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THE
COMMON POT

The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast



Lisa Brooks

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Finally, my travels in Wabanaki over the years have grounded my writing, and I am grateful for those friends and relations who have invited me into their home territories and have tracked with me through our shared histories. This book is also theirs. Ultimately, my greatest hope is that the words contained herein can in some way contribute to the continuance of our land and to the ongoing regeneration in which every indigenous inhabitant of the North Country now seems to be engaged.

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Alnôbawôgan, Wlôgan, Awikhigan *Entering Native Space*

The Gaspeians do not know how to read nor how to write. They have, nevertheless, enough understanding and memory to learn how to do both if only they were willing to give the necessary application. But aside from the fickleness and instability of their minds, which they are willing to apply only in so far as it pleases them, they all have the false and ridiculous belief that they would not live long if they were as learned as the French....Some of these Indians, however, for whose instruction some trouble has been taken, have in a short time become philosophers and even pretty good theologians. But after all, they have ever remained savages....They have rendered themselves wholly unworthy by leaving their studies in order to dwell with their fellow-countrymen in the woods, where they have lived like very bad philosophers, preferring, on the basis of a foolish reasoning, the savage to the French life.

—CHRÉSTIEN LÉCLERCQ, *New Relation of Gaspesia*, Kespek, 1691

Alnôbawôgan: Defining Native Space

Buried within the vocabulary at the back of an obscure nineteenth-century "teaching" book is a word that defines an Algonquian conception

of nativity. According to Abenaki author Peter Paul Wzokhilain, *alnóba-wógan* means both "human nature" and "birth." It is translated literally as the activity of "being (or becoming) human." So it would seem that, in Wabanaki philosophy, the very nature of being human is rooted not in the consciousness of our mortality but in our nativity. The missionary Chrestien LeClercq observed that the Mi'kmaq "rejoice all in common on the birth of their children, even to making feasts, public speeches, and all kinds of rejoicings." As part of this celebration, LeClercq observed, the "Indians wash their children in the river as soon as they are born." When Algonquian or Haudenosaunee children were born, they entered into a network of relations: the marriages and kin relationships that connected people and the places they inhabited. These places were connected not only by relationships but by a network of waterways, which people traveled by canoe and footpath from the southeast coast to the northwest lakes (see Map 1).¹

In the traditional Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) creation story of Sky Woman, only a mass of water exists beneath the sky, and the water animals are its only inhabitants. When they see a woman falling from a hole in the Sky World, the animals gather in "council together. . . to devise a way to provide for her." Each animal dives to the bottom of the sea, grasping for mud. Each returns, gasping for air, empty-handed. Finally, muskrat, it is said, dives deep down into the water until he can go no farther, grasps a handful of earth in his paw, and rises to the surface. He gives up his life, but in his last breath, he releases the mud onto turtle's back. Geese fly up to catch Sky Woman in their wings, and, as they lay her on turtle's back, the woman releases a seed she had carried from the Sky World, and the earth is born.²

The story of Sky Woman emphasizes the primacy of water in the northeastern landscape. Sky Woman enters a world of water and water beings from within which the land emerges. The story suggests that the earth is neither solid nor constant, but exists only through the interrelated activity of its inhabitants. Moreover, the creation of the earth requires thought. The story emphasizes the resourceful intelligence of the water animals and of Sky Woman herself. The thinking that results in creation is cooperative, drawing on the insights and abilities of all members of the group to solve the problem at hand. As the newest arrival, Sky Woman becomes a participant rather than being portrayed as an outsider. Before falling through a hole in the Sky World, she reaches out to grab a seed from a tree, with the thought of earth in mind. When she arrives in the water world, she plants the seed, making her own contribution, as the



Map 1. The indigenous northeast: a network of waterways.

grandmother of all humans, to creation. Rather than being planted in a void by a divine male creator, the earth requires the conduit of a woman's body and mind.

Both the Abenaki word *alnóba-wógan* and the Haudenosaunee story of Sky Woman connect nativity to human emergence and the active state of transformation that birth implies. This framework provides a striking contrast to conventional constructions of Native "tradition" as static and inherently mortal while confirming the idea of tradition as an ongoing process, both cyclical and transformative. When Europeans arrived on the Algonquian coast, they entered into this Native space: a network of relations and waterways containing many different groups of people as well as animal, plant, and rock beings that was sustained through the constant transformative "being" of its inhabitants.

Wlógan: Defining the Common Pot

The conceptualization of a cooperative, interdependent Native environment emerges from within Native space as a prominent trope in the speeches and writings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, reflected in the metaphor of the "common pot." Although the concept was rooted in earlier traditions, Native writers evoked it more frequently as colonial control over Native lands increased.³ The common pot is that which feeds

life from these many beings and are indebted to them for their continuance. The ceremony invokes shared space, making the longhouse a microcosm of the world and reminding humans of their place in it.

Roger Williams observed the other side of the cyclical dish as it manifested itself among the Narragansetts in the seventeenth century: "Whoever commeth in when they are eating, they offer them to eat of that which they have, though but little enough prepared for themselves. If any provision of fish or flesh come in, they make their neighbors partakers with them."⁷ Inherent in the concept of the common pot is the idea that whatever was given from the larger network of inhabitants had to be shared within the human community. This ethic was not an altruistic ideal but a practice that was necessary to human survival. Sharing space meant sharing resources, and Algonquian and Haudenosaunee communities relied on equal distribution to ensure social stability and physical health. All inhabitants of the pot were fed from the pot and were part of the pot. Every part affected the whole. If one person went hungry, if certain individuals were excluded from the bounty of the dish, the whole would face physical and/or psychological repercussions from this rupture in the network of relations.

The common pot was invoked in daily life and in ceremony, as the missionary John Sergeant observed at a Mohican gathering in the eighteenth century:

After we had been there for some time, two Men, appointed for the Service, took a Deer down that hung up in the wigwam, which was to be offer'd, and laid the four quarters upon a bark in the Middle of the House, (the Rest sitting round very serious;) the Skin was taken off with the entire Head and Neck to the Shoulders; the four Quarters were laid one upon another, and the Skin, doubled length wise, was laid upon them, so as to make it look as much like a whole Deer as might be. When this was done, an elderly Man, appointed for that Purpose, stood up over it; and, with a pretty loud Voice, spake to the following purpose. "O great God pity us, grant us Food to eat, afford us good and comfortable sleep, preserve us from being devoured by the Fowls that fly in the Air. This Deer is given in Token that we acknowledge thee the Giver of all Things." . . . After these Ceremonies were ended, the two Men before mentioned, cut the Deer in Pieces and boil'd it; and when it was made ready, a piece was given to every one, of which they all eat, except he that offer'd it, (for he eats none of it) which is to signify it is a Gift, and therefore free, and he desires none of it back again. While they were

and nourishes. It is the wigwam that feeds the family, the village that feeds the community, the networks that sustain the village. Women are the creators of these vessels; all people come from them, and with their hands and minds they transform the bodies of their animal and plant relatives into nourishment for their families. The pot is made from the flesh of birch trees or the clay of the earth. It can carry or hold; it can be carried or reconstructed; it can withstand fire and water, and, in fact, it uses these elements to transform that which it contains. The pot is Sky Woman's body, the network of relations that must nourish and reproduce itself.

In the Abenaki language, the word for "dish" is *włógan*.⁴ This word has a direct linguistic relationship to the word for the river inter-
vales where Abenaki families flourished: *wólłanak*. These "hollowed-out places" were not empty spaces to be filled but deeply situated social and ecological environments. There is a certain poetic resonance between these words and the phrase that invokes "thanks to all our relations," *włidô-gawógan*. In the coincidental formation of letters, "all our relations" can be contained within the "dish."⁵ The land, *aki*, is a self-sustaining vessel, but it requires participation from all its interwoven inhabitants. When humans deliberate on their relationships to the other beings in their *wólłana*, their thoughts lead to more conscientious action within that environment. Every human community in the northeast has a way of thinking through their relationships to others, of forming and renewing relations through ceremonial councils, and of acknowledging their dependence on nonhuman inhabitants through rituals of thanksgiving.

For example, as Seneca scholar Arthur Parker explained, whenever the Haudenosaunee hold a Confederacy council, they open with the Thanksgiving Address, offering

thanks to the earth where men dwell, to the streams of water, the pools, the springs and the lakes, to the maize and the fruits, to the medicinal herbs and trees, to the forest trees for their usefulness, to the animals that serve as food and give their pelts for clothing, to the great winds and the lesser winds, to the Thunderers, to the Sun, the mighty warrior, to the moon, to the messengers of the Creator who reveal his wishes and to the Great Creator who dwells in the heavens above, who gives all the things useful to men, and who is the source and the ruler of health and life.⁶

The address calls the community to deliberate on the dish that sustains it. This opening encourages people to acknowledge that they draw their

eating, one of the Waiters gave the Skin with the Feet, and some of the Inwards, to an old Widow Woman, which is a Deed of Charity they always practice upon such Occasions.⁸

This Mohican ceremony enacted distribution of resources, equality between community members, and the interdependency inherent in the network of relations, but it also emphasized the role of human action in rebalancing a loss in the network. People had the right and the responsibility to give part of their share to another person, especially to one who had suffered a loss or was in need, but they did not have the right to take more for themselves than they required for subsistence. Leaders often established their status by giving away what they had acquired to other community members. The consequences of disrupting the distributive flow of energy could be dire. Numerous Abenaki stories tell of the disastrous effects of hoarding resources and acting on selfish impulse, while the Haudenosaunee creation story emphasizes the critical difference between participatory thinking and impulsive action. Any act, whether destructive or creative, reverberates in the network of relations. When the network falls out of balance, everything else must shift into action to create a new equilibrium. Here lay the central problem with European newcomers. As soon as Europeans settled on the coast, they became inhabitants in Native space. In the common pot, shared space means shared consequences and shared pain. The actions of the newcomers would affect the whole.⁹

The Jesuit priest Pierre Biard recorded one of the earliest criticisms of European behavior among the Mi'kmaq of the northeast coast. According to the missionary, "They consider themselves better than the French traders and fishermen; 'For,' they say, 'you never cease fighting and quarreling amongst yourselves; as for ourselves, we live in peace; you are envious of each other, and usually disparage each other; you are thieves and liars; you are covetous, without generosity and mercy; as for us, if we have a piece of bread, we divide it amongst ourselves.'" ¹⁰ Although Biard himself dismissed this statement as "self-deception," such quotes are emblematic of the common trope of the "noble savage" in French and English texts, which were often used to critique European culture. Yet the statement also has specific meaning within an Algonquian context. The Mi'kmaq were not merely asserting moral superiority but were expressing profound concern for the consequences of acquisitiveness. They were speaking largely of the fishermen and traders on their

coasts, who demonstrated, on a daily basis, a desire for resources that seemed unquenchable. The maintenance of the common pot relied on awareness of the delicate balance of give and take, and Europeans appeared to have little understanding of this system or of their role in it.

Many northeastern people recognized that Europeans had already suffered repercussions in their own land. Roger Williams related that the Narragansetts believed that the English had traveled across the sea because they had burned up all their wood. "Have you no trees?" the Narragansetts asked their new neighbors.¹¹ The Mi'kmaq had similar suspicions about the French. In ironic contrast to Biard, some apparently believed that it was the Jesuits and traders who "deceive[d]" themselves. According to Chrestien LeClercq, a Mi'kmaq leader asked the fishermen and traders at Kespek:

If Francé, as thou sayest, is a little terrestrial paradise, art thou sensible to leave it? And why abandon wives, children, relatives, and friends? Why risk thy life and property every year . . . to the storms and tempests of the sea in order to come to a strange and barbarous country which thou considerest the poorest and least fortunate of the world? Besides, since we are wholly convinced of the contrary, we scarcely take the trouble to go to France . . . seeing, in our own experience, that those who are natives thereof leave it every year in order to enrich themselves on our shores . . . Learn now, my brother, once for all, because I must open to thee my heart: there is no Indian who does not consider himself infinitely more happy and more powerful than the French.¹²

Europeans were in the common pot, whether they knew it or not, and they had brought with them ideas, behaviors, and materials that could potentially disrupt or even destroy it. A central question that arose in Native communities throughout the northeast had to do with how to incorporate the "beings" from Europe into Native space and how to maintain the network of relations in the wake of the consequences — including disease and resource depletion — that Europeans brought to Algonquian shores. This question would play an important role in the conversation among Native leaders in the northeast for four centuries, and that conversation would become manifest through one of the most powerful "beings" brought over from Europe: the written word.

Williams claimed that when the Narragansetts encountered English writing, they said, "Manittowoc," which Williams translated as, "They are Gods."¹³ However, a more accurate translation suggests that

the Narragansetts believed writing "held *Manitou*," the power of transformation. As Karim Tiro has insightfully observed,

It is unlikely that the Indians Williams met mistook the English for gods; rather, they acknowledged that the "Bookes and Letters" themselves manifested an abundance of *Manitou*, the spiritual power that suffused things in varying degrees. . . . However, Native recognition of *Manitou* was not necessarily a mark of approbation, because *Manitou* was ambivalent power. It could be creative, but it could be destructive as well. Their assessment proved to be close to the mark.¹⁴

Mi'kmaq held a similar belief about books and letters. LeClercq observed, "They suppose that there is some enchantment or jugglery in them," he wrote, "or that this letter has a mind, because, say they, it has the virtue of telling to him who receives it everything which is said and everything which is done, even the most hidden and most secret."¹⁵ It was among these Mi'kmaq that writing began to transform in Native space.

