

Our Souls are Already Cared For: Indigenous Reactions to Religious Colonialism in Seventeenth-Century New England, New France, and New Mexico

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Our Souls Are Already Cared For: Indigenous Reactions to Religious Colonialism in
Seventeenth-Century New England, New France, and New Mexico

A Thesis Presented
by
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ABSTRACT

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RELIGIOUS COLONIALISM IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY NEW ENGLAND,
NEW FRANCE, AND NEW MEXICO

MAY 2020

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This thesis takes a comparative approach in examining the reactions of residents of three seventeenth-century Christian missions: Natick in New England, Kahnawake in New France, and Ohkay Owingeh, New Mexico in New Spain, to religious colonialism. Particular attention is paid to their religious beliefs and participation in colonial warfare. This thesis argues that missions in New England, New France, and New Mexico were spaces of Indigenous culture and autonomy, not due to differing colonial practices of colonizing empires, but due to the actions, beliefs and worldviews of Indigenous residents of missions. Indigenous peoples, no matter which European powers they interacted with, reacted to Christian worldviews that permeated all aspects of European colonial cultures.

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INTRODUCTION

Among other works well pleasing to the Divine Majesty and cherished of our heart, this assuredly ranks highest, that in our times especially the Catholic faith and the Christian religion be exalted and everywhere increased and spread, that the health of souls be cared for and the barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself. -Papal Bull Inter Caetera, Pope Alexander VI, May 4, 1493¹

All Colonialism is Religious

On May 4, 1493 the Catholic pope, Alexander VI signed the papal bull *Inter Caetera*. Known colloquially today as one of the key documents in the “Doctrine of Discovery,” the Papal Bull highlights the common Christian mentalities and practices that defined colonialism in North America in the following centuries. The Bull’s immediate purpose was to grant all land west of an imaginary line in Brazil to Spain, and to the east of that line to Portugal. Throughout its text, the Bull emphasizes the “divine right” of Christian princes to claim title to foreign lands and convert and colonize all of the peoples living in those lands, while arguing that Catholic global dominance is what the Christian god desired. In the eyes of Catholic leaders, all of the good things that came to the Christian princes were a result of God’s will. This Christian world view rested on the belief that Christian doctrine was the only correct belief system, and everything else was not only wrong, but an instant path to damnation. Those who converted would receive eternal life, those who refused were not only destined for hell, but fair game for Europeans colonizers to enslave or kill. This was considered “just warfare.” As emphasized in the Papal Bull this manner of thinking manifested itself not only in the

¹ “Primary Resource: *Inter Caetera* by Pope Alexander VI (May 4, 1493),” Encyclopedia Virginia,(Library of Virginia, March 20, 2013), https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Inter_caetera_by_Pope_Alexander_VI_May_4_1493.

colonization of the Americas, but also in earlier campaigns against non-Christian peoples, including the Crusades.

All Christian governments throughout the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries adhered to a similar world view, even after the Protestant reformation. In *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1700*,² Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra successfully argues this point by comparing Spanish and English colonizing practices through their belief in demonology. Anything, or anybody, that did not agree with their interpretations of Christianity was a result of the devil and needed to be eradicated. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries especially, both colonizing powers viewed the Americas to be Satan's playground, and interpreted Indigenous religions to be a result of Satan's trickery. Cañizares-Esguerra argues that England and Spain had a shared cultural and religious history which led them to have similar religious worldviews, even though they often cast each other as demonic. This analysis should be expanded to the French, as a similar religious worldview also defined their colonizing practices in North America.

In colonizing the Americas, Christian empires hoped to collect as many souls as possible. Christians believed that converting all inhabitants of the planet would herald the Millennial Kingdom in which the world would enter into a thousand years of peace which would result in the second coming of Jesus Christ. As analyzed by John L. Phelan in *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World*,³ this belief has been engrained in Christianity since the days of Constantine and inspired the actions of notorious

² Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1700*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

³ John L. Phelan, *The Millennial Kingdom of the Franciscans in the New World*, (Princeton University Press, 1994).

“explorers” and colonizers including Christopher Columbus, and Hernando Cortes.

Europeans saw the conversion of all non-Christians as a key to a fundamental promise of Christianity; the end of the world and the ultimate judgment of the living and dead.

Europeans mined for gold and silver, and collected timber and other materials and natural resources, for the benefit of their economies. They used a Christian framework to justify these actions. Two thousand years of Christian history demonstrates that European political and religious leaders had no qualms about brutally punishing people who did not follow their beliefs correctly, whether through warfare or institutions, such as the Inquisition. This created a sense of intense control. The religious organizations that enforced evangelization in North America included the New England Company, the Society of Jesus, and the Franciscans. All of them used elements of control towards members of their organizations as well as their converts. The New England Company acted as a body politique. They mandated that the Act establishing the Company was read throughout all of the parishes in England and Wales. They wanted to ensure that all parishioners knew they had the option to donate to their mission.⁴ The constitution of the Society of Jesus, or the Jesuits, forced priests in that Order to abandon all aspects of their material lives, including friends and family, to devote themselves entirely to the Society, which included missionary work.⁵ The Franciscans charged themselves with enforcing the Inquisition both in Spain and in their American colonies. Spain’s colonization of the

⁴ “July 1649: An Act for the promoting and propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in New England.,” in *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. C H Firth and R S Rait , London: His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1911.
Society for Propagation of the Gospel in New England., G. Parker Winship, *The New England company of 1649 and John Eliot*, 26.

⁵ *The Constitution of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms: A Complete English Translation of the Official Latin Texts*, (The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996).

Americas was not only defined by *Inter Caetera*, but also by another Papal Bull called *Santa Cruzada*. This was an extension of the medieval crusades into the Americas that guaranteed monetary rewards to those who fought heathens and heretics.⁶

Fear accompanied control in Christian beliefs and doctrines. Scholar of Christian mentalities, Jean Delumeau, argues that Christianity is a religion based on fear due to its emphasis on sin. This created a fearful European culture that reinforced the control wielded by religious authorities.⁷ Believers in Christianity needed to follow church doctrine, or they would spend eternity in hell. This returns us to the idea of evangelizing, colonizing, and defeating the devil, wherever he happened to be in the world.

It is essential for scholars to at least acknowledge the religious aspects of colonialism if they wish to understand the societies of European colonizers and their interactions with Indigenous peoples. Some scholars have completely neglected the religious aspects of colonialism. For instance, *Colonial Intimacies: Indian Marriage in Early New England* by Anne Marie Plane, analyzes how colonialism changed marriage for Indigenous peoples. Plane focuses on Indigenous marriages that found themselves the subject of English court cases. She views English marriage solely as a legal practice, and neglects to connect the legal to the religious. In other words, Christian empires determined their laws and cultural norms in accordance with biblical teachings and church doctrines. Indigenous peoples also interpreted marriage through their own

⁶ Charles Wilson Hackett, "Introduction" in *Historical Documents relating to New Mexico, Neuva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1773*, ed. Charles Wilson Hackett, Vol. III, (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 5-16.

⁷ Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of Western Guilt Culture 13th-18th Centuries* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 3.

religious lenses. Legal, cultural, and military aspects of colonialism should not be separated from religion.

Indigenous Reactions to Religious Colonialism

The discussion of European world views serves only as a preface to give context to the events, and conditions, discussed in this thesis. This is not a thesis about European mentalities, but the Indigenous reactions to European mentalities. Throughout the seventeenth century, English, French and Spanish colonizers introduced Indigenous peoples throughout North America to Christianity through their actions and missionary projects. All three of these colonizing powers interpreted Indigenous peoples and their beliefs through the lens that Christianity was right and everything else was wrong.

Indigenous peoples, on the other hand, interpreted these European powers through their own religious lenses. They also reacted to the fear, brutal control, Christian doctrines and beliefs that the European missionaries and settlers brought with them to North America in a variety of ways.

This thesis takes a comparative approach and analyzes three North American Christian missions: Natick, Massachusetts in New England, Kahnawake, Quebec in New France, and Ohkay Owingeh, New Mexico in New Spain. These three communities were under the jurisdiction of three different colonial powers, three groups of Christian missionaries (Calvinist, Jesuit, and Franciscan), and all maintained a strong sense of Indigeneity. They all participated in three violent conflicts at the end of the seventeenth century that placed religious ideals, both Indigenous and Christian, at the forefront. These three missions are deeply interesting, yet, widely misunderstood places. These were Indigenous communities at the front lines of European colonization whose residents

experienced, interpreted, and often adopted, Christian beliefs with an Indigenous worldview.

Scholars Michael P. Winship, Daniel Richter, and Joseph Suina (Cochiti Pueblo), all imply that conversion to Christianity signaled an automatic break with Indigenous traditions and beliefs. Winship argues that Indigenous peoples had to “remain Native American” before missionaries became active in New England.⁸ Daniel Richter argues, that upon converting to Catholicism, all Iroquois converts abandoned all kinship ties and Iroquoian traditions.⁹ Suina states, that all Pueblos converted to Catholicism for “show” and to protect their traditional beliefs, implying that conversion was a betrayal of their identity and traditions.¹⁰ Others, such as Jean O’Brien (White Earth Ojibwe), Allan Greer, Evan Haefeli, Kevin Sweeney (just to name a few), argue that missions were distinctively Indigenous. They analyze the political and cultural autonomy of mission communities. This thesis aims to continue those conversations and highlight the indigeneity of these mission communities. I also hope to dispel another misconception held by many scholars, including Jean O’Brien and Alan Greer, that converts in missions in specific colonial regions remained more Indigenous than converts in other colonial regions. For instance, Jean O’Brien argues that only Puritan “praying towns” in New England allowed for Indigenous autonomy, but missions elsewhere, such as New France, led to total subjugation of Indigenous cultures and powers. Allan Greer argues the exact

⁸ Michael P. Winship, *Hot Protestants: A History of Puritanism in England and America* (Yale University Press, 2019), 195.

⁹ Daniel Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonialism*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 131.

¹⁰ Joseph H. Suina, “Underestimation of Pueblo Power,” in *Po’pay: Leader of the First American Revolution*, (Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishing, 2005), 77.

opposite.¹¹ This thesis argues that missions in New England, New France, and New Mexico were spaces of Indigenous culture and autonomy, not due to differing colonial practices of colonizing empires, but due to the actions, beliefs, and worldviews of Indigenous residents of missions. Indigenous peoples, no matter which European powers they interacted with, reacted to Christian worldviews that permeated all aspects of European colonial cultures.

Due to similarity in circumstances, certain patterns occurred in all three mission communities. Indigenous peoples converted and/or moved to missions primarily in times of crises including epidemics, droughts, famines, and war. Military and political alliances, and a guarantee of certain rights and protections also served as major motivators to convert. Indigenous lifestyles and politics, architecture, subsistence patterns, languages, gender roles, kinship, and religious ceremonies remained extremely important in missions as well. Residents of these three communities also engaged in different forms of syncretic Christianity in which Indigenous peoples interpreted Christianity through lenses determined by their traditional religious beliefs, languages, and cultures. The different cultures of the Indigenous residents led to some of the major differences between the missions.

Indigenous peoples have distinctive worldviews highly influenced by their religious beliefs. While kingdoms throughout Europe in the seventeenth century shared very similar worldviews because of Christianity, Indigenous nations varied widely in religious beliefs and worldviews which explains some of the different reactions to religious evangelization. In “‘We Are Well As We Are’: An Indian Critique of

¹¹ Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 104.

Seventeenth-Century Christian Missions,”¹² James P. Ronda, through a comparative study of missions in New England and New France, demonstrates that the beliefs of Eastern Woodland peoples permitted them to believe in the deities from differing religious traditions. Thus, many converts adopted Christian beliefs into their pre-existing cosmologies. Puebloan traditions often differed.

Missions can, and must, be viewed as the sites of meeting between different religious worldviews. Too often, scholars continue to view Indigenous religious worldviews as less important and less valid than European Christian worldviews. In *Native North American Spirituality: Sacred Myths, Dreams, Visions, Speeches, Healing Formulas, Rituals and Ceremonials*,¹³ Elisabeth Tooker compiles a collection of anthropological translations of Eastern Woodland religious stories dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These translations often place a Christian spin on Indigenous spiritualities. Tooker’s commentary is also extremely objectifying towards Indigenous peoples and their beliefs, and often casts Indigenous peoples as an extinct and exotic species. In a more recent volume, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846*,¹⁴ Ramón Gutiérrez fetishizes and sexualizes all aspects of religious beliefs held by Indigenous peoples in New Mexico. In relying solely on Spanish sources and his own misconceptions, Gutiérrez argues that all aspects of Pueblo rituals were sexual, exotic, and strange. It is extremely

¹² James P. Ronda, “‘We Are Well As We Are’: An Indian Critique of Seventeenth-Century Christian Missions,” in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Jan., 1977) pp. 66-82.

¹³ Elisabeth Tooker, *Native North American Spirituality: Sacred Myths, Dreams, Visions, Speeches, Healing Formulas, Rituals and Ceremonials*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1979).

