farming towns. This “Great Migration” of Puritans driven by religious struggles in England increased the settler population without furnishing new places to settle. In the interval between 1630 to 1633, three thousand new settlers arrived. As the English population grew, the settlers in the Massachusetts Bay Colony and Plymouth began to establish a tentative interest in the land to the south of their settlements, not to colonize, but to trade.

For the first few years of the 1630s, English interest in settling further south along the Connecticut River remained largely theoretical. In 1631, a sachem named Wahginnicut invited the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonists to build a trading house at Matianuck (present day Windsor) on the Connecticut River. Wahginnicut and his band, the Podunk, were not actually living at Matianuck at the time, but had just been exiled from their land by the powerful Pequots. Both English colonies declined the offer to align with the Podunks at Matianuck. The first English claim to the coast of Long Island Sound was expressed in 1632 when the Earl of Warwick

45 Lipman, The Saltwater Frontier, 113.
47 Salisbury, Manitou and Providence, 183.
48 Salisbury, Manitou and Providence, 205.
granted some land to the nobles Viscount Saye and Lord Brooke to establish Fort Saybrook. Not intended to be a town but a fortified trading post, it nevertheless remained unoccupied by English people for several years.\(^{49}\) Before the English could establish themselves in Connecticut, even as traders, the Dutch began to create more permanent trading posts along the Connecticut River, piquing English interest in the territory.\(^{50}\) In 1633 Natawanute, who had inherited the sachemship from Wahginnicut, offered again to host an English trading post at Matianuck. This time, the settlers at Plymouth agreed, but John Winthrop, governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, was not convinced—by his judgment the Indigenous groups in Connecticut were far too powerful for English settlement there to be safe. English and Dutch settlements in Connecticut at this point happened on the terms of the Indigenous people who invited traders in, and only consisted of trading posts of mostly men, not of the farming towns populated by entire families that the Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth colonies were creating. Although European territorial claims in Connecticut stayed very limited, the increased presence of traders in the early 1630s did affect Indigenous lives. The new level of proximity with the English brought epidemics that devastated Connecticut’s Algonquians.\(^{51}\)

**Epidemic disease and the first wave of town founding**

As English settlement had expanded in Massachusetts and Plymouth, Indigenous peoples had used alliances with English peoples to attend to their own communities’ needs. The alliances they built were disrupted in 1633, when smallpox


\(^{50}\) Salisbury, *Manitou and Providence*, 207.

hit the Indigenous populations of the Connecticut River—the Wangunks, Saukiogs, and Tunxis—and spread to the groups on the Long Island Sound—the Mohegans and Pequots, Quinipiacs, Niantics, and Paugussetts. Although previous epidemics of new European diseases had already hit Massachusett-speaking peoples, those along the Long Island Sound and the inland populations of the Connecticut River Valley, who had less direct and sustained interaction with settlers, had not experienced many casualties. In 1633, however, smallpox spread rapidly throughout southern New England, reaching communities previously sheltered from disease’s worst impacts. Algonquian communities experienced losses as great as 90% of their populations and social systems of inherited leadership that had been in place for generations were abruptly disrupted. To the colonists in the Massachusetts Bay, these deaths were an opportunity. Unable to navigate the Indigenous landscape of Connecticut and afraid to confront the people who lived there, colonists found themselves suddenly facing a power vacuum in the lands to the south, where the tribal communities were attempting to cope with the devastation they were experiencing. Settlers believed these epidemics were the work of God, opening land up to them for settlement. Previously afraid to venture into Connecticut, the English began to feel comfortable doing so once the epidemics hit. Indigenous communities, meanwhile, were suddenly in much greater need of new alliances. Despite the devastating effects of epidemics, Indigenous peoples continued to negotiate with English settlers from a position of power and authority, bringing settlers into Indigenous networks on their own terms.

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52 Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 87.
55 Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 90.
Indigenous peoples in Connecticut had been building favorable relationships with English traders for years, and as the English attempted to exploit groups weakened by epidemics, Indigenous communities initially followed their pre-epidemic diplomatic protocols. While no group sought English rule, many understood that proximity with English people could help realign power structures that were unfavorable to their nation or village. The Wangunks, who lived on the watershed of the Connecticut River, negotiated with an English trader named John Oldham to establish an English settlement at Pyquag. John Oldham was an outlier in English society who had ventured further into Indigenous territory than most English people were willing to go, creating trade relationships with many Connecticut peoples. In the winter of 1634 to 1635, Oldham and a group of men from Watertown, Massachusetts stayed near Pyquag through an agreement with the Wangunks’ leader, Sowheag.\(^{56}\) In the next year women and children from the town followed these initial male migrants to Pyquag.\(^{57}\) While the original text of the agreement or deed between Sowheag and Oldham was either lost or never written down at all, later evidence makes it possible to extrapolate that it was similar to previous agreements between Connecticut River nations and Europeans. This agreement to share space most likely included a military alliance and a trading relationship, even if it was negotiated in the wake of the epidemics that had left the Wangunks in straitened economic and political circumstances.\(^{58}\)

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The following summer, a group of colonists from Dorchester, Massachusetts that included whole family groups came to establish an English town near the Plymouth colonists’ trading post at Matianuck.\(^5^9\) In the two years since the Plymouth traders had arrived at Matianuck, the sachem Natawanute and much of his community had died from smallpox. The Bay colonists decided to create an English-style town at Matianuck because of the depopulation of the tribal community in that place. This was the first European town founded in Connecticut that went beyond an abstract land claim or a trading post to try to reproduce the idealized English farming community. Crucially, it was established right after the 1633-4 epidemic, which halted all trade activity on the Connecticut River for a year and left tribal communities in turmoil. This settlement of transplants from Dorchester would become the town of Windsor.\(^6^0\) While Natawanute’s community had negotiated the original agreement that created the trading post in Matianuck, there is little evidence about their role in inviting this more permanent form of English settlement. They may simply have been too busy trying to reconstitute their community after so many deaths to respond to this English encroachment.

Those Indigenous groups that did negotiate with English town founders at this time were likely in part motivated by a desire to establish more direct relationships with English people rather than being forced to go through middlemen from the coast, including the Pequot. The Pequot had recently attempted to lay claim to the entire Connecticut River, and going over their heads to deal with English people helped the

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River groups to assert their independence from the Pequot.\textsuperscript{61} After settlers began to create an English town at Matianuck, the Saukiogs, a band closely related to the Wangunks, accepted the second English settlement in their territory that took the shape of a town, not a trading post. In the fall of 1635, the town of Newtown, Massachusetts followed Dorchester, sending 35 people to create a town on the Connecticut River. The agreement to found an English town at Saukiog was brokered with Sowheag’s son, Sequassen.\textsuperscript{62} Because of the close relationship between the Wangunks and Saukiogs, the decision to accept English people by River groups at the time seems to have been part of a coordinated strategy, one in which communities along the Connecticut used connections to English people to empower themselves against the Pequot.

At the same time as Sowheag and his son Sequassen were strategically allowing English settlers into their homelands to preserve tribal autonomy after the epidemic, another father-son duo operating from the Massachusetts Bay Colony was attempting to consolidate colonial power. For John Winthrop, the governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the problem with the new settlements in Connecticut was that he did not have any authority over them. Even worse, no English person did—organized outside of English law and without permission from the king, the towns at Pyquag, Matianuck, and Saukiog were troubling to the elites of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Luckily for these men, the Plymouth-based Saybrook Company had a very old and tenuous claim to the land that was currently being settled. They chose

\textsuperscript{61} Salisbury, \textit{Manitou and Providence}, 206-208.
\textsuperscript{62} Ives, “Wangunk Ethnohistory,” 19.
John Winthrop Jr., the Massachusetts governor’s son, to govern a new colony they
dubbed Connecticut, and Winthrop used Saye and Brooke’s patent to establish a
small fort at Saybrook. Still without any real charter, Connecticut had just enough
legitimacy in the eyes of English leaders at Massachusetts to assuage some worry.63
John Winthrop Jr. continued to live in Boston near his father much of the time,
confirming that his ascension to “governor” of the nascent colony was not a break
with the family dynasty but rather an extension of it.64 Yet while the Puritans had
managed to cobble together a claim to a new colony they called Connecticut, no one
had bothered to gain the assent of the Algonquians who lived there. In reality this
“colony” consisted of three very newly established trading towns and a tiny fort. The
rest of the land was English only in the imagination of the Winthrop family and a few
others.

**The Pequot Massacre**

Although the Winthrops had fabricated an English claim to the land, without
the cooperation of Algonquian peoples, Connecticut’s status as a colony would
remain aspirational. The Wangunks, Mohegans, Pequots, Niantics, Quinnipiacs,
Podunks, Tunxis, Paugussett, and other smaller bands, were the only people who had
experience navigating between isolated English settlements, which to an Englishman
were like islands, with no clear path through what they viewed as wilderness back to
the “civilization” of Boston.65 A few English people, such as John Oldham, were able
to navigate Connecticut colony and trade with local populations, but most English

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people were at a loss outside of the small regions in which they had negotiated Indigenous permission to settle.\textsuperscript{66} Indigenous peoples were also the only ones experienced at planting and hunting in Connecticut’s landscapes. Furthermore, they had the ability to mount military attacks against the settlers, and despite the recent trauma of the epidemics simply had more power in Connecticut than any English person.\textsuperscript{67} In 1636, however, the destabilization of Algonquians by epidemic disease along with English desire for sovereignty spun into a series of violent conflicts that changed systems of authority in Connecticut.

Indigenous societies had already begun to restructure themselves to accommodate European traders before the epidemics. The Pequots sometimes used violence to bring other wampum-producing and trading groups under their authority during the 1620s. In the epidemics of 1633-1634, hundreds of Pequot community members had died and Tatobem had been killed by Dutch merchants, producing uncertainty and intense disagreements about how to move forward. The Mohegan band, previously within Tatobem’s nation, split from the Pequots under their new leader Uncas.\textsuperscript{68} This existing Indigenous conflict was hard for settlers to understand, partly because their own communities were facing challenges at the same time. In 1635, due to the combined effects of their unfamiliarity with the landscape and to a bad hurricane, settler crops in Connecticut failed and led to starvation.\textsuperscript{69} In this unstable atmosphere, John Oldham, who had previously struck the deal with Sowheag

\textsuperscript{67} Lipman, \textit{The Saltwater Frontier}, 131-134.
\textsuperscript{68} Brooks, \textit{The Common Pot}, 57-58; Lipman, \textit{The Saltwater Frontier}, 132.
\textsuperscript{69} Grandjean, “New World Tempests”, 76-77.
to establish English settlement in Pyquag, was an essential link for the hungry English.70 Havoc broke out in July 1636, when Oldham was murdered by a group of Manisses people from Block Island who believed the English trader had betrayed them to work with the Pequots.71

English settlers blamed Pequots for Oldham’s murder and initiated violent reprisals, escalating a conflict among Indigenous groups by introducing colonial motives of land seizure. The Pequot’s ancestral territory was in the southeast along the coast of the Long Island Sound, and the English wished to establish access to the sea at the mouth of the Pequot River.72 The English also feared that the Pequot were hugely powerful and that their trading networks competed with English ones. This was not completely correct—the Pequot had been hit by the recent epidemic just like other groups, but even before that they had begun to lose power. In the 1630s the Pequot were in a defensive position, disempowered by Connecticut River communities’ decisions to undercut Pequot control by inviting English trading posts.73 Nevertheless, English officials chose to target the Pequot specifically because they were threatened by their remaining territorial holdings, trading power, and relationship with the Dutch, who English traders viewed as rivals.74 Alongside these broader territorial aims, Connecticut settlers initiated raids so that they could steal Pequot food after the hurricane had destroyed their unestablished farms.75 The Pequot War impacted not only the Pequot and the English but all of the Algonquians in

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71 Lipman, *The Saltwater Frontier*, 132-134.
75 Grandjean, “New World Tempests”, 93-95.
Connecticut, many of whom had relationships with both parties in the war and could not stay neutral.

Amid the English conflict with the Pequot, alliances shifted among Indigenous groups in ways that would impact future English expansion in the region. Some of the Quinnipiac fled from their homelands in the western coast of the Long Island Sound and sheltered with the English and River groups along the Connecticut. The existing English settlements around the Connecticut River along with the River nations’ resentment of coercive Pequot trading power might have made this area a safer place for English people during the war, but settler fears led them to turn on their Indigenous allies. In 1637 the Pyquag settlers who had agreed to an arrangement of shared space for mutual benefit suddenly claimed total control of Pyquag, where Sowheag and the Wangunks lived. The settlers exiled Sowheag from Pyquag, and he retreated to Mattabessett, another part of Wangunk homelands a few miles south. Although the settlers’ decision to drive out Sowheag had been fueled by paranoia about living with Indigenous peoples during a war, their choice did not increase their safety. Immediately after Sowheag left, Pequots raided Pyquag and killed nine settlers. Settlers suspected the raid had been Sowheag’s doing and relations between the colony and the Wangunks soured for years. Mohegans and other groups with previous relationships to the Pequot, as well as their competitors the Narragansetts, joined with the English in hopes that the war would enact a form of

78 Salisbury, Manitou and Providence, 219.
“violent redistribution,” ending the unequal power consolidated by Pequots.80 The networks of trade and kinship between Algonquian groups meant that no one was unaffected by the Pequot War, even if their nation did not participate in combat.

English participation in the conflict culminated in the Pequot Massacre, which showed how different the intentions of colonists were from those of Indigenous participants.81 On 27 May 1637, the settlers set out for the Pequot village at Mystic Fort under the leadership of Major John Mason. These soldiers had been fed a diet of propaganda churned out by their fellow colonists who—in service to their desire for land—argued that the Pequot were satanic and the settlers were agents of God.82 When the settlers arrived at Mystic Fort and could not easily invade it, they chose to use the fort’s barricades themselves as a weapon and set it on fire, stationing English people and Indigenous allies outside the few exits to kill anyone who tried to escape.83 Because Mystic “fort,” while fortified, was a town where whole families had taken shelter, many of the 400 to 700 Pequots who died in the Pequot Massacre were children, elderly people, and other noncombatants.84 Narragansetts at the scene denounced this pointlessly destructive action, marking a break that would grow into a widening rift between them and the Connecticut colonists.85

In the aftermath of the massacre, in which the English had tried to eliminate one rival for land, the English forces pursued Pequots into other territories and

82 Salisbury, Manitou and Providence, 220-221.
83 Grandjean, “New World Tempests,” 99; Lipman, Saltwater Frontier, 162.
84 Vaughan, New England Frontier, 144-145.
became aware for the first time of lands further inland along the Sound. From Mystic, a group of surviving Pequots, led by leader Sassacus, fled into Quinnipiac and then Paugussett territory to seek shelter. The English soldiers who followed them were the first English people other than traders who had seen these territories. The English noticed that Quinnipiac was a fertile area with no European settlements.\(^\text{86}\) While Sassacus split off from the group to try to secure military aid from the Mohawk, the rest of the Pequots ended up with the Sosa and Sasqua bands of the Paugussett confederacy. The English followed the Pequot west and fought the final battle of the Pequot War with them in Paugussett territory in June of 1637.\(^\text{87}\) The battle introduced the English to this area and the Paugussets that lived there, sparking interest in settlement almost immediately.\(^\text{88}\) With the war officially ended, the English attempted to capitalize on their new knowledge about Indigenous groups and regions they had barely encountered before, as well as to use their “victory” in the massacre to consolidate English power over Indigenous peoples. In 1638, settlers from Hartford, Windsor, and Wethersfield signed a treaty with Mohegans and Narragansetts called the Treaty of Hartford. The Massachusetts settlers who had established the Connecticut River towns spoke on behalf of Connecticut, a colony that had not previously existed. They claimed broad stretches of land formerly under Pequot control for Connecticut, contradicting claims to that same land by Massachusetts.\(^\text{89}\)

\(^{89}\) Daragh Grant, “The Treaty of Hartford (1638): Reconsidering Jurisdiction in Southern New England,” \textit{The William and Mary Quarterly} 72, no. 3 (July 2015), 470.
The sole basis of this construction of “Connecticut Colony” was Indigenous support: Narragansett and Mohegan leaders signed the treaty, and land agreements between English settlers and the River groups bolstered their claims. At the same time as settlers used Indigenous allies to support their colony’s existence, the treaty undermined the jurisdiction of Indigenous people and assumed that true sovereignty could only rest with European colonizers. The Pequot, meanwhile, were cut out of the negotiations—the English settlers who wrote the treaty attempted to legally exterminate the Pequots and to forbid them from claiming their tribal identity. Under settler law, Pequots were completely divorced from their land claims by this war, in theory setting up a tract of land where settlers had total control.

The treaty set a precedent that land claims by English settlers might be legitimately achieved through military conquest. Yet even the “conquered” Pequot lands were not free from claims by Indigenous peoples, and the settlers still had very few places they could claim as their own in Connecticut, aside from the three settlements at Pyquag, Matianuck, and Saukiog that were only a few years old. The settlers’ further expansion into Connecticut would take place in the long shadow of the Pequot War, as threats of violence and invocations of conquest remained in the minds of both English and Algonquian people. While the massacre of the Pequots introduced new threats of violence, it did not signify the end of authority for any

92 Den Ouden, Beyond Conquest, 12-13; 40.
93 Den Ouden, Beyond Conquest, 5.
94 Grandjean, American Passage, 41.
Indigenous nations in Connecticut. Instead the period after the Pequot War brought new strategies for maneuvering over land and power.\textsuperscript{95}

**Quinnipiac/New Haven**

In late April 1638, five hundred extremist Puritans sailed from Boston to create a theocratic colony in Quinnipiac country.\textsuperscript{96} They negotiated permission with the Quinnipiac nation, which lived along the coast of the Long Island Sound. These settlers, under the leadership of two men who had created the eponymous Davenport-Eaton company, wrote articles of government to mark their town founding that contained no laws, because they planned to follow Biblical law.\textsuperscript{97} Even more than Connecticut, which had its flimsy conquest justification, the Davenport-Eaton Company had no standing according to English imperial thinking to back up their land claims—they planned to create a separate, more religiously rigorous colony outside of Massachusetts, a new haven for true believers.\textsuperscript{98} Because the Davenport-Eaton company was striking out on their own without a grant from the king, they needed very clear Indigenous land deeds to defend against claims by other settler groups and to assert their right to stay at Quinnipiac.\textsuperscript{99}

This situation placed a significant amount of power in the hands of the Quinnipiac, who had their own reasons to partner with the colonists. Like the other

\textsuperscript{96} Menta, “Cultural Conflict in Southern New England,” 162.
\textsuperscript{97} *Records of the Colony and Plantation of New Haven, from 1638 to 1649* (hereafter RCPNH), ed. Charles J. Hoadley (Hartford: Case, Tiffany and Co., 1857), 11-12.
\textsuperscript{98} Menta, “Cultural Conflict in Southern New England,” 163.
\textsuperscript{99} Menta, “Cultural Conflict in Southern New England,” 166.
Algonquians in Connecticut, the Quinnipiac were hit hard by the smallpox epidemic of 1633-4. One of the Quinnipiac bands, led by Montowese, had been reduced to only ten adult men plus women and children. Although the English, especially the recently arrived New Haven settlers, were completely unfamiliar with the Quinnipiac, the Quinnipiac were not ignorant about English people or the complex benefits and drawbacks that could come from allying with them. The Quinnipiac were closely linked to the Wangunk and other River groups, helping to link these inland groups to the ocean and the wampum crafted from its shellfish. One of the Quinnipiac sachems who negotiated with settlers, Montowese, was Sowheag’s nephew and Sequassen’s cousin. Having inherited a Quinnipiac leadership role from his mother, Montowese lived at Quinnipiac but maintained ties to the Wangunks. At the negotiation with the settlers a Wangunk man, Sawseunk, was also present as a negotiator. The leading families of the Quinnipiacs were thus intimately aware of the results of leaving treaties with English people vague or assuming that settlers would respect Indigenous sovereignty in land agreements. Their relative Sowheag had just been allowed, on 5 April 1638, to return to his own land at Pyquag after being exiled by colonists. The English colonists who arrived in Quinnipiac at the end of April had little idea what to expect, but the Quinnipiacs were part of longstanding kinship and trade networks that prepared them to negotiate.

101 RCPNH, 6.
No record survives of the first agreements between the Davenport-Eaton Company and the Quinnipiac. Even the settlers’ internal records do not begin at settlement but pick up six months after their arrival.\textsuperscript{106} When the company arrived in Quinnipiac they were completely dependent on the Quinnipiac. The early settlers lived in wigwams or in houses built into the sides of hills and needed Quinnipiac guidance to learn how to farm the land. In this early period, the Christians began to feel that their hoped-for sacred space was being unfairly infringed upon by the Quinnipiac.\textsuperscript{107} Quinnipiacs, interpreting the settlers as their guests, tried to trade with them even on the English sabbath day, and sometimes walked into English wigwams unannounced and stayed longer than the English thought was polite.\textsuperscript{108} After their first six months of living in Quinnipiac country, the settlers tried to establish some distance and to solidify their own very shaky claims to the land. The two were related—if the settlers had a written agreement then their relationship with the Quinnipiac would no longer be based solely on reciprocity and friendly interaction but would have standing in colonial law even if relations deteriorated.

The first treaty between the Davenport-Eaton Company and a Quinnipiac band was signed on November 24, 1638. Since no one in the Company spoke the Algonquian dialect of Quiripi, they hired Thomas Stanton of Connecticut to interpret.\textsuperscript{109} The first band with which the settlers treated, which was led by a sachem named Momauguin, agreed to a deal with the settlers that was unprecedented in Connecticut for its specificity and the restrictions it placed on the Indigenous hosts. In

\textsuperscript{106} Menta, “Cultural Conflict in Southern New England,” 167.
\textsuperscript{108} RCPNH, 3.
\textsuperscript{109} RCPNH, 1; Menta, “Cultural Conflict in Southern New England,” 166-7.
the deed as recorded by the English, the Quinnipiac thanked the English settlers for
their protection, citing fear of Pequot and Mohawk control as previously scaring them
away from the area where they were currently residing.\footnote{RCPNH, 2.} The mention of the Pequots
would have made little sense coming from the Quinnipiacs, who were aware of their
recent losses in the massacre. While the Pequot probably did become more aggressive
toward trading partners in their attempts to retain power just prior to the Pequot war,
it also seems likely that by partnering with the English, the Quinnipiac hoped to gain
protection from the English.\footnote{RCPNH, 2.}

In the surviving deed, Momauguin and his council agreed to sell their lands
“to the utmost of their bounds” and to live only on a 1200-acre plot of land, which the
settlers had the right to fence in. They also agreed that the settlers could hunt and fish
within the 1200 acres the Quinnipiac retained and promised to stop their friendly,
casual interactions with the settlers. Coming to town on the sabbath, entering English
people’s houses without permission, and entering town in a group of more than five
while carrying weapons were also banned. In one of the most strict terms of the
treaty, the English stipulated that if the Quinnipiac wanted to relocate elsewhere other
than the land they had set aside for themselves, they had to secure English
permission.\footnote{RCPNH, 2.} In the long term this kind of agreement would have been very
restrictive on Algonquian farming practices, since the Quinnipiacs would only have
farmed in one area for ten years at most before moving to more fertile fallow soil.\footnote{Cronon, Changes in the Land, 45(?).}
The specificity of the treaties between the English and the Quinnipiac, however much it appears to constrain the Quinnipiac, must be read in the context of the previous year’s Wangunk expulsion from Pyquag. Such events showed Indigenous people that one of the most effective ways to protect themselves in negotiations with settlers was to have detailed agreements written into colonial law. The notion that this agreement created a “Quinnipiac reservation” is wrong not only because “reservation” does not accurately describe the arrangement (discussed more below), but also because the deal did not involve all the Quinnipiac. The Momauguin treaty formalized a diplomatic agreement between one band of Quinnipiacs, led by Momauguin, and the Davenport-Eaton Company. Several other bands of Quinnipiacs were left unaffected by the agreement, and indeed went on to create different agreements with the settlers. A few of these treaties would take place within the next few weeks.

