

WRITING NATIVE PASTS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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WRITING NATIVE PASTS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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Writing Native Pasts in the Nineteenth Century argues that Native American historians responded to the disciplinary emergence of settler-colonial history by challenging the belief that writing afforded exclusive access to the past. As the study of history developed in the nineteenth century, the supposed illiteracy of indigenous communities positioned them outside of historical time. This exclusion served as a facile justification for their territorial displacement and political subjugation. Though studies of historical writing by Native Americans have shown that authors countered these practices by refuting settler-colonial histories and the racist ideologies on which they were based, none has considered how these authors likewise defended their communities by contesting the spurious premise that, because they did not write, indigenous peoples were unable to situate themselves in relation to their pasts. In *Writing Native Pasts*, I contend that indigenous writers advocated for the territorial and political sovereignty of their communities by insisting on the authority of their historiographical traditions. They did so, I establish, by making the content, structure, and distribution of their narratives amenable to histories whose authority derived from discursive practices that exceeded the formal constraints of the written word. These writers thus countered an intellectual tradition whose origins were inimical to their pasts and hostile to their cultural and political futures. As Native Americans committed their pasts to the page, they used the practices that had placed them outside history to demand the rights afforded to those within.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Daniel Radus was born in Syracuse, New York. He attended Cornell University, graduating in 2008 with a Bachelor of Arts degree, *magna cum laude* and with distinction in all subjects. He majored in English, minored in American Indian Studies, and combined these interests to write an Honors thesis, under the supervision of Professor Eric Cheyfitz, on the poet Maurice Kenny. In 2010, he received a Master of Arts in English from the Pennsylvania State University, where his interest in colonial and nineteenth-century American literatures was kindled by a supportive faculty and generous peers. He then returned to Cornell to complete his doctorate in English. He lives in Syracuse with his spouse, Anne; their son, George; and their two dogs, Molly and Tahoe. In the fall of 2017, he will join the faculty of SUNY Cortland as Assistant Professor of English.

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Introduction

Peter Clarke's Archive

In *Origin and Traditional History of the Wyandotts*, Peter Clarke pauses his account of Wyandot history to describe how his people, also known as the Hurons, recorded and expressed their pasts. For centuries, Clarke explains, belts of carved shells, called wampum, had been deposited “in the archive of the Wyandott nation” to preserve “the nature of a covenant or contract . . . the hidden content of which was kept in the memory of the Chiefs” (18). On these occasions, the Wyandots, much like their neighbors, the Haudenosaunee, spoke their histories into certain belts, enacting a performative ritual that coupled established traditions of oral and semasiographic expression.¹ In the nineteenth century, however, these methods evolved. As Clarke recounts, at “about this time” his people gathered “for the purpose of overhauling” their archive, “which consisted of wampum belts, parchments, &c., [sic] contained in a large trunk” (66). Adam Brown, Clarke’s grandfather, presented the belts “to the assembled Chiefs and warriors” and then

wrote on a piece of paper, and tacked it on each wampum belt, designating the compact or treaty it represented, after it had been explained from memory by the Chiefs appointed for that purpose. There sat, before them their venerable King, in whose head was stored the hidden contents of each wampum belt, listening to the rehearsal, occasionally correcting the speaker, and putting him on the right track whenever he deviated. (66–67)

For Clarke, this event served to standardize what seems to have become an unorganized cache of crucial records; it took, he recalls, “two or three days to examine and rearrange them all in proper order” (67). For our purposes, however, the event narrates more than the organizational protocols of indigenous diplomacy. When the Wyandots gathered to organize their archives, they appealed

¹ Most linguists differentiate between two systems of writing. In glottographic systems, visual marks represent units of spoken language. These scripts are contrasted to semasiographic systems, like wampum belts, wherein marks are unrelated to speech.

to a novel expressive practice: the written word. In the past, the recitation of historical events had been an oral custom assisted by the mnemonic and archival properties of wampum, a relationship consecrated, at least in the Haudenosaunee context, in revered traditions.² Now, in the nineteenth century, these oral and semasiographic histories were recorded anew in a glottographic script.

Students unversed in the fraught histories, not to mention the recent critical traditions, of indigenous literature in the United States often interpret events like Clarke's as instances of loss, as if the mere presence of written words in this archive renders the non-written corrupted or even irretrievable. There exists, of course, a sizeable collection of scholarship that counters this belief, but Clarke himself provides a suitable rebuttal.³ In his description of this new archive, the written word supersedes neither speech nor shell. Instead, the written word becomes one component of a larger discursive circuit. First, the wampum belt prompts speech; next, that speech is transcribed; last, the transcription is affixed to the belt. In this expressive network, the written word assists in the reorganization and preservation of Wyandot histories, complementing, rather than corrupting, its established peers. Clarke thus describes an archive wherein written histories are informed, and even transformed, by their oral and semasiographic precursors. Even as these traditional histories are transcribed or translated, so too are the written results of these practices altered through their inclusion in this multimodal archive. The "paper . . . tacked" on each belt serves less to supplant the wampum, or the oral expressions imbued therein, than to ensure their continued relevance.

Writing Native Pasts in the Nineteenth Century examines the literary inheritance of this archival transformation. Though scholars have focused on published belletristic texts, sermons,

² For the Haudenosaunee, the origins of wampum, and its ritualized uses, are connected inextricably to the cultural history of their political formation. As the heroes Hiawatha and the Peacemaker spread their message of peace to the hostile tribes that would later comprise the Haudenosaunee, they offer wampum to console those beset by grief.

³ In an oft-cited articulation, Craig Womack argues that "to legitimize a space for . . . native [sic] intellectual history, scholars of Native literature need to break down the oppositional thinking that separates orality and literacy wherein the oral constitutes authentic culture and the written contaminated culture" (1999, 15).

and autobiographies, in this period Native Americans more often wrote histories than these other genres.⁴ Histories, as defined for this project, were narrativized, if not chronological, records that described the historical experience of indigenous nations across immense temporal spans. Often, though not solely, their structure aligned with that of their progenitor, *David Cusick's Sketches of Ancient History of the Six Nations*, the subject of the first chapter. In *Sketches*, Cusick divides his history of the Haudenosaunee into three parts: first, he describes their cosmological origins; next, their migration to their present lands; and last, their consolidation as a sociopolitical entity. Other examples, like Andrew Blackbird's *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians*, a subject of the third chapter, adhered to this structure and then included extensive post-contact histories, as well. Still others, particularly William Apess's *Eulogy on King Philip*, the focus of the second chapter, narrated these post-contact histories exclusively, a detail that perhaps explains its outsize acclaim and attention relative to its understudied peers. In spite of their various structures, these histories, uniformly and from the outset of the genre, were political documents. Though the expectations of settler-colonial readers, and the barriers to publication for non-white authors, often mandated that these histories be advertised as curious vestiges of an exotic and vanishing race, still their authors considered them as alternatives to the histories propagated by their settler-colonial counterparts.⁵

Cusick, for example, implied his opposition to those histories, stressing in the preface to *Sketches* that he had “endeavored to throw some light on the history of the original population of this country, which . . . has never been recorded” (1). George Copway, evidently not a reader of

⁴ Though Robert Warrior has argued for the “historical centrality of nonfiction in Native writing in English since the late eighteenth century,” scholars often eschew histories, as a nonfiction genre, in favor of others (2005, xvi). This is striking, not only because of the amount of histories written in this period, but also since, as Lisa Brooks argues, the divide “between what is literary and what is historical, particularly in Native American writing,” is superficial (xxii).

⁵ Several examples of the genre, including those written by Cusick and Blackbird, were written in part to capitalize on nineteenth-century Americans’ interest in indigenous culture, though of course this interest was predicated on the presumed extinction of indigenous peoples. Most often, these histories included vocabularies and phrasebooks in the indigenous languages of their authors.

Sketches, also asserted the unprecedented nature of his effort, noting that *Traditional History and Characteristic Sketches of the Ojibway Nation* was “the first volume of Indian history written by an Indian” (xi). Others stated their opposition explicitly, criticizing the inaccuracies and excesses of settler-colonial records. In *History of the Ojibway People*, William Warren demurs, if slightly, explaining that his people have “preserved accurate and detailed accounts” that are worth “much consideration, although they may slightly differ from the accounts which standard historians and writers have presented” (113). His peers are less diplomatic. Joseph Nicolai begins his history of the Penobscot, *Life and Traditions of the Red Man*, with the note that “none of the studies nor the researches of the white man have ever penetrated” their traditions, and he assures his readers that his work appeals to “no historical works of the white man, nor any other written history from any source” (95). Blackbird argues that “white historians” have distorted his peoples’ histories, often purposely, and that there exists no “correct account of the Ottawa and Chippewa . . . according to our knowledge of ourselves” (1887, 6). Elias Johnson, whose *Legends, Traditions, and Laws of the Iroquois* borrows verbatim from several sources, contends that “the Histories which are in the schools . . . are still very deficient in what they relate of Indian History” (3).⁶ Clarke, perhaps the most lyrical of these writers, describes his opposition to settler-colonial histories in martial tones, noting that while his “work may appear rather strange and new-fledged,” he persists nonetheless, hoping to “dodge the missile of the critic who may attempt to knock it into oblivion” (iv).

As their statements reveal, these authors sought to amend the historical record, presenting to settler-colonial audiences histories that supported their contemporaneous struggles for political and territorial rights. Blackbird, for example, decries settler-colonial historians for their failure to

⁶ Johnson, here and throughout much of his work, appropriates Anna Johnson’s *The Iroquois; or, the Bright Side of Indian Character*. Anna Johnson, who wrote under the pseudonym Minnie Myrtle, was a progressive reformer and friend of Asher Wright, a missionary to the Senecas at Cattaraugus in the middle of the nineteenth century.

mention that, in their cession of Mackinac Island, the Ojibwes “reserved a strip of land all around . . . as far as a stone’s throw from its water’s edge” (1887, 20). The candor of these writers, not to mention the righteousness of their cause, has caused scholars to read these histories primarily for how their content departs from the historical records of their settler-colonial peers. This approach remains an important one, not least because of its insistence on asserting the rectitude of histories otherwise obscured by the received interpretation of settler-colonial historians. Efforts to recover these histories improve the circumstances of present-day indigenous communities, as when these accounts are used to attain legal redress or even recognition from the United States. Nonetheless, there seems opportunities for readers of these books to consider seriously the critique of Deborah Doxtator, who, almost two decades ago, lamented that these records were “more often viewed as sources of history than as themselves historiographic” (34). Though this is a fine distinction, still it instructs us to read these histories not only for their content, but also for their capacity to reveal the cultural practices used to produce and preserve that content.⁷ Scholars might consider, that is, the discursive origins of these histories and the strategies used to translate them into writing.

The authors of these histories offer ample justification for this approach. Some even share Doxtator’s lament. In a series of letters exchanged with the antiquarian Lyman Draper, Clarke, if implicitly, criticizes settler-colonial historians’ insistence on reading histories like his as sources. Draper, who sent similar missives to dozens of potential informants, writes brusquely, imploring

⁷ Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney clarifies usefully that the idea of “history” encompasses not simply the content of historical records but also the traditions and practices that constitute the “culturally patterned way or ways of experiencing and understanding . . . [and] constructing and representing history” (4).

Clarke to provide the details absent from his book.⁸ He entreats Clarke to answer several queries, all of which contain citations and annotated remarks (figure 1). His final message concludes with

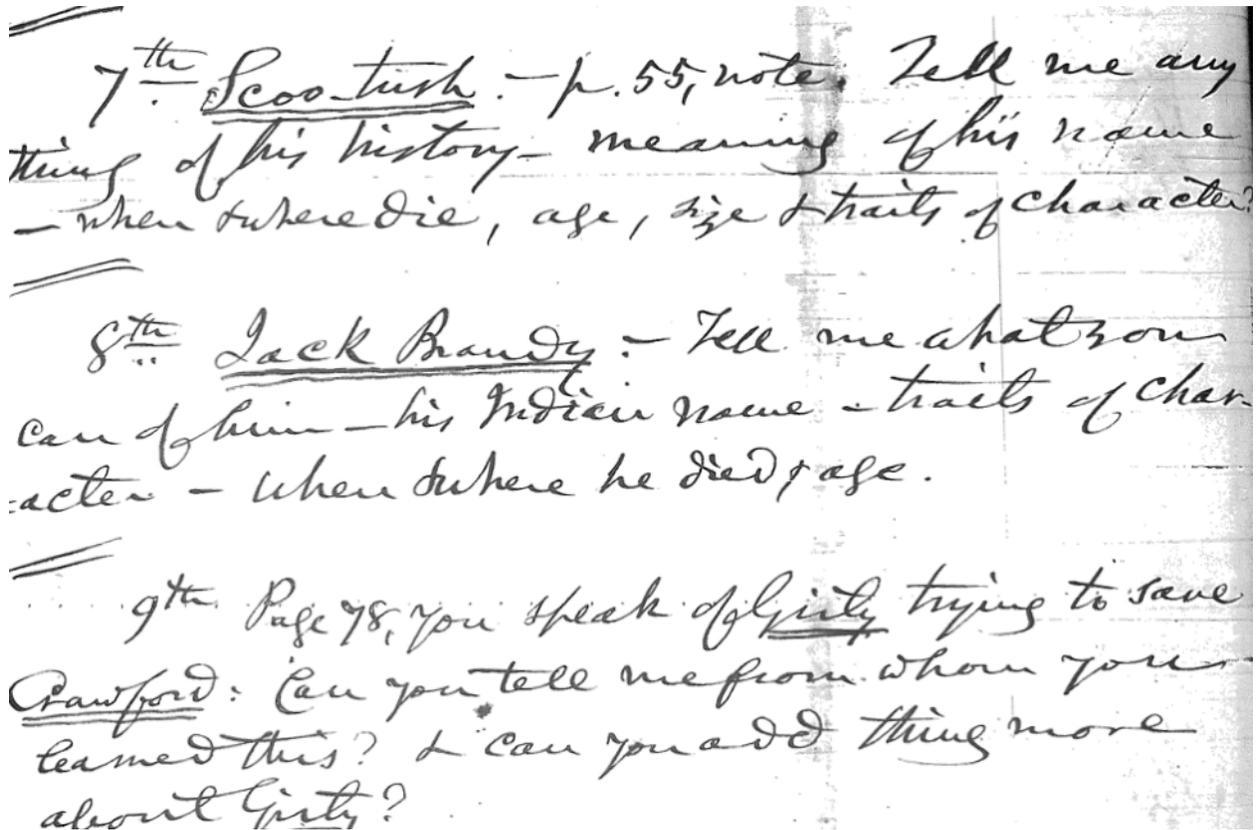


Figure 1. Lyman Draper to Peter D. Clarke, 19 June 1882. (Detail)

a representative demand: “Pray, answer all the 8 inquiries, in their order, + as fully as you can.”⁹ Clarke often recoils from these requests. When asked about his sources, for example, he demurs. “I am sorry to tell you,” he responds, “I am at a loss for how to give you a more definite account . . . as I said to you before, the old people of my tribe I gathered it from have passed away.”¹⁰ He does the same in reply to Draper’s appeal that he “try hard to recall [his] authorities,” writing that

⁸ Draper exemplifies what Phillip Round deems the “non-Indian cultural entrepreneur,” men who, in the nineteenth century, solicited and collected indigenous historical materials, often to profit from their publication (180).

⁹ Lyman Draper to Peter D. Clarke, 1 September 1882.

¹⁰ Peter D. Clarke to Lyman Draper, 6 July 1882.

he finds it “rather difficult to learn more of the different characters you mention.”¹¹ One need not doubt Clarke’s avowed ignorance to perceive in these responses an implicit criticism of Draper’s solicitations. His failure to answer these questions adequately suggests that, for Clarke, the ideals of settler-colonial historians were tangential to his designs. When Draper pleads for further details about the death of Tecumseh, Clarke refuses, stating that “at that time, you and I, were nowhere under the Sun.”¹² This response is, of course, a wry deflection, an apologia for his ignorance, but Clarke also signals his suspicion as to the utility, and even the existence, of definite accounts and authorities. He seems even to have anticipated challenges like Draper’s, affirming in his preface that his book need not conform to the ideals of settler-colonial historians; to them, he notes, “this history may appear like some phantom from the past” (v). Clarke, his remarks confirm, found his book valuable apart from its status as a mere source of historical knowledge.

His peers shared this sentiment. Blackbird explains that he was inspired to write not only to contest settler-colonial accounts, but also to preserve the cultural traditions that inhered in his narratives (1887, 25). Others maintained that their histories resulted from traditions unavailable, or even inimical, to settler-colonial historians. Johnson, curiously, given the appropriative nature of his effort, reassures his audience that he “frequent[ed] the old people . . . and solicited them to relate the old Legends and their Traditions” (6). Nicolai argues stridently that *Life and Traditions* renounces settler-colonial influences in favor of the knowledge he has attained “in the researches of [his] people’s past” (95). Warren writes similarly that he appealed directly to “the old men and chiefs who are repositories of the traditions of the tribe” (27). These historians, and many of their peers, insisted on the historical authority—on the “historicity”—of their discursive practices, and

¹¹ Lyman Draper to Peter D. Clarke, 10 July 1882; Peter D. Clarke to Lyman Draper, 16 July 1882.

¹² Peter D. Clarke to Lyman Draper, 5 June 1882.

not only on the rectitude of their contents. Their books thus sought to defend, or even legitimize, the process of historical production, in addition to its results. This effort was, of course, political. As Angela Wilson observes, to consider histories like these as more than “simple disseminations of historical fact” is to recognize their consequence as “transmissions of culture upon which our survival as a people depends” (36). In their consideration for the process of historical production, rather than the product, these authors argued not only for historical redress, but also for the right to experience, represent, and distribute their histories in accord with their expressive traditions.¹³

At the same time, however, these authors understood the difficulties inherent in their task. Their written defense of these traditions was fraught, not because the written word was somehow inimical to oral and semasiographic expressions, but rather because the translative labor required of these authors was a real hardship, one compounded by a dearth of educational opportunities.¹⁴ Cusick notes in the preface to *Sketches* that he has “taken much pains in procuring the materials, and translating into English language” (3). Johnson echoes this claim, admitting to his audience that he “enter[s] upon the task with much distrust” (4). So too Copway, who couches his appeals for the uplift of indigenous peoples in an assertion of his own authorial inadequacy (vii). Nicolai laments that though his education inhibits him from arousing “the feelings of the people,” still he has “undertaken the work and have done it my own way” (96). Clarke mourns likewise that “it is no easy task to write a work of this kind” (iii). These are standard, even expected, expressions of authorial humility, but they also operated for these authors as tacit acknowledgments that written

¹³ Anna Lee Walters argues for an “inherent right of tribal peoples to interpret events and time . . . according to their aesthetics and values . . . even when this interpretation is different from that of mainstream history” (86).

¹⁴ As I discuss in the first chapter, oral, semasiographic, and glottographic expressions rarely existed independent of one another in indigenous contexts, nor were they ever incommensurable. In fact, as Lisa Brooks argues, indigenous writers from all periods “spin the binary between word and image into a relational framework” (xxi).

support for their expressive traditions required a concerted effort to translate those traditions into a discursive form that was, if not foreign or inconceivable, at least new to their communities.

These authors also recognized that, in addition to its novelty, the written word often acted as an instrument of settler-colonial oppression. As Christopher Teuton notes, since the nineteenth century the ability to write in glottographic scripts “has been wedded to an evolutionary model of [cultural] development that has contributed to colonialist typologies” (6). These typologies are of course myriad. Perhaps foremost among them, however, has been the spurious but still persistent belief that, because they did not write, indigenous peoples were without history—without, that is, the intellectual capacity to understand or situate themselves in relation to their past. Indians were thus excluded from the auspices of historical time.¹⁵ This belief, ethnocentric to its core, has been used for several centuries to justify the denigration of indigenous culture and the dispossession of indigenous land. As Joshua Bellin explains, the presumed dearth of written records in pre-contact indigenous societies denied to their nineteenth-century progenies the ability to “conceive, create, or transmit history,” making them “of no consequence” to settlers, “the peoples of history” (132). In the nineteenth century and still today, theories like these have contributed to the oppression of indigenous peoples, not least by classifying their autochthonous histories as insufficient evidence of their enduring rights.¹⁶

The absence of this evidence was a convenient settler-colonial fiction, one that gained its potency through a concerted effort to privilege glottographic scripts over other expressive forms. Though indigenous peoples did not “write,” at least in the current sense of that term, they did use

¹⁵ Kevin Bruyneel notes that, in settler-colonial contexts, indigenous peoples have been relegated to “colonial time,” an inescapable past in which settler-colonial politics are rationalized through the denial of those peoples’ abilities to progress through time and thus persist into the future (2).

¹⁶ For example, as I note in the second chapter, for indigenous communities in New England, the absence of written treaties with the United States has rendered their lands vulnerable to rhetorical, legal, and physical appropriation.

oral and semasiographic discourses before the introduction of the written word. In the nineteenth century, the expressive potential of these forms was devalued as “the ability to write became . . . the single most important marker of civilization” (Teuton 12). Among their several deficiencies, oral and semasiographic records were condemned for their putative inability to serve as credible sources in the pursuit of historical knowledge. As Steven Conn explains, in this period efforts to “study and understand” the expressive traditions of indigenous cultures assisted the development of history as an “organized discipline” (6).¹⁷ Though oral and semasiographic accounts had been understood previously as historical, now they were studied as mythical, an inferior classification that evinced the irrationality of indigenous intellectual traditions (Murray 99). As settler-colonial historians began to privilege written records as the exclusive source for historical knowledge, the discursive practices of indigenous peoples no longer satisfied their interpretive standards. Rather, as Claudio Saunt notes, these historians came to understand oral and semasiographic traditions as “childlike . . . and primitive,” not unlike their practitioners (675). These traditions, crucial pillars of Clarke’s triadic archive, were excluded from the privileged domain of historical inquiry.

In *Writing Native Pasts*, I argue that indigenous historians responded to this exclusion by challenging the idea that the written word served as the sole determinant of historical truth. They did so, I establish, through a series of formal innovations that rendered the content, structure, and presentation of their books amenable to expressive traditions that exceeded the formal constraints of the written word. In an effort to explore these innovations, I advance an interpretative method derived from the archival transformation that Clarke describes in *Origin and Traditional History of the Wyandotts*. I argue that histories written by indigenous authors in this period should not be read as analogous only to the “piece of paper . . . tacked” onto earlier historical expressions. The

¹⁷ Linda Tuhiwai Smith has argued similarly that the emergence of history as an organized discipline in this period amounted to “a modernist project which . . . developed alongside imperial beliefs about the Other” (31).

genre functions not as a mere translation of the non-written histories that preceded its emergence. Instead, I approach these histories as translations of Clarke's multimodal archive in its entirety—as, that is, a novel form of historical narration that appeals at once to several expressive registers. *Writing Native Pasts* thus combines intensive archival research and literary-critical analysis with cognate disciplines—art and book histories, performance and media studies—to claim that these books preserved and extended, rather than eclipsed, indigenous methods of historical expression. In addition to this structural analysis, I adopt the decolonial methods of Native American Studies to examine the political implications of these formal innovations. Historians like Clarke, I argue, appealed in their written histories to these expressive traditions to intervene in a discipline whose origin was inimical to their pasts and hostile to their cultural and political futures. In their appeal to non-written expressions, indigenous historians countered the belief that these expressions were inadequate as evidence of their political rights. Their books thus advocated for the sovereignty of indigenous communities by insisting on the authority of their historiographical traditions.

Writing Native Pasts thus responds to developments in the study of early and nineteenth-century American literatures. As the discipline has engaged with the interdisciplinary methods of ethnic studies, scholars have expanded the purview of their analyses to include expressive forms that challenge staid definitions of discourse, literacy, and writing.¹⁸ These studies have examined interactions between the written word and other discursive media, arguing that these interactions advance assertions of sovereignty that resisted the era's assault on indigenous lands, politics, and

¹⁸ In an effort to dismiss outmoded characterizations of indigenous cultures as solely “oral,” for instance, scholarship in colonial and nineteenth-century Native American literatures has appealed to methodologies developed by scholars of Native American Studies. Lisa Brooks and Phillip Round, for example, consider how indigenous peoples engaged willfully and strategically with the written word and the printed book. Similar efforts, by Hilary Wyss among others, have reinterpreted the practices through which indigenous peoples acquired and employed alphabetic literacy.

epistemologies.¹⁹ *Writing Native Pasts* engages these trends and supplements them, modeling an inclusive approach to literary-critical scholarship that counters an inclination to privilege written words as the apex of cultural expression. The project thus understands the adoption of the written word by indigenous societies in this period not as evidence of cultural declension but rather as an effort to preserve historiographical traditions and the political rights expressed therein. In short, I argue that, as Native Americans committed their past to the page, they used the practices that had placed them outside history as the means to demand the rights afforded to those within.

In its three chapters, *Writing Native Pasts* argues that indigenous authors insisted in their histories on the validity of oral, performative, and non-textual traditions of historical expression. The first examines how these authors modified the written word to serve the politics of their oral traditions. I focus on David Cusick's *Sketches*, a history of the Haudenosaunee, first published in 1827, that relies extensively on the author's unprecedented transcription of his oral traditions into print. I assess first how the oft-cited ideals of print nationalism functioned for indigenous peoples in the antebellum period, noting that the distribution of printed material preserved and threatened Haudenosaunee oral traditions. When Cusick printed these oral traditions, he both rendered them legible to settler-colonial readers and prevented their later revision, diminishing their authority. I argue that, rather than succumb to the deleterious effects of print, Cusick retained in that medium the malleable and individualized nature of oral expression. I find in *Sketches* a willful diminution of formative events in Haudenosaunee history, and I establish that this formal innovation allowed Cusick to claim contested territories in print even as he retained the possibilities to revise the oral stories on which those claims were based.

¹⁹ Birgit Brander Rasmussen has called this approach a “new kind of early American literary studies,” one that opens new avenues of inquiry in a field that has garnered a reputation for topical and methodological conservatism (3).

In the second chapter, I turn from oral histories to performative ones—specifically, to the recitation of histories shared by indigenous societies in New England. I appeal to an unexamined collection of advertisements to reconsider the performance history of William Apess’s *Eulogy on King Philip*, a lecture on the colonial history of New England first delivered in 1836. The archive reveals that, as Apess traversed this region, he followed established routes that had been used for centuries by indigenous nations as they traveled to recite ritualized accounts of their shared pasts. Scholars of transnational indigeneity have argued that, as these performative histories circulated, their rehearsal defied the settler-colonial narrative that indigenous peoples had vanished from the region, thereby affirming the enduring political rights of groups like the Mohegans, Pequots, and Narragansetts. I reference these studies to describe how, much like Cusick’s strategic uses of the written word, Apess incorporated in the promotion, performance, and content of his lecture these performative histories of transnational kinship. I argue that Apess exploited the mobility afforded to him as a lecturer to insist on the continued authority of an expressive tradition that resisted the coordinated erasure of indigenous peoples and their political institutions.