Awikhighan: Writing in the Network of Relations (Kespek, 1677)

In a village at Kespek, "the last land," on the extreme northeast coast of Wabanaki, children circle around a "black robe," reciting a prayer. A couple of the children pick up birchbark fragments that their mothers have discarded from the baskets they are making, along with some charcoal from the fire used to cook their morning's meal. As the priest speaks, the children scrape charcoal on birch. It takes a while for the missionary to catch on, but when he does, he is utterly astonished that, all on their own, the children have developed a system for writing and remembering the Lord's Prayer. Each phrase is represented by a figure, and each child uses his or her own set of "characters." The priest decides to institute their technique. He makes the characters uniform and has each child copy them onto birchbark with charcoal. Parents begin to follow their children's lead. When the missionary leaves for six months and then returns, he finds that the birchbark scrolls have traveled along the rivers and spread throughout the interior villages. He observes that even relations "who had come from a long distance . . . could already decipher the characters with as much ease as if they had always lived among us."¹⁶

In this way, these birchbark writings traveled rapidly over rivers through the network of relations. LeClercq noted, "The principal advantage and usefulness which results from this new method is this, that the

Indians instruct one another in whatsoever place they may happen to be. Thus the son teaches his father, the mother her children, the wife her husband, and the children the old men." In this way, communities adapted an old technology within an extant system of communication to pass new knowledge through Native space.¹⁷

This process of transmission was not an entirely new phenomenon; the children's impulse arose from a familiar practice. The Jesuit Gabriel Druillettes, who lived among the Norridgewocks on the Kennebec River, farther down the Wabanaki coast, had observed the same kind of writing some twenty-five years before LeClercq's arrival in "Gaspesia": "Some would write their lessons after a fashion of their own, using a bit of charcoal for a pen, and a piece of bark instead of paper. . . . They used certain signs corresponding to their ideas, as it were, a local reminder, for recalling points and articles and maxims which they had retained. They carried away these papers with them, to study their lessons in the quiet of the night."¹⁸ LeClercq himself observed: "They have much ingenuity in drawing upon bark a kind of map which marks exactly all the rivers and streams of a country of which they wish to make a representation. They mark all the places thereon exactly and so well that they make use of them successfully, and an Indian who possesses one makes long voyages without going astray."¹⁹

Indeed, the *Jesuit Relations* are full of references to *awikhighan*, writings on birchbark (see Figures 1 and 2). They were used for making messages, remembering songs, and recording stories and communal history. Hunters would commonly post pictographic "message maps" on trees to inform each other of the location of game and the routes they would travel. As LeClercq noted, rivers and streams appeared prominently on indigenous maps, and it was along these waterways that messages were carried from village to village. *Awikhighan* conveyed knowledge from one person or place to another across the system of waterways that connected them.²⁰

Wampum, another form of indigenous "writing," moved along these same rivers. All wampum originated in coastal villages between the Muhhekkuntuk (Hudson) River and Narragansett Bay, traveling upriver to inland sites of exchange, then on to Wabanaki and Haudenosaunee territory to the north and west (see Map 2.).

Women wove wampum beads into strings and belts that represented the binds between nations, recorded communal narratives and commitments, and enacted renewal and change (see Figure 3). According

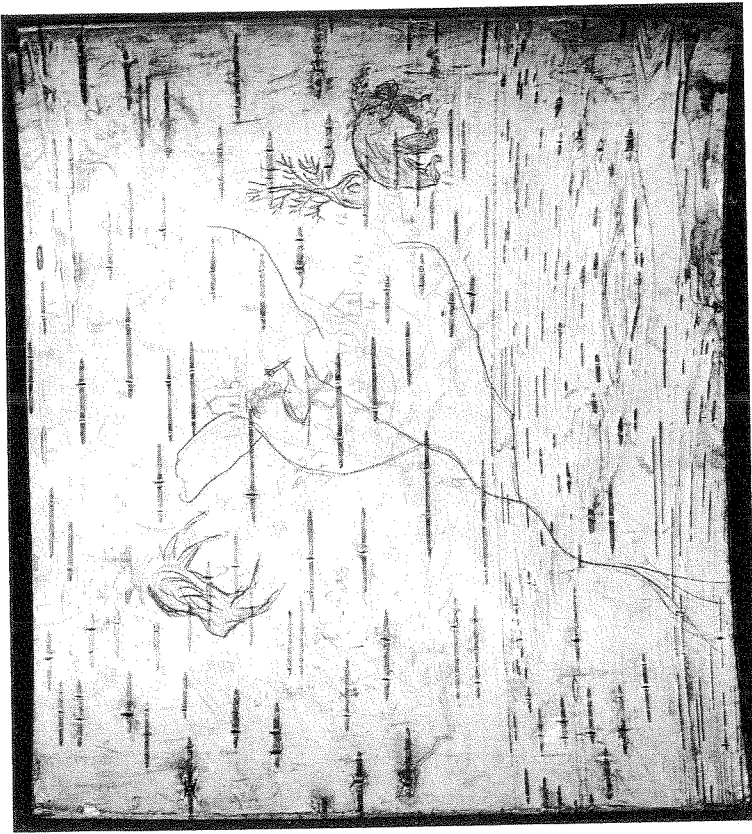
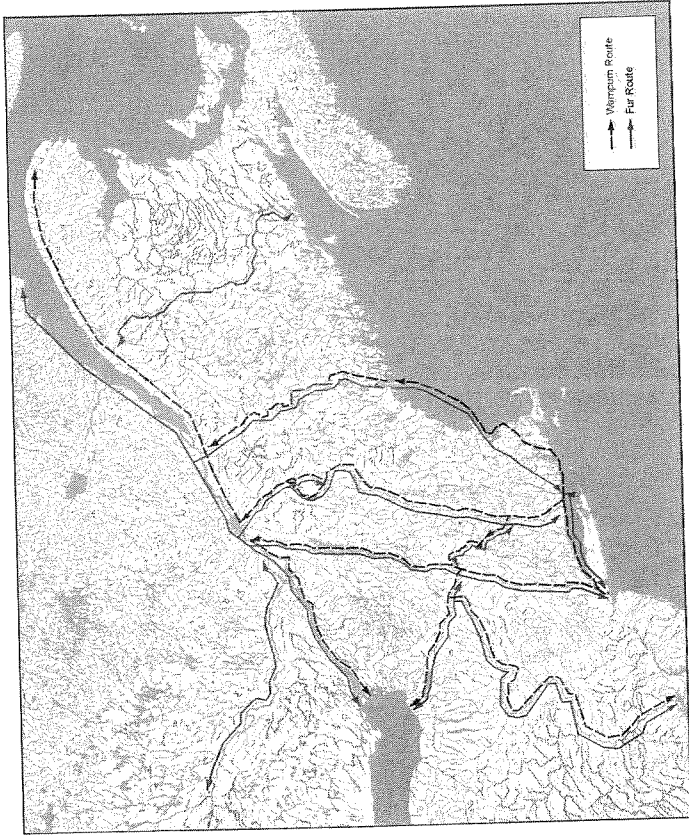


Figure 1. Passamaquoddy birchbark scroll, ca. 1877. Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution, cat. no. 393432.

to Arthur Parker, the Haudenosaunee used wampum as a mnemonic device to “call to mind” the “laws” that held the Confederacy together, to “record matters of national or international importance,” to symbolize political relationships, to condole those in grief, and to secure a “pledge of truth.” The Jesuit Jerome Lalemant, who was familiar with both Haudenosaunee and Algonquian customs, wrote of wampum, “Presents among these peoples dispatch all the affairs of the country. They dry up tears, they appease anger; they open the doors of foreign countries; they deliver prisoners; they revive the dead: one hardly ever speaks or answers except by presents. That is why, in the harangues, a present passes for a word.” While *awikhigianak* were often temporary, characterized by their “portability,” wampum symbolized permanence. When an agreement, an alliance, or an event was put in wampum, a transformation in Native space was solidified.²¹



Figure 2. Montagnais birchbark scroll with writing in French. Copyright 2007 Harvard University, Peabody Museum, 94-38-10/52507 N35423.



Map 2. Major routes of the wampum and fur trade, from the southeast coast to Ksitikw, the St. Lawrence River.

Both *awikhiganak* and wampum exemplify a spatialized writing tradition. Geographer G. Malcolm Lewis has written extensively on Native mapmaking during the “encounter,” noting that although “writing” as Europeans knew it “did not exist among Native North Americans,” Native people quickly began using maps “to communicate to whites,” a phenomenon that occurred “much less frequently” in the reverse. According to Lewis, “A shared nonlinguistic mode for communicating spatial information emerged quickly and spontaneously,” and Native people “were almost certainly drawing on an indigenous pictographic method for leaving messages and recording cultural traditions.” *Awikhiganak* and wampum were facets of an indigenous writing system that was based on “cartographic principles.” The graphic symbols used in both forms represented the relationships between people, between places, between humans and nonhumans, between the waterways that joined them. The communal stories recorded on birchbark and in wampum would even connect people with their relations across time, bringing the past, present, and future into the same space.²²

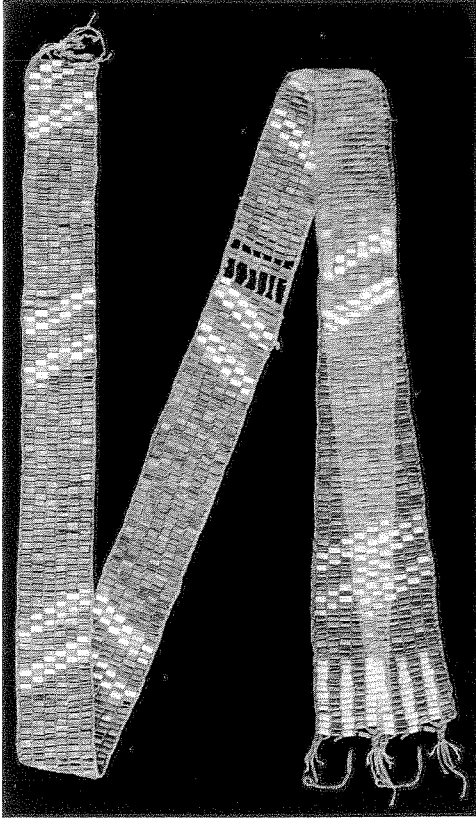


Figure 3. Wampum belt. Copyright 2007 Harvard University, Peabody Museum, 03-9-10/62375 N28261. Lake Constance, Ontario, ca. 1600.

In the chapters that follow I explore the ways in which the writing that came from Europe was incorporated into this spatialized system. It is no coincidence that the word *awikhigan* came to encompass letters and books or that wampum and writing were used concurrently to bind words to deeds. Transformations occurred when the European system entered Native space. Birchbark messages became letters and petitions, wampum records became treaties, and journey pictographs became written “journals” that contained similar geographic and relational markers, while histories recorded on birchbark and wampum became written communal narratives. All of these forms were prolific in the northeast long before Indian people began writing poetry and fiction. These texts, which emerged from within Native space, represent an indigenous American literary tradition.²³

Awikhiganak in the Great Beaver’s Bowl: Pinewans’s Network of Relations (Kwintekw, 1747)

In the spring of 1747, an Abenaki raiding party posted an *awikhigan* outside an English fort on the “long river,” Kwintekw. It read:

Gentlemen. Whereas there have been very grievous complaints in the province of — with respect to ye support and maintenance of your frontiers in a time of war, we... have undertaken to free

you from such an extraordinary charge by killing & taking captive the people & driving them off & firing their fortifications. And so successful have we been in this affair that we have broke up almost all the new settlements in your western frontiers: so that you need not be at one half the charge you were in the year past in maintaining a war in those parts: for now there are but little else besides the old towns, and if they will not fortifie and defend themselves; we think they ought to be left to our mercy. And for this good service that we have done the province, we humbly ask a suitable reward; but if your honours see fit we will wait till a peace is concluded and then receive it in presents. But in the mean time if some small matter of encouragement be given us we will go on to bring your frontiers to a narrower compass still & make your charges still smaller; but if your honours approve of this our design we humbly request of you to give us information whither it be more acceptable to you that we man your defeated garrisons our selves and eat up the provisions which your poor distressed neighbours leave in ym when they flee in their hurry & confusion or whither we burn up the forts with the provisions; for we assure you we find much more in them than we want for our own support whilst carrying on this business. Gentle-men however some may look upon us now yet we can assure you we are your very humble, obsequious servants.²⁴

The "petition" was signed by "Old Town, Chee Hoose, Pene wonse, and Prik Fore English, in the name of & on behalf of others."²⁵ The men gave their location as "Number 2 on Connecticut River," identifying for their English readers a recently constructed settlement in Abenaki space. Although the document, even at first reading, seems a radical text, the full meaning of this *awikhigan* cannot be comprehended unless we enter the network of relations through which the petition's authors traveled and the places to which they belonged. By opening the world of just one of the authors, Pene wonse (often spelled *Pinewans*), and his relationship to the site where he left his message, we can learn volumes about the implications of the text.