On December 11, another Quinnipiac leader, Montowese, and the Davenport-Eaton settlers negotiated a treaty. Unable to secure Stanton, the settlers were left with a less experienced interpreter, John Clarke. This agreement described a plot of land north of Momauguin’s band’s lands and gave the English the rights to most of it. This agreement was less restrictive to the Quinnipiac, reserving their right to hunt and fish in the land given to the English. It also designated a plot of land as specifically Quinnipiac, “wch portion of land they desire may hereafter, upon a view, be assigned, appointed and limited unto them by ye sd English planters.” In the context of these

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115 RCPNH, 6.
two agreements between the Company and Quinnipiacs, it becomes apparent that these agreements were primarily diplomatic treaties, not “sales” of land—although some colonial documents record treaties but were labeled by settlers as deeds, the text of these documents refers to them as treaties.116 While both Momauguin and Montowese received payment from the settlers, it should be understood as a token gift exchange to cement a diplomatic agreement, not as a sale in which money is exchanged for a commodity. The reserved plots of land by both bands were not strictly delimited “reservations” but rather an effort by the Quinnipiac to ensure their continued right to occupy the portions of land they were already on, aware as they were of the dangers of not spelling this out for the settlers. As the Quinnipiac held apart an area of land the settlers could not claim, the Davenport-Eaton Company acquired more privacy and exclusivity to the land that comprised their houses and planting grounds. In the Montowese treaty much of the land in question remained shared, according the text of the agreement, with both the Company and the Quinnipiac free to hunt and fish there as long as neither infringed on the other.

The Davenport-Eaton Company’s characterization of the agreement must be contrasted with the records of daily life in Quinnipiac/New Haven, which do not describe a group of Indigenous people forced onto reserved lands which they are unable to leave. Rather Quinnipiac’s settlers were both dependent on and constrained by the Quinnipiacs. It is clear in the surviving documents that the Quinnipiac negotiators were active in shaping the terms of agreement. This is not to discount the

aims of the Davenport-Eaton Company, which attempted to establish full jurisdictional control over the Quinnipiacs through this agreement.\textsuperscript{117} Still, by 1639, the Quinnipiac settlers had fenced in the entirety of their town and created town gates to protect the only entrances and exits to what was essentially a fort.\textsuperscript{118} Beginning in 1639 the Company which controlled the town also established an elaborate town watch system, furnishing all men between the ages of 16 and 60 with guns and compelling them to stand watch every night except in the winter months.\textsuperscript{119} Thus although the Quinnipiac settlers may have aspired to complete control over their neighbors, and were certainly able to leverage their advantage in numbers to some effect, their wish for sovereignty remained unfulfilled. After their agreements with the Quinnipiac, the settlers maintained a posture of defensiveness.

**Pequonnock/Stratford**

As English settlers continued their pattern of establishing settlements in areas recently affected by both the epidemics and the Pequot Massacre, they turned to the area along the Long Island Sound just west of Quinnipiac, occupied by the Paugussett confederation. Soon after the Pequot War, some emissaries from Hartford traveled to Paugussett country and made a deal with representatives from throughout the confederation for mutual “friendship” and protection, which was to include an English settlement in Paugussett homelands. This agreement was conducted using principles of Algonquian diplomacy. At the end of March in 1638, a group of Connecticut men traveled to Paugussett country “to make sure of that whole trackt of

\textsuperscript{117} Menta, “Cultural Conflict in Southern New England,” 172.
\textsuperscript{118} RCPNH, 24.
\textsuperscript{119} RCPNH, 25, 33-34,
land in order to prevent the Dutch etc [and] accommodate the English who might after come to inhabite there.”¹²⁰ The English negotiators traveled for six days from Hartford to present-day Norwalk, where they convened with a group of Paugussett negotiators to talk about settlement. The interpreter, John Higginson, was a pastor who by his own admission was selected only because no better translator could be found. The Paugussett negotiating party apparently included leaders from throughout the Paugussett homelands, from modern-day Milford to the Hudson River. Two Pokanoket leaders agreed to accompany the Englishmen back to Saukiog/Hartford to present a strand of wampum to the Connecticut Court to solidify the alliance. At this point Hartford was still an infant settlement, and the negotiations there had to take place in a prominent official’s barn because the meeting house had not yet been constructed.¹²¹ This land deal, like those along the Connecticut River and at Quinnipiac, was a treaty for shared use and not a sale. This distinction is especially evident in the Paugussett case because wampum was given to the English by the Paugussett, and not the other way around.

As in the New Haven case, the colonial record keepers described the Paugussetts giving up all their land. According to the inexperienced translator Higginson, the Indigenous delegates “did with an unanimous consent expresse there desire of the English frendship, theire willingness the English should come to dwell amongst them & profes that they did give & surrender up all theire land to the English Sachems at Conecticott.”¹²² While Higginson remembered a party of Englishmen

¹²² SLR, vol. 1 book 10, 471,
traveling down to Paugussett to initiate negotiations, Thomas Stanton, Pequot war veteran, recounted the story differently. Maintaining that the land was conquered and therefore English property, he recalled that “the Indiens at Paquanock did Intreat M' Haynes & M’ Hopkins that some of Unglish would come and dwell by them so that they might not be in feare of theire enemies- the uplanders.”\textsuperscript{123} In contrast to Stanton’s claims that the Indigenous parties sought out English protection from other Indigenous groups, Higginson pointed out that the English tried to leverage Paugussett fears of the English, “it being not long after the English Conquest & the fear of the English being then upon them.”\textsuperscript{124} It is Stanton’s account, however, that recalls that the Pequonnock band of Paugussetts maintained hold of some of their lands, asserting “that the English should have all theire land only providing them some place for planting w^ch I think is but a reasonable request.”\textsuperscript{125}

Despite the specificity of these agreements between Hartford representatives and the Paugussett confederation, this settlement was not created, settlers and Paugussetts instead favoring local negotiation. English settlement made its mark in Paugussett country a year later when a different group of settlers started planting in Pequonnock, seemingly having created their own agreement with Pequonnocks or perhaps piggybacking on the existing diplomatic deal.\textsuperscript{126} The English settlers who arrived in Paugussett country were a separate group from the Connecticut River English settlers, but in 1639, Hartford’s local government announced their intention

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{123} SLR, vol 1 book 10, 473-4. \\
\textsuperscript{124} SLR, vol 1 book 10, 471. \\
\textsuperscript{125} SLR, vol 1 book 10, 473-4. \\
to incorporate the two new settlements at Pequonnock and nearby Uncoway into their colony.\textsuperscript{127} By April 1640, the settlers in Paugussett country had agreed to Hartford’s authority, seemingly in part because they could not negotiate the bounds between the two new English settlements there on their own.\textsuperscript{128} The status Hartford had claimed as leader of a new colony after the Pequot Massacre could not yet be taken for granted but had to be bolstered by assistance in projects of diplomacy.

Although interpretations of a Paugussett “reservation” coinciding with the establishment of the first English town are less prominent than the similar stories from New Haven, one scholar has advanced the argument that the 1638 agreement with settlers created a Paugussett reservation.\textsuperscript{129} Clearly, the Pequonnock negotiators did not surrender the entirety of their homeland to the English, and they did reserve a specific area, known as Golden Hill, for their own exclusive use while agreeing that other areas could be under exclusive use for English settlement. As with other contemporary treaties, the majority of Pequannock land was given over to shared use like hunting and fishing while the Pequannock ensured an area large enough for horticulture for their exclusive use. Land used for agriculture had to be specially protected because of the sedentary nature of its intended activity and because the danger of English encroachment or damage to crops persisted if such boundaries were not clearly demarcated.\textsuperscript{130} The Pequannock case, however, would prove unique because rather than settle to one side of an Indigenous town, English settlers established settlements on either side of Golden Hill, the towns of Stratford

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\item \textsuperscript{127} PRCC vol. 1, 36.
\item \textsuperscript{128} PRCC vol. 1, 47.
\item \textsuperscript{129} Wojciechowski, \textit{The Paugussett Tribes}, 65-66.
\item \textsuperscript{130} Anderson, \textit{Creatures of Empire}, 210-211.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
(Pequonnock) and Fairfield (Uncoway). This unique settlement pattern would cause problems between settlers and the Pequannock early on, because neither had any room to expand. Yet for both settlers and Paugussetts, the country around them remained Indigenous—outside of the settlers’ specified bounds, they had only imaginary authority.

Nameag/New London

By 1645 land claims resulting from the Pequot Massacre remained ambiguous to colonists and to Indigenous participants, the Treaty of Hartford’s bold claims of conquest failing to materialize on the ground. Uncas, the leader of the Pequots’ relatives the Mohegans, had begun to try to replace the Pequots as a leading tribute holder among the surrounding nations.131 Through his position, based on Indigenous structures of trade and kinship but influenced by Connecticut Colony’s attempt to enfold the remaining Pequots into the Mohegan nation, Uncas had become a powerful force. Uncas also fostered a connection with John Mason, the general who had ordered the Pequot Massacre at Mystic Fort, who served as an ally in negotiations between the Mohegans and the English.132 Pequot identity, meanwhile, had not been successfully destroyed by the Treaty of Hartford, and some Pequots were working to free themselves from the Mohegan and Narragansett oversight imposed upon them after the war. The Winthrop family, having helped to legally extinguish the Pequot from existence and consign most Pequot members to the rule of other Indigenous leaders or slavery in the West Indies, also used the connections they had built with the

131 Lipman, Saltwater Frontier, 169-170.
“extinct” Pequot nation during the conflict to expand their settlements into the growing Mohegan territory. English settlement in Pequot country took place according to the competing interests of Pequots and other Indigenous groups, not the totalizing conquest claims laid out in the Treaty of Hartford.

In 1645, John Winthrop Jr. traveled from his father’s colony in Boston to visit a Pequot settlement called Nameag along the Thames River and survey it for settlement. Winthrop’s trip was facilitated by Indigenous interaction. He stayed in wigwams along the way, trading with Algonquians for food, and traveled on paths that were little understood by English settlers but easily navigated by most Indigenous people. When he stopped for the night in Hartford, Winthrop found that the English leaders were absent, so he was hosted instead by Saukiogs. Winthrop arrived at Nameag with the help of multiple Algonquian guides. The Pequot village at Nameag had been ordered to pay tribute to the Mohegans after the Pequot War, but retained some autonomy. The leader at Nameag, Robin Cassacinamon, escorted Winthrop on his way back to Boston after the Nameag Pequots had helped Winthrop survey their land “for a suitable spot for a colony.” The Nameag Pequots seem to have agreed to help Winthrop found a town within their lands because they preferred an alliance with the English to the Mohegans, although both groups had been their enemies in the Pequot War. Winthrop in particular was one of the most powerful

133 Grandjean, American Passage, 69-70.
136 Carlton and Winthrop, 504-506.
English men they could have on their side, and would prove an important ally in Pequot efforts to regain some of what they had lost in the massacre.

**Mattabessett/Middletown**

The Wangunk leader at Mattabessett, Sowheag, continued in his hostility toward the colonists. Despite a few attempts by the General Court to improve relationships, colonial authorities continued to hear reports that Sowheag was harboring “enemies.” Although the colony almost acted on this intelligence a few times, they were ultimately too wary of starting a violent conflict with Sowheag to follow through.\(^{138}\) Relations shifted sharply in 1649, when Sowheag allowed a group of English people to settle at Mattabessett. Unlike the early Quinnipiac deeds, these agreements are not preserved or were never written down.\(^{139}\) Soon after he allowed settlers to move to Mattabessett, Sowheag died.\(^{140}\) His children were left to negotiate with the settlers, continuing their father’s legacy amid changing circumstances. Because the agreement between Sowheag and the settlers does not survive, the most detailed written account of the negotiation comes from a “deed” signed by Wangunks more than twenty years later. Yet in the decades between 1650 and 1672, so much about settler-Indigenous land agreements would change that it is difficult to reconstruct what happened in this original agreement. Rather than denying the role of historical change and colonial power in reinterpreting agreements, it may be better to

\(^{139}\) Ives, “Wangunk Ethnohistory,” 25.
\(^{140}\) Ives, “Wangunk Ethnohistory,” 27.
acknowledge that despite the detail of Connecticut’s colonial archives, they also contain massive silences.

Conclusion

The first English towns established in Connecticut were negotiated immediately after the smallpox epidemic, when Indigenous communities and settlers established reciprocal relationships of shared space. This practice quickly broke down when settler attempts to assert sovereignty conflicted with Indigenous means of “balancing” power.\textsuperscript{141} Immediately following the Pequot Massacre, English settlers expanded rapidly. Indigenous groups, having seen the violent response by the English to a nation that contested their power, were willing to collaborate with the English, but Algonquians now recognized that the English were willing to violate customary agreements about shared space. In response, Algonquians created detailed treaties and formalized them through a gift exchange between settlers and Indigenous leaders. Indigenous negotiators were careful to preserve a specific area of land needed for sedentary activities like dwellings and horticulture, which they made sure was recognized in English laws. English people asserted specific boundaries for their settlements also. The rest of the tribal homelands which were not marked out in this way remained under Algonquian control, open to English people for hunting and travel. While Hartford settlers pretended they ruled a colony, English towns were not yet fully established and remained spread out, contingent on Indigenous cooperation. Although certain transactions, particularly the New Haven settlers’ treaty with

\textsuperscript{141} See Brooks, \textit{The Common Pot}, 20-21, 42-43, 60, for discussion of Algonquian practices and theories about “rebalancing.”
Momaugin, were more coercive, only a very small portion of the land in Connecticut could credibly be claimed by the colonists. The rest of Connecticut remained, on paper and especially in practice, Algonquian.
Chapter Two: “A people whose tents are yet amonst us” (1638-1675)

Introduction

Historians of settler colonialism in New England have worked to uncover the nature of Indigenous-settler relations by looking at deeds of land transactions between Indigenous people and English settlers. This focus on deeds necessarily created a one-way narrative of exchange, where the English, rich in goods, traded with Indigenous peoples, who had extra land. Looking beyond deeds and incorporating mundane town records casts new light on deeds as one part of a dynamic in which the English depended heavily on Indigenous people for the resources necessary to make their towns functional. The English needed Indigenous guidance, Indigenous labor, Indigenous diplomacy, and Indigenous food to survive in Connecticut. Because no English settlement could establish itself without Indigenous cooperation, the English had to alter their ways of life significantly after initial land agreements were established. The Indigenous mediation of English settlement in Connecticut produced physical and social proximity between the two groups. Because all English settlement at this point depended on Indigenous assistance and continued permission, English people had to maintain diplomatic relationships with Indigenous peoples through a continuous process of negotiation, diplomacy, and threatened or actual violence.

This chapter is divided into three sections that discuss aspects of life in Connecticut in which settlers depended upon Indigenous peoples. The first section

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142 For examples of this narrative about Indigenous people rich only in land and English people rich in goods, see: Baker, “A Scratch with a Bear’s Paw”; Banner, How the Indians Lost Their Land, 51-52; Vaughan, New England Frontier, 107-108.
describes how patterns of settlement created extreme physical proximity, in which settlers and Indigenous hosts planted in neighboring fields, traveled the same roads, hunted and traded in the same spaces, and created social connections. The second section focuses on slavery, showing how, by forcing people into bondage after the Pequot war, settlers throughout Connecticut took advantage of Indigenous knowledge. Looking at slavery also helps illustrate that proximity is not synonymous with friendship or equality—relationships could be intimate without being based on mutual respect. The final section of this chapter looks at legitimacy, investigating the ways that Connecticut’s settlers depended on continued Indigenous validation of their land claims to sustain their settlements. Together, these areas of investigation illuminate the on-the-ground landscape of interactions between settlers and Indigenous peoples, upending the idea of a bounded “frontier” to show that early settlements were products of closeness, not separation.

**Daily interaction**

Settler towns and Indigenous communities shared overlapping territories and encountered one another frequently. While the proximity between settlers and Indigenous peoples developed because settlers relied on Indigenous infrastructure, permission, and information to settle in a given place, that physical closeness enabled a network of interdependence that persisted long after the site of settlement was marked out. English settlers were unfamiliar with the landscape, the weather, and the manners of farming along the Connecticut, and had little understanding of the complex politics within and between Indigenous communities. English people needed to trade with Indigenous peoples for shelter, food, and household goods. They
depended on Indigenous labor when they hired messengers and guides. These connections were essential to the survival of any newly founded town.

Because of their unfamiliarity with the areas they were attempting to settle, English people needed Indigenous guides to show them viable places for settlement in the first place. These locations were never untapped areas free of human modification, but instead were almost always one of several settlements used by an Indigenous group. Frederick Jackson Turner’s influential “frontier thesis” argued that American history had been characterized by an expanding wave of Anglo-American settlement that moved further and further west, confronting Indigenous peoples only on the “outskirts” of English territory.¹⁴³ Since then, historians have shown that English settlement did not follow this simplistic frontier pattern, but rather settlers began their settlements in close proximity to Indigenous communities, located within Indigenous homelands from the very beginning.¹⁴⁴ Indigenous decision-making in land transactions meant that even the sites settlers chose for their settlements were influenced by Indigenous peoples. As discussed in Chapter One, the early land agreements between English settlers and Indigenous groups in Connecticut laid out small plots of land that were exclusively English but reserved most of the territory for shared use or exclusive Indigenous control. Early English settlements did not take the form of broad swaths of land without Indigenous contact. Even after a land agreement had taken place, settlers lived among Indigenous peoples and had to try to foster functional relationships.

¹⁴⁴ Lipman, The Saltwater Frontier, 4; Grandjean, American Passage, 3-13.
At Nameag, John Winthrop Jr.’s band of settlers lived with Pequots in the same town. After an attack on the Nameag Pequots by Mohegans, the settlers wrote to the General Court, “we are most barbarously iniuriously and unchristianly dealt withal to have such a people whose tents are yet amonst vs, to be vnnecessarily provoked and forced vpon a condition of absolute despaire.”¹⁴⁵ This was an unusually close relationship, brought on by the Pequots’ refugee status and need for protection from their oppressors: English, Narragansett, and Mohegan. Although the dwellings of Indigenous people may not have been interspersed with English houses in most other towns, they were not so far off either. In New Haven the settlers more than once described the locations of new land grants as being “betwixt Mr. Davenports farme & the Indian wigwams.”¹⁴⁶ Davenport was no rugged frontier adventurer, but rather a pastor and one of the most prominent men in the community—the Davenport in New Haven’s founding Davenport-Eaton Company. In Stratford, the town officers recorded a dispute between two men who disagreed about payment for a plot of land “lying nere and about ye Potatuck Indians fort.”¹⁴⁷

Indigenous peoples and settlers not only lived next to one another, they worked nearby as well. Settler-owned livestock trampling Indigenous fields was a well-documented problem throughout New England.¹⁴⁸ Although sometimes these animals traveled long distances, the more serious problem was that English fields so often bordered Indigenous ones. In 1671 in Stratford a man gifted his wife a parcel of land in “Paquannack” field, bounded “on the North with Common land, North-east

¹⁴⁶ RCPNH, 198 and 42-4.
¹⁴⁷ SLR vol. 1 book 10, 464.
¹⁴⁸ Anderson, Creatures of Empire, 189-190.
with land the Indians improve.” In another land sale between settlers in Stratford, a man sold another eleven acres of land “bounded on the South with the Indian field.” In Nameag, settlers debated how to deal with the problems of their cattle damaging Indigenous cornfields. In Quinnipiac in 1647, the General Court agreed to allow settlers to set up weirs to catch fish, as long as "they be not prejuditall to the wares [weirs] the Indians have already set vpp.” English settlements in those years were far from other English plantations, but they could hardly have been closer to their Indigenous hosts.

English dependence on Indigenous knowledge for travel meant that the locations of each English settlement had at least as much to do with Indigenous decision-making as English. As discussed in Chapter One, the English only became aware of sites in Quinnipiac, Pequot, and Paugussett country through the Pequot War. As surviving Pequots fled English forces after the Pequot Massacre, they relied on kinship and trade networks with the Quinnipiacs and Paugussetts—tracing a path through an Indigenous landscape that the English barely understood. Even after their first glimpses of these locations, English settlers required Indigenous mediation to realize their goals of settlement. In Paugussett country, the first settlers traveled with the help of an Indigenous guide to the location where the Paugussetts agreed to receive them. Indigenous guides also facilitated John Winthrop’s first journey to Nameag, helping him to find lodgings during his trip using Indigenous principles of

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149 SLR vol. 1 book 10, 427.
150 SLR vol. 1 book 10, 462.
152 RCPNH, 310-11.
153 SLR vol. 1 book 10, 471.
diplomacy.\textsuperscript{154} At Nameag Winthrop depended on the knowledge of Pequot leader Cassacinamon, who led him to an area where Cassacinamon “told [Winthrop] there was fruit-bearing land without rocks, arable with a goodly number of planting-fields.”\textsuperscript{155} The specific initial land agreements in all of these English settlements, wherein Indigenous people reserved certain areas and use rights for themselves, are also evidence of a strong Indigenous role in shaping the location and character of English settlements.

Many of the Indigenous groups who made land agreements with English people did so under severely constrained circumstances. All local groups had suffered from epidemic disease in the recent past, a fact which the English planned to use to their advantage.\textsuperscript{156} Some Indigenous communities were under threat of violence, especially after the destabilization caused by the Pequot War. For some nations, allowing English settlers to live near them probably seemed like the best in a range of options—although in-depth transcriptions of oral treaties do not survive in every case, references to them in English records suggest that many agreements stipulated that English neighbors had to protect Indigenous peoples from attacks by Haudenosaunee Iroquois, Mohegans, or other potential rivals.\textsuperscript{157} If Indigenous peoples did not wish to allow English settlement near them, it was possible to resist—as Sowheag, leader of the Wangunks, did by retreating from Wethersfield after its colonists reneged on their treaty and choosing to live at Mattabessett, where the Wangunks created a zone free

\textsuperscript{154} Grandjean, \textit{American Passage}, 69-70.
\textsuperscript{155} Carlton and Winthrop, “Overland to Connecticut in 1645,” 505.
\textsuperscript{156} Cronon, \textit{Changes in the Land}, 90.
of colonial interference for over a decade.\textsuperscript{158} This is not to argue that Indigenous peoples always welcomed or enjoyed English settlement, merely that they exercised influence in choosing how and where that settlement took place.