In the third chapter, I consider the histories embedded in “non-textual media”—in, that is, non-written expressions that served in indigenous societies like semasiographic accounts. I argue that indigenous authors preserved these non-textual practices in their written histories by altering the physical properties of their books. I describe the oft-neglected tradition of indigenous writers and readers gilding their books with objects—like shells, bark, and quill—that, in their societies, were imbued with historical significance. I focus on one example of this tradition, a presentation edition of Andrew Blackbird’s *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan*, written in 1877. Margaret Boyd, Blackbird’s sister, bound the edition in birch bark and then embroidered it with dyed porcupine quills. I argue that inherent in these materials were histories of the Odawa

that eluded or even resisted articulation in the written portion of Blackbird's book. I show that, as she adorned this written history with non-textual expressions, Boyd appealed to historiographical practices that emphasized the contribution of women to the preservation of Odawa sovereignty, a subject ignored by her brother. Boyd, I conclude, exploited the capacious materiality of the book to argue for the authority of her non-textual traditions of historical expression.

In these three books, as in others written by indigenous authors in the nineteenth century, the inclusion of oral, performative, and non-textual traditions counters the interpretive standards of settler-colonial history. Clarke, whose work informs much of *Writing Native Pasts*, champions these expressions in a scene that, for our purposes, serves as an apt allegory for the broader thesis that guides the project. In an otherwise staid account of his tribe's eighteenth-century migrations, Clarke records the arrival of a visionary apparition. He observes that, "while the Wyandotts were at Lower Sandusky," a young member of the tribe

was taken prisoner . . . by a party of white scouts who were passing that way homeward.

And where they encamped the second night a strange looking [sic] Indian appeared to the maiden prisoner in a vision and spoke to her, thus, "I come to tell you, that to-morrow, at noon, these white men will meet a party of Indians, on the war-path, and have a fight with them. . . . I am not one of your race," he continued, "I am a *frog*, although I appear to you in human shape . . . it is with grateful feeling towards you that I come to tell you of your chance to escape." (55–56)

The abduction of the young woman, I argue, implicates her in the settler-colonial narrative of her captors. Clarke shifts narrative perspective from the Wyandots to the scouts, digressing briefly to follow these settlers as they progress "homeward." The captors thus impose on the young woman a particular historical narrative, one that, Clarke implies, threatens her with physical danger. The

woman escapes, of course, but only through the intercession of a disguised frog, an event that, in its appeal to indigenous traditions, resists inclusion not only in the narrative of the scouts but also in those of settler-colonial historians like Draper. When he asks for further details, Clarke replies with a familiar refrain. His sources are dead, he writes, and the surviving members of his tribe do “not know anything more about the said maiden.”²⁰ Stories like these, Clarke seems to recognize, quite literally frustrate the production of settler-colonial history. In his book, and in the examples that I discuss in these chapters, the presence of these expressive traditions, however apparitional, challenges efforts to discredit indigenous histories as mythical and thus meritless. Historians like Clarke, I establish, argued forcefully for the authority of their historiographical traditions and the political rights that those traditions documented and enshrined.

²⁰ Peter D. Clarke to Lyman Draper, 16 July 1882.

Chapter One

Printing Native History in *David Cusick's Sketches*

“I have given up the idea [of] sending my manuscript to you. I am going to have it printed in Lewiston. I think it best as I can express the meaning of words when corrected.” These words, dictated by David Cusick and sent to Horatio Gates Spafford of Troy, New York, in late 1825, provide an apt précis of the narrative that structures this chapter. The manuscript mentioned here is of course *David Cusick's Sketches of Ancient History of the Six Nations*, printed and published in Lewiston—a small town near the Tuscarora village in western New York—in 1827. As willed by its author, *Sketches* evaded Spafford, a learned dilettante known best for his *Gazetteer of the State of New-York*, an exhaustive account of the condition of that state in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Though Cusick’s reasons for spurning Spafford remain cryptic, certainly his decision attests to concerns about the clarity of his language. The preface to *Sketches*, written by Cusick four months before his letter to Spafford, notes that its author was “so small educated that it was impossible . . . to compose the work without much difficulty” (3).¹ Proximity to the site of *Sketches*’s printing could have facilitated a process of collaborative editing as the document was prepared for press. That process, however, never occurred: Cusick’s distinctive orthography and syntax were disparaged by contemporary readers as “peculiar to the people of his complexion.”² In addition to his editorial concern, then, Cusick seems to assert a broader but unspoken rationale for the decision to print his manuscript in Lewiston.

At the least, Cusick’s decision to print *Sketches* closer to home suggests some skepticism as to his correspondent’s designs. Spafford likely solicited *Sketches* for inclusion or abridgement

¹ All citations to *Sketches* are drawn from the second edition. As I discuss later, there is reason to believe that Cusick considered the second edition to supersede the first.

² *Philadelphia National Gazette*, 3 July 1827.

in his proposed history of New York; the *Gazetteer* reveals that he had collected a “great mass of materials” for the effort (62). Ceding the manuscript to such a project was to risk ceding not only editorial control of *Sketches* but also the meaning contained therein.³ Cusick, who expresses in a postscript his familiarity with Spafford’s “papers,” had some cause for concern. A section of the *Gazetteer* devoted to the state’s “Indians” evinces Spafford’s benign but nonetheless pernicious ignorance of the subject. The “history of the Indians is not the design of this sketch,” he explains, only to note later that he cannot “collect sufficient data for enumeration of the Indians at present” (57, 59). Cusick may have bristled at the temerity of Spafford’s solicitation given that the author purports to describe the region’s indigenous peoples only to absolve himself of any knowledge as to their past and present conditions. Perhaps he presaged that Spafford’s treatment of his history would align with what ethnologists and historians concluded—that, as Albert Gallatin expressed, “very little reliance can be placed” on *Sketches*’s “fabulous annals . . . invented by a pure Indian” (1848, cxlviii). Given the enthusiastic dismissal of *Sketches* by learned discourse throughout the nineteenth century, Cusick seems justified in his apprehension. Entrusting this work to Spafford was to risk the distortion and corruption of its historical “meaning.”

Cusick’s refusal to have Spafford arrange for his manuscript’s publication also may have entailed recognition that he was writing at the cusp of a profound change in the means of textual production. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, printing presses proliferated in frontier settlements like Lewiston. As recent scholarship has detailed, indigenous peoples living in these areas exploited their newfound proximity to print. Cusick, his letter affirms, availed himself of a printing press installed in Lewiston in 1823; the second edition of *Sketches* was produced nearby

³ Phillip Round has detailed the perils of these collaborations for Native writers in the nineteenth century (173–190). He notes that, in addition to the loss of editorial and interpretive control, “when Indian materials entered the field of cultural production through the auspices of Euro-American cultural entrepreneurs, the creators lost all claim to their intellectual property rights” (188).

at Lockport. That these locations could provide Cusick with the means to produce his text was a new phenomenon, one that allowed the nascent author to claim an artistic and editorial autonomy unavailable to earlier indigenous writers. The press in Lewiston freed Cusick from the perils of collaborating with an author who considered indigenous histories as ancillary to his “design[s].” Likewise, with the means of production nearby, Cusick more easily resisted the incorporation of *Sketches* in an account of state history that positioned the Haudenosaunee as an impediment to its manifest progress. The ardor of Cusick’s refusal—the resolve with which he confirms the place of his manuscript’s printing—suggests that the presence of a press near Tuscarora reinforced and even authorized his desire to refuse Spafford’s patronage.

In addition to these factors, the decision to spurn Spafford may have been buoyed also by an auspicious historical synchronism. In western New York, the proliferation of printing presses coincided with a renewed effort by state officials and private speculators to buy Haudenosaunee lands. Cusick dictated his letter to Spafford at the height of these pressures; less than a year later, the Senecas sold a majority of their territory to the state under controversial conditions. The press at Lewiston thus functioned for Cusick as a means of preserving not only his authorial autonomy but also the political autonomy of the Haudenosaunee. Writing from near the seat of state power, Spafford echoed in his *Gazetteer* the misplaced benevolence that structured New York’s program of coordinated encroachment and dispossession: the “manners and morals” of the state’s Indians, he argued, “are ameliorated by the example of moral neighbors” (58). Cusick disagreed, telling a traveler to his home that it was “degrading to the Indian character to adopt American manners.”⁴ Printing *Sketches*—at its core a defense of Haudenosaunee territory—in Lewiston, near the lands to which Cusick’s family helped secure title, acted symbolically if not literally as a rebuke of the

⁴ “Editorial Correspondence,” *New Hampshire Patriot*, 16 October 1826.

practices Spafford lauded as constituting “a better policy with the Indians . . . than any other state in the nation” (59). The decision acted too as a personal rebuke of Spafford, himself an inveterate speculator who may have met Cusick while living in northwestern Pennsylvania on lands that he acquired from the Holland Land Company, a principal architect of Haudenosaunee dispossession (J. Boyd 337–341). Cusick’s decision to print *Sketches* near Tuscarora connected his manuscript to the land and, even more urgently, to that land’s preservation as Haudenosaunee territory.

More than some misgiving over his linguistic fluency, then, the letter to Spafford reveals Cusick’s developing sense that the printing press near Tuscarora allowed him at once to counter the diminution of his history, to control that history’s production and distribution, and to employ that history in the service of protecting Haudenosaunee interests. As such, this letter documents not merely an exchange between seasoned publisher and neophyte author nor solely one between an acquisitive scholar and his circumspect informant. More than these, Cusick’s letter presages a unique and transformative development in the expressive practices of indigenous historiography. Less than two years after this exchange, *Sketches* would become the first printed volume of oral traditions to be collected, authored, and copyrighted by a Native American. When Cusick insists in his letter that print is essential to the meaning of his history, then, he appeals to a new method for expressing the past—one that, I argue, preserved and extended the discursive traditions of the Haudenosaunee. The availability of printing presses, coupled with the pressures of dispossession, forced Cusick to integrate print into his existing historiographical practices. His letter to Spafford constitutes our first trace of this evolving form of historical expression.

As this reading of Cusick’s letter suggests, this first chapter examines the transformative role of print—as both material practice and representational form—in the creation, purpose, and distribution of oral histories of land tenure. *Sketches*, a history of the Haudenosaunee from their

cosmological origins to the close of the fifteenth century, is uniquely suited to this analysis. Even as *Sketches* documents one of the earliest interactions between print and oral traditions, however, few studies of the text have considered the complexities of this unprecedented engagement.⁵ This omission is striking since, from its inception, scholarship in colonial and early nineteenth-century Native literature has focused on how indigenous peoples appropriated and altered the practices of alphabetic literacy to preserve and modernize their cultural practices and political values. Given its role in the replication and dispersal of the written word, print seems a natural extension of this critical preoccupation. To date, however, only Phillip Round has offered an extended account of “the ways in which print provided . . . Native authors and their communities with a much-needed weapon in their battles against relocation, allotment, and cultural erasure” (5). Round presents an invaluable foundation for further analysis, and this chapter builds on his contribution by focusing on the relation between print and Native historiography—between, that is, emergent technologies for textual production and what Arnold Krupat deems the “ways of knowing the past” that inhere in indigenous societies (2002, 49). *Sketches* reveals how nineteenth-century Native writers used and refashioned print to serve the cultural and political objectives of their oral traditions.

Haudenosaunee Historiography and the Problem of Print

For the nineteenth-century Haudenosaunee, appeals to the written word were neither self-evident nor seamless. In his 1912 study of the Code of Handsome Lake, for example, the Seneca scholar Arthur Parker describes how his ancestors expressed their oral histories in new written forms. As

⁵ The exception is Round, whose analysis of the woodcuts appended to the second edition of *Sketches* considers how those illustrations emerged “out of a desire to preserve oral and pictographic traditions and extend them into the new world of print culture” (204).

Parker recounts, in 1862 preachers of the Gai'wiio', a series of religious precepts established by the deceased Seneca prophet, met to resolve variants in their versions of the Code. He writes that

They met at Cold Spring, the old home of Handsome Lake, and compared their versions. Several differences were found and each preacher thought his version the correct one. At length Chief John Jacket, a Cattaraugus Seneca, and a man well versed in the lore of his people, was chosen to settle forever the words and the form of the Gai'wiio'. This he did by writing it out in the Seneca language by the method taught by Rev. Asher Wright, the Presbyterian missionary. The preachers assembled again . . . [and] memorized the parts in which they were faulty. The original text . . . now is entirely destroyed. Chief Jacket gave it to Henry Stevens and Chief Stevens passed it on to Chief Cornplanter who after he had memorized the teachings became careless and lost the papers sheet by sheet. (7–8)

Though Parker presumes that the preachers sought to transcribe the Gai'wiio' to standardize their faith, his account contradicts that assertion. After Chief Jacket transcribed the Code, the gathered preachers did not produce individual copies of the manuscript. Instead, they decided to memorize his text and then resume their oral recitation. Indeed, the preachers seem not to have afforded the written Gai'wiio' any particular significance. Chief Cornplanter misplaced the manuscript and, at least according to Parker, failed to rewrite the Gai'wiio' until 1903, four decades after its original transcription (8). In contrast to Parker's account, then, the preachers perhaps did not assemble to "settle forever the words and the form" of their faith. Their appeal to the written word was less a concession to its presumed superiority than a complex negotiation with a discursive system that, as I will argue, both complemented and threatened their oral traditions of historical expression.

Parker's account, though not inconceivable, relies on an ethnocentric and even pernicious belief in the innate superiority of the written word. Christopher Teuton, echoing Jacques Derrida,

identifies this belief as an example of “graphocentrism”—as an example, that is, of the reflexive valorization of alphabetic writing as the exclusive “source of unassailable truth” (25).⁶ Historians in the nineteenth century acceded readily to this graphocentric idea. Albert Gallatin, the reviewer of *Sketches*, lamented that he could garner only “white fibs” from non-written sources, especially because the “considerable tact” of his indigenous informants compelled them to “invent a tale” to satisfy his curiosities (1848, cxlviii). At least implicitly, in this lament Gallatin judges oral forms against their written peers, finding the former inferior as credible records of historical events. For historians like Gallatin, words were reliable because they were stable and, to use an anachronistic term, falsifiable. In contrast, oral histories were ephemeral and, perhaps more importantly, reliant for their ultimate meaning on the subjectivity of their interpreters. These traits were intolerable to settler-colonial historians, who created historical knowledge under the assumption that persistent inquiry would reconcile these subjective accounts into one inviolable historical truth. Krupat has claimed that this assumption, like other facets of the settler-colonial intellectual tradition, derives from what he considers an “internalization of the habits of alphabetic literacy” (2009, 13).⁷ These habits, for Krupat, create in settler-colonial philosophies a “dualistic logic” that promotes or even compels “oppositional, hierarchical, and exclusionary” thought (2009, 16). In these contexts, the discovery of historical truth required the invalidation of any possible alternatives as insufficiently factual, universal, or objective. Unsurprisingly, then, given their character as “context-dependent

⁶ Of course, as Derrida explains, neither speech nor writing possesses an intrinsic or superior claim to transparency, efficiency, or authority. Though his *Of Grammatology* argues against the logocentrism of structuralist linguistics and anthropology, Derrida also avoids an appeal to graphocentrism. For Derrida, the production of meaning—of truth—occurs through the interplay of these discursive forms rather than the subordination of one system to its counterpart.

⁷ Here, Krupat gestures reservedly to the work of Walter Ong. I share with Krupat some affinity for these ideas as limited heuristics if not as totalizing narratives. As Krupat explains, one “need not posit some great ‘divide’ between orality and literacy to accept Ong’s well-known contention that ‘writing is a technology that alters thought’” (2009, 15).

forms of signification,” non-written expressions were fraught with interpretive perils, unable to establish or record histories that satisfied these interpretive standards (Teuton xv).

These standards have been challenged, and even undermined, by historians from a range of critical schools, most notably by those aligned with poststructuralist historiography.⁸ For our purposes, however, perhaps the most incisive critique has derived from the intellectual traditions of indigenous societies. In his study of the Cibecue Apaches, Keith Basso explains that, for many indigenous groups, the concept of singular historical truths is “rejected out of hand as unfeasible and undesirable” (32). Instead, according to Basso, indigenous histories are “extremely personal, consistently subjective, and . . . highly variable” (32). These qualities are common touchstones in critical appraisals of indigenous history, and their regularity suggests that history serves different purposes in settler-colonial and indigenous contexts.⁹ For one, as Angela Wilson explains, while settler-colonial historians are preoccupied with the establishment of historical facts, their Native peers often consider this aspect of historical knowledge subordinate to the “experiential lessons” gleaned from historical narratives (33). Wilson does not mean to suggest that facts are somehow inconsequential to indigenous historians. Instead, she implies that these historians do not accede reflexively to the settler-colonial platitude that facts are an “exclusive determinant” of historical knowledge (Krupat 2002, 52). The rejection of this alleged truism allows indigenous societies to perceive their histories less as settled accounts than as dynamic narratives. Indigenous historians thus can adjust “past detail to consist with present reality” (Krupat 2002, 60). Or, in more prosaic terms, as sources for the “experiential lessons” that dictate social behavior, these histories remain

⁸ Ezra Kleinberg, in discussing the use of deconstruction as a historical methodology, offers an extensive genealogy of poststructuralist historiography.

⁹ Angela Wilson argues succinctly that there exists a “fundamental difference in the perception of history” between indigenous and settler-colonial societies, a common refrain in scholarship.

open to revision in response to changing circumstance. They serve not only as stable accounts of past events, but also as “frameworks for . . . shaping social action” in the present (Fowler 267).

Perhaps it is no surprise, then, that indigenous historians accept the personal, subjective, and variable—that is, the “context-dependent”—nature of oral traditions more readily than their settler-colonial peers. Though scorned in many settler-colonial contexts, for indigenous societies these traditions function as credible sources of historical knowledge.¹⁰ An appreciation for these traditions as historical, however, requires standards for interpreting the past that are distinct from and perhaps irreconcilable with settler-colonial history. In indigenous contexts, as I have argued, historical truths are both multiple and variable. These ideas are not innate to indigeneity—nor do they reveal, in their willful disregard for historical fact, a kind of intellectual nihilism. Instead, as Basso contends, they derive at least partly from the fact that Native histories were “rarely written down” (31). Just as settler-colonial historians based their standards on their graphocentric ideals, so too have indigenous peoples defined their pasts in relation to their oral expressions. According to Krupat, these expressions produce in indigenous settings an intellectual tradition characterized by a “conjunctural,” rather than oppositional, logic (2009, 13). Groups that privilege non-written expressions, that is, perceive differences less as occasions for exclusion than as opportunities for incorporation. These standards are consonant with what Laurie Anne Whitt calls an “indigenous commitment to epistemological pluralism,” one that promotes “recognition that there are diverse versions of existence” (247). This recognition pertains also to diverse histories, all of which are truthful despite variations, oppositions, or provisionalities. As Wilson notes, “while there might

¹⁰ For Philip Deloria, oral stories are “the heart of Indian historiographical traditions” (17). Deborah Doxtator writes that “oral traditions are ideally suited to recording and recounting” indigenous histories, and Krupat argues that these histories are “more readily carried out in a predominantly oral society” (40; 2002, 60).

be differing stories . . . there is acknowledgment that there may be more than one ‘right’ version” (47).

In the nineteenth century and even today, Native historians tend to privilege oral histories over their written counterparts, dismissing the latter as beholden to interpretive and sociocultural standards that do not align with their priorities. Anna Lee Walters, for example, contends that the “‘fixed’ quality of written histories carries with it some very complex tribal ideas about how this will affect the ‘living’ state of the people” (80). This observation, however vague, aptly conveys the uncertainty that some indigenous historians feel about written histories. When Walters notes obliquely that these histories have a “‘fixed’ quality,” she contrasts the presumed permanence of written words with the ephemeral nature of oral discourse. Though she remains unclear, perhaps strategically so, about how that permanence influences “tribal ideas . . . about the ‘living’ state of the people,” still her message seems clear. For Walters, as for her nineteenth-century precursors, the written word calcifies otherwise animate and vital pasts. Histories, when written, attain some degree of physical permanence and referential stability. In their permanence, written histories are dissociated from their creators and the peoples they reference. Likewise, in their stability, written histories resist, if not preclude, later emendation. They are thus dead—or, at least, deadened—in a sense implied by Walters. They are distanced from “the people” and, as such, are unresponsive to their present realities. As Birgit Brander Rasmussen notes of the colonial-era Haudenosaunee, Indians “were often critical of the celebrated ability of Western letters to separate written words, speaker, and context” (75). For the Haudenosaunee and others, the written word externalized the past, threatening the animate relation of histories to their creators, locations, and current realities. Written histories thus forfeited their power as instruments of continuity with the present and the future of the societies that they chronicled.

In the abstract, Walters seems correct when she implies that written histories compromise if not entirely undercut the interpretive standards of indigenous historians. But she errs when she likewise contends that the distinctive features of written and non-written expressions are not only opposed but also innate. As Matt Cohen argues, these expressions in fact reside on a “spectrum”; they are not “structurally independent” from one another (28).¹¹ Indeed, the actions of Handsome Lake’s adherents in 1862 reveal that the written word, though antagonistic to indigenous history, nonetheless could be exploited for its benefit. When Parker notes that Chief Cornplanter’s loss of the transcription occurred “sheet by sheet,” he invites us to interpret this act as calculated instead of capricious. The loss of the written Gai’wiiio’ seems the result less of inattentiveness, as Parker assumes, than of a strategy to manipulate the distinctive features of the written word to serve the ideals of indigenous history. According to Elizabeth Tooker, the men did not “intend to establish a single authoritative text” (46). Instead, they produced “a sense of ‘one version’” that “cover[ed] familiar points in a somewhat familiar order” (47–48). The transcription did not need to be saved because the truth of the Gai’wiiio’ required only a sense of the written record—only an awareness of how its contours could be adapted to the present circumstances of the preachers’ communities. In creating and then deliberately discarding the transcription, the adherents used the written word not to standardize their faith, but instead to privilege the “context-dependent” nature of their oral expressions. Their actions thus expose the excesses of Walter’s critique. Here, the written word facilitated, rather than precluded, the alignment of history with the “‘living’ state of the people.”

Of course, the loss of the written Gai’wiiio’ relied on the transcription’s tenuous claims to permanence and stability. Though assumed indelible, in fact the written word is fragile—subject,

¹¹ Teuton notes likewise that written and non-written discourses serve complementary purposes. Oral traditions are “living forms of cultural knowledge, kept alive in the memory of members of the group,” whereas written accounts “record tradition for posterity, to live beyond the lives of those who record them” (xvi).

much like non-written expressions, to revision and disavowal, to the “sheet by sheet” disposal of singular manuscripts. When written words are printed, however, their reproduction and dispersal heightens their resistance to these gestures. If this seems obvious now, it is important to recollect that, as Meredith McGill observes, only in the nineteenth century did the volume and distribution of printed materials begin to overwhelm “authorial and editorial control” of written texts in areas populated by indigenous societies like the Haudenosaunee (2). In this period, presses emerged at rapid rates in frontier areas across the United States. Their appearance allowed for the production and distribution of printed material on an unprecedented scale. Studies of this phenomenon often argue that, as these materials flourished, so too did their potential as instruments of identification and consensus. Grantland Rice, in his rehearsal of Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, explains that the “manipulative . . . and conventionalizing power” of printed materials created in otherwise detached populations a shared narrative of national origins (126). Trish Loughran has argued the opposite—that the proliferation of these materials produced simply the appearance of consensus. She explains that, in fact, these changes amplified sectional tensions by accentuating differences that would have gone unacknowledged. In either case, these innovations threatened to create shared histories within otherwise diverse publics. As the production of printed materials increased, “previously distinct and culturally autonomous populations” endured the prospect that their differences would be subsumed under a collective narrative of national identity and history. What we call now “print nationalism” was “a new and frightening problem” for groups that were resistant to the perceived abrogation of their individual liberties (Loughran 5).

Like their settler-colonial peers, the nineteenth-century Haudenosaunee perhaps harbored concerns about this “new and frightening problem.” Their concerns, however, likely derived less from a need to preserve critical individualism than from a desire to sustain distinctive histories. If

we are prepared to accept, with Walters, that the written word threatened indigenous histories by rupturing their continuity with the future, then printed materials intensified the rupture. Histories, when printed and circulated, are distanced irretrievably from the condition of their creation. They become unavailable to later alteration, rendering them unresponsive to the communities that they serve. Peter Nabokov notes that this responsiveness—what he considers the “central strength” of Native history—“stands in philosophical and political opposition to the monopolizing inclination of . . . print” (94). Rasmussen observes of the Haudenosaunee in particular that the societal value of semasiographic discourses like wampum were “almost antithetical to the logic of print, which is meant to facilitate reproduction and circulation and makes possible detachment from original context” (73). In its “promise of opening up communication and making information public and impersonal,” print in fact imperiled the social value of indigenous histories (Nabokov 202).

This influx of printed materials coincided with a renewal of state-sanctioned speculation in Haudenosaunee territory. In 1827, the year of *Sketches*'s initial publication, there emerged for the Haudenosaunee an urgent need to print and distribute histories that established and defended their territorial sovereignty. This need was an attenuated consequence of the Revolutionary War, perhaps the most significant episode in their post-contact history. In the aftermath of the Sullivan Expedition, tribes allied with the British were forced to abandon their homes and migrate west to Seneca territory. Soon after, the Senecas and their displaced allies re-established themselves near Buffalo Creek. According to Alyssa Mt. Pleasant, residents there sustained “a set of relationships with the land that reflected distinct Haudenosaunee social and political philosophies” (120–122). These relationships revitalized and maintained their political rights despite the exigencies of war. Though allied with the colonists, Cusick and the Tuscaroras also were subject to displacement. In 1779, a small contingent settled to the north of Buffalo Creek. A second group, driven from their

plots in the Genesee River valley, joined the first in 1792. Tuscaroras living among the Oneidas, including the Cusicks themselves, followed these peers westward at the turn of the century. Like the peoples at Buffalo Creek, the Tuscaroras established a connection to their new settlements by imbuing the land with social and political relevance. The Cusicks in particular rationalized their migrations by arguing for the need to secure title to tribal land—a process that, despite protracted efforts, they could not achieve with the Oneidas.¹²

In 1808, with support from their Seneca neighbors, the Tuscaroras secured their rights to a reservation of 10 square miles. Soon after, at Buffalo Creek and Lewiston, the Haudenosaunee began to feel pressure from the displacement efforts of land speculators. As Laurence Hauptman has shown, the Ogden Land Company—holders of the state-granted preemptive right to purchase Seneca and Tuscarora land—began, in the aftermath of the War of 1812, to promote the removal of the Haudenosaunee from their new settlements. The success of these efforts were limited until 1826, when the Ogden Land Company sought aid from the United States to negotiate a land-sale treaty with the Senecas at Buffalo Creek. Though the treaty was signed in accord with all federal regulations, some Seneca leaders later reversed course, claiming that they had agreed to its terms under duress. In spite of these concerns, the agreement was enacted. In 1826—again, a year prior to the initial publication of *Sketches*—the Senecas lost the majority of their territories, including large portions of the reservation at Buffalo Creek and other villages in the Genesee River valley.