Origin Stories: Ktsi Amiskw, the Great Beaver

Ordinarily, Pinewans and his relations might have been coming to this place to fish. Every spring, as the icy floods receded from the banks of the river Kwinitewkw, Sokokis (or Sokwakiak), who inhabited the south-

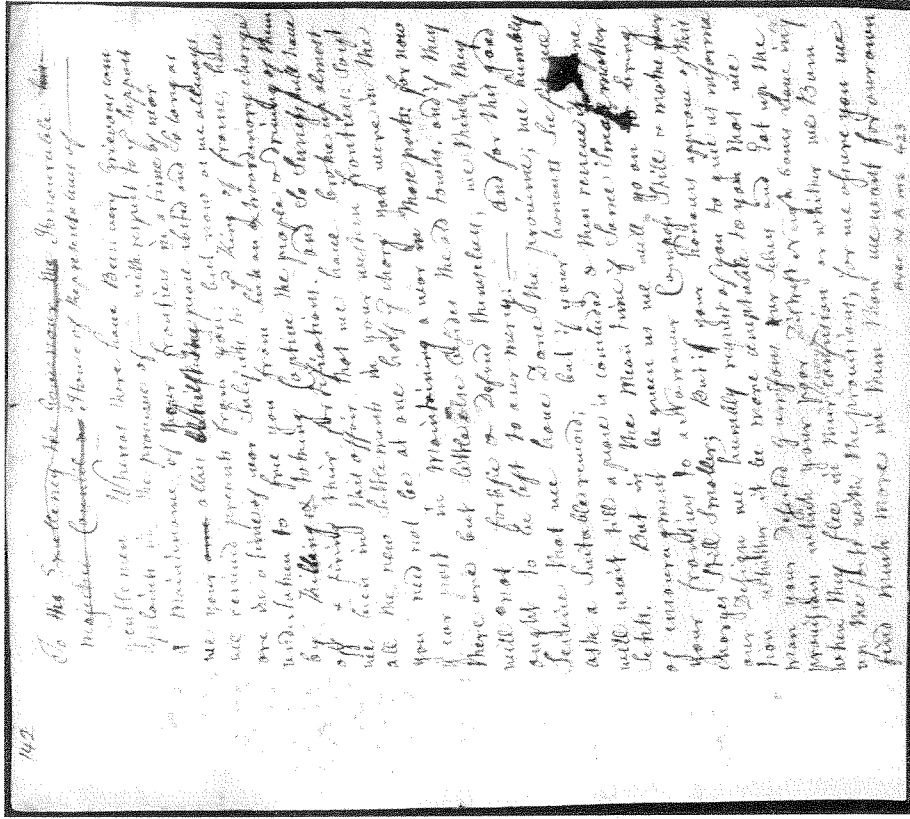


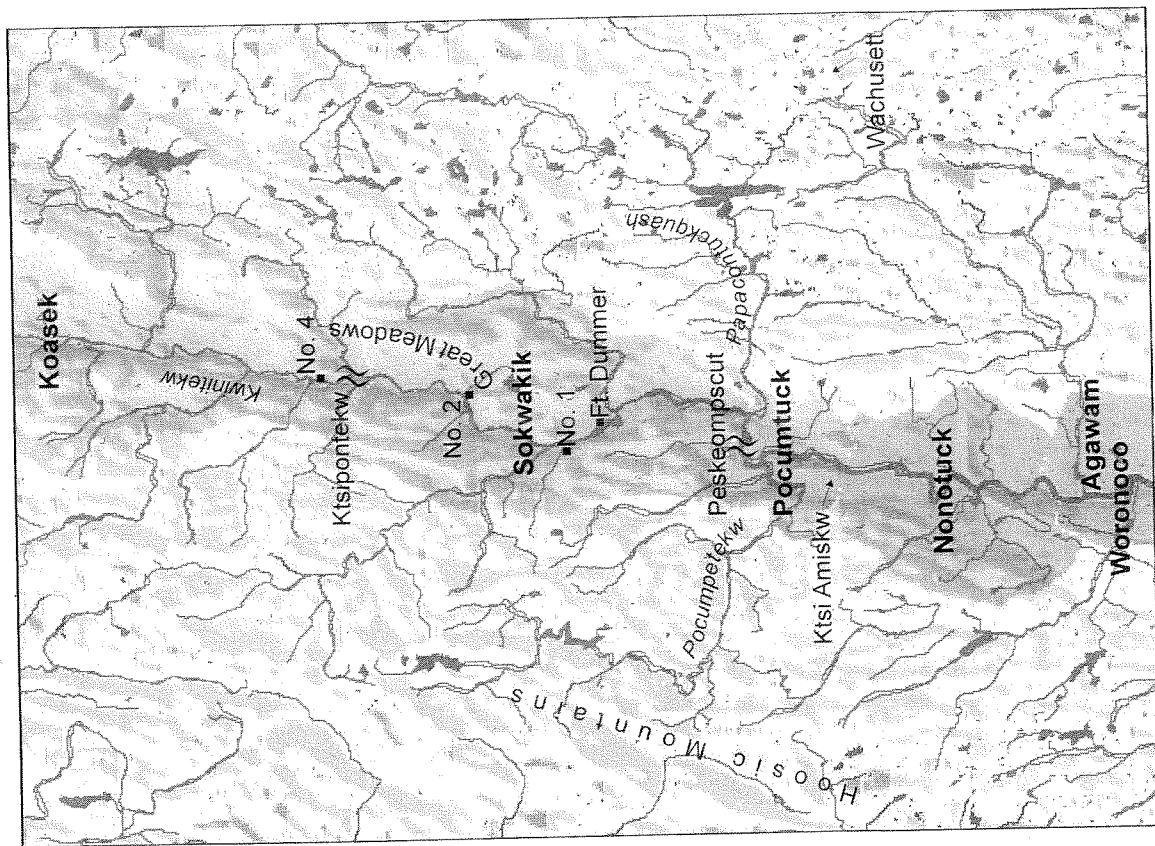
Figure 4. Indian petition to the General Assembly, 1747. Courtesy Edward E. Ayer Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago.

ermmost stretch of Abenaki country, descended from the uplands just in time for the arrival at Ktsipóntekw, the "great falls," of the spawning salmon and shad, which provided needed sustenance after a harsh northern winter. Pinewans and his relations were part of an extensive ecological system that reached from Ktsipóntekw to Peskeompscut, the Pocumtuck "great falls" to the south, where many of the fish stopped before climbing its rocky steps to swim upriver toward Abenaki country. Kwinitewkw's annual flooding provided fertile ground for the women who planted in the intervale. The "great meadows" where Pinewans posted his *awikhigan* hosted "some of the best farmlands in the whole valley."

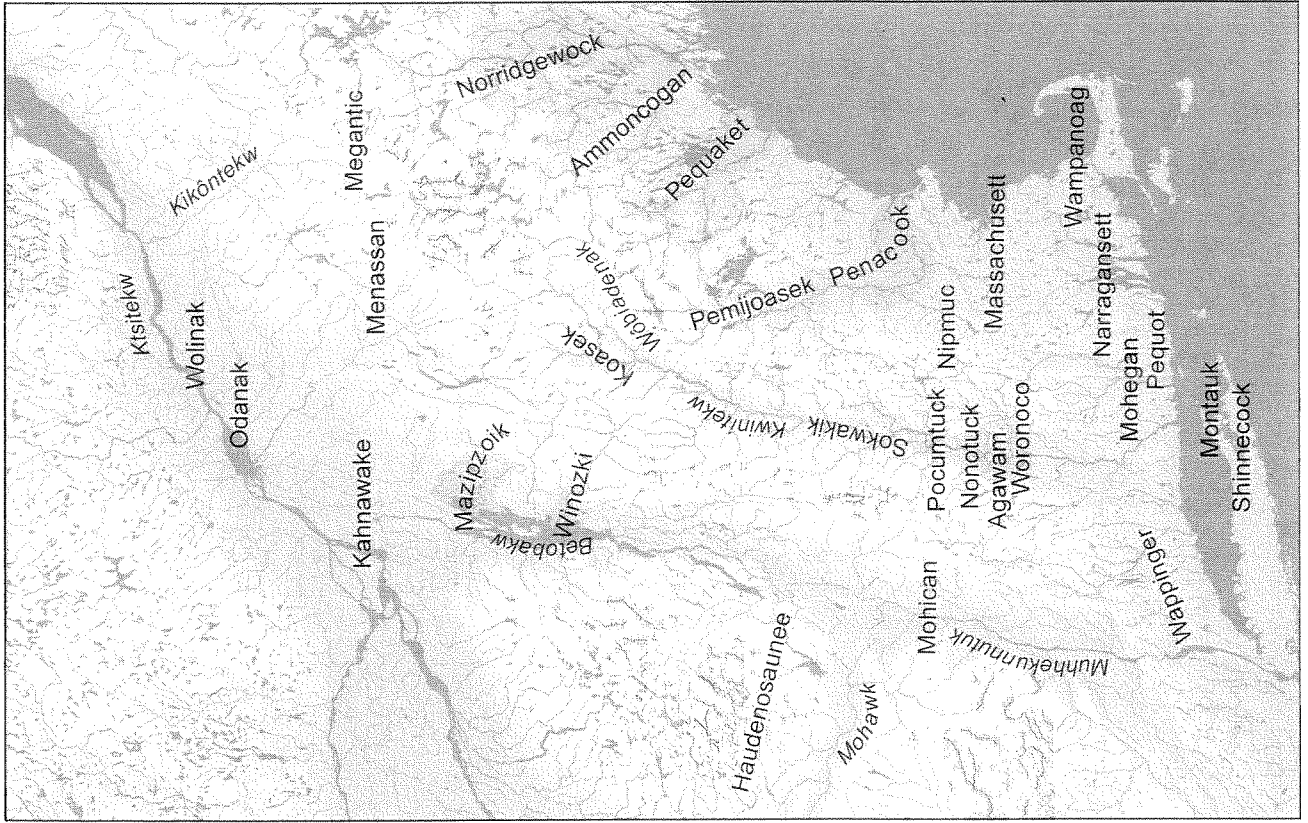
The annual planting of corn, beans, and squash stabilized the riverbanks, added nutrients to the soil, and, when abandoned for a new field, created a meadow habitat where waterfowl, game animals, and edible plants abounded. This relationship between the river, fishing, and planting had been ongoing for centuries, perhaps millennia.²⁶

Downriver, just below Peskeompscut, lay Ktsi Amiskw, the Great Beaver, looming above the "ancient crossroads" of Pocumtuck. During the great floods, this area had been his pond, and when the waters receded they left behind a long, deep impression in the land that fostered abundant growth. In vital contours of the valley, major centers of inhabitation formed, from the northern "place of pines," Koasek, to the southern place of Sokwakik, and farther downriver to Pocumtuck, Nonotuck, Agawam, and Woronoco. These *wólhnanak* were fertile bowls between mountain ranges that were capable of sustaining the many families who gathered there, forming permanent communities and hosting trading parties who came through with news and goods from far away.²⁷

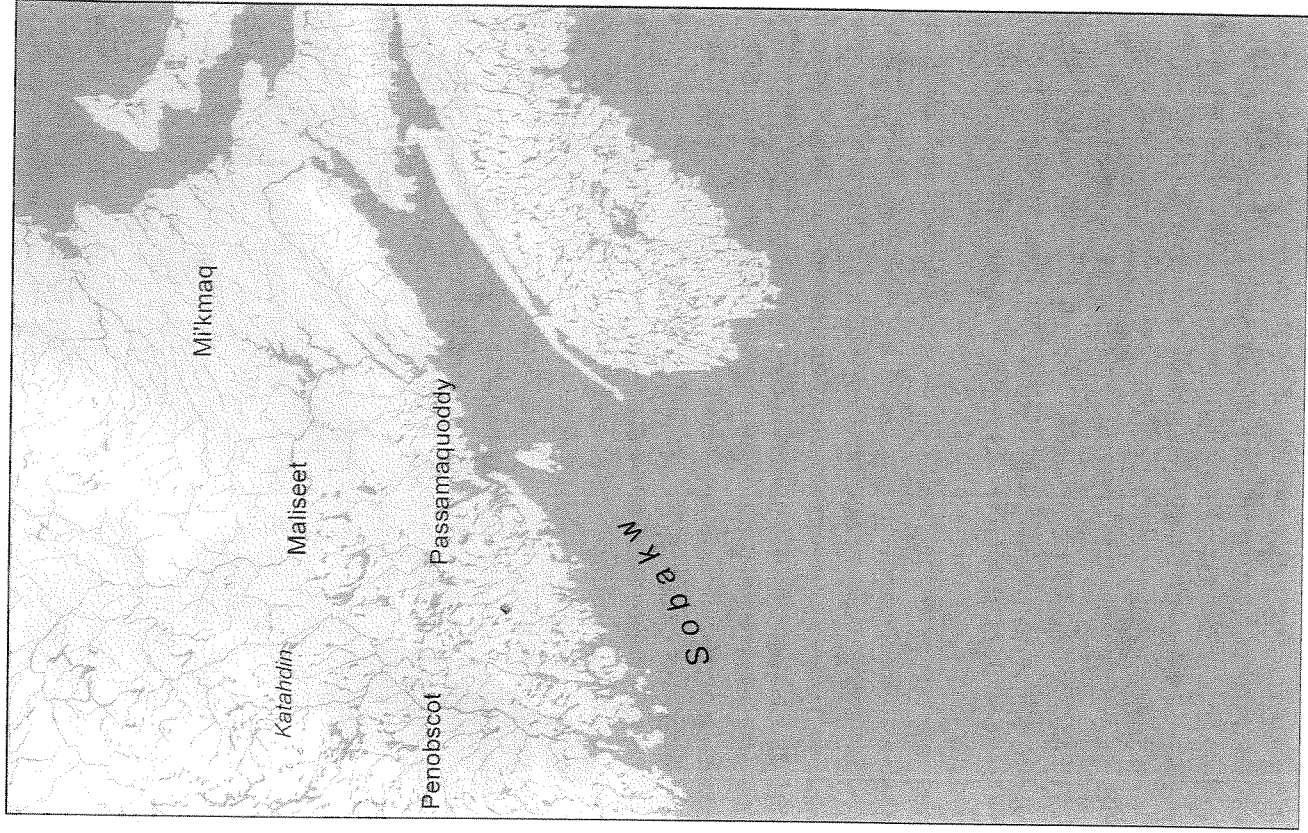
Well-traveled canoe routes and trails spread out from below Ktsi Amiskw, connecting Native homelands. Riverways led northwest to the Winozki and Mazipskoik *wólhnanak* on the eastern shore of Betobakw, the western emergence place of Wabanaki, and "the lake between" Abenaki and Haudenosaunee country. To the northeast were the Penacook *wólhnanak* on the river Molódemak, leading upriver to the Pemijoasek *wólhnanak*, the western intervalle of Wóbiadenak, the White Mountains, the central emergence place of Wabanaki. Paths led through the mountains to the eastern *wólhnanak* of Pequaket on the Saco River, farther east to the Ammoncogan *wólhnanak* on the Androscoggin, and on to the *wólhnanak* of Norridge-wock on the Kennebec, with riverside trails moving through indigenous settlements to Ktsitekw, the "great river" in the north, and to Sobakw, the sea. From Mount Katahdin, the eastern emergence place of Wabanaki, riverways led to the easternmost *wólhnanak* of the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet, and Mi'kmaq, reaching northeast toward the daily emergence place of the sun. Back at Ktsi Amiskw, trails extended to the east along the river Papatuckquash to Wachusett Mountain in Nipmuc country and west along the river Pocumpetekw to Mohican territory on the Housatonic and Muhhekunnutuk. Near the central village of Pem-potowwuthut, the Muhhekunnutuk travel corridor connected with the Mohawk River and its western routes into Haudenosaunee country. Here the Moñawks maintained the eastern door of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, which included their relations, the Oneidas, Onondagas,



