

George Sheldon, 1895

George Sheldon (1818-1916) strikes a confident pose surrounded by the tools of his trade. Staring directly at the camera, the seventy-seven-year-old historian is depicted at the height of his career in 1895, the year the first volume of his *History of Deerfield* was published. In 1870 Sheldon founded the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (PVMA) and in 1880 opened the Memorial Hall Museum after PVMA purchased the building from Deerfield Academy.

Revisiting Pocumtuck History in Deerfield: George Sheldon's Vanishing Indian Act

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Abstract: *During the first seven decades of the English fur trade in the middle Connecticut River valley of Massachusetts, the Pocumtuck, Nonotuck, Sokoki, and other Native American tribal nations were densely documented and actively engaged in intercultural trade, diplomacy, and conflict. Amid the increasing hostilities of the 1670s to the mid-1700s, the valley's Native people largely folded into the populations of surrounding tribes, and documentation on them diminished. During the 1800s, Deerfield historian George Sheldon depicted this complex history as an Indian vanishing act and refused to acknowledge the presence of living Native descendants. This article re-examines the evidence of Pocumtuck Indians in Deerfield and highlights the literary erasures that continue to obscure our view of indigenous history. It is based on Dr. Bruchac's research for her dissertation, "Historical Erasure and Cultural Recovery: Indigenous People in the Connecticut River Valley" (2007). She earned her PhD in anthropology from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.*

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. . . it is usuall for the English to speake much to us that come though they understand little . . . wee desire that if any Messengers bee sent to us from the English they may bee such as are not lyares and tale carryers, but sober men, and such as we can understand.

– Pocumtuck sachem Onapequin, 1659¹

[The 1704 “Deerfield Raid”] was not an attempt of the Pocumtucks and Norwottucks to recover the homes of their fathers . . . All the sentimental stories about this bloody raid being a grand and patriotic attempt of the Indians to revenge their wrongs, recover their old hunting grounds and the graves of their fathers, are pure fiction, and must vanish into thin air.

– Deerfield historian George Sheldon, 1895²

LITERARY COLONIZING

Nineteenth-century narratives of New England history often suggest that the region’s original Native American Indian³ inhabitants were primitive people who were naturally overcome, if not altogether replaced, by disease, warfare, and white civilization. In some locales, residents staged colonial history as a heroic drama starring noble white⁴ protagonists who struggled to carve civilization out of a supposed wilderness infested with unreasoning savages. These narratives suggested that Native people and Euro-American colonists could not peaceably coexist. The primary sources, colonial documents, and oral traditions, however, suggest a far more complex and less inevitable sequence of events.⁵

Colonial sources themselves clearly describe the indigenous people of the middle Connecticut River valley in Massachusetts as autonomous, powerful groups that were actively engaged in trade and diplomacy, particularly the Nonotuck and Pocumtuck of present-day Northampton, Hadley, and Deerfield. These tribes invited limited English settlement, participated in far-reaching intertribal alliances, and transacted agreements that preserved traditional access to natural resources. When relations with the English failed, tribes drew upon existing alliances to seek refuge among their Native neighbors. Why, then, is this history so poorly understood?

I suggest that regional nineteenth-century historians consciously sifted the records to select historical anecdotes that emphasized Indian hostilities for dramatic impact. Their published accounts of colonial events placed white colonists at center stage and positioned indigenous people as natural antagonists and outsiders. Public renditions (monuments, speeches, historical pageantry, etc.) of this history also employed elements of nostalgia and invention. The production of history became, in this way, a method of crafting white cultural heritage by claiming the past as the collective property of non-Native settlers and their descendants. Some historians strove to minimize the influence of Native diplomacy and alliances and to downplay the intelligence of Native leaders. Others, who supported the “vanishing Indian” paradigm, tried to silence Native voices and block the potential for future Native presence by consciously crafting a definitive ending, a tragically poetic moment when all Indians in the region supposedly ceased to exist.⁶

Colonial and imperialist tactics have long been used to shape the documentation of colonized peoples. As Alison Wylie explains, such histories intend to erase the possibility of valid alternatives:

The assumption underwriting the dominant histories . . . is that there is no substantial (“authentic”) presence of indigenous peoples who might lay claim to land, resources, or their own (distinctive) cultural identity and thus contest the legitimacy of essentially colonial rights of access and ownership . . . there is, therefore, no point in undertaking any systematic investigations of “native” history . . . The theses of extinction, abandonment, and assimilation become self-fulfilling colonial ambitions.⁷

Colonization, in this interpretation, is not just an historical era that indigenous peoples passed through on their way to the modern (and theoretically post-colonial) world. Rather, it is an ongoing process that is reinforced by the production and dissemination of colonizing literature and ideologies. Indigenous scholar Donald Fixico argues that literary dispossessions are routine in the writing of America’s Native history. Jean O’Brien points to the “narrative of Indian extinction” that is deeply rooted in America’s historical consciousness.⁸ The products of colonial ideologies—misleading and biased texts, images, and characterizations of Indigenous people—are surprisingly durable and self-replicating. Some have been circulated and re-circulated for decades; as a result,

their compelling familiarity and emotional resonance can obscure, if not displace, more factual representations. These practices and products constitute a remarkably effective methodology of historical misdirection and erasure that I characterize as “re-colonizing.”

Historians in the town of Deerfield, Massachusetts, for example, did more than merely recount colonial events; they actively shaped the narration of community memories. Elihu Hoyt, Epaphrus Hoyt, Dr. Stephen West Williams, and George Sheldon perfected a framework that naturally positioned colonial settlers against Indian interlopers and drew stark contrasts between past and present lifeways. These authors made past events viscerally personal by recounting the sufferings of white colonists as recalled through the oral traditions of their descendants. Williams, for example, when republishing his ancestor Reverend John Williams’ classic 1709 captivity narrative, *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion*, invited his readers in 1835 to vicariously experience the past. His accounts of times, “when the country was wild and waste, and exposed to all the horrors of savage warfare,” were composed to evoke a sharp contrast with “the pleasant country in which we now reside, under the banners of peace, of comfort, and security.”⁹

The most prominent Deerfield historian, George Sheldon (1818-1916), was a sixth-generation descendant of Ensign John Sheldon, an English settler who first set foot in Pocumtuck territory in 1664. As a native son of Deerfield and founder of both the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association (PVMA) and Memorial Hall Museum, Sheldon felt a sense of responsibility for preserving Deerfield’s history. His rendition of Native history suggested that the Pocumtuck homeland—despite having been cleared and cultivated for centuries before Europeans arrived—was largely unused and uninhabited, that the Pocumtuck Indians had been utterly (and rightfully) destroyed by the Mohawk, and that a few struggling survivors had deeded their land to the English out of desperation. In promoting his interpretation, Sheldon used multiple venues, including speeches and newspaper articles that led up to his authoritative work, *A History of Deerfield, Massachusetts*, published in two volumes in 1895 and 1896.

He chose to comment on pressing Indian issues of the 1890s such as assimilation, removal, and detribalization by asking his readers to reflect upon Pocumtuck history, asking, “What rights have savages in the face of civilization?”

It will not do to say of the early wars that the Indian was a patriot warrior, fighting to recover land unjustly taken from

him by the English, as many writers urge. In no case, can the origin of Indian hostilities in New England be traced to any claimed infringement by the whites on territory of the natives . . . In the dastardly attack at Deerfield, Feb. 29, 1704, it was not—as sentimental writers have often professed to believe—a desperate attempt on the part of the Pocumtuck tribes to get possession of their favorite haunts and the graves of their ancestors. Not a Pocumtuck, nor the son of a Pocumtuck, wagged a finger in the affair.¹⁰

Pocumtuck hostilities had twice forced the abandonment of the English settlement, yet according to Sheldon, the Pocumtuck felt no attachment to their land. To commemorate English resilience, Sheldon personally oversaw the installation of stone markers and memorial tablets in that town that commemorated Deerfield residents killed and captured by Indians in these conflicts.¹¹ In this way, the survival of the English was permanently linked to the disappearance of the Pocumtuck, as though it were impossible for the two communities to ever coexist.

Sheldon's *A History of Deerfield, Massachusetts* was published in two volumes containing an immense quantity of data on Deerfield's white settlers and descendants, including 395 pages of genealogies. Volume One is thick with records of Indian conflicts across the region from the late 1600s to the mid-1700s. However, the two chapters discussing the Pocumtuck Indians are relatively brief and impersonal: one focuses on archaeological discoveries, and one ends with the statement, "Never after do we find in recorded history, a single page relating to the unfortunate Pocumtucks."¹²

Such a statement represents a powerful erasure. The data preserved in Sheldon's personal papers and published texts shows a close familiarity with primary sources that recorded Native perspectives, although his publications show little sympathy for Native people. His triumphal style of constructing white Anglo-American history was by no means unique to Deerfield, but it was carefully scripted to deflect public attention away from any deeper investigation of Pocumtuck agency. He promoted his vision of "vanishing" until it became accepted as conventional wisdom that the Native inhabitants of the valley had abandoned their homeland. In order to understand the Pocumtuck Indians, therefore, we need to disentangle Sheldon's influence.¹³ What follows is a brief summary of Pocumtuck history and a critique of Sheldon's interpretations.

INDEPENDENT AND FREE PEOPLE

Archaeological evidence shows the middle Connecticut River valley to have been inhabited by indigenous peoples for at least 12,000 years, from the end of the Wisconsin glaciation. The indigenous people we call *Pocumtuck* occupied lands on both sides of the present-day Deerfield River and the middle Connecticut River reaching up to the mouth of Miller's River. The word *Pocumtuck* derives from an Algonquian locative word that variously translates to indicate a place beside a "narrow, swift river," or a "short, shallow, sandy river." This flexible translation accurately characterizes the Deerfield River, which ranges from a rocky channel of swift rapids at its upper reach to a sandy meandering stream in Deerfield. The valley between *Sunsicke* ("stony hills," now called West Mountain), and *Pemawatchuwatunck* ("winding hills," the Pocumtuck Range, including East Mountain) constituted the center of the Pocumtuck homeland.¹⁴

When European colonists first arrived, Native village sites were already cleared and planted with corn (*Zea mays*) on rich alluvial flatlands that looked highly desirable for colonial settlement. Abenaki historian Lisa T. Brooks identifies the Pocumtuck homeland as a rich habitat "where waterfowl, game animals, and edible plants abounded," and a communal gathering place that was linked by waterways, foot trails, and kin networks leading to the Winooski and Missisquoi territory near Lake Champlain, Pennacook in the White Mountains, Nipmuc in eastern Massachusetts, and westward to Mohican and Mohawk territory. Distance did not limit communications; as anthropologist Peter A. Thomas notes, the "forest hot-line" maintained by Native messengers was "far more efficient than anything the colonists were capable of establishing."¹⁵

The Pocumtuck and other Native people living in the middle Connecticut River valley during the early 1600s were generally identified by indigenous "locative" names that described local topography. Five geographically distinct but closely related Native communities were situated at ideal horticultural sites along the rivers: *Agawam* indicated the low-lying land around present-day Springfield and Agawam; *Woronoco* is where the river winds around the land at Westfield; *Nonotuck* (also called *Norwottuck*) is a mid-way place on the river around Northampton and Hadley; *Pocumtuck* is along the swift, sandy river at Deerfield and Greenfield; and *Sokoki* is a place for spearing fish at the southernmost extremity of the Abenaki homeland.¹⁶

These groups were classic examples of what Thomas calls “segmentary tribes,” organized into villages of about 500 people at minimum, with an approximate total population of 5,000 Native people in the middle valley. There was a great deal of political flexibility, since individual villages/tribes operated as “distinct sovereignties, rather than allied clans, except in cases where self-interest prompted an alliance.” In 1648, English fur trader William Pynchon astutely observed that that “no one Sachim doth Rule all.” The terms *sachem* (male clan or kin leader) and *sunksqua* (female clan or kin leader) designated individuals who were not singular tribal chiefs, but heads of family bands; each tribal nation had multiple sachems.¹⁷

The Nonotuck and Pocumtuck Indians were very well documented in the United Colonies Records, Connecticut Records, the Jesuit Relations, and the New York Colonial Documents during the 1600s. These written records are partial, of course, since they largely focus on male leadership, military conflict, land tenure, and economic exchange. The crucial relations and decision-making processes that took place within and between Native communities were rarely mentioned or documented by European observers; it could be argued that these tribal dynamics are still poorly understood today.¹⁸