Given their proximity to the Senecas and their own history of dispossession and removal, the Tuscaroras were aware of the threat to their reservation near Lewiston. These concerns seem to have emboldened the tribe, ushering in a period of increased nationalist sentiment. Though the Tuscaroras had garnered a reputation as skillful and willing adapters to settler-colonial ideals, by

¹² Douglas Boyce provides an extensive account of Tuscarora history in this period.

the 1820s the tribe abandoned those ideals in response to state-led infringements on their rights.¹³ In 1821, the state moved to levy taxes on land the Tuscaroras had purchased to form part of their village. These tensions intensified when the group turned briefly against the missionaries serving in their midst. In the middle of the decade, a church built by Tuscarora Christians was abandoned following a dispute with its presiding minister.¹⁴ A visitor to the reservation in 1827 reported that stipends provided to missionaries there were ineffective; in general, he argued, “the Indians were averse to receiving instruction from the whites.” Cusick, who welcomed the reporter to his home, agreed with this sentiment. The visitor’s article observed that Cusick and his family, though once ardent supporters of missionaries, now “opposed . . . the religious instruction of the missionaries who had been sent among them.” When the visitor asked Cusick “why he did not suffer his own children to be instructed, and why he did not lead a more civilized life,” Cusick abruptly finished their conversation, asserting that to do so would be “degrading.”¹⁵

Sketches, then, appeared at the juncture of two critical episodes: one, the advent of small-press printing near reservations; and two, the renewal of state-sponsored land speculation and its resistance. These events, taken together, produced the means and the need for *Sketches*. Yet, as I have sought to argue, even as *Sketches* exploited print “against a concrete colonialist threat,” still the nature of its production seems opposed to the interpretive standards of indigenous history (R.

¹³ In language characteristic of the period, settlers in the first decade of the century described the Tuscaroras as “in a more improved state than the rest of the Indians” (qtd. in Boyce 129). Boyce notes that the perception was facilitated by Tuscarora men’s receptiveness to agricultural labor, a practice somewhat antithetical to the gendered divisions of labor common among nineteenth-century Haudenosaunee (129). Red Jacket, a prominent Seneca leader and orator, supported this characterization when in 1803 he claimed that the presence of missionaries at Tuscarora had “reduced [them] to the status of menial laborers” (Mt. Pleasant 140).

¹⁴ In an undated letter to the editor of the *Masonic Mirror and Mechanics Intelligencer* for 21 July 1827, Peter Pinse blames the decay of the church on “injudicious and overzealous missionary ministers.”

¹⁵ “Editorial Correspondence,” *New Hampshire Patriot*, 16 October 1826.

Parker 293). The extent of *Sketches*'s initial distribution remains unknown, but notices published in New York, Philadelphia, and several smaller cities attest to its wide circulation.¹⁶ As he placed *Sketches* in these expanded channels of distribution, Cusick relinquished control over his history. Though *Sketches* was for some readers little more than a curio, nonetheless its presence in print produced a version of Haudenosaunee history that resisted revisions in response to future social contingencies.¹⁷ In this sense, *Sketches* provided readers with what indigenous historians abjure: a past that, due to its presence outside the purview of its creator, was deadened—unalterable and thus unresponsive to the community it served. Cusick's defense of Haudenosaunee territory thus threatened his peoples' traditions of historical expression.

David Cusick's Sketches: A Biobibliographical Excursus

When the historian Francis Parkman turned to *Sketches* as a source for his pioneering *Conspiracy of Pontiac* (1851), he judged its content “a medley of traditions in which a few grains of truth are inextricably mingled with a tangled mass of absurdities” (I, 18). Scholars today, while justifiably opposed to Parkman's language, remain puzzled by *Sketches*'s content. Scott Lyons, for instance, has observed that his Haudenosaunee students often declare the “legends and myths” in *Sketches* “wrong” (129). Even as readers continue to struggle with its content, however, in the last decade *Sketches* has gained attention nonetheless for the nature of its production. *Sketches*, Round notes, was the first “Native-authored . . . [and] –copyrighted text printed in English” (150). Though this

¹⁶ *Sketches* was referenced in “Indian Literature,” a short notice printed in the *New York Telescope* for 14 July 1827. A notice printed in Philadelphia's *National Gazette* on 3 July 1827 was copied and printed in several local papers: the *Berks and Schuylkill Journal* (7 July 1827); the *Farmers' Cabinet* of Amherst, New Hampshire (14 July 1827); and the *Connecticut Herald* (17 July 1827); among others.

¹⁷ In his letter to the *Masonic Mirror*, Peter Pinse suggests that while the fact “that an indian should write any thing worthy of perusal, might appear incredible to an European; and that an *Indian* should write a *book*, a large book, a history . . . might appear also incredible to some Americans,” *Sketches* was in fact the production of an indigenous community that was “intelligent, civilized, happy, and literary” and thus primed for assimilation.

distinction has given *Sketches* an audience, there remain few comprehensive studies of its author or its bibliographic history (Konkle 239–42; Round 150–51). Such details are crucial additions to the historical record and, even more critically, they advance our understanding of the cultural and political objectives of Cusick and his remarkable text.

In the colonial period and the nineteenth century, the Cusick family featured prominently in the spiritual, cultural, and political lives of the Tuscaroras. According to Laurence Hauptman, with several other Tuscarora families, the Cusicks—or Kaghnatshos—formed a “leadership elite [that] shaped community existence” (1993, 39).¹⁸ The Cusicks attained this position through their ardent Christianity, their uncommon facility with the English language, and their involvement in land transactions and emigrations. Nicholas, David’s father, was for many decades an interpreter for missionaries to the Tuscaroras.¹⁹ He served as interpreter and guard for Lafayette during the American Revolution and later acted on behalf of the Tuscaroras to negotiate the cession of lands that still comprise part of their reservation.²⁰ In collaboration with his son James, Nicholas wrote a vocabulary of the Tuscarora language; the work had been solicited by the War Department and soon after became fodder for the proto-linguistic studies of Gallatin and his fellow ethnologists.²¹ James himself was an ordained Baptist minister, perhaps best remembered for his pro-emigration

¹⁸ Audra Simpson has cautioned scholars against extrapolating uncritically from prominent Haudenosaunee families to the lived experiences of the Haudenosaunee in general (83).

¹⁹ Descriptions of Nicholas Cusick’s work as an interpreter are myriad. In its annual report for 1818, the New-York Missionary Society printed several letters from the missionary James Crane attesting to Cusick’s role; a ledger in the same document reveals that he was paid by the Society for his service (“Twenty-First Annual Report”). A year later, a visitor to the Tuscarora village engaged Cusick in an extensive discussion regarding the various languages spoken by the Haudenosaunee (Duncan 57–58).

²⁰ In his travelogue, Thomas McKenney discusses Cusick’s military service in an anecdote that would be copied and repurposed by authors throughout the nineteenth century (431–32). Douglas Boyce notes his role in the development of the Tuscarora reservation (111–16).

²¹ The vocabulary was printed by Gallatin in 1836 (305–406).

stance following the Treaty of Buffalo Creek in 1838.²² Some years later, he led a small group of Tuscaroras to Kansas in a failed and finally tragic attempt to resettle there.²³ Dennis, another son, was a celebrated artist; his paintings adorned the collection boxes at the mission house in Buffalo Creek, where he also taught.²⁴ In matters of politics, religion, and arts, then, the Cusicks were, at least for Hauptman, “the most prominent lineage in Tuscarora history” (1993, 39–40).

David Cusick was born into this notable family between 1780 and 1785.²⁵ He spent much of his youth in Oneida territories, where many Tuscaroras had emigrated in the aftermath of their expulsion from North Carolina. When his family migrated west to the fledgling Tuscarora village near Lewiston, David remained at Oneida under the tutelage of Samuel Kirkland, a Presbyterian minister who founded Hamilton Oneida Academy in 1793. As one of Kirkland’s initial students, Cusick would have studied in “Latin and Greek . . . Arithmetic, Geography, English Grammar & Surveying.”²⁶ While distanced from his kin, Cusick developed close relationships with members of Kirkland’s family.²⁷ He later settled at Tuscarora, where his martial, religious, and intellectual

²² Elias Johnson, a Tuscarora historian, details James Cusick’s ordination (137). Hauptman notes that “Nicholas and his son James supported the Buffalo Creek Treaty” (1993, 161).

²³ James Cusick traveled to Washington in 1845 to discuss the removal of the Tuscaroras to Indian Territory during the next year. In an account of that trip, he describes his visit with President Polk and the benefits of resettlement. According to Johnson, soon after their arrival in Kansas, “one-third of the emigration party had died in the Indian Territory, [and] the remainder came home among the Tuscaroras” (137–38).

²⁴ William Sturtevant considers Dennis Cusick a progenitor of what he calls the “Early Iroquois Realist Style” (129). Timothy Alden, a missionary to the Senecas and the Munsees, wrote in 1825 that Dennis “had spent considerable time” at the mission school and that he “has a natural taste for drawing, and some of the specimens of his ingenuity in this art, which we had opportunity to examine, indicate a genius worthy of encouragement” (119).

²⁵ During a visit to the Tuscarora reservation in 1826, a reporter noted that David Cusick was “about 45” (“Editorial Correspondence,” *New Hampshire Patriot*, 16 October 1826).

²⁶ In a letter to his son John written in 1798, Kirkland noted that for “now almost four years,” he had “fed, clothed, and schooled a boy of a Tuscarora chief”—almost certainly David. A report from 1802, printed in the *Documentary History of Hamilton College*, noted that the Academy “consists of fifty Scholars . . . [and] two Preceptors” (101).

²⁷ A letter sent to the minister’s son in 1800 reveals that, for David, affection accompanied instruction:
I cant forget When we live together we love one other very much, You loved me most all one Brother, tho’
I was Tuscarora Indian . . . I live here at Oneida with your Father and Mother. They love me well as ever I

pursuits began to mirror those of his father and brothers. He served guard with the Americans in the War of 1812, defending futilely against a British advance on Fort Niagara and the Tuscarora village.²⁸ When missionary activities resumed after the war, Cusick joined the effort. He assisted the reverend James Crane in translating a children's catechism and spelling book for the village's mission school.²⁹ Near the same time, he began to cultivate an interest in Haudenosaunee history. In 1822, a visitor to the Tuscarora village observed that Cusick collected and displayed "a variety of relics" and many "belts of wampum" in his home (Stansbury 98). In addition, like his brother, Cusick drew scenes from earlier periods in Haudenosaunee history. His drawings, remarked the visitor, "exhibited in a striking and clear manner the council meetings, the rites of worship, and the modes of dancing practiced by [his] forefathers" (Stansbury 98). Cusick thus seems to have embraced a project meant for Nicholas, who had told missionaries in 1802 that he would "collect materials for making up . . . a history of the ancient tribes inhabiting this continent" (Miller 66).

Cusick took advantage of this fledgling role as a tribal historian. With the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, the Tuscarora village became a popular destination for those visiting the falls at Niagara.³⁰ Cusick invited to his home a constant stream of curious tourists. Travelogues

don't know verr[y] much I ask M^r Kirkland if when I grow up a great [man] if my mind would not open like I know great deal, he tells yes if I apply my self & make observations[.]

²⁸ Johnson details the Tuscaroras' involvement in the war and names Cusick as one of "about thirty-five Tuscarora volunteers, stationed at Lewiston on guard" (167). By late 1813, the British had burned Fort Niagara, Lewiston, and the Tuscarora settlement. Boyce writes that, "with their homes, church, school, and livestock destroyed, most of the Tuscaroras apparently left the Niagara frontier and many went to the Oneida reservation. Lewiston was abandoned until 1815 and groups of Tuscarora presumably began to return at about that time as well" (138).

²⁹ Other members of Cusick's family also may have assisted in this effort. A report from the New-York Missionary Society reveals that Crane "had printed, 500 copies of Brown's Catechism, and 400 copies of a spelling book, both in the Tuscarora language. . . . They have been, during the past winter, introduced into the school" ("Twenty-Third Annual Report," 10). A handwritten note appended to a copy of the catechism at the American Antiquarian Society states that the pamphlet was "presented by David Cusick, son of the Chief of the Tuscaroras, whose cabin we visited in our return from Niagara Falls" on 20 July 1826.

³⁰ Patricia Jasen notes that by "the 1820s a growing number of tourists at Niagara incorporated a visit to the village of the Tuscarora, near Lewiston, New York, into their itineraries" (42).

from the period remark uniformly on his desire to display and peddle paintings and other wares to patrons and voyeurs alike. For example, on his return from signing a treaty with the Ojibwes in 1826, Thomas McKenney “purchased some moccasins of him, a painting by one of the tribe, which illustrates a tradition, and several other drawings” (433). After the publication of *Sketches* in 1827, Cusick integrated the book into his economic endeavors. According to William Bulluck, an unnamed Cusick brother would hawk *Sketches* to travelers riding from Lewiston to Lockport, enticing buyers to stop mid-journey at Tuscarora for a meeting with its author (xxvii). “His house and family were patterns of neatness and order,” Bulluck reported, asserting that Cusick was “the most intelligent Indian I had met with” (xxviii). His room “was decorated with colored drawings of his own execution,” and Bulluck purchased several before departing as Cusick beseeched him “to call on [his] return” (xxviii). Others purchased *Sketches* from Cusick himself. John Bachman wrote after *Sketches*’s publication that “the chief showed us his drawings—the belt and wampum and battle axe—and sold us one of his books, full of fables” (68). Cusick, then, parlayed interest in Haudenosaunee history into a cottage industry wherein he sold historical relics, drawings, and *Sketches* itself to the throngs of travelers who visited the Tuscarora village throughout the 1820s.

Here he wrote the preface, dated June 10, 1825, to the first edition of *Sketches*, a 28-page pamphlet copyrighted in the Southern District of New York in January of 1826 and published in Lewiston in 1827. The location of *Sketches*’ original printing has become a matter of speculation. While the pamphlet’s title page notes that the volume was published at Lewiston and printed for its author, there is no printer’s imprint in the first edition.³¹ Given his letter to Spafford, however,

³¹ Though Round provides an extensive account of *Sketches*’ printing and publication history, he notes erroneously that the first edition “was printed at ‘Lewiston, at the Tuscarora Village’” and maintains that “its type was set and its pages were printed by Tuscarora community members” (151). As Robert Dale Parker details, while the first edition was almost certainly printed and published in Lewiston, the words “at the Tuscarora Village” do not appear on that edition’s imprint. The text contains no indication that it was printed at Tuscarora, and there is no evidence to suggest that Tuscaroras themselves printed the first edition.

Cusick likely contracted to print *Sketches* in Lewiston with the printers of the *Niagara Sentinel*, a weekly produced there from 1823 to 1827.³² One year later, Cusick revised his volume by adding seven paragraphs to the end of the text and four woodcut engravings to the beginning.³³ Several of those engravings correspond to the descriptions given by visitors of the images that decorated Cusick's home.³⁴ While the second edition's claim to a run of seven thousand copies is likely an exaggeration, *Sketches* was nonetheless popular not only as a curio of the tourist trade but also as an object of study. The pamphlet was referenced disparagingly in the early nineteenth century by Parkman and several other of the nation's preeminent ethnologists and historians.³⁵ Others cited *Sketches* approvingly or at least in neutral terms.³⁶ Thoreau, for example, thought Cusick's work

³² A notice in the *Lockport Observatory* for 10 May 1827 explains that "The Niagara Sentinel, formerly published at Lewiston in this county, has been discontinued."

³³ The nature of Cusick's textual additions is somewhat unclear. While the second edition concludes definitively, the first edition ends abruptly at the very bottom of the pamphlet's final page. One could speculate that the first edition's final paragraphs were present but have since been lost. Indeed, a handwritten note in the Newberry Library's copy of the first edition—added by an early cataloguer—declares that there "must have been another leaf." However, all five extant copies of the first edition end in the same fashion.

³⁴ McKenney bought from Cusick a rendering of "a giant, before whom the natives are flying in great terror"—a fair description of a woodcut that Cusick titles "The Stonish Giants" in the second edition (433). Stansbury, as discussed earlier, wrote of a drawing by Cusick that depicted "the modes of dancing practiced by [his] forefathers"—again an accurate description of a woodcut titled "The War Dance."

³⁵ In 1846, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft described *Sketches* as "curious evidences of the way-farings and wanderings of the human intellect, unaided by letters, or the spirit of truth" (21). One year later, though he relied extensively on the text for his *Notes on the Iroquois*, Schoolcraft dismissed *Sketches* as "a mass of incongruous details" only useful if "divested of [its] absurdity" (37). As mentioned earlier, Gallatin explained in 1848 that "little reliance can be placed on . . . [the] pretended historical traditions" in the "evidently fabulous annals of the Iroquois . . . invented by a pure Indian" (cxlviii). Orasmus Turner, though less strident than others, describes Cusick as possessing "rather more than the ordinary love of fancy and fiction, inherent in his race" (50).

³⁶ The first published reference to *Sketches*, in Alexander Withers' *Chronicles of Border Warfare* (1831), used it to describe indigenous peoples' "notions of theocracy" and accounts of settlement (18, 26). In 1834, Joseph Ingraham appealed to *Sketches* for the spelling and pronunciation of Niagara (28). The naturalist Constantine Rafinesque saw *Sketches* as a Haudenosaunee correlative to the *Walam Olum*, the discredited origin and migration narratives of the Delawares (60–61). Hiram Clark's *History of Chenango County* includes a substantial excerpt from *Sketches*, "not pretending to pass any opinion upon dates so ancient, and resting only in human memory" (11).

“valuable as showing how an Ind[ian] writes history,” a dismissive remark notable still for its insinuation that Indians not only write history but also do so in a particular fashion (Bellin 183).

Elements of the second edition’s production hint that Cusick may have reinforced or even reconceived *Sketches* as a nationalist pursuit, stridently asserting the Tuscaroras’ control over the the development and objectives of the text. This edition was published at the “Tuscarora Village: (Lewiston, Niagara co.),” the change in location itself a gesture toward what Round views as the “nation-centeredness” of the history (151). It shared a press with the Quaker abolitionist Lyman Spalding’s journal *Priestcraft Exposed*, the first issue of which criticized missionary activities as corrupt commercial enterprises.³⁷ Though perhaps coincidental, the shared press could imply that Cusick had become familiar with Spalding’s arguments or even agreed with his opinions. At the least, the presence of Spalding’s screed uncovers regional precedents for mobilizing print against missionaries and in support of indigenous populations. That *Sketches* was altered and reissued in the midst of this political fervor suggests that Cusick’s estrangement from missionary instruction after *Sketches*’s first printing—an event discussed earlier in this section—influenced his desire to issue a second edition. In any case, Cusick’s revisions give reason to believe that he understood the second edition to have superceded the first. Though other editions of *Sketches* were released later, only these two were printed in Cusick’s lifetime, as he seems to have died in late 1840.³⁸

³⁷ The second edition of *Sketches* was printed in Lockport by Cooley & Lathrop. In a notice from 1828 announcing the disbanding of an earlier firm, Turner & Lathrop, the latter’s address is recorded as “the office of ‘Priest-Craft Exposed’.” (“One Thing is Certain!,” *Lockport Journal*, 8 May 1828). Perhaps coincidentally, Spafford was also an outspoken opponent of “priestcraft,” describing himself in 1827 as “so far as I know, the first person in the United States, publicly to call attention to the dangerous schemes of the hierarchists” (“Ascendency of Priestcraft,” *The Reformer*, February 1828). The first issue of *Priestcraft Exposed, and Primitive Christianity Defended*, from July 1828, included this attack on missionaries:

Is this immense amount begged annually, in the name of the ‘poor perishing heathen’ given to them? Nay, it is expended . . . on *poor, despised, and persecuted missionaries!* Are not the ‘heathen’ *laid under contribution* as soon as these missionaries get a foot hold among them? Look at the missionary journals for the amount *plundered* from the Sandwich Islanders . . . or a little nearer home, from our own Indians.

³⁸ Newspapers from New York (“David Cusick,” *New York Spectator*, November 18, 1840) to Baltimore (“A Chief Dead,” *Baltimore Sun*, November 21, 1840) in this period announce the death of David Cusick, but their accounts of

Printing Haudenosaunee History in *David Cusick's Sketches*

“Books,” writes Luther Standing Bear, “have robbed a people of both history and memory” (27). Though he penned these words at Pine Ridge in the first decades of the twentieth century, I have sought to argue in this chapter for their applicability to the Haudenosaunee from a century prior. As the arrival of small-press printing coincided with the renewal of state-sanctioned speculation, historians like Cusick were presented with a dilemma. In consigning their pasts to the page, they at once offered historical evidence for their territorial sovereignty and threatened a vital tenet of their historiographical traditions. Standing Bear, despite his outward cynicism, in fact provides a resolution to this dilemma. Even as he critiqued the effect of books on his people, Standing Bear wrote several, all of them meditations on the “history and memory” of the Oglala Lakota.³⁹ Thus, at least for Standing Bear, the solution to this threat was not to abjure the written word but rather to use that discursive form to advance the interests of his community. Cusick, I argue, achieves a similar objective. Using a range of rhetorical and narrative strategies, Cusick divests *Sketches* of its threat to his community and preserves its utility as evidence of their territoriality. Cusick, that is, counters print’s propensity to authorize histories, to displace them from the conditions of their creation, and to render them immutable despite future exigency. *Sketches* instead offers a printed history that remains animate in its calculated provisionality, its intimacy with its creator, and its amenability to revisions. Cusick provides an authoritative history of the Haudenosaunee even as he denies in print both the possibility and desirability of authoritative historical accounts.

David’s life routinely confuse him with his father. These inconsistencies give reason to suspect that Nicholas in fact died in 1840, though there are no known first-hand accounts of David after that year. In 1845, James Cusick wrote of his “late brother David’s book on the Indians” in a letter to Schoolcraft (1847, 237).

³⁹ Standing Bear finished four books: a memoir of his childhood at Pine Ridge, an ethnography of the Oglala Lakota, and two volumes of Lakota folklore.

In the preface to *Sketches*, Cusick at once affirms the principles of indigenous history and acknowledges, like Standing Bear, that those principles are unsettled by his actions. This tension manifests itself in the preface as an equivocal narration of *Sketches*' conception and composition:

I have been long waiting in hopes that some of my people, who have received an English education, would have undertaken the work as to give a sketch of the Ancient History of the Six Nations; but found no one seemed to concur in the matter, after some hesitation I determined to commence the work; but found the history involved with fables; and besides, examining myself, finding so small educated that it was impossible for me to compose the work without much difficulty.—After various reasons I abandoned the idea: I however, took up a resolution to continue the work, which I have taken much pains procuring the materials, and translating into English language. I have endeavoured to throw some light on the history of the original population of the country, which I believe never have been recorded. I hope this little work will be acceptable to the public. (3)

These remarks, though distinctive for their syntax, are conventional for the period in their appeal to sentiments like humility, privation, and ignorance. As Ann Fabian describes, in the nineteenth century these expressions functioned rhetorically to absolve the shortcomings of amateur writers. In *Sketches*, however, these sentiments function also to provide readers with a starker portrait of Cusick, one that characterizes him less as an inadequate author than as an uncertain one. This sense of discomfort has been a critical touchstone in analyses of *Sketches*. Russell Judkins, in the first literary-critical account of the text, argued that this sentiment revealed Cusick's position as a "marginal or liminal . . . bicultural man" (31). Though the identitarian elements of this claim are, three decades later, indefensible, still Judkins directs focus usefully to how Cusick seems divided

over his choice to write. For Cusick, the production of *Sketches* seems at best an ambivalent task, one that, like the written Gai'wiiio', threatened and complemented his traditions.

When Cusick notes that “no one seemed to concur in the matter,” his phrase seems at first a lament over his failure to recruit an educated peer. However, due to his tortuous syntax, Cusick seems to define “the matter” not only as the compositional process but also as the “sketch” itself. In other words, perhaps Cusick suggests here not that his peers rejected the task, but that they did not agree in “the matter” of their past. Such an interpretation aligns the phrase with the principles of indigenous history. No one concurs because, as Cusick intimates, there exists no authoritative version of the Haudenosaunee past. Absent consensus, Cusick hesitates, cognizant that his choice to write *Sketches* threatens to impose on his peers the historical unanimity they have resisted. He soon rejects this unanimity, however, and determines to predicate *Sketches* not on consensus but on his effort—procural, translation—to produce an individual version, however arduous the task. Cusick vacillates in the passage between an adherence to his tradition and a realization that those practices complicate the writing of *Sketches*. Even as he accepts that “no one seemed to concur,” Cusick acknowledges that this circumstance hinders his ability to document “the history of the original population of the country.” Cusick’s uncertainty materializes here, as his choice to write coexists uneasily with his effort to avoid unsettling the tradition that he threatens to undermine.

His humility discloses similar concerns. When Cusick writes that he waited “in hopes that some of my people . . . would have undertaken the work,” he reveals tacitly that he does not want the position in which he finds himself. As Fabian details, these claims are standard in nineteenth-century prefaces, as are expressions, like Cusick’s, that attempt to rationalize authorial reluctance with reference to the absence of an “English education.” Though Cusick received that training as a child, still he distances himself from this education to explain to his readers his failure to write

“without much difficulty.” Given the ambivalence that saturates this preface, however, Cusick’s conventional appeals perhaps also reflect a broader concern about the nature of his history. These deferential statements seem intended not simply to absolve *Sketches*’s faults but also to diminish the potential for its content to be construed as authoritative. In the preface, Cusick rejects his role as an author, historian, and leader to divest *Sketches* of its ability to offer an authoritative account of the Haudenosaunee past. Cusick’s strategic humility finds its apotheosis in the last sentence of the preface, as he expresses hope that “this little work will be acceptable to the public.” Here, to be sure, Cusick apologizes to an audience of travelers, historians, and tourists for his deficiencies as an author. More than this, however, Cusick directs an apology to his own community—to the Haudenosaunee peers discussed at the start of his preface—not for his syntax but instead for his decision to write.⁴⁰ As Cusick realizes, these peers resisted his petition “to give a sketch of the Ancient History” because of their concerns about the communal effect of historical consensus. In *Sketches*’s preface, then, Cusick asks that his peers accept his “little work” even as its production and distribution challenge their historiographical traditions.

