Our Beloved Kin

A New History of King Philip's War

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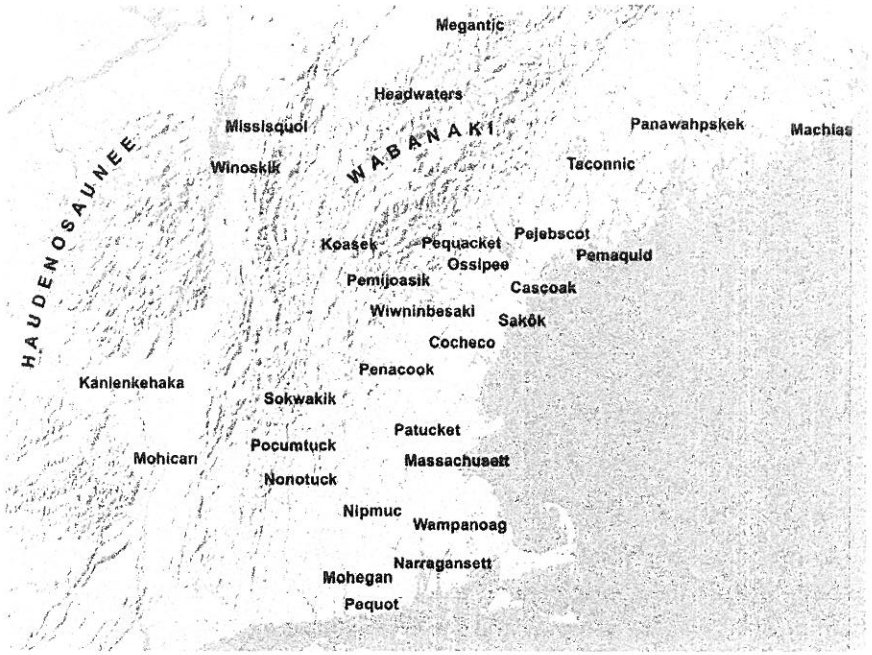
INTRODUCTION

THE ABSENCE OF PRESENCE

As the first leaves of sassafras and strawberry emerged in the Wampanoag country during the spring of 1623, a leader stepped forth to confront Plymouth colonist Edward Winslow and the Wampanoag diplomat Hobbomock as they entered the Pocasset town of Mattapoisett, on the banks of the Kteticut (or Taunton) River. All were preoccupied with the illness that had overcome a beloved man, Ousamequin, or Massasoit (his title)—a "great sachem" of the Wampanoags and leader of the adjacent region of Pokanoket. Hundreds gathered at Ousamequin's council house, and both Hobbomock and Winslow were en route to pay their respects, a "commendable" Indigenous custom in this land, as Winslow noted in *Good News From New England*. This Pocasset leader, however, had remained at Mattapoisett, perhaps to help begin cultivating the fields, process the spring fish, or look after children and elders who required care. A gunshot had sounded beyond the river just prior to Winslow's arrival, putting the leader on edge, prepared to defend those kin who also remained. From the well-worn path ahead, the leader may have heard heavy English boots, or Hobbomock's voice, lamenting and singing Ousamequin's praises. Winslow later reported that a rumor had circulated that Ousamequin had already passed away. Indeed, their diversion to Mattapoisett was in part necessitated by his concern that the sachem of this town, a man who held a much more suspicious view of the English settlers who had so recently planted on the Wampanoag coast, "would succeed" Ousamequin[1] (see maps 1 and 4).

Upon entering Mattapoisett Winslow approached the great *Sachimo Camoco*, the council house where leaders deliberated, where the sachem and his family lived and hosted guests. However, he quickly discovered that "Conbitant, the



1. Native homelands of the Northeast, highlighting places mentioned in the book

Sachem, was not at home, but at" Pokanoket, tending to Ousamequin and his kin. Instead, Winslow remarked, he was greeted and given "friendly entertainment" by "the Squa-sachim," translating to an audience in England, "for so they called the Sachims wife." This was his mistranslation. *Saunkskwa*, or "sachem-squa," was not simply the word for spouse but rather the word for female leader, suggesting that this woman who "entertained" him was perhaps more than Conbitant's wife, particularly given that by local custom she would have come from a leadership family.[2]

The saunkskwa must have carried a legitimate suspicion of this English newcomer who, by his own account, had raised a gun at her and her family during the previous year's spring gathering at Nemasket, a neighboring Wampanoag town, acting rashly on false rumors that Conbitant had killed Plymouth's interpreter, Tisquantum. Indeed, that spring, on the return journey home from Pokanoket, Conbitant would raise this encounter when Winslow assured him of Plymouth's good intentions, asking, "If your love is so great and it grows such good fruits, why is it that when you come to our places or we go to yours, you stand as if ready to fight, with the mouths of your guns pointed at us?" Yet,

despite the gun Winslow carried, the saunkskwa responded to his arrival with diplomacy. She hosted Winslow and his small party, offering hospitality, food, and rest, as well as assistance and information, when she allowed Winslow to "hire" one of her runners to seek news from Pokanoket of Ousamequin's status. Perhaps this impulse arose in part from her awareness of the danger of rumors in Winslow's hands. But it also arose from her responsibility as a leader, a choice she made about how to deal with this stranger in her space. Her response was emblematic of the ways in which Native leaders often acted as diplomatic hosts to unexpected European guests.[3]

Indeed, two years before, the Wabanaki leader Samoset, of Pemaquid (far up the coast), had greeted the startled newcomers at Patuxet (or Plymouth) in their language, saying, "Welcome Englishmen!" This reflected not only Indigenous diplomacy, but experience with over one hundred years of trade, cultural and linguistic exchange, as well as violence, disease, and captivity with "Englishmen" and other western Europeans on the coast. Indeed, Samoset was one of many Wabanaki and Wampanoag men who had been captured by European "explorers," learning a new language by necessity, and in his case, returning to serve as an intercultural diplomat. This exchange was not new to the Wampanoags or Wabanakis, who also had been traveling by canoe to exchange with each other for millennia. What *was* new about this "encounter" was that these Englishmen had come to stay, marking a discernible move from extractive colonialism (including the harvesting of trees and fish and the capture of Indigenous bodies) to settler colonialism. These newcomers also carried a vision that "Englishmen" would replace the Indigenous people, including women planters, as the rightful inhabitants of this land.[4]

Winslow's is the only account of this important woman in the Puritan narratives. She was a leader, the wife of Conbitant, and a relation to many. She experienced the arrival of the newcomers and their incorporation into Native networks of exchange and diplomacy. She hosted Winslow, and other leaders, at her large home. Like other women, she cultivated and sustained the fields that fed the families. She felt the dire impacts of the diseases that ravaged her relations. Living through the epidemics and the first wave of colonization, she experienced unimaginable grief and loss. Yet she birthed and raised at least two daughters, Weetamoo (or Namumpum) and Wootonakanuske, who survived several epidemics, as well as threats of violence, to mature into leaders among their communities. Yet in Winslow's account, this significant mother and leader was not even named.

Although well remembered within Native New England communities, like her mother, Weetamoo has often not been named in the histories and

literatures of early America, despite her prominent leadership role. Weetamoo emerged as the saunkskwa of Pocasset after Conbitant's death, recognized by Ousamequin as his relation and "true heir" to the Pocasset sachemship. In fact, the title of this book is taken from Ousamequin's description of Weetamoo as "our beloved cousin" and "kinswoman." An influential Wampanoag diplomat, Weetamoo presented a political and cultural challenge to the Puritan men who confronted her authority. Her strategic adaptation to the colonial "deed game" enabled her to protect more land than nearly any surrounding leader (a history explored in chapter one). She married Wamsutta, Ousamequin's eldest son, in a dual marriage alliance with her sister Wootonakanuske and Wamsutta's brother Pometacomet, more commonly known as Metacom, or "Philip." She played a key role and forged alliances during the infamous colonial conflict known as "King Philip's War." One Puritan chronicler portrayed her "as potent a Prince as any round about her" with "as much corn, land, and men, at her command" as Metacom, insisting she was "much more forward in the Design and had greater success than King Philip himself." Yet in many histories of the war, she is relegated to a trivial role in comparison to Metacom or colonial leaders such as Plymouth governor Josiah Winslow, Edward's son. Even recent scholarly accounts mention her briefly, a footnote to history.[5]

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Weetamoo's striking presence in primary documents and her conspicuous absence from many secondary sources led me down a long winding road of historical recovery. Tellingly, this process began with a simple question regarding the role of women leaders in King Philip's War. However, the deeper I dug the more I found myself pursuing a decolonizing process of expanding the strategies through which we might do the work of history, which in the Abenaki language is called *ôjmowôgan*, a cyclical activity of recalling and relaying in which we are collectively engaged. Thus, if you hold this book in your hands or are viewing it on a screen, I am asking you to follow these strands and storylines with me. I am saying, "Welcome," although I will warn you that, for some readers, this landscape may seem unfamiliar and unsettling. Others, of course, may find it strikingly familiar. I acknowledge that it may be difficult to follow me at times. Yet, if you come in the manner of a guest to the "place-world" I've created, and immerse yourself as I have in the documents and maps of our history, I hope your participation may be rewarded with the gift of seeing a world we all inhabit with greater insight and clarity.[6]

This book also focuses on the recovery of the Nipmuc scholar James Printer, another compelling figure absent from most histories, who was accused of "revolt" during King Philip's War. Wawaus, or James, was from a leading family in the Nipmuc mission community or "praying town" of Hassanamesit. After attending English preparatory schools in the Massachusetts Colony, James became an apprentice to Cambridge printer Samuel Greene, and helped usher in American publishing history. He worked the first printing press in New England, which was housed in the Harvard Indian College (another project of historical recovery covered in depth in chapter two). Here, the man henceforth known as James Printer set the type on the first bible printed in North America. Printer adapted to a changing and challenging environment, using his linguistic skills to survive the ravages of war, serving as a scribe and negotiator for Native leaders, and leveraging his invaluable talent to negotiate his way back to the Press. He went on to serve as a leader at Hassanamesit, enabling the protection of Nipmuc lands and the survival of his kin and community. Laboring at the Harvard Press after the war, he set the type for one of the first publications by a woman in the English colonies, a text that would become a classic of American literature. In the process, he encountered himself in the print. He was not only the printer of *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God . . . A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, but a character within it, credited with helping to negotiate the "redemption" of the Puritan mistress Mary Rowlandson, by her (and his) own hand.[7]

Both the Nipmuc printer and the Puritan mistress survived King Philip's War, but the conflict upended their lives. Both experienced forms of "captivity" and "restoration." As Jill Lepore observes, however, "The lasting legacy of Mary Rowlandson's dramatic, eloquent, and fantastically popular narrative of captivity and redemption is the nearly complete veil it has unwittingly placed over the experience of bondage endured by Algonquian Indians during King Philip's War." Captivity has most often been seen as a condition faced by settlers, particularly women and children. Until recently, as Pauline Strong relays, scholars often "neglected or distorted" the "Native American context of captivity." Margaret Newell notes that "we still know more about the relatively few Euro-American captives among the Indians than we do about the thousands of Native Americans" who were enslaved. This "absence," as both Newell and Strong suggest, is particularly grievous when we consider that "in numerical terms, the captivity of English colonists among Indians pales in comparison to the abduction, imprisonment, and enslavement of Indians by the English, and indeed, to the captivity of Indians by Indians during the colonial period."[8]

For example, in August 1675, James Printer was captured by colonial forces and falsely accused of participating in a raid—on Rowlandson's town of Lancaster, Massachusetts. Although he ultimately averted conviction, establishing

that he was in church, James was imprisoned for a month in a Boston jail and "barely escaped lynching" by an English mob (a story relayed in full in chapter five). Five months later, James's brother traveled eighty miles on snowshoes to deliver a warning to ministers at Cambridge that another raid on Lancaster was imminent. However, Massachusetts military leaders did not respond quickly enough, and in February 1676 Mary Rowlandson was captured by Narragansett men during a winter raid. As detailed in chapter seven, Mary was carried to the Nipmuc stronghold of Menimesit, where she encountered James and his extended family, held in "captivity," according to missionary Daniel Gookin, by their own relations. In an intriguing twist of fate, at Menimesit, Rowlandson was given to Weetamoo, whom she followed deep into the interior of Nipmuc and Wabanaki countries, as the saunkskwa sought protective sanctuaries for families evading colonial troops. Years later, in 1682, as James set the type on Rowlandson's narrative, he helped preserve the most detailed portrait of Weetamoo and her movements in the colonial record.[9]