Algonquian dwellings both sheltered English people and inspired them in constructing their own homes. When John Winthrop Jr. visited Nameag to survey it for settlement, he traveled for almost a month and had to find Indigenous hosts to put him up in their wigwams in most of the villages where he stayed. Any English person traveling by land in New England at that time would have sought shelter the same way.\textsuperscript{159} Once Winthrop Jr.’s settlement was established at Nameag, he lived in a dwelling he described as a “wigwam.”\textsuperscript{160} English “wigwams” like Winthrop’s were built by English people but inspired by Algonquian architecture, and were the norm in the early years of new settlements.\textsuperscript{161} Existing Indigenous shelters could also be useful to English people once they had constructed their own homes—in a 1647 New Haven case, a man was accused of neglecting his responsibilities as a cowherd, having spent “the most part of the day in a wigwam or some shelter” on account of rain.\textsuperscript{162} While early settlers’ use of Indigenous shelters did not replace English efforts to build their own more “English” structures, the landscape of existing Algonquian structures at times benefited settlers struggling to set up their towns.\textsuperscript{163}

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\textsuperscript{158} Ives, “Wangunk Ethnohistory,” 18.
\textsuperscript{159} Grandjean, American Passage, 70.
\textsuperscript{160} Winthrop Papers: Vol V, 111-112.
\textsuperscript{162} RCPNH, 308.
\textsuperscript{163} Lepore, The Name of War, 77.
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English people also relied on Algonquian communities for food. They found that “Indian corn” was much easier to grow in the Connecticut climate than English grains and depended on it heavily. Settlers began by trading or stealing corn from Indigenous people and gradually learned—with Indigenous help—how to cultivate it themselves.\textsuperscript{164} Corn was so valuable to colonists in Connecticut that they used it as a currency.\textsuperscript{165} As it was a staple for most Algonquian groups, corn quickly became a staple for Connecticut’s settlers—an adoption of an Indigenous way of life that has persisted into the present day. English people also traded with Algonquian peoples for other types of food, including venison. In Quinnipiac in 1640 the town elected a settler “truck master for the year,” because it was his job to “truck” or trade with the Quinnipiacs for venison.\textsuperscript{166} Relationships with Indigenous peoples had to stay functional for colonists to access food, especially in the spread-out English settlements of Connecticut.\textsuperscript{167} These relationships required continual diplomacy. The preservation of their alliances with Indigenous neighbors was an important concern for settlers making decisions about their own farms. When New Haven’s settlers created their first articles of government in 1645, they included careful rules for penning in pigs, "wch course & care to keepe swine at a distance may also prevent much damadg & offence betwixt the English & the Indians, wch ariseth oft by our trespassing vppon their corne, & their killing our swinne."\textsuperscript{168} English settlers had a

\textsuperscript{164} Grandjean, “New World Tempests,” 92-93.
\textsuperscript{165} NLTR 1647-1666, 30-31; RCPNH, 120-121.
\textsuperscript{166} RCPNH, 42-44.
\textsuperscript{167} Grandjean, “New World Tempests,” 81-91.
\textsuperscript{168} RCPNH, 208.
material interest in maintaining positive relationships with their Indigenous neighbors who helped them to eat.

Indigenous peoples and colonists traded with one another not only for food but also for household goods. Although the material culture of Algonquians was different—built for a more mobile lifestyle than English people were accustomed to—they produced many goods that English people found useful. In 1650 some New Haven indentured servants coveted an Indigenous-produced tanned hide so badly that they stole it from a wealthy woman’s house. Their wish for a properly tanned hide can be put in perspective when contrasted with the state of that craft among English settlers at the time. In 1647 two English settlers were convicted of fraud in New Haven colony for selling shoes that immediately fell apart. The New Haven General Court determined that the man who had tanned the hide for the shoes did not know how to tan hides correctly, and the man who had sewed the shoes together did not know how to do his job either. In a time and place where English settlers were working outside as farmers, trying to build new houses, churches, and roads, and getting accustomed to snowy New England winters, it was difficult to find an English person who knew how to make shoes. Use of Algonquian products sustained settlers as they tried to establish new towns in Connecticut.

English settlers also relied on Indigenous peoples to travel by water. Because English settlement in Connecticut took place within Indigenous landscapes, settlers

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170 RCPNH, 335-353.
found themselves within a world of water travel that was inaccessible to them. Many English settlements were located at important sites for water travel such as along major rivers or on the coast. For this reason, English towns were more accessible to each other by boat travel than on foot. Because of the way Indigenous settlement patterns shaped English town founding, the English were forced to rely on Indigenous canoes. In New Haven in 1645 the town records mentioned that, of the boats then in use in New Haven, some were made by the English and some were bought from Indigenous people. Another New Haven man traveled into Mohegan country to get canoes in 1646. Early New London settler Thomas Minor owned two canoes made by Indigenous craftsmen. When they did not acquire their own canoes, settlers sometimes hitched rides on Algonquian boats to travel from one English outpost to another. Katherine Grandjean has advanced the framework of a “communications frontier” in early New England, arguing that much of the English project of colonization consisted of a slow effort to control not just land but communication. For the entire 17th century, Grandjean argues, this project had hardly begun, and English people depended on Indigenous messengers and methods of travel. Because settlers relied on Indigenous people to help them find a place to live, they also needed Indigenous methods of travel to transport themselves to and from their settlements long after the initial founding.

172 Grandjean, American Passage, 71-72.  
173 RCPNH, 208-214.  
174 RCPNH, 229-230.  
175 Lipman, The Saltwater Frontier, 74-75.  
176 Lipman, The Saltwater Frontier, 71-72.  
177 Grandjean, American Passage, 3-13.
English townspeople in Connecticut lived in an Algonquian society, in a condition of economic dependence and physical proximity to Algonquian peoples. English settlements were so spread out from each other because they were situated within an Indigenous political landscape. When English settlements in Connecticut are understood as existing within Indigenous homelands rather than independent from them, they no longer appear scattered or random, but instead reveal themselves as part of a functioning social system that long predated the arrival of Europeans. This understanding helps us to conceptualize the degree of interdependence between Indigenous peoples and settlers, who shared the same spaces and the same resources.

**Work and slavery**

The proximity of Indigenous peoples to English settlers did not always take the form of friendship. After the Pequot Massacre, the English enslaved many of the captured Pequots. John Winthrop Sr. sold seventeen Pequots to the English West Indies as slaves, while others remained in New England. Other Indigenous peoples sometimes became enslaved or indentured through debt collection or as punishment for “crimes,” as adjudicated in English courts, although these forms of indenture were much less common in the early period of town settlement, becoming increasingly prevalent after 1675. In the collection of settlements that called themselves New England, 1,200 Indigenous people were enslaved before the end of the 17th century. Although indentured Indigenous individuals resisted the English and sometimes

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escaped, the system of indenture fostered proximity. Indigenous servants provided knowledge about diplomacy, language interpretation skills, travel guidance, and information about farming and hunting. Enslaved Indigenous men, women, and children not only helped settlers learn to survive in an unfamiliar landscape, but the continued family connections maintained by captured Pequots ensured that in becoming slaveholders the English also became further entangled in Indigenous social structures.

The English arrived in Connecticut with their own system of indentured servitude, but captured Indigenous people faced a very different experience from indentured Englishmen. Certainly, English indentured servants were often treated badly; in New Haven they were punished disproportionately for petty crimes. In one New Haven case an indentured servant who was hit in the head with a hammer by his master got only two months off before going back to work for his assailant.\textsuperscript{181} However the English system of indentured servitude existed at least in part as a way to provide for indigent children—it was common for parents to bind out their children as indentured servants, either if they could not care for them or if they wanted them to learn a trade. Certain provisions in New England law, like that masters had to teach indentured servants to read, helped those who were indentured to find a role in free society after their time was up.\textsuperscript{182} Meanwhile Indigenous people convicted of crimes could be punished by being sent to do forced labor in other English colonies, such as the West Indies, a fate that did not await English criminals.\textsuperscript{183} For those able to

\textsuperscript{181} RCPNH, 46-47.  
\textsuperscript{182} Vaughan, \textit{New England Frontier}, 207.  
\textsuperscript{183} Vaughan, \textit{New England Frontier}, 207-208.
remain in New England, English masters viewed enslavement as a form of social control, hoping it would convince Indigenous peoples to abandon Algonquian culture.\textsuperscript{184} In 1659 the United Colonies, an organization made up of leaders from New Haven, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Plymouth, passed a law offering food and clothes to Indigenous parents who offered their children for indenture, an offer some struggling parents accepted.\textsuperscript{185} Having been indentured could hinder an Indigenous person’s efforts to return to their community of origin once their term was up, an intentional outcome of the English use of forced labor as cultural conversion.\textsuperscript{186}

Although English people justified enslaving Pequots based on their supposed anglicization, they also desired Pequot servants specifically for their Indigenous knowledge. John Eliot, famous missionary to the Massachusett people, is one high-profile example. Eliot began his ministry when English people in London began criticizing the Massachusetts Bay Colony for abandoning its founding goal of converting Indigenous peoples. His project provided credibility to the colonists’ claims that theirs was primarily a missionary project and therefore helping secure further funding from supporters in England. One of the only English settlers to try to become fluent in an Algonquian language, Eliot made knowledge of Massachusett a cornerstone of his ministry. Eliot learned Massachusett only because he was tutored by a captured Montaukett man who had been enslaved after the Pequot war.\textsuperscript{187} In addition to language skills, multiple English settlers left records showing that they

\textsuperscript{185} Lipman, \textit{The Saltwater Frontier}, 219.
\textsuperscript{187} Grandjean, \textit{American Passage}, 97.
highly valued the hunting abilities of Indigenous servants. While settlers did not attempt to exploit Indigenous peoples as a major source of agricultural labor, they recognized their need for help from Indigenous peoples for their knowledge of the place and people the English were trying to colonize.

Indigenous peoples resisted the system of involuntary indenture, sometimes inspiring worry in the English about their potential as a force of resistance. In a 1650 court case in New Haven, an indentured servant, referred to in the English records only as “Captive,” was accused along with some English servants of stealing objects from wealthy English homes. His name may have been a reference to the way he became indentured, through capture in the Pequot War, although it is also possible it was an anglicization of an Algonquian name. This servant confessed, along with his English co-conspirators, to stealing guns and powder and selling them to other Indigenous people. In sentencing him and his compatriots for their crimes, the New Haven court ruled that Captive was guiltier than the English servants. The proximity of Indigenous people—especially those held against their will, known to have participated in past uprisings—made English people wary of plots and betrayal. Reflecting on the case, “The Court considered what a mischeivous example this is, and how dangerous it is to nourish vnrighteousnes & disorder in a plantation: for who can be secure, of his Chilldren or servants, or goods, if this be allowed.” However as nervous as settlers sometimes became about proximity to

188 Plane, Colonial Intimacies, 217 n. 31.
189 NHTR, 8-9.
190 NHTR, 13.
192 NHTR, 14.
their indentured servants, the system of enslaving and indenturing Indigenous people was too important to the colonial project to consider giving it up.

Enslaved Pequots used colonists’ dependence on their labor to preserve family relationships in the aftermath of the Pequot massacre. The persistence of family connections in conditions of enslavement is illustrated by the case of a Pequot servant who ran away from her English mistress in 1647. The former servant’s master wrote to another English man, asking him to appeal to John Winthrop Jr. on his behalf. The master wrote, “shee is the dauter of on quassen and hee hath with hir vnkell intised hir away…” which her master viewed as unfair,

shee being a Chilld of deth, and I keeping hir 2 yeares vnder the sirgens hand and for all my Charg and kindes sheen too him his wif and friendes from tim too time, especeyallley too his Chilld hom I haue tould often if shee wolld marey I wolld not hinder hir, onley let mee haue as much as woll purches mee a neger in hir roome...  

This letter reveals a number of important facts about the nature of Pequot indentured servitude after the massacre. The female indentured servant, who remains unnamed, was captured while sick or injured and subjected to two years of medical care by her English masters as a young child. The letter does not explain the nature of this woman’s childhood suffering, although it may have been an injury sustained in the Pequot massacre, as she was captured “in the time of the pecod ware” and had “a great Cut in her face by hur Ie.” Her designation as a “child of death” seems to have referred to her injury. Her English masters were not only aware of her family

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193 Winthrop Papers: Vol V, 164. The spelling of this settler is especially hard to read. It may be helpful to read aloud.
194 Winthrop Papers: Vol V, 165.
195 Warren, New England Bound, 103. Warren writes that a “child of death” was a child sentenced to be executed for the crimes of her parents; however, in this case it seems that the death sentence was from illness, necessitating “the surgens hand.” My interpretation that this individual was not sentenced
lineage—“the dauter of on quassen,” but had maintained a relationship with her father from the time of her indenture, showing “kindes” to “him his wif and friends from tim too time.” Ultimately her continued connection to her family would help Quassen’s daughter to escape.

An additional letter about the same case, addressed to John Winthrop Jr. by a third Englishman, explained why Winthrop Jr. was involved. Quassen’s daughter had probably “com into [Winthrop’s] libertys,” because “she haue a Cusen liuing with you.”

Two cousins—the children, perhaps, of Quassen and his brother—were both enslaved in English households far apart from each other. Quassen and his brother spent time with the master’s family, leading them to believe they had a friendly relationship—a testament to how commonplace Indigenous-English proximity was at the time. The English family’s offers, which they considered very kind, of marriage for their Pequot servant if she found an enslaved Black person to replace her, seem to have been unwelcome to both the captured woman and her family. Marriage at this time would likely have meant marriage to a Christian Indian, and would have involved living under close English oversight, most likely in the Bay Colony far from her Pequot relations. Instead this Pequot woman’s family planned to help her gain her freedom, family networks and communication pathways having been kept open despite the devastation of the Pequot Massacre. There is no record showing whether this escaped woman had to return to her life as a slave, but this story attests to both

to death by colonists for family crimes is bolstered by the letters’ discussion of her surviving relations, who stayed in contact with her master’s family.

196 Winthrop Papers: Vol V, 165.
197 Plane, Colonial Intimacies, 42-45 for importance of marriage to the English in colonial project; 98-99 for discussion of attempts at English control within praying towns.
the dependence on Pequot labor by the English and the continued family and cultural connections maintained by captured Pequots even against great odds.

Alongside these examples of forced labor, settlers also sometimes tried to incorporate Indigenous individuals into their system of waged work. In the New Haven case in which indentured servants stole a tanned hide, the two English servants ran away to escape punishment for their thefts. An English search party was unable to find them, and the men were only retrieved because a group of “Indians”—probably Quinnipiacs—brought them back to New Haven.\(^{198}\) In both New Haven and Middletown, settlers tried to encourage Indigenous peoples to help exterminate the local population of wolves, a serious predator for English livestock. In New Haven in 1650, Quinnipiacs who killed wolves were offered 5 shillings per wolf head.\(^{199}\) In Middletown in 1666, the settlers offered a similar reward, although they required Wangunk wolf killers to prove that their wolf was killed near town by bringing an English witness to the wolf’s carcass.\(^{200}\) Although the New Haven settlers had less strict requirements for their Indigenous neighbors, both plantations showed recognition that Indigenous peoples were more familiar with the surrounding landscape than most English people. The expectation that Indigenous neighbors could be informed of such a statute and would follow through by hunting a wolf and then showing its carcass to English settlers reveals the level of daily interaction, and the

\(^{198}\) NHTR, 4.
\(^{199}\) NHTR, 21-24.
\(^{200}\) “Middletown Town Votes and Proprietor’s Records: Vol. 1 (1652-1735)” (hereafter MTVPR) (Middlesex County Historical Society, Middletown, CT), 58.
ease of communication, that would have been the norm in English settlements at this time.

Even “voluntary” labor, however, could transform into a more coercive form. Once they began participating in systems of English waged work, Indigenous peoples were more vulnerable to accusations by English settlers of owing Englishmen money or of property damage. Courts frequently ordered Indigenous debtors to pay their debts by working for free.²⁰¹ Indigenous labor within colonial settlements was coercive and had serious impacts on Indigenous communities, but it also impacted the imagined purity of settler society. The need for Indigenous labor in early settlements required constant communication and social proximity not only with people enslaved by English families or working for a wage, but with the larger kinship networks to whom these workers stayed connected. Slavery and work in Connecticut took place at close range, ensuring that settler-Indigenous interaction remained part of daily life.

Diplomacy

Indigenous peoples not only helped English settlers with work and sustenance, but diplomatic relationships with them were essential to facilitating all English settlements in early Connecticut. While English people speculated that Indigenous neighbors wanted English settlements nearby for protection from, alternatively, the Narragansetts,²⁰² Connecticut River Indians,²⁰³ the Pequot,²⁰⁴ and the English themselves,²⁰⁵ the English depended on Indigenous alliances for their own safety.

²⁰² Winthrop Papers: Vol. V, 82-83.
Settlers wanted to live closely with Indigenous neighbors because they hoped for their military protection. Balancing between multiple competing political systems, including their own English one, settlers required continued acceptance of their land claims from the Indigenous grantors if they wished to have their towns recognized by Indigenous and European people. Without this validation of their land claims by their Indigenous neighbors, English people were at risk of the colonial leadership denying their town recognition or membership in the colony. Even more fundamentally, settlers had to maintain positive relationships with their Indigenous hosts so that Indigenous peoples would continue to tolerate the colonial presence. Colonists and Indigenous neighbors negotiated these land agreements through a combination of peaceful diplomacy and actual or threatened violence. While not always friendly, these relationships were important to all parties and required continuous interaction with Indigenous peoples long after a settlement was founded.

Settlers at Nameag in particular relied on Indigenous cooperation. Cassacinamon, the leader at Nameag, had managed to consolidate his leadership in the decade following the Pequot War, during which a subset of surviving Pequots were forcibly relocated to Nameag and subjected to Mohegan control. Using his relationship with John Winthrop Jr., Cassacinamon had convinced the Massachusetts governor’s son to establish a settlement at Nameag. Winthrop Jr.’s move to Nameag, and agreement with the Pequots, constituted English recognition of Pequot land claims and of Cassacinamon’s status as a leader.\textsuperscript{206} The Mohegans who lived to the north of Nameag were not happy to find that Winthrop had gone behind their backs to

\textsuperscript{206} McBride, “The Legacy of Robin Cassacinamon,” 79-81.
make a deal with their tributes. As soon as the English arrived in Nameag to establish
their settlement, Uncas began to retaliate against the Nameag Pequots who had welcomed the settlers there. John Winthrop Jr. complained:

Vncus hath threatened the Indians Cutshamakin and Casacinamon, and others, and hath threatened to burne the wigwams of the Pequot Indians, at Nameag, and did send many men in an hostile manner into the English plantation at the said place to take Cutshamakin from thence without any order or warrant from the English magistrates whereby he hath disturbed the said plantation and put the women and children in feare, and frighted the Indians there, who lived peaceably among the English and were very helpful and vsefull to them…

The Winthrop family had chosen to align themselves with Cassacinamon and the Nameag Pequots because this was the easiest way to gain access to land around the Pequot River. The Nameag Pequots, under the guidance of Cassacinamon, had established a crucial foothold to regaining the sovereignty they had lost. Similarly to the strategy used by the River groups of accepting European settlement to counteract Pequot control, the Pequots had now mobilized English settlers against the Mohegans. Uncas quickly fought back.

According to the Treaty of Hartford, the Pequots had forfeited the right to settle in their historic homelands or to claim a distinct national identity. Yet after the war, much Pequot land had fallen into the possession of the Mohegans, who had historically occupied many of the same areas. In a result that must have been frustrating for potential English town founders, the massacre did not free up Pequot land around the Thames and Mystic River for settlement but placed it under the

207 *Winthrop Papers: Vol V*, 82-83.
jurisdiction of the Mohegans, a newly powerful group.\textsuperscript{209} Winthrop Jr. wrote to a friend in Nameag, “If the Pequotts be not taken vnder the English, If these Indians that we must live neere be still vnder Vncus command, there wilbe noe living for English there…”\textsuperscript{210} Winthrop Jr., influenced by his close relationship with his new Pequot hosts, suggested that the colonists of Nameag help the Pequots write a petition to the General Court declaring that they did not wish to be subject to Uncas. “I looke at the quiet of our plantation principally, and conceieue a greater security to have a party of the Indians there, to have their cheife dependence vpon the English. They will easily discover any Indian plotts, etc.”\textsuperscript{211} At this stage of his settlement, one of the worst things Winthrop Jr. could imagine was to lose his alliance with the Pequots who shared the village. The attack by Mohegans on the Nameag Pequots, while not directed primarily at the English settlers, was witnessed by them because the homes of the Pequots were interspersed with the dwellings of the English. Winthrop welcomed Pequot proximity and alliance at Nameag because he knew that without it, English settlement there would be impossible.

The resulting petition, delivered to the General Court in 1647 and signed by 48 Nameag Pequots and some additional Pequots living at Niantic, laid out a case for Nameag Pequot independence from the Mohegans and “subjection” to the English:

\begin{quote}
That whereas o\textsuperscript{r} Sachems & people have done very ill against the English formerly, for w\textsuperscript{ch} they have justly suffered & bee\textsuperscript{n} rightfully conquered by the English; Wee yo\textsuperscript{r} humble petitioners, who had no consent nor hand in shedding the English blood, but by the Advise of Wequash fled from o\textsuperscript{r} Country being promised by Wequash that the English should not hurt us if
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{210} Winthrop Papers: Vol V, 100-101.
\textsuperscript{211} Winthrop Papers: Vol V, 100-101.
wee did not Joyne in warre against them, doo humbly beseech the Comissioners to take us under the subjection of the English & appoint us some place where wee may live peaceably under the Government of the English.212

In their petition the Nameag Pequots denied direct involvement in the conflict with the English, arguing that they had been convinced to flee into Niantic country by Niantic leader Wequash Cooke. While the Nameag petitioners maintained a tone of diplomatic respect for English authority, they firmly contested the English narrative of the war, and the violent separation of Pequot communities that had resulted. When they asked to be taken “under the subjection of the English,” the Nameag Pequots were not giving up their tribal sovereignty but reclaiming it. Although this was a limited reclamation, requiring as it did acceptance of English authority over Pequots, it must have seemed to preferable to the petitioners to their subjection by the Mohegans. While not immediately freed of their formal tribute status to the Mohegans, the Pequots used their alliance with Winthrop to mount a continued defense of their sovereignty. Colonial authorities criticized Winthrop for his sympathy to the Pequots, but he continued to act as an intermediary between them and those officials who lobbied for the harshest possible interpretation of the Treaty of Hartford.213 As a result of this interdependence, in the face of the seemingly much stronger alliance between the Mohegans and the colonial government, both the English settlers and their Pequot hosts won the right to stay at Nameag.

Like Winthrop Jr., other settlers valued their relationships with Indigenous neighbors because they expected that they would reciprocally share information about

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212 Petition of Cassasinamon and Obachickwood, July 1647, (1647.07.00.00), Grant-Costa, Paul, et. al., eds., Yale Indian Papers Project, Yale University, http://hdl.handle.net/10079/digcoll/2564358
Indigenous or Dutch plots against the English. When Winthrop Jr. wrote that the Nameag Pequots “could easily discover any Indian plotts, etc,” he expressed a viewpoint held by many English settlers. Indigenous neighbors for Winthrop could be potential enemies, but they were even more crucial as allies. The English highly valued intelligence from Algonquian sources — English colonists spent much of the 1650s in fear of a Dutch-Narragansett allied attack because of rumors they heard from their Indigenous neighbors. Indigenous people used the English dependence on them for information to their own advantage. Their ability to foment fear about the supposed Narragansett uprising helped the Mohegans to stay in power among the English, forcing settlers to treat Indigenous people reciprocally if they wished to have warning of an upcoming plot.\textsuperscript{214} The English dependence on Indigenous information did not mean English people viewed Indigenous peoples as their equals. In a letter to John Winthrop Jr., Roger Williams defended his own honor against some rumors by writing that “The report was (as most commonly all Indian reports are) absolutely false.”\textsuperscript{215} Although such posturing may have been easy in writing, the reality was that English people had to take Indigenous information seriously. Indigenous proximity to English people helped to guarantee mutual protection and safety, at least in theory.