Material and social interactions were crucial to the maintenance of tribal relations. Allies among the Algonkian and Haudenosaunee (Iroquoian) nations customarily exchanged *wampumpeag* (“white shell,” known more commonly as wampum) to encode agreements and secure long-term assurances of peaceful relations. Wampum beads, derived from quahog and whelk shells, were also used by colonial settlers as a means of monetary exchange. However, for Native people, wampum also conveyed both spiritual and political understandings. It was handled and measured as single beads, short strands, fathoms (six foot long strands), and belts. Belts, at minimum, were about six beads wide and two feet long, with symbols woven in to designate agreements or messages; sizes and symbols varied according to purpose. A single fathom of wampum contained roughly 200 individual beads. A bundle of 100 fathoms (containing at least 20,000 beads) constituted a large quantity, enough to construct at least forty small belts that could be used to great effect in making peace with surrounding Native nations.¹⁹

During the 1630s, the Connecticut River valley Indians invited the English to the valley for trade. They set up accounts with fur trader and land broker William Pynchon (1590-1662), and his son John Pynchon (1626-1703) and other sub-traders to purchase cloth and various sundries

in exchange for corn, wampum, and beaver furs. Corn was a crucial commodity; archaeological and documentary evidence both testify to the fact that the Pocumtuck were skilled at maize horticulture. They utilized the fertile open meadows around present-day Deerfield, and dozens of short-term food storage pits pocked the surface of the glacial outcropping called Pine Hill. Pocumtuck crops proved essential to the survival of the Connecticut Colony in 1638. After a devastating famine in the wake of the Pequot War, the Pocumtuck agreed to sell 500 bushels of corn downriver at five shillings a bushel to save the English settlements below Hartford from starvation. The English paid for this corn in 12,000 “strings” (one-foot strands) of wampum, the equivalent of about 500 fathoms.²⁰

Despite their friendly trade relations, the Pocumtuck were respected as a powerful force under the leadership of the sachems Onapequin, Massapetot, Weerewomaag, Mashalisk, and others. The United Colonies of New England, a 1643 confederation formed by Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven, paid particularly close attention to Pocumtuck hostilities against the Mohegan and Long Island tribes for fear these would impact the English colonies.²¹ The references to Pocumtuck Indians in these records and in the correspondence of colonial leaders are so dense that space does not permit a full recounting here. What follows, therefore, is a sampling of accounts that illustrate the independence of the Nonotuck and Pocumtuck during the 1600s, the complex dynamics of shifting inter-cultural relations and alliances, and the strategic relocations that ensured the survival of their descendants.

In 1648 William Pynchon warned Massachusetts Bay Governor John Winthrop that the Nonotuck and Pocumtuck Indians were not English subjects, having not yet sold their land, and “must be esteemed as an Independent free people.” If any English went “with strength of men to disturb their peace at Naunotuk they will take it for no other than a hostile action.” He reported the Pocumtuck to be well prepared with allies and fortification:

I heare that Pacumtuk will psue the Quarrel & joyne wth ye Indians of the duch River against ym [Uncas], but the Naricanset [Narragansett] must begin the war, and as I heare eather yesterday or this day is like to be ye day of fight between them & ye Naricanset: though these [Connecticut] River Indians will delay their tyme till the tyme that corne begins to be ripe; but now they are making a very large & a strong fort.²²



**Mashalisk, Pocumtuck sunksqua,
at John Pynchon’s truck house in Springfield**

Sketch for a scene for the website, *The Raid on Deerfield: The Many Stories of 1704*, Francis Back, illustrator. Courtesy of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, MA. All rights reserved.

“Truck house” was the 17th–18th century term for the locale where Indian trade goods were housed for storage and sale. It derives from the term “truck” —literally meaning to trade in material goods. “Trucking cloth” was a coarse variety of cloth (often linsey-woolsey or duffel) preferred by the Indians and produced in quantity for trade. The term “trading post” typically applies to the late 19th century western context.

In an Aug. 30, 1742 letter from Massachusetts Governor Shirley to the Duke of Newcastle, Shirley explained: “And as the only hold which this Government had had upon ‘em, has been to supply ‘em with a trade upon cheaper terms than the French can, it has ever been its policy to maintain truck or trading houses in their neighbourhood in order to keep ‘em dependent upon us for their cloathing, corn, rum and other provisions and necessaries.” Collections of the Maine Historical Society, 2nd series 11 (1908): 251. See also Ronald O. McFarlane, “The Massachusetts Bay Truck House in Diplomacy with the Indians,” *New England Quarterly* 11 (March 1938): 48-65.

In July of that year, interpreter Thomas Stanton reported that 1,000 Native allies armed with at least 300 guns were gathering in the Pocumtuck homeland to plan a large-scale assault on the Mohegan. Under the leadership of the sachem Uncas, the Mohegan had separated from other Native nations to ally themselves with English colonial leaders in Connecticut. Stanton's warning that the English might intervene appears to have stalled this particular attack.²³

By 1657, colonial leaders reported that the Pocumtuck had "so great a victory" on Uncas and killed so many Mohegan that, surely, these hostilities would end. In January of 1658, Uncas promised a tributary payment of wampum to secure peace, but his sincerity was doubted. John Pynchon, who had recently inherited his father's fur trading business and influence, reported extensively on this tribal conflict. In a letter to Governor Winthrop, he wrote:

Thus it is, the Pocumtucks, as the wampum is but little (say they) so they say but little, only they will sit still at present, and see how Uncas carries it. The last time after Uncas sent them wampum he gave out proud speeches, which if they find him now to forebear and that he do send them some good girdle or girdles of wampum from himself that they may see the reality, they do intend a full peace, otherwise not.²⁴

Uncas' emissaries went upriver with wampum to secure peace, but the Pocumtuck sachems, being insulted by the smallness of the payment, threw the wampum back and threatened to kill the horses. The following year, after another raid against the Mohegan, Onapequin attacked a farmhouse in Wethersfield and a Podunk Indian named Chauk complained that two of his children were "taken violently away and kept captive at Pocumtuck" for reasons unknown.²⁵

In a poignant series of communications during 1658-1659, interpreter Samuel Marshfield conveyed a message from the United Colonies Commissioners that begged for "long peace and frindship between all the English and the said Sachems; which wee are willing and desirous should bee continued." In a lengthy reply, the Pocumtuck sachems responded:

it was all there desires that peace and friendship betwixt themselues and the English should still continew; and whereas in the message sent to them there is mension of wronges and Injuries done by them to the English; They answered; first; that

they knew of none; and if any were done; it was not by the allowance of the Sachems.

The sachems refused to attend a meeting in Hartford since it coincided with a confederacy meeting with the Sokoki and Mohawk but insisted that they held a “Resolution of living in peace with the English.”²⁶ Massachusetts Bay sent a communication that similarly acknowledged their friendly relations with the Pocumtuck, Narragansett, and Mohawk, writing that they “have never done them, or any of their people, any wrong or injury since our coming hither” and asking that “love and peace may be continued between us & the succeeding generations.”²⁷

The verbal tête-a-têtes preserved in these colonial records communicate a great deal about Pocumtuck agency and sovereignty. In one exchange, Connecticut Captain John Mason complained about the Pocumtuck’s “extreme pride and insolency,” but Onapequin told Stanton:

what was said against us about them was out of mistake, for they understood not us nor wee them as it is usuall for the English to speake much to us that come though they understand little . . . wee desire that if any Messengers bee sent to us from the English they may bee such as are not lyares [liars] and tale carryers, but sober men; and such as wee can understand.²⁸

Errors in literal and cultural translation clearly complicated matters, but Thomas Stanton, Onapequin’s preferred translator, was apparently considered a rare example of a trustworthy Englishman.

Despite any cultural bias, it’s clear from their own records that the English regarded the Pocumtuck as shrewd traders, desirable allies, and powerful enemies. These Native people traveled great distances to harass their enemies, but they also endeavored to smooth diplomatic relations with other tribal nations through exchanges of wampum belts and beads. They engaged in savvy negotiations as equals with colonial leaders and spoke their minds about colonial injustice. Following is an illustration of the geographical reach of Pocumtuck influence: in 1648 they allied with the Narragansett (Rhode Island), and in 1650 they joined a new alliance against the Mohawk in company with the Sokoki (northern Massachusetts and southern Vermont), Pennacook (New Hampshire), Kennebec Abenaki (coastal Maine), Mohican (eastern New York), and Jesuit missionaries in French Canada.²⁹ By the late 1650s, the Mohawk had restored friendly relations with the Pocumtuck.

While the Pocumtuck were flexing their muscles, however, the Nonotuck Indians began bargaining away their independence in land transactions with the English. In 1653, a group of men and women including Chickwallop, Nenessahalant, Nassicohee, Kiunks, Paquahalant, Assellaquompas and Awanunsk agreed to accept 100 fathoms of wampum and ten wool coats in exchange for English use of a parcel of land on the west side of the Connecticut River extending nine miles westward to the headwaters of the Westfield River. Native women traditionally took responsibility for planting fields; as a result, they were listed on many Indian deeds either in their own right (Awanunsk on the Northampton deed), or in absentia as the “right owners” of the land (Kewenusk and Niarum in the first deed for Agawam and Springfield).³⁰

These documents functioned as social contacts that ensured peaceful coexistence and reflected tribal negotiations and understandings. Yet, it’s unclear whether Native and English signatories fully grasped each others’ interpretations of these documents. The increasingly large quantities of wampum and sundry items involved may have been understood by Native sachems to constitute tributary payments and gifts.

One could argue that the so-called “Indian deeds” might more appropriately be read as “joint use agreements” rather than quitclaims. On the 1653 deed, for example, the English agreed to plow the Nonotuck Indians’ cornfields. Some parcels were “sold” by different sachems on separate occasions. On one sale, the sachem Umpanchela complained that he had been underpaid and demanded an additional fourteen shillings payment. Although territorial markers and boundaries were carefully denoted and new “owners” assigned, the language of these deeds preserved agreements intended to support continued Native presence. For example, the 1658 deed for Hadley reserved Nonotuck “libertie to Hunt Deare, fowle &c And to take fish, Beaver or Otter” and retained use of an Indian cornfield, in exchange for a payment of 220 fathoms of wampum. A 1660 deed for Hatfield reserved the right to harvest wood and even set up wigwams on the town common, for a payment of 300 fathoms of wampum.³¹

Initially, the Pocumtuck were not as inclined to cede land to the colonists as other tribes. New York and Massachusetts colonial leaders feared that the Pocumtuck posed a serious threat to long-term English settlement due to their powerful and extensive alliances.³² In 1664, the Pocumtuck offered to accept a wampum tribute from their former Mohawk allies when they signaled: “Let them send us a present, then we will release their prisoners and bring a present to their country, thus to renew our

old friendship.” Pynchon’s sub-traders, Thomas Clarke and David Wilton, were present for the Pocumtuck peace negotiations, but afterwards, things went desperately awry. The Mohawk sachem Saheda was killed during his return trip after delivering wampum to the Pocumtuck. A retaliatory Mohawk attack killed the Pocumtuck sachem Onapequin and his family and destroyed the Pocumtuck fort. On February 6, 1665, John Winthrop Jr. told Roger Williams that the Mohawk had killed Onapequin by mistake and that Pocumtuck Indians had fled to Nonotuck seeking assistance:

I heard from Mr. Pynchon that they would make peace if they knew how, but none of them durst goe to treat about it. I should thinke now they [the Mohawk] have revenged upon Onopequen, they might hearken to peace; which possibly if they desire it, may be by the mediation of the English, when its season of passing.³³

By July of 1665, Winthrop Jr. reported that a multitude of Indians were at arms, “all in a combination from Hudson’s River to Canada,” as this incident rippled across the region. In the Albany Court, Dutch Commissary Gerrit Slichtenhorst heard the Mohawk sachem Cajadogo’s testimony that Pynchon and his sub-traders had orchestrated Saheda’s murder:

. . . the English have told and directed the savages, to fight or kill the Dutch and Maquaes and the English have threatened, if you do not do as we tell you, we shall kill you. They say also, that 40 ships shall come across the sea to make war here and ask for the surrender of this country and if we were not willing to give it up, they intend to kill us all together . . . They say further, that at the time when the messengers of the Maquaes had come to the fort of the Pacamtecock [Pocumtuck] savages to confirm the peace, several Englishmen were in the fort, who [urged] the savages to kill the Maquaes and they are dead now.³⁴

Pynchon denied this account, claiming that Clarke and Wilton were at the fort to make peace. Governor Peter Stuyvesant suspected that the story might have been fabricated, but the records are not entirely clear. In any event, John Pynchon was perfectly poised to take full advantage of this sudden shift in Pocumtuck fortunes.