As historian Neal Salisbury has insisted, "Our understanding of the cross-cultural dimensions of captivity will remain incomplete until the stories of the . . . James Printers and Weetamoos throughout American history are fully fleshed out and placed alongside . . . more familiar narratives" like Rowlandson's. This book seeks to answer his charge. All too often, histories of war focus on male soldiers and warriors, the victories and losses of captains, generals, and chiefs. In drawing James and Weetamoo's stories together, a different picture of war, captivity, and resistance arises, one that reveals the determination of a mother, who was a valiant leader, and the compromises of an erudite scholar, who became a diplomat and scribe. These stories reverse the narrative of absence and reveal the persistence of Indigenous adaptation and survival.[10]

As Anishinaabe historian Jean O'Brien and others have observed, American readers have often been drawn to the "national narrative of the 'vanishing Indian,'" including the death of Native leaders like Philip, rather than the more complex stories of Native adaptation, as with James Printer. The persistent narrative of "extinction," to which O'Brien refers, "has falsely educated New Englanders" and Americans "for generations," engendering a mythological history in which the English, and their American descendants, "replace" Indians in the land. Likewise, in writing about "King Philip's War" colonial ministers and magistrates sought to contain Indigenous resistance within narratives that would justify their replacement. Following colonial structures, many authors and historians have also contained such wars within an orderly "chain-of-events" or thesis argument. A decolonial process might reverse that trend by resisting containment and opening possibilities for Native presence. As exemplified by the

expansive and connective approach of chapter six, where multiple narratives intertwine, this book seeks to focus narrowly at times on the alternative stories revealed by tracking Weetamoo, James Printer, and their network of relations, while at other times expanding far beyond that scope to vast Indigenous geographies, including the Wabanaki northern front, where many Native people sought refuge from colonization and war.[11]

The book is organized episodically, to offer scenarios, like the encounter between Winslow and Weetamoo's mother, and insights for contemplation and critical reflection. Section breaks and subheads signal a pause in the narrative, offering an opportunity for deliberation.

LANGUAGE: NAMING WAR

One of the most crucial lenses to viewing history anew is Indigenous language, a vastly underutilized archive of place names and concepts. A new generation of Hawaiian scholars, some trained in the Ka Papahana Kaiapuni immersion schools, is bringing forth a revolutionary understanding of the historical relationship between Hawai'i and the United States, based on a vast archive of Hawaiian newspapers and documents which past historians have largely ignored, in part because they lacked literacy in the language. Our understanding of Wampanoag and New England history will be transformed as a new generation of Wôpanâak speakers, led by Jessie Little Doe Baird, turns the lens of language on the body of place names and understudied Wôpanâak language texts. Language keepers are among the most important scholars we have with us today. Their insights into a single word can reveal layers of history which we cannot understand from documents alone. As a student of Abenaki language and a scholar of history, I have benefitted tremendously from conversations with language keepers in northern New England such as Roger Paul, Carol Dana, the late Cecile Wawanolet, her son Elie Joubert, and her student, Jesse Bruchac, as well as language keepers and tribal scholars in southern New England like Jessie Little Doe Baird, Bettina Washington, Linda Coombs, Elizabeth James Perry, Jonathan Perry, Cheryll Holley, Pam Ellis, Stephanie Fielding, and Melissa Tantaquidgeon Zobel. My understanding of Indigenous language is only that of a student, not of a fluent speaker, but being able to understand the nuances of language has at times shed remarkable light on the historical landscape.[12]

The "war" in which Weetamoo and James Printer became embroiled would not have been known to them, in any language, as "King Philip's War." As Jenny Pulsipher notes, that appellation arose only in the eighteenth century,

perhaps with the publication of Benjamin Church's *Entertaining History of King Philip's War*. Thomas Church published his father's boisterous memoir in 1716, forty years after Benjamin Church led a company to capture and kill Metacom. If Custer had survived the Battle of Little Bighorn, he may have relayed a similar account of that war. Church's narrative formally marked the "end" of the conflict with his own successful containment of Metacom. The hyperbolic narrative implied that it was Church's leadership and tracking skills that enabled his company to locate and ensnare the elusive Wampanoag sachem, even though Church acknowledged that a Pocasset Wampanoag man, Alderman, struck the fatal blow. Naming the conflict "King Philip's War" created an impression of finality. The Indigenous "rebellion" had been squashed with the death of Philip, the subjugation complete, titles cleared. This act of naming contained the "war" from an ongoing, multifaceted Indigenous resistance, led by an uncontainable network of Indigenous leaders and families, to a rebellion, an event that could be contained within one year, by a single persuasive insurgent, who had taken his exit and vanished.[13]

As Lepore notes in her landmark work on the narratives of "King Philip's War," "Names of wars are always biased; they always privilege one perspective over another." In New England, when the first narratives of the war emerged, the conflict was known more broadly as "the Warr with the Indians in New-England," as Massachusetts minister Increase Mather entitled it, or "the Indian War," as Rhode Island leader John Easton and Massachusetts merchant Nathaniel Saltonstall described it. Later, this struggle would be acknowledged as part of a longer engagement, "the first Indian war," the beginning of resistance against increasing English expansion that continued in the northern Wabanaki country for the next hundred years. Indeed, the Mohegan leader Owaneco, who led an influential company of Mohegan scouts *for* the English in this "first" war and those that followed, referred to this conflict as "the warres with the Generall Nations of Indians," suggesting a series of wars waged by the English with a regional alliance of Native nations. This Mohegan naming may be the most accurate.[14]

Moreover, most of the Native people who were impacted by this war would have named the conflict in their own languages. To them (and for many Native people today) this was not New England, but *ndakinna* (to use the Abenaki word), "our land," the place "to which we belong." This is a word that denotes kinship, similar to *nigawes*, "our mother." Long before it was reinscribed as "New England," this place was named Wôpanâak or Wabanaki, "the land where the sun is born every day." The tribal names Wabanaki and Wampanoag reflect an originary embeddedness in this land, as well as the first peoples' responsibility to

welcome the sun's emergence and return. Wabanaki and Wampanoag people are born of, and continually born into, this easternmost place. While neighboring Native nations used these terms to describe the nations the English termed "Indians" of "New England," they called themselves simply "the people," the human beings (*alnôbak* in Abenaki). When introducing themselves, the people would have acknowledged the families and places to which they "belonged," like James Printer's town of Hassanamesit, in the Nipmuc or "freshwater" interior, or Weetamoo's homeland of Pocasset, on the coast.[15]

Likewise, Native people in the Northeast had multiple names for war. In Western Abenaki, with which I am most familiar, *aôdowôgan* is an activity in which people are engaged, a state of being which is temporary. In this language there is a distinction between being caught up or immersed in a conflict, *matañbégw*, or *aôdin* ("we are fighting, we are in a war"), and "to wage war against something or someone," *nedaiwdwôdamen*, or *nañsekañsw*. There are also multiple words that refer to counselor-warriors, such as *pniesesok*, in Wôpanâak, and *kinôbak*, in Abenaki, both of which translate more precisely to those who have the courage to pursue difficult courses, similar to words that describe steep terrain. Edward Winslow acknowledged that "the pnieses are men of great courage and wisdom," among the "Sachims Council," who would "endure most hardness, and yet are more discreet, courteous and humane in their carriage than any amongst them."[16] One of the most intriguing questions raised by the study of language is to consider which "name of war" a man like James Printer, a woman like Weetamoo, a pniese like Hobbomock, or Metacom himself would have used to describe the conflict in which they found themselves entangled, and which Metacom was accused by the English of waging. Native languages also have precise and complex terms for peace, and this book, especially in its final chapters, highlights the processes and places of peacemaking that the existing narratives of war obscure.

REENVISIONING "NARRATIVE FIELDS"

Both Jill Lepore and Amy Den Ouden, among others, have highlighted the important role of narration in establishing accounts of war and legal justification for settler colonialism in New England. Den Ouden provides an incisive, if somewhat ironic, comment by Peter Hulme:

"The particular difficulty associated with the establishment of the European colonies concerned what might be called the planting of a narrative, the hacking away of enough surrounding 'weeds' to let flourish a narrative field in which the colonists could settle themselves."[17]

Among the goals of this book is to provide, reveal, and restore alternative "narrative fields," which have sometimes arisen quite unexpectedly from the archive of colonial documents, like "weeds" breaking through soil into that well-established "field." Perhaps this "unsettling" process, in which I have engaged, could be better described as allowing multifaceted "plants" to emerge into the "narrative field," transforming that field into a (narrative) swamp which requires different kinds of navigation, or reading practices.

READING IN THE ARCHIVE

When I embarked on this project, I thought it would focus on recovering the stories of James Printer and Weetamoo, revealing different perspectives on the war . . . and it does. I thought this book would be about reading narratives of the war like Mary Rowlandson's text anew . . . and it is. I believed that extending our historical vision to include the vast land of the northern front was crucial to understanding the war and its aftermath, and that proved true. What I did not know at the outset was how much new material would be revealed by focusing so closely on the lives of James, Weetamoo, their families, and those who traveled north. So much had already been written about the war, so many archives mined by historians. I did not realize how many more documents would arise in the process of research that previous historians had not located or acknowledged. I could not have anticipated how such documents would challenge and unsettle the narratives of the war.

So many of the histories that have been written about "King Philip's War" over the last two centuries rely on the veracity of the narratives written by seventeenth-century colonial military and religious leaders, such as Increase Mather, William Hubbard, and Benjamin Church. Yet I found many instances where these foundational narratives are either not supported or entirely contradicted by primary records from the precise time and place about which they were written. For example, the oft-cited, contradictory narratives of the death of Weetamoo's husband, the Wampanoag sachem Wamsutta, are undermined by the records of the Plymouth Court (see chapter one). The accounts, written postwar, emphasize a suspected collusion between Wamsutta and the Narragansetts, which led the Plymouth colonial government to capture Wamsutta. Mather and Hubbard place Wamsutta's capture and death (by either illness or poisoning) within a larger narrative of longstanding Indigenous rebellion and conspiracy. In particular, Mather offered his account as proof of the "notoriously known" "jealousies" of the "Narragansetts and Wompanoags." However, the court documents reveal that rather than conspiracy with the neighboring

Narragansetts, Plymouth's real concern was Wamsutta's purported land deals with settlers in the competing colony of Rhode Island.[18]

Land stands at the center of those narratives. Mather's "history" of the war opens with a clear claim to the land he called New England, portraying Indigenous people as interlopers in a divinely gifted space. The Boston minister asserted "that the Heathen people amongst whom we live, and whose Land the Lord God of our Fathers hath given to us for a rightfull possession, have at sundry times been plotting mischievous devices against that part of the English Israel which is seated in these goings down of the Sun, no man that is an Inhabitant of any considerable standing, can be ignorant."[19]

Mather's geographic orientation is revealing. While Wampanoag and Wabanaki people recognized this region as the land of the dawn, Mather regarded New England as a place "seated" in the "going down of the sun." For Native people, this was the easternmost land, a place of origins. For English settlers, this was their final resting place, the end of their journey to a remote place to the west of their home. Yet it was also a birth place for them, a "new" England, a new "Israel" that would provide a fertile ground in which to plant their fields and raise their sons. The problem, as we will see herein, is that another people were already planting here, and they had their own new generations to cultivate, their longstanding responsibilities to this land holding greater weight than the promise of a distant "Lord God." While ancient planting fields and bonds of reciprocity rooted the Wampanoag, Narragansett, Nipmuc, and Wabanaki families deeply in these places, men like Mather also claimed a "rightful possession" to these lands, which they imagined had been granted them by a higher authority. At this intersection of competing claims, "rights" and responsibilities often conflicted. The puzzle that is both perplexing and disturbing to unpack, if our orientation is east, is the way in which men like Mather sought to portray the practice and defense of those longstanding Indigenous responsibilities to land and kin as a "mischievous" plot against "the English Israel" which had planted itself "amongst" them.