When settlers used land agreements with Indigenous peoples to validate their land claims, they granted further authority to Indigenous diplomacy around land. Connecticut authorities recognized Indigenous “natural rights” to their homelands, and usually required settlers to provide proof of a legitimate land deal with

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\textsuperscript{214} Grandjean, \textit{American Passage}, 105.
\textsuperscript{215} \textit{Winthrop Papers: Vol V}, 251.
\end{flushright}
Indigenous occupants before recognizing English claims.\textsuperscript{216} English authorities correctly feared Indigenous reprisals if settlers began to occupy areas to which Indigenous occupants had not granted access.\textsuperscript{217} As discussed in Chapter One, Indigenous peoples granted English settlers the right to start a plantation though detailed verbal agreements that usually specified some degree of shared land use. Because these founding land-use agreements were not really sales, but treaties, they had terms that both parties had to continually abide by.\textsuperscript{218} Some land “sales” in New England required periodic payments by English people, and many hinged on the English continuing to observe Algonquian hunting and fishing rights in “English” territory.\textsuperscript{219} Calling upon Indigenous “proprietors” for validation of their land claims, English settlers had to make sure to maintain continued good relationships, because Indigenous refusal to acknowledge settler land claims could spell the end of a newly founded town in both Indigenous and settler systems.

Elsewhere as in Nameag, Indigenous peoples strategically negotiated English settlers’ efforts to create alliances. Treaties of shared land use between settlers and Indigenous peoples did not create separate settler spheres independent of Indigenous influence but rather bound settlers into reciprocal relationships with their hosts. Whether the first town founders realized it or not, by agreeing to share land with Indigenous communities, settlers became enmeshed in existing Algonquian networks of trade, alliance, and kinship. As Lisa Brooks explains, “In Algonquian languages, alliance is an activity, a state of being that can adapt and change. Relationships of

\textsuperscript{219} Baker, “A Scratch with a Bear’s Paw,” 244-246.
belonging, protection, and acknowledgement required renewal, sometimes enforcement, but always negotiation.”220 Thus when settlers to negotiated with Algonquians, they committed to continue renegotiating and “adapting” according to the needs of their respective communities.

**Conclusion**

As English settlements expanded in Connecticut, settlers found themselves increasingly enmeshed with Indigenous populations. English people and Indigenous peoples in the land the English had named Connecticut had to negotiate living close by one another, and early settlers needed Indigenous help for almost every aspect of their new settlements. The fact that these relationships were interdependent did not mean they were always mutually beneficial or fair. Rather, English people still considered themselves the true sovereigns of the land they lived on. Yet even attempts at domination, such as the enslavement of Indigenous people, somehow ended up leading to ever closer proximity. Especially in the case of land, settlers had to attend to their treaties with Indigenous neighbors to maintain their claims. While this interdependence was unavoidable if settlers wished to establish plantations, growing anxieties among settlers about their proximity to Indigenous peoples made them unwilling to sustain the system. Chapter Three will chronicle how settlers, attempting to appeal to colonial authorities, tried to shape their settlements into ideal English towns. As Indigenous peoples continued to try to maintain reciprocal

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relationships and to hold settlers to the terms they had agreed to, settlers worked to turn Indigenous towns into English ones.
Chapter Three: “Farther and future trouble”: Battles for Legitimacy, 1638-1662

Introduction

In the years between the end of the Pequot War in 1638 and the English monarchy’s grant of a charter to Connecticut Colony in 1662, groups of settlers and Indigenous peoples negotiated jurisdictional and territorial control based on competing, or at times complementary, goals. While negotiation and interaction between Indigenous peoples and settlers was essential to the establishment of any English settlements in the area that would become Connecticut, more expansive alliances and imperial concerns challenged and complicated these local agreements. Broadly, four distinct but interconnected approaches represented different interests: leaders at the self-styled colonial government in Hartford attempted to legitimize Connecticut’s status as a colony by appealing to other colonies and to England; settlers in English plantations worked to ensure the permanence of their towns through negotiations with Indigenous neighbors and through cooperation with Hartford; some Indigenous leaders prioritized their community’s local concerns by trying to partner with and ensure good relationships with English neighbors; meanwhile another strain in Indigenous thought urged a broader pan-Indigenous movement for sovereignty that was skeptical of English power.

This chapter is divided into three sections, each investigating an aspect of life in which these conflicting loyalties and strategies became especially problematical between the Pequot War and Connecticut’s charter. The first section addresses the world of legislation and political control, and the ways that settlers and Indigenous peoples disagreed about the level of sovereignty that each group possessed. The
second section discusses negotiations of religious and social boundaries, which began to further distance settlers and Indigenous peoples from each other despite their economic interdependence. The third and final section moves to the effort led by Hartford to create strict boundaries in land at the same time as Indigenous peoples and local settlers were beginning to reevaluate their relationships of neighborly interdependence. Through these processes, settlers began to define the legitimacy of their settlements by their success at separating themselves from Indigenous peoples, abandoning strategies of coexistence and interdependence and reinterpreting obligations laid out in existing treaties.

Colonial centralization and Indigenous politics: 1638-1651

When settlers arrived in what would become Connecticut, they had no charter from the English monarchy to give them permission to establish a colony. This meant that from the beginning, land claims in Connecticut were uniquely tied to Indigenous recognition—without it, the settlers had no recourse to prove why they should be where they were. Early settlements, scattered mainly on the coast and along the Connecticut River, started independently from each other, with no one town claiming overarching control. After the Pequot War, however, the settlers making up the General Court at Hartford, who adjudicated claims among the three existing English Connecticut River settlements, began to claim more authority. Although the General Court’s representatives knew that in practice they only spoke for “the seu'all plantacons in this River of Conectecott,” these would-be colonists believed that their
jurisdiction should extend far beyond this area.\textsuperscript{221} Beginning in 1638 with the Treaty of Hartford, they began a process of centralizing and consolidating their power that ran parallel to individual groups of settlers’ efforts to create new plantations through agreements with local Indigenous communities. At the Hartford Court delegates from Hartford, Windsor, and Wethersfield worked to consolidate what power they had and to expand their reach outward to the southeast and southwest. Like the English signatories of the Treaty of Hartford, the Davenport-Eaton Company’s settlers in New Haven had their own colonial aspirations, and soon after they made their first agreements with the Quinnipiac they began trying to consolidate nearby regions under their authority. Wealthy New Haven men made agreements with Quinnipiac leaders, as well as Paugussetts, Munsees, and sachems on Long Island.\textsuperscript{222} In the following decade, from roughly 1640 to 1650, settlers in other English plantations began to seek advice from Hartford and New Haven, and to declare their allegiance to the “colonies” based there. By aligning their interests with Hartford and New Haven, settlers gambled that the new “colonies” could legitimize their settlements, and in turn they legitimized the colonial claims of their fellow settlers.

Hartford’s increasing authority and focus on law and order sometimes conflicted with the practices of settlers, who were accustomed to focus on their local concerns, which they negotiated with the community they had aligned with. In the process, the settlers accepted an authority that conflicted with the Indigenous peoples who remained, in the eyes of the English government in London, the only real

\textsuperscript{221} PRCC vol. 1, 10; Grant, “The Treaty of Hartford,” 468, 472-473.
\textsuperscript{222} Menta, “Cultural Conflict in Southern New England,” 192-194.
“owners” of the land. Indigenous peoples observed this rising tide of English settler unity and attempted to fight for their own legitimacy and the freedom to govern themselves. Some, following the Narragansett leader Miantonomo, called for a pan-Indigenous identity and argued that Indigenous people should work together to defend their claims. Other nations built connections with particular English settlements, hoping to preserve the safety of their community ahead of the promotion of a more general Indigenous identity.\textsuperscript{223} Many groups followed a combination of both strategies, at times seeking a broader coalition but focusing on local needs when expedient. As both the settlers and their Indigenous neighbors weighed their loyalties to the local versus the newly forming broader movements, the fight for legitimacy and land claims became increasingly complex.

Processes of colonial centralization like the ones based out of Hartford and New Haven proceeded as if land agreements between Indigenous peoples and settlers had been English-style land sales, incurring no further responsibilities on either party. For instance, in 1644 it turned out that Mohegans were still using the Totoket land claimed by English settlers for trapping. Responding to complaints by settlers, the New Haven court sent a delegation to “warne Vncus or his brother or else Foxen to come and speake wth the Governor and the magistrates.”\textsuperscript{224} Although most land agreements did not forbid the right of Indigenous peoples to continue trapping, hunting, and fishing, the new colonial structure treated these customary methods of sharing space as violations. Similarly, in 1638, Hartford attempted to legislate a

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{223} Brooks, \textit{The Common Pot}, 62-63.
\item \textsuperscript{224} RCPNH, 130.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
standard of interaction between Indigenous people and settlers that would have made little sense applied to any actual settlement at the time.

It is ordered where any Company of Indians doe sett downe neere any English plantacons that they shall declare whoe is their Sachem or Cheife & that the saide Cheife or Sachem shall paye to the saide English such trespasses as shalbe comitted by any Indian in the saide plantacon adioyninge, either by spoilinge or killinge of Cattle or Swine either wth Trappes, dogges or arrowes…

All the early settlements in Connecticut had come about in the opposite way—settlers came to “sett downe neere” or in Indigenous villages, requiring the English to announce their presence and negotiate shared space. Yet as settlers looked to self-styled colonial leaders at Hartford and New Haven, they granted these authorities the power to reframe agreements involving Indigenous peoples who had never contracted with Hartford, only with a small group of English settlers.

Although colonial centralization at Hartford and New Haven occurred without the input of Indigenous peoples, some Algonquians began conducting diplomacy with this newly authoritative group of English people, hoping to strike a better deal for their community than they were able to with smaller parties of settlers. After the Pequot Massacre, the Wangunks chose to negotiate with the colonial powers at Hartford rather than the Wethersfield settlers who had expelled them, securing colonial recognition of their continued rights to Pyquag land. On April 5, 1638, the General Court at Hartford ruled that both Sowheag and the Wethersfield settlers had committed wrongdoing, but that the scores were now even and Wangunks could return to their homes at Pyquag/Wethersfield.226 This ruling declared that the

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225 PRCC vol. 1, 19.
226 PRCC vol. 1, 19-20.
Wangunks had been justified in calling on the Pequots to attack Wethersfield and kill eight people, because Wethersfield colonists had unjustly expelled them from their land. Alden Vaughan, in his history of Puritan-Indigenous interactions in early New England, interpreted this action as an example of the English effort to be fair when adjudicating claims between English and Indigenous parties. This ruling by the General Court is better understood as an expression of Hartford settlers’ special concern for record-keeping and legitimacy. The Wangunks’ demand of recognition for their land rights was more convincing to the Hartford court, with its aspirations of achieving a colonial charter from the English monarchy, than it had been to the Wethersfield settlers, who had acted out of paranoia regarding the safety of their plantation. Because of its focus on ensuring settler land claims in the “colony” were legitimate and would not collapse under English imperial scrutiny, Hartford’s general court could be a useful channel for Indigenous peoples when settlers tried to undo their treaties about shared use.

For the same reasons that the centralized proto-colonial structure at Hartford could benefit Indigenous peoples, it also added new dangers. The aspiring colony on the Connecticut River based much of its authority on conquest, claiming that through the Pequot massacre and ensuing battles it had won large tracts of Pequot land. When the Pequots returned to their homelands after the war and planted crops again, the Hartford General Court sent forty men to Pequot to steal all the corn Pequots had planted. Through the newly centralized operations at Hartford, the colony was able to

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compel men “out of the severall plantacons” to join in this endeavor.\textsuperscript{229} A few months after the General Court declared that the Wangunks could return to their land in Wethersfield, the court contemplated a war against them, worrying that the Wangunks could be harboring Indigenous murderers of Englishmen at their village in Mattabessett, which they had retreated to after the Wethersfield expulsion.\textsuperscript{230} Ultimately the Hartford settlers did not pursue this course because, upon consultation with the New Haven settlers at Quinnipiac, they concluded that a new war would be too risky.\textsuperscript{231} Yet even if not carried through in this case, Hartford’s ability to conscript large numbers of soldiers from the Connecticut River and Paugussett Country plantations was real, as attested by the forty men sent to Pequot. Hartford’s capacity to organize groups of settlers had not existed prior to the Pequot War, and was based on claims to conquest rights made in the Treaty of Hartford, validated by Narragansett and Mohegan diplomats and by oaths of loyalty from other English settlements. English centralization had created a new, more complicated diplomatic landscape for Indigenous peoples, particularly the “conquered” Pequot.

At the same time as English settlers attempted to unite around common concerns, a parallel call for unity was taking place in Indigenous communities. Miantonomo, the Narragansett leader who had allied with the English against the Pequots, became dissatisfied with English negotiators after the massacre. While he had expected the English to engage in mutual exchanges of wampum with the Narragansetts, as would befit a relationship between two equal parties, the English in

\begin{footnotes}
\item[229] PRCC vol. 1, 32.
\item[230] PRCC vol. 1, 31-32.
\item[231] PRCC vol. 1, 32.
\end{footnotes}
the Treaty of Hartford declared that the Narragansetts now owed “Connecticut”
nonreciprocal wampum payments. Offended by this disruption of their pre-massacre
relationship, Miantonomo refused to give the English the wampum tribute he
collected from the Pequot.232 Instead, he sought out trade and diplomatic relationships
with other Indigenous peoples.233 By 1642, Miantonomo had formulated a call for a
broader Indigenous identity, a movement that would unite based on shared
Algonquian values to counteract English disregard for Indigenous lands and customs.
According to English sources, Miantonomo spent much of his time traveling to other
Indigenous villages and trying to encourage Indigenous peoples to unite against the
English.234 In 1644, the Narragansetts officially “submitted” to the English
government overseas, arguing that their political system should be viewed as equal or
perhaps superior to those of the surrounding colonies, and therefore that it made no
sense for them to submit to any individual colony’s authority.235

The Wangunks at Mattabessett were one of the groups most frequently
implicated in Miantonomo’s “plot” of Algonquian unity. After settling their dispute
with the Wethersfield settlers, the Wangunks elected to move to Mattabessett, a
village within their traditional homeland lying further south along the Connecticut,
rather than return to living closely with the English at Wethersfield. This move
represented a new strategy for dealing with English people, one tuned to the events of
the previous five years since Sowheag’s initial welcome of settlers to Wangunk
country. Within that time, the Wethersfield English had shown themselves to be

233 Lipman, The Saltwater Frontier, 155-156.
paranoid and unwilling to trust Wangunk alliance, and the Pequots, who had prevented Wangunks from having direct trade with the English, had ceased to be a power.\textsuperscript{236} The Wangunks instead relied on connections with other Indigenous people, marking out Mattabesett as a space for them, not for the English. The would-be sovereigns at Hartford had little control over Wangunks because of this structure, complaining in court that they were unable to convince Sowheag to pay restitution for a horse allegedly killed by Wangunks.\textsuperscript{237}

As the Hartford and New Haven settlers became more fearful of a growing Indigenous movement, they attempted to connect with an even broader English body than that represented by the colony. In 1643, Connecticut, New Haven, Massachusetts, and Plymouth created the United Colonies, a kind of colonial league. The formation of the United Colonies was a direct response to settlers’ fears about their relative distance from one another compared to their Indigenous neighbors. “We are further dispersed vpon the sea coasts and rivers then was at first intended,” they explained in the Articles of Confederation for the United Colonies, “…& whereas we live encompassed w\textsuperscript{h} people of severall nations and strange languages, w\textsuperscript{c}h hereafter may prove injurious to vs or our posterity, and forasmuch as the natives have form\textsuperscript{ly} comitted sundry insolencies and outrages vpon severall plantations of the English, and have of late combined themselves against vs…” the English Christians should unite over shared concerns of “nation and religion” as “one.”\textsuperscript{238} The Articles of Confederation promised members of the United Colonies would defend one another

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\footnote{236} Ives, “Wangunk Ethnohistory,” 20-22.
\footnote{237} PRCC vol. 1, 58.
\footnote{238} RCPNH, 98.
\end{footnotes}
against enemy attacks. The participating colonies also hoped to establish agreed-upon strategies for dealing with disputes between colonies and to choose a unitary approach for “how all the jurisdictions may carry itt towards the Indians, thatt they neither grow insolent, nor be injured w'hout due satisfaction, least warre break in vpon the confederates through such miscarryages.” The United Colonies hoped to do the same thing that the newly founded Connecticut and New Haven governments had tried to do, on a much larger scale: form a united English movement to legitimize settlements, ensure their permanence, and adequately defend against Indigenous resistance. And like the colonial authorities at Hartford and New Haven, the United Colonies hoped to consolidate their power by regularizing interactions with Indigenous peoples and avoiding war.

As Indigenous peoples defended their sovereignty by adapting to new English systems of authority, the men who made up the United Colonies became increasingly focused on clarifying and documenting their land claims. In a 1650 list of “instructions” for the next meeting of the United Colonies, a committee agreed that they should “presse the Commissioners to take speedy Cource for setling sufficient and knowne boundaries to each jurisdiction that peace and love maybe preserved and continued amongst us.” Recognizing that even the four members of the United Colonies had unclear and contradictory land claims, the commissioners imagined that they could meet together and demarcate specific boundaries for their jurisdictions.

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239 RCPNH, 100.
240 RCPNH, 102.
241 Instructions Agreed Upon by the Commissioners of the United Colonies, August 8, 1650, (1650.08.08.00), Grant-Costa, Paul, et. al., eds., Yale Indian Papers Project, Yale University, http://jake.library.yale.edu:8080/neips/data/html/1650.08.0
Disregarding the complex Indigenous land usage systems that were still in place in the regions they discussed, the commissioners suggested that a meeting of colonial leaders could hash out these boundaries on their own. This effort to privilege the intentions of English people regarding land ownership ignored the reality in Connecticut and the other colonies that Indigenous claims to land, jurisdiction, and power were still active and influential.

At times Indigenous strategies of land preservation had the effect of legitimizing Connecticut’s colonial status. As described in Chapter Two, Nameag Pequots and Winthrop Jr. subverted colonial domination through their alliance, but this same strategy also reinforced Hartford’s claim to authority. In their appeal to the colony, the Nameag Pequots presented themselves as allies hoping to further Connecticut’s goal of colonial consolidation. They also got their settler ally John Winthrop Jr. to write an appeal to the United Colonies arguing for Pequot independence. Winthrop’s appeal on behalf of the Pequot relied in part on the idea that, once they were freed from forced rule and dislocation, the Pequots could be useful allies to the English.\footnote{Petition of John Winthrop, Jr. to the Commissioner of the United Colonies, 1649, (1649.00.00.00), Grant-Costa, Paul, et. al., eds., Yale Indian Papers Project, Yale University, http://jake.library.yale.edu:8080/ncips/data/html/1649.00.00.00/1649.00.00.00.html.} In 1650, this strategy worked. The Hartford court assented to allow Cassacinamon and his band to leave the Nameag settlement along the Thames, directly bordering Mohegan country, for five hundred acres of Pequot land at Noank on the Mystic River.\footnote{Kevin A. McBride, “The Legacy of Robin Cassacinamon: Mashantucket Pequot Leadership in the Historic Period,” in Northeastern Indian Lives, 1632-1816, ed. Robert S. Grunt (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 86.} While the Nameag Pequots used the structures the Hartford colonial leaders and Commissioners of the United Colonies had put in
place, they also utilized local relationships with the settlers who lived close to them. This mutually beneficial relationship helped both the Pequots and the settlers to validate their settlements before Hartford. In November 1651 the Pequots and New London townspeople signed a covenant describing their responsibilities to one another, agreeing to respect each other’s land claims. The Pequot agreed to fence their fields to prevent damage from English crops, but both groups affirmed each other’s claims. While this strategy was successful in freeing the western Pequots from Mohegan oversight and facilitating their return to their ancestral lands, it also provided further legitimacy to Connecticut Colony and to the United Colonies in their pretensions to oversee Indigenous land claims.

In February of 1651, Connecticut Colony passed a law banning land purchases from Indigenous peoples by individuals—all such arrangements now had to happen through the colony. Part of the reason this mattered to the colonists was certainly that they valued Indigenous land agreements and feared what would happen if settlers violated them. Yet the 1651 law did not just repeat these values—it represented a new achievement in the Hartford settlers’ creation of a colony. In 1638 when English settlers arrived at Pequonnock, neither they nor the Hartford settlers were sure that their settlement was under the jurisdiction or within the “boundaries” of Connecticut Colony. Only after they had sworn their loyalty and achieved membership did it become so. Even Winthrop Jr. in 1645 was not clear on whether his settlement at

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244 Covenant between the Town of Pequot and the Indians, November 18, 1651, (1651.11.18.00), Grant-Costa, Paul, et. al., eds., Yale Indian Papers Project, Yale University, http://jake.library.yale.edu:8080/neips/data/html/1651.11.18.00/1651.11.18.00.html.
245 PRCC, 214.
Nameag would be in Connecticut or in Massachusetts Bay. His method of aligning with the Pequots, whom the Hartford settlers had attempted legally to wipe out of existence, directly challenged the Connecticut River towns’ authority.

By 1651, the Hartford settlers, through attracting the allegiance of other English settlements and claiming a role as a colony alongside the other members of the United Colonies, had carved out a space in which they believed they could claim jurisdiction. This was a new level of colonial leadership for Hartford, not a clarification of authority they had previously held. As Hartford usually did when trying to increase its power, the settlers disregarded Indigenous peoples’ roles to rely on negotiations with other English people. By claiming sole right to buy Indigenous land, Hartford’s colonial government precluded the possibility of agreements between Indigenous people and settlers that did not benefit colonial authority.

**Church order and blasphemy**

While colonial power players in Hartford and New Haven tried to construct a colony out of a collection of settlements, they began to regulate the social and religious structures of the settlements under their control. Most English settlers in Connecticut were Puritans who understood the church to be the center of civic and social life. For these congregationalist Christians, creating a proper social hierarchy for a new town meant founding a church. Creating a church bound English settlers together, but it also enacted harsher divisions between them and their non-Christian neighbors. Algonquians in Connecticut, largely uninterested in conversion to

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Christianity, represented a non-Christian population that the settlers viewed as increasingly threatening to their social structures. The proximity of settlers to Algonquians, while it remained a benefit to settlers who wanted protection, trade, and geographic guidance, started to seem more like an obstacle to the English settlers’ goals. As English settlers, under the influence of colonial centralizers at Hartford and New Haven, created their churches, they also began to draw stricter boundaries between English people and Indigenous populations.

In England, “Puritan” had been a derisive term for members of the Church of England who believed strongly in the Calvinist doctrine of predestination and who wanted a total reformation of the Church to eliminate all practices they saw as relics of Catholicism.248 Once these Puritans left England to settle in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, they were faced with the conundrum of how to institutionalize a religious movement that had previously tried to evade supervision. New England settlers adopted a method of church founding that was radically decentralized: in each new settlement, a group of people would declare themselves members of the elect and sign a “covenant” creating the church for their town. This group, not a bishop or a political leader, would choose the minister to lead their new church.249 This structure was known as congregationalism, because the church was managed by the congregational body itself. The settlers who founded a congregation were often the same who held the biggest financial stake in the town, the “town proprietors” who owned the bulk of town lands and formed the town government.250 These congregations were not

248 Richter, Before the Revolution, 178-181.
249 Richter, Before the Revolution, 193.
250 Richter, Before the Revolution, 194; Martin, Profits in the Wilderness, 137-142.
completely autonomous, however; newly formed congregations had to receive approval from other churches’ leaders, creating a horizontal system of oversight that enforced conformity of practice.\textsuperscript{251} Thus while leadership structures in congregationalism were localistic, they also bound English settlements together. The town proprietors’ enforcement of the congregational church structure functioned similarly to efforts from Hartford to centralize the colonial government. Both pushed English people into closer alliance with one another and incentivized them to separate themselves from Indigenous neighbors.