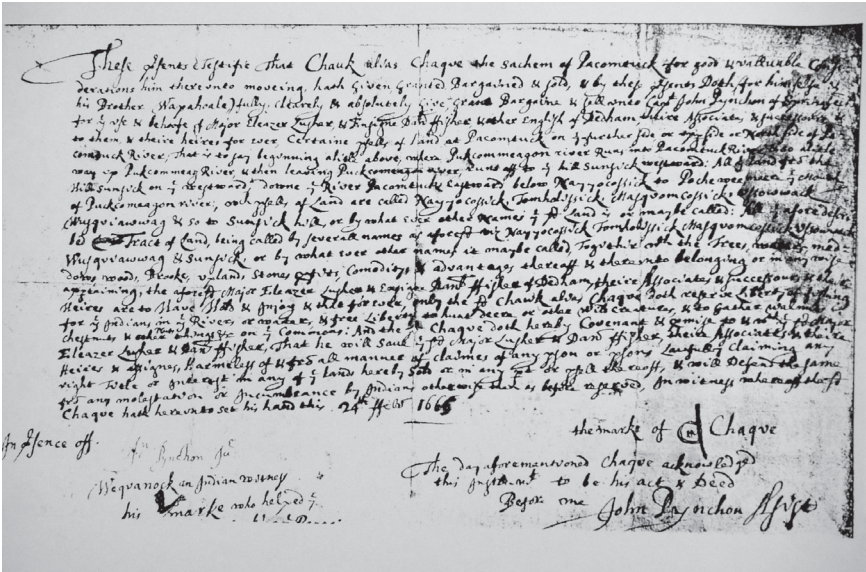
POCUMTUCK RELOCATIONS

English proprietors from the town of Dedham, near Boston, had expressed an interest in Pocumtuck land but knew that Pocumtuck survivors were “like to clayme a Title.” Surveyor Joshua Fisher agreed to meet with Pynchon to “empower him to contract with those said Indians for the buyeing out of all their Right or clayme in the premises” and proceeded to lay out a plan before the land was even sold.³⁵ The primary signatory for the first Pocumtuck deed was a man named Chauk, a Podunk Indian from Wethersfield who was described as “a peacable Indian liveing neare the English and [who] hath not bine engaged in any warr or quarrells this twenty yeares.” Chauk’s children had been taken captive by Onapequin years earlier, but it’s not clear how Chauk ended up at Pocumtuck or how he secured title to Pocumtuck land after Onapequin’s death. In 1667, Chauk and his brother Wapahoale signed a deed, witnessed by a man named Wequanock, that included a promise to defend this land “from any molestation or Incombrance by Indians” apart from certain reserved rights:

only the said Chauk alias Chaque doth reserve Liberty of fishing for ye Indians in ye Rivers or waters & free Liberty to hunt Deere or other Wild creatures, & to gather Walnuts chestnuts & other nuts things &c on ye commons.³⁶

This text appears to preserve what the English recognized as usufruct rights, the legal right to use property that belongs to another person. Despite this, it’s doubtful that the English actually intended to honor Native rights in the long run. The 1665 plan for Pocumtuck land drafted by Fisher had depicted 8000 acres of empty land and made no mention of Native presence, despite the extant planting fields, wigwam sites, burial grounds, and trails. Surveyors measured out forty-three home lots on both sides of a six-rod-wide, one-mile long, north-south street, with the eastern boundaries stopping at the foot of the Pocumtuck Range, falling just short of the site of the Pocumtuck Fort.³⁷

A Quaboag deed signed just a few months after the Mohawk attack represents a different kind of negotiation, in that it makes no provision for continued Native use of the land and resources. It does, however, highlight shared tribal interests. Land about to be sold by the Quaboag sachem Shattoockquis was also claimed by the Pocumtuck sachem Mettawampe, “who challenging some interest in the land above sold received part of



Deed for Pocumtuck Land, February 24, 1667

It reads (in part): These presents Testifie That Chauck alias Chaque the sachem of Pacomtuck for good & valluable considerations him there unto movinge, hath Given Granted Bargained & sold, & by these presents doth . . . fully clearely & absolutely give grant Bargaine & sell unto Capt John Pynchon of Springfeild for ye use & behoofe of Major Eleazer Lusher & Ensign Daniel ffisher & other English of Dedham their associates & successors . . . Certaine persels of Land at Pacomtuck on ye further side or upper side or North side of Pacomtuck river . . . only the sd Chauck alias Chaque doth reserve Liberty of fishing for ye Indians in ye Rivers or waters & free Liberty to hunt Deere or other Wild creatures & to gather Walnuts chestnuts and other nuts things &c on ye commons . . .

Image and transcription from: www.1704.deerfield.history.museum (courtesy of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, MA).

ye pay, & concented to the sale of it all.” A parcel measuring roughly six square miles was sold for 300 fathoms of wampum. The Quaboag and Pocumtuck people already had close relations (Onapequin was born at Quaboag), and the Brookfield land sale reinforced these ties, but it also generated enough wampum to manufacture at least 100 wampum belts. The repair of Pocumtuck-Mohawk relations in subsequent years may well have been facilitated by the wampum that land sales generated.³⁸

Shifts in Pocumtuck strategy were clearly underway, since Pynchon was able to secure an additional four deeds in relatively short order. Deeds were signed in 1667 by Masseamet and Ahimunquat and in 1674 by Mettawampe. In 1672 and 1674, Mashalisk, the *sunksqua* (female sachem) at Pocumtuck, signed away two parcels to John Pynchon to pay off “a debt of ten large Bevers & other debts of Wuttawoluncksin her son.” Mashalisk received sixty fathoms of wampum, two coats, and other sundries, but she reserved none of the traditional rights to hunting, fishing, or gathering. Interestingly, the prime salmon and shad fishing falls at Peskeompskut (present-day Turners’ Falls), just north of this location, were never included or alienated in any deed.³⁹

The Pocumtuck tolerated English occupation of their homeland without incident until 1675 when King Philip’s War erupted in the east.⁴⁰ Pynchon hoped that his “engaging the Maquas [Mohawk] not to entertain or favor our enemies” might keep things stable, but in a September 8, 1675, letter to English authorities at Albany, he expressed alarm that local Indians had joined in the uprising:

Northampton and Hadley Indians have also shown themselves, and have killed seven of our men and wounded several . . . And unless the Maquas should manage their old quarrel against them, I doubt whether they may not at last show their rage against yourselves.⁴¹

The Wampanoag sachem Metacom (King Philip) drew on his alliances with Nipmuc, Narragansett, and Connecticut River valley Indians as fighting spread across the Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island colonies. The Pocumtuck sachem Sancumachu headed up a large war party composed of Pocumtuck, Nonotuck, Woronoco, and other local Indians. They led the September 18, 1675, attack when 700 Native warriors ambushed Captain Thomas Lathrop’s party of English militia and teamsters at what came to be called “Bloody Brook” in Deerfield. These hostilities resulted in the temporary abandonment of both Native

and English settlements across central and southern New England. Native dominance in the valley was shattered on May 19, 1676, when more than 300 Native noncombatants were slaughtered by Captain Turner's company at a fishing camp at Peskeompskut. In August of that same year, the war effectively ended with the death of Metacom. The English abandoned their fledgling town at Pocumtuck (now Deerfield) for nearly a decade.⁴²

On May 29, 1676, New York Governor Edmund Andros set aside lands in Schaghticoke, New York, as a refuge for Agawam, Pocumtuck, Nonotuck, and Woronoco Indians who had been displaced by Massachusetts settlers. Noting that 500 Sokoki had already taken refuge with the French, he announced that "all Indyans, who will come in & submitt, shall be received to live under the protection of the Government" at Schaghticoke, located twenty-one miles northeast of Albany. This offer was both humanitarian and strategic, since Andros hoped to create a buffer against Abenaki attacks; he offered the refugees freedom to travel as they pleased, "without Molestation."⁴³ Mohican and Mohawk people carried the messages and reported to Albany authorities on the comings and goings. Some refugees hedged their bets by purchasing ammunition from the Dutch and "hid a great many gunns about Pacompuck [Pocumtuck]."⁴⁴

Sadochques (also called Shattoockquis), the Quaboag sachem who had transacted the Brookfield deed, headed a group of 150 Connecticut River valley Indians who relocated northward to Abenaki territory in present-day Vermont and Canada. In 1685, they moved south to settle at Schaghticoke.⁴⁵ In a speech to Robert Livingston, secretary for the Albany Commissioners of Indian Affairs, these refugees sought the protection afforded by a new covenant between the Mohawk and English and agreed that "Scachkook Shall be the Place of our habitacon for which wee are Verry Thankfull." Livingston invited Sadochques "to acquaint the Rest of your nation" of the welcome they received and "to use all means to Perswade them to live at Skachkook." Between the ritual exchanges of beaver pelts and wampum belts that sealed the arrangement, Livingston promised to protect them and insisted, "you may freely goe and live there and your Children after you: in Peace and quietnesse."⁴⁶

By 1690, the English town at Pocumtuck, now named Deerfield, had been re-settled. Seeking a buffer of friendly Indians to help guard against French Indian attacks from the north, Massachusetts colonial leaders began to welcome Native refugees back, on the condition that they avoid warfare. In 1691, a large group of Pocumtuck people returned to Deerfield, as reported by Samuel Partridge:

. . . the Indians that are come down are about 150 of them, men, women, and children, and are settled at Deerfield under the side of the mountain southerly from the town, living in the woods about a mile out of the town, the men plying hunting and leaving their women and children at home.

Captain John Pynchon cautioned these Pocumtuck not to “wander from your present stations without orders in writing” and agreed to “allow you abiding where you are this winter time, you behaving yourselves peaceably and orderly and carrying it well to all our people.” He noted that the English militia were “now apprehensive of some approach of the French and Indian enemy.” The Pocumtuck insisted that they “intend no ill to the English but to carry it peaceably . . . They desire their squaws may be safe under protection while they are all hunting.”⁴⁷ Despite these reassurances, the English were suspicious of Native people, and the Pocumtuck refugees were eventually forced out by Pynchon, who suggested that all Indians living north of Springfield, Massachusetts, should be considered hostiles:

If at any time they have given assistance to us, and been instrumental to destroy our enemies, it had not been out of any principle of friendship or obedience, for at other times they have been ready to assist our adversaries and destroy us.⁴⁸

Native movements and motivations were not as sinister as Pynchon suggests, but diplomatic relations with English colonists in the valley had been clearly broken down. From the Pocumtuck and Nonotuck perspective, inter-tribal and intercultural strategies and alliances had been in a state of constant re-negotiation since the colonists arrived. Despite entreaties of peace, productive trade, and agreements to share territory, the English colonists had proved to be duplicitous neighbors. Pynchon had signed numerous deeds that explicitly promised continued subsistence and settlement rights for Native people, but it was clear that they could exercise those rights only at their peril. Then, in 1694, the General Court of Massachusetts passed a declaration that confined all “friendly Indians” to a small area and offered bounties “for every Indian, great or small, which they shall kill, or take and bring in prisoner.” In 1694, the scalp bounty paid fifty pounds for a Native man, and twenty-five pounds for a Native woman or child. The scalp bounties were periodically renewed, and by 1704, had been adjusted to 100 pounds for Native males “capable of bearing arms,” ten pounds for a woman or child, and no payment for children under ten

years old (these could be sold or transported). As Pynchon interpreted this, any Indian living within five miles east or west of the Connecticut River could be considered a hostile enemy combatant.⁴⁹

As a life or death choice, Native inhabitants were forced to leave. Some went northward to Sokoki and Pennacook territory in present-day Vermont and New Hampshire or farther north to the Saint Francis Abenaki village of Odanak near the St. Lawrence, to live under the protection of New France. Linguistic evidence shows that a number of Pocumtuck people joined a Catholic mission village near Montreal under the protection of Father Mathevet. A few went to the Mohawk village of Kahnawake. Others returned to Schaghticoke, and by 1702 at least 1,000 Native people were living there. Over time, this refugee settlement absorbed more than 2,000 Native people from the Connecticut River valley, and the sachem Soquans declared that “they are now so strong, that they do not much fear the enemy.” Historians Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney note that the diaspora of Pocumtuck people “did not destroy Native ties to the region” but rather “strengthened them, in short, by forging new bonds.”⁵⁰

It should be no surprise, then, that Pocumtuck warriors chose to revisit Deerfield in company with their Native allies from New France when war broke out again. During the early morning hours of February 29, 1704, a force of 270 Native people—including about 100 Kahnawake Mohawk, twenty Huron Wendat, and a mixed group of 150 Abenaki Indians—joined with forty-eight French troops and militia to attack the town of Deerfield. Forty-seven Deerfield residents were killed and 112 were taken captive for transport to New France. This event permanently altered relations among Native, English, and French communities and their descendants in the Connecticut River valley and in Canada.⁵¹

As geographic and social distance increased, Connecticut River valley Indians and their descendants increasingly came to be identified by their current locale rather than their tribal ancestry. For example, at a Deerfield conference held three decades after the 1704 attack, the Pocumtuck, Sokoki, and Woronoco people were identified as “Schaghticoke Indians.” Massachusetts Governor Jonathan Belcher had agreed to meet “with such tribes of Indians as may be desirous to renew their friendship with us,” and in August of 1735, more than 140 Native delegates—including eight Kahnawake Mohawk, seventeen Hudson River Mohican, nineteen Saint Francis Abenaki, forty-four Housatonic Mohican, and sixty-six Schaghticoke Indians—gathered in Deerfield for five days of meetings with Belcher, the Governor’s Council, and members of the House of Representatives. Belcher followed the traditional protocols of the

Haudenosaunee condolence ceremony, opening the gathering with a wampum offering to symbolically clear the way:

I Am glad to see you: I give Thanks to the Great GOD who has safely conducted you through a long and tedious Journey; It is a great pleasure to me that we have the Opportunity of refreshing our Faces with the sight of each other. Holding out one String of *Wampum*,-proceeds, and says, *My good Friends and Brethern*, This is to wipe away all Tears from your Eyes.— Then holding out a second—This is to open your Throats that you may speak with all Freedom—Then a third—This is to wipe away all Blood, and to comfort you under all your past Difficulties.