¹⁴ Ramón A. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

important to separate Indigenous beliefs from the exoticizing and racist noble savage trope that paints Indigenous peoples as mystical, magical nature worshippers. It is essential to understand that Indigenous spiritualities are just as world defining and important to its believers as Christianity is to Christians and Christian kingdoms.

Colonial Warfare

New England, New France, and New Mexico all experienced intense colonial warfare in the last decades of the seventeenth century. Just as all colonialism was religious, so too, was all colonial warfare. These wars involved Indigenous rivalries with other Indigenous nations and European powers, and rivalries between European powers. Religion dictated the planning and actions of the forces involved in the wars. A major argument of this thesis is that residents of missions, or these uniquely Indigenous spaces, played distinct roles in these inherently religious wars. Residents of Natick in King Philip's War, and of Kahnawake in the wars of the 1680s and 1690s, served as scouts for European forces, as well as peacemakers and intermediaries between warring parties. The Pueblo Revolt differed from the other wars in that it was an outright rebellion against colonialism. Ohkay Owingeh served as an important place of leadership during the revolt. In all three conflicts Indigenous-style warfare, knowledge, and kinship were very important.

Warfare can often leave behind large deposits of primary and secondary sources. During the wars of the late seventeenth century, English, French and Spanish colonial and religious authorities produced legal documents, narratives, and diaries detailing the conflicts' events. Indigenous peoples in New England also produced legal documents that demonstrated their experiences during King Philip's War. Documents by European

colonizers also clue readers into the roles of Indigenous peoples during the wars, and how Europeans interpreted those roles. In the centuries since the seventeenth century, historians have hypothesized and debated the events, goals, and causes of colonial wars. Warfare can also drive societies to their extremes and can make, break, or completely change one's religious beliefs. It also exposes and exacerbates the existing problems in society while creating new ones. As Lisa Brooks (Abenaki) argues, a key aspect to remember when analyzing war is that the priority for affected individuals is survival. In the case of the religious wars involving Natick, Kahnawake, and Ohkay Owingeh, Indigenous peoples turned to both Indigenous religions and Christianity as a means for survival, either as a tool of spiritual comfort, or as proof of loyalty and innocence to European authorities. Religion acted as an important way for Indigenous peoples to navigate complex warfare and a rapidly changing, and often brutal, colonial world.

Our Souls Are Already Cared For

The thesis breaks down into three chapters: the first focusing on Natick, the second on Kahnawake, and the third on Ohkay Owingeh. The order was chosen due to the general chronology of their respective conflicts. King Philip's War began in 1675, while the wars that implicated Kahnawake, and the Pueblo Revolt occurred over the course of the 1680s and 1690s. Each chapter includes a section detailing the establishment of the community and analyzing how the culture, politics, and functioning of the community were distinctly Indigenous. A second section analyzes the spirituality of the community, and their distinctive form of syncretic Christianity. The third section analyzes the community's role in colonial warfare. A conclusion follows the three

chapters that includes my final thoughts and highlights why the study of missions and religious colonialism is still important for our contemporary twenty-first century world.

The Calvinists, Jesuits, and Franciscans established missions throughout the Americas and the world. This type of analysis could be applied to any and all of those missionary communities. I chose to explore these three specific communities because they are somewhat well known outside circles of historians and the people who still reside in these communities. Although Massachusetts school children are never taught to define “praying town,” they are taught that Natick was the first praying town. Natick set the framework for the establishment of praying towns throughout Massachusetts and the subsequent treatment of Indigenous peoples in New England. Kahnawake was the home of the first Native American Catholic saint, Kateri Tekakwitha. Ohkay Owingeh was home to a famous Indigenous protector, the leader of the “first American Revolution,” Po’pay. There are many primary and secondary sources that provide excellent insight into these communities during the seventeenth century.

This thesis relies most heavily on the writings of European clergy and legal documents. In the following chapters I will discuss how religious orders differed when it came to the education of Christian converts which reflects itself in the authorship of the documents. In analyzing Natick, I focused on the writings of the famous Puritan missionary John Eliot, and the military leader Daniel Gookin. The writings of John Eliot contain the confessions of Indigenous converts that Eliot annotated and edited. However, these confessions contain the words of the converts, and demonstrate their understanding of Christianity, and the place of Christianity in English society, in addition to their confessed religious beliefs. I also rely heavily on Massachusetts General Records,

specifically the petitions written by residents of Natick. These documents, despite showcasing the terrible conditions that many converts faced during King Philip's War, also demonstrate the willingness of converts to employ religious rhetoric to navigate the English legal system.

For Kahnawake, I rely primarily on Reuben Gold Thwaites's French transcriptions of the *Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*. Multiple Jesuits spent time at Kahnawake and wrote about the culture and converts in the mission. There is a special emphasis on the piety of the converts, but these writings often reveal elements of Iroquoian spirituality practiced in missions, as well as the actions of the community during the wars. Although the exact words of the converts are not always recorded, the actions of the converts, and the Jesuit's descriptions and reactions to these actions, are profoundly revealing.

For Ohkay Owingeh I rely on two collections of documents, both edited by William Charles Hackett: *Historical Documents relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1733*, and *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín's Attempted Reconquest 1680-1682*. These volumes include writings by Spanish political leaders and Franciscan friars. These collections also include court cases involving Pueblo converts, as well as the testimonies of Pueblo prisoners during the revolt. To further explore the words of these prisoners, I used Barbara De Marco's annotated publication of the original Spanish texts. Another valuable source in exploring the history of Ohkay Owingeh, and especially the community's role in the aftermath of the Pueblo Revolt, is the journals of New Mexican governor Diego de Vargas. John L. Kessell and Rick Hendricks translated and compiled the journals into five volumes. Like

the *Jesuit Relations*, the Spanish documents are clearly biased towards the European perspective and worldview, but they do reveal the actions of the Indigenous converts. Through these European sources we can better understand how Indigenous peoples used religion to navigate these colonial regimes. Additionally, while colonizers fought to stamp out Indigenous religious practices, their writings cannot hide their lack of success.

In returning to the quote from *Inter Caetera* that opens this introduction, European religious leaders aimed to send as many souls as possible to heaven and political leaders often aided in this process. Pope Alexander VI urged Christian princes to conquer and convert the world so “that the health of souls [would] be cared for.” In their world views they saw evangelization as an altruistic necessity in the creation of what they believed would be a perfect world. They acted arrogantly, assuming that they had not only the right, but the divine right, to perform such actions. They also refused to acknowledge that Indigenous peoples already had ways to care for their own souls. Residents of missions continued to care for their own souls as well as their own physical wellbeing throughout the seventeenth century.

CHAPTER 1 NEW ENGLAND: NATICK, MASSACHUSETTS

Lord, how long wilt thou looke on? Rescue my soule from their destructions, my darling from the Lyons
-(Psalms 35:17, KJV 1611)

Jehovah tohuttooche kummoneauóog? Kenáhamash nukketeahogkou wutch oowoskhuaonganuóut
pasukoooo nuñaumon wutch qunnónoout.
-(Psalms 35:17, Mamusse Wunneetupanatamwe Up-Biblum God, 1663) ¹

In December of 1675, Symon Beckam preached Psalm 35 while he and other Wamesit Indians fled from Chelmsford, Massachusetts after having been falsely accused of participating in the battle in the said town. In *An Historical Account of the Doing and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England in the Years 1675, 1676, 1677*,² Daniel Gookin used this incident to demonstrate the genuine faith and understanding of Christianity held by the Indigenous converts. Beckam's choice to preach Psalm 35 in particular also demonstrated the complex feelings of being caught in between the English and other Indigenous peoples that many converts, including residents of Natick, felt during King Philip's War. He saw both the English, to whom he and his community were allied, and other Indigenous peoples, many of whom were his cultural and biological kin, as enemies. In this crisis, he and his community turned to two things: themselves and Christianity. The community fled and stuck together. They also turned to the Bible, which the missionaries introduced to them and taught them to interpret, as a source of comfort. Psalm 35 encapsulated the emotions that members of the community felt at the time and aided them to cry out to a higher power for help. Throughout the war, residents of Natick also utilized multiple avenues, resulting from the unique culture of the praying town, to aid themselves both physically and spiritually.

¹ *Holy Bible*, (King James Version, 1611), biblegateway.com.

² Daniel Gookin, *Historical Account of the doings and sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England, in the years 1675*, (Robert Boyle, 1677), 474.

Natick, the first “praying town” or Calvinist mission in Massachusetts Bay Colony, was established by Nipmuc and English political and religious leaders in 1651. Beginning immediately, residents of Natick fought to prove their Christianity to English authorities while maintaining kinship relations to their brethren outside of the mission. Natick also had important kinship relations with people from other praying towns, which became increasingly apparent over the course of King Philip’s War. Natick served as a place of refuge for its residents during times of difficulty including epidemics and war, not only physically, but also culturally and spiritually. Natick was an autonomous Indigenous space where residents could maintain their language, and other key elements of their culture and traditions.

As residents of this Calvinist mission, the people of Natick entered into a military and political alliance, or covenant, with the English. In this community, Indigenous converts had English protection to maintain a land base. Additionally, many Indigenous converts received an English education and learned how to read and write. While continuing to have elements of Nipmuc leadership in Natick, the town also participated in English-style government.

Over the course of King Philip’s War, the relationship between the people of Natick and the English changed drastically. Despite being allies, the English came to question the loyalty of all Indigenous Christians as the war progressed. The English captured, interned, imprisoned, and enslaved residents of Natick often without proof of any disloyalty. It is essential to note that while the English betrayed their Indigenous allies, and were incredibly cruel and unjust, their actions fell in line with the religious and political worldview that governed seventeenth-century New England. In the eyes of the

English, disloyalty made the converts the “enemy Indians” that they were fighting. The English authorities also saw disloyalty as turn away from Christianity. Throughout the war, the people of Natick defended themselves in a variety of ways often combining Indigenous style warfare and diplomacy with knowledgeable navigations of the English legal system.

Countless monographs have been written about King Philip’s War and the interactions between Indigenous peoples and the English in seventeenth-century New England. For this chapter, I concentrate on some of the more recent secondary scholarship by Lisa Brooks and Jean O’Brien. Both authors center Indigenous perspectives and actions, and create unique narratives of the events of the seventeenth century. The writing of Michael P. Winship provides some useful information about the relationship between residents of Natick and the English missionaries but does not emphasize the Indigeneity of the converts. The true strength in Winship’s work lies in his analysis of the complex Calvinist belief system.

The petitions written by residents of Natick during King Philip’s War, and the writings of John Eliot and Daniel Gookin, reveal the confessed religious beliefs of Natick converts. More importantly, these sources demonstrate the ability and willingness of the residents of Natick to navigate the English legal system and protect themselves and their kin in the lead up and duration of King Philip’s War.

Waban, John Eliot, and the Creation of Natick

The New England Company, or the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England, acted as the main political and economic body that funded the Calvinist missionary projects in New England. If the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in

New England had a favorite child, it was John Eliot. Many of the meetings recorded in the Record Book of the Company explained raises in Eliot's salary, and donated funds for the printing of the Bible in Wôpanâak, for which Eliot was solely credited.³ However, James Printer, and other Indigenous students and workers at the Harvard Indian College, ensured the successful completion of the task. Overall, the records frequently sing Eliot's praises. But Eliot's work was not a product of the Company, rather the Company was founded to ensure that Eliot could have the monetary means to continue his work. Additionally, the desires of Indigenous converts had a huge impact on Eliot and the ultimate decision to create the first "praying town" of Natick, which in turn led to the creation of the Company.

Waban was one of the first Indigenous converts to Christianity under John Eliot's tutelage. He was a Nipmuc man who became a political and religious leader in Natick. The interactions between Eliot and Waban began in the village of Nonantum, and specifically in Waban's wigwam on October 28, 1646.⁴ Here, John Eliot and Thomas Shepard preached to Waban and his brethren, which resulted in a small group of converts. Although the records published by Eliot and the New England Company made it appear as though they all converted solely for the love of Christ and the Calvinist faith, the subtext implies that this was not always the case.

In *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture, 13th-18th Centuries*,⁵ Jean Delumeau argues that Catholicism developed into a fear-based religion. Calvinism,

³ Society for Propagation of the Gospel in New England., G. Parker Winship, *The New England company of 1649 and John Eliot*, 111.

⁴ Michael P. Winship, *Hot Protestants: A History of Puritanism in England and America* (Yale University Press, 2019), 194.

⁵ Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture, 13th-18th Centuries* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1990)

as practiced in Massachusetts Bay Colony, emphasized predestination and eternal punishment and damnation for sin,⁶ and could also be considered fear based. This emphasis on sin and punishment could have certainly led many Indigenous people to convert. Michael P. Winship explains that Waban acquainted himself with English settlers by visiting their homes for food and simultaneously was exposed to Christianity and the Puritan lifestyle.⁷ Winship also says that Waban slowly began believing in Christianity, including the concepts of sinning, heaven and hell, and praying to God in the Christian manner. He began to fear that the English would kill him, and the other Nipmucs of Nonantum, if they did not pray and become Christian. He told others at Nonantum to start praying and ultimately this led to John Eliot preaching in the community.⁸

Waban's role in the Christianization of Nonantum and the foundation of Natick symbolizes many of the complexities in the Indigenous reactions to religious colonization in New England. Waban converted to Christianity willingly, for no missionary forced him to convert, nor was he born into a mission or a Christian community. He also spread Christian ideas to his community before any missionary. While Waban certainly had a high level of agency in his conversion, it is also important to note his level of fear when making his decision to become a Christian. Immediately, he feared that he, as well as his relatives, would be killed if he did not become Christian. This fear was not unique to Waban. In 1653, after the establishment of Natick as a "praying town," John Eliot, and Thomas Mayhew wrote *Tears of Repentance: Or a further Narrative of the Progress of*

⁶ Winship, *Hot Protestants: A History of Puritanism in England and America*.