Adding to the supervision congregations imposed on one another, the nascent colonial leaderships began to regulate religious practice from the top down. For English settlers, proper Christian practice became increasingly tied to the “fixity” represented by “settled” colonial towns.\textsuperscript{252} The Massachusetts Bay Colony began this trend in 1638, immediately following the upheaval of the Pequot War, when its leaders began to vet new immigrants to keep out religious dissenters.\textsuperscript{253} When New Haven leaders admitted neighboring settlements into their “colony,” they promised these isolated English people economic and political protection only under the condition that they would follow the religious laws it imposed on its own settlers. When New Haven accepted Milford into its new “colony” in 1643, New Haven officials discovered that Milford had six men in its town who were not members of the Congregational church. New Haven officials decided that Milford could still be part of New Haven colony, but only if they barred those six men from ever holding

\textsuperscript{251} Richter, \textit{Before the Revolution}, 193.
\textsuperscript{253} Richter, \textit{Before the Revolution}, 200.
town office and agreed to never admit non-Christians to town again.²⁵⁴ Although this religious mission had been part of New Haven Colony from the beginning, the centralizing efforts of the United Colonies meant that all member colonies were subject to strict religious scrutiny. In the same list of instructions from 1650 in which the commissioners urged settlers to figure out their colonies’ boundaries, they encouraged each colony to “make thorough Inquisition amongst yourselves whether any people be under any of the Collonies without a setled publick ministry and where ever any such be that dew Course and order be taken wth them either to reduce them to a setled ministrie or send sufficient orthodox minister to them.”²⁵⁵ For Puritan settlers, the political and social entity of the town was synonymous with the church congregation.²⁵⁶ For those with colonial aspirations, the process of turning Connecticut into a colony meant turning its settlements into church communities. The focus of colonial leaders on creating properly Christian towns led settlers to regulate their own congregations and those of their neighbors, creating “settled” church communities to show colonial authorities that they themselves were sufficiently “settled.”

Pressure from colonial leaders to establish “church order” in new settlements caused English people to break faith in their agreements with Indigenous peoples. Because the policies of the United Colonies, as well as Connecticut and New Haven, required all towns to have a minister, settlers sought out town ministers with an

²⁵⁴ RCPNH, 110-111.
²⁵⁵ Instructions Agreed Upon by the Commissioners of the United Colonies, August 8, 1650, (1650.08.08.00), Grant-Costa, Paul, et. al., eds., Yale Indian Papers Project, Yale University, http://jake.library.yale.edu:8080/neips/data/html/1650.08.0
²⁵⁶ Conforti, Saints and Strangers, 58-59.
insistence that sometimes verged on desperation. Middletown settlers, for instance, found themselves in a quandary when they rejected the first minister they received. In their effort to draw in another church leader on short notice, the Middletown settlers offered the new minister a number of plots of land, and promised him and two other potential settlers the right to purchase lands from the Wangunks. John Winthrop Sr., always the devoted father to his entrepreneurial son, similarly attempted to use Indigenous people to attract a minister to Winthrop Jr.’s plantation at Nameag. Winthrop Sr. wrote a letter to the prominent Algonquian language-speaking English missionary Thomas Mayhew, promising him that if he came to New London he would have even more opportunities to convert Indigenous people than he did at his current residence, in Martha’s Vineyard. At the time, New London’s agreement with the Nameag Pequots did not include a religious mission. Ultimately Mayhew declined, leading Winthrop Sr. and his other son Adam to both attempt to bring ministers to Nameag who had been voted out of their jobs at other settlements. Settler willingness to ignore treaties with Indigenous peoples to acquire a minister demonstrates how important the establishment of a church was for creating a viable town.

It is important to note that aside from John Winthrop Sr.’s letter to Thomas Mayhew, none of the town records describe conversion of Indigenous neighbors as part of the minister’s duties. In fact, settlers in Connecticut treated the religious conversion and potential “salvation” of Indigenous people with near total

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257 MTVPR, 45, 50.
259 Winthrop Papers: Vol 5, 270, 277.
The most “success” for a Christian minister in Connecticut was a ten-year experiment by Reverend Fitch of Norwich, among the Mohegans. Uncas conditionally welcomed Fitch in the 1660s, seeing him as another powerful Englishman who could support Mohegan independence. Once Fitch began preaching to Mohegans, however, Uncas realized that conversion to Christianity was not merely an inward change but would have consequences for social structures and economic practices. In 1674 Uncas ended his alliance with Fitch and began harassing the small number of Mohegans who had converted. Other English towns learned from this example. The New Haven settlers did at one point fundraise to buy a suit of clothes for Niantic-Pequot preacher Wequash Cooke, but Wequash Cooke did not work among local Quinnipiacs. All of the covenants and agreements between settlers and ministers made it clear that the minister’s duties were only to the English Puritan population. Hartford occasionally passed laws exhorting Connecticut settlers to throw resources toward missionary efforts, but in the town records there is scant evidence that anyone took this seriously. Instead the creation of church communities in Connecticut created a stricter boundary between English Puritan townspeople and everyone else.

While Connecticut settlers became increasingly concerned about their “church order,” Connecticut Algonquians almost unanimously rejected Christianity. At the same time as the system of Indigenous Praying Towns was being established in

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261 Michael Leroy Oberg, Uncas: First of the Mohegans (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 166-170. Thank you to Taylor Kirsch who directed me to this exception.
262 RCPNH, 60.
263 PRCC vol. 1, 531.
Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay, no similar wave of conversion took place in Connecticut. Connecticut’s Indigenous population had so many resources that English people needed, including land and trade goods, that their status among English people was not in question even if they retained their religious traditions.\(^{264}\) In Massachusetts, Nipmuc, and Wampanoag country, the ravages of epidemic disease had led Indigenous peoples to search for new strategies of survival at the same time as English missionaries launched a conversion effort. Some Indigenous groups in these areas saw benefits in becoming Christian, because it both increased their negotiating power with settlers and helped them to reorganize their societies amidst huge and traumatic changes.\(^{265}\) While Indigenous peoples in Martha’s Vineyard and eastern Massachusetts experienced rapid English encroachment that made conversion seem like a practical decision, communities living in the area that would become Connecticut lived nearby to English people but governed themselves separately.\(^{266}\) Especially before 1660, when the fur trade was still very profitable, groups living along rivers and on the seacoast in Connecticut had a good deal of leverage with English people.\(^{267}\) In addition the relatively centralized leadership of figures like Uncas and Ninigret, Miantonomo’s successor, allowed those leaders to discourage conversion among members of their nations.\(^{268}\)


\(^{265}\) Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*, 75-78.


\(^{268}\) Lipman, *The Saltwater Frontier*, 170.
Indigenous peoples in Connecticut resisted Christianity through many strategies. Wequash Cooke, the Niantic-Pequot preacher for whom the New Haven settlers bought a coat, was apparently on the receiving end of an especially harsh form of this resistance. According to the missionary text *New England’s First Fruits*, Wequash, inspired to convert by the English victory in the Pequot War, “went amongst the Indians, like that poore Woman of *Samaria*, proclaiming *Christ*.” If we are to believe this English account, the Niantics at the mouth of the Connecticut who Wequash tried to convert responded by poisoning him. Although this allegation is difficult to verify, coming as it does from a polemical missionary text, it is notable for the description of Wequash’s death. “…when he lay upon his death bed, some Indians who were by him, wished him according to the Indian manner, to send for *Powow*.” Wequash supposedly refused, insisting that his fate was in the hands of Jesus Christ, and ultimately died.\(^{269}\) No matter the level of accuracy in the account of Wequash’s murder, it reflects real patterns of Indigenous hostility to conversion and insistence on maintaining traditional religious practices, such as the use of an Algonquian healer or “powwow” to cure diseases.

A legal case in Quinnipiac also helps to illustrate Indigenous attitudes toward Christianity, as well as settlers’ responses. Pawquash, a Quinnipiac man, was charged in New Haven court in 1646 for an interaction that had taken place four years earlier—Pawquash “came into Mr. Craynes howse when they were blessing God in the name of Jesus Christ; and that he then did blaspheamously say that Jesus Christ

was mattamoy & naught, & his bones rotten, & spake of an Indian in Mantoises plantation assended into heaven.”270 Pawquash’s actions were offensive to the Crayne family on several levels—most immediately, they involved what the Craynes considered blasphemy. Furthermore, Pawquash’s dismissal of Christianity struck a lighthearted, mocking tone. Pawquash’s ironic skewering of English sacred beliefs was in keeping with Algonquian rhetorical traditions of satiric deflation of the powerful in the face of power imbalances.271 His assertion that he knew of someone who had ascended into heaven forced his Puritan neighbors to confront the reality of alternate religious beliefs and practices to their own, and displaced Christianity’s supposed monopoly on supernatural power. In addition to the content of what Pawquash said, the Crayne family may have been affronted simply by his coming into their house. Interactions like these were the source of great tension in early New Haven, as Quinnipiacs attempted to practice the relationships they were accustomed to have with guests, including unannounced visits.272 In a settlement that aimed to strictly follow Biblical law, the presence of blasphemers was inherently threatening, even more so if they felt comfortable entering one’s home.

Ironically, Pawquash’s blasphemy was evidence of his familiarity with Christian ideas. While early missionaries sometimes complained that Indigenous peoples did not understand the complex doctrines of Puritanism, Pawquash had no trouble at all grasping that the English believed in a God who had died and ascended into heaven.273 Although Pawquash would not have experienced a concentrated

270 RCPNH, 262.
273 *First Fruits*, 4.
missionary effort, he understood his neighbors’ beliefs. Perhaps networks of communication between Quinnipiac and indentured Indigenous people, or converted family members who lived in Praying Towns, had been Pawquash’s entry into these concepts. Or maybe his day-to-day interactions with the New Haven Puritans had included discussions of religion. Crayne testified that Pawquash called the English god “mattamoy,” a Quiripi word for “dead.” Therefore at least some of Pawquash’s communication with the Crayne family took place using Quiripi loanwords, in a mutually intelligible hybrid language honed through trade and other interactions.²⁷⁴ Pawquash’s visit to the Craynes was consistent with the closely intertwined lives of Indigenous people and English settlers described in Chapter Two. Yet unlike the labor and diplomatic negotiation that Puritans were glad to receive from Indigenous people, social interactions like Pawquash’s made most English people profoundly uneasy, and the added sting of an insult to their religion made this one a punishable offence. Pawquash was sentenced to be whipped, but the settler court informed him that a second offence “would hazzard his life.”²⁷⁵

Although Pawquash received punishment for his words, the English settlers did not expect him to convert; their demand was that he not insult Christianity within their settlement. In addition to the stiff resistance to conversion from Pawquash and others, there was a theological reason for this focus on separation rather than conversion. This had to do with what English Puritans were trying to accomplish in their settlements in the first place. Christian settlers, who had left England due to the

²⁷⁴ Grandjean, American Passage, 99-100.
²⁷⁵ RCPNH, 262.
dominance of other religious groups, were concerned primarily with establishing proper religious order in their own communities, and they regarded all non-Puritan groups as threats to that project. In New Haven Colony, the treatment of another group of “strangers” is illustrative of the attitude toward non-Puritans. In 1647 two sailors from Barbados were accused of working on the Sabbath. The New Haven court ruled that since they were strangers, or non-Puritans, the men would not be punished for their transgression, but if they came back to New Haven and committed the same crime again, they would get the same punishment as a resident. The Puritans of New Haven did not think to try to convert these strangers to Christianity—however, when they were in New Haven, the court certainly intended that strangers would follow Biblical law. The attitude toward Indigenous people in those years of Connecticut’s settlement was similar—settlers did not attempt to convert them, but they did try to compel them to follow Biblical rules while in English settlements. Their aim in doing so was to keep supposed bad influences out of the Christian town, not to try to change the lifestyles of Indigenous strangers.

Amid these fears about Christian purity, colonial courts began to pass legislation that attempted to regulate social interactions with Indigenous people. In August 1642 the General Court at Hartford banned Connecticut settlers from allowing Indigenous people into English houses. Part of their motivation was rumors they had heard about a Narragansett plot that would unite multiple Algonquian communities,

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276 Conforti, *Saints and Strangers*, 43.
277 RCPNH, 335-53.
278 Conforti does argue (71-72) that puritans wanted strangers to convert—but this seems more similar to the English wish that Indigenous people convert, not backed up by action
including the Wangunk. In September the court outlawed the purchase of venison from Indigenous people, even though this was an important source of food for many settlers. By December, Hartford’s fears about social contamination had heightened further. “Whereas divers persons dep'te from amongst vs, and take vp their abode w'th the Indeans in a p'pane course of life,” the General Court declared, anyone who left a settlement to “settle or joyne” with Indigenous communities would be sentenced to at least three years in prison, with possible additional fines and corporal punishment. The court’s fear that Indigenous lifeways were attractive to settlers might illustrate another reason for Pawquash’s harsh punishment—if proximity had allowed Pawquash to learn about Christianity, it might have been the case that he had also taught settlers about his own practices. Perhaps the New Haven court feared that such unregulated intercultural interactions would lead settlers to be not offended by Algonquian “blasphemy,” but attracted to it. At bottom, such restrictions on social interactions reflected colonial leaders’ fears that their English “colonists” were not loyal to their government. This was the flipside of the concern for church order—for the leaders of the new colonies, a town that did not have strong social boundaries with Indigenous people was a town whose allegiance was not reliable. Yet as the Hartford settlers recognized, these dual loyalties were inevitable in a colonial context—English people wanted to trade with Indigenous people and even to live among them.

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279 PRCC vol. 1, 73.
280 PRCC vol. 1, 74.
281 PRCC vol. 1, 78.
282 Lepore, The Name of War, 5-6.
Even when fears of military conflict abated, the Hartford settlers enforced restrictions on interaction. A law in October 1643 banned renting or lending commodities to Indigenous people. It also forbade trade with Algonquians in their villages, commanding English people to trade only in their own homes or aboard ships.283 This of course directly contradicted the 1642 law banning English people from allowing Indigenous people into their homes—in June of 1644 the court finally appealed this law, leaving an awkward period of over six months when trade with Algonquians was banned in one of the only places where it was allowed. In the same session, the court clarified just which Indigenous people should be allowed into English homes: only a “sachem” could enter, and only if he was accompanied by four or fewer other Algonquians. The court granted an exception for Uncas, who because he had been a “fryend to the Englishe” could bring twenty people with him.284 This effort to limit social and economic interdependence was still ongoing in 1647, when the court attempted to ban the practice of “letting land to the Indians,” presumably meaning the sharing of planting lands within English settlements. The court explained that through this practice, Algonquians “mixe themselues in their labours w th the Inglishe, and therby the manners of many young men are lyable to be corrupted.”285 The practice of intermixing English and Indigenous planting fields in Connecticut persisted for decades after this law was passed.286 The concern of the Hartford settlers

283 PRCC vol. 1, 95.
284 PRCC vol. 1, 106. In “Indians and Colonists after the Pequot War,” 85, Neal Salisbury points out that laws like these, which reflected a pervasive English “preference” for identifying and conducting diplomacy with one specific Indigenous leader, altered Algonquian government structures and empowered certain individuals at the expense of communal decision-making.
285 PRCC vol. 1, 149-150.
indicates how common such proximity was, but also that to those with colonial aspirations it was a source of anxiety.

The goal of establishing a hierarchical, ordered Christian town made colonists wary of outside non-Christian influences. English people may have theoretically believed that Indigenous people could become like them, but in practice Connecticut’s leaders were skeptical. Even the famous apologetic text for New England Christian missionaries, *New England’s First Fruits*, includes a caveat about interaction with Indigenous peoples: “Yet (mistake us not) we are wont to keep them at such a distance, (knowing they serve the Devill and are led by him) as not to imbolden them too much, or trust them too farre.”287 In opposition to the stated goal of conversion was the fear that existing too near Indigenous people—both geographically and socially—would endanger a Christian community. Of course, as shown in Chapter Two, Connecticut settlers could not simply create plantations far from Indigenous settlements—they needed proximity to Indigenous peoples to survive. The distance required to create an ideal Christian community would have to be artificially imposed, marked out within a settlement pattern characterized by closeness.

**Town bounding: 1650-1662**

By the 1650s, Hartford had consolidated its claim of authority over the English settlements in Connecticut “colony.” Granted legitimacy by the loyalty of settlers in disparate towns, the Court could assert jurisdiction over a much wider area

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287 *First Fruits*, 16.
of land than it could have credibly claimed fourteen years earlier after the Pequot
Massacre. Once Hartford had accumulated the loyalty of settlers throughout its
“colony,” its leaders set out to create documentation of English land claims
throughout the province. Still without a charter, these documents were the only thing
that held together Connecticut’s narrative of colonial status. Hartford settlers
attempted to compile written deeds that marked out detailed boundaries, clarifying the
extent of the colony’s lands in terms that the English government would understand.
New Haven, which was now surrounded by Connecticut on three sides, began a
parallel process.

Existing agreements between English settlers and Indigenous people did not
provide the written land deeds that colonial governments desired. They had been
negotiated orally, sometimes written down in abridged form by settlers but frequently
not recorded at all, since neither group understood the authority of the agreements to
be primarily based on documents.288 More importantly, these agreements were not
land sales but treaties, agreements that required continued interaction and included
diplomatic obligations. Many of them retained Indigenous rights to use the land
alongside the settlers.289 The law passed in 1651 requiring colonial oversight of land
agreements with Indigenous peoples marked a shift. In asking settlers to record sales
and send them to Hartford, the colonial authorities were asking the townspeople to
turn dynamic, participatory agreements into static, one-time, “sales” of land.
Indigenous peoples did not simply accept this attempt to rework the agreements they

had made. In challenging Hartford’s reinterpretation of their treaties, they sometimes appealed to their local English neighbors. Increasingly, however, Indigenous peoples turned to colonial powers at Hartford, demanding that settler leaders negotiate with them as sovereign groups. Building on the emerging pan-Indigenous identity articulated by Miantonomo, Indigenous people also connected with one another to commit acts of resistance and sabotage. Implicit in Indigenous peoples’ resistance to this change in land negotiation was the threat that Indigenous people, who had given Connecticut Colony all the legitimacy it possessed, could also take it away.

In 1651, the settlers at Hartford heard a case that helps illustrate their motives for passing the law forbidding land transactions between individual settlers and Indigenous people. An Englishman named William Cheesbrooke had recently settled at Pawcatuck and begun trading with the local Niantic community. The colony brought him to court at Hartford, claiming that he had violated the law against buying Indigenous land without colonial approval. The court told Cheesbrooke that the area he had settled “did clearely appertaine” to Connecticut Colony, but it is does not seem that this was evident to either Cheesbrooke or the Niantics. On the contrary, Cheesbrooke argued to the court that he thought his settlement was legitimate because he had received permission from the Massachusetts Bay Colony. But Cheesbrooke’s violation of the law about government permission was not his greatest crime—his actions carried (in the open face of it,) the greater ground of offence, in that by his calling hee was fitted, and by his solitary liuing advantaged, to carry on a mischeuious trade with the Indians, prfessly cross [to] the generall orders of

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290 PRCC vol. 1, 217.
291 PRCC vol. 1, 216.
the Country, and extremely prejudicial to the publick safety...besides it seemed more than vncomely for a man professing Godliness so to withdraw from all publick ordinances and Christian society.\textsuperscript{292}

Cheesbrooke’s actions were threatening to the colony because, by contracting with Niantic hosts directly, he had created a trading relationship outside Hartford’s control. Specifically, the colony was worried that Cheesbrooke might be violating laws about selling guns to Indigenous individuals. The fear of social contamination was also present, as the colonists worried that Cheesbrooke could not possibly live as a Christian among Indigenous peoples. The colonists’ biggest worry was not that Cheesbrooke had scammed his Niantic hosts by settling among them without colonial oversight, but that he might become loyal to them over the colony, especially since he was the only English person living there. Cheesbrooke assured the court that he was not selling any guns, and that he hoped to create a larger English settlement at Pawcatuck as soon as possible.\textsuperscript{293} The Hartford leaders were greatly encouraged by this and told Cheesbrooke that if he submitted a list of settlers for his new plantation and agreed to be loyal to Connecticut Colony all would be well.\textsuperscript{294} In this application of the 1651 law, colonists were not concerned with Cheesbrooke’s unfairness to Indigenous people—rather they feared that his close ties to them might undermine his relationship to the colony. Dedicated to encouraging English settlement, these settlers assumed that Cheesbrooke’s interactions with Indigenous people were legitimate, they only demanded that he conduct them in a way that benefited the colony.

\textsuperscript{292} PRCC vol. 1, 217.
\textsuperscript{293} PRCC vol. 1, 217.
\textsuperscript{294} PRCC vol. 1, 218.
Building on their efforts to control land transactions and diplomatic relationships, Hartford settlers began to pass laws that attempted to restrict the movement of Indigenous peoples. In 1652 the court declared “that no Indian shall walke or come neare vnto or amongst any English mens howses, in Townes or Farmes, on either side of the Riuer, or elsewhere” on Sundays or face fines and imprisonment. A law from April 1653 stated that Indigenous peoples had to prove their loyalty to the English by giving up any guns they had. Of those who refused to give up their guns, the Court declared “that they are not to shoot of any gunn or gunns in the night, or walk in the night, except they come with a message to ye English,” and that if an Indigenous person walking at night resisted capture by the town watch the watch was justified in shooting. These laws were in some ways similar to earlier efforts to control interaction, but they also departed from them. While Hartford settlers had attempted to control Indigenous interactions with settlers in the past by banning settlers from entering Indigenous homes, these laws presumed that settlers had the authority to control Indigenous movements.

Indigenous peoples did not accept the imposition of new restrictions on their ability to strike land deals. In the colonial record of the Cheesbrooke case, the local Indigenous population had been completely absent from the decision between Cheesbrooke and the Hartford court to establish a larger settlement there. Apparently the Niantics at Pawcatuck had not assented—in 1654, they filed a complaint to the General Court. The court was forced to acknowledge that the Pawcatuck Niantics had

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295 PRCC vol. 1, 235.
296 PRCC vol. 1, 240.
a right to “inioye their planting ground at Paucatuck, prouided they carry friendly & peacably to the English.” Unfortunately the original complaint appears to have been lost, but it seems likely that to the Niantics at Pawcatuck an appeal to the General Court seemed the most strategically useful in defending their land in part because of the fear the Hartford settlers felt toward them. This fear was explicitly named in the Cheesbrooke case and in the court’s ruling. While importing additional English settlers into Pawcatuck helped the Hartford leaders assuage their fears about empowering the Pawcatuck, an influx of settlers on this scale led to new problems for Hartford when the Niantic population became disgruntled. Enshrining the rights of both the Indigenous and the settler populations at Pawcatuck protected the court from losing a new and vulnerable town in their “colony.”

At Paugussett, members of the Paugussett confederation continued to conduct negotiations with town leaders, not colonial authorities. Because of the settlement patterns of Stratford and Fairfield, Pequonnocks were in the position of negotiating with two competing English settlements on either side of their current residence. As towns began to record their land rights, this situation became increasingly tense. In 1656 the Hartford court gave Stratford an official grant which described its bounds. Nevertheless, in the following years Pequonnocks and Paugussets continued creating new land-use agreements with Stratford and Fairfield settlers. In 1658 a Paugussett man named Asantaway and his wife (unnamed in the colonial record) transferred rights to a plot of land between Stratford’s town bounds and the “Milne River” to

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297 PRCC vol. 1, 250.
298 SLR vol. 1 book 10, 476.
Stratford. This agreement was overseen by the Paugussett community but specifically named Asantaway, indicating that this tract may have been in use by him and his wife personally for planting or as their residence. While it involved specific individuals, this grant was conducted with the consent of the Paugussett nation, and specified multiple kinds of land use, with the boundaries of English settlement being more restrictive than the areas in which cows were allowed to travel.\textsuperscript{299} In 1657, the Pequonnock as a collective entity clarified their bounds with Fairfield, agreeing that Fairfield would possess certain tracts of land and that the Pequonnock would have exclusive access to land on the neck.\textsuperscript{300} The Pequonnock and Paugussett dealt with the Stratford and Fairfield settlers whenever they had immediate concerns, in arrangements in which both parties could consent to land transfers.