The Native speakers answered in kind, and wampum belts were exchanged throughout the week to seal agreements. The goals were both straightforward and far-reaching: the Mohawk sachems Auountauresaunkee and Ountaussoogoe called for peaceful trade and interactions among all parties; the Mohican sachem Konkapot requested an English missionary to serve the Housatonic Mohican village at Stockbridge, Massachusetts; the Schaghticoke sachems Marsequent, Naunautooghijau, and Weenpauk offered bundles of beaver pelts and requested ample supplies to serve the truck house at Fort Dummer (now Brattleboro, Vermont). Trading posts were crucial elements of a broader colonial strategy, since by offering trade at better terms than the French,

**Facing page: The Northeast Showing Native
Homelands and Movements, c. 1650-1750**

During this period, many Native communities started shifting locations under pressure from international and inter-tribal warfare. In 1650, a group of Wendats (Huron) migrated to Lorette after war with the Iroquois. In 1676, a group of Kanienkehaka (Mohawk) from present-day New York moved north to Kahnawake near Montreal. After 1676, some Wôbanaki families and bands went west to Schaghticoke and/or north to Pennacook, Cowass, Missisquoi and Odanak. Some Native communities, like Kahnawake, Lorette, St. Francis/Odanak, and Norridgewock incorporated Catholic missions. Despite all this movement, many Wôbanaki people in present-day Vermont and New Hampshire never left. Others shifted back and forth among different Native communities for generations.

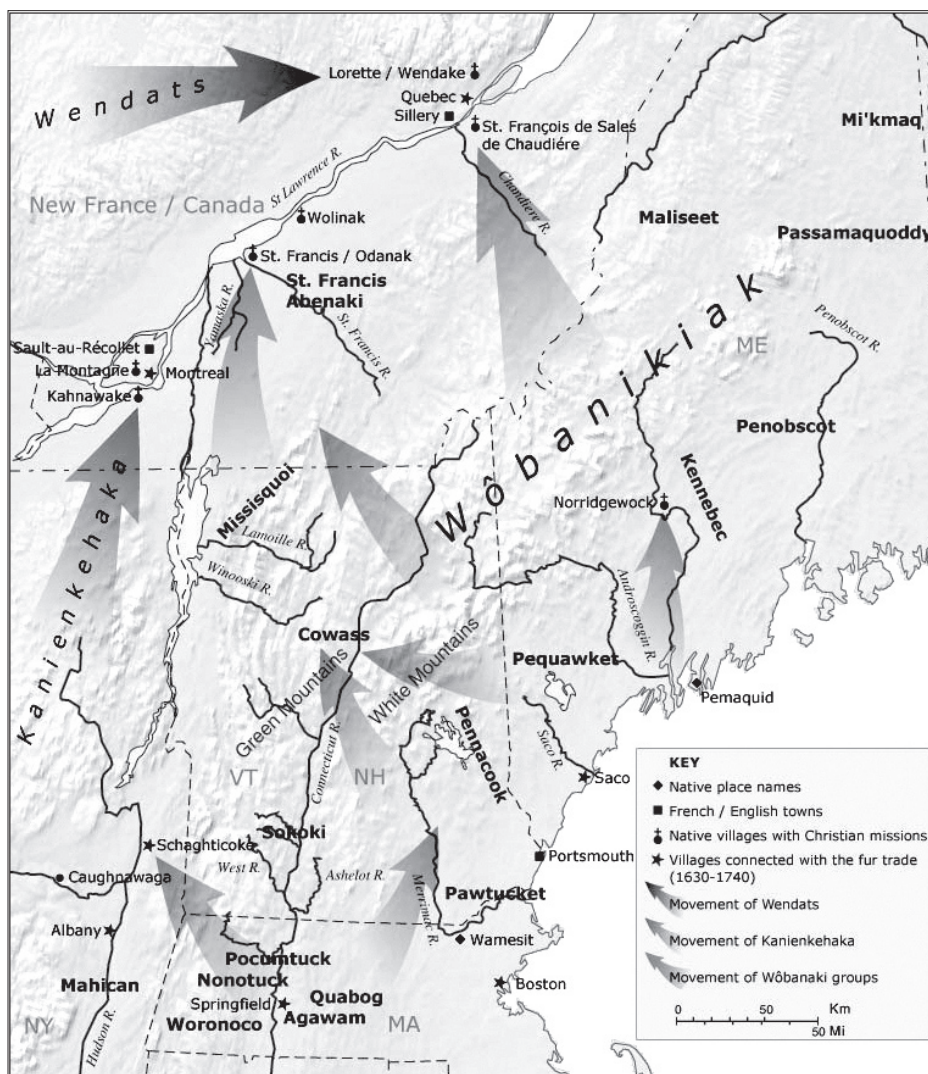


Illustration from *Captors and Captives: The 1704 French and Indian Raid on Deerfield*, by Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003); adapted for the website, *The Raid on Deerfield: The Many Stories of 1704*. Caption and image courtesy of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, MA. All rights reserved. See www.1704.deerfield.history.museum/

the Massachusetts Governor hoped to ensure peaceful interactions and keep Native people “dependent upon us for their clothing, corn, rum and other provisions and necessaries.”⁵²

Within a few months of the Belcher conference, several large parcels abutting and slightly overlapping historical Pocumtuck and Sokoki territory in northern Massachusetts and parts of southern Vermont and New Hampshire were sold. One deed encompassed the upper Pocumtuck (now called the Deerfield) River and stretched across the present-day towns of Ashfield, Charlemont, Buckland, Hawley, Heath, Monroe, Petersham, Rowe, and Savoy, up to “the foot of the mountain that Seperates and Divides the waters that flow from thence East into Connecticutt River and West into Hudson’s River.” The signers, Mauhammetpeet and Megunnisqua, identified themselves as “Women of the Scautecook Tribe,” and rightful owners of land that had “Descended to us from our Grandmother Ohweemin.” In the deed covering present-day Athol and Templeton, the signers Francois, Ompontinnuwa, Penewanse, Cockiyuwah and Wallenas testified:

We the Subscribers Indians of the Scauhtecook Tribe whose Ancestors habitations were by or near unto Connecticutt River in the Province of Massachusetts . . . Are the true Sole and rightfull owners of the Land hereafter described . . . And We do further declare to Our certain knowledge that no Indian or Indians of what name or Nation Soever has any right Challenge or interest to or in the abovesaid Tract of Land.⁵³

The discourse surrounding these documents signaled both an assertion of hereditary ownership and the intent to accommodate shared use. Penewanse, Wallenas, and Marsequnt, among others, stayed in the valley to maintain the peace, and served as scouts at Fort Dummer.⁵⁴

Schaghticoke remained a safe refuge for decades until increasing numbers of English settlers moved in, and Native families were eventually forced out. Historian Gordon Day, in his authoritative work, *The Identity of the Saint Francis Indians*, notes that by 1754, “the entire population of the refugee village of Schaghticoke on the Hudson River moved to Odanak.” The population of Odanak, the Saint Francis Abenaki village near the St. Lawrence, was in constant flux over time, as Native families from Sokoki, Missisquoi, Pennacook, and Pequawket came to stay for a few years, or a few generations.⁵⁵

During the 1700s and 1800s, the descendants of Connecticut River valley Indians were variously identified as “Schaghticokes,” “North Indians,” “Loups,” “River Indians,” “Saint Francis Indians,” and other confusing designations.⁵⁶ Ironically, in the aftermath of war, many Native people endeavored to restore social relations with their former white neighbors—and even former captives—in valley towns. John Williams of Deerfield was visited by his former Abenaki captor on several occasions, and Mary Sheldon hosted her former Mohawk mother as a repeat visitor at her new home in Northampton.⁵⁷ Other Native people passed through over time, camping on the edges of English settlements or peddling baskets. Not surprisingly, Native movements outside the limited boundaries of these colonial towns were less visible and poorly documented.

CONSTRUCTING DEERFIELD’S WHITE HERITAGE

During the early 1800s, New England’s white citizens began embracing commemorative events that, in essence, served as public performances of white ownership of history. In 1835, the 160th anniversary of Deerfield’s 1675 “Bloody Brook Massacre” was observed by a crowd of 6,000 people who gathered at the original site. Massachusetts Governor Edward Everett commemorated the “Indian catastrophe” by delivering the oration. Indians had been doomed to fail, he argued, since they belonged to “a different variety of the species, speaking a different tongue, suffering all the disadvantages of social and intellectual inferiority.” He particularly exhorted the Amherst College students and faculty in the crowd to never forget the military struggles that had brought enlightenment and education to Deerfield.⁵⁸

Deerfield historians Epaphrus Hoyt (1765-1850) and Stephen West Williams (1790-1855) oversaw the building of a marble monument at the Bloody Brook site. In 1838, Luther B. Lincoln, president of Deerfield Academy, delivered another oration at this site, the very place “where their fathers bled to secure to them the rich boon they possess.” He reminded the audience of days when “the nightly howl of the wolf, the scream of the panther, and the yell of the red warrior pierced the ear from the dark-tangled woods.” He painted the Pocumtuck homeland as an “interminable wilderness” and “gloomy swamp” with only “a few patches of Indian tillage to interrupt the dismal waste.” Dismissing the dense evidence of indigenous horticultural industry and diplomatic relations, as well as the peaceful coexistence that characterized the first seven decades of the 1600s, he depicted the colonial past as a dreadful place where:

every tree concealed an Indian; and every Indian's hand grasped a bloody weapon; on every Indian's face was pictured the curse of the white man; and in every Indian's bosom a flame was kindled, to be extinguished only by the death of its victim.⁵⁹

In 1888, while delivering a speech in Whately, George Sheldon similarly conjured an “interminable wilderness” that Native people had roved through like wild beasts, with “no towns or cities to conquer or occupy.” Sheldon described the Pocumtuck Indians, not as skilled warriors, but as primitives who viewed the Englishman as “a superior being, armed with thunder and lightning.” He characterized Indians as duplicitous predators who could never be trusted and painted a gruesome picture of fear on the frontier:

A man goes to the woods for his cow or horse, but he comes not back; a woman goes out with a milking pail . . . friends go out to find her body cut and mangled and her scalp taken away. A boy goes out for nuts and berries, and he has disappeared forever from the eyes of his agonized mother. An Indian who had lived on the most friendly terms with an English family, would come hundreds of miles . . . and lay in wait, often for weeks, by some familiar path, patiently waiting the coming of a victim, then . . . hurry back to Canada.⁶⁰

Sheldon's history was both a conqueror's narrative and a descendant's revenge. As he explained to his audiences, ancestral “blood flows in the veins of many I see around me, and doubtless many a heart-beat has quickened at the mention of their names and deeds.”⁶¹ He pronounced his opinion of the 1704 French and Indian attack on Deerfield:

It was not an attempt of the Pocumtucks and Norwottucks to recover the homes of their fathers . . . All the sentimental stories about this bloody raid being a grand and patriotic attempt of the Indians to revenge their wrongs, recover their old hunting grounds and the graves of their fathers, are pure fiction, and must vanish into thin air.⁶²

Despite this vitriol, Sheldon did compose a few sympathetic renditions of the Pocumtuck. In an 1890 article, he described them as “industrious

and provident,” noted that women exercised the right “to own land as well as cultivate it,” and praised their rescue of the starving English in 1638:

The Pocumtuck had plenty of food to sell, and it must have been a busy and exciting day when Pynchon came among them to buy five hundred bushels of corn, bringing twelve thousand strings of wampum . . . files of women, with baskets on their backs, were soon seen threading the narrow pathways to the river; for in a short time a fleet of fifty canoes, freighted with Indian corn, was on its way down the Connecticut, to relieve the impending famine in the settlements below.⁶³

Sheldon readily acknowledged that Pocumtuck generosity had been crucial to the survival of the Connecticut colony, perhaps because this event fed the larger trajectory of the English settlement success story. In another instance, Sheldon praised the Pocumtuck sachem Onapequin’s shrewdness in dealing with the Mohegan sachem Uncas and the General Court of Connecticut during the 1650s. He credited Onapequin with having “a mind well-grounded in ethics, and able to deal with hard facts in a logical as well as diplomatic manner,” and noted that the sachem treated the English as equals, “in no spirit of servility.”⁶⁴

Sheldon’s description of the 1665 Mohawk attack on the Pocumtuck fort took on a different tone, however. Deerfield’s oral tradition, as recalled by Epaphrus Hoyt, had described this attack as an equal contest with both forces retreating after severe casualties were inflicted. New York authorities had reported the regret of the Mohawk and their subsequent efforts to reestablish relations with the Pocumtuck. But Sheldon saw, in this event, his opportunity to “script” a dramatic closing act. With the Pocumtuck vanquished, the English occupation of Deerfield would be forever uncontested.