⁷ Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 194.

⁸ Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 194.

the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New England,⁹ which was published by the Corporation for the Propagation of the Gospel. This volume was addressed to Oliver Cromwell, the English public, and Puritan clergy, in part to convince readers that the residents of Natick had genuinely converted on a spiritual level and deserved to have their own church. Eliot and Mayhew also wanted to prove that their missionary projects were successful ventures that needed to continue. The book contains the public confessions of multiple Indigenous converts, and hints that many of them had converted and remained Christian largely out of fear.

Waban's confession is included in Eliot and Mayhew's collection. He states that he began to believe in Christianity after an epidemic and feared dying without praying to God first.¹⁰ The rhetoric that Waban employed implied that he doubted his self-worth. He concludes his confession by stating: "I confess that I can do nothing, but deserve damnation, only Christ can help me and do for me. I have nothing to say for my self that is good."¹¹ John Wilson, a Puritan minister from Boston and a reverend Elder who witnessed the confessions of Waban and other converts, deemed this confession to be genuine. Wilson, and later Eliot in his writing, noted that Waban actually cried throughout his confession. Perhaps his strong emotions and self-doubt arose after an earlier encounter with John Eliot in Nonantum before the foundation of Natick. At one point, Waban claimed to hate praying. When John Eliot found out, he told Waban that God knew all of his thoughts and his sins and that he was praying with an "entirely evil

⁹ John Eliot, Thomas Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance: Or a further Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New England*, (London: The Corporation for the Propagating of the Gospel and Peter Cole, 1653).

¹⁰ John Eliot, Thomas Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance: Or a further Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New England*, 7.

¹¹ Eliot, Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 8.

heart.”¹² For Waban, a man who appeared to fear death and the Puritan god, this prospect of being seen as “evil” in the eyes of God for his thoughts, feelings, and doubts would certainly be terrifying and could have had long lasting effects on his psyche and self-esteem. It could have also influenced him to further delve into Christianity to eliminate the possibility of being sent to hell.

In many ways, the public confessions of other early Natick residences resembled Waban’s in sentiment. Other confessors, such as Totherswamp, emphasized the influence that others had on his decision to start praying, particularly in his first confession in front of the Elders. He stated that initially he did not pray because his family and friends did not pray.¹³ An epidemic also influenced Totherswamp’s early interest in Christianity. Totherswamp said in his confession, “that [my loved ones] did almost all die, few of them left; and then my heart feared, and I thought that I will pray unto God, and yet I was ashamed to pray.” Although he said that he no longer felt ashamed to pray after the missionaries arrived, he became more fearful, and confessed that he did not truly start to think about God until after learning about sin. He became even more frightened after learning that God knew all of his sins. Like Waban, Totherswamp’s sense of self-worth could be further analyzed as he confessed that he was “like the Devil,” as all of his thoughts were evil, and that he “deserve[d] death and damnation”¹⁴ This fear of dying and of going to hell is the main reason why Totherswamp said he accepted Christ and rejected sin. He goes on to say that he loved God “Because he giveth me all outward

¹² Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 195.

¹³ Eliot, Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 4.

¹⁴ Eliot, Mayhew *Tears of Repentance*, 4-5.

blessings...especially that he giveth us a Minister to teach us, and giveth us Government.”¹⁵ He also implied his admiration and loyalty to English leadership.

Many of the other confessions follow the same formula as Totherswamp’s confession. The confessor mentioned that initially they did not pray to God or believe in sin usually due to the influence of others around them. They did not want to be mocked for praying to the Christian god; or, they had no interest because nobody around them had any interest. Then, typically with the help of a missionary, they came to see themselves as worthless beings that were destined for hell as everything that did, said, thought, or felt was sinful. Out of fear of death and sin, the confessor began to pray in a Christian manner hoping to be forgiven for all of their sins. Although some confessions were judged as genuine by the Elders in 1653, the “praying town” of Natick did not get their own Church until 1660.¹⁶

Some English contemporaries had doubts about the genuineness of the confessions, and the Elders judged many of the confessions of 1653 as “falling short of Christianity,”¹⁷ and perhaps for good reason. Many converts, such as John Speen, confessed in front of the Elders twice. His first confession, judged by Eliot as “being too short in some main points,”¹⁸ did not have the same emphasis on fear, sin, and punishment that is found in his second confession. His first confession emphasized his new found love of English-style agricultural labor and his loss of interest in hunting.¹⁹ In his second confession, he states that his brother, a ruler, was taken away by God because

¹⁵ Eliot, Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 5.

¹⁶ Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 197, 199.

¹⁷ Winship, 198.

¹⁸ Eliot, Mayhew, *Tears of Repentance*, 29.

¹⁹ Eliot, Mayhew, 28.

of his sins, and that is why he began to pray and became a Christian.²⁰ Eliot notes that some confessors had preparatory confessions that were sometimes, but not always, read by the Elders. All of these confessions were prepared in advance and contained elements of rehearsal and revision. The formulaic nature of the confessions implies that the Elders were listening for specific elements and details. These confessions also fall heavily in line with those of English settlers in New England who needed to prove that a spiritual transformation had taken place in order to become full members of their towns and parishes.

While these confessions may have suspicious elements, they should not be cast out entirely. It is impossible to know the true religious feelings or beliefs of an individual, of any background, living in any time period, unless you are that individual. Individuals may have converted for a variety of reasons including curiosity and genuine interest. Others may have lost faith in their traditional beliefs while, as argued by James P. Ronda, many individuals may have seen Christianity as an addition to those traditional beliefs. As the residents of the praying towns maintained distinctive kinship relationships, family also influenced conversions to Christianity. However, the notion that Waban, Totherswamp, and others converted out of fear due to epidemics and the other demographic, social, and political changes that resulted from English colonization in North America, is highly likely. Jean O'Brien hypothesizes in *Dispossession by Degrees: Indian Land and Identity in Natick, Massachusetts*, that epidemics were a major catalyst for conversion.²¹ As Indigenous peoples were dying in waves from unknown illnesses,

²⁰ Eliot, Mayhew, 29-30.

²¹ Jean O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees: Indian Land and Identity in Natick, Massachusetts* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 28, 54-60, 63.

survivors often saw their entire communities disappear before their eyes. It is not entirely unfounded to imagine that many people turned to the English, who were not dying from disease and gaining territorial and political power, and their god, who could potentially save them and give them eternal life. It is also easy to imagine how people who were in the midst of what seemed to be the apocalypse would believe the English when they argued that they had arrived due to a divine calling and the will of their god. Waban himself, after losing faith in traditional healers, came to call Christ a “physician of souls.”²²

At the same time, it is vital to remember that while Eliot was a trained Puritan minister, this brand of Calvinism that was preached to, and adopted by, the people of Natick differed from the Calvinism practiced by the English of New England. Missionaries, English speakers in majority Massachusett-speaking communities, needed to translate Christian doctrine, beliefs, and texts across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Spiritual concepts that are so culturally engrained cannot simply be applied to other cultures that already have their own deeply engrained spiritualities. Missionaries, despite only having limited understanding of Indigenous spiritualities, often put a Christian spin on Indigenous spiritualities.²³ Natick converts also applied Christian concepts to their traditional beliefs. Cotton Mather argued that this version of Christianity was not valid, and all Indigenous converts needed learned how to read English and the Scriptures.²⁴ In *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip’s War*, Lisa Brooks (Abenaki) describes

²² Lisa Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip’s War*, (Yale University Press, 2018), 77.

²³ Lisa Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Philip’s War*, 85.

²⁴ Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, P. George Winship, xlviii.

this combination of Christian and Indigenous beliefs as “syncretic Christianity”²⁵ Many Nipmuc converts, including the ones whose confessions were recorded in 1653, had markedly different worldviews from the Elders to whom they confessed. To John Speen, his original confession detailing his switch from hunting, something linked closely to men’s duties in Indigenous communities, to agricultural labor, women’s work in Indigenous communities, may have been enough to demonstrate his conversion. To the English Elders who heard this confession and viewed labor as an integral, essential, and everyday part of an Englishman’s life, it would not.

Even if the confessions were not genuine, the Natick converts demonstrated that they understood key aspects of English society. They understood that fearfulness, especially of sin, was a vital part of devout Christianity. The residents of Natick also had many good reasons to convert and thus ally themselves with the English. As the English encroached further and further onto Indigenous lands, the establishment of Natick allowed the Nipmuc and Massachuett residents to possess land protected for them under English law. The English government in New England justified their taking of Indian land, by arguing the land was not “improved” upon, which demonstrated that Indigenous inhabitants were not civilized human beings.²⁶ It made sense that the converts at Nonantum began to adopt English religious, legal, and cultural practices,²⁷ as it forced the English to see them as human beings. Later, these converts urged Eliot to help them establish Natick and have English legal title.²⁸ In the process of helping to establish

²⁵ Lisa Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*, 84-85.

²⁶ Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin*, 61.

²⁷ Winship, 196.

²⁸ Winship, 196.

Natick, John Speen prayed that no further land would be taken away.²⁹ An alliance between the English and Natick also resulted in a covenant that ensured military aid and protection for both parties, until King Philip's War, when the English questioned the loyalty of the Natick Indians, both in terms of their piety, and their upholding of the military covenant.

Natick as an Indigenous Town

Today, many scholars find it difficult to comprehend that Indigenous peoples could still be Indigenous after converting to Christianity or moving to missions. Michael P. Winship includes a bizarre passage in *Hot Protestants* that tries to describe the speed of conversion of Indigenous peoples in New England that reads, "Since the Jews remained stubbornly Jewish, the Native Americans must remain, for the time being, Native American, and there was no point in putting the energy into trying to convert them."³⁰ Winship emphasizes the common religious mentality of seventeenth-century European leaders and Christian missionaries, and views the conversion of all non-Christians as something inevitable, and necessary. He also erroneously states that the English did not see a reason to make any effort to convert Indigenous peoples when the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was formed in 1649, less than three years after Eliot first preached at Nonantum.³¹ Most jarringly, he implies that an Indigenous convert to Christianity is no longer Indigenous.

²⁹ Brooks, 173.

³⁰ Winship, 195.

³¹ The New England Company was founded by an act passed by English Parliament on July 27, 1649.

"July 1649: An Act for the promoting and propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in New England." in *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, ed. C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1911), 197-200, Accessed March 27, 2020, www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp197-200.

The strongest counter to this argument, at least in the case of the residents of Natick, is made by Jean O'Brien in *Dispossession by Degrees: Indian Land and Identity in Natick, Massachusetts*. Above anything else, O'Brien demonstrates that Natick was an Indigenous space throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although the legal system and government of Natick superficially appeared to be entirely English, O'Brien argues that the "government of Natick incorporated elements from three kinds of polities: English, Indian, and scriptural."³² Perhaps she could have condensed this argument to describe English politics as inherently scriptural, but she explains that individuals who held traditional leadership roles before the establishment of Natick continued to hold positions of power in Natick. Individuals who made confessions in 1653 also held leadership roles in Natick, some which were unique to the community. Cutshamekin was the "chiefe sachem" in the Neponset River valley and remained the chief in Natick. He was also one of Eliot's earliest converts. Waban also became a political and spiritual leader to many of the earliest converts.³³ Other early converts, such as John Speen, became teachers in Natick. In addition to individual leaders, the town elected a board of selectman. The town also acted as a cultural and linguistic haven. However, the domineering gaze of the English was never far away. The General Court of Massachusetts ordered on May 26th, 1658 that "major Atherton doe take care that all such Indians doe live accordinge to our lawes as far as they are capable." This order also appointed Indian commissioners to act as a County Court for Natick, and other praying

³² Jean O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees: Indian Land and Identity*, 48.

³³ O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 49.

towns, and “execute all comands and warrants as Marshals and Constibles”³⁴ English people also lived in the town to keep an eye on the converts.

Education remained highly influential to many residents of Natick involved in King Philip’s War, which will be explained in much more detail in the following section. Almost immediately, after the foundation of the community, residents of Natick began sending their children to nearby English towns to be further educated in Calvinism, English culture, language, and the Bible. Most famously, Waban sent his son, Thomas Waban, to be educated in nearby Dedham.³⁵ Kinship relations that Natick Indians had with other Indigenous communities, particularly other praying towns, were also important during the war. Many of the most prominent Christian participants in King Philip’s War had ties to Natick.