While Pequonnocks and Paugussetts continued to negotiate land use with settlers on the local level, colonial centralization provided an opportunity for Stratford and Fairfield leaders to reinterpret these agreements to be more favorable to the English. In their communications with one another, Stratford and Fairfield settlers described the Pequonnock land in between their settlements as belonging to English jurisdiction; the only question for them was which of their towns it belonged to. According to one settler from Fairfield, the Stratford and Fairfield townspeople met because Fairfield had received an influx of settlers and needed more space. Stratford agreed to grant Fairfield an “inlargement of our bounds toward Stratford.”

Recognizing that this renegotiation of their town also involved the Pequonnock, the

\textsuperscript{299} SLR vol. 1 book 10, 475.
\textsuperscript{300} Agreement between the Pequonnock Indians and the Inhabitants of Fairfield, March 20, 1656/7, (1657.03.20.00) Grant-Costa, Paul, et. al., eds., Yale Indian Papers Project, Yale University, http://hdl.handle.net/10079/digcoll/1018263
Fairfield settlers agreed that they would “keepe our Indiens upon our owne bounds.”

Apparently this agreement fell apart, in part because Fairfield had claimed jurisdiction over Pequonnock land without Pequonnock involvement. At issue was which town would have the right to claim Pequonnock land once the Pequonnocks had left. The Hartford court heard this dispute in the spring of 1659, collecting testimony from Pequonnocks as well as settlers from both towns.

On May 19, the court declared that “according vnto yᵉ desire of the Indians they may quietly possess and enjoy from henceforth and for future, that parcel of land called Gold Hill.” To make up the parcel that Pequonnock complainants demanded, the court would take away some land that was “within the liberties of Fairfield,” enough to make up 80 acres when added to the existing Pequonnock village. After this agreement, the court declared, the Pequonnock living at Golden Hill “shal from henceforth and for future be accounted as Fairfield Indians, or belonging to Fairfield,” which did not seem to mean much more than that Fairfield was responsible for negotiating land claims with the Pequonnock. Yet the court took care to note that “in case these Indians shal wholly at any time relinquish and desert Gold Hill,” the land would become part of Stratford. In this case two English towns founded close to one another both pushed in on their Indigenous neighbors, creating pressure on all sides for a resolution. Judging by the documents at the Hartford court, one might conclude that the debate was primarily between Stratford and Fairfield.

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301 SLR vol. 1 book 10, 472.
302 PRCC vol. 1, 335-6.
While colonial records of this case erase Pequonnock decision-making, local documents compiled by Stratford settlers show that Pequonnocks were instrumental in pushing the court to recognize their lands at Golden Hill. These records also reveal the ambiguities of Hartford’s main claim to land aside from deeds: conquest rights. Thomas Stanton, the colony’s official Algonquian-language interpreter, wrote a letter in support of the Stratford settlers during their case dismissing the “insolent & unreasonable behaviour and demands of the natives in your partes as chalenging all or the greatest parte of your land so long since by you posest.” As Stanton understood it, “there chaleng is that if the English can prove the land they poses were ever sould them or given them or Conquered by them.” Yet for Stanton the case was a simple one: “the English did possesse all those partes as Conquered lands for from New Have to Sashquaket we did pursue the Pequots.”

According to him, since the English pursuit of the Pequots after the massacre had continued through Quinnipiac and Pequonnock country, all of that land had become English by right of conquest and did not need to be purchased. Stanton’s argument was not the one upon which the Hartford court ruled—a claim based on conquest would have undermined all the treaties and agreements with the Pequonnock the Stratford settlers presented to the court. Yet the Stratford settlers did collect the Stanton testimony and present it to Hartford despite its contradictory nature. It seems that they felt threatened, not only by Fairfield but by the Pequonnock themselves, who had “challenged” the English to “prove” all their claims to their land. The real story of the Stratford-Pequonnock-Fairfield land dispute may be one of Indigenous protest against encroachment, one in

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which the Pequonnocks used Hartford’s new concern for record-keeping against their
land-hungry colonial neighbors. As towns in Hartford’s jurisdiction adopted the
colonial preference for record-keeping, Indigenous peoples adapted to this shift by
negotiating land agreements with Hartford rather than with towns.

On October 4, 1660, Hartford’s court attempted to even further regularize land
transactions:

To p’vent future inconvenience and vnecessary trouble y’t may ensure by
vnwritten grants, bargaines, sales or morgages, It is ordered by this Court, that
from hencforth all grants, bargaines, sales or morgages of hous and lands,
shalbe in writing and subscribed by the granter with his owne hand or mark,
vnto w’ch mark his name shalbe annexed, and also subscribed by two witnesses
at least, w’th their owne hands or markes... & that noe grant, sale, bargain or
mortgage shalbe of value but such as written and subscribed, as abouesaid. 304

This new rule required that all land transactions be recorded on paper and signed with
witnesses. trying to prevent “unnecessary trouble,” the court was imposing a system
of land use different from that which had been practiced before. Only ten years earlier
in 1650, the court had passed a law requiring settlers to lay out the bounds of their
towns each year. In the 1650 law, the court used “bounds” to mean physical markers,
such as piles of rocks or blazes on trees. 305 This method of recording land agreements
through the ritual of walking the edge of a settlement and creating physical boundary
markers would have made the most sense to settlers, as it mimicked practices in
England. 306 It also would have been legible to Algonquian neighbors, and was similar
to Algonquian practices of marking hunting territory with blazes on trees. 307

304 PRCC vol. 1, 358.
305 PRCC vol. 1, 512-513.
With this 1660 law the court declared that bounds in land were not physical markers in the real world but verbal descriptions on pieces of paper. This transformation from oral treaty agreements to written deeds was part of the colonial leaders’ effort to transform land from a collectively managed resource into a form of private property.\textsuperscript{308} It was also a response to new changes happening in England: while England had briefly become a Puritan-controlled commonwealth in the 1640s, in 1660 King Charles II regained the throne and turned his attention to consolidating royal power, including across the ocean where colonists had been mostly free of imperial oversight.\textsuperscript{309} Towns worked quickly to obey this new system. In New London in February 1661 the town created a “town book” to keep land records.\textsuperscript{310} A few pages earlier the New London settlers had copied the full text of the law requiring record-keeping into their local records.\textsuperscript{311} In Middletown in 1666 the town created a record book “to record lands according to law.”\textsuperscript{312} Towns had to respond to Hartford’s new requirements, transforming a system of local land use negotiation to one of centralized, written and recorded market transactions.

Hartford’s efforts to document land transactions soon turned to land use agreements with Indigenous people. On May 16, 1661, the General Court decreed:

\begin{quotation}
It is ordered by this court that for all Landes granted either to perticuler Townes or persons by the court wherein any Indians have right and Interest: The Grantee shall agree and compound wth the proprietors for there right to prevent farther and future trouble that may arise through the neclect thereof
\end{quotation}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{308}{di Bonaventura, “Beating the Bounds,” 148.}
\footnotetext{309}{Richter, \textit{Before the Revolution}, 241-242.}
\footnotetext{310}{NLTR, 1647-1666, 28.}
\footnotetext{311}{NLTR, [69]. Pagination in the NLTR is inconsistent. Numbers in brackets refer to item numbers for pages where page numbers were not present.}
\footnotetext{312}{MTVPR, 70.}
\end{footnotes}
And this court doth judg this duty requisite to be attended in all former Grants although it hath not been enioyed in the said Grants\textsuperscript{313}

Hartford officials were worried about the “trouble” that could result when settlers relied only on colonial grants to legitimize their land claims, ignoring Indigenous people’s “right and Interest” in their homelands. Discussing this kind of trouble, the court may have been thinking of cases like the Pawcatuck one, in which the court enlarged the English settlement at Pawcatuck without Indigenous consent and was forced to recognize Pawcatuck rights, or the Pequonnock case, in which Pequonnocks demanded that the English “prove” they had the right to their land. In the second part of the law, the court turned to settlements that had been established before the law was passed, making it clear that the responsibility to consult with the local Indigenous population and record the alienation of their “right” to town land applied to them too. Essentially, the Hartford Court was asking English settlers to negotiate with Indigenous “proprietors” and to create documentation of the original land agreements that had created the settlements. The court recognized that this went beyond simply recording what had been said at the time—the settlers would have to “agree and compound” with their Indigenous hosts, creating new agreements and potentially offering additional payment.

Conclusion

\textsuperscript{313} NLTR, [67]. This law is copied in full into the New London Records along with the date it was passed in Hartford. However, it was not included by the compiler of the PRCC. This could be due to several causes—the original document or part of the page containing that law was lost, the compiler chose to exclude it, or it was decayed by time. The practice of copying laws passed in Hartford into local record books was used in all the towns included in the study—usually the law can be found almost word for word in the Hartford records. Thus, there is little reason to assume this law, although not attested in the published PRCC, did not exist.
At the same meeting in which Hartford settlers required documentation of Indigenous land agreements from all towns, the settlers discussed the progress of their petition for a colonial charter from England. By 1662, the most powerful men in Hartford and its affiliated settlements had convinced the newly reinstated King Charles II that “the Colony, or the greatest part thereof, was Purchased and obtained for great and valuable Considerations, and some other Part thereof gained by Conquest.” On this basis of Connecticut’s “legitimate” land transactions with Indigenous people, the king declared Connecticut a new colony with its own powers of government. The charter also devolved the power to oversee Indigenous land claims from the English monarchy to Connecticut’s General Court, undercutting assertions of sovereignty made by groups such as the Narragansetts, who had held firm on their assertion that they were a separate polity equal in status to any colony. The work of the Hartford settlers since the Pequot War had come to fruition. Yet Connecticut was still far from the colony they imagined—Indigenous peoples controlled significant swaths of land and possessed serious political power. Algonquians negotiated with settlers as members of separate polities, neither claiming jurisdiction over the other. While from across an ocean in England Connecticut’s land claims may have looked straightforward, close up they remained contested and uncertain.

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315 Holmes, “In Behalf of Myself and My People,” 43.
Chapter Four: “That their hands might be tied”: Reserved Lands (1662-1680)

Introduction

Connecticut’s receipt of a charter from the English king in 1662 came thirty years after the first English trading posts were built along the Connecticut River. The charter would change Connecticut Colony’s relationship to Indigenous peoples, especially regarding treaties about land use. As these changes began to rupture existing relationships, Connecticut and its Mohegan and Pequot allies were pulled into a war instigated by Plymouth Colony with the Wampanoag people. King Philip’s War, which lasted from 1675 to 1676, was primarily a war over land. Connecticut’s participation in the war affected settlers’ and Algonquians’ relationships to one another and required new strategies for the preservation of land. By the end of the war, Indigenous peoples in Connecticut realized that they needed new methods if they wished to preserve their territories. Using the colonial court, Indigenous leaders entered their collective, perpetual land rights into official records.

This chapter is broken into three sections. The first section covers the years between the creation of Connecticut’s charter and the beginning of the war, focusing on how settlers used the charter to try to reinterpret land agreements while Indigenous peoples attempted to restore existing agreements based on treaties. The second section briefly covers the events of the war, describing some of the contests over land in Massachusetts and Plymouth Colony to provide context as well as the opportunity to compare the war in these colonies, which has received more attention from historians, to the situation in Connecticut. This section also demonstrates that during and after the war, settler fears about proximity increased, a shift that altered their
understandings of their diplomatic relationships. Finally, the third section of this chapter turns to a pivotal General Court meeting in May of 1680, in which the legal framework that distinguished Indigenous reservation lands from other land was articulated for the first time. As Connecticut Colony assumed its new role in England’s royal empire, Indigenous peoples adapted to changing expectations about land use and worked to assure colonial recognition of their land rights.

**Connecticut Colony, chartered: Interactions 1662-1675**

Under the charter, Connecticut’s government began to change. Now that Connecticut’s colonial status was backed up by royal decree, English settlers no longer felt so dependent on Indigenous support to legitimate their land claims. Furthermore, the charter included a stipulation that devolved all authority over Indigenous lands from the king to Connecticut’s General Court.316 Connecticut settlers’ understandings of their obligations to neighboring colonies and to Indigenous peoples shifted as soon as they received the charter. Their colonial neighbors mostly acquiesced to Connecticut’s new status, forced to do so by their acknowledgment of the king’s authority. Within a few years, colonial leaders had used the charter to intimidate neighboring New Haven colony into becoming part of Connecticut.317 But Algonquians within the boundaries of the newly legitimized Connecticut Colony were under no such obligation to accept settlers’ redefinition of their diplomatic relationship. While the colonial government attempted to circumvent Indigenous rights to land and claim their new territory for English possession, Algonquians

316 Holmes, “In Behalf of Myself and My People,” 43.
317 PRCC vol. 1, 441.
demanded that settlers continue to follow the treaties made before the charter was granted. Within towns, settlers continued to feel religious and social pressure to isolate themselves from Indigenous peoples—yet interactions continued. Even if the settlers had mitigated their reliance on Indigenous diplomacy to legitimate land claims, they had not been able to do away with the interdependence between themselves and their Indigenous neighbors.

After Connecticut received its charter, the court began to “grant” Indigenous land to settlers without consulting Indigenous peoples, assuming that grantees would be able to negotiate a purchase and that the people on the land would be willing to sell. This method of land “granting” was typical of New England’s charter colonies, but had not been the norm in Connecticut before the charter.\(^{318}\) The only large-scale grants given by Connecticut Colony before the charter were to soldiers who fought in the Pequot war, but because Pequots were still on the land, these grants were not actually laid out until after 1662.\(^{319}\) Connecticut under its charter began granting tracts of land at almost every twice-yearly General Court meeting. Some of these grants referenced specific areas, meaning they might have documented the court’s approval of existing agreements between Indigenous peoples and settlers. Others, however, were so vague that it was impossible that they referred to a deal that had already taken place. In 1670, the court granted a settler 60 acres of land “where he

\(^{318}\) Springer, “American Indians and the Law of Real Property in Colonial New England,” 37-39. Springer does not make a temporal distinction between land practices in Connecticut before and after the charter, but his description of land practices is specifically about charter colonies. It makes sense to conclude (and the record supports this) that practices in Connecticut only became consistent with other charter colonies after the charter was granted.

may find it.”

The next year the court granted a group of settlers “liberty” to “purchase what land they can of the Indians.” Grants of this nature presumed a very different relationship with Indigenous peoples than the court had previously practiced. Where before the court had been almost obsessed with assuring “legitimate title” in all agreements with Indigenous peoples, it now approved increasingly abstract grants to settlers, assuming that Indigenous grantors would comply. Prior to Connecticut’s charter, Indigenous peoples had been able to compel English settlers to compromise with their concept of land rights, maintaining a relationship based on treaties. During this period, the General Court requirement that settlers show Indigenous “title” to their lands had provided an opportunity for Indigenous peoples to hold settlers to their agreements using the colonial legal system. Now that the king had granted the court its own authority over land, Indigenous peoples no longer had the same power to delegitimize English land claims. The settler legal system no longer contained automatic checks on encroachment, endangering the agreements that had been so carefully constructed.

Even Connecticut’s Indigenous allies were faced with new levels of coercion by the chartered colony. In October of 1666, the General Court granted Reverend James Fitch 120 acres of land next to John Mason’s farm in Mohegan country. A footnote by the annotator of the records adds that the “native right” for this grant was purchased “subsequently” by Fitch from Uncas, his son Owaneco, and Attawood. Since Uncas was a strong ally of the colony and had managed to control English

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320 PRCC vol. 2, 130.
321 PRCC vol. 2, 151.
322 PRCC vol. 2, 49.
settlement in Mohegan country in the past, it might be reasonable to assume that he had been able to make a free decision about this land; the charter, however, had changed Connecticut’s dealings with even its closest allies. At the same meeting in which the court granted Fitch Mohegan land, the General Court had also responded to a Mohegan complaint about encroachment from New London. Uncas had been at odds with New London settlers since their first deal with the Pequots at Nameag, when he had raided their settlement. In 1654 a committee of settlers created by the General Court attempted to adjudicate the ongoing disagreement, setting down some bounds specifically but declaring that they would leave part of the bounds “for the Court to order or ye Town…to agree with Uncas.” Uncas, his English ally John Mason, and two men from the Nameag settlement had all signed this agreement. 

Yet by the 1666 the boundary dispute had not been solved, and Uncas appeared in court to complain that New London settlers had expanded their settlement into Mohegan land without his permission. The committee responded that they saw “no cause” to alter the boundaries that Uncas was appealing, but they acquiesced to his demand for twenty pounds in restitution, recognizing that his lands had been settled upon without his permission. In this interaction, although the court acknowledged the Mohegan right to the land in question, it did not return this land to Mohegan control, instead offering Mohegans monetary compensation for land they had already lost. In this context, Uncas’ “sale” of land to Fitch that same year takes on a new cast.

323 PRCC vol. 2, 42-43.
324 Complaint of Uncas against New London Men, c. 1666, (1666.10.20.00), Grant-Costa, Paul, et. al., eds., Yale Indian Papers Project, Yale University, http://jake.library.yale.edu:8080/neips/data/html/1666.10.20.00/1666.10.20.00.html.
325 PRCC vol. 2, 47-48.
With the colony willing to naturalize land encroachment after it had occurred, negotiating a land sale in reaction to the court’s grant would have been more of a preemptive measure than a free choice. Even if Uncas had not assented to sell he might have soon seen settlers in his homeland, and he could not count on the court to expel them.

Although not copied into the official court record, Uncas had another demand that the settlers agreed to: “for the Rest of Uncas his land up the River unto Norwich bounds we do Order with his own free Consent that he nor his heirs shall nott sel any partt of itt to any person or persons whatsoever butt unto New London town and nott to them neither without the Consent of his people.” Even in this situation of land loss Uncas was able to assert the rights of himself and “his people.” Although he could not expel the encroaching New London men, he used the case as an opportunity to enter his community’s communal understanding of land ownership into court records. While English negotiators insisted on interpreting Indigenous sachems as rulers over their people, their role was closer to a diplomat who conveyed decisions agreed upon by the community. Amid the increasing power of English settlers to encroach on Indigenous land, Uncas employed new strategies to reinforce an Indigenous concept of land rights. Although the committee appointed to negotiate with Uncas faithfully recorded both parts of the agreement, the twenty pounds restitution and the vow to conduct land sales by communal consent, the General Court record keeper only copied down the first part. Indefatigably completist when

documenting their own land claims, the Hartford court proved to be somewhat lax recording Indigenous assertions of theirs.

As the General Court changed the way it understood settler land claims, extending vague “grants,” it also began to negotiate Indigenous land claims in a different and more aggressive manner. In addition to new grants, the General Court in the 1660s began increasingly to issue decrees “extending the bounds” of existing towns. One such generous expansion was issued to the newly founded town of Stonington, in 1666. The Court ordered that Stonington’s bounds could be extended ten miles from the sea northward, and that the boundaries would increase from their existing eastern bounds until they reached the Pawcatuck River. The court also granted two individual settlers, Thomas Minor and John Gallop, 100 acres of land each north of the new bounds of Stonington. Massachusetts settlers had established Stonington in Pequot country in 1662 based on “conquest rights” from the Pequot War, but inconveniently for them they settled near the Pequot territory of Cossaduck at the same time as the eastern band of Pequots, no longer subject to the Narragansetts, was returning home under official court approval. In the same 1666 meeting, the court appointed two settlers to “lay out the land for Coassatuck Indians” according to the decision of a committee, “and likewise to lay out the northern bounds of Stonington” with their new extension. As hinted at with the word “likewise,” the process of expanding Stonington’s bounds and the act of defining eastern Pequot territorial limits were the same process. The colony’s effort to

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328 PRCC vol. 2, 36-37.
329 Holmes, “In Behalf of Myself and My People,” 74.
330 PRCC vol. 2. 36.
demarcate and record clear “boundaries” of Indigenous territory was a necessary step in the process of bounding English towns—especially if, as in the case of Stonington, settlers sought territorial expansion. Rather than protect Indigenous land claims, the colonial government’s focus on record-keeping and surveying gave settlers an advantage, allowing them to cheat and lie about the agreements they had made with Indigenous neighbors.

The disagreement between the eastern Pequots and Stonington had begun in 1663, when the commissioners of the intercolonial coalition the United Colonies, responding to years of Pequot advocacy and resistance to the colonies’ attempts to eliminate them, commanded two settlers to “lay out” a tract of “lands for their planting.” The commissioners specified that “the quantity promised [the eastern Pequots] at Coassatuck is 8000 acres,” or 12.5 square miles, and that it should provide access to the coast by being “near the sea side.”

When Massachusetts, then still claiming jurisdiction over the eastern Pequots, laid out the survey, however, the colony created a tract that was only 2,000 acres. Stonington residents claimed that this tract at Cossaduck was theirs and launched a campaign of intimidation to “warn” the Pequots from the “town’s land.” In 1664 the eastern Pequots complained to the commissioners of the United Colonies that they were “yet dissettled and abused” by Stonington settlers, and the commissioners affirmed the 2,000 acre grant from the year before. The Stonington settlers, not satisfied with this outcome, continued to threaten the Pequots who settled near their town and in 1666 created a committee to

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333 PRCC vol. 2, 33.
survey the boundaries of Stonington. As part of the new survey, Stonington granted tracts of land at Cossaduck to multiple important men in the town. This new survey enabled Stonington’s representatives to argue before the court that they had a prior right to Cossaduck.\textsuperscript{335} At Connecticut’s General Court meeting on May 10, 1666, the same meeting where Stonington’s bounds were expanded by several square miles, the court created a committee of four men to “settle the matter in difference betwixt Stonington Inhabitants and Indians at Coassatuck,” declaring that the committee’s decision would be binding.\textsuperscript{336} At the next town meeting, six months later in October, the court ruled that its grant of land to Pequots had been unfair to Stonington and ordered the Pequots to resettle at Pochaug on a two to three square mile tract the court would lay out.\textsuperscript{337} Eventually, after continued agitation by Stonington settlers, the Pequots were forced off this tract as well. In 1669 they struck a deal with John Winthrop Jr., who had amassed large land holdings in many parts of the colony, to live on “his” property at Quaquatog Hill in Stonington. Under this agreement the Pequots were not only relocated yet again, they were also required to pay rent to Winthrop.\textsuperscript{338} Through the tools of surveying and record-keeping, Stonington settlers had fabricated a claim to Pequot land that seemed legitimate, spurring a redefinition of the boundaries between the groups that favored the settlers and dispossessed the Pequots.