Cusick pursues that acceptance not by forsaking these traditions but rather by altering his printed account so that the medium better accommodates the interpretive standards of indigenous historians. As Susan Kalter discerns in her critique of *Sketches*, Cusick “struggles to maintain the . . . orality of his text as he adopts Western literary modes as the means of [its] expression” (26). For Kalter, this “struggle” entails an effort to preserve in *Sketches* a range of “oral” traits, among them an “openness to the shaping influence of audience” (26). I would add to this range Cusick’s insistence that the historical narrative offered in *Sketches*, like its oral precursors, remains one of countless versions, none of which aspire to primacy over alternatives. This insistence appears not

⁴⁰ Susan Kalter notes similarly that “it is the Iroquois to whom [Cusick] might feel he needs to apologize” (22).

only in the content of *Sketches*, as I will argue, but also in its paratextual elements. In its first two editions, for instance, the title page of *Sketches* does not include a byline. Instead, *Sketches* offers itself to readers as *David Cusick's Sketches of Ancient History of the Six Nations* (figure 2). Here,

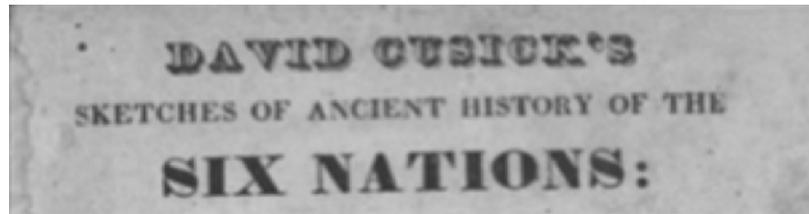


Figure 2. Title Page, David Cusick's *Sketches*. (Detail)

Cusick quite literally asserts individual possession over the historical narrative that he presents in his text. Round has argued that this curious feature of *Sketches* “invokes the emerging capitalistic prerogative of authorship” in the nineteenth century (216). In this sense, Cusick claims to possess this version of Haudenosaunee history to ensure compensation for its production and publication. Cusick often leveraged his renown as a historian to his financial advantage, and his production of *Sketches* seems no exception. Indeed, several facets of *Sketches*'s production disclose that Cusick harbored concerns over his finances, including its self-publication, its exaggerated claim of seven thousand copies, and its detailed copyright page.⁴¹ These proprietary aspects of *Sketches*'s titular possessive need not foreclose other explanations for its presence, however. Though *Sketches* was marketed as a souvenir to exploit a vogue for cultural voyeurism, the status conferred to *Sketches* as a result of this “capitalistic prerogative” also lessened the authority of its contents. That is, the intended function of *Sketches*—to remind travelers of their exotic adventure—also positioned the text not as an authoritative historical account but instead as the fanciful musings of an individual author. The title of *David Cusick's Sketches* emphasized not only the remunerative potential of

⁴¹ In addition, Cusick may have accentuated *Sketches*'s nature as a cultural curio to entice interest from readers. That is, he may have preserved the syntactical and orthographic inconsistencies of *Sketches* to heighten its desirability as an object intended for tourists. Other writings by Cusick, though not free of these inconsistencies, often are clearer than large portions of *Sketches*. Though she qualifies this claim differently, Kalter argues similarly that Cusick may have used non-standard English willfully (29).

the text but also its subjectivities. Cusick, then, perhaps intended for his book to be titled *David Cusick's Sketches* because its contents present only his interpretation of the Haudenosaunee past, not those of his reluctant peers. Though Round contends, as I discuss in the previous section, that the title amounts to one of many “authorizing gestures . . . [that] suggest the nation-centeredness” of *Sketches*, in fact the possessive seems to distance Cusick from those Haudenosaunee who did not “concur in the matter” (150). *David Cusick's Sketches* accentuates the authorial identity of Cusick to diminish its status as an authoritative or universal guide to Haudenosaunee history.

That status is likewise diminished by Cusick’s decision to describe his book as a series of “sketches.” In the nineteenth century, the description would have indicated to potential audiences that *Sketches* compiled several brief and desultory episodes from the “Ancient History of the Six Nations.” Though the content of *Sketches* corresponds somewhat with that description, Cusick’s decision seems not only an aesthetic consideration nor only, as Round argues, a profit-motivated adoption of a genre “popular in nineteenth-century Anglo-American storytelling” (210). Cusick, more than engage with the conventions of antebellum literature, describes his book as a series of “sketches” to reconcile that book with the principles of indigenous history. Kristie Hamilton, in a study of this nineteenth-century genre, identifies aspects of the sketch that distinguished the form from its generic peers. According to Hamilton, for nineteenth-century writers the sketch “became a vehicle for working out culturally acceptable rationales for authorship” (27). She argues further that the sketch, in contrast to other antebellum genres, both allowed for the “public expression of private experience” and “did not foreclose interpretive possibilities” (4). Though Hamilton never considers authors like Cusick, the traits she describes as central to the sketch align the genre with the ideals of indigenous history. Indeed, these traits provide Cusick with a “culturally acceptable rationale” for his decision to transcribe and publish his version of the Haudenosaunee past.

If, as Hamilton notes, readers of sketches—and thus of *Sketches*—understood the book as the expression of a “private experience” that encouraged “interpretive possibilities,” then Cusick perhaps selected this genre in an attempt to reconcile the presence of *Sketches* with the traditions of his reticent peers. For one, an acceptance of *Sketches* as “private”—as, despite its publication, an experience exclusive to its author—emphasizes, like its titular possessive, the singular nature of its contents. In addition, the acceptance of *Sketches* as replete with “interpretive possibilities” accentuates its variability and its privileging of “interpretative truths” over historical facts. In this way, Cusick’s decision to describe his book as a set of sketches heightens its status as subjective, ephemeral, and provisional, and aligns *Sketches* further with the oral expressions on which it is based. This decision also explains Cusick’s curious comment, in his preface, that he “found the history involved with fables” and, as a result, “abandoned” *Sketches* temporarily. For Konkle, the phrase reveals Cusick’s desire to disentangle the fabular from the historical; his brief reluctance, then, derives from the difficulties of affirming *Sketches* as history “in contradistinction to fables” (243). But the phrase suggests also that Cusick perhaps “abandoned” his book temporarily not to excise the fabular from *Sketches* but rather to accommodate the fabular within *Sketches*’s history. Here Cusick narrates his gradual acceptance of the fabular as an element of the historical, not as its opposite. He recognizes that, like the sketch, fables are valued for their social utility as stories that inspire “interpretive possibilities.” Cusick appeals to the sketch not only to align his history with its oral forebears but also to emphasize the salutary function of the fabular, insisting on the presence and legitimacy of “fables” in *Sketches*’s history of the Haudenosaunee.

As the preface and paratextual elements of *Sketches* reveal, Cusick concerned himself not only with the content of his book, but also with its structure—with, in other words, how the book organized and presented its content to readers. Studies of *Sketches* have focused far more on its

structure than its difficult content. Judkins, for instance, argues that *Sketches* aligns with settler-colonial conventions for narrating history, as does Konkle. Deborah Doxtator, in contrast, claims that *Sketches*, rather than adhere to settler-colonial conventions, in fact follows what she calls the “cultural structures” of Haudenosaunee history, including its invocation of prominent figures like Sky Woman and Hiawatha, the respective protagonists of the Haudenosaunee peoples’ narratives of origin and confederation (42). Round both accepts and complicates this explanation, observing that these signal events, though present in *Sketches*, are afforded less attention than others that, at least for most readers, seem comparatively trivial (213). For Round, the relative absence of these events, and the attendant emphasis on the quotidian elements of Haudenosaunee history, serve to contest settler-colonial critiques of *Sketches*’s historical plausibility. This claim, though credible, relies implicitly on an understanding of *Sketches*’s audience as adherent solely to the interpretive standards of settler-colonial history. That is, for Round, the diminution of these formative events insulates settler-colonial audiences from the intolerable prospect that *Sketches*’s history could be, to again cite the preface, “involved with fables.”⁴² *Sketches*’s “public,” however, likely included not only settler-colonial readers but also Cusick’s reticent peers, whose refusal to accept *Sketches* was premised less on its fabular elements than on its threat to their historiographical traditions.

If we read *Sketches* in accord with the interpretive standards of the peers who refused to “have undertaken the work,” its diminution of these formative episodes serves not to fulfill the expectation of settler-colonial readers but instead to subvert them in favor of the Haudenosaunee. *Sketches* disregards several of these events, but its record of the formation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy is illustrative. Near the middle of *Sketches*, Cusick offers this account:

⁴² Since, as I discuss in the previous section of this chapter, settler-colonial historians often disparaged *Sketches*, this strategy—if intentional on the part of Cusick—nonetheless proved ineffective.

. . . a war broke out among the Five Nations: during the unhappy differences the Atotarho was the most unhappy chief, [he] resided at the fort Onondaga; his head and body was ornamented with black snakes . . . after a while he requested the people to change his dress, the people immediately drove away the snakes—a mass of wampam were collected and the chief was soon dressed in a large belt of wampam; he became a law giver, and renewed the chain of alliance of the Five Nations and framed their internal government, which took five years in accomplishing it. (19–20)

Though Cusick later supplements this crucial narrative with further details, absent entirely from *Sketches* are its two integral figures.⁴³ *Sketches* fails to discuss the Peacemaker, who travels from *Wendake*, the lands of the Hurons, to share with Hiawatha a peaceful alternative to the “unhappy differences” that Cusick describes. *Sketches* likewise ignores Hiawatha himself, who has lost his family and agrees to advocate for that peaceful alternative with the leaders of the “Five Nations,” including Atotarho. Absent too is Atotarho’s initial response to these entreaties; in most versions of the story, he opposes Hiawatha and reacts violently prior to acceding under duress. In addition to these absences, *Sketches* all but elides this critical episode entirely, omitting a paragraph break before transitioning to what seems to be, at least initially, an unrelated account of the Senecas. For scholars of the Haudenosaunee, and even readers in the nineteenth century, this cautious account, and the brevity with which it is narrated, seem glaring—indeed, almost inconceivable.

Cusick, I argue, elides this episode for two reasons, both of which align *Sketches* with the interpretive standards of indigenous historians. For one, as Krupat observes, indigenous histories often avoid the delineation and valorization of particular historical actors. Instead, these histories transpose the actions of individuals onto broader communities (2002, 55–56). Though ubiquitous

⁴³ For example, *Sketches* does reference, however briefly, the white tree of peace, an important element of this event.

in later histories of the Confederacy, perhaps the Peacemaker and Hiawatha were considered less significant to the Haudenosaunee in earlier centuries. At the least, as Daniel Richter explains, the significance of the Confederacy itself often changed to align with the needs of its members; prior to the seventeenth century, for example, the Haudenosaunee were less “political entity” than they were “cultural phenomenon” (7). Thus the absence of these historical figures perhaps represented a desire to understand the Confederacy as the result not of individual efforts but rather communal ones. In his record of the Confederacy’s formation, Cusick twice ascribes to “the people” actions more often credited to the Peacemaker and Hiawatha as individuals. He further reinforces these substitutions in one of *Sketches*’s second-edition woodcuts (figure 3). That illustration, much like



Figure 3. “Atotarho, a Famous War Chief, Resided at Onondaga.”

the words of *Sketches*, depicts the formation of the Confederacy without explicit reference to the Peacemaker or Hiawatha. Instead, two unidentified men approach a seated Atotarho. Though his

readers can assume the identities of these figures, Cusick never provides them.⁴⁴ In addition, he strengthens that anonymity by rendering the two men visually indistinguishable from each other: they stand similarly, share facial profiles and expressions, and wear identical clothes. Further, as William Sturtevant observes, both figures are depicted identically to the generic Haudenosaunee men that Cusick illustrates in other woodcuts appended to his book (131). In both the textual and visual registers of *Sketches*, the mere presence of the Peacemaker and Hiawatha recede as Cusick attributes their struggle to establish the Confederacy instead to “the people.” Their identities and actions, Cusick intimates, are less integral to Haudenosaunee history than the Confederacy itself and the social benefits that have resulted from its formation.

Cusick perhaps also elides this episode to divest *Sketches* of its potential as an instrument of historical consensus. In his engraving, Cusick shows Atotarho prior to his conversion, covered in snakes. He thus situates this scene precisely in the established chronology of the Confederacy: in this frame, the Haudenosaunee, as a cultural and political group, is embryonic, not yet formed. Round contends that the selection of this scene, and not the ensuing “moment of transformation,” aligns with his argument that Cusick emphasizes the quotidian, rather than the political, in order to enhance the historical plausibility of *Sketches* (213). The presence of the dog behind Atotarho, an otherwise inexplicable inclusion, for Round becomes evidence of this longing for plausibility. Again, this assertion, though credible, discounts the role of Cusick’s peers in *Sketches*’s creation. Cusick, in deference to the interpretive standards of indigenous history, perhaps omits this scene, this “moment of transformation,” to preserve for readers possibilities for later emendation of that formative moment. In this sense, Cusick accommodates the production of alternative histories by

⁴⁴ Scholars versed in Haudenosaunee culture will recognize that, in addition to never using the honorific moniker of “the Peacemaker,” Cusick also never uses that man’s personal name, likely to conform his history with the cultural prohibition against its utterance.

bringing his Haudenosaunee peers only to the cusp of this critical event. He describes the origins of the Confederacy obliquely, preserving opportunities for his readers—and future generations—to revise them in accord with their conditions. As Nabokov explains, “keeping many versions . . . available for discussion enables a society to check and adjust its course through uncertain times” (47). In his engraving, then, Cusick does not disavow politics; instead, he engages with them in a manner that will allow the Haudenosaunee to revise their histories in response to their “uncertain times.” Cusick, that is, envisions a future in which the preservation of the Haudenosaunee would require his peers or progenies to reinterpret or even revise its origins, and he writes *Sketches* with these eventualities in mind. In sum, though *Sketches* seems, for some readers, to deny the import of this episode, perhaps the opposite is true. For Cusick, as for his Haudenosaunee peers, to elide the formation of the Confederacy was to afford that event particular historical prominence.

In contrast to his elision of this formative event, Cusick attends meticulously to historical episodes that, for modern readers, seem incidental or even trivial. Though the attention that these events garner in *Sketches* does serve to emphasize the quotidian elements of Haudenosaunee life, that focus also functions politically. That is, when Cusick expounds on these incidental episodes, he affirms the territorial sovereignty of the Haudenosaunee without foreclosing opportunities for the revision of critical historical events. For instance, though readers might recognize Onondaga Lake as the seat of Atotarho and thus as the original capitol of the Haudenosaunee, this setting is absent from *Sketches*'s record of the Confederacy. Cusick instead discusses Onondaga Lake only to establish the origins of the mosquitos that plague its shore. In *Sketches*, then, the ancestral seat of the Haudenosaunee becomes associated less with the exploits of Hiawatha than with those of a “great mosqueto . . . with a long stinger” whose spilt blood morphs into the pests that pervade the lake (21). Though its inclusion in *Sketches* seems trivial, in fact Cusick appeals to this history

of Onondaga Lake, and not its renowned alternative, intentionally. As with his refusal to identify Hiawatha or the Peacemaker, Cusick refuses to name the geographical origin of the Confederacy, preserving opportunities to revise those origins in accord with future events. His later account of Onondaga Lake thus allows Cusick to affirm its historical connection to the Haudenosaunee even as he upholds the historiographical traditions of the “public” that he references in his preface.

Sketches also recounts how the Haudenosaunee resisted the invasion of a “Lake Serpent.” As with his discussion of the “great mosquito,” here Cusick stresses an event that appears trivial, and he reinforces its apparent triviality by focusing not on the details of the event itself but rather on how the Haudenosaunee built fortifications to defend themselves. He writes of

The manner making the fort: at first they set fire against several trees as requires to make a fort, and the stone axes are used to rub off the coals, as to burn quicker; when the tree burns down they put fires to it about three paces apart and burns it down in half a day; the logs are collected to a place where they set up round according to the bigness of the fort, and the earth is heaped on both sides. A fort generally has two gates; one for passage, and the other to obtain water. (17)

In this passage, Cusick extracts the “manner making the fort” from its historical context, offering his settler-colonial audience an abstracted glimpse into Haudenosaunee life. The instructions thus position Cusick as an informant, exposing readers to cultural knowledge otherwise unavailable to them. However, just as *Sketches*’s account of Onondaga Lake serves as more than an explanation for ecological phenomena, so too does this passage operate as more than a guide to cultural ones. Though episodes like these disclose to curious readers the environmental and cultural knowledge of the Haudenosaunee, their inclusion also establishes for these readers the historical relationship of the Haudenosaunee to their land. That is, perhaps Cusick includes these episodes, despite their

historical triviality, because their detailed accounts of these territories affirm the Haudenosaunee people's ancestral connections to the region. Moreover, at least in the case of the "Lake Serpent," these stories establish not only a connection to the land, but also a history of defending that land against foreign invasion. Cusick perhaps includes these trivial histories because their presence in *Sketches* allows him to establish the territoriality of the Haudenosaunee even as he ignores, or at the least diminishes, events like the origins of the Confederacy. In this sense, Cusick accepts and even exploits *Sketches*'s ability to authorize singular histories, but only when he discusses events that are unlikely to require later emendation. Cusick thus establishes the territorial sovereignty of the Haudenosaunee in *Sketches* even as he preserves the historiographical traditions of his peers.

Cusick also argues for that sovereignty by referencing incidents that, though insignificant as historical episodes, nonetheless concern the politics of the nineteenth-century Haudenosaunee. In their effort to derive lessons from historical events, indigenous historians often understand the past not as, in the words of Doxtator, "distinct, differentiated, and . . . separate from the present" (37). Instead, for these historians, the past is understood in "consciously constructed continuity" with the present (Doxtator 39).⁴⁵ As I mentioned earlier, in *Sketches*, Cusick transitions suddenly from his cursory record of the Confederacy to an extended account of how the Seneca expanded their territories. He describes a battle with the "Squawkihews," a neighboring tribe, and observes that the Seneca "settle the country and build forts on the Genesee river to keep the Squawkihews in subjection." He also details, with cartographical precision, that the tribe now "possessed along the bank of the Great Lake, now Ontario, to the creek called Kenaukarent, now Oak Orchard, [to] the bank of the river Onyakarra, now Niagara" (20–21). This record, though ostensibly unrelated

⁴⁵ James Thomas Stevens, a contemporary Mohawk poet, notes usefully that, in Haudenosaunee contexts, the passage of time, though often allegorized as a river, in fact is better allegorized as a lake. "Everything that has happened," he writes, "is there swirling around; it has not flowed past and been forgotten" (188).

to the politics of the Haudenosaunee, in fact appeals to their concerns forcefully, if not explicitly. As readers familiar with this region will recognize, the area detailed in this passage aligns almost precisely with the territories stolen from the Seneca in 1826, one year prior to *Sketches*'s release. In this passage, then, Cusick discusses an otherwise insignificant event to forward an implicit but still clear criticism of the state-sanctioned dispossessions that have obliged him to write *Sketches*. He finds in the event a resolution to the plight of the nineteenth-century Haudenosaunee, arguing for their status as historical occupants of the lands confiscated by their settler-colonial neighbors.

In this event and throughout *Sketches*, Cusick amplifies these arguments with an insistent and, I argue, calculated appeal to spatial and temporal markers that force his audience to question the legitimacy of state-sanctioned dispossession. When Cusick writes that, for instance, the creek known as Kenaukarent is “now Oak Orchard,” his inclusion of this English toponym familiarizes settler-colonial readers with the territories to which Cusick refers. Not unlike his addition of “the manner making the fort,” here Cusick accommodates those readers’ desire for information about an unfamiliar culture. More than this, however, the inclusion of the newer toponym subordinates “Oak Orchard” to its Haudenosaunee antecedent. In its arrangement, this sentence confines “Oak Orchard” and two other English toponyms within comma-bounded parentheticals, situating these stolen territories inside Haudenosaunee geographies. *Sketches* thus argues syntactically and more broadly for regional histories that recognize these lands as inherently Haudenosaunee; toponyms like “Oak Orchard” are—to borrow a phrase from linguistics—non-essential elements, as are the territorial claims forwarded by their presence. In addition, the insistent repetition of “now,” used often within *Sketches* to introduce English toponyms, reinforces the temporal immaturity of these claims and thus subtly discredits them as insufficiently historical. Cusick implies, in other words,

that the claims of the Haudenosaunee to places like Onyakarra are more legitimate than those of their settler-colonial counterparts due to their presence in a deeper and more authoritative past.

Cusick does similar work in his description of an event that follows the subjugation of the Squawkihews but nonetheless occurs in the same region, on territories stolen from the Senecas in 1826. He discusses a period “800 years before the Columbus discovered the America,” and notes that “about this time the Twankanahors, (now Mississaugers,) ceded the colonies lying between the Kea-nau-hau-sent (Oak-Orchard,) and the river Onyakarra, (Niagara)” to the Haudenosaunee (23). As an aside, here the identical toponyms, no longer confined by comma-bound phrases, are restrained further by literal parentheses. In addition to this spatial frame, *Sketches* also insistently frames its historical events with appeals to the eras in which they occurred. Rather than detail for his readers the precise years in which these events transpired, however, Cusick starts each sketch with an approximation of the years between these events and 1492, when “Columbus discovered the America.” These approximations are, of course, subtly ironic. *Sketches* asserts repeatedly that Columbus “discovered” America only to suggest the absurdity of that claim, especially given the extent of the pre-Columbian histories that Cusick presents to his readers. More than this, though, just as the inclusion of English toponyms argues for the immaturity of nineteenth-century claims to Haudenosaunee land, this appeal to Columbus affirms the illegitimacy of his claim to the New World and, more crucially, that claim’s enduring legacy in ideas like the Doctrine of Discovery.

Indeed, Cusick discredits that apparent discovery with a second frame, one that insists on the historical longevity of Haudenosaunee politics. This frame references Columbus’s discovery, but only to subsume that event within an older legacy: the succession of hereditary chieftanships at Onondaga. Cusick narrates, for example, “the reign the King Atotarho VIII, perhaps 450 years before Columbus,” when “the Twakanhah or Messissaugers began to wage a war against the five

nations” (29). Cusick reinforces here that the Haudenosaunee—as a people and a polity—thrived for several centuries before the arrival of Columbus, defending the territories that he now resides on and tries to protect with the publication of *Sketches*. More than merely chronological markers for settler-colonial and indigenous audiences, then, the juxtaposition of Atotarho with Columbus argues for a temporal hierarchy in which the former precedes the latter. Cusick then resumes the narration, noting that “the enemy”—the Twakanhah or Messissaugers—“was so excited that they determined to destroy the fort Kauhanauka, (now in Tuscarora near Lewiston,)” but were quickly “repulsed and flies from the foe” (29). Here again, Cusick relates historical events to nineteenth-century Haudenosaunee politics, referencing the contested territories not only of his broad polity but also his own people, the Tuscaroras. As with his earlier account of the Senecas, here Cusick, however obliquely, references nineteenth-century dispossessions and anticipates their failure. In *Sketches*, then, Cusick insists repeatedly that the sovereignty of the Haudenosaunee precedes that of the outsider, who has no right to possess what he has discovered and then claimed for his kind.

In sum, even as Cusick accedes to print, he constructs *Sketches* such that its history flouts that medium’s strictures and conventions. As a result, Cusick provides in *Sketches* an account of the Haudenosaunee that satisfies the interpretive standards of indigenous historians. In his elision of formative events from Haudenosaunee history, Cusick allows for their future revision and thus assuages the concerns of his skeptical peers. Likewise, in his emphasis on incidental histories, he affirms the territorial rights of the Haudenosaunee people and thus contests their state-sanctioned dispossession. Cusick, though guided by his traditional expressive practices, assents strategically to their modernization, providing in *Sketches* a printed history that reads as authoritative even as it steadfastly denies its own status as an authoritative account of the Haudenosaunee past.

Chapter Two

Touring the *Eulogy*: Kinship and the Transnational History of Native New England

Though scholars have learned much about William Apess in the past two decades, the last three years of the Pequot intellectual's life—from 1836 to 1839—have remained, according to Robert Warrior, nonetheless “shrouded in mystery” (2005, 4). In his collection of Apess's writings, first published in 1992, Barry O'Connell noted that two performances of the *Eulogy on King Philip* in Boston were Apess's “last in the public eye” (276). That Apess disappeared from public life after January of 1836 has become the conventional analysis, persisting almost to the present moment.¹ An adherence to this standard account is hardly censurable, of course. Insofar as scholars remain interested in Apess for his notable writing, the appearance of the *Eulogy* is a watershed moment: the text is his last and, as many have argued, his most realized articulation of the plight of Native peoples in nineteenth-century New England.² This account of the *Eulogy* as Apess's last textual incarnation, however, has diverted our attention unduly from the nature of its performance, from how this address in fact represented not a conclusion to Apess's intellectual life but rather a new beginning, one that has remained shrouded only by the difficulties of tracking the writer from the page to the stage.

The *Eulogy* in Boston was neither Apess's last moment in the public eye nor the apex of his intellectual development.³ Instead, that lecture inaugurated a series of performances that took

¹ Rochelle Rainieri Zuck, for instance, observed in 2013 that the *Eulogy*'s performance in Boston “marks the end of what we know of Apess's career as an orator” (1). Though the consistency of this analysis has made Apess's public disappearance after January 1836 all but immune to critique, recent books by Philip Gura and Drew Lopezina have expanded our knowledge of Apess's public life in his final years. I build here on those expansive accounts, focusing narrowly on the performance history of the *Eulogy* as Apess toured that lecture beyond Boston.

² For Lopezina, the *Eulogy* is “the most powerful critique of the colonial endeavor to emerge from the first half of the nineteenth century” (2010, 675). Lisa Brooks calls the text Apess's “most provocative” (198). Maureen Konkle argues that Apess's works reveal “a developing critique of racial difference,” one that finds its apotheosis within the *Eulogy* (105). Warrior notes that “Apess's *Eulogy* brings [his intellectual development] full circle” (2005, 36).

³ In a version of this chapter published in 2016 in *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, I join recent scholarship by Gura and Lopezina to establish this claim.

Apess across New England, to the nation's capital, and perhaps to New York City. In the months after his lectures in Boston, Apess delivered the *Eulogy* in Salem, Worcester, and Hartford.⁴ One year later, he likely lectured in New York. He then went south, visiting Washington in late 1837 to preach, lecture, and decry the treatment of several tribal delegations visiting the city—perhaps those that had met weeks earlier to broker a peace among the Sauk, Meskwaki, and Sioux. While evidence of Apess's final years has led many to conclude that they were marred by dissipation—economic, familial, and physical—these revelations lend credence to Warrior's speculations that this period might have been marked also by a widening and intensification of Apess's intellectual pursuits (2005, 38–43).⁵ Indeed, as Warrior suspected, the geographical reach and the intellectual breadth of Apess's career expanded significantly in the three years prior to his death.

The performance of the *Eulogy* in New England signaled a new stage in the development of Apess's public persona and political projects. Advertisements for these performances suggest that, in his last years, Apess augmented the practices that had structured his earlier public events. Since at least 1830, Apess had supplemented his itinerant preaching with lectures at larger, often secular venues wherein he would speak on political issues and sell books.⁶ In touring the *Eulogy*, Apess expanded his connection to these places by using the infrastructure of the region's nascent

⁴ As I completed revisions on this manuscript, Lopenzina uncovered an additional performance of the *Eulogy*, prior its arrival in Boston, in Portsmouth, New Hampshire (2017, 222).

⁵ Scholars have pieced together aspects of these final years by attending to recorded debt actions, mortgage loans, and a coroner's inquest into Apess's death. Apess was named as a defendant in four debt actions lodged in the Barnstable County Court in 1835–7 and mortgaged his home and property in September 1836 (Konkle 152–3). The interviews conducted as part of the coroner's inquest suggest that either he had left his first wife or that she had died. By 1839, Apess had moved to New York City, married a woman named Elizabeth, and was struggling with bouts of intemperance (Konkle 154–6; Warrior 2005, 39–41).