Natick during King Philip’s War

King Philip’s, Metacom’s, or the Great Indian War was, by far, the most defining military conflict to sweep New England in the seventeenth century. Although many lives were lost on all sides, the war particularly devastated the Indigenous peoples of New England, Christian and non-Christian alike. The first casualty of the war is widely regarded to be the Massachusetts man, John Sassamon. Considered a traitor and a spy by some, this interpreter and educator, attended Harvard, was a protégé of John Eliot, and Metacom’s scribe. Sassamon spent a good portion of his life living and working in Natick.³⁶ His death, often seen as the pivotal moment that started the war, and all of his

³⁴ MASS RECS 4 PT 1:334.

³⁵ Daniel Mandel, *Northeastern Indian Lives, 1632-1816*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 171.

³⁶ Brooks, 63-64 .

complexities, demonstrate the difficulties that many converts from Natick faced during the conflict.

John Sassamon, wherever his loyalties lay, acted as a go-between for the English government and Wampanoag leadership. Other converts from Natick may not have had the same position and influence initially, but they also often found themselves caught between the English and other Indigenous peoples. Accused of being a spy for the English by many Wampanoag for approving questionable land sales, and accused of being too loyal to the Wampanoag by the English for teaching Metacom and others to read,³⁷ Sassamon was ultimately killed for either of the said controversies. Daniel Gookin, however, argued that Sassamon's murder was a result of his Christian faith.³⁸ During the war, many residents found themselves mocked and killed by their Nipmuc and Massachusetts kin for their loyalty to the English, and their Calvinist beliefs. Residents of Natick found themselves falsely imprisoned, enslaved, deported, executed, and kidnapped by the English under accusations of fighting with "the enemy," and breaking their military covenant. Natick prisoners were sometimes released from captivity temporarily to act as scouts and spies for the English. The English saw these accused individuals as turning against them as well as their god. As a defense, many Natick residents turned to the English legal system, petitioned the Massachusetts General Court, and reminded them not only of their loyalty to the English but also to the Christian faith.

Daniel Gookin noted, that from the outset of the war, many English soldiers viewed their Indigenous Christian allies with suspicion due to their bias against all

³⁷ Brooks, 64.

³⁸ Daniel Gookin, *An Historical Account of the doings and sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England, in the years 1675, 1676, 1677*, (Wikisource), 440 .

Indigenous peoples. However, he mentioned that the English government did not discriminate against “all Indians,” including their Indigenous allies, until the summer of 1675.³⁹ Lisa Brooks says that this switch came after the battle of Quaboag. Nipmuc soldiers had a mock church service which included the singing of Christian hymns in the meetinghouse after attacking the town.⁴⁰ Many settlers were not aware that these Nipmucs were not Christian Indians, and became suspicious of residents of praying towns, arguing that Indigenous converts had a distinctly primitive nature that would eventually cause them to revert back to their “savage” ways.⁴¹ Immediately after this incident, the English began capturing residents of praying towns, accusing them of acting with “the enemy” during the raids on Quaboag and Lancaster, even though many of those captured fought with the English.⁴² The especially cruel Captain Samuel Moseley (known for feeding captives to his dogs!!) was the man chosen to capture and imprison the suspected Indigenous converts.⁴³ On August 30, 1675, Moseley captured a large group of suspected participants in the raid on Lancaster that included James Printer, a convert from Hassanamesit with kin connections to Natick, who assisted Eliot in the translation and printing of the Wôpanâak bible, and acted as a scout for the English during much of the war.⁴⁴

The discrimination did not end on battlefield. Daniel Gookin mentions that after the attacks on Quaboag, Hadley, and Springfield, “all the Indians [were] reckoned to be

³⁹ Daniel Gookin, *An Historical Account of the doings and sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England, in the years 1675, 1676, 1677*, (London, 1677), 5-7.

⁴⁰ Brooks, 188.

⁴¹ Brooks, 190-191.

⁴² Brooks, 193.

⁴³ Brooks, 194-195.

⁴⁴ Brooks, 194.

false and perfidious,” and Secretary Edward Rawson ordered all Indigenous peoples to be confined to the centers of the five praying towns in Mass Bay Colony.⁴⁵ They could only leave the center of town if accompanied by an English chaperone. Alone, these residents of praying towns could be mistaken for “enemy Indians,” and killed. Gookin explained that if they were killed, it was their own fault, and “their blood...will be on their own heads.” The English government would acquit any Englishman who killed an Indigenous person under these circumstances.⁴⁶ Adhering to this law, according to the English, would be proof of the converts’ loyalty to the English. Gookin explained that this policy was extremely detrimental to the functioning of, and the people in, the praying towns.⁴⁷ Suddenly, Indigenous peoples could not partake in any sort of day labor, tend to their cattle or swine, or gather corn. This rule essentially gave the English free reign to capture, and kill residents of praying towns, even those who had no involvement in the war and were simply going about their daily lives.⁴⁸ As the English began to inflict more violent and unjust control over allied Christian Indians, more and more of them began to fight for Metacom.

This law also symbolized a major theme in the evolution of Metacom’s War: the elimination of Indigenous freedom and the possession of Indigenous bodies and land. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, common Christian mentalities justified the killing and enslavement of non-Christian Indigenous peoples. In the eyes of the English,

⁴⁵ Daniel Gookin, *An Historical Account of the doings and sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England, in the years 1675, 1676, 1677*, 450-451.

⁴⁶ Gookin, *An Historical Account of the doings and sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England*, 450.

⁴⁷ Gookin, *An Historical Account of the doings and sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England*, 451.

⁴⁸ Gookin, *An Historical Account*, 451.

non-Christian Indigenous peoples were not human beings, but “heathens” and “barbarians.” Hearing the Gospel, and learning it in either Wôpanâak or English, confessing belief in Calvinism, and possibly being baptized in the faith, only to reject it later, would be an utmost affront to New English cultural and moral sensibilities. For the English vying for Indigenous land, labor, and possessions, this reasoning would have been the perfect excuse to take what they wanted.

Natick residents felt the brunt of English desire on October 26, 1675, when they were accused of burning down an abandoned house in Dedham, Massachusetts. This resulted in their deportation to Deer Island in the middle of Boston Harbor. The official decree by the Massachusetts General Court, dated November 30th, 1675, stated that they were sending the people of Natick to Deer Island for their own security, as well as the security of the “country.”⁴⁹ Gookin hypothesized that most likely someone set this fire purposely, “to procure the removal of all of those Indians from Natick.”⁵⁰ Although this fire accusation may have been a shock to many residents of Natick, they had been well aware that deportation was a possibility. Days before this incident, on October 18th, John Watson, a convert from Natick, presented the General Court with a petition reaffirming the community’s loyalties to the English. He asked for more English people to come live in Natick to observe that the converts were loyal, well-behaved, and should not be removed from their homes.⁵¹ Ultimately, this petition was not successful. As they prepared to be shipped off to Deer Island, John Eliot came to comfort these newly

⁴⁹ MASS RECS 30: 185c.

⁵⁰ Gookin, 472

⁵¹ Gookin, 470-471.

imprisoned deportees, and reminded them to remain faithful, as this horrible “tribulation” would help them “enter into the kingdom of heaven.”⁵²

The deportation of the Natick Indians to Deer Island defined their experience for the duration of the war. The English saw the deportees on Deer Island as a supply of labor. On September 26th, 1675, before the people of Natick even arrived on Deer Island, the General Court emphasized the importance of labor for the converts on Deer Island as means for them to earn provisions.⁵³ On December 16th 1675, the General Court ordered for Mr. Bradford and Mr. Tying and Captain Henchman to help draw up labor and manufacturing contracts for the Indigenous peoples on Deer Island. They reasoned that this would lead to the “improvement” of the Indigenous prisoners themselves, and of the “publicke.”⁵⁴ The English reinforced their ideas of, and need for, labor and work at the expense of Indigenous freedom.

Natick prisoners on Deer Island fought for the English to protect their families imprisoned on the island. Natick men temporarily left Deer Island, and acted as scouts and spies, before being forced back onto the island. Many of these scouts were the sons of some the founders of Natick who made confessions in 1653. These scouts included Andrew Pittinee, James Speen, and John Magus. Other famous scouts who had connections to Natick were James Quannapokkit and Job Kattenanit. These times of extreme hardship revealed the extent to which residents of Natick went to protect themselves and their families. Lisa Brooks explains that Quannapokkit and Kattenanit agreed to work with the English army for the protection and benefit of their families still

⁵² Gookin, 474.

⁵³ MASS RECS 30: 185b.

⁵⁴ MASS RECS 30: 187.

on the island, even though they faced violence. They were specifically chosen to leave Deer Island in February 1676 and take part in the expedition to Metacom's hide out in Menemesit.⁵⁵ These scouts were very important and extremely versatile. They understood the English language, culture, and religion, they were trained in Indigenous-style warfare, and knew how to navigate the landscape of eastern and central Massachusetts in a way that the English could not. Although these scouts faced discrimination from English authorities for being Indigenous, they needed to rely on specific elements of their Indigeneity to ensure their safety in battle. However, Metacom and other Indigenous leaders, such as Weetamoo, deeply distrusted Christianity and English-allied residents of praying towns because of their distinct knowledge.⁵⁶

Other converts, who had avoided imprisonment on Deer Island, feared ultimately ending up there. Tom Wettasacomponom, also known as Captain Tom, a convert from Natick, and former soldier for the English at the outbreak of the war, was in Hassanamesit with his son Nehemiah, and Nehemiah's wife and children when he was carried away by the "enemy Indians." In his deposition, relayed to the General Court by James Quannapokkit and Job Kattenanit sometime in 1675, he said that in choosing to remain with the English or go with the enemy, he chose to go with the enemy because he "was also afraid to go to deere Island." After Tom escaped, he returned to Natick, but the English imprisoned him, falsely accused him of fighting with "the enemy," and sentenced him to death. Throughout his deposition, he continually attempted to reaffirm his loyalty to the English. He stated that during his captivity with "those wicked Indians," he "greatly desired to be among the praying indians and english again." He emphasized his

⁵⁵ Brooks, 288.

⁵⁶ Brooks, 267, 278.

son's loyalty to the English as well by saying that Nehemiah "never had or would fight against the English." He also said that he returned specifically to Natick because he wanted to be with his kin and the English again. He saw the praying town as a place of refuge even during a tumultuous war. Finally, he concluded by saying that he did not want to fight the enemy or the English, and that he wanted diplomatic exchange to end the war.⁵⁷ John Eliot, James Quannapokkit, Job Kattenanit, and other Indian scouts, petitioned on behalf of Captian Tom and his family, as well as eighty other accused soldiers, for their release from English captivity.⁵⁸ English soldiers, Abraham Gale and John Partridge, claimed to the General Court in 1676 that they saw, and heard, Captain Tom with the enemy during the raid on Sudbury.⁵⁹ Ultimately, the depositions of the Englishmen won out, and Captain Tom was hanged in Boston on June 22, 1676.⁶⁰ John Eliot claimed that Tom died "with his arms raised in prayer."⁶¹

Captain Tom's wish for political negotiation, as well as the petitions of the Indigenous scouts, demonstrated the willingness and ability of many people of Natick to navigate the English legal system for their benefit during the war. Lisa Brooks states that the first people to engage in peace talks were residents of praying towns. Converts from all praying towns, or their created "distinct regional community," and who fought on either side of the conflict, came together and communicated with English and Indigenous leadership and relayed messages, often in writing, to and from various groups. For

⁵⁷ MASS REC 30: 172.

⁵⁸ Brooks, 311.

⁵⁹ MASS REC 30: 205, 205A.

⁶⁰ The Society for Colonial Wars in the State of Connecticut, "1675-King Philip's War" <https://www.colonialwarsct.org/1675.htm>.

⁶¹ Brooks, 312.

example, Peter Ephraim of Natick participated in the delegation that met with Weetamoo in Wachusett in the spring of 1676.⁶²

Other residents of praying towns continued to petition the General Court for the freedom of imprisoned relatives, who the English had either enslaved or deported to Deer Island. Adults often wrote these petitions on the behalf of children, some as young as five years old. Whether due to the genuine beliefs of the petitioner, or simply as proof of loyalty to the English, the rhetoric of these petitions was often highly religious. In 1676 converts from Punkapoag and Natick petitioned the General Court on behalf of a young slave named Peter. The petitioners, who included, William Ahaton, James Rumneymarsh, Thomas Rumneymarsh, Mister Daniel Waban, and Captain John Hunter, were all kin to Peter. They claim that he “submitted himselfe to the Inglish the last agust in plimouth [?] and was from thence sould in to this colony,” and was enslaved by John Kingsley. The “Honored Counsel” ordered Peter, as well as others, to come before them, and Peter was ultimately put in jail. They reminded the court that Peter had served his master, John Kingsley of Milton, loyally before his arrest. They asked for Peter to be released from prison, either to continue serving John Kinsley, or to be returned to the petitioners. Throughout the petition they employed Christian themes. Most notably, they begin their petition by crediting God for ordering the “warre and trobles,” and claimed that it pleased Him to do to so, as it was part of his “providence.”⁶³ This belief that the Christian god desired this war as a way to punish all Christians in New England for their sins is commonly found in the writings of John Eliot and Daniel Gookin, as well as others, and

⁶² Brooks, 297.