Map 3. The river Kwinitekw from Ktisipóntekw to Peskeompscut, with Native *wólhnanak* highlighted. Note the mountains (Hoosic range and Mount Wachusett) that form geographic and political boundaries between territories and the location of colonial fort settlements within Native space.



Map 4. The environs of Kwinitekw, showing Wabanaki wāilhanak, mission villages, and neighboring Native territories from Sobakw, the sea, to Kitsitekw, the St. Lawrence River.



killed by the millions for fur-lust from across the sea. Their pelts buy blankets, cloth, weapons, knives.

In this world out of balance, Ktsi Amiskw dreams a hard dream: a world without beavers. Then, far away, like the promise of a winter dawn, he dreams the rivers back, young mothers building, secure in their skins, and a pond full of the slapping tails of children.²⁹

Ktsi Amiskw sat above the *wólhanna*, watching as women planted and men fished below. When Europeans entered the Kwinitewk Valley, they brought a desire for beaver pelts and plenty of rum, as well as more useful goods, for trade. Ktsi Amiskw watched as John Pynchon built a trading post downstream, at Agawam, where men traveled with canoes full of skins, returning with iron pots for their wives, guns for themselves, and bellies full of rum. Ktsi Amiskw watched as unfamiliar sicknesses spread through family networks and tore them apart. Pynchon's rum seemed to ameliorate the pain of loss, but also increased the desire for furs and fostered the anger and competition that could lead to violence. Ktsi Amiskw's children became vehicles for the reconstruction of human networks disrupted by disease and warfare. Their pelts were traded for wampum, and people used both as conduits for condolence and reparation. Yet, ironically, competition over the materials required for the ceremonies of rebalancing could lead to further cycles of war. Ktsi Amiskw sat there, watching these transformations in the valley, the whole time.

To the west of Ktsi Amiskw, families on Muhhekunnutuk found themselves in an ideal position for trade with Dutch newcomers on the coast. The Mohicans had been active in indigenous trade networks as far north as Ktsitekw, and they took up this distributive role with European goods as well. Until the Dutch moved upriver and established Fort Orange (later Albany), the Mohawks could acquire European goods only through trade with the Mohicans or people on Ktsitekw, and the Mohicans took advantage of their geographic position by charging the Mohawks tribute. When trade did not work, the Mohawks tried raiding, which led to full-scale war between the two nations for the beaver grounds of the Muhhekunnutuk Valley and to the reversal of the tributary relationship when the Mohawks unleashed the full power of the increasingly forceful Haudenosaunee Confederacy on the Mohicans.³⁰

Mohicans had frequently hunted the mountains to the west of Kwinitewk, but as the demand for beavers increased, they appeared more often in the Kwinitewk intervale, seeking to expand their hunting territory

Cayugas, and Senecas. To the south, beyond Ktsi Amiskw, Kwinitewk traveled to the southern coast of Sobakw, where the wampum-making nations of the Niantic, Mohegan, and Pequot gathered by its mouth.²⁸

The families who inhabited the Kwinitewk watershed contributed to the shape and growth of the valley. In addition to planting on the riverbanks, women cultivated medicinal and edible plants in the marshes and meadows, while men cultivated the forests through controlled burns and harvests of firewood, ensuring an abundant supply of berries and other low bush growth to support a healthy population of game. Ktsi Amiskw's children, the beavers, abounded in this environment and played a similarly critical role in its maintenance. Their dams created many of the marshes that provided people and animals alike with a diversity of plant foods, as well as habitat for the water animals whose furs and flesh sustained families through long winters. When beavers abandoned a pond to move to another part of the watershed, the marshes transformed into meadows, creating a rich habitat for large animals like deer and bear, as well as the fields of berries that provided so much sweet taste in summer stews. In this way, beavers participated proactively, along with humans, in the continuation of this abundant dish.

However, Ktsi Amiskw's story has another side, a tale that arose during the wars that dominated Kwinitewk during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and resurfaced in the twentieth century along with the beavers that once more fill the valley. Abenaki writer Cheryl Savageau captured the story in a poem:

At Sugarloaf, 1996

...for Marge Bruchac

i. Ktsi Amiskw

In the big pond, Ktsi Amiskw, the Beaver, is swimming. He has built a dam. The water in his pond grows deeper. He patrols the edges, chasing everyone away. This is all mine, he says. The people and animals grow thirsty.

Cut it out, Creator says. And turns Ktsi Amiskw to stone. The pond is drained. There is water and food for everyone. See those hills, Ktsi Amiskw's head, body, and tail? He's lying there still, this valley his empty pond.

ii. Ktsi Amiskw Dreams

For living out of balance, Ktsi Amiskw lies still, while for centuries, his descendants are trapped in every stream, caught in every river,

through intermarriage and, at times, through war. Some Mohicans sought refuge from Mohawk raids in the villages of their eastern relations. This movement directed Mohawk attention to the marshes of Kwinitewk. Haudenosaunee land, in historian George Hunt's words, was not a "productive beaver ground," and overhunting soon depleted the beaver population in the Muhheknunnutuk and Mohawk Valleys. The connections Mohicans made within the Kwinitewk family network only added justification to Mohawk raiding of the fertile bowl. Ktsi Amiskw watched as the bodies piled up on the banks of the river: beaver skins on Pynchon's table, human flesh in the forests and fields.³¹

This violent redistribution of resources sent the valley through cycles of dissolution and reconstruction. During one winter, a huge number of people gathered to weave themselves together in Ktsi Amiskw's bowl. Sokokis, Pocumtucks, Penacooks, and Mohicans met for three months, cementing relationships through marriage, trade, and ceremony to strengthen the defense of their contiguous lands against Haudenosaunee raids. With this new energy in manifestation, warfare intensified, transforming the landscape of the valley. The people gathered their families on a secluded forest hill northwest of the river, where they built a large fortification. In the winter of 1663, after the completion of harvest, Haudenosaunee warriors attacked the hill settlement, with "heavy losses on both sides." Relations came from the north, south, and east to assist the people on the hill in the defense of their "fort," and they provided refuge in their own villages for the families to recover. Some of the people fled all the way north to the French settlements on Ktsitekw, where several mission villages emerged, including the "town" of Odanak (or St. Francis). In the wake of this shared loss, the Pocumtucks tried to forge a path to peace between the Mohawks and the Sokokis, but the councils were disrupted when a Mohawk chief and his party were killed on their way to Pocumtuck, and then a whole new course of warfare spilled into the Kwinitewk Valley. The raiding was so intense that men were forced to temporarily abandon their fishing sites and women their planting grounds, often subsisting on what could be acquired on the run or through trade.³²

After the Algonquians of the valley joined together to raid the Mohawks in their own country, the Mohawks launched an overwhelming counterattack on Ktsi Amiskw's home, laying siege to the Pocumtuck *wółhana* and claiming the whole of the Great Beaver for themselves. The

survivors scattered, leaving their destroyed fields to seek refuge with relations to the north and south. A year later, Englishmen from Massachusetts Bay targeted the seemingly "empty" site for a new settlement. They would come to call it Deerfield. These settlers would hear the story of the Great Beaver from the people who returned to their *wółhana* in the years to come, and it would become a part of their oral tradition as well.³³

In the midst of these transformations in Native space, the English desire for land steadily replaced their desire for furs. Stories came upriver from the sea, traveling along Molódemak and Kwinitewk, that the Penacooks and coastal peoples were experiencing land loss and violence as the English craving for space and resources grew. Algonquians could no longer rely on fur pelts for trade, and traders stacked up their debts. Meanwhile, beavers were hiding out in enclaves, their abandoned ponds turning to fields.³⁴

Just as harvest was set to begin in 1672, an "old woman" named Mashalisk, who had likely lost the majority of her family to disease and warfare and had witnessed the valley's brutal transformation, made a dramatic move to rebalance a world that had spun out of control. Mashalisk granted a "tract of land" on "Quinneticot River" which was bounded by "ye lower point of ye Hill called Wequomps" to the trader John Pynchon "for & in consideration of a debt of ten large Bevers & other debts of Wuttawoluncksin her sons."³⁵ According to Abenaki historian Marge Bruchac, "Wequomps" refers to "the hill at the end of the Pocumtuck Range," the formation known to Natives and colonists alike as the Great Beaver.³⁶ When Mashalisk sold this land, she transferred the burden of Ktsi Amiskw's legacy from her own sons to Pynchon and all "his heirs & assigns forever." And when she received "sixty fada of wampum" from the trader, he accepted the responsibility. Pynchon thought he was getting the better deal. In return for ten pelts and some strings of shell beads, he was gaining access to the Great Beaver itself. But Mashalisk had him fooled.

At the heart of Ktsi Amiskw's story is the danger of acquisitiveness in the common pot. The Great Beaver gets greedy and uses his talent for building dams to hoard water, and everyone in the bowl suffers the consequences of his desire. Through the beaver trade, the individualistic values for which the Mi'kmaq had expressed such disdain made their way into the kinship networks that had sustained Algonquian families for millennia. As historian Kenneth Morrison has explained, "The

fur trade challenged the redistributive imperative and made the ideal more difficult to achieve."³⁷ The result was rupture in the networks that constituted the common pot, violence that spread like rapids through a river, and a shared grief that could not be contained. Still, Ktsi Amiskw's story also contained the seeds of rebalance, planted by one woman who transformed the soil of Kwinitewk, as every woman before her had done in the spring when the waters receded from the shore. She took Ktsi Amiskw's bowl in her hands, full with the season's harvest, and handed over to the trader the legacy of his own greed.

Creating a Kettle of Peace (Deerfield/Pocumtuck, 1735)

In the Petition "at [Fort or Town] No. 2," Pinewans and his relations referred to the "new settlements in your western frontiers," the "old towns," and the "defeated garrisons" and "forts" that English settlers had fled in haste. At the time, these "western frontiers" were merely the southern stretches of Kwinitewk and Molódemak. Rather than conceding to a constantly expanding "frontier," the "petitioners" referred to multiple "frontiers" in flux, movements up riverways that could be reversed. The petition described a bounded English space that might be brought "to a Narrower compass still." Neither the movement of colonization nor its repulse was naturalized; each was the result of human agency. From the perspective of its authors at the time when the petition was written, the "frontiers" of English expansion were shrinking back toward the coast, where the "old settlements" remained vulnerable. "New settlements" and "forts" constituted not permanent fixtures, evidence of conquest accomplished, but rather temporary, "abandoned" sites within Native space.