The records also reveal a much more complex role for Weetamoo. In Mather's postwar narrative of Wamsutta's capture, she is reduced to a scorned wife who erroneously believes her husband had been poisoned by settlers. In general, colonial narrators downplayed her role, and the conflicts between the colonies, while building a narrative of Indian treachery. But in the documents, she appears as a diplomat and leader who strategically manipulated and circumvented Plymouth's interests in her lands in order to protect them.

Two overlooked manuscript letters concerning Weetamoo, explored in chapter three, shed new light on the origins of King Philip's War. John Easton, the

Quaker governor of Rhode Island, composed a letter to Plymouth governor Josiah Winslow, one month before the outbreak of war, detailing Weetamoo's concerns regarding Plymouth Colony's encroachment on her lands, and urging Winslow to restrain this imposition on "the Queen's Right." Rather than addressing her pressing concerns, Winslow himself wrote to Weetamoo on the eve of war, hoping to persuade the influential leader to remain neutral. The letter makes clear Winslow's intent to contain Metacom, a neighboring sachem and Weetamoo's brother-in-law. Both letters illuminate the context of the causes of war in striking ways, as well as the reluctance of later historians to acknowledge the importance of Weetamoo's leadership or the strategies Plymouth pursued in its invasion of Metacom's stronghold. Thus, homing in on two extraordinary but neglected actors—Weetamoo and James Printer—led me not only to recover crucial documents, but to uncover a radically different "narrative field."

READING SCENARIOS

In my research, I also focused on reading the primary sources closely for what was happening on the ground—interpreting actions against statements, reading depictions of geography, paying close attention to behavior, movements, and exchanges. Influenced by Diana Taylor's *The Archive and the Repertoire*, and approaches from Native literary studies, I considered the "scenarios" contained within primary documents, reading people's actions in places of cultural and ecological significance, through a culturally specific lens. In writing, I also sought to imaginatively reconstruct these "place-worlds." This style may be especially evident beginning with chapter four, on the opening of the war, where storytelling evokes the interruptive, chaotic nature of war, even as critical close reading sheds light on events and causes.[20]

This process was enabled by language study—dwelling on a place name or title, or utilizing multiple language resources to recover a more accurate conceptualization of a practice like "tribute" or a category like "captive." But it also entailed reading texts, such as deeds, within a network of related documents. For example, one mistake that historians sometimes make is to assume that a court grant can be read as the beginning of colonial settlement, or as a marker of legitimacy. In contrast, I would often find that a "grant" issued by the Plymouth or Massachusetts Court did not lead to immediate settlement but rather to protests by Native people who inhabited those places. Sometimes the resistance to "improvement" was overt, such as dismantling built structures or assaulting livestock. In other cases it was a matter of discerning the evidence of continued

inhabitation and signs of protecting lands against encroachment. Often, statements made in court years later demonstrated that although English people claimed title, Indigenous people continued to inhabit, cultivate, and know land as their own, retaining their ancestral rights and responsibilities.

READING THE LAND AS ARCHIVE

Likewise, a large part of the research for this project has entailed walking, paddling, and driving through the places where these events took place. The land itself is an archive that demands interpretation. My own education often involved my father, along with Abenaki community leaders like Lenny Lampman, Louise Lampman Larivee, Lester Lampman, and Larry Lapan, and my tracking mentor Gordon Russell, taking me out on the land and showing me the stories it has to tell. Those excursions entailed learning to recognize the rocks that revealed the remains of homes and council houses, understanding how apple trees planted by grandmothers were still feeding deer, which in turn were still feeding families through the winter, and learning to read the flow of the river in rapids and trout pools, or, as I learned from Wampanoag tribal historians, seeing the cliffs where councils were held at Metacom's stronghold of Montaup. These ancient and ongoing places all have stories attached to them—features that evoke memories, embed oral traditions, and map subsistence and survival, and that can reveal acute insight into a historical document.

My teachers in Abenaki country consistently emphasized the importance of oral history, learned on the land and at the kitchen table. When I began this project, I imagined the same might be true in southern New England, but I learned that I had as much to learn from Wampanoag readings of the documents as I did from hearing oral histories. When I visited Massachusetts and Rhode Island, out came books, illuminating readings of the printed word, laced with ironic humor about all of the misguided interpretations that have been published over the years. We have a tendency to think of Native people, of the past and even of the present, as "oral cultures," but this characterization fails to account for adaptation. The Wampanoags and their neighbors swiftly and adeptly adopted reading and the culture of the book in the seventeenth century, making them a highly literate people. Moreover, these communities have been engaged with the historical record for multiple generations, producing analysis, synthesis, and knowledge, which is informed by their oral traditions. Consultation and exchange regarding the interpretation of documents, places, actions, and motivations is an ongoing process in which I am engaged, a process that

will never be complete. Thus, as you reach the end of this book, you will encounter more openings than closures, inviting the process of research, recovery, and exchange to continue.

My own obsession with land and place, swamps and rivers, led to many hours immersed in maps, as I strove to comprehend routes of movement, tracked particular places, and attempted to reconstruct subsistence and recreate the historical space in my mind. The maps would inevitably lead me back to those swamps and rivers, where my legs would become snagged in brambles, my feet wet and muddy. In southern New England, one of the greatest challenges was figuring out how to access and understand places that had been radically transformed by colonialism and industrial development. I encountered a stark difference in southern New England than what I had previously experienced in northern New England. Whereas so much of our forested land in Wabanaki has either been sustained or recovered, in Wampanoag country the development is overwhelming, in some places erasing any traces of the Indigenous landscape that preceded it. I will never forget the experience of traveling to Mattapoisett (in Somerset, Massachusetts), where Weetamoo grew up, to find a massive power plant overshadowing the entire peninsula.

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Readers will be able to travel in digital space to many of these places, via the book's website, at http://ourbelovedkin.com, which features a wide array of maps, images, and related documents as well as "connections" that offer additional context. These online maps, created for the book, are often key to understanding Indigenous networks, places, and movements in each chapter. The website provides multiple options for navigation. From the website's table of contents, you can select "Navigate Alongside the Book." You can also follow the embedded link to each chapter's digital "path," provided in the first endnote of each chapter in this book. Or you can select individual embedded links, which appear in additional endnotes throughout the text. Through this website, the interested reader will be able to journey beyond the page, linking to key documents, places, and contexts that further illuminate the stories contained in the book, allowing participation to extend into digital space, and perhaps, out onto the land.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE STORIES OF OUR ANCESTORS

In my travels, I realized that it was my own unique family that has compelled me to tell this story anew. The most obvious is my father's influence, teaching

me to read the land and waterways, to understand the depth of history that lies within the land, to laugh at our human fallibility in the face of so much power. Still, the more I wrote, the more I realized that an equally strong influence came from the stories I heard from my cherished *Babcia*, my mother's mother. At the beginning of World War II, my grandmother found her family suddenly displaced by a war in which she had no commanding role and no power of resistance. She lived on a farm in rural Poland with her parents, three young children, and my grandfather, who once pulled a plow by the strength of his broad shoulders when the oxen gave out. They were displaced from their home by opposing armies, coming from both Russia and Germany, and she soon found herself separated from her husband, her parents, and her siblings, as she and her children were transported on cattle cars, often in bitter cold, between Nazi labor camps. *Babcia* was a phenomenal storyteller, and her harrowing tales have stayed with me. Her ability to strategize in the midst of chaos was astounding, and led to the survival of seven children, three of whom were born during the war, including my mother. I know that but for the strength and intelligence of this woman, who never had a formal education, I would not be here.

Yet among the most important realizations I drew from her stories was that for most people in the world, war simply arrives at their door, an unwelcome invader. It is not the carefully orchestrated series of causes, effects, strategies, and events that historians often construct in the aftermath. For most people, war is a relentless storm that arrives without warning, a swirl of chaos that upends their lives in untold ways. For most mothers and many fathers, the goal of war is merely striving to ensure that their children will survive. Inevitably, this understanding shapes my reading of the documents as much as my training as a scholar. Rather than striving for objectivity, I've taken a cue from my grandmother and father.[21] I aim to strive for integrity in my research and interpretation, and pursue a relentless determination to document the strategies of survival. I acknowledge, and even cultivate, a sense of embeddedness (rather than distance) through my writing. In doing so, I draw on and respect the language of this land, which privileges participation. This includes using writing as a tool, and this book as an *awikhigan*, to draw you, the reader, into this Native space, to use the techniques of storytelling to draw you into "place-worlds," with the goal of deeper understanding.

Opening the door to Weetamoo's story meant understanding her as a mother, a sister, and a leader responsible for protecting all of her "beloved kin." Likewise, James Printer's story revealed his family's remarkable efforts to find sanctuary for their relations when it seemed that no place in their homeland was safe. This project also changed when I became a mother, transformed by my

newfound understanding of the lengths to which a parent will go to protect a single life. It brought not only deeper understanding of the actions of Weetamoo and James Printer, but also, quite unexpectedly, of Mary Rowlandson, and most assuredly, of those ancestors who found refuge in the north country and survived.

1

Namumpum, "Our Beloved Kinswoman," Saunkskwa of Pocasset: Bonds, Acts, Deeds

"Squa Sachim, Our Beloved Cousin, Kinswoman," Nonaquaket, July 1651

A unique "Indian deed" is the earliest surviving *awikhigan*, or written instrument, to which Weetamoo of Pocasset set her mark. In the document, dated July 26, 1651, the "great sachem," Ousamequin, his son Wamsutta, and his son-by-marriage Tuspaquin recognized Weetamoo, then known as "Namumpum," as both the neighboring "Squa Sachim" and their "kinswoman." They declared, as "neighbor sachems" who "bordered upon" the "confines and inheritance of our beloved cousin," that only Namumpum held the symbolic and legal authority to permit settlement at Pocasset. While acknowledging her right to allow an individual settler, Richard Morris, to inhabit a "tract" of land in her territory of "Nunequoquit or Pogasek Neck," the document also mapped crucial Indigenous relationships.[1]

The "deed" concerned a small "neck" of coastal wetland in Pocasset, on the east side of Kteticut (Taunton River), the great waterway of the Wampanoag country. At the center of Pocasset was the river Quequechand, a series of fishing falls, which flowed from Watuppa, a long spring-fed pond. Namumpum maintained a town, with her kin, by the deep pool at the falls, but they relied on a vast ecological range, including cedar swamps to the south and forested uplands to the north. They maintained several planting fields, including one at Nonaquaket, beside crystalline coastal waters. Trails and canoe routes enabled travel from Quequechand southward past Nonaquaket Pond to the neighboring saunkskwa Awashonks's territory of Sakonnet and coastal Acoaxet; and northwards via the Kteticut to Ousamequin and Wamsutta's territory of Pokanoket, Tuspaquin's town of Nemasket, and Cohannet, where the Pocasset path joined the Kteticut trail.[2]

3. Pocasset and Pokanoket, highlighting places in chapter 1

In the heat of July, Pocasset families would have been living on the coast and ponds, fishing, gathering shellfish, harvesting plants from the salt and cedar marshes, and returning periodically to check the growth of their planting fields. To the west of Nonaquaket's planting grounds, on the "neck," their English neighbor, Richard Morris, with their permission, left his cattle to graze on the copious salt marsh grasses, the cows confined by water on both sides of the pen-

insula. Yet summer was not all subsistence, but a season of diplomacy. While this deed confirmed Morris's right, it also recorded a council among sachems, Indigenous diplomatic rhetoric intertwining with English legal discourse. The deed signals the ways in which leaders like Ousamequin and Namumpum had begun to adapt the tool of writing to play a role similar to wampum, the powerful shell bead which bound people together, and bound words to deeds.[3]