He tested out several renditions of this script. In a version of his manuscript for *A History of Deerfield, Massachusetts*, serialized in the 1886 *Greenfield Gazette & Courier*, he insisted that the Pocumtuck fort had been “stormed and taken” and all of its inhabitants summarily “slaughtered, by the enraged Mohawks” in 1665. As a result, he intoned:

Thus fell the powerful Pocumtucks. In one fatal day their pride and strength were laid in the dust. The survivors were scattered, some to Canada and some to the Mahicans, on the Hudson. A feeble remnant, renouncing their independence,

sought the protection of the English . . . The enervated remains of the Pocumtuck Confederation—rebellious against English domination—appeared for a few months in Philip’s War. At its close the few miserable survivors stole away towards the setting sun and were forever lost to sight. Never again do we find in recorded history, a single page relating to the unfortunate Pocumtucks.⁶⁵

In 1888, at a speech in the nearby town of Whately, he extrapolated upon the cause of the Mohawk attack. Crafting a dramatic scene that does not appear anywhere in the colonial documents, Sheldon claimed that the Pocumtuck sachems, in a fit of pride, had wantonly murdered a Mohawk peace emissary:

The pride of the Pocumtucks had now reached that pitch which goeth before a fall. Seeing the dread Mohawks at their feet as suppliants turned their heads, and instead of ratifying the treaty they murdered the envoy in cold blood, and probably all his suite. This offense, no less rank among savage than civilized peoples, called for the direst vengeance.⁶⁶

In an 1890 speech to the Connecticut Valley Historical Society, he claimed that this single event had also caused the Mohawk to seek vengeance against the Pennacook and Abenaki, “until blood enough had been shed to appease the manes of the murdered ambassador.”⁶⁷ In his 1895 book, *A History of Deerfield, Massachusetts*, Sheldon imagined the entire Pocumtuck homeland as a wasteland when the Dedham surveyors arrived. In his final version, “Their forts and dwellings had become ashes fertilizing the rank weeds over their sites, and sad silence brooded over their bleaching bones, or grass grown graves.”⁶⁸

Sheldon’s biased interpretations of Native history did not go unchallenged. Josiah Temple, his co-author for the *History of Northfield*, researched widely and felt the New York documents looked especially interesting, but Sheldon argued that there was no point in seeking evidence of local Indians outside of the valley. He felt that the Dutch and Mohawk testimony in the New York colonial documents could not be trusted, perhaps because they intimated English involvement in rupturing Pocumtuck/Mohawk diplomacy.⁶⁹ Historian Michael Batinski notes that Sheldon had one very outspoken public detractor, John Pratt, a political

rival who adopted the pseudonym “Pocumtuck” in his letters to the *Greenfield Gazette & Courier* newspaper. Batinski explains that:

Beginning in the summer of 1867, Pratt as “Pocumtuck” and Sheldon, signed simply “S,” exchanged attacks in the Greenfield newspaper. Reminding his readers that Sheldon had lived all his life on the site of an “Indian graveyard,” Pratt proposed that with “every whiff from his home lot,” Sheldon was becoming obsessed by antiquity.

Pratt raised uncomfortable facts, informing readers that Deerfield’s ministers had been slaveholders and that their town historian was a grave-robber. He styled Sheldon as a “dead bone disquisitor . . . so completely buried in antiquity that he now knows nothing else” and dismissed his historical collections as dust and debris. Pratt was a knowledgeable individual who published frequently in the newspaper, but he was a social outsider with no direct genealogical link to Deerfield’s founders. Sheldon’s status as a native son of Deerfield gave him more social clout, and his museum gave him the perfect forum to enshrine and promote his opinions.⁷⁰

Apart from his being a Deerfield descendant, it’s difficult to explain the intensity of Sheldon’s antipathies to Native Americans. Some of his writings on local history are clearly tailored as reactions to federal Indian policy and larger debates over the dissolution of tribal sovereignty in the post Civil War era. In examining Sheldon’s opinions on the “Indian Question,” historian Barry O’Connell notes the increasing influence of missionaries and social reformers in Sheldon’s time who were raising uneasy questions, “not only about Euro-Americans’ treatment of Indians in the past but also about what was being done in the late nineteenth century.”⁷¹ Sheldon apparently felt it necessary to choose sides by advocating for Indian removal. He used bloody examples from Deerfield’s history as a rhetorical device to paint the Pocumtuck Indians and, by extension, all Native people as inherently dangerous and untrustworthy. He clearly strove to retain his privileged position as an interlocutor of both Native and English history without being bothered by Indian sympathizers.

INDIANS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Despite his insistence on disappearance, Sheldon reluctantly acknowledged the continued presence of Pocumtuck Indians in the valley

after the Mohawk attack. As subjects of the state of Massachusetts, he said, they had bartered their freedom for protection among the English:

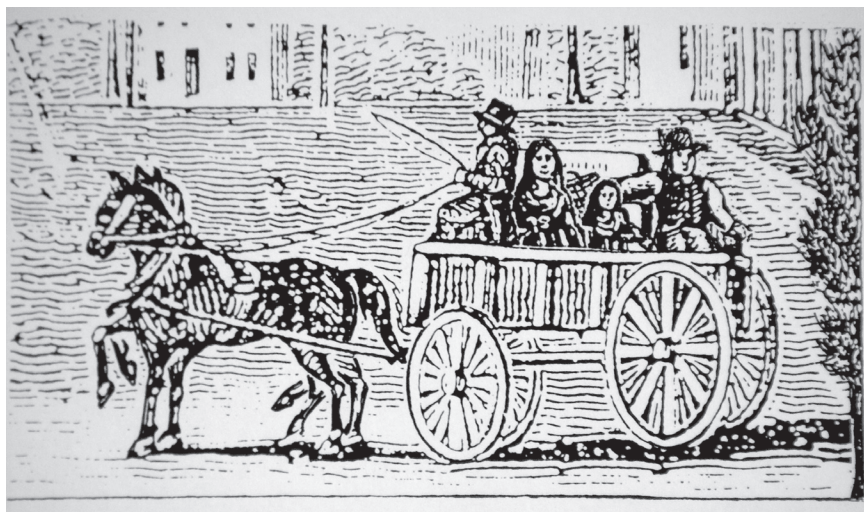
Here they lived a vagabond life, eking out, as they could, a miserable existence on the outskirts of civilization . . . they could neither hunt nor fish in their old haunts, nor anywhere near the towns. So hampered, their stock of venison or beaver, with which to trade for English comforts, was small, and the baskets and birch brooms made by the squaws, ill supplied their place.⁷²

The discourse of wandering, displaced Indians eking out a living on the edges of English towns reflected a social reality that was not limited to the Connecticut River valley. By the late 1700s, some Native American people in New England had adopted relatively fixed and sedentary agricultural practices on settled homesteads, but many others chose to circulate, practicing itinerant basketry, hunting, fishing, and herbal medicine for trade with their white neighbors. At mid-century, John Milton Earle, Massachusetts commissioner of Indian Affairs, complained that these migratory Native families appeared to be, “scattered in various parts of the state,” with “no organization, no central point, no records, and no common bond of union.” Regional town historians equated marginality with homelessness, but for many Native people, itinerant lifeways were both a strategic choice and a social necessity. Traveling afforded them access to freely available natural resources and enabled them to maintain contact among geographically distant relatives.⁷³

George Sheldon wrote as though he had no contact whatsoever with living Indians, but when he was in his early twenties, he witnessed the arrival of twenty-five Abenaki Indians who traveled from Odanak to Deerfield for an extended visit. Some of the Indians who came in August of 1837 were known from earlier visits; others were visiting Deerfield for the first time. A reporter for the *Greenfield Gazette & Mercury* described them as “comfortably well off for Indians, having several horses and wagons, and a goodly supply of blankets and buffalo robes. They are of the St. Francis tribe in Canada.” He noted, “They are very hospitably treated by the Deerfield people. We understand they will return to their homes, from which they have been absent nearly a year, by the way of Albany.”⁷⁴ The town’s minister, Reverend John Fessenden, reported:

During their sojourn with us . . . partly no doubt on account of the rarity of any of the descendants of this race of people in our vicinity at the present day, their encampment was frequented by great numbers of persons, almost denying them time to take ordinary meals, but affording them, as if to make amends for such inconvenience and privation, a ready sale for their fabrics [baskets].⁷⁵

This visit was vividly recalled in part because these particular Indians had a familial relationship with some of the white citizens of Deerfield. The eldest woman among them (recalled as “Eunice of Williamsecook”) was of mixed ancestry, being the granddaughter of Eunice Williams, a white captive taken from Deerfield in the French and Indian raid of 1704. Eunice of Williamsecook was accompanied by her granddaughter Marie Eunice Agent and Marie’s husband, Indian Doctor Louis Otondosonne Watso (c. 1778-1885). Marie and Louis’ son Jean (John) Baptiste Watso came in company with his pregnant wife Marguerite (Margaret) Obomsawin, and Louis’ daughter Marie Saraphine (Sophie) Watso Denis-Paul brought her young son Ambroise Denis-Paul. The names of the other visitors are less



19th Century Indian Visitors

Drawing inspired by illustrations in John Warner Barber’s *History and Antiquities of Every Town in Massachusetts*, 1848. Art by Margaret Bruchac.

clear in local memory. These individuals, like so many other northeastern Native people during the early 1800s, traced their lineage to several tribal origins, including the Mohawk village of Kahnawake and the Abenaki village of Saint Francis. Among the many other Connecticut River valley families living at Saint Francis were the descendants of Pinewanse and Wallenas, signatories to the 1735 Sokoki and Pocumtuck deeds. These families expressed an intimate (and ancient) familiarity with the rivers and trails of the valley they had reluctantly left.⁷⁶

In 1837 Epaphrus Hoyt met with the Abenaki visitors, as did doctor Stephen West Williams, who encouraged Louis Watso to share his knowledge of indigenous medicine. Williams used this knowledge to compile an herbarium of specimens and cited Watso in a publication on medical botany, but he also complained of Watso's impact on his medical practice, noting: "Within a year or two I have seen hundreds of my fellow citizens chasing after a part of a tribe of Indians who came here . . . for the cure of their diseases."⁷⁷ Reverend Fessenden drew a direct line to Pocumtuck history when he dedicated a special sermon to these Indians. He recalled the bloody warfare of the past but implored his audience to rejoice in the present friendly relations with Natives who had clearly "buried the hatchet." He took this peaceful visit to be a "remarkable illustration of the truth declared in our text, by which the blood of two races so distinct and unlike, and once so hostile and irreconcilable, has been blended together."⁷⁸

The timing of this visit was rather fortuitous for the publisher of the *Greenfield Gazette & Mercury* newspaper, since it excited interest in a new publication, *The Memoir of Rev. John Williams*, being reprinted (for the sixth time) with a new addendum by Stephen West Williams. The book was praised as an inspirational and heroic narrative:

In the present age when masculine virtues seem to be giving way to what is called refinement of manners and intellect, we are in danger of losing sight of the heroism of human nature which so eminently sustained our forefathers, when the wily Indian lurked behind every bush—the war whoop was heard from the surrounding forest and the settlers were exposed to sudden incursions of the savages at every step. To remind us of these scenes and awaken reminiscences in the old, and to excite inquiries in the rising generations, is the design of Dr. Williams' Book.⁷⁹

This comparison of the fearful and “wily Indian” of history with the peaceful Native visitors who camped on the town common must have been confusing. When this Abenaki family group traveled to Northampton in 1838, a writer there complained that they were but “a wretched remnant,” bearing little resemblance to the former “noble and proud Red men” of history, “whose stealthy tread and uplifted tomohawk, carried death to hearts terrified by their appalling war-cry.”⁸⁰

The Indian visitors to Deerfield were not, by any means, the only survivors of the Pocumtuck, Nonotuck, Sokoki, Woronoco, and other indigenous inhabitants of the middle Connecticut River valley. The Watso family, for example, kept a home address at the Abenaki reserve of Saint Francis, but they traced ancestral lines from Woronoco, Sokoki, and Pennacook families as well. They were intermarried with the lineal descendants of the Brookfield sachem Shattoockquis/Sadochques, who now carried a surname that had morphed into Mesadoques and Sadoques. The names of many prominent Native individuals from the contact era had been similarly transformed into family surnames when these individuals and their kin moved into Abenaki and Mohawk enclaves during the 1700s. The Pocumtuck had historically had close social and political relations with Nonotuck, Sokoki, Pennacook, Abenaki, and Mohawk people, and these complex tribal relations naturally did not produce a single linear chain of descent.⁸¹

In all of his voluminous publications and speeches, George Sheldon rarely discussed any living Indians. As mentioned, his two-volume, 924-page *A History of Deerfield, Massachusetts* was replete with detailed recountings of the Indian wars and included nearly four hundred pages of genealogical data on the white residents of Deerfield, but it contained no genealogical data about Indians whatsoever. Buried in a short paragraph about Rev. John Fessenden’s career as a minister, Sheldon mentioned, “In 1835 [sic] he preached a sermon before a party of Indians from Canada . . . This sermon was published.”⁸² Sheldon’s sole mention of his own encounters with living Indians offered no names or details, and he even provided the wrong date.