To comprehend the petition, we need to understand how these "new settlements" came about, how "frontiers" could fluctuate, and why the petition's authors would have pursued the containment of settler space. The Deerfield Conference of 1735, in which Pinewans and his relations were key participants, provides a gateway to comprehension. This attempt to create a "kettle of peace" took place in the shadow of Ktsi Amiskw and included Abenakis, Mohawks, Mohicans, and English, each with different stakes. Two critical documents emerged: the minutes of the conference and a group of three deeds signed by Pinewans and his relations. Both concerned the land between the two "great falls" of Kwinitewk and the agreements that would allow for shared inhabitation. Before ex-

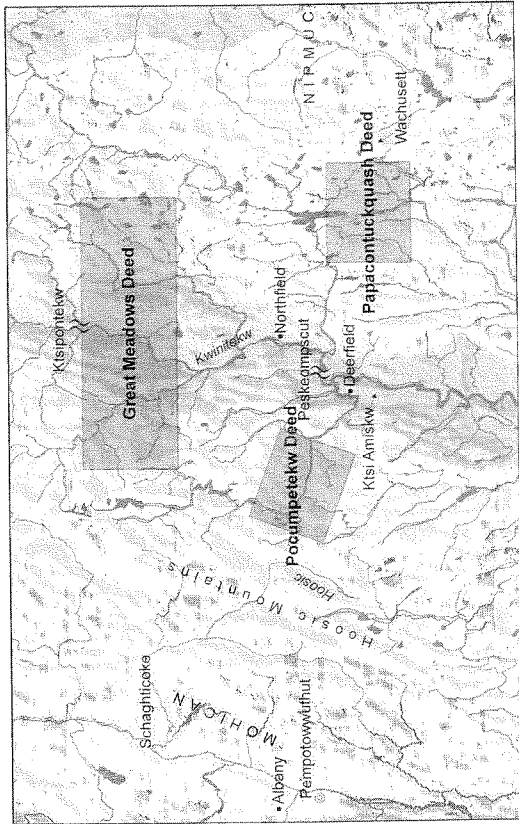
ploring these texts, it is necessary to frame the deeds, the conference, and the subsequent petition within a geographically and historically specific landscape and to map the various routes that participants took to Deerfield.³⁸

New Towns, Old Towns

Over the course of several decades and in the wake of war, English settlers moved up Kwinitewk, settling on its banks and acquiring deeds for the new towns of Deerfield and Northfield, located within the Pocumtuck and Sokwakik *wólhanak*. These deeds often recognized the subsistence rights of Native families who continued to return to the intervals, and conflict over their exact meaning was a factor contributing to the heavy raiding of those settlements in the years that followed. By the time of the Petition at No. 2, Deerfield and Northfield were referred to as "old towns." The new group of deeds that emerged during the Deerfield Conference in 1735 allowed colonial settlement to push farther north into the valley, extending west along the river Pocumpetekw to the mountains that separated the Kwinitewk and Muhhekunnutuk watersheds and east across the river Papatontuckquash to Nipmuc territory at Wachusett Mountain. Pinewans and his brothers signed a deed for the eastern portion and witnessed the deeds for the western and northern sections along with Keewauhoose, or "Chee Hoose," one of the signers of the Petition at No. 2. The deeds they witnessed included all the land below Ktsipóntekw, including the women's fertile fields at Great Meadows.³⁹ (See Map 5.)

Women's names appeared frequently in deeds concerning Kwinitewk lands, largely because they held the strongest claim to the fields they planted. Mashalik's deed for Ktsi Amiskw was not an anomaly. When Pinewans and his brothers authorized a deed for their ancestral lands, they signed on behalf of their "deceased" mother, Woolaootaumesqua, along with the son of her sister Nepuscauteusqua, their brother Francis.⁴⁰ Their signatures demonstrate the descent of land rights through the female line, but also signify a change in the gender dynamics of land tenure and the strong preference of colonial officials for dealing with male representatives.

Pinewans, his brothers, his cousin, and Keewauhoose signed the deeds with a group of fifteen men and women, all of whom were related through their connection to the "new refugee village" of Schaghticoke, at



Map 5. Deerfield Conference deeds: Kwinitekw from Ktsipóntekw to Peskeompscut, with the boundaries of the three deeds outlined. Note the locations of colonial towns and the new refugee village of Schaghticoke.

the junction of the Hoosic and Muhhekunnutuk Rivers. This “new town” emerged when numerous Kwinitekw families fled to their Mohican relations during the colonial conflict known as King Philip’s War, which erupted only a few years after Mashalisk’s transfer of Ktsi Amiskw and sparked what historians Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney call the “Anglo-Abenaki Wars.” As violence spread northwest from the resistance on the Algonquian coast, thousands of Wampanoags, Narragansetts, and Nipmucs joined families from Kwinitekw at a sheltered Sokwakik gathering place. There, the captive Mary Rowlandson observed, they “asked one another questions, and laughed, and rejoiced over their gains and victories.” As families took refuge for the winter, they met in council to make plans for a spring offensive on the English settlements within their homeland. During the previous fall, the men had repulsed the towns of Deerfield and Northfield, and in the spring the women once more descended from the uplands to replant their fields on the riverbanks. While families were gathered at Peskeompscut for the salmon and shad runs, the English attacked, launching the northernmost raid of the war. This massacre of hundreds was especially disturbing because Peskeompscut was recognized as common space. In response to the assault, Kwinitekw’s inhabitants turned to their Mohican neighbors for assistance and were

given a place of asylum beyond the mountains, on another waterway, far from the New England settlements.⁴¹

Although the “Schaghticoques” came to be identified with the village that the Mohicans and the Albany English created for them, their personal names spoke to the close relationship they maintained with their original homeland. For instance, the name of Pinewans’s brother, Wallenas, meant “valley person,” while Keewauhoose was likely named for Koasek, the *wólhana* on the northern stretch of Kwinitekw. The families who sought refuge at Schaghticoke continued to return to Kwinitekw for subsistence and trade (as well as raids) and continued to interconnect with Abenaki relations to the north and east. The Earl of Bellomont expressed concern that the “Eastern Indians” and the Schaghticoques “still retain their friendship and intermarry with each other,” while an embittered John Pynchon complained that the Schaghticoques could not be contained despite their status as “protected” Indians, saying, “Sometimes they live at Skachkook, sometimes to the eastward, intermingling with the Eastern Indians, sometimes in Canada.” He told the Albany English that they had “nourished vipers” by giving the Kwinitekw natives a refuge. The Albany settlers remarked that the “Eastern Indians” regarded the Schaghticoques as “a part of themselves.”⁴²

This “intermingling” had become a prominent feature of Native space. Marriage was one of the best ways to make family out of “strangers” or to resolve tensions between groups, and it was instrumental to maintaining ties across geographic distance. During the beaver wars, intermarriage became a common strategy for sharing space, especially as communities took in refugees from families disrupted by disease and warfare. Mohawks, in particular, sought to replace lost family members through the tradition of captive adoption, ironically forging kinship alliances through war. These relationships produced a network of multifaceted family links in the northeast. In the corridors and crossroads of Kwinitekw, people often encountered relatives as they traveled through with hunting, trading, or raiding parties, even if the groups had originated from communities that were a great geographical distance apart. The valley had been transformed not only by warfare but by the marriages that served to defuse it.⁴³

These alliances provided strengthened trade relations, places to stay if conflicts arose at home, resources for assistance if food or supplies were short, and coalitions against “a common threat.” Thus, Sokokis knew they could seek refuge with the Mohicans and their Abenaki relations to

the north when the English struck their home. This dispersal provided for stronger ties and further intermarriage with northern Abenakis, as well as Mohicans and Mohawks who frequented the trading posts at Albany. Meanwhile, on Kistekw, the "great river" to the north, a shared religion, ties to the French, and geographical proximity had brought the Abenakis at Odanak and the Mohawks at Kahnawake into closer alliance, while both maintained their affiliations with their relations to the south. Furthermore, both Schaghticoke and northern Abenakis sustained relationships with their eastern cousins from Penacook to Pequaket and even to villages near the coast. All of these groups continued to frequent the Kwinitekw Valley for subsistence, trade, and councils. From within this space, as Haefeli and Sweeney have observed, "Deerfield" emerged as "the center of a web of political, commercial, and familial interests that stretched from Mohawk country in the west to the Canadian mission villages to the north, and to Penacook-Pigwacket country in the east." "Much to the colonists' consternation," they write, "Deerfield remained a vital crossroads for Natives."⁴⁴

Routes to the Deerfield Conference, Relational and Historical

The people who gathered at Deerfield in 1735 represented this reconfigured Native space. Here nations who had learned from the beaver wars that "disputes and quarrels" over resources would "bring on their destruction" arrived at the tail of the beaver to engage in a process that was quite familiar in Native space: they would "eat together" and attempt to create a "kettle of peace."⁴⁵ The largest number came from the "Schaghticoke" nation, many of whom were living upriver in their ancestral *wólhanna*. These included Pinewans and his brothers. A number of Mohicans arrived with the Schaghticoke, likely traveling from their village on the Muhhekkunnutuk to the Hoosic, then crossing over the mountains and following the course of Pocumpetekw to Kwinitekw. Mohicans from the Housatonic came upriver to join them, while Abenakis from Odanak and Mohawks from Kahnawake traveled from the north together, following Kwinitekw downriver until Ktsi Amiskw came into view.⁴⁶

The *wólhanna* of Pocumtuck had long been an important meeting-place for Native nations, but increasingly it was becoming a space shared by Natives and colonists. The network of relations exemplified by the Deerfield Conference included English people as well. While the governor of Massachusetts, representatives from the King's council, and legis-

lators from the House of Representatives had come to the meeting from colonial centers, at least two of the most prominent figures had entered Kwinitekw's network through captivity. This is an important aspect of the Petition at No. 2 as well. When Pinewans and his relations referred to "taking captive the people," they referred to a practice that was both familiar and terrifying to their English readers.

Two major participants in the conference, Stephen Williams and Joseph Kellogg, had been taken captive as children in the famous 1704 raid on Deerfield by a coalition of Abenakis, Mohawks, French, and Wyandots during the third "Anglo-Abenaki War" (also known as Queen Anne's War). The young Williams spent the winter and spring of 1704 traveling through Abenaki country with the Penacook leader Wattanummon and his relations, living upriver at Koasek, traveling to Winoskik when warfare disrupted subsistence, and finally trekking to the refugee village of Odanak, where he was eventually "redeemed" and returned to his family. In 1735, in the same town from which he had been captured, Stephen Williams attended the conference in the hope of encouraging the Mohicans on the Housatonic to establish a mission at their village of Wnahtukook. He had brought wampum to them the year before to introduce the idea, and some had been receptive. Captives, including several of the Williams clan, often became part of the network of relations, keeping in touch with their "families" long after their release. Colonial and indigenous decisions were often affected by the presence of family members within adopted communities. Stephen's father, John Williams, wrote one of the most famous captivity narratives of his day, but he maintained contact with his "relations" from Odanak, noting friendly visits from his former captors in his journals. Later generations of Abenakis, recalling their relationship to this place and this family, referred to Deerfield as "Williamsecook." Stephen's sister, Eunice, was taken captive as a child to Kahnawake, where she was adopted into a Mohawk family and chose to remain as a Mohawk wife and mother. As an adult, Eunice renewed her kinship ties to her birth family, even visiting her English relations at Deerfield. Despite the Williamses' endless efforts to persuade her to return to her "native home," Eunice was steadfast in her desire to remain at Kahnawake.⁴⁷

While Abenakis sought land reclamation through the Deerfield raid, one of the Mohawks' main motivations was the acquisition of captives. Eunice was taken to replace a mother's only child, and eventually she produced children of her own. The Mohawks took home children

from the neighboring Kellogg family as well. Joseph Kellogg, whose grandfather had participated in the attack on Peskeompscut, was carried to Kahnawake along with his brother and two sisters. Both of his sisters remained at the Mohawk village until they were grown women. Joseph was able to take home the youngest, Rebecca, more than twenty years later under the condition that she could bring the "Indian man and boy with whom she lived." His sister Joanna, like Eunice Williams, remained at Kahnawake and married a Mohawk man, returning to visit her brothers later in life as a Mohawk mother. Joseph spent a year living as part of that community himself before being taken in by the French. At the Deerfield Conference, he served as an interpreter and was offered as a fair trader for the new fort that the English had established in the Sokwakik *wólhanna*.⁴⁶

Fort Dummer, where Kellogg served as truckmaster, was located upriver from Deerfield on a site between the two "great falls," near a marsh where Kwinitekw's inhabitants hunted waterfowl and gathered wild rice. The English established this northernmost post in 1724 during Greylock's War, or the "Fourth Anglo-Abenaki War," a resistance against English expansion led by a Kwinitekw refugee. "Greylock," or Wawanolewat, had drawn many other Kwinitekw men to his adopted *wólhanna* of Mazipskoik, including Schaghticoke. From the deep wetlands of the river Mazipskoik, Abenaki raiding parties repeatedly traveled south by canoe routes and footpaths, striking English settlements and then swiftly withdrawing into the forested mountains that they knew so well. Wawanolewat's "strategy of draining the colonists' resources by small-scale guerilla attack and the threat of lightning-fast raids," like Mashalisk's deed, worked to reverse the dynamic of the beaver wars. The colonists were behaving like the Great Beaver, hoarding the pond's resources for themselves, and Wawanolewat disrupted that pattern, draining the pond piece by small piece, poking holes in the dams of colonization, and reclaiming his Native space for all its inhabitants.⁴⁹

During Greylock's War, Joseph Kellogg was commissioned to lead scouting expeditions in the Kwinitekw Valley and the surrounding mountains from a base at Deerfield. His job was to protect the towns of Deerfield and Northfield; having been built within the Pocumtuck and Sokwakik *wólhanna*, they were particularly vulnerable targets. Inundated by Wawanolewat's raiding parties, Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor William Dummer assigned Colonel John Stoddard, an influential land

speculator, to supervise the construction of a fort above Northfield. Stoddard recruited Kellogg's lieutenant, Timothy Dwight, to command the fort and procured some of Kellogg's soldiers to man it. Dummer and Stoddard planned to use the fort as a base camp for scouting parties that would intercept Wawanolewat's raiding parties before they reached the colonial settlements. They hoped to recruit "Western Indians" to lead the expeditions, but when Kellogg traveled to Albany to enlist Mohawks, few were receptive.⁵⁰

The Mohawks as a nation refused to fight with the English in this war, reversing the path taken by their ancestors, who had played a critical role for the English in King Philip's War and engaged in their own campaigns to acquire access to Algonquian space. Family ties and political empathy likely held back many Mohawks from opposing Wawanolewat's resistance. However, the Mohawk sachem Theyanoguain, or Hendrick, was much more receptive to Kellogg's invitation. He had worked previously with Joseph's brother Martin, serving as a guide on an expedition to Montreal to redeem captives from the Deerfield raid, and these connections in the Mohawk network of relations worked to the advantage of the fort's designers. Hendrick took a position at Fort Dummer and, along with the Mohican sachem Aupaumut, recruited warriors to scout with them. Hendrick and Aupaumut spent several years working with Dwight and Kellogg, scouting Kwinitekw from the fort to Kisipóntekw, often climbing the mountains overlooking the falls to search for the campfires of Wawanolewat's war parties.⁵¹