Adhering to traditional protocols, the sachems opened their statement by invoking bonds of kinship, the framework on which governance rested, declaring they were "of the blood and kindred" of Namumpum. Algonquian languages express kinship through pronouns like "my," "our," and "his." Yet these terms do not denote possession, but rather evoke responsibilities and shared histories that bind people to each other and the land. Every pronouncement of kinship invokes a bond. While *nigawes*, "my mother," evokes the birth cord that connects the infant to its mother, *ndakinna*, "our land," evokes the cord that ties the people to our nourishing mother-land. Moreover, these terms embed inclusivity and exclusivity. To Ousamequin and his "neighboring sachems," Namumpum was "*my* kinswoman," "*our* cousin," as well as his "brother's daughter,"[4] deceptively simple words which, like wampum, bound their expression of reciprocal kinship to their deeds. Yet his words also drew bounds around "our land," making clear that those outside the bonds of kinship, in this case, the Plymouth settlers, could claim neither Weetamoo nor her land as their own.[5]

The bonds of kinship also required sachems to respect the bonds and "bounds" between their territories, "our land," on which families relied for sustenance. In the deed, Ousamequin, the leader recognized as "Massasoit," the "great sachem" of the Wampanoag, and Plymouth's most valued ally, spoke with reverence for his "kinswoman," insisting he commanded neither obedience nor authority in the territory of her "inheritance." Further, Ousamequin stated, "I Never did nor intended to put under plimoth any of my kinswomans land but my own inheritance and there fore I do disalow of any pretended claime to this land." Marking a clear boundary between Plymouth's "pretended" assertions and Namumpum's jurisdiction, Ousamequin expressed Namumpum's *exclusive* relationship to Pocasset, a symbolic representation of the "collective right" of Pocasset families, which he was obliged to respect as her kinsman and "neighbor."[6]

Indeed, one crucial function of summer councils and *this* written instrument was to cement and clarify relationships between neighboring peoples and their territories, including settlers. In the discourse of English land tenure, the deed allowed Rhode Islander Richard Morris the right to claim this "neck" at Nonaquaket as "property," a "tract" cut off from Pocasset, which he could pass down to his descendants or sell to another individual. Yet, in the context

of Indigenous councils, the writing registered Namumpum's protection of the usage rights of a single settler whom she had allowed in her territory *against* the claims of Plymouth men. The fledgling colony of Plymouth "pretended" to claim preemptive rights to the entire Wampanaog country, through their alliance with Ousamequin; the legitimacy and bounds of their "patent" rested in part on their treaty with him. Plymouth interpreted Ousamequin's role as "chief Sachem" and his "inheritance" of "a great tract of land" as rule of and rights to all Wampanoag territory. Yet this deed represents a clear example of Ousamequin denying that he had the power of a "king." Although he may "have put my land under plimoth government," he formalized in writing that he "never did nor intended to put under plimoth any of my kinswoman's land."[7]

The use of the word "under" is telling. While Ousamequin and Namumpum acted within an Indigenous rhizomatic system of kinship, the English settlers at Plymouth sought to incorporate them into "interlocking hierarchies" of governance. In the first treaty between Ousamequin and the settlers, shortly after their arrival at Patuxet in 1620, Edward Winslow and his fellow émigrés declared that "King James would esteem of him as his friend and ally," implying equality between the "great sachem" and the king. In subsequent renewals, the Plymouth men tried to place Ousamequin and his sons "under" the English king, who imagined all these territories as his own, setting out the boundaries on paper, lines of latitude and longitude that crossed lands "from sea to sea," upon which he would never step foot. Likewise, although most of the Plymouth men had never been to Pocasset, they claimed it "under" their imagined jurisdiction, by right of their patent from the king and their treaty with Ousamequin. That spring of 1651, they had already imagined dividing "Puncateesett [Pocasset] Neck," including the cove of Espowet, among themselves, "over and against Rhode Island." But, in an ironic turn, Ousamequin's role as *Massasoit*, a great ambassador, compelled him to use his diplomatic ability to make his allies comprehend Wampanoag territorial relationships and Namumpum's authority. Namumpum maintained here and throughout her lifetime that her Pocasset mother-land was her just "inheritance." She had the right and responsibility to maintain its integrity, and she, in consultation with her families, would decide whom she would allow to enter her network of kin. With this deed, Massasoit recognized Namumpum's exclusive right to grant usage rights to an individual settler in a particular place in her territory. Although Rhode Islanders like Morris and the Plymouth men regarded "Pocasset Neck" as potential pasture, to Namumpum, the ancient cove of Espowet and marsh of Nonaquaket sustained a vast network above and below the ground, which she was bound to preserve.[8]

This chapter will explore a number of deeds in which Weetamoo (Namumpum) appears as a major diplomatic figure, setting a crucial, complex stage for her alliance-building during King Philip's War. The saunkskwa materializes only on the eve of the war in most histories, which too often rely on postwar narratives that displace both her diplomacy and the war waged against Indigenous women. Thus, this chapter necessarily fills a substantial gap in the record; these documents demonstrate Weetamoo's leadership prior to the war, as well as the challenge she posed to Puritan men and their colonial desires. Moreover, these documents, read in the context of Native networks of kinship and geography, reveal that Wampanoag leaders did not merely acquiesce to or resist progressive land loss and dispossession, but devised "strategic adaptations" to colonization, including the deeds and "improvements" that settlers imposed upon the land.[9] Each section will present a document and lead the reader through interpretations, illuminated through geography and Indigenous cultural frameworks. Juxtaposing Weetamoo's struggles and strategic adaptations with some of the women and men in her extensive network, this chapter asks us to read rhizomatically from the time and place of particular deeds to contiguous locations and scenarios, which provide crucial context for interpretation. While Weetamoo's appearances in the historical record may first appear sparse, this chapter builds a frame through which we will be better able to understand her motivations and adaptations prior to King Philip's War.

"YOU HAVE RATHER BINE A HUSBAND THAN A WIFE"

If Ousamequin and Namumpum stood on Nonaquaket Neck as they exchanged words, they would have seen a small village across the narrows, which the English settlers called Pocasset—a name likely borrowed from the neighboring Wampanoag territory. The origin story of this fledgling English settlement, where Morris lived, elucidates the challenge Namumpum posed to colonial men, as a woman whose authority was recognized by the most influential Native men they knew. The story also reveals early competition for jurisdiction among English colonists. Indeed, Plymouth leaders desired to claim the land at Pocasset Neck "against" the people of Pocasset, not only because of the land's resources, but to enforce their power versus wayward settlers who had rebelled against their neighboring colony in Massachusetts Bay and set up their own colony which came to be known as Rhode Island.[10]

Pocasset, later renamed Portsmouth, had been established on "Aquidneck Island" in 1638 when Narragansett leaders, including Canonicus and his nephew Miantonomo, granted occupancy rights to a group of exiles, in a se-

ries of councils brokered by Roger Williams (see map 3). Their words bound with strings of wampum, the sachems gave the English families permission to exclusively inhabit the island, where they could plant, graze livestock, build houses and a church. Likewise, Ousamequin gave them permission to cut grass from neighboring necks and coves, and they agreed to give annual "rent" in the form of a coat, acknowledgement of his sachemship, and their usage rights in Wampanaog territory.[11]

These first settlers of the island had been expelled from Massachusetts Bay in 1637 as a result of the Antinomian Controversy, a conflict associated with the notorious Anne Hutchinson, who deigned to take on the role of teacher, gathering a small congregation of women in her Boston home who posed questions about John Cotton's weekly sermon. At the root of the "blasphemy" was her belief, shared with the minister John Wheelwright (her sister's husband), that pre-destined salvation, or "justification," could be discerned only through "inner assurance" of "God's grace," not through reading the signs and "evidence" of salvation, known as "sanctification," in outward behavior. This notion posed a threat to the authority of the ministers; if an individual could, through inner reflection and prayer, discern the presence of grace, she did not require confirmation by any outside body, including her minister. Hutchinson was by no means the first to propound this belief, but she was regarded as its most vexing proponent and, as a woman, the most vulnerable one. Using gendered language, Edward Johnson called her "the grand Mistris of all the rest" and her nemesis, Governor John Winthrop, suggested she was the mother of the Antinomian Controversy, "the breeder and nourisher of all these distempers." Still, it was Hutchinson's appropriation of a masculine leadership role that caused the greatest offense. During her church trial, the minister Hugh Peter chastised, "'You have stept out of your place, you have rather bine a Husband than a Wife and a preacher than a Hearer; and a Magistrate than a Subject." As Mary Beth Norton has observed, Hutchinson was punished by the ministers for "her refusal to occupy a woman's proper place."[12]

After two protracted trials, first in the General Court and then in Boston's First Church, the Bay Colony's leaders banished Hutchinson, along with Wheelwright and other defenders. Roger Williams, likewise exiled for controversies over religious doctrine, brokered a council with the Narragansetts to make space for the exiles in the fledgling colony of Rhode Island.[13] Thus, the first English village settled adjacent to Weetamoo's town and named for her territory originated with a woman who stepped out of her "place" to assume a leadership role.

Hutchinson and Weetamoo challenged the beliefs and structure of Puritan society by asserting a space of authority for women. In Weetamoo's country,

banishment was reserved for the worst offenses—unthinkable acts of violence and family betrayal that threatened the whole. However, Hutchinson's world rested on a firm hierarchy of male authority, in which families, farms, towns, and colonies needed to be "husbanded" into order by men designed by God to govern those below them. The rebellion of a woman, or the failure of men to control and "yoke" their subordinates, threatened to push the entire social order toward chaos.[14]

PLANTING POCASSET

That July of 1651, as she returned from the council, Namumpum (Weetamoo) might have joined her kinswomen to check on their planting fields nearby Nonaquaket and Quequechand. By midsummer, the corn stalks likely reached toward the sun, tassling, drawing bees to light among them. Beneath the stalks, squash vines would extend across the mounds, wide green leaves expanding to provide shade, blossoms beckoning to bees. From among the leaves, bean tendrils would spiral around the stalks, climbing toward sunflowers and sunchokes, delicate white flowers promising fruit. Working alongside the plants, the women would have coaxed soil up the mounds with noninvasive shells and hoes, ensuring the shallow corn roots were protected, not only by squash leaves but their own hands. The Plymouth and Portsmouth settlers might have seen a terrible chaos of tangled vines. But this "ecological cornucopia" had its own order, a network of relationships that fostered long-term sustainability.[15]

Across the Sakonnet river, Namumpum might have noticed a stark difference in the planting fields at Portsmouth. No large mounds rose from the earth. No women cultivated communal fields. Even Anne Hutchinson, allowed comparable freedom at Aquidneck, would have been confined in her work to the domestic household and kitchen garden, tending orderly rows of lettuce, turnips, and herbs. One of the first acts of the English men at Pocasset was to divide the land into household lots, each owned and governed by a husband. They divided lots into parcels, designated for a house, pasturage for cattle, outbuildings to house livestock and fodder in winter, and a fenced planting field. If as a child Namumpum had observed the Hutchinson household, across the narrows of the river, she might have seen William standing on the neck of the cove in his field, accompanied by two massive horned creatures, yoked to a plow. In the soil, he would have commanded the oxen to make parallel furrows in long, deep uniform lines. When this arduous task was completed, William would have taken his oxen to the other side of the rectangular field and compelled them to repeat the parallel rows to cross the previous ones. If William planted in the manner typical of Plymouth colonists, he would sow the English

grains of wheat, barley, and rye in the rows, and plant corn in small hills at the intersections, or alternatively, he might have planted English and "Indian" crops in separate fields. Just as the English king placed an imagined grid over the continent, and settlers placed imagined grids over Native territories to make towns, thus a man "husbanded" the land into an imagined order, creating a grid to contain native corn and English grain within his properly bounded fields.[16]

The English men in Portsmouth and Plymouth, the saunkskwa may have already known, gazed longingly across the narrows at her "meadows" and fields. They desired her planting grounds, cultivated and fallow, her marshlands, salt and fresh, with the passion of the righteous, believing that the land's destiny was to be converted with the plow, yoked like oxen, husbanded to its "proper" purpose, and transformed to field and pasture.