Colonial conflicts may have continued to stir Deerfield memories, but the Native people who visited Deerfield expressed no desire to reawaken memories of past bloodshed. In later years, they recalled that they greatly enjoyed their travels through the valley, camping wherever they pleased and visiting relatives in far-flung locales. In 1922, a few years after Sheldon’s death, Louis Watso’s great-granddaughter Elizabeth Sadoques, who was then living in Keene, New Hampshire, was invited to Deerfield to speak at

Memorial Hall. She told the audience that her parents, Israel Sadoques and Mary Watso, had left Odanak and traveled down the Connecticut River to return to their original homeland; they retained vivid family memories of their connections to the valley. Deerfield historians characterized her account as a “rare addition to the early history of Massachusetts.” Sharing “a tradition that has existed in my family for two centuries,” and promising to “tell it exactly as mother tells it and which was told her by her mother,” Sadoques described Eunice of Williamsecook’s 1837 visit to Deerfield and the very warm welcome she and her family enjoyed:

She was treated nicely, and was shown the door full of nails, and was told that the deep marks were made by an Indian’s hatchet, on that memorable night of the battle . . . While camping at Williamsecook, the various families made small baskets of ash and many of these were sold to the people there. They also served corn to visitors who so desired it.⁸³

Native American descendants of Connecticut River valley Indians continued to visit over subsequent generations, enjoying close, personal encounters with Deerfield’s townspeople. Yet, George Sheldon left these stories out of his history. Perhaps he reasoned that a Pocumtuck Indian, having left the confines of Deerfield, was no longer a Pocumtuck. Perhaps he set kinship limits on Indian descent and was unwilling to consider a member of any other tribal group as having any possible Pocumtuck ancestry. By positing this claim, Sheldon may have hoped to divert others from considering evidence to the contrary. Few people had access to primary documents at the time, and the papers that Sheldon found in the state archives and in the attics of Deerfield’s citizens did not always match his preferred renditions of vanished Indians.⁸⁴

EXHIBITING AND RE-COLONIZING THE POCUMTUCK

The Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association was established in 1870 as a means to preserve “memorials, books, papers and relics” that would “illustrate and perpetuate the history of the early settlers, and of the race which vanished before them.” The founders, including George Sheldon, used Deerfield Academy’s original building as a location for Memorial Hall Museum, which opened in 1880. Although Sheldon promoted Memorial Hall Museum as a place where Pocumtuck and English history would intersect, there was no space dedicated to living Indians; there

was only room for the dead.⁸⁵ Just as European museums of the classical age had assembled, “confiscations from tyrants and the trophies of war” to articulate “a new regime of truth,” so Memorial Hall housed deeds, tomahawks, skeletons, and other icons that signified Deerfield’s victories over the original inhabitants.⁸⁶

Chief among those icons was the “Indian House” door, the sole surviving architectural remnants of the “Indian House,” a Sheldon family garrison dwelling that had temporarily sheltered some of Deerfield’s residents during the attack on the night of February 29, 1704. The dismantling of this historic house, an event that spurred the founding of the “Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities,” inspired George Sheldon to rescue Deerfield’s past. He started by purchasing the old Indian House door, which manifested, in his memory, as a boundary marker:

Here, Indian and English history unite. On its gashed face may be read an epitome of the bloody wars of England and France, —religious wars, and wars of conquest, projected into the New World Colonies. In all New England there is not preserved in any historical collection to-day any single relic that can compare with this old battered Door. There is nothing so realistic, nothing that brings us in such close touch with the horrors of Indian warfare, which terrorized and desolated the English settlements, as this old tale-telling, hatchet-hewn door.⁸⁷

Sheldon was not overstating the mnemonic power of that particular icon, since many Deerfield residents held the door in similar regard. Near the door, a wall of marble plaques commemorated the people captured or killed during the 1704 raid. These installations depicted a divide between “the pioneers of this valley” as people of “courage and energy, faith and fortitude,” and “the savage” who had to be expelled before civilization could manifest itself.⁸⁸

Sheldon also eagerly pursued amateur excavations of the Pocumtuck dead.⁸⁹ Dozens of Native burial sites, wigwam circles, old planting fields, former storage pits, and even the Pocumtuck fort site, were located within the bounds of the town of Deerfield. Epaphrus Hoyt identified the Pocumtuck fort site atop the Pocumtuck Range as a locale where “a great variety of rude Indian implements, as well as bones, have there been found.”⁹⁰ Skeletal remains had also been found at Bars Long Hill, at John Broughton’s Hill, and at “an Indian burying place west of the ‘Old Street

burying ground.” Sheldon saw these physical remains as material proof of Indian extinction:

In connection with the indications of abode . . . fragments of weapons and utensils can always be found. With these proofs about him the close observer can say with confidence, here dwelt the red man; here stood his fort, here lay his cornfield, and standing on a selected spot he can add, underneath my feet lie his mouldering remains.⁹¹

Between 1860 and 1867, Sheldon unearthed the skeletal remains of at least twenty Pocumtuck individuals from his home lot in the center of Deerfield. Some were sent to Edward Hitchcock Jr. of Amherst College for curation and anthropometric study.⁹²

In an 1886 essay for the *Greenfield Gazette & Courier* titled “Relics of the Departed Race,” Sheldon described some of his finds. Although he viewed Native human remains as abandoned relics, it is notable that these burial sites were not haphazard; they illustrated the kinds of careful interments done by living relatives. In addition, they clearly dated no earlier than the 1600s, since the personal adornments and funerary possessions included a mix of Native and non-Native goods, from shell wampum to glass trade beads:

In one grave there was found what appeared to be the remains of a basket . . . In another, that of a child, was a stone figure, about four inches long, perhaps representing a fish or serpent . . . A grave discovered in 1866, in which the skeleton was well preserved, was rich in relics. There was a vessel of burnt clay, rudely ornamented . . . There were also shell pendants for the ears, thin disks of shell about one inch in diameter perforated through the center, and some fifty pieces of white peag or wampum. Other articles, evidently procured from the whites, were about five hundred small glass beads, red, white, and green . . . A bodkin or awl of bone was also found.⁹³

Sheldon expressed no concern for the sentimental or ritual significance of these burials. Instead, funerary possessions were scattered into public and private collections. Only a few representative relics (e.g., an “Amulet from an Indian Child’s Grave in home lot of donor”) made their way into

Memorial Hall Museum, to be displayed along with the excavated skeletal remains.⁹⁴

Along with Josiah Temple, Sheldon also sought out “underground barns” (maize storage pits) and other sites to excavate. On one junket, his amateur efforts utterly destroyed the physical evidence of thirty-three such sites located at Peskeompskut alone, each containing “acorn shells, fragments of wood, bark, and broken stone.”⁹⁵ Judging from the fragmentary records that survive, he threw away much of what he uncovered, and simply pulled bones and artifacts out of the ground at random. In his *History*, he noted, “Hardly a year passes without the discovery of isolated graves.”⁹⁶ This unscientific approach to archaeology was not, of course, unusual for the time when collectors and historians were pursuing antiquarian excavations around the country. However, whereas Euro-American graveyards in Deerfield and elsewhere in the valley were considered to be sacred and inviolable heritage sites, Native graveyards enjoyed no such protection.⁹⁷ Native skeletal remains from Nonotuck, Pocumtuck, and Sokoki sites were placed on display in libraries, museums, and physical anthropology laboratories. In Deerfield, these displays took on additional significance by conceptually locating Native peoples inescapably in the past.

Indian presence in Memorial Hall was, as a result, obscure, represented by a massive collection of aesthetically arranged prehistoric stone tools, an assortment of skeletal fragments, broken pottery and beads, and dusty baskets. Isolated objects, like the bloody linen shirt from an Indian attack and a rusty gun, bespoke ancient violence. One case held the deed signed by the Pocumtuck sunksqua Mashalisk. Other cases held skeletal remains that Sheldon had unearthed from his family’s homesite. Native voices were silent, their historical agency invisible. The remains of deceased Pocumtuck people from the 1600s were displayed, not as somebody’s revered ancestors, but as ghoulishly inert public property. As Neal Salisbury has observed, the random arrangement of indigenous objects made their cultural context irrelevant, since “the overall effect was to render Indians as merely one category of white experience, denying them a meaningful history and a humanity of their own.”⁹⁸

Around 1910, Sheldon entered into correspondence with Warren K. Moorehead, then curator of the Phillips Academy Department of American Archaeology (later the Robert S. Peabody Museum), who requested a few stone specimens from Deerfield. Sheldon replied, with some indignation, that he could not part with a single stone since the Museum’s collections constituted “gifts to be sacredly preserved” in memory of Deerfield’s

white donors.⁹⁹ Moorehead also implored Sheldon for assistance in another cause, the plight of Native people living on reservations, writing:

The past two or three years I have been much interested in the welfare of the American Indian, and have, for the Interior Department, Washington, visited several reservations . . . We owe it to the American Indian to afford him full protection in his property rights. To this end the above organization, The Indian Rights Association has for thirty years stood for justice and a “square deal” . . . I bespeak for it your consideration and should be very glad to have you join the Association and thus aid us in the fight we are making to protect the Indian.¹⁰⁰

There is no record of Sheldon’s response to Moorehead’s request. Sheldon had, however, already addressed this very issue in his 1895 *A History of Deerfield, Massachusetts* when he noted that the “Indian Question” had become increasingly prominent, and that many were endeavoring “to arouse the people to a sense of its importance. Agents are being sent all over the land to enlist sympathy in behalf of the gentle savage.” Sheldon saw this as a barefaced attempt to ignore or apologize for the “deviltries” perpetrated by Indians. Sheldon knew of the debates surrounding Native rights, treaties, land entitlements, reservations, boarding schools, and citizenship, and in his *History*, he had informed his readers:

This is not a new subject. To our ancestors for several generations the “Indian Question” was the great question of their lives. To its importance they were fully alive, —that is, if they were left alive at all. It needed no member of Congress to arouse the people. The Indians themselves did that most effectually, and the enlistment was not of sympathy for the marauding savage, but of soldiers to succor the scattered settlers and to protect, so far as possible, their wives and children from the butcheries of the inhuman barbarians.¹⁰¹

How then, should we read Sheldon? His biases seem obvious, but do we not all generate opinions that are products of our times and circumstances? I suggest that, through his museum and publications, George Sheldon’s goal was to deny the Connecticut River valley’s Indians any hope of a future. His disappearing act was, in essence, a methodology of erasure, a perfect example of re-colonizing. He reiterated his positions at every

opportunity, lest any sympathy for the “savages” might inadvertently disrupt the region’s patriotic memory. Whereas some nineteenth-century writers evoked nostalgia about the nobility of the savages of the past, Sheldon evoked only doom, thereby denying the Pocumtuck both past nobility and future descendants.¹⁰²

RECONSIDERING POCUMTUCK PRESENCE

Over the past few decades, the combined efforts of a number of scholars have brought to the fore more culturally accurate and politically nuanced perspectives on colonial encounters in the Pocumtuck homeland. Archaeologists from the University of Massachusetts and other regional institutions have embraced critical archaeologies that have addressed the Pocumtuck past in a more holistic manner by incorporating Native



Sadoques Family (Abenaki Indians)

Elizabeth Sadoques’ daughter Claudia Mason Chicklas (seated), and granddaughters Joyce Heywood, Lynne Murphy, and Margaret Perillo (middle three in back), among others, reenact their ancestors’ 1837 visit to Deerfield at the “Beyond 1704: Living History in Deerfield” event in 2004. Photo by Margaret Bruchac.