⁶ In 1830, Apess lectured at the Court House in Hartford; an advertisement for the speech notes that “His object is to expose for sale, the Memoir of his life . . . the profits of which is to aid in erecting a house of worship” (“REV. WM. APES,” *Connecticut Mirror*, 25 September 1830). He did the same at the Baptist Meeting House in New York City. A review of that lecture notes that Apess, “although not gifted with the eloquence of *Samson Occom*, succeeds very well in enlisting the sympathies of those who hear him” (*New York Evening Post*, 3 July 1830). As Konkle observes, in 1832 Apess spoke on abolition and Cherokee removal in Boston (97–100).

and burgeoning lyceum circuit. In all of its locations, the *Eulogy* occurred in a venue that hosted speakers sanctioned by city lyceums.⁷ Concurrent with this new access to the lecture circuit was Apess's increasingly strategic use of print publicity to fashion himself and his work. The volume of promotions sold to publicize the *Eulogy* dwarfs that of earlier lectures by Apess, suggesting a concerted and well-funded effort to market the talk to auditors. Likewise, variations within these promotions as the *Eulogy* traveled New England reflect Apess's keen sense not only of the area's media infrastructure, but also of how the vagaries of local audiences and histories could alter the presentation and reception of his lecture. More than an addition to the historical record, then, this new account of the *Eulogy* allows for considerations of Apess as a figure whose politics evolved in tandem with his manipulation of the practices that made those politics visible to a public often inclined to dismiss them.

In this second chapter, I appeal to this revised performance history to argue that Apess's efforts to publicize and tour the *Eulogy* aligned his text with performative traditions of historical expression practiced by indigenous peoples in early nineteenth-century New England.⁸ When he traveled the lyceum circuit, Apess traveled also in a network of regional kinship that "connected Indian people across the landscape" (O'Brien 146). This "network of relations," as Lisa Brooks notes, was sustained by the movements that informed indigenous existence and by the renewal of

⁷ The exception is the *Eulogy*'s second performance in Boston, given at Boylston Hall "by the request of the good citizens of Boston . . . a dissatisfaction being had in regard to [Apess's view of] the Mission cause" ("The Indian King Philip," *Boston Trumpet and Universalist Magazine*, 23 January 1836). The second edition of the *Eulogy*, published one year after the first, transcribes this version of the lecture. A comparison of the two editions shows that, in the second, Apess softened his invectives against missionaries by, for example, particularizing complaints to individuals rather than placing blame on all (1837, 17).

⁸ Recent analyses of the *Eulogy* have modeled an interpretive practice that moves past the work's revision of colonial history to engage what Lopenzina calls the indigenous "systems of knowledge and belief" that inform the text's content and structure (2010, 688). Brooks's reading is exemplary of this interpretive practice (192–218). In claiming that the *Eulogy* "reclaimed New England as Native space," Brooks appeals not only to Apess's revision of colonial history but also, for example, to the intricacies of Algonquian languages and the concept of Manitou (199). I will suggest in this chapter that similar "systems of knowledge and belief" influenced the *Eulogy*'s performances.

histories shared by the region's indigenous peoples (3).⁹ As these communal histories circulated, their recitation reaffirmed the presence of indigenous groups in nineteenth-century New England and thus supported claims to their lasting political autonomy. History, then, was performative—"kinship [is] . . . something we *do*," in Daniel Justice's formulation (2008, 150)—and communal, uniting groups in a ritual that affirmed the "shared principles of alliance and association" (Rifkin 2010, 12). Touring the *Eulogy*, Apess implicates his written history in this performative tradition of historical expression. The past and the political, he argues, inhere not only in discrete groups, but in the movements and relations that bridge their interstices. Apess thus intervenes in debates about the political status of the region's indigenous communities. Narratives of tribal extinction in New England had significant legal ramifications for groups like the Pequot, whose inability to treat with federal officials threatened their status as a nation (Rifkin 2012, 692–3; Huhndorf 11). The *Eulogy*'s tour counters these narratives by evoking a transnational foundation for indigenous nationhood. These nations persist, Apess shows, because of the persistence of histories shared in networks of regional kinship. As the *Eulogy* traveled the region, so too did a transnational history of indigeneity that affirmed the social, political, and physical presence of Native nations in early nineteenth-century New England.

Lecture Circuits and Kinship Networks

As I discuss in the introduction, recent scholarship in colonial and nineteenth-century indigenous literature has described how the adoption of the written word by Native peoples was mediated by their extant expressive practices. For example, as Brooks argues, even as pictographic "birchbark messages became letters and petitions," the latter forms were incorporated in established systems

⁹ Daniel Mandell's study of indigenous peoples in southern New England during this period reveals that the transient nature of these groups was at once a willful effort to support and strengthen ties among communities and the coerced result of the severe economic deprivation that attended their position as settler-colonial subjects (xvii, 7–8, 34).

for the distribution of recorded knowledge (13). In this sense, for indigenous peoples, the written word was a new means of instrumentalizing an old practice; rather than revolutionize indigenous expression, writing supplemented prior discursive traditions, many of which had served similarly to the written word for centuries (Round 12).

Just as the written word was integrated into prior communicative systems, so too was the lecture circuit incorporated into existing networks of indigenous kinship. In the early nineteenth century, indigenous peoples traveled across New England for religious gatherings and economic opportunities (Mandell 40–42). These movements followed established routes between the area’s indigenous groups, preserving and strengthening a complex system of social relations that joined otherwise distinct societies “through stories told, customs practiced, and commitments fulfilled” (Bauerkemper and Stark 9). According to Jean O’Brien, this system of shared relations and pasts “remained at the core of Indian identity in New England,” sustaining the autonomy of indigenous communities despite the diminution of their territories (117). Networks of regional kinship, then, served a political purpose—what Mark Rifkin identifies as a “geopolitics of kinship”—whereby relations between groups supported the maintenance of each as a “distinct, differentiated entity” (2010, 10–11). As they moved in these networks, indigenous peoples performed and reinforced the communal histories that gave identity to individual nations; “community,” Justice explains, was “the constitutive measurement of selfhood” (2008, 151). As a result, kin relations shared by otherwise distinct Native groups were essential to the maintenance of indigenous nationhood.

Apess provides an apt example of the political effects of these indigenous kin relations. In 1833, he appealed to these relations to lead the Mashpee revolt, perhaps the strongest effort to further indigenous autonomy in New England in the nineteenth century. The “revolt” concerned local Wampanoags’ efforts to abolish state guardianship, prevent theft of their natural resources,

and regain control of their meetinghouse. Though he came to Mashpee as an ordained Methodist minister, Apess also traveled there within an existing network of indigenous kinship. Indeed, the acts of itinerant preaching and performative kinship were often linked; as Daniel Mandell writes, “religious gatherings . . . facilitated kinship connections” between indigenous groups throughout this period (41). Apess notes in *Indian Nullification*, an account of his contributions to the revolt, that, although he was inclined to assist the Wampanoags, his status as an outsider rendered those prospects fraught. In council with the Mashpees, he remarked that

though I was a stranger among them, I did not doubt but that I might do them some good . . . As, however, I was not a son of their particular tribe, if they wished me to assist them, it would be necessary for them to give me a right to act in their behalf by adopting me, as then our rights and interests would become identical. (173)

Apess here invites the Mashpees to engage in the performative affirmation of indigenous kinship, to adopt him “as one of ours” so that he might assist in the movement for their sovereignty (174). The Mashpees oblige and, in a document provided to their settler-colonial overseers, provide one of the clearest articulations of nineteenth-century indigenous kinship: “Be it known,” they write, “that we, the Mashpees . . . do hereby agree to adopt the Rev. William Apes, of the Pequot tribe” (174). This statement, though couched in the language of settler-colonial institutions, aligns with a centuries-old practice wherein the established relations between distinct indigenous peoples in fact supported the sovereignty of each. For Apess and the Mashpees, these efforts proved to be successful; less than a year after Apess’s adoption, the overseers at Mashpee were dismissed and its citizens were provided with a measure of self-governance (Mandell 101).

Much like indigenous expressive traditions and the written word, the practices and ideals inherent in kinship relations often mirrored those of nineteenth-century “lecture culture” (Wright

3). Though the earliest lyceums featured public debates by the local elite, later iterations attracted broader audiences by sponsoring the performances of traveling lecturers. Like most travel during this period, these performances followed paths produced by indigenous groups as they interacted with their environment and neighboring peoples.¹⁰ Networks of lecturing and kinship, then, often formed parallel and contiguous circuits across early nineteenth-century New England. More than this, however, lyceum activities, like kin relations, assisted in the production of national identity. These events, Angela Ray notes, “created a body of shared ideas and shared experiences, shaping a sense of nationhood through communal participation” (2005, 7). Scholarship often ascribes this nationalist character to what Tom Wright describes as the “solipsistic” role of lyceums; lectures, these studies claim, emphasized themes that forestalled consideration of issues beyond the nation (6).

Though invested in the formation of a national public, the lyceum movement was never as solipsistic as previously assumed. Lyceums, Wright argues, also provided a wider vantage by featuring speakers that transcended the narrow concerns of the developing nation. In this sense, the nineteenth-century lyceum was premised on the interaction of nationalist and “cosmopolitan” sentiments (1–6). This interaction produced in lyceum participants a national identity created not by looking inward but instead by considering the place of the nation in relation to those beyond its borders. According to Ray, even as they “positioned themselves as national citizens, still they saw the nation as a constituent of the cosmos” (2013, 32). Like networks of indigenous kinship, the lecture circuit created and sustained national identity by performing a connection to broader publics across the globe. In this sense, kinship networks and lecture circuits functioned similarly

¹⁰ As Howard Russell notes, “it was by use of these immemorial ways, not, as some historians have imagined, by trail blazing” that colonists and later Americans would travel throughout southern New England (201).

as institutions that cultivated national sentiment through compelling their respective participants to consider the transnational bonds that delimited national belonging.

Though a recent addition to our critical lexicon, transnationalism—interactions across the social, political, and geographical borders of individual nations—has been an integral component of indigenous politics for centuries (Bauerkemper and Stark 9). As many studies have contended, these transnational interactions often have served to strengthen and even produce the sovereignty of individual Native polities. Perhaps counterintuitively, then, indigenous nations derive at least part of their authority and legitimacy from practices that extend beyond their borders. As Warrior argues, “our nationalism is born out of native transnationalism” (2009, 125).¹¹ Tribal nationhood thus differs significantly from settler-colonial principles of national belonging. Whereas the latter relies for its force on a “static separatism from the world and its peoples,” in indigenous contexts nationhood derives from “peoplehood . . . a relational system” that, as Justice notes, maintains in indigenous communities a “balance with one another, with other peoples . . . and with the world” (2006, 24).

Though not limited to indigenous contexts, this definition of the transnational has gained currency in studies of Native American literature, traditionally a discipline invested in nationalist paradigms. As the means to reinforce—rather than displace—nationhood, transnational practices have been recuperated by scholars as an essential element of indigenous sovereignty. Instead of threatening the internal coherence of indigenous nations, for centuries these practices have been constitutive of their development and persistence. As Justice observes, kinship relations reinforce this affiliative category by defining the nation not as a hermetic entity, but rather as a community

¹¹ Similarly, for Justice, “our nationhood and tribal specificity has . . . been built upon a transnational foundation (2010, 170). Tol Foster likewise contends that a transnational frame is “not necessarily ancillary to tribal specificity, but is actually at times the very center of a given tribal practice” (272).

that acknowledges and “incorporate[s] difference . . . to assert distinctiveness as a people” (2010, 170). Rifkin contends similarly that kinship provides indigenous groups with the means to affirm their distinct identities even as those identities find meaning within an “intertribal matrix” (2010, 11). Rather than conflate these identities, transnational interactions in the networks of indigenous kinship serve as “sites of nation-building” where distinctions are reconciled through an exchange of “intellectual, cultural, economic, social, and political tradition” (Bauerkemper and Stark 9, 5). Kinship thus simultaneously affirms the nation as the privileged site of Native political affiliation and acknowledges that those politics derive force from their origins beyond the nation’s purview.

The political effects of this dynamic interplay were particularly relevant for indigenous peoples in early nineteenth-century New England. In this period, the region’s indigenous groups lacked the state-recognized attributes of nationhood, most notably a history of treaty negotiations with the nascent United States (Rifkin 2012, 691). The absence of these attributes licensed in the region’s settler imaginary the belief that indigenous peoples “had either ceased to exist, or their prospects for the future had dimmed to the vanishing point” (O’Brien 139). This erasure allowed settlers to claim indigenous history as their own, appropriating that past to create an identity that was distinct from their European forebears. As Cooper observes in *The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish*, his romance of colonial-era Connecticut, indigenous peoples became “heroes of song and legend, while the descendants of those who laid waste to their dominions, and destroyed their race” were “yielding a tardy tribute to the high daring and savage grandeur of their characters” (ix). In their willingness to dismiss the presence and politics of indigenous peoples in nineteenth-century New England, these tributes in fact replaced the region’s violent history with a fraudulent narrative of “just relations and property transactions . . . that legitimated [settler-colonial] claims to the land” (O’Brien 55). Lacking the “state-recognized language” needed to refute these spurious histories,

indigenous peoples appealed to alternative means of asserting their national sovereignty (Rifkin 2012, 693). Apart from the numerous petitions sent to state governments, these groups resisted legal restrictions on their autonomy by reaffirming, through the maintenance of kin relations, the transnational foundations of indigenous nationhood. As Amy Den Ouden writes of the colonial period, “the ties to kin and locality that held reservation communities together and lent authority to their leaders . . . were a source of power, creating possibilities for resistance” (28). Networks of kinship, premised on the transnational exchange of communal histories and social obligations, gave force to calls for the continued presence and political legitimacy of indigenous nations.

Three years before the *Eulogy* debuted on the lecture circuit, Apess’s participation in the Mashpee revolt connected these parallel networks of kinship and lecturing. Prior to his adoption, Apess presented to the gathered Mashpees a history of the region’s indigenous peoples and, in so doing, reaffirmed his kin relations with the Wampanoags. As he recounts in *Indian Nullification*, Apess spoke from “a small pamphlet that contained a sketch of the history of the Indians of New England” (172). “As I was reading from it,” he continues,

an individual among the assembly took occasion to clap his hands and . . . to cry “Truth, truth!” This gave rise to a general conversation, and it was truly heartrending to hear what my kindred people had suffered at the hands of the whites. (172)

Brooks, drawn to the similarity of this account and the *Eulogy*’s eventual content, speculates that the pamphlet was a “draft” of the *Eulogy* (117). The *Eulogy* thus perhaps debuted not in a lecture hall, but rather in the Mashpee meetinghouse. If so, prior to appearing on the lyceum circuit, the *Eulogy* served as an articulation of communal history and an assertion of Mashpee sovereignty—in other words, as a performance of kinship in the transnational “network of relations.” As Apess recalls, this performance created in his audience of “kindred people” a sense of national identity

produced not only by their position as citizens of Mashpee, but also by the shared history of what indigenous peoples had “suffered at the hands of the whites.” The history performed at Mashpee thus argued for the constitutive role of the transnational in the construction of Native nationhood, connecting Wampanoag autonomy to the experience of a broader public to claim that the success of Mashpee politics required the maintenance of kin relations that extended beyond their borders. Before the *Eulogy* arrived in the region’s lecture halls, its potential presence within the networks of kinship at Mashpee functioned similarly to a performance at a lyceum. Not unlike those on the lecture circuit, Apess’s speech articulated national belonging in transnational terms.

The *Eulogy* on Tour

Perhaps capitalizing on the success of the Mashpee revolt and his attendant notoriety, three years later Apess broadened his audience for the *Eulogy* by touring the lecture on the lyceum circuit.¹² While Apess had preached and lectured across New England for several years, only when giving the *Eulogy* did he perform regularly at locations connected to the lyceum movement. The Odeon, home to the Boston Lyceum, hosted the *Eulogy* on 8 January 1836.¹³ Several weeks later, Apess delivered the lecture at Salem’s Lyceum Hall.¹⁴ On two consecutive nights in March, the *Eulogy* was performed at the Union Hall in Farmington, where members of the nearby Hartford Lyceum

¹² A draft of the *Eulogy* may have been performed by Apess in Newport, Rhode Island, in the months following the start of the revolt. There, an “Indian preacher . . . [and] son of the forest told many historical truths which could not be very palatable to those who term themselves civilized. He spoke charitably, fearlessly, but unfavourably of the conduct of the white Missionaries among them (*Rhode Island Republican*, 30 October 1833). The description of this lecture aligns with the speech given by Apess in Mashpee and with the content of the *Eulogy*.

¹³ A lecture series sponsored by the Boston Lyceum welcomed B. B. Thatcher to the Odeon on 21 January 1836, less than three weeks after Apess’s appearance there (“Boston Lyceum,” *Boston Courier*, 20 January 1836).

¹⁴ The *Salem Observer* for 30 January 1836 noted that “*An Eulogy* was pronounced last evening, at the Lyceum, upon the Indian King Philip, by the Rev Wm Apes, the Indian Preacher.” Advertisements for the *Eulogy* in Salem appeared in other local newspapers, as well (“The Indian King Philip,” *Salem Gazette*, 26 and 29 January 1836).

held lectures.¹⁵ And though the *Eulogy*'s venue in Worcester—for one performance there in late February—remains absent from the historical record, Apess likely spoke at the Town Hall, home to the Worcester Lyceum.¹⁶ Ira Moore Barton, the chairman of an investigation into the Mashpee revolt, interviewed Apess soon after his performance of the *Eulogy*'s draft and later served on the lyceum's executive committee. Barton's experiences with the Mashpees might have familiarized him with the *Eulogy*, or perhaps Apess's acquaintance with Barton licensed access to the Hall. In either case, rather than recede from the public, Apess followed the *Eulogy* in Boston with at least four additional performances.¹⁷

Apess's presence on the lyceum circuit coincided with a marked transformation in his use of print to publicize his appearances. Advertisements for the *Eulogy* in Boston and its subsequent venues differ greatly from prior efforts to market his sermons and lectures to potential audiences. For one, though Apess had long used print to attract audiences, the volume of promotions for the *Eulogy* was unprecedented.¹⁸ Prior to his performance in Boston, Apess placed notices in at least thirteen of the city's newspapers. In Hartford, he advertised in at least five. No prior sermons or lectures by Apess approach these numbers; more often, as in a series of sermons promoted in the

¹⁵ A meeting of the Hartford Lyceum at Union Hall was advertised, for example, in the *Connecticut Courant* for 5 May 1834. Advertisements for the *Eulogy* in Hartford appeared in several local newspapers.

¹⁶ William Lincoln, a historian of Worcester, wrote in 1836 that lectures hosted by the Lyceum in the city's "Town House" were "thronged with a continually increasing crowd" (276; see also *Some Historic Houses* 23–24).

¹⁷ In addition to the initial performance in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, as discussed earlier, these four cities are the only known to have hosted the *Eulogy*. Though a "Eulogy on King Philip" was given on 18 August 1836 as part of the commencement exercises for Norwich University in Vermont, a program for those exercises names its speaker as Charles Douglas Gray ("Norwich University"). Gray, who attended Norwich in the late 1830s, may have bought a copy of the *Eulogy* and performed it, though this seems unlikely given the tenor of the day's festivities (*Catalogue of the Officers and Students* 6). Prior to Gray's address, fellow student Thomas Whipple delivered a patriotic *Eulogy on James Madison*. More likely is that Gray offered a eulogy for Philip of Macedon; the library at Norwich included a biography of this King Philip, written in 1775 by Thomas Leland (*Catalogue of Books* 15).

¹⁸ Apess's appeal to newspaper publicity aligned his efforts with those of his fellow Methodists in colonial and early America. In his account of the Great Awakening, Frank Lambert details "the key role of newspapers in publicizing the revivals throughout the colonies" and identifies George Whitfield as the progenitor of the "'preach and print' approach to evangelism . . . a combination that attracted huge outdoor crowds" (15, 111).

Liberator in the summer of 1832, notices were placed only infrequently in single newspapers. In contrast to these earlier events, expansive publicity for the *Eulogy* in Boston and Hartford would have required significant funds and a sophisticated sense of how print media operated across the region. Apess would have visited printers, selected the wording for his notices, and bought space and time in the papers.¹⁹ He would have organized ticket sales at bookstores and arranged venues (Wolfe 1). He may have solicited patronage from antiquarians or abolitionists given his sustained relationships with these groups and the affinity shared by the *Eulogy* and their respective causes. In coupling the lyceum circuit with this unprecedented appeal to publicity, Apess broadened his professional pursuits—preaching, advocacy, authorship—to include lecturing to larger and often secular groups across the region.

Further, more than the volume of promotions, the content of the *Eulogy*'s advertisements reflects Apess's increasingly nuanced negotiation of the media infrastructure of early nineteenth-century New England. Notices for the *Eulogy* are distinctive in their combination of transactional details—time, date, place—with editorial comments that changed based on the city in which they

¹⁹ Absent correspondence or contracts with these newspapers' editors, we cannot know definitively whether Apess wrote the advertisements in the *Eulogy*. All extant evidence, however, suggests that he did. In the nineteenth century, lecturers often wrote their own promotional material and enlisted newspaper editors to assist in its printing and distribution. William Wells Brown, for instance, asked William Lloyd Garrison to print handbills promoting his talk in the city of Lynn in 1858 (Greenspan 359). Apess, an acquaintance of Garrison's, advertised the *Eulogy* in his *Liberator* ("The Indian King Philip," 2 January 1836). Angela Ray reveals similarly that lyceum organizers would place advertisements in newspapers for their forthcoming lecturers (2005, 93). The *Eulogy*'s promotions themselves also provide evidence for Apess's authorship. Near-identical promotions for the *Eulogy* were printed in at least nine Boston newspapers. Likewise, promotions from Hartford—printed in at least four of that city's newspapers—are similar to one another in sentiment if not phrasing. Had Apess allowed his editors to write the *Eulogy*'s promotions, the content and layout of these notices would have differed relative to the newspapers in which they were printed. Perhaps the best evidence for Apess's authorship is found in Boston's *The Standard* for 6 January 1836. As I note later, that paper includes not only a conventional promotion for the *Eulogy* but also, in an adjacent column, its editor's preemptive critique of Apess's performance. Given the tenor of that review, presumably the editor of *The Standard* would not have labeled Philip, as does the author of the *Eulogy*'s promotion, a "celebrated warrior" ("The Indian King Philip, at the Odeon.").

were printed (figures 4 and 5). These variations did not occur before the *Eulogy*.²⁰ For example,

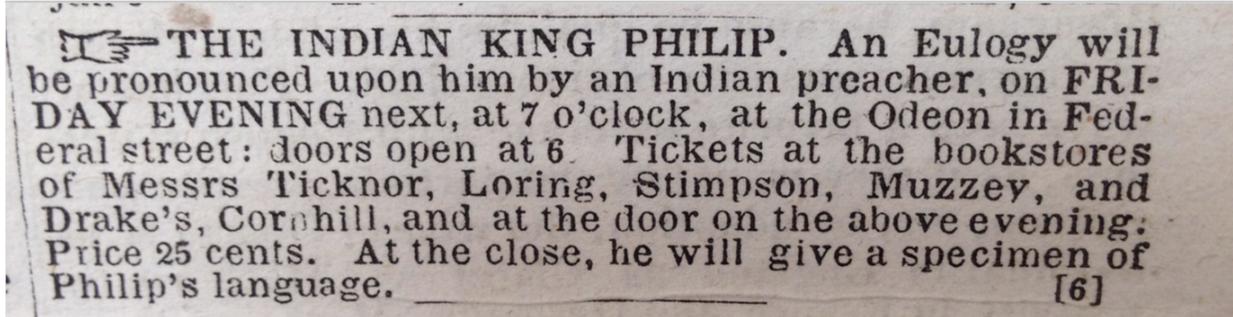


Figure 4. "The Indian King Philip," *Daily Evening Transcript*, 6 January 1836.

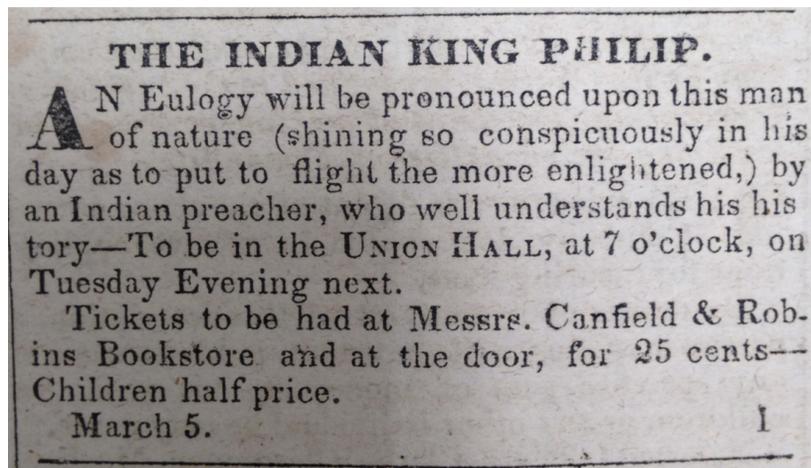


Figure 5. "The Indian King Philip," *Patriot and Democrat*, 5 March 1836.

advertisements for Apess's performances in Boston announce that an "Indian preacher"—Apess remains unnamed—will provide a "specimen of Philip's language."²¹ In contrast, notices printed in Salem omit any reference to linguistic specimens. Audiences are told instead that the *Eulogy* "will be the only chance to hear the true character of the mighty Philip."²² The advertised focus

²⁰ Prior to the *Eulogy*, advertisements for Apess's speeches rarely included more than transactional details. When these notices did include more than transactional detail, often they were written by editors of individual newspapers. In the promotions for a series of sermons publicized in the *Liberator* in 1832, for example, added to a conventional announcement is William Lloyd Garrison's claim that after "a short interview" with Apess, the editor held "a very favorable opinion of his talents and piety" (*The Liberator*, 19 May 1832).

²¹ "The Indian King Philip," *Boston Press and Semi-Weekly Advocate*, 8 January 1836.

²² "The Indian King Philip," *Salem Gazette*, 26 January 1836.

of the lecture thus turns from Philip's language to the truth of his laudable character. Promotions for the *Eulogy* in Hartford echo and intensify this turn, describing Apess as not simply "an Indian preacher," but also as a man who "understands his history."²³ Moreover, the tempered praise that Philip garners in Salem becomes, in Hartford, an effusive tribute. In that city, Philip "shin[es] so conspicuously . . . as to put to flight the more enlightened."²⁴ Or, as in a similar notice printed in the same location, he becomes a "giant personage of the Woods."²⁵ The promise of truthfulness in the Salem notice likewise becomes an assurance to audiences in Hartford "that the history of Philip shall be fairly explained, and in a manner it has never been before."²⁶ Editorial statements within the *Eulogy*'s advertisements thus differed significantly in their portrayals of Apess, his lecture, and its subject.

Neither random nor capricious, these revisions remained consistent in each location that Apess visited. As such, the differences reveal Apess's awareness of how audience expectations varied relative to local prejudices and predilections. Audiences for the *Eulogy* in Hartford, that is, may have needed different enticements than those from Massachusetts. The trials of itinerant preaching had taught Apess to recognize and manipulate these differences. As he observes in *A Son of the Forest*, the sight of an indigenous preacher could draw a crowd of curious onlookers, "some to *hear* the truth, and others to *see* the 'Indian'" (51).²⁷ Beyond simply recognizing this

²³ "The Indian King Philip," *Hartford Patriot and Democrat*, 5 March 1836.