"NAMUMPUM, SQUA-SACHEM OF POCASSET"

While Portsmouth men solidified their identity as "planters" by husbanding the land into orderly fields, Pocasset women derived strength from cultivating the intertwined mounds. Weetamoo's leadership arose from her role as a cultivator of diplomacy. The 1651 Nonaquaket deed recognized Namumpum's title as "squa sachem," a phrase English men erroneously translated as "queen" or "sachem's wife." English women's status was defined primarily by the men to whom they were bound, by birth to their father's rank, and by marriage, to their husband's. Thus it was challenging, despite the recent reign of Queen Elizabeth I, for English settlers to conceive of a Native woman governing in her own right, particularly given that, in their hierarchies of race, class, and gender, an "Indian" woman would rank far below themselves.[17]

Nevertheless, in Algonquian communities and languages, the title "saunkskwa" was commonly applied to women leaders like Warrabitta and Weetamoo, as equals to their male relations. They were the "rock women" on whom entire communities relied. These titles contain the most important role that *sôgemak* and *sôgeskwak* played. They were not ruling "kings" and "queens," but rather ambassadors, "hard-bodied" diplomats who traveled to other nations, carried their community's deliberative decisions, communicated effectively and persuasively with other leaders, and traveled swiftly to return the wider deliberations home.[18] Rather than singular authorities, they formed part of a leadership network, which also included counselors and elders. Their collective responsibilities are embedded in the rhetoric of the Nonaquaket deed. The Pocasset families entrusted Namumpum to represent their intertwined interests and their collective sovereignty in their territory. She had inherited this role

from her father, Conbitant, as well as her mother, but had risen to this capacity through her community's trust. In council, she received acknowledgment from "neighboring sachems," including Ousamequin's commitment to uphold the saunkskwa's right at Pocasset against the claims of Plymouth. Likewise, she ensured that the right they had allowed to their Portsmouth neighbor would be respected. She ensured the bonds with their Wampanoag kin and the more delicate strands that connected them to their new neighbors would be cultivated and upheld.

"THIS WOMAN TATAPANUM," PATUXET, 1659

Sometime after Ousamequin made his declaration regarding Weetamoo's authority in 1651, Weetamoo married Wamsutta, his eldest son, in a dual marriage alliance joining her sister Wootonakanuske with Metacom, further cementing the bonds between these Wampanoag leadership families, ensuring peace, security, and exchange between them. It appears, however, that soon after this marriage, the Plymouth men sought to use this bond to access Weetamoo's lands.

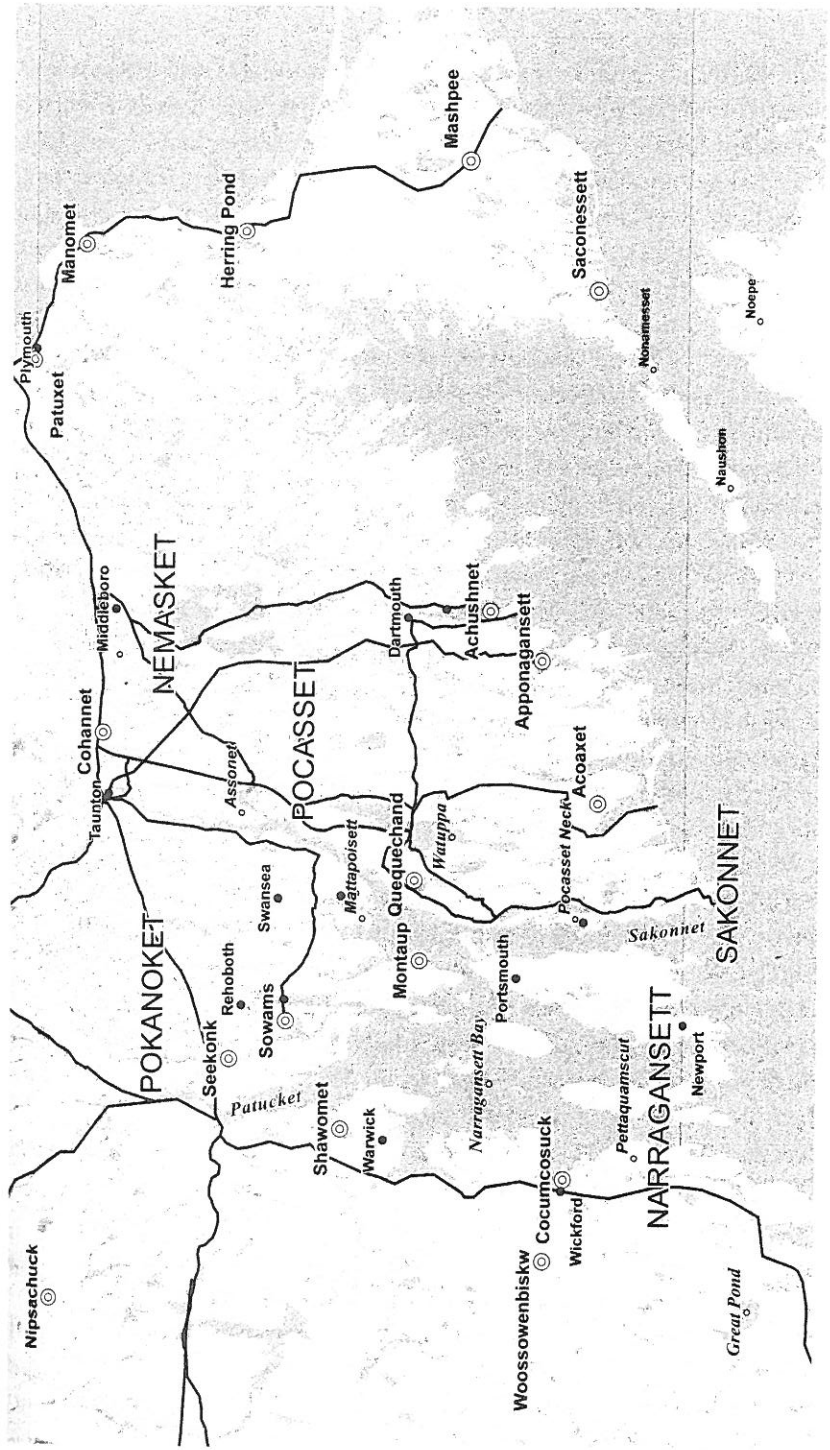
According to the Plymouth Book of Deeds, on Christmas Eve, 1657, Plymouth leaders James Cudworth, Josiah Winslow, Constant Southworth (William Bradford's stepson), and the tavern keeper John Barnes cornered Wamsutta regarding a debt to Barnes that had come due that very day. They compelled him to sign a "bond" for "a parcel of land, which they say is granted by the court of Plymouth unto themselves with some others." Yet, according to their testimony, Wamsutta insisted he was "not willing at present to sell all they doe desire." Much of the court's "grant" was on Pocasset land, which Wamsutta had neither the right nor the authority to concede. The Book of Deeds recorded that over a year later, in April 1659, "Tatapanum" (Namumpum/Weetamoo) released her husband from the bond, by her signed consent to convey those lands to a group of twenty-six "freemen," including those who compelled the bond. The large "tract" included "all the upland and meadow . . . on the easterly side of the Taunton River," from Quequechand to the "narrowing of Assonet neck," as well as the "meadow on the westerly side of Taunton river" to the "head of the Weyposet river" (see map 3). The document reported that Wamsutta and Weetamoo had relinquished for themselves and their "heirs" "any right and title . . . unto any part and parcel thereof." Then, in June 1659, the Book of Deeds recorded, Wamsutta and "this Woman Tatapanum" "appeared before" Josiah Winslow and William Bradford Jr., "acknowledging" that the previous agreement was their "free act and deed."[19]

These documents demonstrate a stark contrast with the Nonaquaket deed, which recognized Namumpum as saunkskwa and conveyed to a single settler the right to use a small "tract" of land. The "Freeman's" deed encompassed much of northern Pocasset and authorized a large group of settlers to divide the land into lots which could be sold for profit and developed into farms, mills, and pasture. The deed registered a different set of relationships as well. While acknowledging Wampanoag authority to convey land, the instrument invested the Plymouth men and the English king with jurisdiction *over* them, asserting that "Ossamequin, Wamsutta [and] Tatapanum" were "natives inhabiting and living within the government of New Plymouth in New England in America." With such deeds, the Plymouth men further constructed their vision of New England as colonial space, in which "Natives" were "inhabitants," rather than sovereigns. Although only Wamsutta and Namumpum's marks were affixed to the deed, the document also implied that these leaders consented to this construct and to their status in the colonial hierarchy. Moreover, while no titles or kinship ties appeared, Namumpum's gender was marked, in English terms.[20]

Some historians looking back upon the few words that the Plymouth men recorded might regard these documents simply as land transactions, but the records reflect merely the surface of the waters below, often concealing oral and symbolic exchanges and the acts that followed. Even the record itself reveals a compelling anomaly: all of these statements, from December 1657 to June 1659, were recorded in the same place in the Plymouth Book of Deeds, at the same time. Written on two sides of the same page, they immediately precede the division of the lands in question, in 1666. Their veracity relies on the testimony of Plymouth men *to the consenting acts of Wamsutta and "this Woman Tatapanum."* Although the historical record is sparse and sometimes confounding, composed largely of the brief phrases recorded as acts of the court, we can use a network of documents to read the scenarios that took place at both Pocasset and Plymouth and, drawing on Indigenous language, geography, and other cultural frameworks, we can begin to interpret what might have taken place on the ground.[21]

THE ROAD TO PATUXET

Ironically, the men who claimed jurisdiction over the whole Wampanoag country had only recent and limited familiarity with its geography; Winslow and Southworth were foreigners who claimed the rights of "first born sons." In contrast, when Weetamoo went to Plymouth, she traveled through territory she knew intimately. For her, this was not "New England" but Wôpanâak, ancestral ground (see map 4).



4. From Pocasset to Patuxet, wide view of places in chapter 1

As she walked the familiar path from Pocasset with her counselors, Weetamoo would have followed the Kteticut north, passing through the ancient planting grounds at Assonet, grown high with grasses and edible plants. New plants intermingled among native ones—dandelion, red clover, Englishman's foot, first brought to these lands in cattle dung. Wamsutta could have joined her en route from Pokanoket at the junction with the Kteticut trail near Cohannet, a key fishing place. Some twenty years before, the settlement of Taunton had emerged here when a high-ranking "spinster," Elizabeth Poole, who had left the Massachusetts Bay Colony, made an agreement with local Native leaders to live nearby Cohannet, on a stream off the main trail. Here, when Weetamoo was still a child, Poole had tended her cattle, relying for support on her brother and a small group of settlers who followed after her. Weetamoo may have passed by Poole's old house or seen her cows grazing as she walked by the stream.[22]

From Cohannet, the Kteticut trail led east, a road long traveled by diplomats. A canopy of nut trees provided shade from the sun's rays. At Nemasket, Weetamoo, Wamsutta, and their company could stop to refresh and exchange news with Tuspaquin, Amie, and their kin. From there, the Nemasket trail led them to the coast and the old town of Patuxet, where the English settlement of Plymouth had arisen from ground depleted by disease. As she approached it, Weetamoo must have encountered cows, roaming without constraint during warm months, and men from the outlying settlements, drawing cattle or carrying meat and cheese to market.[23]