voices, archaeologies of place, and public engagement. Historians and archaeologists have become better attuned to social contingencies and to the consequences of imperfectly scripting the histories of indigenous people. Native American descendants from Kahnawake, Saint Francis, and other Native communities around the Northeast have been warmly welcomed to participate in events, to archive family memories, and to fully engage in reconstructing missing histories. Sheldon's legacy museum, the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, in cooperation with Historic Deerfield, joined enthusiastically in this effort, and the results include new museum exhibitions, walking tours, and the award-winning website *Raid on Deerfield: The Many Stories of 1704*.¹⁰³

Despite the success of this multicultural approach to history, antiquarian stories of the type scripted by Sheldon and his contemporaries have remained remarkably durable and popular. The discourse of colonization and re-colonization is not, of course, limited to Deerfield. Historians and indigenous people might choose to argue at length about whether we are now living in the "colonial" or "post-colonial" world, but we cannot fully escape the biases inherent in the narration of history. Textual erasures and material misrepresentations have proven to be remarkably effective strategies for obscuring the linkages that connect modern indigenous communities to their pre-colonial past. Re-colonizing is not just an antiquarian pursuit; it can be found in state-produced documents that limit indigenous sovereignty and human rights. Perhaps most ironically, the relative density or scarcity of documentary evidence still shapes our understandings of indigenous populations: the absence of evidence is routinely interpreted as "evidence" of "absence."¹⁰⁴

George Sheldon, I believe, willfully misrepresented the dense documentation of Pocumtuck and Nonotuck strategy and resistance. He ignored the flexibility of Algonkian Indian identity and failed to recognize that a shift in residence did not automatically erase indigenous ancestry. During the 1600s, as they had for millennia, Native people living in the middle Connecticut River valley employed seasonal travels, fluid kinship networks, and flexible alliances. These activities both confused and transgressed colonial social and political boundaries. The absorption of Pocumtuck people into the Schaghticoke and Abenaki populations was not a mysterious diaspora to a foreign country; people simply followed familiar paths to live among their cousins and allies.¹⁰⁵ The indigenous strategies that enabled survival under the pressure of colonial settlement persisted into the nineteenth century, often in full view, if not in full understanding, of Euro-American observers.¹⁰⁶ Native families retained

more than just ancient memories of long-past homelands; they visited and revisited those homelands over the generations. Suffice to say, Sheldon missed a very simple point. Perhaps there were no Pocumtuck Indians among his neighbors, but there were Pocumtuck kin living within reach of the Pocumtuck Range, whether he chose to recognize them as such or not. Their histories matter.



Notes

¹ David Pulsifer, ed., *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England, Vol. II, Acts of the Commissioners of the United Colonies of New England* (Boston, MA: William White, 1859), 236-237.

² George Sheldon, *A History of Deerfield, Massachusetts*, vol.1 (Deerfield, MA: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 1982): 672.

³ Although “Native American” is commonly used as a generic term to refer to the indigenous peoples of the Americas, I use the terms “Native” and “Indian” in this article to better correspond to the language in colonial documents. The term “indigenous” is also used as a broad term of reference.

⁴ The term white, for the purposes of this article, refers broadly to those colonial settlers who originated in England, France, and the Netherlands and settled parts of the American Northeast during the 1600s.

⁵ Parts of this article are drawn from and expand upon my dissertation research. See Margaret M. Bruchac, “Historical Erasure and Cultural Recovery: Indigenous People in the Connecticut River Valley,” PhD diss., University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 2007.

⁶ On historical nostalgia, staging, and invention in general, see Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1992); David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1986). For a local example, see Angela Goebel Bain, “Historical Pageantry in Old Deerfield: 1910, 1913, 1916,” in *New England Celebrates: Spectacle, Commemoration, and Festivity*, ed. Peter Benes (Boston, MA: Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife and Boston University, 2002), 120-136.

⁷ Alison Wylie, “Making Alternative Histories: Epistemic Disunity and Political Integrity,” in *Making Alternative Histories: The Practice of Archaeology and History in Non-Western Settings*, ed. Peter R. Schmidt and Thomas C. Patterson

(Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1995), 255-272.

⁸ Eurocentric bias in American history is explored by Donald Fixico, "Ethics and Responsibilities in Writing American Indian History," in *Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing About American Indians*, ed. Devon A. Mihesuah (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), and by Jean O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), xiii.

⁹ Elihu Hoyt, *A Brief Sketch of the First Settlement of Deerfield, Mass* (Greenfield, MA: James P. Fogg, 1833); Epaphrus Hoyt, *Antiquarian Researches or Indian Wars* (Greenfield, MA: Ansel Phelps, 1824); and Josiah Gilbert Holland, *History of Western Massachusetts* (Springfield, MA: Samuel Bowles and Co., 1855). Also see Michael C. Batinski, *Pastkeepers in a Small Place: Five Centuries in Deerfield, Massachusetts* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006). Quote is from Stephen West Williams, *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion* (Northampton, MA: Hopkins, Bridgman and Company, 1853), 95.

¹⁰ Sheldon, *A History of Deerfield*, 672.

¹¹ Emma Lewis Coleman, *A Historic and Present Day Guide to Old Deerfield* (Norwood, MA: Plimpton Press, 1907), 31; Jennie Marie Sheldon, "Deerfield Memorial Stones," *History and Proceedings of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association* (1905), vol. IV, 242-250.

¹² Sheldon, *A History of Deerfield*, 70.

¹³ For a summary of extant sources that belie the "conventional wisdom" of Pocumtuck disappearance, see Claire C. Carlson, "Native American Presences in Deerfield, Massachusetts: An Essay and Resource Guide" (manuscript on file at Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, 1997). On the recounting of Deerfield's history, see Robert Paynter, "Time in the Valley: Narratives About Rural New England," *Current Anthropology* 43 (August 2002):S85-S101.

¹⁴ For archaeological summaries, see Michael Connolly, *Historic and Archaeological Resources of the Connecticut Valley* (Boston, MA: Massachusetts Historical Commission 1984, 25-27). For translations of Native place names, see John C. Huden, *Indian Place Names of New England* (New York: Heye Foundation/Museum of the American Indian, 1962), 178, 242, 354; Joseph Laurent, *New Familiar Abenakis & English Dialogues* (Quebec, Canada: Leger Brousseau, 1884), 209; and Edwin Benedict letter to C. Alice Baker, February 17, 1890, Indian – Miscellaneous Archives, Memorial Libraries, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association.

¹⁵ On Native homelands, see Lisa T. Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 17. On Native networks, see Peter A. Thomas, *In the Maelstrom of Change: The Indian Trade and Cultural Process in the Middle Connecticut River Valley, 1635-1665* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1979), 5.

¹⁶ Place name translations in Huden, *Indian Place Names*, 19, 150, 189, 236, 295, 354; and Harry Andrew Wright, *Indian Deeds of Hampden County* (Springfield,

Massachusetts: Harry A. Wright, 1905), 13, 28-29, 43, 150-51.

¹⁷ Thomas, *In the Maelstrom of Change*, 5; and Temple, *History of Brookfield*, 39.

¹⁸ For a more complete discussion of Pocumtuck influence, see Thomas, *In the Maelstrom of Change*, chapters II, IV, and V. See also Peter Thomas and Margaret Bruchac, "Searching for the Pocumtuck Fort," draft manuscript March 8, 2005. The Pynchon trade records are excerpted in Carl Bridenbaugh, *The Pynchon Papers, Volume I, Letters of John Pynchon, 1654-1700* (Boston, MA: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1982); and Carl Bridenbaugh and Juliette Tomlinson, *The Pynchon Papers, Volume II, Selections from the Account Books of John Pynchon, 1651-1697* (Boston, MA: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1985). Other correspondence concerning the Pocumtuck can be found in David Pulsifer, *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England, Vol. II, Acts of the Commissioners of the United Colonies of New England* (Boston, MA: William White, 1859); and scattered through Edward B. O'Callaghan, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York; Procured in Holland, England and France by John R. Brodhead*, 15 Volumes (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1853-1887).

¹⁹ See William M. Beauchamp, "Wampum and Shell Articles Used by the New York Indian," *Bulletin of the New York State Museum* 8:41 (1901), 327-440; and Ray Fadden Tehanetorens, *Wampum Belts of the Iroquois* (Summertown, TN: Book Publishing Company, 1999).

²⁰ Peter A. Thomas, "Bridging the Cultural Gap: Indian/White Relations," in *Early Settlement in the Connecticut Valley*, ed. Stephen C. Innes, Richard I. Melvoin, and Peter A. Thomas (Westfield, MA: Historic Deerfield, Inc., Institute for Massachusetts Studies and Westfield State College, 1984), 4-21. On archaeological evidence of corn storage at Pine Hill, see Elizabeth S. Chilton, Tonya Baroody Largy, and Kathryn Curran, "Evidence for Prehistoric Maize Horticulture at the Pine Hill Site, Deerfield, Massachusetts." *Northeast Anthropology* 59:23-46. On the corn trade, see Mason A. Green, *Springfield 1636-1886 History of Town and City* (Springfield, MA: C.A. Nichols and Company, 1888), 25-27.

²¹ George Sheldon, "The Pocumtuck Confederacy," in *Papers and Proceedings of the Connecticut Valley Historical Society 1882-1903* (Springfield, MA: Connecticut Valley Historical Society, 1904), 84.

²² William Pynchon letter to Governor John Winthrop, May 5, 1648, in Temple, *History of North Brookfield, Massachusetts* (Boston, MA: Town of North Brookfield, 1887), 37-38.

²³ For Stanton's report, see Records of the United Colonies of New England in *Historical Collections, Consisting of State Papers, and Other Authentic Documents, Intended for Materials for America*, ed. Ebenezer Hazard (Freeport, New York: The Books for Libraries Press, 1969), 105-106. For Stanton's warning, see John Mason letter to John Winthrop Jr., September 4, 1648, in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, 4th Series, no. VII (Boston, MA: Massachusetts

Historical Society, 1865), 413-414.

²⁴ John Pynchon to John Winthrop Jr. May 22, 1658, in Bridenbaugh, *The Pynchon Papers*, Volume I, 25.

²⁵ Acts of the Commissioners of the United Colonies, September 18, 1658, in Pulsifer, *Records of the Colony*, 208, 211.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 214, 221-222

²⁷ Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed. *The Records of the Governor and Company of Massachusetts Bay in New England*, vol. V (Boston, MA: William White, 1853-1854), 436.

²⁸ Pulsifer, *Records of the Colony*, 236-237.

²⁹ Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies were invited to join this alliance, but they refused. Father Gabriel Druillettes, "Narrative of the Journey made in behalf of the Mission of the Abnaquois," in *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France 1610—1791*, vol. XXXVI ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland, OH: The Burrows Brothers Company 1898), 81-111.

³⁰ See Wright, *Indian Deeds*, 26-28, 40-42, 48-49, 51-53, 63-64, 76-77, 80-81, 120-121.

³¹ Wright, *Indian Deeds*, 34, 38.

³² On Pocumtuck-Mohawk relations, see Fernow, 380-382. On September 24, 1664, a new agreement was arranged by Deputy Governor Richard Nicholls with the Mohawk, Seneca, and Mohican that specified assistance against Pocumtuck hostilities. See O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. III, 67-68.

³³ John Winthrop Jr. letter to Roger Williams, February 6, 1665, in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. VI (Boston, MA: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1882), 531-532.

³⁴ John Winthrop Jr. letter to Richard Nicolls, July 11, 1665, in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* vol. VIII (Boston, MA: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1882), 97-99. For Cajadago's testimony, see O'Callaghan, *Documents*, vol. 13, 389-390.

³⁵ Dedham Town Records 4:103 in Melvoin, *New England Outpost*, 51-52.

³⁶ The original deed is preserved in the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Collections. See transcription in Wright, *Indian Deeds*, 61-62.

³⁷ Many of these sites were still clearly visible in George Sheldon's time. An illustration of this land plot is reprinted in Sheldon, *History of Deerfield*, I, 4-5. Also see Carlson, "Native American Presences," 1.

³⁸ This sachem's name was variously spelled, phonetically, as Shattookquis, Sadochquis, and Sadoques. The original deed is in the Hampden County Records, in Springfield, Massachusetts, Liber A, Folio 18. See Wright, *Indian Deeds*, 59. John Mason notified the United Colonies of Onapequin's relations to Quaboag in a letter dated September 1661, in Pulsifer, *Records of the Colony*, 269.

³⁹ See Wright, *Indian Deeds*, 65-66, 67-68, 74-75, and 86-87. On the lack of any deed for Peskeompskut, see Thomas, *In the Maelstrom of Change*, 16.