⁶³ MASS RECS 30: 229.

was not unique to these petitioners. They concluded the petition by promising that they are “earnestly praying for your Honors prosperity.”

Job Kattenanit, the notable scout who lived in Natick for some time, and worked as a preacher in Magunkog,⁶⁴ also petitioned the General Court. However, he sought the freedom of his daughter from “the enemy” Indians. Later, the English doubly imprisoned this 12-year-old girl, similar to young Peter. Instead of being thrown in jail, the young girl was forced onto Deer Island after being claimed as property by Johnathan Fairbanks, an English soldier. On February 14, 1675/6, Job petitioned the General Court to retrieve his three children who had been taken captive by “the enemy” from Hassanamesit. He asked for the accompaniment of an English man or two, or James Speen, “to go forth to see to meet & bring in my poor children & some few Godly [?] among them.”

Throughout the petition, Job reminded the General Court of his, and his children’s, loyalty to the Christian god, and the English.⁶⁵ Captain Gibbs was later sent, along with nine other soldiers, to retrieve Job’s children who had already been reunited with their uncle, Joseph, and were travelling between Hassanamesit and Quaboag, and following Job.⁶⁶ Outside of Quaboag, Captain Gibbs met up with Joseph, the children, and the others travelling with them. Instead of ensuring the safety of the children, Gibbs and his company robbed Joseph’s party. Gibbs promised Job’s twelve-year-old daughter, as property, to Johnathan Fairbanks, who then took the girl to Quaboag with him.⁶⁷

Eventually, the English deported the twelve-year-old and Job’s other children to Deer Island. This did not sit well with Fairbanks who petitioned the General Court for her

⁶⁴ Gookin, 480.

⁶⁵ MASS RECS 30: 190a.

⁶⁶ Brooks, 289.

⁶⁷ Brooks, 289.

release, asking for the child to be returned to him. He claimed that Job himself tipped him off to the location of his children saying they were in a wigwam outside of Quaboag. Most notably, in extremely secular language, he reminds the Court of Gibbs' promise that the child belonged to him.⁶⁸

Although the majority of Natick residents used the English legal system in hopes of aiding their loved ones, this was not always the case. Peter Jethro of Natick, who worked as a scout for the English, may have arguably been blinded by his own need for personal safety. In the summer of 1676, Peter turned in his father Tantamous, or "Old Jethro," as well as about 40 others, to the English authorities for their loyalty to the "enemy Indians." This was part of an operation organized by the English that allowed Peter Jethro, and others, an opportunity to spy for the English in "Nipmuc, Penacook, and Wabanaki countries," and receive amnesty for their work.⁶⁹ All of the captives taken in this operation were either sold into slavery or, in the case of Tantamous, executed by the English. Although Peter acted in conjunction with the English, and followed their orders, English thinkers villainized Peter for his actions. Increase Mather used Peter to demonstrate that converts were also "savages" who had no trepidations about allowing their own fathers, as well as dozens of others, to be killed.⁷⁰ He received amnesty but ended his father's life. Harsh colonial mentalities ultimately ruined Peter's reputation even as he tried to work in his own best interest within this colonial society.

The residents of Natick found themselves in a terrible situation during the war, and unfortunately, not much changed for them afterwards. For those who survived the

⁶⁸ MASS RECS 30: 200.

⁶⁹ Lisa Brooks, "Peter Jethro and the Capture of Monoco," ourbelovedkin.com.

⁷⁰ Brooks, 335-336.

war, internment of Deer Island, and returned to Natick, they found their previous lives and community largely destroyed. The English continued to publicly execute Indigenous peoples in Boston who they suspected to have “rebelled” during the war for the following decades. In Natick specifically, the reduced population size and loss of property and assets led to an increase sale in land, as well as the voluntary indentured servitude of Natick youth in nearby towns.⁷¹ But as Jean O’Brien demonstrates, the end of King Philip’s War did not signal the end of the Indigeneity of Natick. Following the war some prominent families, such as the Speens and the Wabans, were able to maintain political power, and gain property ownership and wealth well into the eighteenth century.⁷² The people of Natick continued to petition the General Court, typically over land. Religion also remained a priority for the town. In 1683, the town appointed their second minister, Daniel Takawambait, an Indigenous man, to replace John Eliot. He served as minister for the rest of his life, until 1716.⁷³

Many of Eliot’s earliest converts were old by the end of the war. Daniel Gookin recorded many of their confessions in Wôpanâak, which John Eliot translated to English and published in a collection in 1685.⁷⁴ John Speen, who first confessed in 1653, worked as a teacher in Natick, traded land between Natick and Sherburn, and had a son, James, who worked as a scout for the English during the war.⁷⁵ Speen emphasized sin in his dying speech, more so than in his first short confession. Speen indicated that he still feared sin and the possibility of being sent to hell. He begged the Lord for forgiveness

⁷¹ Brooks, 316-317.

⁷² O’Brien, 131-143.

⁷³ O’Brien, 88.

⁷⁴ John Eliot, *The Dying speeches of several Indians* (Cambridge, MA: Samuel Green, 1685; Ann Arbor: Text Creation Partnership, 2011), 1.

⁷⁵ “Old Speen -1685,” Native Northeast Portal, nativenortheastportal.com.

and repeatedly said that he was a sinner, specifically mentioning his struggles with alcohol.⁷⁶ Gookin also recorded Waban's final confession. It appeared that Waban's earlier fear of death had disappeared. He stated: "I now rejoyce, though I be now a dying." Like Speen, Waban begged to be saved from hell, called himself a sinner, and pledged his soul to the Lord. The majority of his dying words were a reminder to his brethren to remain devout Christians, to pray, and to confess their sins often. Eliot also described Waban as a wonderful ruler and Christian.⁷⁷ Again, the question must always be asked regarding how deeply the residents of Natick held these beliefs as Eliot noted that the confessors rehearsed their dying speeches with Daniel Gookin.⁷⁸ Some speeches, such as the case of a younger man named Nehemiah,⁷⁹ who was fatally injured while hunting, occurred when Eliot was not present, and when the confessor was likely unable to speak.

Like the initial confessions, these dying speeches should not be discarded either. It is evident that the deterioration of the relationship between the residents of Natick and the English did not drive everybody away from the faith. Many still confessed that they saw Christianity as the key to eternal life. In fact, as in the case of Waban, one might argue that some grew and became more confident in their faith. Waban may have also implored his brethren to remain Christian to maintain a sense of loyalty to the English and protect themselves in the aftermath of the war. The people of Natick saw the town as a home even though they often had to fight to get back to it. Natick scouts and political leaders used the mix of Indigenous and English skills they maintained in Natick to

⁷⁶ John Eliot, *The Dying speeches of several Indians*, 11.

⁷⁷ John Eliot, *The dying speeches of several Indians*, 2-3.

⁷⁸ Eliot, *The dying speeches of several Indians*, 1.

⁷⁹ Eliot, *The dying speeches of several Indians*, 8.

navigate through a rapidly changing, and extremely violent world. Although the English imposed their culture and beliefs onto Indigenous peoples in physically, spiritually, and psychologically damaging ways, the people of Natick created a community that allowed them to defend their interests and safety, as well as create their own culture.

CHAPTER 2

NEW FRANCE: KAHNAWAKE, QUEBEC

In the midst of King Philip's War, the residents of Natick contended with threats other than the "enemy Indians" and the English. Like all of New England, Natick was not immune from attacks from the French and their Mohawk allies throughout the seventeenth century. One of the complexities of European colonization of North America was the ongoing competition for land, power, and resources between rival European empires. French Catholics and English Puritans arrived in the Americas with centuries of rivalry behind them. Many Indigenous nations in North America also had centuries of competition for land, power, and resources behind them. This meeting of rivalries certainly colored the interactions between the Iroquois and the French, as some Haudenosaunee nations saw the French as allies from whom they could benefit. Other Haudenosaunee nations viewed the English as better allies. These relationships manifested themselves during violent conflicts throughout the seventeenth century. As Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney explain, these conflicts consisted primarily of Iroquoian mourning wars that were exacerbated by French and English encroachment onto Indigenous land. As these wars were cyclical, they became more violent towards the end of the seventeenth century.¹ While the residents of Natick relied on their knowledge as Indigenous peoples to engage in European tactics throughout the last decades of the seventeenth century, residents of Kahnawake partook in Indigenous-style warfare that was often influenced by European powers and priorities.

¹ Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, *Captors and Captives: The 1704 French and Indian Raid on Deerfield*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 58.

Christianity, in this case Catholicism, unsurprisingly influenced of many inter-tribal and inter-colonial relationships. In the 1660s French Jesuits expanded their missionary project into Mohawk, and other Haudenosaunee, communities. After decades of conflict between the Haudenosaunee and the French-allied Hurons, the French and the Haudenosaunee made peace with one another This led Jesuits to slowly enter Haudenosaunee communities and start missions along the south shore of the Saint Lawrence River. One of the most famous missions was Kahnawake. Similar to Natick, both Indigenous peoples and European missionaries played integral roles in the creation, and maintenance, of this community. The Catholic, and specifically Jesuit beliefs that permeated the communities differed greatly from the Puritan essences of Natick in that European languages, education, and literacy did not receive the same emphasis. More importantly, the overwhelmingly Mohawk populace of Kahnawake created a markedly distinct culture from Nipmuc Natick.

During the wars of the 1680s and 1690s, the French needed to maintain peaceful relationships with their Indigenous allies for the benefit of their economy, and for protection from the English. As a result, the relationship between the French and residents of Kahnawake never devolved like the relationship between the English and residents of Natick. The relationship between the converts in Kahnawake and their non-Christian kin highly influenced their participation in the wars. Similar to the Praying Indians in Natick, the people of Kahnawake leveraged their unique status with the French, and their non-Christian Mohawk kin, to initiate peace talks at the end of the seventeenth century and beginning of the eighteenth century.

Other scholars, including the ones that I cite throughout the chapter: Jean-Francois Lozier, Allan Greer, Evan Haefeli, Kevin Sweeney, and Daniel Richter, make similar arguments. It is widely agreed that Kahnawake, as well as the other Saint Lawrence missions, remained largely autonomous throughout the seventeenth century. Scholars disagree, however, regarding the maintained level of Indigeneity within the community. I argue that the autonomy of Kahnawake resulted from the community's Indigeneity. Authors primarily regard the colonies of New England and New France as staunch enemies and do not draw connections between the reactions of Indigenous residents of missions to religious colonialism, and warfare in different colonial regions. Like many of these authors I draw heavily from the *Jesuit Relations*, which were written by Jesuit missionaries to publicize the work they were doing in the missions and maintain funding for their missionary projects. The *Relations* were originally published throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France, both for the Society of Jesus leadership and the French public. These writings, while heavily infiltrated by a Christian worldview, provide interesting insight into the functioning of the mission, and Kahnawake's involvement throughout the wars of the late seventeenth century. They also reveal some aspects of Mohawk spirituality, culture, and politics that persisted in Kahnawake during the late seventeenth century.

Kahnawake as an Indigenous Space

In *Flesh Reborn: The Saint Lawrence Valley Mission Settlements through the Seventeenth Century*, Jean-Francois Lozier explains that the mission communities along the Saint Lawrence “were not merely French missions, but indeed Indigenous

communities formed as a result of intersecting desires, needs, and priorities.”² This notion is apparent from the very outset of the missionary projects in the Saint Lawrence. Just as Natick had John Eliot and Waban, the Saint-Francois-Xavier mission at La Prairie or Kentake, which later broke into Kahnawake and Kanehsatake, had Tonsahoten, and his wife, Gandeacteua. A Huron man, Tonsahoten, known as “the father of the believers”³ lost his home during the Huron-Iroquois wars of the 1660s, and was adopted by the Oneidas. He was baptized by Father Leonard Garreau while still in Huronia. In 1656, he married Gandeacteua. In 1668, they became the first residents of Kentake after Gandeacteua’s conversion by Father Jacques Bruyas. They also recruited some of the first Oneidas to come to Kentake and create a Christian mission community.⁴

Lozier hypothesizes that the creation of these communities was a direct result of the conflict between the Haudenosaunee and the Hurons. He emphasizes that many of the first residents in the Saint Lawrence missions were “New Iroquois,” or Huron individuals adopted into Haudenosaunee communities.⁵ Similar to the government of New England, the government of New France gave converts and mission residents distinctive privileges. For instance, all converts became French citizens.⁶ Additionally, residents of the missions were paid to farm, which acted as a huge draw and influenced many to stay.⁷ Most importantly, the Jesuits did not engage in the process of “francisizing”⁸ and the mission

² Jean-François Lozier, *Flesh Reborn : The Saint Lawrence River Valley Mission Settlements through the Seventeenth Century*, (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2018), 6.

³ Lozier, *Flesh Reborn*, 187.

⁴ Henri Béchard, “TONSAHOTEN, François-Xavier,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed February 19, 2020, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/tonsahoten_1E.html.

⁵ Lozier, *Flesh Reborn*, 175, 182-183.

⁶ Lozier, *Flesh Reborn*, 166.

⁷ Lozier, 173.