²⁴ "The Indian King Philip," *Hartford Patriot and Democrat*, 5 March 1836.

²⁵ "The Indian King Philip," *The Hartford Times*, 5 March 1836. As an aside, the language used to characterize Philip in Hartford lends further credence to the claim that Apess wrote his own advertisements as he toured the *Eulogy*. These descriptions of Philip align readily with those offered in the *Eulogy* itself.

²⁶ "The Indian King Philip," *Hartford Christian Secretary*, 5 March 1836

²⁷ Secular audiences were likewise desirous of the presumed spectacle that attended Indian lecturers. In her diary for 29 April 1832, Louisa Park writes that her friends reacted with "astonishment and disappointment" when—at an anti-removal event in Boston—both Elias Boudinot and Apess were "drest like *other* [white] *people*" rather than like a "real wild Indian with his hair streaming down his back, a tomahawk in his hand, and a wampum belt" (Park Family Papers; see also Konkle 97–99)

dynamic, however, during the *Eulogy*'s tour Apess tailored his advertisements to the locales in which he performed. In Boston, Apess trades consciously in the exoticism that accompanied the existence of an Indian preacher, attaining what Warrior has called a "critical relationship with the fact of his own novelty" (2005, 23). Aware of that city's fascination with the seeming remnant of its indigenous population, Apess recasts himself as a "sensationalized commodity" (Round 166). His presence in Boston thus mirrors and even personifies his pledge to provide readers there with an example of Philip's language. Apess becomes a further enticement, a living correlative to the moribund language that might satiate his audiences' desire for an exotic spectacle.

In advertisements for the *Eulogy* in Hartford, however, Apess alters this approach. Rather than engage the spectacle of the vanishing Indian, Apess promotes his lecture's historical rigor as well as the character of its subject. No longer the bearer of an exoticized language, Philip instead becomes a "beloved and lamented countryman" whose "true history" Apess intends to provide.²⁸ Apess's turn from language to history repositions Philip from an object of cultural voyeurism to a subject of historical events. And though he remains an "Indian preacher," near Hartford Apess insists additionally that he is "well acquainted" with colonial-era history, tempering the potential sensationalism of that moniker.²⁹ In making these changes, Apess provides audiences in Boston and Hartford with opposed senses of what they can expect from the *Eulogy*. Whereas promotions in Boston describe the lecture as a curiosity, those in Hartford describe it as a truthful account of colonial history. This distinction also influences Apess's description of the *Eulogy*'s subject and its speaker. In Hartford, Philip seems less a cultural specimen than a historical actor. Absent the promise of his exotic language, Philip becomes notable not through his cultural differences, but

²⁸ "The Indian King Philip," *Connecticut Observer*, 5 March 1836).

²⁹ "The Indian King Philip," *The Hartford Times*, 5 March 1836.

rather through his neglected status as a towering historical figure. Likewise, when Apess appeals not only to his religiosity but also to his knowledge of the past, he transforms himself in Hartford from a spectacle into a scholar.

These modifications reinforce our sense of Apess as attentive to his audiences' reactions and adaptive to their desires. As with the abridged second performance of the *Eulogy* in Boston, perhaps Apess altered his promotional strategy in Hartford to account for the reception his talk received in prior venues. More than this, however, the focus of each city's advertisements aligns with and supports local attitudes regarding the subject of the *Eulogy*. Philip and his eponymous war ravaged central and eastern Massachusetts while leaving Connecticut all but unscathed. In the nineteenth century, addresses given in Boston and its environs often referenced these earlier battles as they sought to justify Indian extinction and valorize colonial origins. Edward Everett's 1835 address at the site of the Battle of Bloody Brook, for instance, used this occasion at once to commemorate that colonial conflict and observe that "as the civilized race rapidly multiplies, the native tribes will recede, sink into the wilderness, and disappear" (6). Apess perhaps encountered speeches like Everett's, and certainly he knew of the contempt with which many Bostonians held Philip. In *The Standard* for 6 January 1836, appended to a notice for the *Eulogy* is a preemptive response that veils its malice in an air of indifference:

Here is something worth while. Be it known, that on the eighth of January, 1836, a native American Indian is to pronounce in the city of Boston, an eulogy on this great sachem. . . Well, strange things have happened. Our fathers stuck the warrior's head upon a pole, and his limbs adorned the spires of Boston by way of weather-cocks; now let us make amends by hearing from one of his fallen race his eulogy.

Though comments like these are an imperfect metric for broader attitudes, one notice in Hartford suggests that, for at least some in Connecticut, the lecture was received positively: “We wish the Indian success and a full house,” wrote the editors of *The Hartford Times*.³⁰ Advertisements for the *Eulogy* thus appealed to local history to promote the talk in accord with audience expectation. To emphasize the exoticism of Philip in Boston, that is, was to soften or withhold the reality that Apess intended to lionize a man many there scorned. Likewise, distanced from the war’s legacy, to promote in Hartford a true history of Philip was to recognize the absence of a communal past that might sanction the cynical “amends” of *The Standard*. The ignored realities of Philip’s life, Apess seems to have understood, remained more acceptable to residents of Hartford than those in Boston, for whom the centuries-old war continued to serve as a fraught site of remembrance and contestation.

In addition, when Apess describes his lecture in Hartford as an unprecedented and “fairly explained” interpretation of colonial history, he attests to the prevalence of a historical narrative that dismissed the political legitimacy of Native nationhood in nineteenth-century New England. This narrative licensed Americans to claim the *Eulogy*’s subject as their national past, concealing Philip’s resistance under a veneer of sentimental nationalism that rationalized colonization and its attendant denial of Native autonomy. The *Eulogy*’s only extant review enacts this process of appropriation and erasure. Writing for the *Massachusetts Spy* on 24 February 1836, Calvin Crane describes Worcester on the anniversary of Washington’s birthday. He notes of the holiday that

No American should ever witness its return, without marking it well. The day should be honored, as the birth day of a hero, such as the world never saw—a man such as any one

³⁰ “The Indian King Philip,” 5 March 1836.

might be proud to imitate. We are unwilling that the day should go by without a passing notice, and we therefore present a few facts which may not be unworthy of record.

Crane's panegyric to the President saturates each element of his article, recalling Apess's claim in the *Eulogy* that "the virtues" of Washington are "engraven on the hearts" of his listeners (277). He first lauds the unseasonable clemency of the weather, observing that it made men "so pleasant and social that . . . even Washington himself would have been proud." He then describes a party where attendees "not only danced intellectually but patriotically—for it was a patriotic day." His concluding review of the *Eulogy* similarly gestures to the enduring legacy of the first President:

The orator was a true descendant of the Red Men, and he feelingly told the story of the Red Man's wrongs. He was, in my opinion, too severe upon our fathers, but his situation and the situation of his people must furnish his excuse. The history was interesting, and the orator was, in some passages, really eloquent.

Though he expresses sympathy for the plight of indigenous people, here Crane purges the *Eulogy* of its politics by ignoring the complicity of his "fathers" in producing this lamentable "situation." Crane absolves his national heroes by casting indigenous resistance as a sentimental narrative of a regrettable but nonetheless eclipsed past. His review thereby replaces the lecture's history with an account of national origin that erases Native peoples from the physical and political landscape of nineteenth-century New England. As the *Eulogy* illuminates a history "buried in the shades of night," Crane reinters that past, offering instead a history wherein the wrongs of his ancestors are assuaged by the inexorable extinction of Native peoples and their political institutions (277).

Only after the publication of this review does Apess begin, near Hartford, to promote the *Eulogy* as a "true history" in contrast to those offered by Crane and other settler-colonial writers.

More than attend to the local predilections of Hartford residents, then, the advertisements in that city refute a historical narrative that offered, as Apess notes in the *Eulogy*, sympathetic “words” to the region’s indigenous peoples even as it justified the past “works” that had facilitated the disenfranchisement and disappearance of indigenous nations (287). Given his Pequot heritage, for Apess Hartford—more than any other locale—may have symbolized the persistence of this insidious history. Indeed, for Apess’s audience, the colonial history of that city provided a facile rationale for contemporary denials of Native nationhood. At the end of the Pequot War, a treaty signed in Hartford in 1638 stipulated that the Pequots would “no more be called Pequots but Narragansetts and Mohegans” (Treaty of Hartford). Though the Pequot nation reconstituted after the conflict, nonetheless the treaty served “to justify encroachment on reservation lands and obfuscate Native histories” in the colonial period and beyond (Den Ouden 10). The treaty and its enduring legacy thus abetted the creation of the very histories that advertisements for the *Eulogy* in Hartford sought to discredit. Even a source for much of the *Eulogy*, Samuel Drake’s *The Book of the Indians*, notes that a “remnant” of Pequots after their eponymous war “promised to appear no more as a nation” (II, 106). As O’Brien observes, in settler-authored histories written during the early nineteenth century the Pequot War and its aftermath were touchstones “for asserting the extinction of New England Indians” (41). Hartford, these histories suggest, situated spatially the dispossession not only of the Pequots’ territory but also of their historical claims to nationhood.

Even as Hartford continued to mark the site of Pequot erasure, however, the city also was home to a sizable population of indigenous peoples. As Ron Welburn notes, Hartford served as a vibrant hub of indigenous transnationalism, attracting groups from across what he has called *Missinnuok*, the cultural and geographical region encompassing southern New England and parts of eastern Long Island (45). Native peoples—Corchaugs, Montauketts, Narragansetts, Pequots,

Shinnecocks—traveled from their communities to Hartford as they sought “religious fellowship, work opportunities, and education” (8). Indeed, at the time of the *Eulogy*’s rehearsal in Hartford, at least four members of Apess’s family lived there.³¹ According to Welburn, the “resettlement” of Hartford by this indigenous diaspora at once recalled and resulted from the location’s “history as a cultural space” for peoples throughout *Missinnuok* (48). Suckiaug, a village that stood on the site of present-day Hartford, was “a hub of activity” in the seventeenth century; the town acted as a crossroads that aided “diplomacy, trade, and probably the enactment of ceremonies” (Welburn 50). Hartford, then, retained a centuries-long significance as a gathering place where indigenous nations met to affirm and renew their relations. In this sense, the city acted as a central node in a network of indigenous kinship, one that began prior to colonization and continued throughout the nineteenth century. In resettling Hartford, indigenous peoples appealed to that city’s past as a site of connection and continuance. They thus claimed the city anew as a “Native space,” countering settler-colonial narratives that defined it as the site of their extinction (Welburn 48; see Brooks).

The *Eulogy* in Hartford likewise enacts this process of reclamation. As Apess toured the lyceum circuit, his advertisements attested to the development of his public persona and political project. More than this, however, promotions for the *Eulogy* reflected the lecture’s distinct role in each of its locations. In Hartford, Apess’s attention to historical reinterpretation reflected the presence, in that city, of a history that required reinterpretation. Uncovering the *Eulogy*’s tour in New England thus allows for considerations of the text that satisfy Brook’s essential admonition that analyses of “early Native texts simply cannot take place without widespread understanding of the place-worlds they inhabit” (xxiv). Following Brooks, in the rest of this chapter I read the

³¹ Letters were left at the post office in Hartford for Gilbert, Lyman, and Sally Apes—as well as William himself—in 1836 (*The Times*, 5 March 1836; 16 April 1836; 2 September 1836). The next year, a letter was left for Lois Apes (*The Times*, 15 April 1837). Welburn provides further evidence of the Apes or Apess family in Hartford during the late 1830s and 1840s (90).

Eulogy for how the text appeals to performative traditions of historical expression to affirm the vitality of Pequot nationhood at the very site of its presumed foreclosure.

Apess's Transnational History of Native Nationhood

Apess affirms Pequot nationhood in Hartford by attesting to the transnational relations that have sustained its existence. In its content and structure, the *Eulogy* provides a history of Native New England that transcends the nation as a category of indigenous affiliation. Emphasizing instead the transnational networks that structured national belonging, the *Eulogy* echoes and affirms the kinship bonds that strengthened articulations of indigenous nationhood in the nineteenth century.

Though Apess writes often of the individual nations that populated colonial and early nineteenth-century New England, at moments in the *Eulogy* he qualifies the term to distinguish between indigenous and settler-colonial notions of nationhood. When he describes the region's Native groups as "nations of this soil," for instance, Apess separates settler-colonial nationhood from forms of national affiliation that gain meaning through—and are literally grounded in—the experiences of indigeneity (286). As Justice observes, "indigenous nationhood should not . . . be conflated with the nationalism that has given birth to industrialized nation-states." The latter, he notes, is "often dependent upon the erasure of kinship bonds," while the former in fact relies for its survival on their perpetuation (Justice 2008, 151). Rather than neglect the transnational bonds that inform national belonging, indigenous nations use those relations as the principal means of asserting their sovereignty. This sense of nationhood structures Apess's account of colonial-era history.

In the *Eulogy*, Apess writes that Philip had gathered "a train of warriors" from nations so numerous that "it would swel [his] address too full to mention [them] all" (296). This profusion of warriors, he suggests, precipitated King Philip's War by prompting a conflict between settler-

colonial and indigenous conceptions of nationhood. Apess notes that a council convened in 1671 “courted war instead of peace” by levying five charges against Philip (292). “The third charge,” he recounts, “was: harboring divers Indians, not his own men but the vagabond Indians” (292). Though undefined in the *Eulogy*, in *The Book of the Indians* Drake explains that the “vagabond Indians” had “left their own sachems”—their own nations—to join Philip (III, 23). The council, in other words, opposed Philip’s right to welcome non-Wampanoags onto his lands, fearing that these coalitions would curtail English hegemony. This fear, though not unfounded, nonetheless signaled that the Puritans had misconstrued the nature of Philip’s actions. As the historian James Drake documents, Philip understood his actions not as the illicit “harboring” of “vagabonds,” but rather as the reaffirmation of regional kinship relations (101). When he allowed “divers Indians” onto his land, Philip enacted a conception of Wampanoag nationhood that understood difference as a means of strengthening sovereignty. The Puritans, unable to accommodate this definition of nationhood, maintained in their charge that these transnational bonds weakened the Wampanoag nation and subjected it to English dominion. The council thus criminalized kinship, imposing on Philip a form of national affiliation that mandated his estrangement from other Native peoples.

Though his sources read this episode as unexceptional, Apess inveighs against the Puritan effort to forbid Philip’s actions. He criticizes not only the council’s desire to abolish Wampanoag sovereignty, but also its failure to recognize the nationhood that supports those sovereign claims. “What a charge this was to bring against a king, calling his company vagabonds,” he says, asking incredulously as to “what right had they to find fault with his company?” (293). The question, of course, is rhetorical: Apess affirms that the Puritans had no legal rights to protest Philip’s action. Apess suggests that, without the rights required to threaten Wampanoag sovereignty, the Puritans resorted to interpreting kinship as a nefarious and conspiratorial practice that jeopardized their

claims to power. He exposes the irrationality of this interpretation by documenting Philip's effort to unite his neighbors through the performance of kinship. When Philip divides a wampum-clad coat among his followers, for instance, Apess observes that the act so "cheered their hearts" that they resolved to "maintain their rights and expel their enemies" (297). Here, the assembled men are buoyed by more than the transfer of wealth. Philip often preserved kinship bonds through the ritualized exchange of gifts; in 1675, for example, he sent wampum and clothing to the Mohegan leader Uncas to ask for his assistance in the conflict (Sanders). Philip's followers are heartened, then, by the reaffirmation of their ties to the Wampanoags. These ties not only rallied their spirits but also assisted in the defense of their own nations. Thus rather than "harboring divers Indians," Philip enacted what Joseph Bauerkemper and Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark deem "transnational kinship diplomacy" (11). In apportioning his wampum, he sought not to "collapse one nation into another but instead . . . to cultivate productive relationships that could transcend political and territorial lines" (Bauerkemper and Stark 11). Apess, in his attacks against the Puritans' council, suggests that the disastrous history of colonial New England resulted from their refusal to accept these relationships as evidence of the enduring sovereignty of the region's Native nations.

When Apess writes that identifying Philip's relationships would "swell [his] address too full," then, his comment signals more than a concern for oratorical economy. In his reluctance to differentiate between nations, Apess compels engagement with a form of national affiliation that emphasizes shared histories. His comment thus enacts rhetorically Philip's "transnational kinship diplomacy," foregrounding transnational bonds to affirm their critical role in the preservation of indigenous politics. In this sense, the *Eulogy* counters what Rifkin has identified as a problematic critical tradition in studies of Apess. As Rifkin notes, the assumption that Apess "did not engage with other Pequots" during his childhood has led to a belief in "the impossibility of a specifically

Pequot perspective in his work” (2012, 701). That belief, he continues, has licensed a conviction in “the necessity of understanding [Apess] as speaking pantribally” (2012, 701). Rifkin counters this assertion, finding in *A Son of the Forest* “elliptical allusions” that reveal Apess’s connection to the Pequots even as they signal the “relative invisibility” of the tribe in the nineteenth century (2012, 703). Another challenge to this tradition might confront its implicit belief in the inimical nature of national and transnational affiliation. In other words, instead of accepting that Apess’s activities “weakened his self-identification as a Pequot,” scholars might acknowledge that, when he spoke about the diversity of tribal nationhood in New England, Apess engaged with a system of regional kinship that supported Pequot autonomy (Velikova 326). As Chadwick Allen notes, recognizing the “interactions of indigenous peoples, cultures, histories, and texts” complements, rather than discredits, assertions of tribal nationalism (xiv; Weaver 18). Using these interactions as evidence of indigenous nationhood, Apess encodes in the *Eulogy* a “Pequot perspective” that emphasizes the nation’s shared history and its continued presence in New England.

In an anonymous review of *A Son of the Forest*, the author—likely Drake³²—writes that Apess had expressed to him a desire to compile “the real history and antiquities of the Pequots.” Drake admonishes Apess, noting that, “as our readers might be aware,” the Pequot nation “was destroyed in 1637, when it ceased to exist as an independent community.” Apess, Drake warns, “must . . . not allow himself to be carried away by every slight and imperfect tradition.” Perhaps discouraged, Apess never wrote a history of the Pequots and thus never argued explicitly—as he would have—against Drake’s own “imperfect tradition.” Despite the apparent absence of Pequot nationalism in his writing, however, Apess appeals to that cause in both *Son* and the *Eulogy*. He does so by stressing—even fabricating—the shared history that bound the Pequots to the region’s

³² Konkle argues convincingly for this attribution (102).

other indigenous nations. An often-read passage from *A Son of the Forest*, for example, describes Philip as a “king of the Pequot tribe” (3). Scholars have read the inaccuracy of this description as a challenge to the narrative of Pequot extinction. As Rifkin observes, the error “can be read as a way of endowing greater political status” to the Pequots through an “inheritance” of Wampanoag sovereignty (2012, 695).³³ These readings locate the rhetorical force of this error in its conflation of distinct tribal histories. Apess yokes his extinct nation to the discernable sovereignty of Philip, producing a counterfactual that refutes the legacy of the Hartford treaty. Though instructive, this account deemphasizes the role of transnational kinship in Apess’s defense of Pequot nationhood. The rhetorical force of Apess’s error derives less from its elision of these two tribes than from its affirmation of their shared relations. As he preached and lectured in Wampanoag territory, Apess himself appealed to these relations and their political effects. Indeed, his role in the Mashpee riot evinces his appreciation for how the bonds between these two nations supported the sovereignty of each. Thus Apess’s error need not be read as the suppression of Pequot history nor as an effort to supplant its indistinctions with the transparencies of the Wampanoags’ sovereign past. Instead, in identifying Philip as a Pequot, Apess argues that the historical imbrication of these two nations served as a principal means of creating and sustaining their political distinctiveness.

The same argument suffuses the *Eulogy*. Though scholars have argued that Apess silently corrected his prior genealogical error by omitting from the *Eulogy* “mention of a direct family tie between [himself] and King Philip,” in fact Apess does repeat that inaccurate claim at the start of his lecture (Velikova 313). As he describes the *Eulogy*’s purpose, Apess also describes himself:

³³ Roumiana Velikova notes that Apess’s claim tries “to restore the faded glory of the Pequots and refashion their historical record” (314). For Arnold Krupat, Apess associates Philip with the Pequots to suggest that his eponymous war ought to “be seen to descend in a direct line from earlier Puritan aggressions,” namely the Pequot War (2009, 92).

Justice and humanity for the remaining few prompt me to vindicate the character of him who yet lives in their hearts and, if possible, melt the prejudice that exists in the hearts of those who are in possession of his soil, and only by right of conquest—is the aim of him who proudly tells you, the blood of a denominated savage runs in his veins. (277)

Perhaps intentionally, in this passage Apess uses several pronouns that lack clear antecedents. As a result, the final passage—Apess’s proud assertion that “the blood of a denominated savage runs in his veins”—can be interpreted in several ways. Apess leaves his reader with some doubts as to not only the subject of his statement, but also the meaning of the phrase “a denominated savage.” For instance, a conventional analysis might hold that the phrase means “a person who is labeled a savage.” In this sense, the blood is Apess’s; the phrase ironizes, reconsiders, and reappropriates the derisive label of savagery. Given the extent to which irony informs the *Eulogy*, this reading is tenable. However, an alternative interpretation is also available: with equal validity, the phrase “a denominated savage” can be interpreted as “a savage who is given a name.” Apess was aware of the complex naming practices produced by Native societies and English colonists in seventeenth-century New England. In *The Book of the Indians*, for instance, Drake is obsessive in his effort to catalog the names afforded to Philip and his family. He writes that

Alexander was the English name of the elder son of *Massasoit*. His real name appears at first to have been *Mooanam*, and afterwards *Wamsutta*, and lastly *Alexander*. . . . About the year 1656, he and his younger brother, *Metacomet*, or rather *Pometacom*, were brought to the court of Plymouth, and being solicitous to receive English names, the governor called the elder *Alexander*, and the younger *Philip*. (III, 1, emphasis original)

Here, the proliferation of names reinforces a sense of Philip as denominated—as, that is, given a name. Apess, who read this passage before writing the *Eulogy*, thus perhaps describes himself as,

once again, connected genealogically to Philip, the denominated subject of the *Eulogy* itself. He notes, at least rhetorically if not factually, that the blood of Philip runs through his body. Apess's *Eulogy*, like his earlier autobiography, makes an explicit claim for Apess's transnational kinship with Philip, and this connection is supported further by the Wampanoag leader's characterization in promotions for the lecture in Hartford. There, Philip is described as a "noble son of the forest," a clear reference to Apess's prior publication.³⁴ Apess associates Philip with both his textual and familial histories, reinforcing the connection between the Pequots and the Wampanoags.

At other points throughout the *Eulogy*, rather than restrain himself to the Pequots and the Wampanoags, Apess broadens his shared history to include indigenous communities from across New England. This transnational history evokes Pequot nationhood even as the particularities of the nation's past remain unstated. Prior to his account of Philip's history, Apess presents "a mass of history and exposition" wherein he catalogs "the deeds and deprivations committed by whites upon the Indians" during the first years of English colonialism (289, 279). These events, remarks Apess, explain why "all the Indians generally felt indignantly toward whites, whereby they were more easily allied together" (289). This "mass of history," then, works not to distinguish between nations but rather to describe the shared history that facilitated their mutual defense. The *Eulogy* emphasizes the communal nature of this history by foregoing details that would allow its readers to differentiate between individual nations. In this portion of his lecture, Apess does not refer to the names of tribes, nor does he provide locations for the events that he describes.³⁵ For example, Apess recounts that "whites robbed the Indian graves, and their corn, about the year 1632" (282). He follows this with an episode from "1619 [when] a number of Indians went on board of a ship

³⁴ "The Indian King Philip," *Christian Secretary*, 5 March 1836.

³⁵ After his "mass of history and exposition," Apess names the Narragansetts and the Mohawks (298–99).

. . . and the whites set upon them and murdered them without mercy” (282). In these cases—and throughout the *Eulogy*—Apress strips otherwise distinct historical events of their tribal and spatial specificity. He offers no sense of the victims’ tribal affiliations, nor does he disclose the location in which these events occurred. Apress thus avoids any account of the identities, boundaries, and histories that served to distinguish between indigenous peoples, rendering them simply “Indians” and situating them in an indistinct landscape that lacks reference to the borders between them.

In his reluctance to provide tribal and spatial details, Apress advances a rhetorical strategy that recalls Philip’s efforts to resist English dominion through “transnational kinship diplomacy.” Like Philip and the Puritan council, in the *Eulogy* Apress dissociates indigenous peoples from the categories that rendered them legible to—and therefore erasable within—settler-colonial history. In the early nineteenth century, settler-authored accounts of indigenous history often made sense of indigenous groups by appealing to the identities and boundaries of distinct tribes. Drake’s *The Book of the Indians*, for instance, uses these categories to structure his history of indigenous New England. Each chapter considers one or more tribes, describes the bounds of their territories, and details their histories from encounter to the colonial period. In his account of the Narragansetts, Drake provides first a “general account” that includes its “bounds . . . as described in the times of the sachems” (II, 48). He then locates the “zenith of its greatness” in 1642 before transitioning to the present day where, citing a census from 1832, he notes that—of its meager “remnant”—only “seven . . . were unmixed” (II, 48). The Pequots fare even worse: theirs is the shortest chapter in the book, focused almost exclusively on their eponymous war and punctuated by the refrain that they would “appear no more as a nation” (II, 106). As these accounts suggest, a reliance on tribal and geographical designations in settler-authored histories could abet—or even compel—claims of tribal extinction. The facts of Narragansett obsolescence or Pequot extinction, that is, become

tenable to Drake because he relies solely on these categories for his sense of indigenous politics. For Drake, the Pequot “promise to appear no more as a nation” because the Treaty of Hartford—in apportioning Pequot survivors to neighboring tribes and confiscating their territories—severed them from the categories that made their political persistence legible to settler-colonial history. He thus imposed on groups like the Pequots a conception of nationhood that, given its adherence to these categories, facilitated assertions of their disappearance in the early nineteenth century.

In the *Eulogy*, Apess counters this imposition. He affirms that, despite Drake’s assertions, indigenous nations endure because their existence relies not on distinct tribes or territories but on the transnational networks that connect them. He emphasizes these networks by rewriting scenes from *The Book of the Indians* so that they accommodate the principles of indigenous nationhood. As Konkle has noted, though Apess borrowed extensively from Drake as he wrote the *Eulogy*, he did so “with a great deal of rearrangement and reinterpretation” (102). For example, while Apess gleaned his descriptions of grave robbery and shipboard murder from *The Book of the Indians*, he revised Drake’s account of these events so that their tribal and geographical details were omitted. In Drake’s history, these details are clear: the English robbed the grave of a Massachusetts woman in Plymouth and murdered several Wampanoags on a boat moored in Massachusetts Bay (II, 43; II, 18). The clarity of these details in *The Book of the Indians* suggests that, in the *Eulogy*, Apess withheld them willfully rather than due to ignorance or even, again, a fear that they might “swell our address too full.” Indeed, these omissions recur throughout the *Eulogy*, and their consistency reveals the presence of a rhetorical strategy that stifles assertions of tribal extinction. By refusing to offer these details, Apess forwards a transnational history of Native New England. He appeals to a conception of nationhood based not on the distinctions between the region’s Native peoples but rather on their shared relations. He thus compels readers to consider Native New England as

a “network of relations” joined together by the assertion of a communal past and the affirmation of a political present. That political present, the *Eulogy* argues, includes nations like the Pequots, whose presence in nineteenth-century New England Apess invokes by disavowing the categories that structured settler-colonial historiography.