In the same years that the eastern Pequots were renegotiating their boundaries with English towns, the Connecticut court attempted to establish direct jurisdiction

\textsuperscript{335} Holmes, “In Behalf of Myself and My People,” 75.
\textsuperscript{336} PRCC, vol. 2, 33.
\textsuperscript{337} PRCC, vol. 2, 56.
\textsuperscript{338} Holmes, “In Behalf of Myself and My People,” 65.
over both eastern and western Pequots. After allowing the Pequot to return to their homelands and to avoid a direct tribute relationship with Narragansetts and Mohegans, Connecticut faced criticism from the commissioners of the United Colonies and from Uncas, who argued that the colony did not have the authority to remove Pequots from their “conquered” status.\textsuperscript{339} Under this pressure from their ally, Connecticut attempted to establish jurisdiction over Pequots. Perhaps realizing how little standing they had to do this within Pequot communities, the colony simply recognized the leaders who were already in power among the Pequot. These leaders, Cassacinamon for the western Pequots and Herman Garrett for the eastern band, had cultivated diplomatic relationships with the colony for years, and in 1666 the English government declared that each was his band’s “governor”.\textsuperscript{340} While colonial support for Indigenous leaders may have worked to undermine principles of communal consent for leadership, the English still did not have the power to interfere much with the day-to-day administration of Pequot country. The only areas in which the English asserted authority were the tribute payments, which they required the Pequot to continue paying, and some agreements that the Pequot would follow Christian biblical law—although without direct colonial oversight, it is unclear how this agreement would have been enforced.\textsuperscript{341} The English effort to impose this level of authority over an Indigenous group was a new step in Connecticut, where tribal communities and English governments had maintained parallel governments with

\textsuperscript{339} McBride, “The Legacy of Robin Cassacinamon,” 85-86.
\textsuperscript{340} PRCC, vol. 2, 39. In a similar process, the creation of the “Praying Town” of Natick was facilitated by Indigenous leader John Speen, and resulted in English recognition of Speen’s authority in the supposedly anglicized town. See Brooks, \textit{Our Beloved Kin}, 173-174.
\textsuperscript{341} Vaughan, \textit{New England Frontier}, 178.
their own jurisdictional spheres. While Connecticut’s assertion of jurisdiction over Pequots is important because it reflects a shift toward attempting to directly control Indigenous populations, it must be emphasized that many of these claims remained theoretical, with the colony gaining little additional real-world power over Pequots.

The power of town expansion grants and the new strategies both Indigenous and colonial negotiators developed to respond to them are illustrated well in the continued troubles over land at Stratford/Pequonnock. In 1659, the court had affirmed that Golden Hill was set apart for the exclusive use of the Pequonnocks. This decision had been based on the original agreement between Pequonnocks and settlers, which appears to have been a shared-use agreement. The Pequonnocks clarified their exclusive claim to Golden Hill, where they could plant unhindered by colonial people and animals, while they allowed settlers to plant and build in a specific patch of land. The rest of Pequonnock territory remained available for multiple uses. In 1656, however, the General Court had extended Stratford’s bounds so that they ran “12 miles inland from Long Island Sound.” After the court’s reaffirmation of Pequonnock land rights in 1659, “Stratford continued to expand north and northwestard,” and “pushed into the northeastern part of Pequannock territory.” In 1671, Musquatt, the Pequonnock sachem, signed an agreement on behalf of his community, formally acknowledging and accepting Stratford’s new boundaries as described in the court grant. In this agreement he made certain to clarify that “Golden

343 Wojciechowski, The Paugussett Tribes, 171.
344 Wojciechowski, The Paugussett Tribes, 171.
Hill as stated by ye Court” was “excepted” from the transfer.\textsuperscript{345} Wojciechowski, in his ethnohistory of the Paugussett confederation, remarks that the Pequonnocks must have known “the futility of trying to resist” colonial expansion, “the more so because the land in question already had been granted to Stratford by the Connecticut General Assembly.”\textsuperscript{346} Yet the Connecticut government’s power to grant land should not be taken for granted—it seems more accurate to acknowledge that the Pequonnock strategically accepted one aspect of the Connecticut Court’s authority in order to bring to bear the authority of the 1659 decision that protected their land at Golden Hill.

Using the colonial court to defend Pequonnock lands from his encroaching neighbors, Musquatt preserved his community’s claim to Golden Hill. Yet in the process of compromising with the court’s understanding of land ownership, he also lost all the rest of the land encompassed in the new grant. It is important to note that it appears that this moment, 1671, is when Pequonnock territory became specifically bounded onto Golden Hill. If it was possible for Stratford to encroach onto Pequonnock lands after 1659, and Musquatt had to sign a deed legitimizing this expansion, this means that even after the court’s affirmation of the shared-use agreement at Stratford, Pequonnock territory was not limited or “reserved” solely to lands on Golden Hill. The 1671 agreement did not “surrender” land that had been solely Pequonnock but transformed land that had been under shared use into a zone fit for English construction and planting. In the 1659 agreement, the English had been

\textsuperscript{345} SLR, vol. 1 book 10, 435.
\textsuperscript{346} Wojciechowski, \textit{The Paugussett Tribes}, 171.
the ones who were “reserved” to a tract of land for habitation and planting. The 1671 agreement represented a pushing outward of English bounds through the elimination of shared spaces.

At the same time, a similar process of settler reinterpretation of shared-use land agreements was taking place in Wangunk country. In a parallel strategy to that employed in the struggles over land at Golden Hill and the conflicts between eastern Pequots and Stonington, English settlers at Middletown used surveying to try to expand their bounds into Wangunk land. Unlike the Pequonnocks, the Wangunk had received no written affirmation of their land rights in the court records. Whatever agreement Sowheag had made with the colony before he died had been lost or never written down. In 1670, Middletown’s settlers began conducting a survey of Wangunk lands. Without Wangunk involvement, the settlers “ran the bounds” of the lands that they saw as belonging to Wangunks. The committee appointed to do so described an existing shared-use agreement as it had been established at the time of Sowheag’s death. Wangunks had sole rights to an area of land along the west side of the Connecticut River, as well as planting plots of land intermixed among those plots farmed by English settlers. A separate plot of forty acres for exclusive Wangunk use had been set aside in an agreement between settlers and Sausank and Seana, a partnered man and woman who were important leaders of a band of Wangunks. Since Middletown’s settlement, these tracts of land had been exclusively Wangunk, but the woodlands and waterways had been available for hunting, fishing, and travel for both Wangunks and settlers. Yet by 1670, the English surveyors described the agreement of shared use negotiated by Sowheag as a “grant” by English officials. They
described the land Wangunks had reserved for themselves as “given to the Indians By the Honnored mr Hains & mr Hopkins,” colonial governors. Suggesting that the English authorities had benevolently set aside colonial land for Wangunks, the surveyors described Wangunk planting territory as “AJudged by the gentellmen as a sofisent alowanc for them.”347 The next month after they attempted to impose specific boundaries on Wangunk land usage, the settlers created a new pound for their animals at Wangunk.348 In Middletown as elsewhere, when settlers spearheaded efforts to clarify the boundaries of Indigenous land, they managed to find more land for themselves, carved out of previously shared spaces. Using the “right” to grant land conferred by the charter, Middletown’s settlers reinterpreted their relationship with and obligations to Wangunks.

While Middletown settlers recognized the power of land surveys to reorganize previous agreements, Wangunks, like the other Indigenous nations fighting encroachment, were able to use the power of surveying to enter their own land claims into the settler legal system. In January of 1672, representatives of the Wangunk nation signed an agreement with Middletown settlers that was to serve as a confirmatory “deed” to the town, supposedly recapitulating the agreement made in 1650. In this deed, Wangunks described the English settlement at Middletown as a gift from Sowheag to colonial governors John Haynes and Edward Hopkins. Not only did this description reverse the logic of the colonial land grant system, but it reframed English settlement at Mattabessett as part of a diplomatic alliance with Connecticut

347 MTVPR, 85.
348 MTVPR, 85.
Colony, highlighting that Sowheag had acted as the representative of a separate polity, not as an ordinary landowner. The deed also mentioned that the Wangunk had received additional payment in the form of “a farther and full consideration” from Middletown’s settlers. Middletown’s settlers had expanded their bounds since the original agreement, requiring monetary compensation for Wangunk lands lost in the interim. Yet in the deed Wangunks still articulated their original claim to Mattabessett and remembered their agreement with settlers as one of mutuality.  

The multiple uses of surveying and of deeds, and the contradictory messages they could contain, coalesced in additional negotiations about the Wangunk land case. In May of 1672, settlers in Middletown received approval from the General Court for the official boundaries they had surveyed between themselves, neighboring English towns, and the Wangunk. On the ground, however, things were less clear. According to Middletown’s town records, following the official recognition of their bounds powerful settlers were still engaged in negotiations with Wangunks to create adequately separated and clearly defined boundaries. In June of 1672, the town voted to approve the transfer of some lands within the bounds claimed by Middletown to the Wangunks, if needed to “Gratify the Indians in order to acquit all Claims & tittle to any Lands with in our bounds.” The settlers were clear that their motive for doing this was to make sure the Wangunks would “give us assurance of all within our bounds from all indian title or claiime.” The settlers had received court recognition of their own bounds, but they knew that future Wangunk challenges to that claim

349 MTVPR, 200-201.
350 PRCC vol. 2, 175.
351 MTPVR, 101.
could cut into land they hoped to build on. Their strategy was to clarify once and for all their boundaries with Wangunks, even if they had to give up some “Middletown” land in the process.

This transaction was a direct response to Hartford’s requirement in 1661 that settlers document Indigenous land claims. Middletown’s settlers attempted to obviate the need for any future negotiation with Wangunks, freezing a dynamic agreement at one point in time and transforming a treaty with mutual obligations for both parties into a sale. The following spring, in 1673, Wangunks signed a “deed” that specifically demarcated the boundaries of land they held as their own. This document used the English tools of surveying to trace out 300 acres of land as exclusively Wangunk.\(^{352}\) By assuming that Wangunk boundaries had to be demarcated, the English court attempted to circumscribe Wangunk habitation within known limits so that they could claim all other land as English. Middletown residents attempted to create a record in which Wangunks had reserved a small tract of land within English territory, although in reality the reverse had happened. At the same time as this agreement reflected English efforts to expand, the Wangunk had managed to negotiate with settlers to expand their own boundaries before they were set in stone. By entering these newly negotiated boundaries into English records, Wangunks must have hoped to preserve them. In the next few years, however, new challenges would emerge in the fragile balance between two competing systems of land usage. Agreements that may have seemed solid before were no longer reliable.

\(^{352}\) MTPVR, 214.
King Philip’s War and its aftermath in Connecticut

In February of 1675, the townspeople of Stratford held a town meeting. They voted that “Golden Hill shall bee layd out by way of division to every particular proprietor according to his proportion.” A group of townsmen led by Captain Curtiss were “appointed to lay out Golden Hill according to the abovesd act.”\(^{353}\) It is not clear based on Stratford’s records where they had derived the authority to “lay out” Golden Hill to settlers, barely four years after the General Court had once more reaffirmed that it was Pequonnock land. Regardless, Stratford’s settlers directed their attentions elsewhere because, a few months later, serious conflicts arose in nearby Plymouth Colony. In August Stratford voted to ban the firing of guns within the town, on account of “our present troubles with the Indians.”\(^{354}\) In November, the town created a committee to build a fortification, responding to an order coming down from the General Court.\(^{355}\) Stratford, like every Indigenous and English habitation in Connecticut, had been caught up in a conflict much bigger than itself. King Philip’s War had broken out, pulling Connecticut settlers and their Indigenous allies into fights for land and legitimacy between Plymouth and Massachusetts colonies and the Wampanoag, Nipmuc, and Narragansett peoples. Unlike the battles waged in court in Connecticut since the Pequot War, this conflict would cause massive loss of life on both sides. It would prove to be pivotal not just for the Indigenous peoples who fought against the colonies, but also for the settlers’ Algonquian allies in Connecticut. During the war English perceptions of Indigenous people shifted, and they began to

\(^{353}\) SLR vol. 1 book 10, 429.  
\(^{354}\) SLR vol. 1 book 10, 430.  
\(^{355}\) SLR vol. 1 book 10, 430.
interpret their diplomatic relationships with their neighbors in new ways. By the time Stratford settlers returned to their effort to settle on Golden Hill, both they and the Pequonnock were navigating a drastically transformed legal landscape.

The conflict that would become known as King Philip’s War began over rights to land. To the north of Connecticut, Plymouth Colony had long maintained a relationship with Wampanoag peoples. For years, important Wampanoag leaders had attempted to negotiate with the colony to defend their land rights. In the 1660s and 70s, negotiations in Plymouth, like those in Connecticut, had become more aggressive. Like their colonial neighbors, Plymouth settlers were worried about maintaining their land claims under the scrutiny of the king’s agents, newly back in power after Oliver Cromwell’s Puritan revolt, and were concerned to articulate bounds with Massachusetts and Rhode Island that favored their own colony. In Massachusetts, unlike Connecticut, there was a large population of “Praying Indians” who had converted to Christianity, particularly within the Nipmuc nation. Although conversion took place under straitened circumstances in the wake of epidemic diseases, Nipmucs chose to become Christian partly in order to gain access to literacy, diplomatic relationships with English authorities, and to retain their freedom of movement and ability to self-govern. In their negotiations with Massachusetts and Plymouth, Wampanoags and Nipmucs identified the importance of record-keeping the same way that Indigenous peoples who negotiated with Connecticut Colony did. They made similar efforts to record their land rights in colonial

documents. Lisa Brooks has demonstrated that immediately prior to the war, Wampanoag leader Weetamoo cautiously accepted settlement in her homeland but at the same time “sought to solidify the boundaries of Pocasset in writing, based on subsistence needs, traditional waterways, and the agreements she had made with individual settlers and Plymouth leaders.” The “Praying Indians” in Massachusetts also used colonial record-keeping to their advantage. By accepting the efforts of missionaries to consign them to “civilized” English-style Christian towns, Nipmuc leaders were able to preserve their territorial base and again, significantly, to ensure that their own land rights were recognized and recorded by colonists.

As Indigenous leaders in the Massachusetts Bay Colony and Plymouth negotiated these crucial documents, settlers attempted to subvert their efforts to accurately record Indigenous land rights into English law. A Christian Wampanoag man named John Sassamon became an ally to Plymouth, providing language interpretation during land agreements with Indigenous leaders. Lisa Brooks has shown that many deeds associated with John Sassamon were contrary to other documents signed by Indigenous leaders or were later contested in court by their supposed signatories, suggesting that Sassamon was working with the colony to deceive his non-Christian relatives. In 1675, Sassamon turned up dead, and the English immediately suspected he had been murdered in retaliation by Wampanoags. Plymouth Colony arrested three Wampanoag men, a sachem, his son, and a counselor, and executed them all after a show trial, although not before they secured a

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“bond” from the sachem’s family in the form of the right to his territory. At the same time as they secured this grant of land, colonists tried to secure promises of “submission” from other Indigenous leaders, including Metacom, or Philip, the sachem of the Pokanoket band of Wampanoags. Plymouth and Philip both feared war from one another, and as Plymouth mounted forces to invade Wampanoag territory some Wampanoags began conducting raids on English towns, symbolically destroying these bastions of colonial power and control over land. To the English these raids were adequate justification to launch a war, which they could now claim was defensive.

What began as a conflict between land-hungry Plymouth colonists and Metacom soon spiraled into something much bigger. In the year during which the war raged, Wampanoag and Nipmuc fighters destroyed twenty-five English towns, hitting fifty settlements in total, over half of the settlements in New England. While Plymouth had begun the war against the advice of other colonies, the agreements between the members of the United Colonies meant that Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island were obligated to fight alongside their neighbor. Connecticut leaders had their own reasons to participate—they saw the Indigenous resistance as a threat to their land claims, and felt that the governor of New York, Edmund Andros, was aiding this Indigenous movement. Installed by the King in 1674 after a bloodless English takeover of Dutch New Netherland in 1664, Andros represented a new form of leadership in the colonies: a staunch royalist following direct orders from the

361 Brooks, Our Beloved Kin, 124, 126-127.
362 Brooks, Our Beloved Kin, 139; Lepore, The Name of War, 75, 94-95, 115.
363 Lepore, The Name of War, xii; Richter, Before the Revolution, 284.
364 Lepore, The Name of War, 107.
crown. Andros’ claims on the ground were bolstered by his diplomatic ties to the Haudenosaunee, whose military and political power dwarfed that of the New England colonies. At the end of June in 1675, Andros installed four ships in the port outside Fort Saybrook. While he claimed that this show of military might was intended to help Connecticut in the coming war, Connecticut’s leaders suspected that Andros sought to intimidate them into giving him the half of their colony west of the Connecticut River, which he owned according to his conflicting royal charter. The Court took umbrage at this dual challenge to the lands they had “so rightfully obtaind, so long possessed and defended against all invassions of Dutch and Indians,” vowing to join their neighboring colonists in the conflict. The Connecticut General Court mobilized a force to join the war.

Colonists soon found that they were ill-equipped to fight Indigenous peoples, opening up an opportunity for some Indigenous nations to pursue a strategy of alliance with the colonies in the war to maintain their land rights. In August of 1675, Uncas’ son Owaneco and a delegation of Mohegans appeared before the meeting of the United Colonies commissioners in Boston, and demanded that, if the colonies wanted their continued support, they had to formally recognize Indigenous land rights at Mohegan. By making their participation conditional upon English recognition of their land base, Mohegans took advantage of the English armies’ inability to navigate or fight in Indigenous territories without the help of Algonquians. The Pequots, still

367 PRCC vol. 2, 260-263.
368 Brooks, Our Beloved Kin, 197.
369 Brooks, Our Beloved Kin, 172-3.
in an unclear legal position and subject to periodic reminders of their “conquered” status, were not able to make a free choice as did the Mohegans. For the Indigenous peoples who assisted the Connecticut colonists, participating in the war must have seemed like the best way to keep their land base secure and their families safe.

As colonial anxieties flared, however, the benefits for Indigenous peoples of alliances with the English were cast into doubt. In Narragansett country, leaders tried to both placate colonial forces and to continue to practice Indigenous diplomacy, refusing to turn over Wampanoag relatives who had sought shelter with them.\textsuperscript{370} While Rhode Island settlers had previously supported Narragansett claims to sovereignty, when Narragansetts exercised their jurisdiction during the war the colony violently rejected Narragansett independence.\textsuperscript{371} Colonial armies attacked a fortified Narragansett village and set it on fire in a strategy very similar to that of the Pequot Massacre, killing hundreds of noncombatants.\textsuperscript{372} In Massachusetts, too, colonists altered existing agreements with tribal allies, most dramatically by passing an order limiting all “Praying Indians” to live in one of five towns, taking away their freedom of movement and ability to hunt for their families.\textsuperscript{373} In the spring of 1676 the colonies began to negotiate truces with Wampanoag forces, leading Wampanoags to believe that they were in a ceasefire. Instead colonists used this opportunity to destroy Wampanoag villages and kill additional people, shifting the balance of the war against the Indigenous resistance.\textsuperscript{374}

\textsuperscript{370} Brooks, \textit{Our Beloved Kin}, 228-229.
\textsuperscript{371} Pulsipher, \textit{Subjects unto the Same King}, 128-129.
\textsuperscript{373} Brooks, \textit{Our Beloved Kin}, 196.
\textsuperscript{374} Brooks, \textit{Our Beloved Kin}, 301-310.
During the war concerns about land claims and proximity had become newly tendentious and spiritually fraught. The southern half of the conflict officially ended in the spring of 1676 after Edmund Andros, trying to win over his skeptical colonial neighbors, partnered with Iroquois soldiers to defeat Wampanoag forces.\footnote{Richter, \textit{Before the Revolution}, 285. The portion of the war that had stretched into Wabanaki country continued for several more years and, by many estimations, the English lost.} Indigenous peoples suffered huge losses, in part because while they customarily tried to inflict few deaths in war, the English aimed to kill as many “enemies” as possible.\footnote{Brooks, \textit{Our Beloved Kin}, 187.} Through the combined effects of military deaths, deaths from disease and starvation, and banishment or enslavement out of the colony, the number of Indigenous people in Massachusetts had been cut in half, with only eight thousand people remaining.\footnote{Richter, \textit{Before the Revolution}, 286.} English people, meanwhile, were left with significant casualties of their own, as well as with massive destruction of their property that forced them to survive on aid from England.\footnote{Lepore, \textit{The Name of War}, xii.} In addition to these tangible losses, the idea of a relationship based on mutual diplomacy and respect, however tenuously it had existed before, had now been permanently damaged. The war put differences between Indigenous and colonial identity into starker relief, and those Indigenous peoples who tried to navigate a shared space with settlers faced many more barriers.\footnote{Lepore, \textit{The Name of War}, xiii.} While existing fears about proximity had previously been balanced, especially in Connecticut, by the need to negotiate with Indigenous hosts for occupancy rights, the war challenged that precedent. Many settlers interpreted the events of the war as a sign from God that they had sinned.\footnote{Lepore, \textit{The Name of War}, 99-102.} They saw Indigenous people, and the
landscape they seemed to navigate so easily, as a threat to their attempt to create ordered towns.\textsuperscript{381} In Connecticut, settlers suspected that their proximity to their Indigenous hosts had polluted their practice of Christianity, requiring divine punishment. Such a conclusion may have seemed especially logical because isolated settlements were most easily hit and destroyed in the war.\textsuperscript{382} Despite the varying responses of Indigenous individuals in the war, and particularly groups in Connecticut Colony’s choice to align with the settlers, colonists projected these wartime fears onto Indigenous peoples in general.\textsuperscript{383} During the war existing anxieties about religious and cultural purity spurred settlers toward a new focus on separation.

Amid these religiously-inflected worries about safety, English leaders and their Indigenous allies adopted a new category, the “friend Indian,” to try to counteract or modulate the growing distrust and separation between Indigenous and settler populations. The idea that certain Indigenous people were “friend Indians” had been created by Massachusetts settlers during the war, as they attempted to navigate the different relationships they had with Nipmucs, who converted to Christianity, and those who resisted colonial rule. While Indigenous peoples tried to reframe the meaning of “friendship” to include all Indigenous groups who maintained diplomatic relationships with the English, English authorities in Massachusetts insisted on interpreting only those Indigenous peoples who lived in “settled” English-style towns as their “friends.”\textsuperscript{384} In Massachusetts the category of “friend Indians” did not prove compelling enough to counteract settler fears and help diplomatic relationships return

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{381 Lepore, The Name of War, 77-85.}
\footnote{382 Lepore, The Name of War, 90-91.}
\footnote{383 Brooks, Our Beloved Kin, 190-191.}
\footnote{384 O’Brien, Dispossession by Degrees, 66-67.}
\end{footnotes}
to normal—rather, it created new systems through which colonists could filter their postwar distrust of Indigenous peoples. Constructing “friendship” on their terms, colonists could use the category to avoid fulfilling their treaty obligations, setting a new and higher standard for their Indigenous allies than had existed before the war.

In Connecticut a similar effort took place to redefine relationships during wartime, carving out a shared diplomatic space based on military alliance. After a summer of Indigenous successes in the conflict, in October of 1675, the Connecticut court acknowledged that they were “apprehensiue of the necessity that som prouission be made so to order the converss that may be between the English and those Indians that are yet friendly to vs, so as neither may rashly, unjustly or imprudently injure the other.” Acknowledging that up to that point local arrangements between settler groups and sovereign Indigenous groups had predominated, the selectmen admitted that they were “findeing it difficult to make a generall order thereabouts, in regard of the different circumstances that may attend seuerall plantations.” To these colonial authorities, it was still imperative to make sure that all towns in Connecticut “come to some agreement wth all the neighbour Indians, how they may be able to distinguish the friendly Indians from others.” As it had in Massachusetts, the category of “friendship” suggested that existing agreements on the local level no longer held, and encouraged settlers to reinterpret their relationships with Indigenous groups. Despite the neutrality or alliance of all Indigenous

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385 PRCC vol. 2, 272.
communities in Connecticut, Connecticut settlers after the war enacted a new approach to diplomacy, one that disregarded existing precedent.

As concerns about the potential bad effects on settlers of proximity to Indigenous peoples increased, the General Court began to pass laws reinforcing social and geographic boundaries. In 1677 the court concluded that the war had been God’s judgment on English settlers who lived too near to Indigenous people. Reflecting on how the “inhabitants of this country liueing in a single and scattering way, remoate from townships and neighbourhood, haue been destroyed and cutt off by the enemie, and theire estates and dwellings made desolate,” the court declared that the “Prouidence of God seems to testify against such a way of liueing as contrary to religion.” Not only did the administrators fear that settlers who lived close to Indigenous people could be victims of violence, they worried that too much friendship could be harmful—they remarked that children born in these settlements were “endangered to degenerate to heathenish ignorance and barbarisme.” On the basis of these fears, the General Court chose to regulate the proximity of English settlements to one another, requiring that “for the future all plantations or townships that shall or may setle in plantation-wise shall setle themselues in such neerness together that they may be a help, defence and succour to each other.”386 While the Connecticut colonists had not gone to war against their Indigenous inhabitants, they viewed the conflict begun in Plymouth as a sign that they had to reaffirm their boundaries lest further destruction follow. Following the war, Connecticut’s settlers

386 PRCC vol. 2, 328.
renewed their efforts to clarify and demarcate boundaries, continuing the process they had begun when seeking a charter.