⁸ Lozier, 181.

was a protected enclave of indigeneity. Unlike the Sulpicians, who also evangelized to Indigenous peoples in New France, and the Puritan English, the Jesuits did not emphasize European education, French culture, or even politics. The politics practiced in Natick might be considered structurally English with Indigenous influences. The politics practices in Kahnawake maintained elements of traditional Iroquoian politics with certain French and Catholic influences.

Kahnawake started as an overwhelmingly Oneida and Huron community. Over the course of its history, the community went through many changes in location, as well as identity. In the 1670s, as the Haudenosaunee, French, and Hurons began to settle into their peaceful relationship, the Jesuits further expanded their missions into Iroquoia. The influx in French presence led to various changes in Mohawk communities, which were met with a variety of opinions and reactions. One of the largest changes was the sale of, and access to, alcohol. The increased presence of French missionaries, and interaction with French *habitants* via trade, also led to epidemics.⁹ Many people rejected *jongleurs*, or traditional faith healers, and began to see Catholicism and French medicine as an answer during epidemics. Residents of Kahnawake had the reputation of being staunch opponents of the consumption of alcohol.

The increased French presence in Iroquoia tested Haudenosaunee loyalties to one another, which acted as a major cause of Mohawk migration to the Saint Lawrence River Valley.¹⁰ However, that is not to say that the Mohawks in missions completely abandoned their old homes, kin, or traditions, as some historians have argued, such as Daniel Richter in *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in*

⁹ Lozier, 177.

¹⁰ Lozier, 178.

the Era of European Colonization.¹¹ For large chunks of the year, converts lived outside of a Catholic setting. Residents of the missions would leave for months at a time to hunt or visit relatives. These kin relationships remained extremely important during the seventeenth-century wars. As more Mohawks migrated to Kentake, the culture became, and remained, Mohawk, even as the community moved locations and eventually settled in the mission St-Francois-Xavier-du-Sault-Saint-Louis/Kahnawake, by 1680.¹²

In its earliest years, the community largely retained a hybrid of Huron and Mohawk leadership, although people from ten to twelve Iroquoian speaking nations lived in Kahnawake.¹³ In 1671, they decided to establish what Claude Chauchetière described as a “traditional Iroquois government” in the mission, which consisted of elected leaders of Huron and Mohawk backgrounds who practiced Christianity. Converts elected two leaders: “one for government and war, the other to watch over the observance of Christianity,” who could lose their positions if they did not practice Catholicism well enough.¹⁴ Chauchetière’s writings, however, did not mention what role clan mothers played in the mission’s government, or which residents elected these leaders. He did mention that Mohawks and Hurons continued to have separate chiefs which often caused problems and led many Hurons to create a new mission elsewhere in 1673. Around the

¹¹ Daniel K. Richter, *The Longhouse Affair: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

¹² “Preface” in *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France 1610-1791*, (Hereafter JR) Reuben Gold Thwaites ed., Vol. LXI, (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers, 1899), 9.

1680 is the year that Louis XIV approved the Jesuit’s land grant. Jesuit sources indicate that the community was already in Saint-Francois-Xavier-du-Sault by 1677.

¹³ Lozier, 196.

¹⁴ Claude Chauchetière, “Narration Annuelle de la Mission du Sault depuis La fondation jusques a 1 an, 1686,” JR, Vol. LXIV, 161.

same time, Mohawks became the most numerous groups in the mission.¹⁵ Missionaries argued that many of the most fervent converts were political leaders both in Iroquoia and in the missions. Father Jacques Bruyas memorialized the Mohawk chief Pierre Assendasse in 1677. Assendasse converted to Catholicism later in life, and Bruyas described him as a perfect Christian who influenced many other Mohawks to convert.¹⁶ Although Assendasse spent most of his life in Iroquoia, Bruyas described him as “la pierre fondamentale de cette eglise,”¹⁷ who faced persecution for his faith. With his influence, as well as that of his family, which Bruyas insisted was one of the most important Mohawk families,¹⁸ many people converted to Catholicism and ultimately moved to Kahnawake. Although Chauchetière demonstrated that the government of Kahnawake was not in fact entirely “traditional,” Mohawk leaders often remained important and influential in both Kahnawake and Iroquoia.

Not all Mohawks moved to Kahnawake for religious purposes. Chauchetière, in his timeline of the mission’s history, mentioned that beginning in the earliest days of the mission, people on hunting trips would stop by the mission and end up staying.¹⁹ According to the Jesuits, simple curiosity was a major factor in many peoples’ emigrations to Kahnawake, and they eventually became believers in the Catholic faith.²⁰

¹⁵ Claude Chauchetière, “Narration Annuelle de la Mission du Sault depuis La fondation jusques a 1 an, 1686,” *JR*, 177, 179.

¹⁶ Pierre Cholenec, “Mission des Iroquois de Saint-François-Xavier pendant l’année 1677,” *JR*, Vol. LXI, 174-178.

¹⁷ Pierre Cholenec, “Mission des Iroquois de Saint-François-Xavier pendant l’année 1677,” *JR*, Vol. LXI, 178.

¹⁸ Pierre Cholenec, “Mission des Iroquois de Saint-François-Xavier pendant l’année 1677,” 174

¹⁹ Chauchetière, “Narration Annuelle de la Mission du Sault depuis La fondation jusques a 1 an, 1686,” *JR* Vol, LXIV, 173.

²⁰ Chauchetière, “Narration Annuelle de la Mission du Sault depuis La fondation jusques a 1 an, 1686,” *JR*, Vol, LXIV, 167.

More plausibly, many non-Catholics moved to Kahnawake following family and searching for stability and safety in a new community, both from French authorities, and possibly, their own brethren. The Jesuits frequently emphasized the persecution that the Mohawk converts in Kahnawake faced from their relatives in Iroquoia. Chauchetière claimed that many converts who were baptized outside of the mission arrived in secret and referred to them as “holy fugitives.”²¹ Allan Greer argues that this religious persecution that the converts experienced in Iroquoia may have been exaggerated by the Jesuits. In describing the story of the most famous Indigenous convert to Christianity, Kateri Tekakwitha, Greer emphasizes that the persecution converts experienced never resulted in violence, despite what the Jesuits implied. Oftentimes, the converts emigrated as families, and the political leaders of their communities urged converts to move to Kahnawake to lessen the issues regarding French and Jesuit presence in Iroquoia.²²

Syncretic Catholicism

Just as Waban first heard Calvinist preaching in his wigwam, Catholic masses in Kahnawake were sometimes said in longhouses. Similarly, the French Jesuits preached deeply culturally engrained religious beliefs to a community of individuals who already had their own deeply engrained beliefs. Converts applied Iroquoian spiritual traditions to Catholicism. Kahnawake was overwhelmingly Mohawk culturally, so Mohawk spirituality was the dominant lens that influenced the community’s interpretation of Catholicism. By 1679, residents of the mission no longer attended church with the French because the community had their own chapel. As Chauchetière explained, at this

²¹ Chauchetière, “Narration Annuelle de la Mission du Sault depuis La fondation jusques a l’an, 1686,” in *JR*, Vol, LXIV, 167.

²² Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 55, 58.

time, the Indigenous converts began to learn church music and, as will be discussed later, became more involved in the everyday functioning of the church.²³ Most importantly, “shamanic”²⁴ and other traditional rituals and ceremonies persisted in the mission and not all residents of the mission agreed to be baptized.

Father Pierre Cholenec argued that the residents of the mission in 1677 could be broken up into three categories: individuals preparing for baptism, individuals recently baptized, and the “plus anciens et ferventes chrétiens.”²⁵ Just as the Puritan missionaries published the successes of their missionary projects with the aid of the New England Company, the Jesuits in New France published theirs with the aid of the Society of Jesus in Paris, France. All three groups mentioned in Cholenec’s letter, as well the majority of the converts mentioned in Jesuit writings, were described as being exceptionally devout. The individuals preparing for baptism often came to the mission out of necessity, but quickly and easily came to believe in, and adhere to, Catholicism. Chauchetière claimed that these newcomers, who in Iroquoia were “mean Iroquois” that may have drank alcohol and rejected the presence of the French Jesuit and their social values, immediately became “good” in the mission.²⁶ After baptism, converts took it upon themselves to recruit their kin to come to the mission. Chauchetière described this as the converts returning to their home villages in an “open war against vice.”²⁷ They also

²³ Chauchetière, “Narration Annuelle de la Mission du Sault,” 207.

²⁴ Lozier, 201.

²⁵ P. Cholenec, “Mission des Iroquois de Saint-François-Xavier-du-Sault pendant l’année 1677,” *JR*, Vol. LXI, 50.

²⁶ P. Cholenec, “Mission des Iroquois de Saint-François-Xavier-du-Sault pendant l’année 1677,” *JR*, Vol. LXI, 52, 54.

²⁷ Chauchetière, “Narration Annuelle de la Mission du Sault,” 195.

evangelized to those they encountered on hunting trips or through trading.²⁸ However, it is important to remember that residents hunted, traded, and visited kin out of necessity. The third group was described simply as living “comme de parfait chrétiens,” who confessed their sins as soon as they committed them and did not wait for Saturdays or Holy Days.²⁹ Cholenec even argued that the people of Kahnawake were more devout than most French people.³⁰

Converts had a propensity to recognize and confess their sins. Although the Jesuits mentioned that some political leaders made public confessions of faith, it was not a requirement to become a resident of the mission or a baptized member of the Catholic church. The emphasis on sin and fear, however, was very similar between Calvinism and Catholicism. As previously mentioned, Cholenec praised the residents who confessed their sins frequently, and categorized them as perfect Christians. He even stated that it was beautiful to see them kneeling at the feet of the priests confessing their “slightest sin.”³¹ The first chapel collapsed after a bad storm in 1683, and Chauchetière claimed that many converts saw this as punishment for their sins, and the sins of those they tried to convert but who refused.³² Immediately, “the Great Agnié,” or “the Great Mohawk,” Joseph Toguiroui, a political leader in the community, offered his cabin as a temporary chapel so the community could continue worshipping.

²⁸ P. Cholenec, “Mission des Iroquois de Saint-François-Xavier-du-Sault pendant l’année 1677,” *JR*, Vol. LXI, 54.

²⁹ P. Cholenec, “Mission des Iroquois de Saint-François-Xavier-du-Sault pendant l’année 1677,” *JR*, 60.

³⁰ P. Cholenec, “Mission des Iroquois de Saint-François-Xavier-du-Sault pendant l’année 1677,” 64.

³¹ P. Cholenec, “Mission des Iroquois de Saint-François-Xavier-du-Sault pendant l’année 1677,” 60.

³² Chauchetière, “Narration Annuelle” 227,228.

A major issue that is ignored by most scholars is that Jesuit writers relied heavily on the private confessions of the converts to demonstrate their piety and their concern about sin. A good example, which I will discuss in the next paragraph, is Kateri Tekakwitha's confession about self-flagellation. Calvinism and Catholicism both viewed confessions as vital parts of their beliefs. Calvinism required followers to make public confessions to prove their faith. Catholicism expected believers to make weekly confessions to be absolved of their sins and prepare for mass and holy days. As opposed to Calvinist confessions that needed to be public, medieval Catholic doctrine guaranteed that confessions would be conducted in secret and that all confessed sins would be kept secret. As written in Canon 21 of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215: "He who dares to reveal a sin confided in him in the tribunal of penance, we decree that he be not only deposed from the sacerdotal office but also regulated to a monastery of strict observance to do penance for the remainder of his life."³³ Society of Jesus leadership, however, did not punish the missionaries for publishing private confessions. Evidently, both the Calvinists and Jesuits viewed confessions as sources to demonstrate the faith of their converts. However, in the case the Jesuits, they violated their own beliefs, and did not respect the privacy of the converts, and church leadership condoned such behavior.

In the eyes of the Jesuits, the converts' fear and obsession with sin and forgiveness did not end with private confessions. A small group of converts submitted themselves to bodily harm, most often through self-flagellation, in order to punish themselves for their sins. The majority of people who partook in such activities were women, but a small group of men participated as well. Some of them tried to emulate

³³ "The Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council Council, 1215," Medieval Sourcebook: Twelfth Ecumenical Council: Lateran IV 1215, sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/lataren4.asp.

nuns and form their own convent. Chauchetière recounted that this phenomenon started when one woman (who he did not name) stood naked out in the snow in 1676. The woman was pregnant, and nearly died.³⁴ Most famously, Kateri Tekakwitha partook in self-flagellation. She, as well as many others, tortured themselves in secret, and were actually told by Jesuit priests to stop this behavior. Kateri often went off with a friend and they would whip each other. After her friend became ill, Kateri confessed these actions, fearing that in effort to punish themselves for their sins they were actually sinning and her that friend's illness was punishment.³⁵ Additionally, a group of eight to ten women, including the wife of the *dogique* (an Indigenous teacher of Catholicism), whipped each other with willow shoots. Men asked the priests for permission to whip each other with willow shoots too, and Chauchetière mentioned they feared they would be outdone by the women. Ultimately, they were denied.³⁶ After Kateri's death, in 1680, the rate of self-flagellation increased as a way to honor to the young woman who many regarded as holy. Chauchetière argued that this imitation was too extreme and a result of a "demon." He specifically cited an instance in which a woman forced her daughter to swim in ice water for sins she had not yet committed. Others excessively beat themselves and overworked themselves while fasting. According to Chauchetière, the Holy Ghost eventually appeared to these people and showed them the error in their ways.³⁷

³⁴ Chauchetière, "Lettre Du P. Claude Chauchetiere touchant la mission des Iroquois du Sault St. Francois Xavier proche Montreal, 14^e Octobre, 1682," in *JR*, Vol LXII, 174.