Beyond New England

Though scholars have described the published *Eulogy* as the apex of Apess’s intellectual project, in this chapter I have argued that our sense of this project expands significantly when we account for the intricacies of its promotion and performance. Attending to the *Eulogy*’s advertisements, for example, reveals the extent to which Apess used the period’s media infrastructure to advance his professional pursuits. Likewise, attending to the *Eulogy*’s presence in the networks of kinship and lecturing reveals the extent to which he connected those pursuits with his decolonial politics. In touring the *Eulogy*, Apess aligned the objective of his lecture with the means of its circulation. He affirmed the social, political, and physical presence of indigenous nations in early nineteenth-century New England by attesting—in print and performance—to the transnational relations that sustained their existence.

Our sense of this project might expand even further when we consider neither the *Eulogy* nor its performances as the apotheosis of Apess’s politics. Rather than the apex of his intellectual project, the *Eulogy* spurred Apess to widen his professional and political objectives beyond New England—to, that is, use his role as a lecturer to affirm his kinship with indigenous groups across the continent. Almost one year after his last appearance in Hartford, Apess lectured in New York City. In four nights at Clinton Hall—“one of the city’s prime venues for lecturers” (Gura 130)—he spoke on “Indian history, wars, manners, customs, [and] religion.”³⁶ Advertisements for these

³⁶ “Indian Lectures,” *New York Commercial Advertiser*, 22 February 1837.

lectures, written by Apess, refer to the speaker as “an Indian, named Gos-kuk-wa-na-kou-ne-di-yu,—by some reported to be a Mohawk, and by others a Pequot.”³⁷ Another notice, written by an editor of the *New York Herald*, identifies the speaker as “an Indian warrior, Metecomet.”³⁸ Philip Gura has noted that the name Apess uses to describe himself appears in *The Book of the Indians*, where Drake employs it to identify Handsome Lake, the Seneca prophet (129). “Metecomet,” as Apess knew and likely divulged to the *Herald*’s editor, was an alias for Philip. As in *A Son of the Forest*, here Apess aligns himself with the Pequots and the Wampanoags. But he also expands on this identification, affiliating with two confederated members of the Haudenosaunee.

By the end of that same year, Apess had traveled from New York to the nation’s capital. Identifying himself as “of the Mohawk tribe,” he spoke at least twice “on the subject of Christian missions at meeting houses associated with the Baptists.”³⁹ As a correspondent for the *Baltimore Sun* reported, Apess’s appearance in Washington coincided with the arrival there “of a delegation of Indians who have been on a visit or tour to the North.”⁴⁰ In the months prior, the city hosted a council to resolve a conflict between the Sioux and the Sauk and Meskwaki. These nations were joined by representatives from the Missouri, Omaha, Oto, Pawnee, and Winnebago tribes (Viola 34–36). Apess may have read about the council and timed his lectures to align with the groups’ return to Washington.⁴¹ Given his established interest in the plight of the Cherokees, he may also have visited the city to lend his support to their final—and ultimately futile—attempt to negotiate

³⁷ “Indian Lectures,” *New York Spectator*, 21 February 1837.

³⁸ “Rabbi Noah at a Discount,” 8 March 1837.

³⁹ *Washington Globe*, 2 December 1837.

⁴⁰ “From Our Correspondent,” 5 December 1837.

⁴¹ Herman Viola notes that this meeting—one of the largest of its time—was a popular spectacle, attracting scores of curious onlookers and incessant coverage in regional newspapers (36).

an alternative to removal (Moulton 86). In either case, he spoke not only on “Christian missions” but also on, as the *Sun* reports, the impropriety of parading these diplomats “out on the commons for the gratification of the people.” Apess, as the reporter detailed, “resented, in strong language, the treatment of the Indians.”⁴² Though Apess did not affiliate himself with these nations, still he advocated for their rights at the seat of settler-colonial power. Washington, itself a transnational city replete—like Hartford—with people from countless indigenous nations, was an ideal locale for the extension of Apess’s professional, political, and intellectual goals.

As he toured in New York and Washington, Apess widened the objectives of the *Eulogy*. He expanded the audience for his lectures and thus broadened a network of transnational kinship that, he hoped, would sustain the social, political, and physical presence of indigenous nations in New England and beyond. Following him from the page to the stage in these cities—and others yet to be recovered—expands further our knowledge of Apess, his final years, and his lasting contribution to the literary and political histories of the early nineteenth-century United States.

⁴² “From Our Correspondent,” 5 December 1837.

Chapter Three Margaret Boyd's Quillwork Histories

When Margaret Boyd returned to Little Traverse, Michigan, from the nation's capital in the fall of 1876, she wrote to the President, Ulysses S. Grant, whom she had met during her travels. "If I wanted to tell you all our troubles," she lamented, "I could not find enough paper to use."¹ Boyd sought to convince Grant of the plight of her people, the Odawas, using hyperbole to amplify her critique of the deforestation that had accompanied settler-colonial encroachment.² Her rhetorical excess, however, also exposed a profound frustration with the expressive potential of the written word. Boyd, even as she exaggerated her material deprivation, argued implicitly that paper—and its metonym, writing—failed to address the problems of her community. She insisted, that is, not only on the severity of the Odawas' plight, but also on the inability of the written word to resolve or even register their concerns.

"I went there," she wrote, "to ask you to give these few familys who never had any lands from the Great Father who ought to have had the lands."³ These "few familys," Boyd intimated, had purchased tracts of land reserved for the benefit of the Anishinaabeg of Michigan under the terms of the 1855 Treaty of Detroit.⁴ That treaty secured for each Anishinaabe family an eighty-acre parcel, but a combination of malfeasance and ineptitude had prevented them from selecting and receiving deeds to their portions of the reserved tracts. These problems remained until 1872,

¹ Margaret Ogabegjokwe Boyd to Ulysses S. Grant, June 1877.

² I use the term *Odawa*, rather than *Ottawa*, in deference to the autonym used by the federally recognized tribe that now resides in the region in which Margaret Boyd lived, the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians.

³ Margaret Ogabegjokwe Boyd to Ulysses S. Grant, 7 January 1877.

⁴ When referencing the shared cultural, linguistic, and political traditions of the indigenous societies of the western and central Great Lakes region, I use the plural term *Anishinaabeg*. I use *Anishinaabe* as the singular and adjectival form. As a non-speaker of the Anishinaabe language, *Anishinaabemowin*, I defer to the spelling used by my sources. When two sources differ as to the spelling of a word, I use the spelling provided in the *Ojibwe People's Dictionary*.

when Congress issued patents to aggrieved Anishinaabeg as pretext for opening all reserved but still unselected lands to settlers.

Boyd, the daughter of an *ogimaa* and herself *mindimooyenh*, understood well the pyrrhic nature of this victory.⁵ The act of Congress decreased the size of Odawa territories in Michigan, hastening a fraudulent land rush that would transform the political, cultural, and ethnic character of *Waganakising*, “the land of the crooked tree” that stretched across the northwestern portion of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula.⁶ “We cannot live this way,” she wrote to President Grant, “they are trying to drive us from our own country . . . our reserved land.” Provisions that were intended to prevent fraud instead exacerbated the situation. Rather than receive free patent to their new land, Odawa families were required to improve their tracts—build dwellings, plant crops—or risk their forfeiture. This requirement prohibited the Odawas from marshaling their reserved territories to their own purposes. “We do not want to take the Lands as homestead,” Boyd noted, “because we are oblige to cut down trees and clear land but we want [to] preserve our trees from cutting down to make sugar.” Boyd’s desire to maintain the sugar groves was both a plea for subsistence—“we use great deal of sugar,” she observed—and for the preservation of Odawa cultural, political, and ecological traditions.⁷ There were *aadizookaanag*, sacred stories, associated with the maples, and the annual harvest structured seasonal movements and provided women with property rights that

⁵ I use the terms *ogimaa* and *mindimooyenh*, rather than English approximations, to reference meanings otherwise lost in translation. Among the Anishinaabeg, *ogimaa* can be glossed as *leader* but lacks “autocratic or hierarchical” connotations (Fletcher 14). *Mindimooyenh*, literally “one who holds things together,” is used to refer to “a category of distinction that honors the pivotal role occupied by fully mature women in the [Ojibwe] social order” (Child 63).

⁶ Census records reveal that, in 1870, “the Ottawa made up better than 95 percent” of *Waganakising*; by 1880, “there were 5,500 more whites than Indians” (Karamanski ch. 6).

⁷ Margaret Ogabegigokwe Boyd to Ulysses S. Grant, 7 January 1877.

were incompatible with settler-colonial ideals of land tenure.⁸ When Boyd made her “bitter long journey” to Washington, then, she argued not only for the preservation of tribal land, but also for the survival of Odawa identity on that land—for, as she described, an acknowledgment from the President that “the Great Spirit created us and gave us this part of the world.”

Though Boyd did meet with Grant, she did not receive the audience she expected, nor did the President reply to her pleas. “The man who take me to see the great Father,” she complained, “did not give me no time to hear any answer.” Her interview lasted a “half minute,” and she was dismayed to learn from her escort that “the great Father did not wish to see his children.”⁹ When Boyd referenced “the great troubles we have with these White Homesteaders,” Grant replied that the Odawas should likewise “take homestead,” voicing approval for the Congressional resolution and evincing his ignorance of the complexities of tribal land use.¹⁰ Boyd would contend later that “all this your poor child would tell you, but no time [was given] to her, to talk to her Father.” She expressed her confusion that a “great Father who is ful power to do anything all but creat another world” nonetheless refused to act with “compasion and pity . . . [for] your poor Indian children.” This refusal was particularly galling, Boyd emphasized, because her journey to Washington had been so harrowing. She discussed having been “throw[n] . . . out of cars because I had not money enough to pay,” and she resorted to “trying to sell our Indian work”—baskets and other wares—to fund her travel. She wept “all way home” to Michigan and felt “most ashame” of her response when those who had sent her to Washington “rush[ed] in haste to the house asking what the great

⁸ Andrew Blackbird, Boyd’s brother, offers one such *aadizokaan*, describing in *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan* how Nanabozhoo, “the most remarkable, wonderful, and supernatural being that ever trod upon the earth,” changed the flow of sap from maple trees (1887, 72). Brenda Child discusses the gendered usufruct rights associated with sugar groves in her history of Ojibwe women, *Holding Our World Together* (77).

⁹ Margaret Ogabegokwe Boyd to Ulysses S. Grant, 7 January 1877.

¹⁰ Margaret Ogabegokwe Boyd to Ulysses S. Grant, June 1877.

Father had said.” The answer would have been suffused with her disappointments. “A poor child went a great long way to see her great father,” she began her first letter, and was “returning home with greater grieve no satisfaction answer.”¹¹

Though her written petitions failed to assuage her concerns, in the capital Boyd appealed as well to objects whose expressive potential aligned more readily with her political objective. In particular, soon after her arrival, Boyd presented the President with a “birchbark canoe, three feet long and decorated with quilled wildflower designs” (Green 2010, 57). The presentation of items like Boyd’s canoe often facilitated settler-colonial support for indigenous politics.¹² In her letters, and in her time at the capital, Boyd lamented the expressive deficiencies of the written word, and she used her non-written practices to transcend those discursive limitations. For Boyd, though no amount of paper could engender that support, quillwork offered a platform to articulate, and even resolve, the troubles that had brought her to Washington. In this chapter, I consider how histories embedded in non-written traditions, like Boyd’s quillwork, supplemented those found in writing. I describe a rather literal instance of the interaction between written and non-written expressions, recovering an oft-neglected artistic tradition wherein indigenous writers and readers embellished their books with materials, like grasses and quills, that were suffused with historical significance. Though I discuss several examples from this tradition, I focus on a presentation copy of Andrew Blackbird’s *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan*. Boyd, Blackbird’s sister, bound this book in birch bark and affixed to it dyed porcupine quills. Inherent in these materials were histories of the Odawas undiscussed in the written share of Blackbird’s *History*, foremost a history of women as principal agents in the preservation and defense of Odawa sovereignty.

¹¹ Margaret Ogabegigokwe Boyd to Ulysses S. Grant, 7 January 1877.

¹² According to Ruth Phillips, the creation and distribution of these objects could “support directly political agendas . . . [and] projects of resistance” (2001, 129).

Quillwork, Culture, and Criticism

Though one recent account of Boyd's journey to Washington ascribes to it beneficial results as a spark for investigations into fraud in Michigan, Boyd's letters reveal that she thought the mission a failure.¹³ This belief would have shocked readers steeped in the print culture of the Great Lakes region. In 1881, the extension of railroads to Little Traverse—now Harbor Springs—spurred the region's development as a destination for travelers. "Weary brain-workers" flocked to the "calm, sweet retreats of Northern Michigan," lured in part by printed reports of the restorative effects of the environment and the welcoming nature of its Native inhabitants.¹⁴ "Aunt Margaret" figured prominently in these reports, and her visit to the capital became a touchstone for establishing the hospitality of the Anishinaabeg and their amicable relations with the United States. One visitor to the area, Angeline Teal, ascribed to Boyd a description of her visit that contradicted the narrative provided in her letters to the President. According to Teal, Boyd found her interview cordial and even productive. Grant "listened to her with the utmost courtesy, and assured her that everything should be made right." Later he "took her on his arm, and conducting her into another apartment, introduced her to his wife and several other ladies."¹⁵ Ulysses Hedrick, who wrote a retrospective account of his youth in Michigan, attributed to Boyd a similar narrative, one that concluded with the President having "made many good promises" during a "long talk" (31). Similar stories, with minor revisions, were printed in guidebooks that sought to familiarize readers with the history of the area and promote its suitability for tourists.¹⁶ These accounts became the official narrative of

¹³ Theodore Karamanski observes that "Margaret's mission . . . did, at least, spark federal authorities to investigate what was happening in northern Michigan" (ch. 6).

¹⁴ "Neyas Pe-To Se-Ga (The Rising Sun), and His People," *Friends' Intelligencer*, 16 September 1882.

¹⁵ "Petosky and the 'Gem of the Straits'," *The Continent*, 10 January 1883.

¹⁶ *Detroit and the Pleasure Resorts of Northern Michigan*, a complimentary guidebook provided to train passengers, reprinted Teal's account, as did the editors of *Old Settlers of the Grand Traverse Region*.

Boyd's travels, replacing the anguish and militancy of her letters with an account that positioned Boyd and her Anishinaabe peers as satisfied recipients of Grant's settler-colonial benevolence.

The futility of Boyd's letters, and the dissonance between her words and those attributed to her in print, suggests that, for Boyd, writing remained ineffective as an instrument of political advocacy. Like many indigenous societies in the nineteenth century, the Odawas endured severe restrictions on their ability to access and leverage written words. Boyd herself experienced these constraints acutely. Indeed, though writing in English was not uncommon for the Anishinaabeg during this period, the inability of that tradition to affect change on Boyd's behalf suggests that it did not benefit all parts of Anishinaabe society equally. As in settler-colonial societies, and with exceptions, women in Anishinaabe communities had less access to written English and benefited less than men from its distribution in print. Hilary Wyss, in her study of indigenous literacies in early New England, argues that "writing . . . was not self-evidently of benefit to Native women," many of whom were excluded from the roles for which writing was required (2010, 123). After her interview in Washington, Boyd—who had greater access to and facility with written English than many of her Odawa peers—perhaps felt similarly.¹⁷ Her own words had proven ineffectual, and printed accounts of her travels to the capital had distorted the results of her visit. "Education brings no blessing with it," she lamented to a visitor. "Our people are crowded from their homes . . . we know not what to do."¹⁸

Like her forebears in eighteenth-century New England, when faced with the deficiencies of the written word, Boyd privileged an alternative expressive practice, one that had existed "for

¹⁷ Along with two Odawa boys, Boyd was chosen in 1825 to attend a Catholic school in Cincinnati. She stayed there for five years before becoming a teacher, first in Detroit and later at the mission in Little Traverse. Boyd's fluency in English was rare among the Odawas. Though education in French was prevalent by the 1830s due to the presence of missionaries, literacy in English was atypical until later in the century (McClurken 33–34).

¹⁸ "Neyas Pe-To Se-Ga (The Rising Sun), and His People," *Friends' Intelligencer*, 16 September 1882.

generations outside the literacy practices involved in print culture” (Wyss 2010, 126). When she visited Washington, Boyd brought not only her verbal petitions but also baskets and other objects she had manufactured from birch bark and embroidered with porcupine quill. Quillwork, as both the practice and the objects are known, had entered Anishinaabe communities by the first decade of the nineteenth century. This artistic tradition developed, as Ruth Phillips details, “in response to the expanded market for curiosities” that accompanied settler-colonial excursions in the Great Lakes during the War of 1812 (1999, 170). Though the Odawas have long considered quillwork an important tradition, its origin in the souvenir market licensed its denigration as an inauthentic practice—as, that is, responsive only to the social and aesthetic desires of settler-colonial buyers, many of whom extolled the practice, and its decorative iconography, as proof of the Anishinaabe peoples’ tolerance for assimilation. However, as the sculptor Frank Ettawageshik argues, for the Odawas, and for indigenous peoples generally, the practice of quillwork reflected not declension but rather “continuity and adaptation in the face of enormous pressures to relocate, assimilate, or otherwise fade away” (29). Though indebted and responsive to the souvenir trade, practices like basketry, beadwork, and pottery also exploited that trade to sustain engagements with indigenous cultural traditions.

Indeed, even prior to their role as commodities, these practices implicated settler-colonial groups in cultural contexts that emphasized indigenous politics, histories, and epistemologies. In the sixty-third volume of the *Jesuit Relations*, written in 1684, Jacques Bigot, a missionary to the Abenakis, provided a “little narrative . . . concerning the state” of his efforts at the St. Francis de Sales Mission near Quebec. Bigot and his peers, in dedicating the mission to St. Francis, erected an altar on which they placed an “image of the saint.” Soon after, the Abenakis, unbidden by the priests, adorned the altar “with everything most beautiful in their possession.” Bigot remarks that

the “whole altar was covered in a great number of collars . . . in all sorts of designs, bugle beads and strings of porcelain; and articles worked with glass beads and porcupine quills.” Though the account remains silent as to whether these items in fact covered the “image of the saint,” still the inclusion of these objects imbued the altar and its iconography with meanings that supplemented, if not entirely subverted, the beliefs espoused by the Jesuits. Bigot seems to have recognized this, as his enumeration of these “savage” adornments concludes abruptly with an account of his own effort to regain control of the altar by incorporating, as he details, “the most beautiful ornaments that we have in our Church.” Inherent in these quills, beads, and strings, Bigot understands, is an effort by the Abenakis to contextualize foreign practices within the familiar, and thus perhaps to wrest a modicum of control from settler-colonial institutions like the Church.

These objects also offered indigenous societies the means to control settlers themselves, not only their institutions. In his eponymous captivity narrative, for example, the British soldier James Smith describes his capture and eventual adoption by a group of Mohawks in 1755. Smith recalls that, before his adoption, his captors disrobed him and dressed him in “a new ruffled shirt . . . a pair of leggin done off with ribbons and beads,” some moccasins, “and garters dressed with beads, Porcupine-quill, and red hair” (1799, 15). They seated Smith “on a bear skin” and offered him “a pipe, tomahawk, and polecat skin pouch.” Adorned in skins and quills, Smith becomes, in the words of a Mohawk leader, “flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone.” The decoration of Smith’s body with these objects imparts on the soldier a newfound identity as Haudenosaunee. Indeed, as the Mohawk leader remarks to Smith, “by the ceremony which was performed on this day, every drop of white blood was washed out of your veins.” For the Mohawks, then, these objects served an integral role in the transformation of Smith from colonial antagonist into “one of our people” (1799, 16). Like the Abenaki altar, the adornment of Smith’s body with these objects functioned

as a sophisticated cultural and political statement. Quills and other materials reflected a desire to reinscribe settler-colonial objects—altars, bodies, and the ideas that they represented—within an indigenous context, one that privileged, to again cite Ettawageshik, “continuity and adaptation.”

An embellished volume of *Okodakiciye Wakan Tadowan Kin*, a Dakota-language hymnal used by Protestant missionaries at Pine Ridge, exemplifies this elaborate process of reinscription, especially when compared to its unadorned original (figures 6 and 7). Unadorned versions of this hymnal were offered to indigenous converts by missionaries who worked among them. Here, the recipient first covered the original book with animal skin, obscuring the crosses pressed into both sides of the original binding. She then quite literally reinscribed that cross onto the front cover of her blank canvas, using materials and techniques that, as I have sought to establish, functioned as more than merely decorative. Like the Abenakis’ altar, this embellished front cover seems less a



Figure 6. Front Covers, *Okodakiciye Wakan Tadowan Kin*.



Figure 7. Back Covers, *Okodakiciye Wakan Tadowan Kin*.

rejection of the beliefs that inhered in the cross than an effort to exert control over those beliefs, to frame them in an indigenous context. Though the unclear provenance of this volume frustrates attempts to interpret the artist's motives, perhaps her quillwork cross reflects a desire to redesign the Christian faith so that its doctrines more closely align with the principles of her community at Pine Ridge. Perhaps, too, the elaborate back cover of this embellished copy reflects the evolution of the desires represented on the front. The abstracted, pseudo-floral pattern retains an animating trace of the cross that it has otherwise obscured. The red petals and yellow stem themselves form a cross, one that gains new meaning as it is supplemented with further quillwork—amended, that is, with further appeals to indigenous cultural practices. These designs thus aptly symbolize what Ettawageshik concludes about quillwork's power—on altars, on bodies, on books—to reconceive settler-colonial traditions and recraft them in accord with indigenous ideals. On both sides of this

hymnal, the original cross remains, almost palimpsest-like, informing these later designs even as it is repurposed, turning the book from an instrument of conversion into one of empowerment.

Further, for the nineteenth-century Anishinaabeg in particular, inherent in quillwork were contexts that countered its status as an artistic affirmation of societal decline. The birch bark onto which quills were fastened, for instance, was an integral component of tribal culture. As with the maple, there were stories associated with the birch, among them an account of how Nanabozhoo, a prominent figure in Anishinaabe narratives, gave that tree its striated bark (Webkamigad 4–25). The bark was “sacred,” as Basil Johnston notes, because of its role in ceremonies associated with the *midewiwin* (2004, 51). Those entrusted with spiritual traditions communicated with spirits, or *manidoog*, and would record their responses pictorially on birchbark scrolls. Simon Pokagon, the Potawatomi chief, referenced these ideas in *Red Man's Rebuke*, a birchbark pamphlet written to coincide with the 1893 Columbian Exposition (figure 8; Berliner 82). He prefaced the pamphlet,

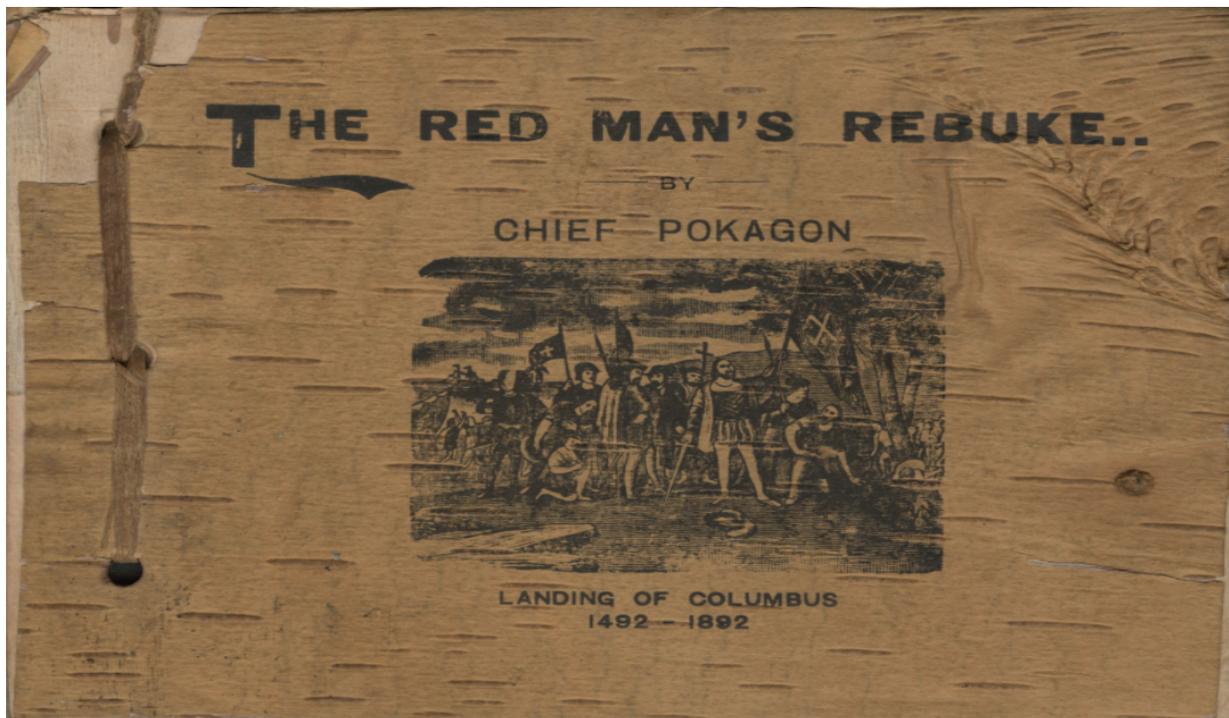


Figure 8. Cover, *The Red Man's Rebuke*.

a searing tirade against the settler-colonial enterprise, with messages of gratitude for “the Great Spirit, who in his wisdom,” Pokagon wrote, had given the birches to “untold generations.” Quills perhaps served an ancillary function in the *midewiwin*, as well. John Tanner, the Ojibwe captive, recounted in the first decades of the nineteenth century that dyed quills were sent as invitations to *midew*, requesting their participation in ceremonies (285–286). Bark and quills both, then, served as means of receiving, recording, and transmitting messages, physical and metaphysical. Though quilled birch bark was a modern innovation that developed in response to commercial forces, the materials that comprised this practice resonated with the Anishinaabeg as resources that had been imbued for generations with historical, spiritual, and expressive purpose.

When she delivered her quillwork to the capital, Boyd appealed to these cultural contexts. Though printed accounts of her mission mentioned only that Boyd’s wares “paid the expenses of her journey,” in her letters to the President these objects were afforded greater significance (Wait and Anderson 146). More than a means of financial subsistence, quillwork provided Boyd with a measure of success that her later letters would not. In her second letter to Grant, Boyd addressed the leader of the Mackinac Indian Agency, asking that he “tell Miss Abbot she must not get tired waiting for her orders we are been working day and night.”¹⁹ Though the details are slight, Boyd likely refers here to Sarah Abbot, wife of the president of Michigan’s State Agricultural College. In this sense, the market for Boyd’s wares seems to have facilitated meaningful relations beyond *Waganakising*.²⁰ As Phillips notes, “the making and sale of quilled bark” not only could provide remuneration but “could also support directly political agendas.” Boyd and others, she continues,

¹⁹ Margaret Ogabegjokwe Boyd to Ulysses S. Grant, June 1877.