Hendrick's family ties and familiarity with the territory made him an ideal scout. The man who rose to become the famous "King Hendrick" had been born near Agawam, not far from Wawanolewat's native Woronoco, to a Mohican father and a Mohawk mother united in a marriage that strengthened a precarious alliance between the two nations. Wawanolewat and Hendrick were both sons of the beaver wars, born just south of Ktsi Amiskw, near Pynchon's trading post, in the midst of violence and exchange. Through the transformations of the beaver wars, Mohawks and Mohicans became invested in Kwinitekw's resources; through trade, marriage, birth, and death, their lives became embedded in the valley.⁵²

Although Mohawks had an interest in the abundant resources of this dish, they were also invested in the maintenance of its social networks. Thus, even as they tried to sustain a neutral position, Mohawk

councilors retained a respect for Abenaki sovereignty and attempted to mediate a peace between Abenaki and English. They met with colonial representatives at Deerfield and also sent three messages to the east with wampum. Delivering the Abenaki response along with their own estimation to John Stoddard and Joseph Kellogg, they remarked, "The Eastward Indians . . . said that in order to Peace with Boston Government they did desire two things viz the Return of the Land, and secondly the return of the Hostages." The Haudenosaunee speaker added, "From that we think the matter respecting Peace seemed to lye with you."⁵³

At the Beaver's Tail

The English "lit a council fire at Deerfield" during Greylock's War to meet with the Mohawks and request their intervention, then rekindled that fire to institute a reconciliation. When the nations gathered at Deerfield in 1735, it was, according to Haefeli and Sweeney, to "reaffirm the peace secured in 1727 at the end of the Fourth Anglo-Abenaki War." After Wawanolewat's resistance stayed English expansion into the northern intervals, there remained the question of how to share the space of Ktsi Amiskw's bowl, in which Schaghticoke and their Abenaki relations, as well as Mohawks, Mohicans, and English, all had interests. A lesson learned well during the beaver wars was that the best way to create a "kettle of peace" was through interdependent exchange. As one Haudenosaunee leader put it, "The trade and the peace we take to be one thing." While trade goods offered a practical way to share materials, the symbolic exchange of wampum and pelts in council made manifest the activity of sharing space.⁵⁴

Algonquians and Haudenosaunee alike enacted such exchanges regularly during the beaver wars, as "overlapping utilization of resources" created tensions that could be resolved only by formal agreement on the terms of distribution and by rebalancing through condolence. When nations agreed to share space, they often referred to the land as a bowl with a beaver tail from which they all might eat. One nation might invite another to hunt or even relocate in their territory, or agreements might be formed that would enable peace in an area on which multiple groups drew. However, the bowl of beaver tail could not contain a knife, which represented the potential for violence. Nations that pledged to share space were also committing to enact peace. Therefore, it is significant that the Native participants in the Deerfield Conference insisted on meeting at

Deerfield, at the foot of the beaver's tail. In council at Deerfield, Englishmen engaged in these indigenous protocols, and through their participation they were making clear commitments in the common pot.⁵⁵

Under a wide tent on the Pocumtuck *wólhuna*, beneath the great beaver and before more than one hundred Native ambassadors, the new governor of Massachusetts, Jonathan Belcher, opened the conference with the familiar Haudenosaunee ceremony of condolence, expressing a desire to maintain a peaceful relationship and trade with the colony's Indian neighbors, in contrast with the aggressive ambitions of his predecessor.⁵⁶ He engaged in wiping away the blood of war and making a clear space for open minds and hearts, offering wampum to seal his words. The Mohawks, along with their Abenaki neighbors (some of whom had strong roots in the valley), returned the gesture, telling Belcher, "The Way is now clear . . . for Freedom of Speech."⁵⁷ Here both the colony and the Native nations made a commitment to create a space where the grief and bitterness of war could be diminished, where they could speak freely, and where minds could open to the activity of making peace.

Emphasizing a change in colonial policy, Belcher spoke to the Mohawks and Abenakis about Fort Dummer, where "some of your people . . . resort," as a trading post, and pledged that Kellogg, a man who already belonged to the network of relations, would serve as a fair truckmaster. The governor wanted them to confirm that if war broke out between England and France, "your Justice and Faith, as well as your Interest will hold you to Peace with us," and he assured them, "You will be always honestly dealt with by Capt Kellogg at the Truck House." The statement revealed British concern over the ties Abenakis and Mohawks had to the French in Quebec, but also demonstrated Belcher's understanding of the relationship between maintaining the trade and maintaining the peace.⁵⁸

Sharing space was at the forefront of the colony's negotiations with the Mohicans from the Housatonic, who had come to Deerfield to discuss the establishment of a mission at Wnahtukook, their own "great meadow." The governor promised protection for their persons and lands and encouraged them to settle in a manner more "compact" so that they might be better served by the colony and their new minister. This meeting paved the way for the town of Stockbridge, an experiment in cooperative living between Natives and colonists that began with the mission. While Stephen Williams was reading a translation of the Housatonic sachem Konkapot's speech, a message came from the Hudson River sachem,

including Pinewans and Keewauhoose, confirmed it. The Great Meadows agreement was made at Fort Dummer just before Massoquint and Naunautookoah left for the conference. However, Pinewans and his brothers signed their deed for the eastern Papacontuckquash lands only after the council was concluded.⁶²

Because the governor's own words demonstrated that the Schaghticoques were living in the Kwitewk Valley and that the English were aware of their presence, the release of lands implied by the three deeds makes little sense. However, if we consider what the deeds may have meant in the context of the conference, a different picture comes to light. Traditionally, Algonquian land transactions were essentially diplomatic agreements concerning land use. Negotiations involved delineating territorial boundaries or common hunting areas with the goal of balanced accommodation of the needs of both groups. The bowl of beaver tail is only one example of the ways in which nations conceptualized cooperative negotiation of space and resources. Even as the European customs of land alienation and written deeds entered Native space, words on paper held less weight for Native people than oral communication and material exchange in council. Furthermore, because Algonquians did not immediately adopt the European concept of land as commercial property, many leaders continued to believe they were negotiating usufruct rights. They often resettled or resold land occupied and then abandoned by colonials, and in many cases Native leaders perceived that they were granting settlers the right to occupy land in common, or to settle a town within the *wóllhana*, rather than relinquishing their own right to inhabit it. In the context of the discussions over shared space and the symbolic meaning of trade at the Deerfield Conference, for Pinewans, Keewauhoose, and Massoquint the "deeds" likely represented their acknowledgment of the English presence in Ktsi Amiskw's bowl and their commitment to co-inhabit this space in peace.⁶³

In fact, the combined conference and deeds clearly delineated the relationships between people and places in the region. The Schaghticoques were confirmed as the primary Native inhabitants of their ancestral territory, while both northern Abenakis and Mohawks were recognized as having the right to trade, camp, and (probably) hunt there, based on the kinship and political ties between them. The Mohawks were honored as the closest allies of the English, and both the Schaghticoques and the Mohicans were acknowledged as people under English protection. The Mohicans' right to their own territory on the Housatonic was also

Aupaumut, saying he was ill but had sent his son to stand in his place. Aupaumut had multiple stakes in the conference, because many of his relations would be participating in the mission experiment and because the fort he had helped establish was undergoing a major transformation.⁵⁹

In addressing the Schaghticoques, Belcher expressed his desire to fully convert Fort Dummer into a space for exchange. He related that he had "set up a Trading House under Captain Kellogg's care, that you may be continually supplied in the best manner, and not cheated in your Trade," offering wampum to seal his words. The speakers, Massoquint and Naunautookoah, responded by thanking the governor for his words, laying "down three Beaver skins in token thereof." They gave him another three pelts to thank him for keeping the path "very plain and clear," a recognition and expectation of commitment to the open space of peace, trade, and communication. Giving them a belt of wampum, the governor expressed his happiness that they were living near the fort, his invitation to communicate with him through Kellogg, and his assurance that they would "have land to live on."⁶⁰

Belcher's language clearly implied that the large number of Schaghticoke men and women who gathered at the conference were inhabiting the Kwitewk intervalle and using Fort Dummer as their primary location for trade. During the years of relative peace that followed, the sachems Massoquint and Naunautookoah took the place of Hendrick and Aupaumut at Fort Dummer. Rather than serving as scouts, their main task was to facilitate the trade and the peace. They were in attendance from 1734 through 1742, arriving every year in the spring and leaving in early winter. Their seasonal occupation of the fort, in combination with other evidence, suggests that a sizable group of Schaghticoques were living in the intervalle from the spring fish runs through harvest, then returning to their refuge near Albany (or the surrounding mountains) for winter hunting and the guarantee of food that their "protection" from the Albany English provided, following a pattern similar to that of the traditional Sokwakiak seasonal use of their *wóllhana*.⁶¹

The names of both Massoquint and Naunautookoah appeared on all three of the deeds signed at the Deerfield Conference to indicate that they were witnesses. Massoquint's wife, Nechehoosqua, was the primary signer on the deed for the Great Meadows, a right passed to her through her own mother, Conkesmah. Massoquint "and Aumesaucooanah and Tecaumis[.] children of the said Massoquint and Nechehoosqua," consented to the deed as her heirs, while the rest of the Schaghticoques,

confirmed, and they were encouraged to associate and trade with the English closest to them, at Northampton, and with those settlers who would join them at Wnahtukook. The English towns on Kwinitekw (including Deerfield and Northfield) were likewise recognized, and the English trading post at Fort Dummer was confirmed as a shared space and meeting place in whose use the Schaghticoques, Abenakis, and Mohawks would all partake. For Mohawks and northern Abenakis, the location of the fort would provide easier access to English goods and a central place to trade and council with the Abenakis' southern relations and with the English from Massachusetts. For the Massachusetts colony, the conference forged an agreement that might draw these nations away, both politically and economically, from the rival French and would also draw the Indian trade away from Albany and closer to Boston. At the same time, the conference and trade ensured the security of their settlements in the aftermath of Greylock's War. For the Schaghticoques, the conference was vital because it ensured that their habitations on Kwinitekw would be protected from violence through political relationships, family ties, and the interdependence of trade; it held out the promise that their abundant *wóhluana*, which had been ravaged by war, might be transformed into a kettle of peace.

In the years that followed, the agreements made during the Deerfield Conference were enacted in the valley. Soon after the council, Kahnawake Mohawks were employed at Fort Dummer to work with Kellogg, Massoquint, and Naunautookoah. The process of trade was facilitated by the presence of leaders who were connected to the local community as well as to the larger network of Mohawks and Abenakis who came to the post, who spoke Haudenosaunee and Algonquian languages, and who were keenly familiar with diplomacy. Fort Dummer became a center of interaction between Mohawks, Abenakis, Schaghticoques, and English, people tied to each other through marriage, captivity, trade, and the common experience of both peace and war. In 1737, Stoddard and Kellogg participated in a renewal of the "Covenant of Peace and Unity" that had been rekindled "two years past at Deerfield." The conference took place at Fort Dummer, and a Mohawk speaker spoke "for our Three Tribes." Laying down wampum, he said, "We now return in answer for our three Tribes, that our desire is that it might remain firm and unshaken, and do from our heart promise that the Covenant shall not be broken on our parts, but if ever there shall be any breach, it shall begin on yours." Stoddard and his compatriots promised that they would continue "to

cultivate the friendship" they had "contracted with your tribes" made "two years ago at Deerfield," and laid down wampum to confirm it.⁶⁴

Yet even as they pledged to share space peacefully, the English had other plans in the works. A few years after the construction of Fort Dummer, as Greylock's War was coming to a close, the Massachusetts colony had devised a strategy for the construction of "Defense Towns" above Northfield (see Map 3). These plans were not altered when peace entered the valley. The winter before the Deerfield Conference, the Massachusetts General Assembly had authorized John Stoddard and Israel Williams to acquire deeds for these lands from the Indians who held claim to them and ordered a survey of the lands all the way to "the Great Falls." Both Stoddard and Williams had large land investments on Kwinitekw and played commanding roles in colonial defense. They were implicated in the Stockbridge project and were the primary organizers of the Schaghticoke deeds. Both men were present at the conferences at Deerfield and Fort Dummer, participating in the commitments to share space. Kellogg, too, played an important role, serving as an interpreter at the conferences and for the drawing up of the deeds. In 1736, only shortly after the Deerfield Conference, the committee was ready to put the plan into action, recommending that "a line of towns" be laid out along the river all the way to "the Great Falls," designed "for further defense and protection" of the colony. Even as the English engaged in councils that set up structures for sharing the valley, they were seeking to transform it into colonial space, perhaps using the conference as a way of ameliorating suspicions as they acquired a route upriver into coveted Abenaki lands.⁶⁵

Reclaiming the Great Beaver's Bowl (Western Wabanaki, 1744-1754)