³⁵ Chauchetière, "Lettre Du P. Claude Chauchetiere touchant la mission des Iroquois du Sault St. Francois Xavier proche Montreal, 14^e Octobre, 1682," *JR*, Vol LXII, 176.

³⁶ Chauchetière, "Lettre Du P. Claude Chauchetiere touchant la mission des Iroquois du Sault St. Francois Xavier proche Montreal, 14^e Octobre, 1682," *JR*, Vol LXII, 178,

³⁷ Chauchetière, "Narration Annuelle de La Mission du Sault depuis La fondation jusques a 1 an," 215, 217.

Allan Greer argues that these penitential habits practiced by the Iroquois of Kahnawake were a mix of Iroquoian and European traditions. He states that they would often expose themselves to freezing temperatures and ice water during ceremony, as a way to connect with the sacred. Intentionally burning oneself was a part of healing rituals, and war preparation. Greer hypothesizes that many converts continued this practice to prepare themselves for the possibility of burning in hell. Greer also mentions that the practice of perpetual virginity amongst young women, and the abstention from sex practiced by married couples, that the Jesuits praised as evidence of Catholic devotion, also carried over from Iroquois spiritual traditions.³⁸ Cholenec introduced whips, hair shirts, and iron girdles into the community.³⁹ The missionaries described these actions as purely penitential but Greer argues that many converts used these actions both as Catholic penance, and as a continuation of Iroquoian mysticism. Which may also explain why the Jesuits believed that these rituals sometimes went too far or did not understand the converts' actions. But converts understood confession and penance as incredibly important parts of their spirituality in both a Catholic and Iroquoian sense.

In 1693, the men of the community performed a public penance called, *hotoungannandi*. Community members gathered to feast, confessed their short comings or sins, vowed to break destructive habits and to become closer to God. Converts promised to give up drunkenness, gaming, vanity, and voluptuousness. Chauchetière stated that the ceremony of 1693 was in preparation for Christmas,⁴⁰ revealing that

³⁸ Greer, *Mohawk Saint*, 118- 121.

³⁹ Greer, *Mohawk Saint*, 123.

⁴⁰ Chauchetière, "Lettre Du P. Claude Chauchetière a son frère, Villemarie, 7 aout, 1694," *JR*, Vol. LXIV, 123, 125.

Mohawk ceremonies continued in missions often with a Catholic twist. Traditional funeral and hunting rituals also continued in the mission.

It must also be noted that the residents of Kahnawake had a distinct relationship with death. While the Puritan wanted their Indigenous converts to live as “visible saints,” the Jesuits strove to baptize as many people as possible. They often baptized people on their deathbeds, essentially to rack up the numbers of people they converted. According to their writings, the Jesuits baptized people by the hundreds and thousands. David P. Henige argues in *Numbers from Nowhere: The American Indian Contact Population*, that many numbers mentioned in Jesuit writings were mathematically impossible, and frankly illogical.⁴¹ That being said, the missionaries did expect residents of the mission, baptized or otherwise, to live up to Catholic ideals. The Jesuits insisted that the converts did not fear, but looked forward, to death. Father Claude Dablon gave an example of “an old blind baptized woman,” who frequently asked Father Jean de Lamberville when she would die and go to heaven. She described death as the “greatest pleasure” that awaited her. The Jesuits aimed to get as many souls as possible to heaven, so the woman’s wish to get her own soul was used as an example of her devotion to Catholicism.⁴²

However, just as we could further analyze the psyche of Waban, so too can we further analyze the psyche of the old woman, and the other converts in Kahnawake. Jesuits frequently mentioned the very high rate of suicide in Iroquoia. The Jesuits used these suicides to prove that non-Catholic Iroquois were sinners, so they never hypothesized about the reasons for such drastic actions. But many people searched for an

⁴¹ David P. Henige, *Numbers from Nowhere: The American Indian Contact Population*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998).

⁴² Claude Dablon, “Des Missions Iroquois, 1679,” *JR*, Vol. LXI, 184.

escape in the chaos that defined conditions in New France during the seventeenth century. Some individuals moved to missions for a sense of stability, but as chaos and warfare reached the missions as well, many converts may have continued to find an escape. Converts actually associated baptism with death for a long time.⁴³ In a Catholic setting, the Jesuits would have simply interpreted this desire for death as a desire to go to heaven.

Chauchetière's writings provide the most comprehensive description of the day-to-day functioning of the mission. Again, Chauchetière emphasized the piety of mission's residents. The mission had masses three times a day: the first at six-forty-five in the morning during the winter, and at five in morning during the summer. Many people arrived at the chapel to pray at four in the morning before this mass. Almost the entire village attended the second mass every day at five-thirty in the morning. The third mass was a children's mass. Chauchetière also mentioned that converts frequently participated in adoration of St. Sacrament.⁴⁴ Chauchetière noted that the enthusiasm of the converts manifested itself through music. Cholenec explained that there were separate male and female choirs. Dablon, in an earlier writing, mentioned a children's choir and complimented the piety of the seven and eight-year-olds in the community.⁴⁵ Chauchetière claimed that these choirs often stayed in the church from eight in the morning until sunset, chanting and singing psalms in the eight modes (scales) of Catholic

⁴³ Chauchetière, "Narration Annuelle," 205.

⁴⁴ Chauchetière, "Lettre Du P. Claude Chauchetière touchant la mission des Iroquois du Sault St. François Xavier proche Montréal, 14^e Octobre, 1682," in *JR*, Vol LXII, 168, 170.

⁴⁵ Claude Dablon, "Des Missions Iroquois, 1679," *JR*, Vol. LXI, 208, 210.

liturgical singing. Cholenec noted the convert's particular love for the music of Christmas and mentioned that the choirs often sang carols from Christmas until Easter.⁴⁶

Lozier argues that the Jesuit writers do not place enough emphasis on the role that Iroquois gender roles, and women in particular, played in the functioning of the mission. However, upon closer look at the *Jesuit Relations*, the day-to-day lives of women become slightly apparent. Chauchetière did mention that the older Iroquois women acted like missionaries and were some of the primary religious instructors in the community. He also credited the women for their hospitality and willingness to share food and farmland with newcomers to the mission.⁴⁷ Older women held a place of prestige in both an Iroquoian and Catholic sense. Women continued to educate the community and manage the communal farming in the mission as they had in Iroquoia. Notably, women acted as religious educators, which was not typical for French Catholic laywomen of the seventeenth century. Jesuit writers also imply that the women chose to be baptized more frequently than men.

Kahnawake during Seventeenth-Century Wars

Like the Praying Indians of Natick, the Iroquois of Kahnawake found themselves caught between their Indigenous kin and European colonizers during brutal violent conflicts. Unlike the Puritans, whose missionary and political goals largely intertwined, the political leaders of New France and the Jesuits often clashed, particularly over the assimilation of Indigenous Catholics, and the goals of the missions. Political leaders, including Louis XIV, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, and Louis de Baude de Frontenac, all argued

⁴⁶ P. Cholenec, "Mission des Iroquois de Saint-Francois-Xavier-du-Sault depuis l'annee, 1677," 210, 283.

⁴⁷ Chauchetière, "Lettre Du P. Claude Chauchetière touchant la mission des Iroquois du Sault St. François Xavier proche Montréal, 14^e Octobre, 1682," in *The Jesuit Relations*, 178, 180.

for the complete assimilation of Christian Iroquois into New France's culture and society, which the Jesuits did not support. The Jesuits also made an effort to separate Indigenous converts and French *habitants* because they feared that the French would encourage the new Catholics to consume alcohol and submit to other "vices." Conversely, the people of Kahnawake had reason to distrust the Jesuits, as they sometimes baptized people against their will, or sometimes without them knowing.⁴⁸ The New French government questioned the loyalties of the Iroquois converts, especially at various times when the people of Kahnawake faced the possibility of fighting their kin.⁴⁹ Residents of Kahnawake did not learn to read or write French so they did not navigate the war through writing and the French legal system. However, the actions of the Kahnawake residents, particularly their engagement with Iroquoian diplomacy, demonstrate their understanding of their unique place in a complex colonial world.

Chauchetière argued that the residents of Kahnawake feared that their kin felt negatively towards them solely because of their Catholic faith.⁵⁰ However, throughout the war, Mohawks in Kahnawake and Iroquoia worked to maintain peaceful relationships with each other. As Lozier mentions, the Mohawks did not advocate for the war as they were kin, and did not want to fight each other.⁵¹ Haefeli and Sweeney argue that the tradition of the mourning war made the "possibility of killing kinsmen...horrifying" to residents of Kahnawake.⁵² During the 1680s, the war was an inter-Iroquoian conflict that

⁴⁸ Claude Dablon, "Des Missions Iroquois, 1679," 230, 232-234.

⁴⁹ Lozier, 197.

⁵⁰ Chauchetière, "Narration Annuelle," 241.

⁵¹ Lozier, 197-198.

⁵² Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, *Captors and Captives*, 69.

was highly influenced by French, English and Dutch leadership. In 1690, the French officially declared war on the English.

Lozier argues that the residents of Kahnawake never truly supported the war, but they fought other Iroquois because upon moving to the mission they no longer considered themselves Haudenosaunee.⁵³ They saw themselves as French allies, and a large number of men from Kahnawake fought in the war with the French. However, actions of many residents of Kahnawake proved that they did not want to fight anybody, especially the Iroquois, as the wars progressed. In 1684, the people of Kahnawake received three options from Joseph-Antoine Le Febvre de La Barre, the governor of New France, to prove their loyalties and determine their participation in the war.⁵⁴ They could return to their old villages and thus ally themselves with the Iroquois, English, and Dutch; they could stay in the missions and not participate in the war; or they could join the French in war. The vast majority of the residents of Kahnawake joined the French.⁵⁵ These Kahnawake residents acted as intermediaries between the French and the Iroquois as ambassadors, or asked their kin for provisions. They also provided the French with strategical advice.⁵⁶ Many of the residents of Kahnawake held similar positions to the Praying Indians of Natick who worked as scouts for the English. Elements of traditional Mohawk culture, namely kinship structures and relationships, and Indigenous-style warfare, were tools that allowed them to succeed.

⁵³ Lozier, 195.

⁵⁴ Lozier, 198.

⁵⁵ Chauchetière, "Narration Annuelle," 239, 241.

⁵⁶ Chauchetière, "Narration Annuelle," 241.

Throughout the first years of the 1680s, large numbers of Catholic Iroquois fought against the English, and the Illinois, Miamis, and Kiskakons.⁵⁷ Jesuits relayed this information to high ranking political leaders in New France to prove the loyalty of the converts as they prepared for a potential war with the Iroquois. However, the Superior of the Missions, Father Thierry Beschefer, mentioned in a letter dated October, 21st 1683, that many of the most Christian Mohawks in the mission, who received a lot of pressure to participate in the war against the Illinois, refused to fight for “the honor of their religion.”⁵⁸ Out of all of the Jesuit missions, Kahnawake consistently had the largest showing of soldiers throughout the war, perhaps out of loyalty, but also due to the community’s large size. In August 1684, 101 warriors from Kahnawake fought with the French. In 1683, a third less of the men from Kahnawake agreed to fight with the French, but at Lozier explains, “Kahnawake’s contingent...was nevertheless the single largest besides that of the French, and alone represented almost a quarter of the total 410 Indigenous warriors present at Cataraqui on 18 August 1684.” Kahnawake helped the French defend their trading posts, such as Cataraqui, and protected French economic assets.⁵⁹ In regard to the attack on the Seneca in 1687, Lozier argues that many of the men of Kahnawake fought out of fear of imprisonment, and out of pressure from relatives who wanted to preserve the French alliance. There were also warriors fighting with

⁵⁷ Reverend Jesuit Fathers, “Assemblée tenue à Quebec dans la maison des RR. PP. Jes, 10 Octobre, 1682,” *JR*, Vol. LXII, 160.

⁵⁸ P. Thierry Beschefer, “Lettre du P. Thierry Beschefer, Superieur des missions de la Compagnie de Jesus, en Canada Ecrite au R.P. Provincial de la province de France, 21. Octobre, 1683,” *JR*. Vol. LXII, 238.