²⁰ Though Boyd’s letters are addressed to the President, occasionally she writes to the Indian Agent who would then direct her letters to Washington. The likelihood that “Miss Abbot” refers to Sarah Abbot suggests that, in this event, Boyd directed her request to the Agent rather than to Grant personally.

used the “power and respect that derived from successful commodity production to support their own projects of resistance” (2001, 129). Boyd’s agenda, ignored and mischaracterized in written accounts of her journey, was sustained not with recourse to writing but rather through quillwork, an expressive tradition irreducible to the practice of alphabetic literacy. Her birchbark containers, more than baubles, served in Washington as they had for generations among the Anishinaabeg—as materials that functioned both discursively and socially, transmitting messages and solidifying relationships between the tribe, its neighbors, and the *manidoog*.

Boyd, that is, recognized quillwork as a communicative system, as a mode of inscription whose expressive potential inhered not simply in its content but also in its “forms and protocols” (Cohen and Glover 33). In this sense, quillwork functioned like writing—though, as some argue, and as Boyd’s experiences attest, this conflation seems as injurious as it is instructive (Newman). In either case, studies of indigenous literatures in colonial and nineteenth-century North America have begun only recently to consider such “nontextual media” an appropriate topic of analysis.²¹ Chadwick Allen has raised similar concerns about studies of contemporary indigenous literature, critiquing that field for a disciplinary parochialism that has licensed a disregard for “the potential relevance of other arts practices to the analysis of literature” (xxii). Attention to these materials is overdue, not least because they have long informed work in adjacent disciplines—media studies, art history, anthropology—and in studies of the literatures of Mesoamerica (Boone and Mignolo, Cohen). Moreover, as scholarship in early and nineteenth-century American literatures continues to migrate toward the concerns that inform Native American Studies, the field’s interdisciplinary orientation will broaden the materials and methods of literary-critical analysis. Whether scholars define *writing* more capaciously or jettison the concept, the archive of what constitutes *literature*

²¹ As recently as 2014, for example, Matt Cohen and Jeffrey Glover could ask what the field would “look like . . . if we embrace[d] nontextual media” (30).

will continue to expand, requiring methods that privilege indigenous expression, experience, and epistemology.

Studies that appeal to these expanded archives have provided models for how to approach expressive traditions that trouble or even transcend staid notions of writing. Given the parameters of the discipline, perhaps unsurprisingly these studies have emphasized the interactions of textual and non-textual media. Birgit Brander Rasmussen, for example, has noted that studies of colonial and nineteenth-century American literature “become richer and more nuanced” when literature is understood “as radically plural in linguistic and semiotic terms” (15). Christopher Teuton argues that diverse graphic traditions, including the written word, exist with oral discourse on a “textual continuum” that structures indigenous expressions. Penelope Kelsey forwards a similar claim in her study of contemporary Haudenosaunee cultural productions, observing that authors appeal to the political, cultural, and aesthetic traditions of wampum belts “as a way of organizing narrative and theoretically undergirding” their writing (1). In combining the written word with other forms of expression, these works reveal the potential of scholarship that acknowledges, accommodates, and considers the implications of the “graphic pluralism” that has informed indigenous literatures from their earliest iterations through our present moment (Salomon and Hyland).

For scholars interested in studying these interactions, Boyd offers an illustrative example. In 1887, a decade after her visit to Washington, Boyd was commissioned to embellish two copies of her brother’s *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan*. Blackbird, himself a leader of the Odawas at Harbor Springs, offered the copies as gestures of gratitude to the book’s editor, Georgiana W. Owen, and Elliott Sheperd, who had funded its publication. Owen’s copy is bound on both covers with birch bark that has been embroidered with porcupine quills (figure 9).

On the front, a green wreath studded with red and white berries encircles purple lettering that



Figure 9. Covers, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan*.

spells out “G. W. O.,” Owen’s initials, and “ypsilanti.,” her residence. A second wreath, full with berries tinted red, white, yellow, and purple, dominates the back, surrounding a vibrant red heart. These images, set against a ground of grained birch bark and supplemented with a spine gilded in gold, lend to the edition an artistry reminiscent of other intricate bookbinding from the Victorian era.²² Though not her most thoughtful design nor her most technical, Boyd’s cover represents the

²² Sue Allen’s *Victorian Bookbinding* provides a comprehensive pictorial survey of this artistic tradition.

esteem in which her brother held Owen, an advocate for indigenous rights whom he had met due to her role as leader of the Ypsilanti Auxiliary of the Women's National Indian Association.²³

While not ubiquitous, for indigenous people in the late nineteenth century the practice of covering books with nontraditional materials—barks, hides—and embellishing those covers with quills, beads, and grasses seems to have been quite common. The practice, as a natural extension of similar artistry on baskets and other domestic objects, lent itself to the souvenir market and to more intimate transactions. Many, including the Dakota-language example above, are hymnals or Bibles. Often these were given as gifts by indigenous believers to missionaries or, in other cases, by the missions themselves to particular devotees. Despite their prevalence, as compared to other quillworked objects these books have garnered little attention from scholars. In part, this neglect can be understood as a measure of the relative cultural importance of quillwork in different tribal cultures. Quillwork, while prized by the Anishinaabeg, had an intensely spiritual significance for some other indigenous societies. As Jeffrey Anderson explains, “while quillwork was an art form throughout indigenous cultures of the northern half of the continent, it was a sacred practice only . . . among the Arapaho, Gros Ventre, Blackfoot, and Cheyenne peoples” (6).²⁴ For these groups, the decoration of particular objects—cradles, tipis, robes—was a ritualized activity, one that was taught to remarkable women by select elders and expressive of religious beliefs that transcended its role as a form of decoration or inscription (Bol 33–47). Quillwork in the Great Lakes, though expressive of Anishinaabe beliefs and values, did not command the same level of veneration.

Even in accounts of Anishinaabe quillwork, however, embellished books are neglected in favor of other objects like baskets. This neglect has persisted despite the similarity of the designs

²³ Other examples of Boyd's quillwork can be found in *Ottawa Quillwork on Birchbark*.

²⁴ Julia Bebbington provides an overview of the sacred aspects of quillwork for the indigenous societies of the Plains (16–17).

applied to books and other wares. For example, in both its extravagance and the particularities of its design, Owen's edition of *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan* conforms to the period's aesthetic sensibilities. Floral and heart-shaped designs were standard visual tropes in Victorian iconography, and they appear often on goods created by Boyd and her Odawa peers (Phillips 1999, 155–196; Green 2013, 226). These visual tropes referenced not merely Victorian sensibilities but also, in a process Phillips calls “transcultural iconography,” the tribal values they were thought to have suppressed. When Boyd decorated her birchbark objects with floral motifs, then, at once she appealed to the cultural refinement associated with flowers in Victorian settings and to a “dissenting point of view,” one that used floral imagery to claim the persistence of tribal beliefs “during a period when more explicit expressions were severely repressed” (1999, 196).²⁵ Baskets and other objects provided their makers with a foundation on which to inscribe, however subtly, their assertions of Anishinaabe political and cultural continuance.

Though they have not yet been the subject of scholarly interest, books like Boyd's can be read similarly. In fact, as an enactment of the interaction between written and non-written media, quillworked books may offer interpretive possibilities beyond those offered by baskets and other wares. In advocating for an expansive archive with which to read quillwork, Phillips has asserted that “texts inscribed through writing, graphic images, and souvenir arts are mutually illuminating and should be considered together” (1999, 196). The quill-decorated book, as a single production that accommodates several discursive practices, casts the relationship between written words and indigenous expressive traditions into stark relief. These books thus offer scholars opportunities to reconsider staid definitions—of writing, discourse, and literacy—in accord with their support for

²⁵ According to Lois Dubin, “there is every reason to believe that many late-nineteenth-century Great Lakes artists purposely created a sense of ambiguity within their floral designs by enfolding cultural information within secular flower patterns” (88).

historical and current-day indigenous peoples. For one, the “graphic pluralism” of these materials compels an interpretive approach that foregrounds indigenous voices that, due to their expression in forms other than the written word, have remained outside the conventional purview of literary-critical analysis (Wyss 2010, 131). When studies consider the imbrication of these various forms, likewise they are compelled to forward an inclusivist approach that privileges the widest possible archive of inscribed experience. This method amplifies the voices of people like Boyd, for whom the written word was ineffective, if not unavailable. In addition, the interplay of these expressive practices in the quillworked book encourages interpretive practices that are more sensitive to the realities of indigenous expression. Just as indigenous cultures were always more than “oral,” as I discuss in the first chapter, so too were they always characterized by a broad range of inscriptive technologies. As David Stirrup notes of the Anishinaabeg in particular, “the relationship between image and word/story . . . is ancient” (299). Books like Owen’s embellished *History* allow for an interpretive practice that remains grounded in this ancient relationship even as it demonstrates how that relationship developed as indigenous histories were expressed in new forms and outlets.

Quillwork Histories

The nature of quillworked books, that is, allows for interpretations of Owen’s decorated edition of *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan* that demonstrate how Boyd’s cover supplements or even alters the content of her brother’s text. For example, the heart affixed to the back of Owen’s edition compels a reconsideration of the relationship between Blackbird and his editor. Though a review of Blackbird’s book declares that Owen edited “nearly the whole work,” her name remains absent from the text itself.²⁶ Only in a footnote on its final page does the book disclose her presence, remarking in a short note signed by the “EDITOR” that “this work is printed

²⁶ *The Ypsilantian*, 9 February 1888.

almost verbatim as written by the author” (1887, 128). The full extent of Owen’s editorial impact is unknown, but other aspects of the text situate her efforts in the long tradition of settler-colonial editors who held significant control over Indian-authored compositions.²⁷ In an effort to preserve elements of indigenous culture before the “inevitable” demise of indigenous peoples, nineteenth-century editors introduced heavily mediated accounts of Native experience to popular audiences. The preface to *History* suggests that Owen considered her efforts in the spirit of this tradition. In an “ACKNOWLEDGEMENT” attributed to the members of the Ypsilanti Auxiliary, she explains that the publication “of this most rare and important history” was necessary because the book offered “an account of a race and a language already passing into oblivion” (1887, 6). Of course, claims like these were progressive for their time; Blackbird himself, like many of his peers, appealed to aspects of the vanishing Indian trope, writing that neighbors of the Anishinaabeg—though never the Anishinaabeg themselves—were threatened with extinction (1887, 5). Though Blackbird did adhere sporadically to these sentiments, their positioning in his book—as the one rationale for its creation—positions Owen as the final arbiter of the history he has recorded. In the written text of *History*, then, Blackbird’s authorship is compromised by the portrayal of Owen’s editorial labors as a benevolent manifestation of the nascent practice of “salvage ethnography.”

Though the text of *History* invites this interpretation, the inclusion of Boyd’s heart on its cover offers an alternative account of Owen’s role in the development of the book. For one, as a symbol in Victorian-era iconography, the heart discloses not an antagonistic relationship between Owen and Blackbird but instead the author’s gratitude for his editor’s effort and for the financial contributions of her Ypsilanti Auxiliary. The heart, in short, suggests that the two parties enjoyed

²⁷ In a letter to the ethnologist Daniel Brinton, which I discuss in further detail later in this chapter, Owen writes that she “was to revise, correct, and arrange” the manuscript before publication (G. W. Owen to D. G. Brinton, 9 April 1887).

a positive relationship. When read in accord with Phillip’s notion of “transcultural iconography,” however, the heart discloses the particular nature of that positive relationship, one predicated on Anishinaabe tradition. As Heidi Bohaker has observed, the word for heart in *Anishinaabemowin, de’*, provides the linguistic and etymological root for *doodem*, or clan (2014, 110).²⁸ Among the Anishinaabeg, *doodem* identities—often named after animals—organized personal, familial, and sociopolitical relations. Members of the same *doodem* “would . . . regard each other as siblings,” fostering a network of social and political alliances that connected Anishinaabe groups across the Great Lakes (Bohaker 2010, 13). This network radiated outward from Anishinaabe communities, incorporating other groups throughout the region. As they encountered settler-colonial societies, for instance, the Anishinaabeg premised their affiliation with these populations on the ideals that inhered in *doodem* traditions. Brenda Child explains that, while *doodem* identities were inherited solely through paternal descent, nonetheless they “encouraged fluidity and the possibility of new partnerships” between the Anishinaabeg and their neighbors (32). The *doodemag* or clan system “expanded to accommodate even massive sea changes in worldview,” facilitating the creation of new relationships—including, I argue, Blackbird’s editorial collaborations with Georgiana Owen (Bohaker 2011, 112).

More than an intangible system for organizing sociopolitical relations, *doodem* identities were depicted on a wide range of media, including on earthworks, outcroppings, domestic items, letters, and treaties, where they operated like personal or communal signatures (figure 10). While Blackbird observed *doodem* figures on a variety of media, he associated the practice most readily with the materials used to cover the book given to his editor. “Emblems of tribes, or families,” he

²⁸ Basil Johnston provides a related but distinct etymology for *doodem*, arguing that it derives from “the same root,” *dood-*, as the words for *to do* and *breast* (1990, 61).



Figure 10. Treaty of Montreal, 1701 (Detail).

detailed, “were often made on birch bark” (1900, 8). The emblems that Blackbird discusses took the form of conventionalized pictographs. In this way, *doodem* pictography functioned not unlike an expressive system, conveying messages to literate audiences. Blackbird, who noted in *History* that the “symbolical ensign of my ancestors was . . . a small hawk,” recalled later that, as a child, he had seen the outline of animal figures drawn on the exterior of Anishinaabe homes (26; 1900, 8). These pictographs signaled to affiliated kin that, by virtue of a shared genealogy, they should expect a hospitable welcome inside.²⁹ Apart from pictographs of clan animals, other elements of this expressive tradition reinforced the role of the *doodemag* in creating partnerships between the Anishinaabeg and their neighbors. As Bohaker details, images of hearts featured prominently in *doodem* pictography. *Doodem* animals were rendered with “the outline of [their] heart[s] visible

²⁹ As James McClurken writes, “Odawa culture obligated those who belonged to an *Ododem* to provide hospitality to all others of the same family. For example, if a person of the bear *Ododem* travelled to another village, he or she could count on staying at the home of another person with the bear *Ododem*” (15).

to the viewer” (Bohaker 2014, 110). In addition, in illustrations that included several animals, the hearts often were joined together by lines that bridged the space between pictographs, expressing visually the connections facilitated by the *doodemag*. In one illustrated petition sent to the United States by the Ojibwes in 1849, for instance, the hearts and minds of seven animals are connected together and then linked to an abstract rendering of the Great Lakes, representing their united call for land redress (figure 11). What Bohaker calls this long “tradition of making the heart visible”

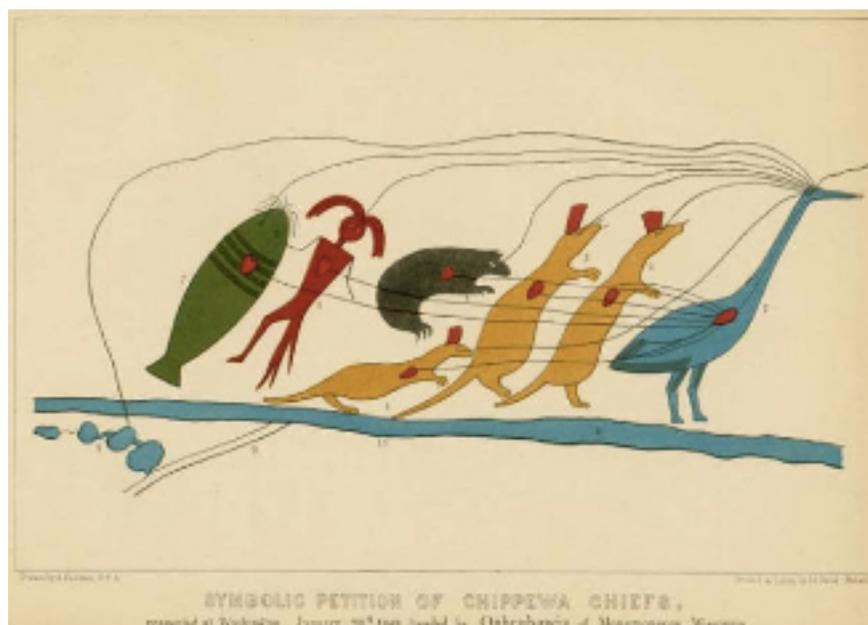


Figure 11. Ojibwe Petition, 1849.

in *doodem* pictography suggests that the relationship of *de'* and *doodem* existed not simply at the level of linguistics or etymology (2006, 126). Much like pictographs of clan animals themselves, images of hearts conveyed messages to readers who understood the importance of the *doodemag* to Anishinaabe traditions. Just as the presence of animals communicated assertions of agreement and hospitality, so too did the heart serve as a symbolic expression of the kinship that structured Anishinaabe societies.

The heart affixed to Owen’s edition of *History* can be read in relation to this pictographic tradition. More than a Victorian-era gesture of gratitude for Owen’s editorship, the heart grounds the nature and purpose of her efforts in Anishinaabe culture. As a “visual cognate” that exploited

settler-colonial iconography to advance Anishinaabe concepts, the heart suggests that Blackbird understood Owen's editorship as a manifestation of the *doodemag* (Phillips 1999, 20). Blackbird, through the inclusion of the heart, characterizes his interaction with Owen as a partnership based on reciprocity and kinship, one that followed established Anishinaabe protocols for the growth of relationships between members and outsiders. The heart, that is, privileges Anishinaabe tradition in an oft-fraught collaboration between indigenous writer and settler-colonial editor, allowing for interpretations of Blackbird's *History* that provide a more nuanced account of Owen's role in the creation of the book. Though the scant evidence from the text of *History*—none of it attributable to its author—insinuates that Owen sought to exploit Blackbird's knowledge to satisfy a familiar settler-colonial imperative, the cover of her decorated edition complicates, if not contradicts, this characterization. For Blackbird, their collaboration proceeded from a centuries-old tradition that provided for the creation and maintenance of Anishinaabe societies, not from the misplaced need to preserve tribal culture before the inexorable disappearance of its practitioners. The non-written media that encloses this copy of *History* thus provides insight into Blackbird's perspective on the production of his text, distanced from the influence of his editor. More broadly, the heart reveals that non-written expressive practices can amplify indigenous voices when the written word, even in Native-authored texts, threatens to stifle them.

Owen herself expresses sentiments that support this characterization. In letters sent to the ethnologist Daniel Brinton, Owen solicits his interest in funding the printing of Blackbird's text. She begins her first letter with an appeal to the manuscript's "special philological value," seeking to interest Brinton in the familiar settler-colonial desire to "save the folklore" otherwise destined to disappear.³⁰ Though his replies are lost, in response to this letter Brinton asked to have the text

³⁰ G. W. Owen to D. G. Brinton, 31 March 1887.

sent to him at the Peabody Museum. Owen, having sparked her correspondent's interest, changes course in her second letter. Rather than appeal again to the manuscript's significance as a cultural relic, Owen implores Brinton to support Blackbird for personal reasons. Blackbird, she notes, "is in most pitiable circumstances and his only hope is in his book." She explains that his attempts to earn an income as a regional lecturer on "Indian matters" were "unsuccessful," and that he turned to Owen for her support in printing *History* as a short pamphlet for tourists. Near the close of this second letter, Owen's intentions in assisting Blackbird become clear. She writes that

I do not know but Blackbird and his family will starve or die of broken hearts of some thing cannot be done to get out at least a pamphlet before June. Could you print some thing which he could sell—and let a thoroughly prepared work be made in time which would be of value in preserving the language of his people?³¹

Here, Owen leverages ethnological interest in Blackbird's knowledge to her own, more altruistic ends. She acknowledges that Blackbird's survival depends on these settler-colonial interests, but her intentions seem more aligned with providing support to Blackbird in a manner that recalls the kinship obligations inherent in the *doodemag*. This extratextual information about the production of Blackbird's text supports the characterization offered by Boyd's embroidered heart, not by the written words of *History* itself.

Apart from the designs on the book's cover, the quills themselves also inform the text of *History*. Indeed, while the inclusion of a heart on Owen's volume counters the book's description of her relation to Blackbird, the quills that comprise that design in fact reinforce other aspects of the written text. In Anishinaabe culture, porcupine quills—and various other materials—not only provided the means to inscribe messages, but also functioned as a repository for their own stories

³¹ G. W. Owen to D. G. Brinton, 9 April 1887.

and values. As Bohaker notes, for the Anishinaabeg “the medium itself could shape or determine the message” (2014, 105). Like all animals, from the Anishinaabe perspective the porcupine was “endowed with . . . singular powers,” including a “capacity to sense the changes of the world, the alteration of the seasons, and the coming state of things” (Johnston 1990, 52). The unique talents possessed by the porcupine are represented in oral traditions that feature the animal itself. In one Ojibwe story, for example, a porcupine conjures a snowstorm after having suffered abuse from a woman desirous of its quills, seemingly causing her death from exposure (Bourgeois 108). Other indigenous societies associated the porcupine with similar concepts. The Menomini, for example, tell a story of two sisters who, while hunting a porcupine in the winter, die from exhaustion even as they “hear the voices of their people in the village” (Hoffman 211). In an Arapaho tradition, a young woman resolves to marry a porcupine to provide her mother with the quills that she needs to finish her embroidery. The animal agrees to the proposal, but warns his wife that his supply of quills varies seasonally: “bear in mind,” he insists, “I cannot furnish many during the hot season but am ever providing during the fall and winter” (Dorsey and Kroeber 231). These stories, all of which insist on the necessity of gathering quills respectfully, also reveal that quills were plentiful in the colder months and that, accordingly, the majority of quillworkers labored seasonally.³² The stories also intimate that quillwork remained the exclusive purview of women, a claim supported in the historical record and by the sheer preponderance of Anishinaabe oral traditions that discuss interactions between women and porcupines.³³ The Anishinaabeg, like other indigenous peoples,

³² Kathy VanDeCar, in a series of interviews with present-day Anishinaabe quillworkers, discusses the seasonality of harvesting porcupine quills.

³³ As one example, William Jones, the Meskwaki anthropologist who collected texts in the Algonquian languages in the late nineteenth century, recorded an Ojibwe story about a “Foolish Maiden” who was tricked by a porcupine into sitting in the trunk of a tree. The porcupine, ensconced in the hollow trunk, slapped the maiden on her bare buttocks, leaving his quills (455–459). A similar act, attributed to Nanabozhoo in the form of a porcupine, features in Odawa oral traditions, as well (Webkamigad 4–25)

associated porcupines and their quills with the onset of winter, the seasonal passages of time, and the societal role of women. Stories about the porcupine thus forwarded a specific relation to time and history, and they insisted on the importance of women to the creation and propagation of that past. The seasonality of quills, manifested culturally in oral histories and in the actual production of quillwork, patterned “the activities of women as cultural agents”—as, in particular, bearers of Anishinaabe history (Lévi-Strauss 253).

This particular orientation toward the past is detailed in “Both Sides Now,” a short story by the Anishinaabe writer Lindsay Keegitah Borrows. In Borrows’ story, Arlene Mitig is visited on her reserve at *Neyaashiinigiming*, in northern Ontario, by her two granddaughters. As Arlene participates in a sweat, she is joined by her brother Eddy, whose

presence kindled a new light. Interconnected images of flowers, leaves, lines, and berries swirled through the air, storied patterns woven through time. This led her to think of the girls playing outside. She thought of the dead porcupine she picked up off the road last night, still sitting in the trunk of her Caddy. She had much to teach her granddaughters.

She couldn’t wait to do some quill work with them later tonight. (406)

These “leaves, lines, and berries” recall a conventional visual trope in Anishinaabe quill artistry, one that Boyd employed in Owen’s edition of *History* and throughout her work (figure 12). More



Figure 12. Front Cover, *History of the Ottawa and Chippewa Indians of Michigan* (Detail).

than this, however, as Borrows' narrator notes, they were "storied patterns woven through time," themselves an archive of the Anishinaabe past. When Arlene observes these storied patterns, she turns almost inexorably to her granddaughters—to the personified future of her tribe—and to the porcupine, connecting the latter with her desire to teach the former. Quillwork, then, functions as the material embodiment of Arlene's desire to share the storied history of the Anishinaabeg with its youngest generation, to sustain her peoples' traditions by ensuring their renewal even in spite of her eventual absence. As Arlene's thoughts drift from these swirling images to her role as the bearer of Anishinaabe history, she affirms that the stories accompanying these "leaves, lines, and berries" reflect a desire for continuance, for a sense of the past that recognizes its role in forging Anishinaabe futures. Borrows' short story, like the oral traditions that inform it, gestures toward the role of quillwork in providing a means for Anishinaabe women to enact this sense of the past.

Indeed, in connecting quillwork with the transmission of communal knowledge, Borrows narrativizes a long tradition in Anishinaabe communities wherein older women used the occasion of producing quillwork and other objects to pass on cultural traditions to their youngest relations. For the Odawas of *Waganakising*, in the nineteenth century and still today, these gatherings were "a time of community when Odawa history and culture were shared" (McClurken 102). As Boyd and others labored, they told "stories so the children learned about Nenabozhoo and other Odawa heroes . . . and important moral lessons" (McClurken 69). In these moments, Boyd and her peers enacted what Child has identified as a central role of women in Anishinaabe societies, that of the "society builder" who is "critical in sustaining Ojibwe communities" (xxvi). Child explains that the "deeply engrained traditions of women's lives served as a rock that stood proudly against the winds of change and helped to sustain family and community life in the face of racial hatred . . . and a desolate reservation economy" (83). Quillwork and other women's traditions held together

Anishinaabe communities by advocating for a sense of history that was grounded in Anishinaabe knowledge and that, moreover, employed that knowledge in the service of ensuring its continued relevance despite the vagaries of settler colonialism.

By decorating the cover of Owen's edition of *History* with porcupine quills, Boyd recalls these traditions and argues for their importance to the history written by her brother. In his book, Blackbird insists that his narrative provides a corrective to the inaccuracies of those authored by "white historians." He explains his work as a new approach to the written history of his tribe, one that attains credibility through its appeals to "our knowledge of ourselves, past and present." And he prefaces his account by affirming with pride that the events in *History* are narrated "according to our understanding in our traditions" (1887, 5–7). These statements establish his account as an alternative to settler-colonial narrations of the Anishinaabe past, positioning *History* as a text that privileges the historical knowledge and traditions of the Anishinaabeg to assert their continuance despite what Blackbird would later call the "cruel deceit and force of arms" that "dispossessed us of our heritage" (1900, 18). The oral stories and modes of production inherent to porcupine quills and their embroidery reinforce these contentions and, more importantly, add to them the voice of an Odawa woman. Boyd's quillwork, as strongly as the words it covers, insists on an orientation to the past that foregrounds Anishinaabe culture and politics and thus argues for their relevance in the late nineteenth century and beyond.

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