As Weetamoo entered the English village, she must have been struck by its structure: square houses built on long, narrow lots lining the sides of the road, fences separating gardens from fields. In the center, upon the hill, stood a building similar in form and purpose to their council house. While its walls were composed of rough-hewn boards, the rectangular structure, built to host gatherings of leaders, would have been a relatively familiar sight. Outside the meetinghouse, Weetamoo would have seen another sight familiar to summer councils: the gathering of people to trade. At Plymouth, "court day" was also "market day." Weetamoo's ancestors had long come to the falls at Patuxet to engage in exchange, but the scene had changed dramatically in just a generation. Walking uphill toward the meeting house, Weetamoo would have heard a cacophony of voices in English and Algonquian, as people bartered, interacting by gestures and signs. The salty smell of fish smoked and fresh, game, salted beef and pork, intermingled with the odor of cheese turning in the heat, and the pungent stench of manure. Here in the market, she would have seen oxen, cattle, and horses yoked for travel and trade, a strange sight; no one in her community would deign to yoke a deer and offer her for trade. Yet this "stock" was

the most prized "commodity" Plymouth settlers possessed. According to the Plymouth Court records, this was the main reason that Wampanoag leaders attended the court in June 1659, to protest against livestock that was inundating their fields.[24]

FROM PLYMOUTH TO POCASSET: THE FREEMAN'S DEED AND THE OLD COMERS GRANT

Just as Plymouth was situated in familiar Indigenous geographies, so, too, were the lands described in the 1659 deed. The acts that led to the deed's creation were rooted in conflicting systems of land tenure, law, and language as well as different perceptions of the land. Traveling the Kteticut trail on a diplomatic visit to Pokanoket in 1621, Edward Winslow noted: "As we passed along, we observed that there were few places by the river but had been inhabited, by reason whereof much ground was clear, save of weeds which grew higher than our heads. There is much good timber, both oak, walnut tree, fir, beech, and exceeding great chestnut trees. The country, in respect of the lying of it, is both champaign and hilly, like many places in England. In some places it is very rocky both above ground and in it. And though the country be wild and overgrown with woods, yet the trees stand not thick, but a man may well ride a horse amongst them."[25]

To the generation that followed, including Josiah Winslow and his peers, the meadows and forests presented uncultivated land ripe for husbandry. The grasses might be cut for hay, the forests converted to lumber to build homes and feed hearth fires. Lush meadows might be claimed to plant furrows of wheat, without the labor of felling trees, while marshes could be converted to pasture. Such acts would fulfill their god's grand design, that men should husband the land, as a wife, to become fruitful. Successful improvement might even be evidence of salvation, while profits from harvested commodities, whether lumber, livestock, or rye, could be read as a "visible sign of God's favor."[26]

Absent from Winslow's description was recognition that the land was already successfully managed. Native women and men had over time developed complex systems of horticulture and forestry that fostered diversity and long-term sustenance. In his travels, Winslow saw "few places" along the great river that did not show the signs of planting fields, understanding these meadows had once been "clear." Yet his description displaced the labor of women who cultivated the soil. While some fields had been emptied by epidemics (then left alone in respect for the dead), others lay fallow as part of a cyclical horticultural system. For example, at this time, while Weetamoo and her relations cultivated

substantial fields near Quequechand falls, the ancient planting grounds on the west side of the Kteticut, which had appeared "overgrown" to Winslow, were resting. In a few years, these old grounds would be burned, fire harnessed as a tool of renewal. In the spring, the women would turn ash into the soil, mixing with decayed leaves and grasses in a nutrient balance. Then women would rebuild their mounds, starting the planting cycle anew. This Indigenous resource management system did not arise from altruistic impulse, but was an adaptation vital to survival for people who had remained in the same place for thousands of years.[27]

The English newcomers likewise possessed long-term practices and environmental knowledge, with beliefs derived from both Christian religion and pagan folklore, which were adapted to an entirely different place. The English plants that grew among Kteticut grasses were uniquely adapted to cattle husbandry, regenerating as cows stomped and chomped. Cattle had adapted to wander among meadows, grazing on grass, saplings, and small plants, eating as much as they could consume. Indigenous plants, on the other hand, were accustomed to browsing deer, which covered wide ranges and fed on a variety of plants. For domesticated grazers like cattle and oxen, Wampanoag grasslands presented a feast, but to the plants that had adapted to this cultural environment, livestock posed a significant threat. Indigenous plants were, however, well adapted to fire; some even relied on it for regeneration. The abundant open forest Winslow witnessed was a cultivated environment, annual controlled burns encouraging the growth of nut trees and edible plants, inviting game and facilitating hunting and gathering. Yet, as Native people discovered, new growth also drew English livestock, while open forests caught the eye of settlers like the Winslows.[28]

It was likely during one of these trips, following in their fathers' footsteps, that Josiah Winslow and Constant Southworth first conceived of acquiring the "meadows" along Kteticut, between Assonet and Quequechand. Unbeknownst to Weetamoo or Wamsutta, the Plymouth Court had issued a grant to these "first borns" and their fellow "freemen" in 1656, for "all the uplands and meadows . . . on the east side of Taunton river, from Assonate Neck to Quaquerchand, alias the Plain, commonly called by the name of the Falls." Yet, it is important to recognize that the "Court" was not an independent body. Southworth and Cudworth were members of that court, while Winslow had served the previous year, immediately following his father's death. The Plymouth men granted Pocasset land to themselves. Still, under English law, the colonial grant would prove fruitless unless they acquired consent from the rightful sachem.[29]

Ousamequin had recognized Weetamoo's "inheritance" of jurisdiction in Pocasset, but the "first born sons" of Plymouth also claimed inheritance of large

tracts of Wampanoag lands granted them by their fathers, the "Old Comers." The "Plymouth patent," granted by the Council of New England, endowed the men with a sense of ownership from the Atlantic Ocean "to the utmost bounds" of Ousamequin's territory at Pokanoket, or "Sowamsettt," and as early as 1639 the first Plymouth settlers endowed themselves and their sons with first choice to those lands. They selected three loosely defined tracts in the Wampanoag country "for future use and distribution," including the "garden" of "Sowamsett" (reserving the "cheefe habitacion of the Indians" on "Causumpsit Neck" or Montaup), on Cape Cod (near Yarmouth and Namskaket), and on the coast between Acoaxet and Acushnet (later Dartmouth). However, the "Old Comers" and "first born" had to secure their shares by "purchase [of] the said land of the natives."[30]

The "Old Comers," including Winslow, first made an agreement with Ousamequin, through the exchange of wampum, to build a small settlement at Sowams (Rehoboth). In 1652, concerned with competition from other colonies, they sought full legal possession of the three large tracts they claimed. They pursued deeds at "Sowams and parts adjacent," and between Acoaxet and Acushnet, with acknowledgment in wampum and goods given to both Ousamequin and Wamsutta. Simultaneously, they sought deeds with leaders on the Cape. Yet, as Laurie Weinstein has explained, early colonial "land sales," often "symbolized two contradictory agreements" wherein Native leaders understood they were "granting co-occupancy rights to use the land" within a particular territory, rather than the permanent alienation of a bounded "tract." Still, as settlers encroached on Native subsistence places and imposed jurisdiction, Native leaders progressively grasped "the full meaning" and potential power of written deeds.[31]

The "Old Comers" had initially included Pocasset Neck in their plans, presuming it was contained within the "bounds" of "Pokanoket." Ousamequin and Wamsutta had maintained, however, that these lands were under Weetamoo's jurisdiction. Rather than respecting the 1651 deed at Nonaquaket, the Plymouth men sought to circumvent the saunkskwa's authority. In December 1652, they secured an "Indian deed" for "Punkateesett," signed by an obscure man named "Ekatabacke." Through this instrument, the Plymouth men created a competing claim to Pocasset Neck *against* Weetamoo *and* Rhode Island Colony. During the June 1659 court, when Weetamoo supposedly confirmed the Freeman's deed, Plymouth also called Richard Morris to appear, offering to authorize his "Indian deed" if he would acknowledge their jurisdiction and "submitt himselfe unto this government," instead of Rhode Island Colony. Although Morris did not immediately consent, the Plymouth men granted themselves authority to seek suitable replacement land nearby. Yet Weetamoo did not put any mark,

that June or ever after, to any deed for Pocasset Neck, and settlement did not commence.[32]

Indeed, one of the most important questions we can ask, as we try to understand these documents, is: What happened on the ground, in these places, *after* the deeds were signed? What do subsequent acts tell us about the agreements behind the deeds? Earlier agreements, like those at Sowams, resulted in immediate settlement, but fostered conflicts in overlapping spaces. At the June 1659 and 1660 court sessions, Wamsutta and other Wampanoag leaders implored the Plymouth leaders to contain the encroachment of livestock on their fields, including the peninsulas of "Kekamewett" (Kickemuit), "Annawamscutt," and "Causumsett Neck" (Montaup), all adjacent to or overlapping English settlements in "Sowams and parts adjacent" (see map 3). Such records also reveal that Wampanoag people continued to plant and live in Sowams, even as settlers built the towns of Rehoboth and Swansea. A major motivation for Wampanoag leaders' participation in this council was their responsibility to compel the magistrates to control the livestock and planters over whom they claimed jurisdiction. And, indeed, this negotiation between leaders is the only reason recorded in 1659 for Wamsutta's presence in the court, with no reference to either him or Weetamoo consenting to further expansion of Plymouth's settlements. In the court records of 1659, she is not even mentioned.[33]

COUVERTURE AND CAPTIVITY

Colonists preferred to do business with Wamsutta, as a male and son of their ally. As historian John Strong has noted, although English men "were somewhat uncomfortable in dealing with women" in land "transactions," they were compelled "by the realities of Indian customs to negotiate with Algonquian women."[34] Although Ousamequin had made clear that Plymouth could not claim jurisdiction over Weetamoo's lands through their agreement with him, marriage may have offered a new inroad, adding another layer to the 1659 deed. As Norton has observed, "power in colonial America lay in the hands of men, who expected to govern women," as members of their household, alongside children, servants, and livestock. Under *English* law, Wamsutta would have gained authority over Weetamoo and her lands when they married. According to the doctrine of *couverture*, all of a woman's property rights transferred to her husband upon marriage, including those inherited from her father. This practice was so ubiquitous in the colonies that it would have seemed a natural part of how the world worked. It would have appeared as an anomaly that Conbitant's daughter, upon marriage to Ousamequin's son, would retain her "inheritance" to Pocasset land.[35]

However, in Native space, the authority to negotiate over usage and resource rights remained with the sachems and saunkskwas as symbolic representatives of the community, regardless of marriage or gender. The union of Wamsutta and Weetamoo did not negate the responsibilities they had in their respective territories, but rather bound them together. Although the colonists sought to empower Ousamequin, then Wamsutta as a single male leader with whom they could negotiate, the strength of the Wampanoags rested more in the union of families than consolidation of power in any single leader.[36] Still, even if they could not apply couverture, the Plymouth men could manipulate this Indigenous *kinship bond* to enforce the *legal bond* of debt they had imposed upon Wamsutta.