⁴⁰ For an historical overview of the Deerfield colony, see Richard Melvoin, *New England Outpost: War and Society in Colonial Deerfield* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989). Also see Erik Mason, “The Pocumtuck Diaspora” (manuscript of Historic Deerfield Summer Fellowship Paper, on file at Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, 1992).

⁴¹ Pynchon in Bridenbaugh, *The Pynchon Papers*, vol. I, 150.

⁴² Melvoin, *New England Outpost*, and Sheldon, *History of Deerfield*.

⁴³ Some writers have confused the Schaghticoke Indians in New York (a refugee village formed in 1676) with the Schaghticoke Tribe in Connecticut (formed around the 1630s), but these were separate villages with separate tribal identities and populations. For Andros’ invitation, see New York Council on Indian Affairs report for May 29-30, 1767, in Berthold Fernow, ed., “Documents Relative to the History and Settlements of the Towns along the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers” in *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, vol. XIII (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1881), 497.

⁴⁴ Louis H. Everts, ed. *History of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincot & Company, 1879), 61. Also see James Spady, “As If in a Great Darkness: Native American Refugees of the Middle Connecticut River Valley in the Aftermath of King Philip’s War,” *Historical Journal of Massachusetts*, 23:2 (1995), 183-197.

⁴⁵ On Shattoockquis/Sadoques, see Day, *Identity of the St. Francis Indians*, 86.

⁴⁶ North Indians to the Governor of Albany July 1, 1685, in Lawrence H. Leder, *The Livingston Indian Records 1666-1723* (Gettysburg, PA, Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1956), 77. Robert Livingston’s reply of July 2, 1685, is in Leder, *The Livingston Indian Records*, 79.

⁴⁷ John Pynchon letter to Massachusetts Governor Simon Bradstreet, December 2, 1691, in Bridenbaugh, *The Pynchon Papers*, 236-245.

⁴⁸ Bridenbaugh, *The Pynchon Papers*, 305-307.

⁴⁹ *The Acts and Resolves of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay* (Boston, MA, 1869-1922), Vol. I, 175-176, 530, 558, 594; Vol. II, 259. By 1757, the bounty in present-day Maine (then part of Massachusetts) was raised to 300 pounds per scalp. See James Phinney Baxter, ed. *The Documentary History of the State of Maine*, vol. 24 (Portland: LeFavor-Tower, 1916), 83. On Pynchon’s interpretation of this, see Sheldon, *History of Deerfield*, 253.

⁵⁰ Gordon Day, *The Mots Loups of Father Mathevet* (Ottawa, Canada: National Museum of Canada, Publications in Ethnology No. 8, 1975). Soquans’ statement, from a 1702 conference between the Governor of New York and the Schaghticoke, is in Fernow, *Documents Relating to the Colonial History*, vol. IV, 991. On the population of Odanak, see Gordon Day, *The Identity of the Saint Francis Indians* (Ottawa, Canada: National Museums of Canada, Mercury Series Paper No. 71, 1981). On new tribal relations, see Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, “Revisiting the Redeemed Captive: New Perspectives on the 1704 Attack on Deerfield,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd Series 52:1, 45.

⁵¹ For explorations of the 1704 event from multiple perspectives, see Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, *Captors and Captives: The 1704 French and Indian Raid on Deerfield* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003); and Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, eds., *Captive Histories: Captivity Narratives, French Relations and Native Stories of the 1704 Deerfield Raid* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006).

⁵² For a description of the proceedings of this conference, see John Wainwright, *At a Conference Held at Deerfield in the County of Hampshire* (Boston, MA: Publisher unknown, 1735), microfilm manuscript 3916 in the collections of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA. Also see George Sheldon, ed. *The Conference at Deerfield, Mass., August 27-31, 1735, between Gov. Belcher and Several Tribes of Western Indians* (Boston, MA: Press of David Clapp & Son, 1906). Sheldon's interpretation of this text, however, contains serious errors in tribal identification, notably failing to recognize the Schaghticoke Indians' tribal identities. On truck houses, see Ronald O. McFarlane, "The Massachusetts Bay Truck House in Diplomacy with the Indians," *New England Quarterly* 11 (March 1938), 48-65. Letter from Massachusetts Governor Shirley to Duke of Newcastle, August 30, 1742, in *Collections of the Maine Historical Society*, 2nd series 11 (1908), 251.

⁵³ Wright, *Indian Deeds*, 121-133, 129. Testimony from Hampden County Records Liber H; Folio 406 is also in Wright, *Indian Deeds*, 132.

⁵⁴ For more discussion of the politics and protocols of this particular transaction, see Brooks, *The Common Pot*, 32-37.

⁵⁵ Day, *Identity of the Saint Francis Indians*.

⁵⁶ See Margaret Bruchac, "Founding Schaghticoke and Odanak," and "Schaghticoke and Points North: Wôbanaki Resistance and Persistence," in *Raid on Deerfield: The Many Stories of 1704*. Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association website, 2005, <http://www.1704.deerfield.history.museum/>.

⁵⁷ Batinski, *Pastkeepers*, 41.

⁵⁸ Harriet Martineau, *Society in America* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1837), 127; and Edward Everett, *An Address Delivered at Bloody Brook, in South Deerfield, September 30, 1835, in Commemoration of the Fall of the "Flower of Essex," at That Spot, in King Philip's War, September 18, 1675* (Boston, MA: Russell, Shattuck, & Williams, 1835), 7-8.

⁵⁹ Luther B. Lincoln, *Address delivered at South Deerfield, Aug 31, 1838 on the completion of the Bloody Brook Monument* (Greenfield, MA: Kneeland and Eastman, 1838), 6-16.

⁶⁰ George Sheldon, "The Pocumtuck Confederacy" in *History and Proceedings of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association 1880-1889* (Deerfield, MA: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 1898), 390-408.

⁶¹ George Sheldon in Daniel White Wells and Reuben Field Wells, *A History of Hatfield, Massachusetts* (Springfield, MA: F.C.H. Gibbons, 1910), 153.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Green, *Springfield 1636-1886*, 25-27; Sheldon, “The Pocumtuck Confederacy” (1904), 81.

⁶⁴ See John Endicott et al. 1658-1659, in Pulsifer, *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth*, 208, 213-215, 221-224, 236-237; Sheldon, *History of Deerfield*, 59-67

⁶⁵ George Sheldon, “The Pocumtuck Indians,” *Greenfield Gazette* (no date) 1886, Manuscript # 4759, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, Deerfield, MA, 11.

⁶⁶ Sheldon, “The Pocumtuck Confederacy” (1898), 404.

⁶⁷ Sheldon, “The Pocumtuck Confederacy” (1904), 99.

⁶⁸ Sheldon, *History of Deerfield*, 69-70. Hoyt, *Antiquarian Researches*, 78.

⁶⁹ The key documents recording this sequence of events are reprinted in Berthold Fernow, “Documents Relative to the History and Settlements of the Towns along the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers,” vol. XIII of *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York* (New York, 1881), 380-389.

⁷⁰ Batinski, *Pastkeepers*, 129-134.

⁷¹ Barry O’Connell, “Who Owns History and How Do We Decide?,” in *Native Peoples and Museums in the Connecticut River Valley—A Guide for Learning*, ed. Dorothy Krass and Barry O’Connell (Northampton, MA: Five College Public School Partnership Program and Historic Northampton, 1992), 29-33.

⁷² Sheldon, *History of Deerfield*, 71.

⁷³ Thomas Doughton, “Unseen Neighbors: Native Americans of Central Massachusetts, A People Who Had Vanished,” in *After King Philip’s War: Presence and Persistence in Indian New England*, ed. Colin G. Calloway (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1997), 207-230; John Milton Earle, *Report to the Governor and Council Concerning the Indians of the Commonwealth* (Boston, MA: William White, 1861), 8; Jean O’Brien, “Divorced from the Land: Resistance and Survival of Indian Women in Nineteenth-Century New England,” in ed. Colin G. Calloway (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1997), 145.

⁷⁴ *Greenfield Gazette and Mercury*, Greenfield, Massachusetts August 15, 1837, 7 (530).

⁷⁵ John Fessenden, *Sermon Preached to the First Congregational Society in Deerfield, Mass. and in the Hearing of Several Indians of Both Sexes Supposed to be Descendants of Eunice Williams, Daughter of Rev. John Williams, First Minister of Deerfield August 27, 1837*. (Deerfield, MA: Phelps and Ingersoll, 1837), 4.

⁷⁶ Margaret Bruchac, “Abenaki Connections to 1704: The Sadoques Families and Deerfield, 2004,” in *Captive Histories: Captivity Narratives, French Relations and Native Stories of the 1704 Deerfield Raid*, ed. Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 262-278. Also see Day, *Identity of the Saint Francis Indians*.

⁷⁷ Stephen West Williams Papers, Box 15, Folder 1, original letter in collections

of Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, Mass.

⁷⁸ Fessenden, *Sermon Preached in Deerfield*, 15.

⁷⁹ *Greenfield Gazette & Mercury*, August 1, 1837.

⁸⁰ *Northampton Courier*, Northampton, Massachusetts, June 6, 1838, IX (25).

⁸¹ Geographical and tribal origins of these names can be found in Day, *The Identity of the Saint Francis Indians*.

⁸² Sheldon, *History of Deerfield*, 804.

⁸³ Elizabeth M. Sadoques, "History and Traditions of Eunice Williams and her Descendants," in *History and Proceedings of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association 1921-1929*, vol. VII (Deerfield, MA: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 1929), 126-130.

⁸⁴ Sheldon salvaged documentation from Deerfield attics and storerooms, in addition to searching archives. A firsthand account of a 1677 raid led by the Pocumtuck sachem Ashpelon, for example, was discovered on a scrap of paper "rescued from a pile of rubbish" at Stephen West Williams' house. See Sheldon, *History of Deerfield*, 231.

⁸⁵ George Sheldon, *A Guide to the Museum of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association*, (Deerfield, MA: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 1908), 8.

⁸⁶ Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, "The Museum in the Disciplinary Society," in *Museum Studies in Material Culture*, ed. S. Pearce (London: Leicester University Press, 1991), 61-72.

⁸⁷ Sheldon, *A Guide to the Museum*, 11.

⁸⁸ From the text of the tablets in Memorial Hall 1882. Also see Neal Salisbury, "The Memorial and Indian Rooms, Memorial Hall, Deerfield," in *Native Peoples and Museums in the Connecticut River Valley - A Guide for Learning*, ed. Dorothy Krass and Barry O'Connell (Northampton, MA: Five College Public School Partnership Program and Historic Northampton, 1992), 38.

⁸⁹ It was common knowledge that Deerfield was an excellent place to collect Native remains; at least 117 indigenous sites are located within the bounds of the town. For example, see Carlson, "Native American Presences."

⁹⁰ Hoyt, *Antiquarian Researches*, 78.

⁹¹ Sheldon, *History of Deerfield*, 74-80.

⁹² Letters from Edward Hitchcock Jr. to George Sheldon, 1867, in Sheldon Papers Correspondence Box 9, Folder 6, Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, MA.

⁹³ Sheldon, *History of Deerfield*, 79.

⁹⁴ J. M. Arms Sheldon, *Catalogue of the Collection of Relics in Memorial Hall* (Deerfield, MA: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 1920).

⁹⁵ Sheldon, *History of Deerfield*, 71, 80.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ For example, see Robert E. Bieder, "The Representation of Indian Bodies in Nineteenth-Century American Anthropology," in *Repatriation Reader: Who Owns Native American Indian Remains*, ed. Devon A. Mihesuah (Lincoln and

London: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 19-36.

⁹⁸ Salisbury, "The Memorial and Indian Rooms," 35.

⁹⁹ Letter from Warren K. Moorehead to George Sheldon September 23, 1908, and Sheldon to Moorhead December 22, 1908, in Sheldon Papers Box 11 Folder 5, Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, MA.

¹⁰⁰ Moorehead to Sheldon March 10, 1911, in Sheldon Papers Box 11 Folder 5, Memorial Libraries, Deerfield, MA.

¹⁰¹ Sheldon, *History of Deerfield*, 672.

¹⁰² Roy Harvey Pearce, *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Press, 1988), 170.

¹⁰³ Carlson, "Native American Presences," 9-10. Arthur S. Keene and Elizabeth Chilton, "Toward an Archaeology of the Pocumtuck Homeland: Critical Archaeology and the UMass Archaeological Field School" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1995); Paynter, "Time in the Valley."

¹⁰⁴ For example, see Bruce Miller, *Invisible Indigenes: the Politics of Nonrecognition* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2003).

¹⁰⁵ Brooks, *The Common Pot*, 17.

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, Christopher Thee, "Massachusetts Nipmucs and the Long Shadow of John Milton Earle," *New England Quarterly* LXXIX no. 4 (December 2006): 636-654.