Susannah Johnson, an Englishwoman captured along with her husband from the uppermost "new town" on Kwinitekw in August 1754, gave birth on the path to Odanak. Her Abenaki captors provided her with a captured horse, built a shelter for her to use while she was in labor, and made a litter, then a pack saddle, so that her husband could carry her on the long trek north. On the western shore of Betobakw, her husband, James, watched as his captors swept up those relations who remained at Schaghticoke and carried them across the lake on a French boat to Mazipskoik, then upriver to Odanak, where they "were by them received as part of their nation." At Odanak, Susannah observed her "family" in the wigwam

as they sat on the ground to eat. "A spacious bowl of wood, well filled, was placed in a central spot, and each one drew near with a wooden spoon." Both James and Susannah witnessed the common pot in action. According to James, the Abenakis had just returned from raiding the Kwinitekw settlements, and they told him they had struck his town, Charlestown, at Fort No. 4, in particular "because the English had set down upon lands there which they had not purchased." They said "that they intended next spring to drive the English on Connecticut River so far as Deerfield." By the time Susannah was captured, Pinewans and his relations were fully engaged in an effort to reclaim their relatives as well as their homelands, delineating and defending the bounds of their dish and seeking to push the English back to the "old towns."⁶⁶

In her own account, Susannah Johnson described the atmosphere in which she had lived as a child at Fort No. 4 during the decade before she had been carried away in captivity: "At this time Charlestown contained nine or ten families, who lived in huts not far distant from each other. The Indians were numerous, and associated in a friendly manner with the whites. It was the most northerly settlement on the Connecticut River, and the adjacent country was terribly wild."⁶⁷

Charlestown was one of the "defense towns" on Kwinitekw, the outermost "new settlement" on the "western frontiers" to which Pinewans's petition referred. Susannah Johnson had grown up living alongside Pinewans's family, and in taking her as a captive (for whom they would seek ransom), they treated her as if she already belonged to them, a sign of kinship and of reclamation of those "lands" the English "had not purchased." Pinewans's family was also well acquainted with the commander of Fort No. 4, Phineas Stevens. Stevens had been captured by Wawanolewat as a boy, and after his return had become a military captain and trader. Like many, he often traveled to visit his Indian "family," and he kept up a fairly healthy relationship with his Native neighbors on Kwinitekw. Pinewans frequented Stevens's trading post, and the two knew each other well. During the years of their acquaintance, Ktsi Amiskw's bowl was undergoing yet another transformation as settlers moved into the area and built forts, mills, and homes. The movement from the ideal of shared space in the Deerfield Conference to the delineation of separate spaces in the Petition at No. 2 can be understood only in the context of the changes that took place in the intervening years, particularly in the space between Northfield and Fort No. 4, between Peskeompscut and Ktsipóntekw.

Only five years after the Deerfield Conference, Joseph Kellogg gave up the command of Fort Dummer to become the Massachusetts Bay Colony's official "Interpreter in the Indian Language and for Indian Affairs." Captain Josiah Willard, whose grandfather was a notorious trader and land speculator in Penacook country, took Kellogg's place. He proceeded to outfit the fort for defense, including the construction of a stockade and the addition of "swivel guns," and encouraged settlement in the town of "No. 1," in which he held substantial financial interest. By 1742, both Massoquint and Naunautookoah had left their positions at Fort Dummer. By 1744, the English had constructed multiple forts on Kwinitekw, including Fort No. 4 and another, Fort No. 2, right on the Great Meadows.⁶⁸

At the same time, transformations were taking place in both European space and the Native network of relations. While the Deerfield Conference may have allowed an opening for behind-the-scenes claiming of space by the English, it also offered an opportunity for communication and alliance-building between Native nations. Mohawks, Abenakis, and Mohicans had become all too aware of the impacts of war and had begun to resist the pull of French and English allies. As tensions brewed overseas in Europe, the Mohawks sent messages and wampum through the networks of the northeast. In 1739, Abenaki communities in the north and east received messages from their Mohican and Schaghticoke relations confirming the alliance between them and requesting that they join with them and the Mohawks in maintaining a neutral stance if war broke out between France and England. With wampum belts they emphasized, "We only destroy ourselves by meddling with their Wars."⁶⁹

However, as the English intent to push farther into Abenaki country became increasingly clear, relationships within Native space began to realign. In the spring of 1744, shortly after the construction of Fort No. 2, Schaghticoke leaders traveled north to visit the old war leader Wawanolewat, to renew their alliance with their Abenaki relations, and to "keep open the road" between them. Inevitably, they must have discussed the impending war between France and England, as well as the increasing English infiltration of the valley, and the Schaghticoke likely sought advice from the man who had once led the movement to reclaim it. With conflicts brewing on Kwinitekw, many of the Schaghticoke remained up north, settling with families at Mazipskoik, Winooskik, and Odanak. Only a few months after this meeting, the Mohawk chief Hendrick threatened some "Eastern Indians" on the streets of Boston, declaring

that the Mohawks would "cut [them] off from the earth" if they went to war against the English. And at Deerfield, as Ktisi Amiskw watched, Eunice Williams visited her English relations on the fortieth anniversary of the famous raid.⁷⁰

By the following year, Abenakis and their allies began raiding the valley settlements, both in coalition with the French forces and in independent guerilla campaigns that followed Wawanolewat's paths. One of the first targets was Great Meadows, where Abenakis captured a settler named Nehemiah Howe. As they traveled upriver from Great Meadows, Howe related, his captors had him leave an *awikhigan* for the English who might follow on their tracks. He wrote, "On the fourth day morning, the Indians held a piece of bark, and bid me write my name, and how many days we had traveled; 'for,' said they 'may be Englishmen will come here.'" The Abenakis' continued inhabitation of the area is especially evident in Howe's account. He noted a place where they had a "hunting house," complete with a kettle and caches of food, and another where they kept canoes for crossing the large lake Betobakw, along with a supply of corn, pork, and tobacco. After crossing the lake, the Abenakis stopped at the French fort at Crown Point, where Howe encountered "Amrusus, husband to her who was Eunice Williams.... He was glad to see me, and I to see him. He asked me about his wife's relations, and showed a great deal of respect to me."⁷¹

We know that Pinewans was participating in these raids in the Kwinitekw Valley because of the appearance of his name on the Petition at No. 2. However, he may have also appeared in another captivity account, that of Mary Woodwell Fowler, who was captured from the Hopkinton fort above the river Bagôntekw, not far from Kwinitekw. Fowler's narrative related that when one Indian man "presented a musket to Mary's breast, intending to blow her through.... a chief by the name of Pennos, who had previously received numerous kindnesses from her father's family, instantly interfered, and kept him from his cruel design, taking her for his own captive." This man was likely Pinewans, and the account demonstrates one of many moments when the relationships that were formed in Native space between settlers and Abenakis prevented violence, even in the midst of war.⁷²

As Abenakis began raiding settlements, the Albany English increased their pressure on Hendrick and his relations to "take up the hatchet" against the "Eastern Indians." However, the Mohawks had

doubts about their English "brothers." They even sent a message to the Mohicans at Stockbridge that they were considering war against the English and traveled to the Housatonic with some Schaghticoles in the spring of 1745 to council with them. The English occupation of Kwinitekw was clearly an issue for all three groups. At the Albany conference that followed in the fall, Hendrick told John Stoddard, "We the Mohawks are apprehensive we shall be served at last as our brethren the River Indians, they [the English] get all their lands and we shall soon become as poor as they. You in the Broad Way (addressing himself to Colonel Stoddard) have got our lands and driven us away from Westfield, [where] my father lived formerly."⁷³

The English, however, were more concerned with securing the Mohawks' assistance in defending the valley against Abenaki raids. They called on the Mohawks' own promises "to strike" the "hatchet... against the French and their Indians in case of any infraction made by them of the neutrality" and told the Mohawk leadership that they were bound by treaty and by wampum to honor that pledge. The English even appealed to Mohawk bravado, reminding Hendrick that his Eastern relations had ignored his words at Boston and had "little regard" for his power. Governor George Clinton of New York emphasized that the Abenakis had broken the agreements to share space, saying, "Belts of Wampum will not bind them to the performance of their promises." They called on the Mohawks to defend the commitments made at Deerfield, complaining that the Abenakis had already killed "two Englishmen near Connecticut River" and were "enemies to... all their fellow Creatures, who dwell round them."⁷⁴

The Mohawks were not so easily swayed. They were suspicious of rumors that "the people of this Province had a design to destroy them" and continued to raise "the old cause that we have been cheated out of our lands." These immediate concerns, combined with the news that came from Abenaki country, made them reluctant to join the English despite heavy pressure from their Albany neighbors, on whom they depended for trade and alliance against the French. Thus, as a last resort, the English raised the issue of the French threat in council the following year. The Haudenosaunee had promised to try to persuade the Abenakis to "make satisfaction" for English deaths, but they had disregarded English requests to strike. The English reminded them of the past insults and injuries of the French, related dramatic accounts of recent French attacks,

and continually associated Abenaki action with French motivation. Finally, the Mohawks agreed to "take up the hatchet," but they seemed much more inclined to strike the French towns in Quebec rather than the Abenaki *wôlhanak*. In fact, Governor Clinton expressed concern that if the English pushed the Haudenosaunee too hard on this point, they might lose "their assistance" altogether. Given their degree of "discontent," they might "join with the French instead of assisting the English."⁷⁵

Abenakis and Mohawks alike traveled to Fort Dummer and Albany to trade; such meetingplaces increased the opportunity for social ties and exchange of news. The neutrality pact demonstrated the Mohawks' awareness of the shared space of colonization, and the Albany meetings revealed the precariousness of their relationship to the English. It would not take much for a Mohawk to join his relations in resistance to English expansion. At least one Mohawk man seems to have made this move, uniting with Abenakis in their reclamation of Kwititekw and signing his name to the Petition at No. 2.

The Mohawk called "Old Town" was most likely in attendance, along with Pinewans and Keewauhoose, at the great council at Montreal in the spring of 1747, during which Abenakis and their northern allies gathered to declare war against the English *and* the Mohawks. They made plans to raid settlements in the Kwititekw Valley and in New York. Old Town and Pinewans soon returned to the Sokwakik intervale, where they set fire to the first house built in the upper valley, camped overnight in Great Meadows, and joined a large group of their relations who had traveled south with a French company to launch a three-day siege of Fort No. 4, battling with their old friend, Phineas Stevens. But before leaving Great Meadows, Old Town and Pinewans left an *awikhigan* for the English at Fort No. 2.⁷⁶

There is a story that comes from the east, where during these same wars Abenakis struggled to oppose the dams that prevented the passage of salmon up the river Presumpscot, named for its "swarming fish." It is the Penobscot story of the "Great Bull Frog," who dammed the flow of the river and hoarded all the water for himself. It is said that Gluskap, the great transformer, saw that the people downriver were dying of thirst and sought to rebalance the water supply himself. On arriving at the pond's edge, Gluskap saw a huge monster in human form — a bloated giant with green skin and "great yellow eyes that stuck out like pine-knots." Standing strong, Gluskap exclaimed,

"Give me water to drink, and the best, at once, you Thing of Mud!" But the [monster] said, "Get out of here. Go find water where you can." Then, Gluskap thrust a spear into his belly, and lo! there gushed forth a mighty river; even all the water which should have run before, for he had put it into himself. And Gluskap, rising high as a giant pine, caught the chief in his hand and crumpled his back with a mighty grip. And it was Bull Frog. So he threw him with contempt into the stream, to follow the current.⁷⁷

The Petition at No. 2 contains all the elements of this traditional story: the teasing, sarcastic humor; the reclamation and redistribution of hoarded resources; the transformation of a being who acts powerful into something very small. The petition's satiric style evokes the "trickster" stories of Matigwes (the rabbit) and Azeban (the raccoon) and even anticipates the ironic voice of nineteenth-century Pequot writer William Apess.⁷⁸ While demonstrating familiarity with the submissive form demanded of colonial instructors, Pinewans and his relations mastered that rhetoric only to subvert it. These men laid bare the colonists' weakness by satirizing their obsessions, addressing the issue of greed that was so profoundly present in Mashalisk's deed with heavy irony, and contrasting the stereotypical English hunger for money and land with their own "wealth." One of the worst effects of war in Indian country was starvation, but Pinewans and his companions insisted that they had more than enough provisions in their own villages and that they were well aware that this was not the case in the English settlements.⁷⁹ As a historical and literary document, the petition poses a challenge to narratives of progressive colonial expansion, revealing the constantly shifting power dynamics of the northeast and the impacts of Abenaki resistance. Most important, this "text" demonstrates that writing was operating as a tool of communication and delineation in Native space, independent of colonial institutions and even in direct opposition to the colonial project. It may be the first piece of American Indian protest literature.