This was fast becoming common strategy. During the court sessions of 1659, the neighboring Massachusetts Colony held the Wachusett leader Nanamocomuck, son of the great Penacook sachem Passaconaway, in a Boston jail. Coveting Penacook lands to the north, the trader John Tinker had drawn a number of Nashaway men under Nanamocomuck's jurisdiction into debt and held him responsible for their bond. In the spring of 1657, when Nanamocomuck traveled to the Massachusetts Court to negotiate on behalf of his kin, the Boston men imprisoned him for failure to pay the debt. Nanamocomuck was confined in captivity for over two years, until his father and brother sold their people's cherished planting and fishing grounds on the Molôdemak River island of Wicasauke in November 1659.[37] Weetamoo and Wamsutta were likely well aware of Nanamocomuck's presence just north of Plymouth. The capture revealed a powerful leader's inability to free his son from the pretended jurisdiction of the English. Further, this case made clear how far English men would go to acquire land they desired, including imprisoning the son of an influential ally. If Weetamoo did give her consent, this was, to paraphrase Scott Lyons, consent in the context of acute coercion, particularly since the men who held the bond were also magistrates on the court.[38]

ACTS ON THE GROUND

According to the Plymouth Book of Deeds, Winslow, Southworth, and Cudworth went "upon the land" between Quequechand and Assonet, took "view of it," then "divided it into twenty-six parcels" in 1660, with the list of grantees recorded in 1666 and 1667, including themselves. On paper, it would seem that Weetamoo permanently alienated land between Quequechand and Assonet, agreeing to relinquish her "right and title" and that of her "heirs." Yet, although the land was "divided" into imagined "parcels," as with Pocasset Neck, none of the grantees moved onto their "lots," failing to "improve" the land, the most

significant marker of ownership in colonial law. Wampanoag people, on the other hand, continued in their longstanding relationships to this place.[39]

Local historians have suggested that the "Freeman's purchase" was "speculative."[40] That is, the Plymouth men invested in fertile land on the Kteticut and Assonet rivers, along a major travel route, "for future use and distribution." In the deed, they attempted to set the northern bounds of "Pocasset" at the Quequechand River, the "cleft rock" and deep pool around which the houses of Weetamoo's families were gathered. Perhaps they assumed they could eventually persuade the Pocassets to live on a smaller, reserved tract below the falls.[41] However, their claim was not performed, through either "improvement" or force. Is it possible that Weetamoo never appeared in Plymouth in April or June 1659, and that she did not sign the deed? Or was she compelled to a compromise through the force of her husband's debt? The only proof of her consent was the testimony of the very men who would profit most. Few English homes were built even in the northernmost part of her territory, and local histories suggest that Assonet was "jealously guarded" by its Indigenous inhabitants. Not until after King Philip's War did grantees, their "heirs," or their "assigns" move onto the land. Weetamoo and the Pocassets maintained the jurisdiction recognized by their "neighbor sachems," despite the grants and deeds created by Plymouth men.[42]

ATHERTON DEEDS: "A DEPRAVED APPETITE AFTER THE GREAT VANITIES," NARRAGANSETT COUNTRY, JUNE 1659

That summer of 1659, another saunkskwa, the Narragansett leader Quaiapin, faced a parallel predicament. Quaiapin had lost her husband, the sachem Mixanno, but maintained leadership at her fortified town of Woossowenbiskw (in present day Exeter, Rhode Island) alongside her sons, Scuttup and Quequegunent. Her brother Ninigret was the longstanding sachem of nearby Niantic.[43] In June, just after Weetamoo allegedly attended Plymouth's court, a group of colonial leaders and speculators "seduced" Cojonoquant, cousin to Mixanno, into signing a deed for some "six thousand acres of the best Narragansett land," a gift "in consideration" of his English "friends'" "great love and affection." These "friends" included Governor John Winthrop Jr. of Connecticut, the local trader Richard Smith and his son, trader John Tinker of Nashaway, and Major Henry Atherton. The deed included a "tract of land . . . called Wyapumseatt, Mascacowage, Cocumcosuck," which included Quaiapin's lands.[44]

These settlers formed the Atherton Company to forge a competing claim, on behalf of the United Colonies—Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Plymouth—

to the lands that Rhode Island held by right of its treaty with the Narragansetts. The Atherton Company's claim centered on Pettaquamscut, an ancient Narragansett planting ground, but eventually encompassed nearly all of Narragansett territory. The members of this company pursued their claim by coercing a "mortgage" through force and deceit from the leading Narragansett sachems, including Quaiapin's sons, her brother, and the elder Quissucquansh, as well as Cojonoquant. Using a raid on Mohegan as a pretext, Winthrop and the United Colonies sent armed forces to Narragansett (in September 1660) to demand payment for damages to English property and "sundry other crimes," which Atherton subsequently offered to cover with a "mortgage" as collateral. On payment of an astounding amount of wampum—six hundred fathoms—in six months time, Atherton promised, "this writing" would "be void and of none effect." However, the company refused to accept payment when the Narragansett leaders delivered the wampum, preferring instead to convert the mortgage to a deed. They had begun dividing the shares before the mortgage even came due.[45]

The company included Edward Hutchinson (Anne's son, returned to Massachusetts) and the Smiths, who lived at Cocumcosuck (Wickford), but other Rhode Island settlers saw the "mortgage" as a ruse and feared its potential impact on their colony. The mortgage circumvented a recent Rhode Island law, which required the court's approval for all purchases of Indian land. At his "first going up" to Narragansett, Atherton had offered Roger Williams a cut, asking him to "interpret for them to ye Sachems," but the Rhode Island leader had "refused," later condemning "this Business" as "an unneighborly and unchristian Intrusion" which was "Contrary to your Laws as well as ours." Writing to Winthrop's rival John Mason, Williams eloquently expressed his concern that the scheme arose from "a depraved appetite after the great vanities, dreams and shadows of this vanishing life, great portions of land, land in this wilderness, as if men were in as great necessity and danger for want of great portions of land, as poor, hungry, thirsty seamen have, after a sick and stormy, a long and starving passage."[46]

AN "ABUSE" AGAINST "A SQUA SACHEM, CALLED NAMUMPUM," WAMPANOAG TERRITORY, JANUARY–AUGUST, 1662

In midwinter of 1661–62, Peter Tallman, a Portsmouth, Rhode Island emigrant, produced a deed for "a parcel of land" that encompassed nearly all of Awashonks's territory of Sakonnet and part of Weetamoo's territory of Pocasset.[47] Neither saunkskwa appeared on the deed. Rather, it proclaimed that Wamsutta, "the greatest and chiefest prince or sachim here about" "freely" gave the land to

his "beloved friend." Ousamequin had recently passed away, leaving the people in deep grief. Tallman sought to extend Wamsutta's new role to claim a great "parcel" for himself.

In the deed, Tallman claimed Wamsutta's consent to grant not only the land, but also the usage rights and resources, including "medows" and "hearbidge" for grazing and "timber" for houses, fences, and fuel, as well as the "coves" and "islands," to lease or sell for pasture. These words transformed the land into an English style patchwork of property for agriculture and resource extraction, eliminating the possibility of Native subsistence. The deed explicitly included the "under-woods" which the Wampanoag men fired, as well as the fishing places, routes, and water resources of the "creeks," "fresh rivers" and "springs." The deed excepted Morris's "purchase" at Nonaquaket and Plymouth's claim to Pocasset Neck, but made no allowances for the Wampanoag people living at Pocasset and Sakonnet.[48]

The deed reveals no hint of the circumstances under which Wamsutta might have been compelled to "give" such a vast tract of land to a single settler. No compensation or exchange is noted. Tallman may have orchestrated a deed of "gift," like the Atherton men, to circumvent Rhode Island law.[49] Likewise, since he had first purchased land at Portsmouth from Morris, Tallman must have known his deed defied Plymouth's claim to jurisdiction as well. Yet Tallman did recognize jurisdiction for Wamsutta, including the right to alienate land, as "the greatest sachem" in the Wampanoag country. Mimicking the rhetoric of kinship, the deed implied the sachem's "gift" was motivated by generosity toward his "beloved friend, a merchant who traveled frequently to Barbados, carrying cattle and bringing back tobacco, sugar, and rum. However, later records reveal that this document was more "bond" than deed. And nearly twenty years later, the witnesses Richard Bulgar and Thomas Durfee testified "that the Indian Sachim called Wamsetta . . . was in a very Sober Condition and not any way Over-come in or by drink" when he signed the deed, the subtext suggesting speculation that the "gift" was induced by rum. Weetamoo's next appearance in the Plymouth Court, in June 1662, arose from her multifaceted strategy to ensure she would not be "put off her ground by" Tallman.[50]

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Six days after Tallman's deed, a "terrible" and "prodigious" earthquake struck the Wampanoag country. As darkness set, the land trembled beneath the cover of snow and a deep howl arose from below. As the rumbling intensified, the earth "shook the houses" of the English and "caused the Inhabitants to run out into the Streets." Over the course of a month, "three violent shocks" shook the land, knocking people to the ground and tearing chimneys from English roofs. Weetamoo and her relations may have interpreted the earth's trembling as a warning that erupted from the lower world, calling for restoration of a world off-balance, which the people felt in their bellies, even as they witnessed its impacts. The rumbles continued through spring, and "the earth did not cease to quake until the following July."[51]

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As the "great earthquake" shook Aquidneck Island, Ann Tallman must have held her five children close. In contrast with Weetamoo, Ann's fate had rarely been in her own hands, and her story provides a salient counterpoint to that of the saunkskwa's. (Reader, bear with me, as I appear to diverge.) Raised in Barbados among plantations and trade ports, the English girl had lost her father, leaving her mother a widow and her brother to manage the family's affairs. As an adolescent, Ann caught the eye of Peter Tallman, a German merchant who dealt in the trade to New England. He married her, and in June 1648 the two set sail on *The Golden Dolphin*, along with Ann's mother and brother, an indentured servant, "at least ten tons of cargo, including rum, cotton and tobacco," and "three slaves," all designed to bring wealth to Peter Tallman's new household in Newport, Rhode Island.[52]

In one of the earliest records regarding slavery in the colony, in 1650, one of these enslaved men, an African called "Mingoe," escaped from Tallman's household, breaking his bonds, asserting his will and moving freely, if furtively, within the Wampanoag and Narragansett country, where he may have found refuge. Apparently, the attempt at recapture was so unsuccessful that Tallman sold the right to hold Mingoe as a slave to John Elton, who had married Ann's mother, on the condition that Elton would seek out the "fugitive" and return him to his proper place within the colonial hierarchy. As Tallman recorded, "The Negro is named Mingoe & but a yong man & hath the marke of I:P: on his left shoulder: & did unlawfully depart from my house in Newport about six months since."[53]

The Rhode Island ports must have presented a strange sight to Weetamoo. Not only did she witness the "yoked" and branded animals shipped and sold at market, but other human beings. Settlers transported bound men and women as commodities from the West Indies to be sold at market in the ports of Narragansett Bay, transforming the coastal landscape to harness wealth. The enslaved then became members of settler households, both property and living beings who could be harnessed to husband the land. While slaves remained rare in Rhode Island at this time, Africans had already begun to adapt in this

new environment, sometimes resisting the physical and legal confines imposed upon them. Over the decades, some Africans and African Americans would join local Native communities, marrying in and sometimes replacing relations lost to war and at sea, entwining with kinship networks. As more enslaved Africans were "imported" *from* the West Indies, Rhode Island enacted a law that authorized the enslavement, sale, and shipment of "Indians" who damaged or confiscated English cattle and goods *to* those southern ports, part of a growing legal code which criminalized and commodified Native people.[54]

An active merchant in the coastal trade, Tallman left Newport and built a house at Portsmouth on land bought from Morris. In addition to his remaining slaves, he held a young English man in indentured servitude, Thomas Durfee, who then served as witness on his deed. One year later, in 1663, Tallman brought Durfee up on charges of "breach of his bond" and "insolent carriage" toward his wife. By that winter, it was clear that Ann was carrying Durfee's child, a truth she did not conceal from her husband. Like Mingoe, Ann and Thomas broke their bonds. Did Ann find inspiration in women like Weetamoo? And in women like Ann, did Weetamoo see the ways in which men like Tallman bound their wives, as well as the land?[55]

Colonization, as a project, is tied to gendered concepts of land and power. When the English explorer Bartholomew Gosnold first viewed the Wampanoag country at Acushnet in 1602, he recorded that he and his men stood in awe, "like men ravished, at the beautie and delicacie of this sweet soil." Portraying the coastal land as a bountiful woman, pregnant with possibility, he believed the "fat and lustie" quality of the earth, which made even the "most fertile[e] part of al[l] England" seem "barren," was simply a contribution of "God and Nature," not realizing the hand that the Wampanoag women had in its regeneration. The women had located their fields in the fertile floodplains of Kteticut in part because of the river's cycles of revitalization, to which their agriculture was uniquely adapted, with the annual spring runoff renewing and replacing the soils. Settlers' conversion of the land, including the deforestation of the open, parklike woods that Gosnold and Winslow admired, disrupted this cycle severely.[56]

Just as Ann Tallman might have seen possibilities for independence in the women at Pocasset, Weetamoo would have witnessed the possibilities for the loss of independence in the changing environment. As settlers felled the great forests to the north and west of Pocasset, Weetamoo and her kin may have noticed the snow melting more rapidly under the spring sun and the spring

runs traveling with greater ferocity, which in turn compromised the fertility of the soil. As English farms spread, the streams dried in summer while insects, worms, and disease increased, affecting plants in the fields and marshes, even as English monocrop planting and plowing drained nutrients from the soil, increasing settler demands for land.[57] These environmental impacts were not limited to the places where the English settled, but the closer those settlements were, the greater their impact on Native women's subsistence.