**The 1680 complaints and the invention of reservations**

Although the war left many dead and altered the ways settlers and Indigenous people related to one another, in other ways life continued as usual. In 1678, Pequonnocks once again brought concerns to the court about encroachment on their land at Golden Hill. The General Court recognized Pequonnocks as “friend Indians,” because they had “carryed orderly and peaceable towards vs” even during the heightened suspicions of the recent war. Standing with the Pequonnocks against the Stratford townspeople, the court affirmed that Pequonnock land on Golden Hill would stay in tribal possession “untill they doe wholly relinquish there right publiquely, and com and record the same before this Court.” The Court’s specification that Pequonnock land could only be alienated “publiquely” and “before the Court” was an acknowledgement of the communal nature of Algonquian land rights, and a promise from the court to continue to uphold the same, at least for their allies. In addition to reaffirming Pequonnock land rights, the court ordered Stratford to engage in a symbolic exchange of two coats to the Pequonnock, a diplomatic gesture that could repair the harm done to their relationship by encroachment and promise that in the future Stratford would be a good neighbor.\(^{387}\)

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In other ways, however, these existing methods of negotiation and diplomacy no longer seemed effective. In its May 1680 session, the General Court appointed a committee made up of Robert Treat, John Tallcott, Jehu Burr, and James Fitch “to heare all those matters and things that the Indians have to acquaint them with, whither they be differences between the English and Indians or between the Indians themselves, and to endeavour a finall issue of those affayres and present them to this Court for their sanction.”

This committee attempted to collapse all Indigenous groups into one list of affairs and presumed that Connecticut had jurisdiction to decide disputes “between the Indians themselves,” something the colony had historically disavowed. This document, which is accompanied by several pages of General Court records that outline the colonial officials’ responses to each complaint, shows the state of Indigenous-English negotiation in Connecticut following the war. While Metacom’s vision of violent Indigenous resistance appeared defeated, Indigenous peoples in New England had not lost their ability to negotiate. Yet after the war there was clearly less assurance that English people would respect even the most clearly articulated of Indigenous demands or continue to conduct diplomacy in a reciprocal and dynamic manner. This list of complaints shows Indigenous leaders prioritizing the creation of clear boundaries and the recording of Indigenous lands into settler court documents.

The first complaint, which apparently came from the whole group of leaders—“Uncass, Cassasinamon & the rest of the chifs with them,” called on the

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388 PRCC vol. 3, 51-52.
colony to acknowledge the sovereignty of Indigenous groups and to continue observing existing alliances. Three years earlier, Mohawks had kidnapped members of several nations along the Connecticut River and the coast. Trying to avoid war, the Indigenous leaders had not responded to this provocation—however, they explained to the court that they were afraid of the Mohawks and wanted assurance of alliance from the colony. This complaint was an attempt by Indigenous leaders to reinscribe agreements of protection and mutual military support in the wake of the war. The Court officially placed the Indigenous leaders present at the session in the category of “friend Indians,” declaring that all of them were “our friends and we are not willing they should be molested by any.” Although they did not directly promise military support, the colonial officials stated their approval of the Algonquian choice not to go to war with the Mohawks and affirmed the separation jurisdiction their “friends” possessed to “manage their own affairs.”

The following complaints by Pequots called on Connecticut’s specific relationship of supposed jurisdiction over the Pequots but represented conflicts within Pequot communities. Mamoho, leader of a group of western Pequots that had split from Cassacinamon and settled elsewhere, asked the court to respond to his request for land to “be layd out to him and his people to live and plant on,” which he had “had promiss at Court Twic[e] but nothing done.” Meanwhile Cassacinamon, the western Pequot leader, argued to the committee that, as some Pequots supposedly under his “government” had left his settlement to “scatter” throughout “sundry

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390 Commissioners Return regarding Indian Sachems' Petitions, May 13, 1680, (1680.05.13.00), Grant-Costa, Paul, et. al., eds., Yale Indian Papers Project, Yale University, http://jake.library.yale.edu:8080/neips/data/html/1680.05.13.00/1680.05.1
391 PRCC vol. 3, 54.
“Towns,” he wanted the court to recognize that he could not exercise jurisdiction over these people. Unless the court was willing to order all the western Pequots to return to Cassacinamon’s town, he wanted to make it clear that he would not be driven into debt over damage people living far away might do to English houses or cattle. Mamoho’s effort to extricate his group from Cassacinamon’s authority, and to establish a land base elsewhere, fell under the jurisdiction of the Connecticut court because of the Pequots’ unique status as a supposedly conquered people. While the court attempted to extend its jurisdiction over Indigenous people in this session, only Pequot leader Cassacinamon actually accepted the English government as a proper avenue for handling Indigenous disputes.

The complaints that followed all concerned continued Indigenous rights to land. Ackenach, a leader of the Paugussetts, whose main settlement was near the English town of Milford, registered a complaint about encroachment, explaining that “a piece of Land that they reserved for them selves and children, the English belonging to Stratford have improved part of it without their leav at which they wonder.”

Responding to this classic complaint of encroachment, the court claimed that Paugussetts had in fact alienated all of their land to Stratford, whether they knew it or not: “stratford men doe produce a deed of sale of the purchase of theire township of the Indians, which deed is a clear pass of those lands to Stratford.” Rather than acknowledge that the deed may have been fraudulent, the court framed their obligations to the Paugussetts as paternalistic. Criticizing the fact that in the deed

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392 “Commissioners Return regarding Indian Sachem’s Petitions,” May 13, 1680.
393 “Commissioners Return regarding Indian Sachems’ Petitions,” May 13, 1680.
Stratford produced there had been “noe provission being made for planting land for those Indians,” the court ordered that Milford and Stratford lay out two 100-acre tracts for exclusive Paugussett use. The court also affirmed that Paugussetts retained hunting and fishing rights within land claimed by the towns. At the same time as the court supported Paugussett land claims, its justification for doing so undercut Indigenous conceptions of land use and treaty negotiations. By refusing to void a deed that had not been conducted according to proper principles, the colony normalized underhanded land negotiations and presented their continued recognition of Paugussett land as a gift from them to the Paugussett, rather than as a diplomatic obligation between sovereign groups.

Next, the colony’s longtime ally and recent military hero, Uncas, articulated an urgent fear. He asked the colony “that his bounds of his Lands may be setled before he dyeth.” Acknowledging that he was “now ould” and did not know “how soone he may dye,” Uncas declared that his priority was “to leave peace twixt his children & people and the English.” Furthermore, he wanted to make sure that if he “should mistake himself by frailty” in the cognitive decline of old age, that the English would respect his desire to be “guided by the Councill” of Mohegan leaders, not taking advantage of his mental status to circumvent principles of community consent. Uncas had good reason to worry about aggressive tactics like this from English land speculators. At the previous session of court, in October 1679, the court had granted New London townsmen Mohegan land under dubious circumstances.

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394 PRCC vol. 3, 55.
395 “Commissioners Return regarding Indian Sachems' Petitions,” May 13, 1680.
New London’s prison had burned down, and the settlers accused the Mohegans of its destruction. When they appealed to the General Court, the court granted New London “liberty to take up” 600 acres of Mohegan land. In his appeal, Uncas called attention to the dishonesty of New London settlers, arguing that the prison had in fact been burned down by “drunken men.” While the New London settlers had judged the 600 acres worth thirty pounds, and promised to pay that amount to the colony, the Mohegans had not been “allowed to set a price of their Land according to ye worth of it,” a departure from previous land agreements. The English court responded to Uncas that they would help to document Mohegan bounds before he died, as requested. They refused to budge, however, on the issue of New London prison, only requiring that New London leader James Fitch give Uncas ten pounds for the 600 acres he was losing. The court did not respond to Uncas’ allegation that New London had framed Mohegans for the prison’s destruction, nor did they acknowledge his demand that as sachem he should have the right to set his own price for his land.

Building on these new strategies for Indigenous land preservation, the 1680 meeting culminated in an agreement, brokered by Pequonnocks, that marked a shift in how colonists conceptualized Indigenous land rights. This moment has not received due attention because there is a gap in the record: while the committee’s report ends with Uncas’ complaints, Pequonnock negotiators were present at this session with demands of their own. Luckily the English response to their unrecorded complaint does survive. “As for Paquanock Indians,” the record reads, “this Court are informed

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396 PRCC vol. 3, 43.
397 “Commissioners Return regarding Indian Sachems’ Petitions,” May 13, 1680.
398 PRCC vol. 3, 56.
that they have sold their lands, and that there is a sufficient quantity of land Golden
Hill reserved for their planting, and if they need more, upon the discovery thereof it
will be considered." Following this decision, the court slipped into its record an
order that had profound meaning for Indigenous people and their land in Connecticut:

This Court orders that what land is allotted or set apart for any parcels of
Indians within the bounds of any plantation, it shall be recorded to them and
the same shall remain to them and their heirs for ever; and it shall not be in
the power of any such Indian or Indians to make any alienations thereof; and
whatsoever Englishman shall purchase any such lands laid out or allotted to
the said Indians, he shall forfeit treble the value of what he so purchases to
the public treasury, and the bargain shall be void and null.\textsuperscript{400}

After years of piecemeal land loss, the court had passed a law that seemed to
challenge English methods of land purchase. In some ways, every Indigenous
complaint before the court that day could have spurred this acknowledgment. Uncas’
assertion, focusing as it did on bounding and demarcating land to prevent future loss
after he was no longer able to negotiate, was a clear articulation of Indigenous
communal land rights before the court.\textsuperscript{401} There is reason to believe, however, that the
direct request spurring this decision was made by Pequonnocks. While the complaint
made to the Connecticut committee by the Pequonnocks is lost, a letter from one
colonial official to another from eight years later reprises the argument the
Pequonnocks made:

\begin{quote}
 at a General Court, May ye 13\textsuperscript{th} 1680, Poquanuck Indians made application to
ye said Court shewing ye commodiousnes of those lands [at Golden Hill] for
their living, by fishing, hunting, et. cet., and they were afraid lest it should be
disposed from them to the injurie of them and theirs, did by their agents for
the wholl companie petition that their hands might be tied and not sell their
rights in that lands and ye consideration of it, with others like minded,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{399} PRCC vol. 3, 57.

\textsuperscript{400} PRCC vol. 3, 56-57.

\textsuperscript{401} Cf. Den Ouden, \textit{Beyond Conquest}, 100.
occassioned an order that what lands is reserved or set apart for anie Indians shall be recorded to them, and it shall not be in ye power of anie Indean or Indeans to make anie alienation thereof… so that if this said trackt of land be sold, ye Indeans will soone in a few years repent and one if not both ye towns will account themselves injured…

According to this letter from Robert Treat, who was on the committee that heard “Indian complaints” on May 13th, 1680, the Pequonnock negotiators requested “that their hands might be tied and not sell their rights in that lands.” Having lost so much land already, including in “deals” in which Stratford compensated them after the fact for encroachment that they had tried to reverse through appeals to the court, the Pequonnocks seem to have no longer trusted English people to conduct land deeds with them. Even if the English did secure a deed, perhaps through tactics like those used by New London settlers to get Mohegan land, the Pequonnock pointed out that “the Indeans will soone in a few years repent.” Activating the tensions between Stratford and Fairfield over which town would claim Pequonnock land after the English seized it, the Pequonnock convinced the colonial committee that leaving the land up to sale would further confuse the dispute between the towns, both of which would “account themselves injured.” By playing on English concerns about proper titles for land, the Pequonnock negotiators convinced the court that this provision was in everyone’s best interest. According to Treat, the other Indigenous negotiators present were “like minded” and agreed to the Pequonnock request, occasioning the court’s order that applied to all Indigenous lands.

This record shows that the colonial move to grant special status to Indigenous reserved lands, forbidding sale by the community, was a response to Indigenous

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402 PRCC vol. 3, 445.
demands. Since 1659 when the court recognized their exclusive right to Golden Hill, Pequonnocks had been trying to secure recognition of their land rights within colonial law. Two years earlier, in 1678, the community had once more reestablished and symbolically marked the land agreement between themselves and Stratford. Yet English notions of property rights had become increasingly inflexible, and Pequonnocks recognized the need to put their agreement in terms English people would understand and respect. By asking the court to “tie” their “hands,” the Pequonnock did not surrender control of their territory but instead demanded that the English legal system recognize the system of land usage already in place—that land rights belonged to the entire community and could not be surrendered by one “seller.” This was a corrective to English negotiators who had granted excess authority to sachems, who were supposed to relay communal decisions, not rule over their people, leading to land alienations that were legal under English law but violated Indigenous norms. Following Uncas’ similar demand in 1666, the Pequonnocks and the other leaders present tried to ensure that the court would interpret Indigenous land rights on Indigenous terms. Although the English court translated this demand into their own grammar of land ownership, referring to Indigenous land as passing to “heirs” and describing Indigenous reserved lands as existing within an English landscape, “within the bownds of” Connecticut’s “plantations,” it nevertheless recorded an Indigenous demand for a different system of land rights to be recognized. Earlier, before the war and the charter, Indigenous peoples and settlers negotiated dynamic treaty-based agreements about shared land use that had room for change and only persisted if they were renewed. Now settler demands on land had changed and the Pequonnocks
recognized that if land agreements were left open for renegotiation, Indigenous people would continue to suffer encroachment and theft. By adapting to settler demands for clear, documented boundaries, Indigenous negotiators developed a new way to preserve their homelands.

**Conclusion**

Connecticut’s Algonquian nations continued to advocate for their land rights during and after King Philip’s War, resulting in the 1680 agreement by the colony that acknowledged Indigenous systems of landownership. Amy Den Ouden has called this 1680 agreement Connecticut’s “reservation law,” identifying this as the moment when the colony recognized Indigenous peoples as holding rights to lands “as a collectivity, in perpetuity.”⁴⁰³ King Philip’s War, rather than marking the end of Indigenous resistance, led Indigenous peoples to create new strategies for land preservation. In 1682, Massachusetts “Praying Indians” secured a similar promise from the Bay Colony’s legislature. The Massachusetts law read that "no indian or indians should sell any land belonging to yr townes without the unanimous consent of every proprietor."⁴⁰⁴ Jean O’Brien has written that this “pact sought to prevent even sachems from alienating Praying Town lands” and "aimed to transform Indian land tenure into a corporate issue” in the eyes of English law.⁴⁰⁵ Perhaps the Nipmucs who created this law in Massachusetts were inspired by the actions of the Pequonnock complainants and their Indigenous allies in Connecticut Colony two years earlier.

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⁴⁰⁴ Massachusetts Archives, Massachusetts State Archives at Columbia Point, Boston, 30:285-6, quoted in O’Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 78.
⁴⁰⁵ O’Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 78-79.
Through adapting to the English legal system, Indigenous peoples in Connecticut and Massachusetts had discovered a way to force colonists to recognize Indigenous concepts of land rights.
Conclusion

This study ends with the passage of Connecticut’s reservation law in 1680, but the 1680 law was not the end of Indigenous peoples’ fights for sovereignty and survival in Connecticut. Neither was it the beginning of the contemporary reservation system. Rather, the 1680 commissioners’ report and resulting law was one of many developments in forming a legal framework for how English colonies would adjudicate Indigenous land rights. Even regarding the perpetual rights of Indigenous communities to their lands, the change was not immediate nor did it affect all nations in the same way; Mohegans retained a position of relative autonomy in negotiating with the colony, and Uncas continued to contract with the settler government as his legal equal until his death.\textsuperscript{406} The provision that lands “set apart for” Indigenous peoples could not be alienated did not mean that all Indigenous peoples were legally confined to those reserved lands, or that no Indigenous communities dwelled or held title elsewhere. Looking closely at the legal genealogy of the reservation system can only yield further examples of contradictions and inconsistencies in colonial policy, as well as covert or open resistance by Indigenous communities.

Still, the 1680 law proved to be extremely significant, shaping the terrain on which all subsequent battles for land were fought. Indigenous peoples were not willing to let the colony forget that they had acknowledged Indigenous communal land rights. The colony, meanwhile, continued to try to reinterpret their role as a paternalistic one. The 1680 law proved to be a multivalent tool that both settlers and

\textsuperscript{406} Brooks, \textit{The Common Pot}, 69.
Indigenous communities could call upon to support their positions regarding land rights. For settlers, the 1680 agreement seemed to mark a shift in how they understood land ownership in the colony—combined with the 1662 charter, this law appeared to give settlers complete control of all lands not specifically marked out to Indigenous communities. Indigenous peoples cited the 1680 law to protest attempts by the colonial government to dispossess them, reminding the settlers that within their own legal system they had recorded Indigenous land rights as communal and perpetual.\textsuperscript{407} Despite using the same law as settlers, however, Indigenous peoples did not concur that the only parts of their homelands they had continued rights to were those “reserved” to them. On the ground, battles over land “ownership” remained complex, and the idea of overarching settler control was not borne out in practice.

After the 1680 law, additional developments gradually created other aspects of a “reservation system.” In the early eighteenth century, settlers in Connecticut began to pass laws to restrict the free movement of Indigenous peoples outside of reserved lands.\textsuperscript{408} Between 1717 and 1725, Connecticut Colony assigned settler “guardians” to each reservation. This system was in part based upon strategies used by Uncas in his mutually beneficial relationship with John Mason, but by 1725 the colony had imposed “guardians” to “oversee” reservation communities all over the colony, with little community input.\textsuperscript{409} Guardianship introduced a new age of settler domination of Indigenous communities. It allowed settlers to directly interfere with Indigenous systems of government and to try to impose Christianity and an English

\textsuperscript{407} Den Ouden, \textit{Beyond Conquest}, 163; 71-73; 271n15.  
\textsuperscript{408} Den Ouden, \textit{Beyond Conquest}, 79-81.  
\textsuperscript{409} St. Jean, “Inventing Guardianship.”
The creation of guardianship added the second characteristic after corporate land ownership that marks a “reservation”: direct colonial oversight. Before the addition of this element, Connecticut Colony’s “reservations” were exclusively agreements about land ownership, not institutions that attempted to control Indigenous governments on their own land. The pattern of creating reserved lands and government oversight established in New England was replicated in the rest of England’s American colonies. After the Revolutionary War, the United States adopted this existing system, further naturalizing and dehistoricizing these institutions.

The system of reserved lands created by the 1680 law had many tragic consequences. While it allowed Indigenous peoples to defend portions of their lands, the colony’s interpretation of reservation deals as ceding all other land to settler control damaged the possibility of Indigenous subsistence. Ecological change made it hard for communities could not produce enough food to feed themselves. Poverty on reservations forced many Indigenous individuals in New England had to seek waged work elsewhere. Certain industries, such as whaling and the military, attracted especially large Indigenous populations. At the same time, the reservation system also helped force many Indigenous peoples into indentured servitude. Unable to support themselves on reservation lands, Indigenous peoples had to borrow money

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411 Apart from the Pequot, who had experienced greater colonial oversight since the Pequot War. Still, Pequots before 1725 had Pequot governors, not settler overseers.
from settlers or buy needed items on credit. Settlers then brought Indigenous individuals into court over petty debts and, because they could not sell their lands according to the 1680 law, settler courts ordered Indigenous debtors—and sometimes their young children as well—into indentured servitude instead.\footnote{Silverman, “The Impact of Indentured Servitude,” 636.} These unforeseen consequences of the system of reserved lands meant that many Indigenous individuals, especially men, were forced to leave their communities. At the same time, had the reservation law not existed, settlers would have been able to continue their strategy of using “debts” to force Indigenous land sales. As seen in Chapter Four, just prior to 1680 this practice had become increasingly common.

From the beginning, the “guardians” who were supposedly protecting Indigenous reservation lands worked with the colony to try to shut down reservations. After the master negotiator Uncas died, his son Owaneco sold huge portions of Mohegan land to settlers who took advantage of his addiction to alcohol. Although other Mohegans sometimes contested these illegal sales, settler courts usually upheld them.\footnote{Den Ouden, \textit{Beyond Conquest}, 100-111.} At other times overseers adopted a strategy that perverted the law’s statement that Indigenous groups should have their homelands “for ever.” These “guardians” would compile data that they claimed proved that the nation in question was extinct.\footnote{Den Ouden, \textit{Beyond Conquest}, 68-69, 77.} These settlers frequently based their arguments on the lack of adult men on the reservation, arguing that a community comprised only of women and children could not possibly have sovereignty over itself or its lands. Citing the very economic situations created by the reservation system and by settler encroachment,
these colonial agents argued that Indigenous communities were defunct and no longer had credible land claims because adult men were absent, living elsewhere as indentured servants or waged workers.\textsuperscript{419} A final push of dispossession came in the form of the allotment system in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, which violated the 1680 law by parceling out Indigenous lands to individual holders, who could alienate them on the capitalist market. The state’s goal in creating this policy was the “termination” of Indigenous nations.\textsuperscript{420} Allotments and termination resulted in most communities in Connecticut losing their reservations by the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century.

The reservation system enabled harm and dispossession, but its ambiguity also helped some Indigenous groups, who called upon the legal history of reserved lands to retain their homelands.\textsuperscript{421} Some communities, such as Wangunks, lost their reservations but maintained their identities by creating bonds of kinship with other Indigenous communities or moving to reservations elsewhere.\textsuperscript{422} After the American Revolution, significant portions of some communities from Connecticut and Rhode Island migrated to the emerging Christian Indigenous territory of Brothertown, New York.\textsuperscript{423} Some groups that stayed in Connecticut were able to apply for federal recognition in the 1980s and thereby regain some lands, while others formalized their state recognition in the 1970s. The Mohegan Nation’s successful bid for federal recognition was based in part on Mohegans’ role in crafting the 1680 law.\textsuperscript{424} Today

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Den Ouden, Beyond Conquest, 181-183.
\item Den Ouden, Beyond Conquest, 183-184.
\item Ives, “Wangunk Ethnohistory,” 79-85.
\item Mandell, Tribe, Race, History, 6.
\item Den Ouden, Beyond Conquest, 225n33.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
five Indigenous nations have federal or state recognition in Connecticut, revealing the durability of reservations as a concept.

Works tracing Indigenous resistance and survival in Connecticut after King Philip’s War have contributed important knowledge to our understanding of how Indigenous peoples in New England used, resisted, and adapted the reservation system to their needs. They are a critical part of the canon of settler-colonial/Indigenous studies in New England. At the same time, the lack of works addressing the origins of the reservation system have served to naturalize a historically constructed system. While early agreements about land operated through mutual obligation, the process of centralization that turned Connecticut into a colony directly conflicted with settlers’ incentives to maintain these alliances. After King Philip’s War, with English imperial power seemingly dominant, Indigenous communities formally entered their collective land rights into the colonial record. These Indigenous negotiators adopted a new strategy in response to changing circumstances. Biases in the way we read history have led many people to interpret the silence about reservation origins as evidence that Indigenous peoples had no role in shaping this system but were merely passive victims. Only by looking further back and paying attention to historical change can we understand reservations as a system built by human beings with conflicting goals over a period of decades. By understanding reservations as constructed, we can undo the sense of historical inevitability that continues to haunt these institutions, and from there begin to imagine new possibilities for decolonization.
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