Pinewans and his relations put the English in the role of Ktsi Amiskw and the Great Bull Frog, writing a story in which they were the transformers, the ones who would break up the dam and let loose the flow of the river. No colonial history from the eighteenth or nineteenth century mentions this petition or even a raid on No. 2 at the time. There were no English inhabitants around to record it. Rather, the petition reveals a moment when Native people chose to record a place in their own history,

when they reclaimed their *wółhanak* on Kwinitew and reversed the tide of English acquisition. As Colin Calloway, the first historian to recover the petition, has written, by 1749 "every English settler was driven out of [the territory that would become] Vermont. Only Fort Dummer and Fort Number Four remained as English toeholds on the upper Connecticut."⁸⁰

After the war, Pinewans returned to Kwinitew and renewed his relationship with Phineas Stevens, despite their opposition during the conflict. In fact, the former captive wrote, "if not for the French, it would be easy to live at peace with the Indians." Stevens met up with his old friend at the Albany truckhouse in the late winter of 1752, and Pinewans told him he would be back at Kwinitew in the spring, when he would pick up the traps he had left at the fort before the war. Pinewans was hunting Amiskw still.⁸¹

That spring, while Pinewans and Stevens were reuniting on Kwinitew, Old Town participated in a meeting at Stockbridge, along with Hendrick's brother Abraham and a representative from the Massachusetts colony. Colonial leaders wanted to know "what measures" could be taken by the English "to promote and effect the reunion of the Six Nations." They were concerned about the Senecas and Onondogas, who seemed to be moving closer to the French. Rather than answering the question directly, the Mohawk men told Joseph Dwight, "I will tell you what has happened in former times," and then related a long narrative of dispossession and deceit. They talked primarily of the history between the Seneca, the French, and the western country, but concluded with a veiled challenge to the English: "The Governor of Canada has frequent communication with the Nations and tells them the English will undoe them. The time will come when they will build a house at the upper end of the Mohawk Land and then a second and third and then descend upon it. This the Governor of Canada says to the Mohawks." This was the story of Kwinitew, a narrative that was becoming all too familiar in Native space. Old Town and Abraham challenged their "brethren" to reverse their course, relating how the French "by cunning fair Speeches and great presents has gained possession of the Senecas' country" and saying that the Senecas had told the Mohawks that "they can't move one foot but that the English take Possession of the Ground." Relating their message without the offense of direct accusation, Old Town and Abraham warned that if the same story manifested itself in Mohawk space, the English might lose their most valuable ally. Old Town

may have fought for the reclamation of Kwinitew, but he would not be forced to fight the same battle for the Mohawk Valley.⁸²

Later that summer, in council at Montreal, Pinewans' relations asked their "brother," Phineas Stevens, to relate a stronger message to "your Governor of Boston." They made clear that any settlement above Fort No. 4 threatened their existence at Koasek and would be interpreted as an offensive act of war. They stated:

We hear on all sides that this Governor and the Bostonians say that the Abenakis are bad people. 'Tis in vain that we are taxed with having a bad heart. It is you, brother, that always attack us; your mouth is of sugar but your heart of gall. In truth, the moment you begin we are on our guard. Brothers, we tell you that we seek not war, we ask nothing better than to be quiet, and it depends, brothers, only on you English, to have peace with us. We have not yet sold the lands we inhabit, we wish to keep the possession of them. . . . We will not cede one single inch of the lands we inhabit beyond what has been decided formerly by our fathers.⁸³

Faced with a recurring English failure to share space, Abenakis finally chose to exclude them from the common pot, drawing a clear boundary between their land and the English settlements on the coast. As the Abenaki orator Jerome Atecouando told them,

You have the sea for your share from the place where you reside; you can trade there. But we expressly forbid you to kill a single beaver, or to take a single stick of timber on the lands we inhabit. . . . We acknowledge no other boundaries of yours than your settlements whereon you have built, and we will not, under any pretext whatsoever, that you pass beyond them. The lands we possess have been given to us by the Master of Life. We acknowledge to hold only from him.⁸⁴

Atecouando emphasized Abenaki indigeneity, insisting, as many Native leaders would after him, that possession of their homelands rested on a relationship that had more power than English paper. These Native rights were inherent, bolstered by generations of inhabitation, and gave Abenakis the power to proclaim that the "boundaries" that the English asserted on paper were null and void. They would delineate the bounds and determine the uses of their land. In the Petition at No. 2, Pinewans and his relations told the English that they were bringing colonial space

to a "narrower compass," pushing back the "frontiers" that the English sought to transcend and reasserting Abenaki sovereignty over the land. Likewise, in reclaiming their Native lands, Atecouando and the Abenakis forbade the English to draw from the Great Beaver's bowl and especially prohibited them from taking those resources for which the English had shown an uncontrollable greed. They were to leave the forests and Ktsi Amiskw's ponds alone.

Awikhigawógan in the Great Beaver's Bowl

Although Calloway, in recovering the Petition at No. 2, assumed that it was "dictated" by Pinewans and his relations, it is likely that they were the true composers of the petition. There are several routes through which writing may have entered the Kwinitekw Valley. As early as the seventeenth century, Penacooks and their relations were learning to write from the English missionary John Eliot and his students. A man named Samuel Numphow, a grandson of the Pawtucket sachem George Numphow and the Penacook sachem Passaconaway's daughter, was a teacher at Wamesit, just downriver from the Penacook *wólhannak* on Molódemak. There were strong ties between these communities, and many refugees from Wamesit were taken in by the Penacooks in the wake of King Philip's War. These included Simon Betokom, the Native scribe who composed letters for Nipmuc sachems during King Philip's War and for Passaconaway's grandson Kancamagus in 1685. Penacooks also took in refugees from the Sokwakik *wólhannak*, while others sought refuge at Schaghticoke, and there was much travel and interchange among these families and places as they regrouped after the war. Thus, some Schaghticokes may have acquired the tool of writing from within the Abenaki network of relations, which included relatives from Penacook and Wamesit.⁸⁵

Writing also could have entered Pinewans's network through the Mohicans, who recognized the power of paper early on. Shortly before leaving for Fort Dummer, Aupaumut made a speech in Albany on behalf of the Mohicans and Schaghticokes that revealed his awareness that their inability to read made them targets for deceit and dispossession: "We have no more Land — the Christians when they buy a small spot of Land of us, ask us if we have no more Land & when we say yes they enquire the name of the Land & take in a greater Bounds that was intended to be sold them & the Indians not understanding what is writ in the Deed or Bill of Sale sign it and are so deprived of Part of their Lands."⁸⁶

Not surprisingly, Aupaumut's grandson would grow up to be one of the most literate Indians of his generation. Hendrick Aupaumut, whose story will unfold in chapter 3, was born just a few years after his grandfather led a group of families from Muhhekunnutuk to join their relations at Stockbridge, where for some twenty years the missionary John Sergeant taught the Mohican children to read and write.⁸⁷ In 1747, at the same time Abenakis were preparing for a spring offensive on the Kwinitekw settlements, Sergeant wrote to a colleague:

Their Language is extremely hard to learn, and perhaps I shall never be a thro' Master of it: there never having been any European that ever was, except one or two, and they learn'd it when they were Children. But the young People among them learn English well; most of them at this place understand a great deal of it, and some speak it freely & correctly. There are many that can read English well; and some are able to write.⁸⁸

Jonathan Edwards, Sergeant's successor, related, "If any one among them is able to read and write, it is looked upon as a great attainment."⁸⁹ The skill of literacy was sought by Native people because they recognized the rising impact of writing in Native space. At the Deerfield Conference, the Mohican sachem Konkapot requested that the governor put the treaty in writing, and Jonathan Belcher agreed, saying, "All I have said to you from Our first meeting here shall be printed, and then be sent to you, that you may as often as you please refresh your Memories with it." Writing was taking on a function similar to that of wampum in preserving the memory of councils and enabling the community to collectively recall them on a regular basis. Konkapot also requested that laws "may be given us in Writing" to protect "our Children [from being] taken away from us for Debt." Here, writing was being called upon to operate like wampum, sealing the promises of the governor, but Konkapot's request also demonstrated the Mohicans' recognition of the binding power of written law on Massachusetts' colonists.⁹⁰

At Deerfield, Belcher also offered literacy to the Schaghticokes and their relations, proposing to send a minister to Fort Dummer to educate their children. Writing, it seems, was something to be presented for exchange. It is possible, then, that Pinewans or Keewauhoose penned the petition. They might have learned to write from Penacook and Mohican relations or received lessons at Fort Dummer. However, the most likely candidate for authorship of the petition was the first signer, Old Town.⁹¹

In April 1737, a missionary arrived in the Mohawk Valley, home to Hendrick, Abraham, and Old Town. Charles Barclay had grown up in Albany, been educated at Yale, and then been hired by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to serve as a minister and teacher to the Mohawks. Early in his stay, he wrote to John Sergeant, "I am almost amazed at the Progress the Youth make in Reading and Writing their own Language." He related, "All the young Men, from 20 to 30 Years, constantly attend school when at home, and will leave a Frolic rather than miss. Sundry of them write as good a Hand as myself." Barclay remained in the Mohawk Valley for nearly ten years, and Old Town was probably a student, for he was part of a group of Mohawks who relocated to Stockbridge in the 1750s after Barclay's successor failed to provide an adequate education for his Mohawk pupils.⁹²

In the summer of 1751, Hendrick joined his old acquaintance Aupaumut at Stockbridge, where he and other sachems participated in a council with Joseph Dwight, Joseph Kellogg, Jonathan Edwards, and Colonel Pynchon." After much deliberation, the Mohawks, according to Edwards, "signified their compliance with the proposal that had been made, of sending their children here to be instructed, and coming, a number of them, to live here, and gave a belt of wampum in consideration of it." The Mohawk families who traveled to Stockbridge were strong supporters of education and were presumably among those most responsive to Barclay's teachings. Because Old Town was a primary leader of this group, it is likely that he had acquired the valuable skill of writing.⁹³

Further evidence of Mohawk literacy, in English as well as "their own language," lies in a strategically eloquent "Petition" to Governor Clinton, in which "the Mohawk Warriors" protested Barclay's abandonment of his post "for the love of money" and argued against his claim to land that they had reserved for a teacher "as his particular property." In the petition they also addressed the problem of false deeds, complaining that some of the local colonists had obtained a patent for lands that had "never been bought from them or payd for, notwithstanding some Indian hands may be produced."⁹⁴ Ten Mohawks signed the petition "in behalf of the Conojohary Castle," including Hendrick's brother Abraham and a man named Odyoughwanoron, perhaps the original Mohawk version of a name that the English would pronounce as "Old Town," and perhaps the man who wrote the *awikhigan* at Fort No. 2. Native writers would raise the issue raised in the petition for centuries to follow, in speeches

and petitions that would echo the rhetoric, strategy, and style of Abraham and Odyoughwanoron.

Of course, there was another route through which writing entered Pinewans's network of relations. The forest that Pinewans, as a hunter, inhabited was full of marks and signs. The otter, fox, and bear who lived in the valley left signs on the marsh's edge, on trees, on stumps, and on trail crossings, giving messages to each other about the space they inhabited. Some messages were designed to prevent conflict over resources, while others might draw the opposite sex into union. Messages could be aggressive, informative, or deeply expressive of desire. Humans, although less capable of leaving appropriate messages in scent, are quite skilled at communication through signs. Thus, hunters left family blaze marks on trees to avoid competition within a watershed and left *awikhiganak* to inform other family members where the good hunting was or what space they might cover in their journey.

The *awikhiganak* left near Fort No. 2 served similar purposes as declarations of spatial relationships. The men who left the petition were marking and reclaiming their family territory against an aggressive competitor, while the birchbark message that Howe recorded gave information to the English who might follow in their tracks. Finally, Abenakis sent a message with clear spatial markers to the English through Stevens in formal writing. The message reverberated so strongly that the powerful Massachusetts authorities directed New Hampshire's Governor Benjamin Wentworth to abandon his plans to claim the northern country of Koasek.⁹⁵

Even as Abenakis vehemently opposed the occupation of Koasek and the Massachusetts authorities made their own opposition clear, Wentworth sent Robert Rogers to blaze a trail through the northern forests to the upper Kwinitekw. As Rogers went through with his men, he left blaze marks on the trees, nearly mimicking the markings Native families used in their hunting territories. Yet, as soon as Rogers left, Pinewans's relations went back through the woods and defaced the marks entirely, making their own message clear: Kwinitekw would remain Native space.⁹⁶

Amiskw, of course, left more signs than any other being. Even decades after beavers have left a marsh, the signs of their work are evident. So strong are their marks on the terrain that many generations later, when it was safe again for beavers to return en masse to reclaim the

waterways, these descendants of Ktsi Amiskw could locate the places where their ancestors had been. For even in their absence, the land was working as they had designed, making better beaver habitat from the resources of the forest.⁹⁷ Ktsi Amiskw, the Great Beaver, sits on Kwinitekw still; you can see him as you come off I-91 and turn south on Route 116. He looms above the industrial cornfields and the moribund mill towns. Ktsi Amiskw is the beaver; Ktsi Amiskw is the Abenaki and the Mohawk; Ktsi Amiskw is the English; Ktsi Amiskw is a sign of how difficult *alnŏbawŏgan* can be in Native space.

2

Restoring a Dish Turned Upside Down

*Samson Occom, the Mohegan Land Case, and the
Writing of Communal Remembrance*

Moving from the interior toward the coast, we travel downriver from Ktsi Amiskw to Pashebauk, “at the mouth of the river,” where Kwinitekw empties into Sobakw, the sea. From the extensive fields beneath Ktsi Amiskw, the Pocumtuck sent corn to feed starving English settlers in the fledgling “Connecticut” colony at the mouth of the river, which in turn fed the colonists’ notorious assault on the Pequot village, in which their relations, the Mohegans, participated. Generations later, the Pequots and Mohegans would serve as scouts for the former captive Joseph Kellogg at Deerfield during Greylock’s War. Stephen Williams recalled that it was Mohegan scouts, not English rangers, who were able to track Abenaki warriors all the way up to Koasek after the Deerfield raid in 1704. Yet, despite their steadfast alliance with the English, the Mohegans still faced the impact of colonial dispossession, exemplified by the following petition, composed by two of its prominent leaders.¹

Dividing the Dish (Mohegan, 1789)

Writing from their village on the Thames River in 1789, “the Mohegans by the hands of their brothers, Henry Quaquauid and Robert Ashpo,” sent the following “memorial” to the Connecticut Assembly:

We beg leave to lay our concerns and burdens at your excellencies’ feet. The times are exceedingly altered, yea the times are turned upside down; or rather we have changed the good times, chiefly by the help of the white people. For in times past our forefathers lived in peace, love and great harmony, and had everything in great plenty.