Yet it was not only "changes in the land" that threatened the capacity of Indigenous women to care for their communities, but more subtle changes in governance. If either Tallman or the Plymouth men planted at Pocasset, they would assert greater political influence over this territory as well, with real consequences for women. To the north, in some of the "praying towns," women's roles were becoming constrained, as men became "rulers" and took hold of the plow and missionaries imposed Puritan laws on sexual relations. In the Wampanoag country, a woman could "put away" her husband if he acted against the welfare of her family. Under Indigenous law, if she divorced, Weetamoo would retain her position as saunkskwa and the governance of Pocasset. Like any Wampanoag woman, she would keep her house and her children. Under colonial law, the husband owned all the property and divorce had to be authorized by the court, with the burden of proof on the party who claimed just cause. Ann Tallman, for example, could not leave Peter unless she proved a violation of the marriage contract, such as permanent desertion, adultery, or impotence. Rather than accusing him, she openly acknowledged the evidence that she had violated the contract herself. Yet, in doing so, she risked losing the means to sustain herself and her children. Wampanoag women planters held greater economic power, providing more than half of the food to their communities–as long as they continued to hold the land.[58]

These gendered systems of power also influenced diplomacy. When Peter Tallman's 1662 deed came to light, the saunkswkas Weetamoo and Awashonks joined together in protest, compelling the Plymouth men to rein in this neighboring settler. According to the Plymouth records, on June 3, 1662, "a squa sachem, called Namumpum" appeared in court to protest the illegitimate deed, an "abuse" of justice against her. In its record, the court did not acknowledge that she was married to Wamsutta, the purported seller. Instead, Namumpum (Weetamoo) was flanked by Tatacomuncah, counselor and brother to Awashonks, who also "complained against Wamsitta for selling away a necke of land called Sakonnet, which hee saith belongeth to him." They referred to the Tallman deed, but the court phrased the "complaint" in a way that suggested fault lay with the Pokanoket sachem. For Plymouth, the greatest issue was

Wamsutta's purported authorization to convey land to a Rhode Island settler, in territory to which they claimed preemptive right. The king's continued recognition of their colony rested on their insistence that "Wampanoags dealt in land affairs exclusively" with them. Perhaps Weetamoo and Awashonks understood it was in Plymouth's interests to nullify the deed, seeking their intervention to prevent Tallman from carrying out his intent on their grounds. Still, their complaint also enabled Plymouth to strengthen its own claims.[59]

According to their record, "the Court agreed to doe what they could in convenient time for her relief," bolstering their claim of a "protectorate" over Wampanoag lands. Tallman was prevented from executing the deed, and the saunkskwas' rights were recognized, but the Plymouth Court also took this opportunity to forcefully assert jurisdiction. In March, they had authorized Seekonk settler and militia commander Thomas Willet to travel to Sowams in arms, to discuss the controversial deed. Willet was instructed "that incase the squa sachem should bee put of her ground by Talmud [Tallman], to see that shee bee not wronged in that behalf." "Likewise," he was "to speak with Wamsitta about his estranging land and not selling it to our collonie."[60]

"THEIR KING'S BROTHER CAME MISERABLY TO DY BY BEING FORCED TO COURT, AS THEY JUDGE POYSONED."

In the midst of this maneuvering during June of 1662, tragedy struck the Wampanoag country, driving Weetamoo, Metacom, and their relations into mourning. Most accounts of King Philip's War foreground Wamsutta's suspicious death, a story recounted repeatedly, with little questioning of the Puritan narratives that give muddled explanations for his capture. All three existing accounts are postwar narratives, rife with conflicting evidence and inaccuracies, and all defend the actions of Plymouth and its wartime governor, Josiah Winslow.

The accounts by Increase Mather, William Hubbard, and John Cotton all agree that Wamsutta's death occurred mysteriously after Winslow "surprised" him at his "hunting house" on Munponset Pond, north of Nemasket, only twelve miles from Winslow's estate. Willet went to speak with Wamsutta at Sowams, they recount, to request his presence at the next court. When Wamsutta failed to appear, increasing suspicions, Winslow led a group of armed Plymouth men to approach Wamsutta and his kin in the midst of a morning meal, their hunting guns resting outside the arbor. After confiscating the guns, Winslow delivered his orders from the court—via the Massachusett interpreter, Roland Sassamon, conveniently nearby—then led the sachem towards Plymouth.[61]

Yet these accounts diverge on numerous points. Did Wamsutta greet Winslow with welcome or suspicion? Did he calmly explain the misunderstanding between them, then travel willingly with Winslow to Plymouth, as Cotton suggested? Or did "the proud sachem" fall "into a raging passion" and refuse to go, as Mather recounted? In Mather's version, Winslow proclaimed that "his order was to bring him to Plimouth, and that, by the help of God, he would do it, or else he would die on the place," pointing "a pistol at the sachem's breast."[62] Oddly, all sources agree that when Wamsutta complied, he declared he would not travel alone, but accompanied by his counselors: "he would go as a sachem . . . and not as a culprit or a prisoner." When offered a horse, Mather relayed, the sachem chivalrously declined, saying if his wife and kinswomen were going to walk, so would he. The tale has the feel of an apocryphal story, the last noble speech of an admirable "chief" who knows his fate lies before him.[63]

The accounts also agree that the court authorized the expedition because Wamsutta was suspected of rousing the Narragansetts toward a "rebellion" against the English, and had failed to attend court as he had "promised" Willet. Instead, "at that very time," Mather insisted, he "went over to the Narragansetts." Yet, despite the dramatic accounts, no evidence appears in the court records of any order to bring Wamsutta to court on these grounds. No records suggest concern that Wamsutta was embroiled in such a "rebellion," nor are there instructions for Winslow or anyone to question the sachem's relationship to the Narragansetts. Winslow was not even on the court during the spring session. Furthermore, no documents suggest that Wamsutta was expected at court. The only mention of Wamsutta in the spring and summer court records concerns his "estranging land" from Weetamoo and "not selling it to" Plymouth. The available evidence suggests, as Francis Jennings long ago discerned, that the real "rebellion" concerned Wamsutta's dealings with *Rhode Island*, and the Tallman deed was but one example.[64]

The narratives recounting Wamsutta's treatment at Plymouth are even more ambiguous than those of his capture. According to Cotton, the available magistrates gathered quickly to meet with Wamsutta and sort the matter out congenially. In contrast, Mather and Hubbard reported that Winslow held Wamsutta at his house, awaiting Governor Thomas Prence's arrival. In either case, while at Plymouth, Wamsutta became "violently sick." Winslow purportedly called on the "physician" Matthew Fuller, who administered "a working physic," which failed to cure him and may have worsened his condition. Wamsutta then persuaded Winslow and the magistrates to allow him to go home, promising to return. En route (according to Cotton) or at Sowams (according to Mather), the sachem died. Before these narratives were published, Metacom reported

to Rhode Island leader John Easton that his brother "came miserably to dy by being forced to Court, as they judge poysoned." If, as Metacom suspected, Fuller administered a "physic" that killed Wamsutta, he had motive. He and his cousin Samuel, as "first borns," had been granted lots in a planned settlement in Sakonnet, within the tract claimed by Tallman. Winslow and his family, of course, had substantive claims at Pocasset as well.[65]

In the Puritan ministers' narratives, Wamsutta's role in a fictional "rebellion" was dramatized, while Weetamoo's role as a leader was erased. They portrayed only Wamsutta's chivalry toward his wife, demoted by Mather to "his squa," a phrase which, by the end of the war, had begun to take on derogatory connotations. The narratives elided the saunkskwa's influence in court, along with the possibility that Winslow may have pursued Wamsutta's capture extra-legally, a warning by Plymouth's first-born sons that Wampanoag leaders should not "rebel" by making land deals with other colonies.[66]

Moreover, these narratives displaced the cause of Wamsutta's death onto the sachem himself. Mather blamed Wamsutta's fiery "distemper," which kept him "vexing and fretting in his spirit." Hubbard insisted that, in line with contemporary beliefs about the relationship between "humors," emotions, and illness, "the very surprizal of him, so raised his choler and indignation, that it put him into a fever." This narrative proved a crucial pretext to the war: evidence of recurring "Indian conspiracy," an example of the "insolency" of the Wampanoag men, and a displacement of colonial violence to Indigenous offense, with death an inevitable result of the fiery nature of Indian men. Or perhaps, as Cotton suggested, the death of Indians was merely the regrettable cause of sickness, the clash of savagery with civilization. Yet the brief records of Weetamoo's interactions with Plymouth regarding the Tallman deed reveal a much more complex political landscape, with contests over colonial jurisdiction and increasing threats to Native lands prompting actions that might simultaneously protect and threaten a woman leader's network of relations. Nothing, the documents show, was inevitable, or as orderly as the later narratives would have us believe; rather, at times, these documents reveal the multifaceted impacts of human actions and choices within competing systems of land tenure, jurisdiction, and belief.[67]

"PHILLIP, ALIAS METACUM, SACHEM OF POCANOKETT"

As the summer of 1662 reached its peak, the corn came into green, drawing families to Sowams. Weetamoo surely attended the festival at her sister's town, carrying gifts to Montaup. As John Cotton reported, after Wamsutta's

untimely death, "There was great solemnity in the Congratulating of Philip's coming to the crowne, by the flocking of multitudes of Indians from all parts, Sachems & others, with great feasting & rejoicing at Mount Hope [Montaup]." Yet, rather than attend the feast, "this caused the Gov'r to call a meeting" with Metacom, requiring "his appearance att the Court held att Plymouth" to renew the "former covenants" made "betwixt our predecessors and his ancestors" and to "make answer" to the "rumors" moving "too and frow of [the] danger of the rising of the Indians against the English, and some suspicion of theire ploting against us to cut us off." Although he must have been wary, Metacom traveled the path through Mattapoisett and Nemasket to arrive at Plymouth on the requested date of August 6.[68]

Ironically, although no court records indicate that Wamsutta was called to court on rumors of an Indian conspiracy, Plymouth did call Metacom to court for that suspicion, following Wamsutta's death. Such "feastings and rejoicings" happened every summer and were no cause for "suspicion," although as foreigners to this land, settlers may have interpreted these gatherings through a distorted lens. Metacom's travel to Plymouth made sense in an Indigenous context, a response to Prence's request, but also part of the annual summer councils to renew relations and resolve conflicts with neighboring nations.

At Plymouth, according to their record, "Phillip, allis Metacum, sachem of Pocanokett" expressed his "desire" for "the continuance of that amitie and friendship that hath formerly bine between" Plymouth and his "father and brother." Perhaps, in the wake of their harsh treatment of his brother, he proposed a renewal of more diplomatic relations. The "Court" agreed they were willing "to continew with him and his the abovesaid friendship." They recorded little of the pledges they made, beyond their generous "promise" to give Metacom "friendly assistance by advise" and to "require our English att all times to cary friendly towards them." From Metacom and his counselors, however, they required a profession that he and his people would "for ever remaine subject to the Kinge of England." Importantly, while Metacom made his acknowledgement to the *king*, as his father had, he did not "subject" his people to the colony of Plymouth. Thus, Metacom maintained an equal if not greater standing in relation to colonial leaders even within the English hierarchy. Along with other pledges, the court recorded Metacom's "promise" that "hee and his will" not "give, sell, or any way dispose of any lands to him or them appertaineing to any strangers or to any without our privity, consent, or appointment." This, of course, was the crucial guarantee in the wake of Wamsutta's death. While Metacom might not have been fully subject to Plymouth's jurisdiction, they secured his pledge that he would sell land only to them.[69]