⁵⁹ Lozier, 208.

people from Kahnawake who did not reside in the community, but got caught up in the fighting because they happened to be visiting at the wrong time.⁶⁰

In February 1692, the Jesuits wrote a memorial for the people of Kahnawake who were involved in the war. They mention that “almost half” of the men of Kahnawake who fought with the French died fighting the English and other Iroquois. This letter, addressed to the Comte de Pontchartrain, is ultimately a request for a small cannon or two culverins for the community, and for Louis XIV to provide compensation for war widows and their children. The letter mentioned that the people of Kahnawake captured and killed enemies, fought both on land and water, scouted in the woods and warned of attacks. The Jesuits, of course, emphasized the faith of people of Kahnawake, and similar to the Praying Indians who petitioned the General Court of Massachusetts, used religious devotion to prove the community’s loyalty to the French. They argued that all of the people of Kahnawake who were captured by enemies during the war always returned to the mission to continue in their Catholic faith, and plot against the English.⁶¹ Although the authors wrote this letter as a means to convince the French government to donate arms and money to Kahnawake, it revealed that many individuals from Kahnawake sacrificed their freedom and their lives during these wars.

The most famous Kahnawake resident to die during the war was “the great Agnié,” (the Great Mohawk) Joseph Toguiroi. A devout Catholic, Toguiroi was also a highly respected political leader in the mission, and a fierce fighter beginning before the foundation of the mission. Additionally, he helped draw new residents to the mission.⁶²

⁶⁰ Lozier, 212-213.

⁶¹ “Memorial in Regard to the Christian Iroquois of the sault in Canada, February 1692,” *JR*, Vol. LXIV, 107-111.

⁶² Lozier, 178.

He fought loyally with the French, following the orders of Governor de Denonville in the attack against the Seneca in 1687⁶³ with about 100-120 other men from Kahnawake.⁶⁴ Although Toguiroi fought with the French in multiple major campaigns in the late 1680s, the “great Agnié” used his political position to quell and avoid conflict. Henri Bechard notes that Toguiroi successfully convinced 60 Mohawks stationed at Lake Champlain, and preparing to attack New France, to call off their plans, and “go back home quietly.”⁶⁵ Undoubtedly, Toguiroi’s familiarity with Mohawk culture and politics served him well in this endeavor. It also fell in line with the sentiments and actions of other residents of Kahnawake who wished to see a peaceful end to the inter-tribal and inter-colonial conflict. Unfortunately, the Great Mohawk did not meet a great ending. Instead of dying triumphantly in battle, he, along with a small group of people from Kahnawake, Kanehsatake, and some Frenchmen, were attacked by a group of Algonquins and Wabanakis coming back from the Hudson River in May 1690. Both the Algonquins and Wabanakis were allies with the mission Iroquois and the French and had mistaken this party for enemies and killed Toguiroi.⁶⁶

The residents of Kahnawake also had to contend with the possibility of being captured and enslaved during the war. Like the Praying Indians of Natick, they had to deal with the prospect of being enslaved by other Indigenous peoples and being held captive with the potential of being killed, adopted, or someday sent back to their home

⁶³ Henri Béchard, “TOGOUIROUI, Joseph, Great Mohawk,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed March 3, 2020, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/togouiroui_1E.html.

⁶⁴ Lozier, 209, 212.

⁶⁵ Henri Béchard, “TOGOUIROUI, Joseph, Great Mohawk,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 1, University of Toronto/Université Laval.

⁶⁶ Lozier, 220.

community. Similarly, there was also the possibility of being sold into European chattel slavery. Despite their loyalties occasionally being questioned, the people of Kahnawake did not experience the same betrayal from the French that the Natick Indians experienced from the English. However, similar to many Praying Indians interned on Deer Island, captives saw the mission as a place of refuge. The Jesuits claimed that when Kahnawake captives regained their freedom, they always returned to the mission. Soldiers on the front lines were at most risk of being taken captive, but after the “Great Agnié’s” death the war escalated, and the mission became an unwilling site of battle. Throughout the 1690s, the mission changed locations multiple times to avoid frequent raids and the risk of capture.

Even as the war escalated, Mohawk individuals, on all sides of the conflict, continued to desire peace. In 1690, a party of 40 Mohawks and Dutch soldiers attacked the mission and took ten to twelve residents captive. In a letter to Governor Frontenac, Reverend Father Jacques Bruyas mentioned that three Mohawk chiefs and 20 Dutchmen visited the mission after this raid, returned the captives, and warned the community that 800 Iroquois planned to invade New France, and “carry off... all the people between three Rivers and Montreal.”⁶⁷ In mentioning “all people” they meant the Indigenous residents of Jesuit missions, Jesuit missionaries, and French *habitants* as well. The chiefs also asked to be received by the Governor Frontenac.⁶⁸ Kahnawake accepted the warning

⁶⁷ Jacques Bruyas, “Letter written by Reverend Father Jacques Bruyas, of the society of Jesus, to Monsieur the Count de Frontenac, Governor and Lieutenant General for the King in Canada, At the Sault near Montreal, April 5, 1691,” *JR*, Vol. LXIV, 55

⁶⁸ Jacques Bruyas, “Letter written by Reverend Father Jacques Bruyas, of the society of Jesus, to Monsieur the Count de Frontenac, Governor and Lieutenant General for the King in Canada, At the Sault near Montreal, April 5, 1691,” *JR*, Vol. LXIV, 56.

of the three chiefs and gave them a series of collars for returning the captives and for the warning.⁶⁹

The giving of gifts and the returning of captives falls very much in line with Iroquoian diplomacy, but according to Jesuit writers, the gifts simultaneously reflected Kahnawake's loyalty to the French. One of the collars represented a promise that the governor of New France would "be greatly pleased to learn their resolution to live under his authority." Another extended an invitation for the visitors to meet with the governor of New France in Montreal that summer. Another reminded them that the residents of the other Catholic missions thought similarly to those in Kahnawake and wanted peace. The final present was a request, as noted by Father Bruyas, for them "to suspend all hostile acts, both against the French and the savages who are children of Onnontio." They also requested that the Mohawks talk to their Loup allies and tell them to suspend hostilities as well. They ended the gift-giving by "handing over" two Dutch prisoners, with a request for all French prisoners in "Orange" (New Netherland) to be returned. The visiting chiefs promised to discuss peace with other chiefs in Iroquoia. After this meeting, Mohawks began coming to the mission to surrender. Father Jacques Bruyas cited "disease, the heavy cost of clothing, and the loss of a number of braves" as the reasons behind the residents of Kahnawake's frustrations with the war. However, he failed to mention the important of kinship relations to residents of Kahnawake. But he noted that

⁶⁹ Jacques Bruyas, "Letter written by Reverend Father Jacques Bruyas, of the society of Jesus, to Monsieur the Count de Frontenac, Governor and Lieutenant General for the King in Canada, At the Sault near Montreal, April 5, 1691," *JR*, Vol. LXIV, 55-57.

many residents had no desire to participate in the war but were “compelled to do so,” and they wanted an end to the violence.⁷⁰

This promising negotiation in 1690 did not signal the end of the war. In fact, the war raged for another eleven years. In a letter to fellow priest, Father Jacques Jouheneau in Bordeaux, dated the 20th of September 1694, Claude Chauchetière emphasized that the mission still hoped for the negotiations of 1690 to be successful. He also mentioned that the English and Iroquois were actively trying to destroy missions in Illinois and Miami territory. Cayuga and Seneca representatives visited the mission, and then met with the French, and attempted to sue for peace. Chauchetière wrote “We refused their presents, and told them that our kettle was still hung; and that they had 30 days. After that, we shall have war on a larger scale than we have had with the savages, unless God, who preserves this country through an extraordinary providence, comes to our aid.”⁷¹ Residents of Kahnawake desired this divine intervention as an answer to their prayers. Many residents turned to Catholic prayer, in addition to Iroquoian diplomacy, as a method to put an end to the war.

Aside from prayer and the meeting of 1690, the residents of Kahnawake aimed for a peaceful ending to the war, or a total avoidance of conflict, beginning at the war’s outset. As noted in the writings of the missionaries and the contemporary historian Jean-Francois Lozier, the residents of Kahnawake did not participate in the war willingly and found pressure from French colonial officials who questioned their loyalty, family

⁷⁰ Bruyas, “Letter written by Reverend Father Jacques Bruyas, of the Society of Jesus, to Monsieur the Count de Frontenac, Governor and Lieutenant General for the King in Canada, At the Sault near Montreal, April 5, 1691,” 57-61.

⁷¹ Claude Chauchetière, “Letter by Claude Chauchetière, missionary in Canada, to Father Jacques Jouheneau, at Bourdeaux, Villemarie, 20th of September 1694,” *JR*, Vol. LXIV, 141, 143.

members who wanted to maintain the French-Mohawk alliance, and the Jesuits who wanted to convert as many people to Catholicism as possible. Although the soldiers of Kahnawake were “universally praised” for their loyalty to the French, they refused to follow Denonville’s orders to burn Seneca cornfields and scout for “outfields.” Many stopped fighting at various times to participate in seasonal hunts.⁷² Haefeli and Sweeney mention that residents of Kahnawake turned against the French and saved many Iroquois in 1693 during a French attack.⁷³ Lozier mentions that other individuals took it upon themselves to flee the mission and find safety wherever possible either in Iroquoia, or with the French or English. Some Mohawks switched religions over the course of the war. Between 1685 and 1688, the population of Kahnawake declined by 200 people. Some of them surely went to Tionnontoguen in Mohawk country. This town was allied to the English and notably Protestant. As the war raged, many Iroquois came to view the “Frenchman’s religion” as the downfall of Iroquoia, and turned to Protestantism because they still wanted to be Christian.⁷⁴ The people of Kahnawake also reached out to Governor Frontenac in the early 1690s through an orator and told him “that the imperial conflict between France and England was the persistent stumbling block to peace.”⁷⁵ With the threat of death in battle, possible enslavement or capture, in a war that nobody truly wanted, it is not surprising that Kahnawake came to be known as a center for mediation and negotiation and served as an important place during peace negotiations in 1701.

⁷² Lozier, 214-215.

⁷³ Haefeli and Sweeney, *Captors and Captives*, 71.

⁷⁴ Lozier, 214-216.

⁷⁵ Lozier, 271.

On the way to Montreal for peace talks, delegates from all five Haudenosaunee nations stopped by Kahnawake over the course of three days starting on July 21, 1701. The interactions between the different parties are not what one may expect from recently warring nations. Lozier cites Bacqueville de la Potherie, a chronicler of New France and witness to the event, who described the meeting as a joyous occasion that had “airs of a great family reunion.”⁷⁶ He noted that the community greeted their visitors with friendly cannon fire and Kahnawake residents reunited with relatives. The meetings of these nations resulted in a condolence ceremony, a traditional element in Iroquoian warfare that signaled the official end of warfare and the beginning of reconciliation. The day after members the Five Nations left Kahnawake, representatives from nations from around the Great Lakes arrived and performed a calumet ritual, a tradition from the Great Lakes region, that also signified the official end of warfare.⁷⁷ Although all the ambassadors journeyed on to Montreal to negotiate New France’s “Great Peace of 1701,” the war had already ended in Indigenous terms and under Kahnawake’s influence.

⁷⁶ Lozier, 286.

⁷⁷ Lozier, 286.

CHAPTER 3

NEW MEXICO: OHKAY OWINGEH

Ohkay Owingeh in New Mexico also found itself at the crossroads of colonial empires in the seventeenth century, as French authorities also hoped to expand their North American colony westward towards New Spain. In order to prevent French incursion on their declared territory, colonial authorities in New Spain aimed to have a strong New Mexican colony. The security of the colony remained a major concern for leaders in New Spain, especially during and after the Pueblo Revolt. For the Pueblos who participated in Pueblo Revolt, the relationship between Spanish and French colonizers was not a priority. The revolt was a reaction to the problems caused by Spanish colonization. Pueblos suffered from starvation due to the high taxes and tithes imposed by the Spanish vice regal authorities which exacerbated an unfortunate series of droughts and bad harvests. They also experienced harsh cruelty from Franciscan missionaries. In turn, the Pueblo Revolt was a rebellion not only against Spanish presence, but against their religion: Catholicism. The most famous leader of the revolt, Po'pay, a religious leader born in Ohkay Owingeh,¹ believed the series of unfortunate natural crises, and the mistreatment by the Spanish and Franciscans, to be a result of the prohibition of Kachina ceremonies, and the conversion of many Pueblos to Catholicism. To Po'pay, the negative events proved that the world was out of balance because the proper ceremonies and gods were neglected.

Unlike missions elsewhere, such as Natick and Kahnawake, Ohkay Owingeh was not a community established dually by Indigenous converts and European clergy; instead,

¹ Alfonso Ortiz, "Po'pay's Leadership: A Pueblo Perspective," in *Po'pay: Leader of the First American Revolution* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Clear Light Publishing, 2005), 86-87.

the Franciscan missionaries forced their missions into Pueblo communities that were already thousands of years old. The Franciscans even ordered Indigenous converts to construct Catholic Churches on top of kivas. However, some Pueblos did convert willingly to Catholicism, and had good reasons to ally themselves with the Spanish. As noted in the previous chapters, conversion and allegiance usually accompanied a need for protection against disease and military enemies, as well as individual spiritual desires. People in Catholic pueblos fought frequently with nearby Apaches and Navajos aided by Spanish soldiers. On September 26, 1638 Fray Juan de Prada wrote that *encomenderos* were obligated to protect Indigenous converts who paid tribute.²

The relationship between the Franciscans and the secular authorities of New Spain resembled the relationship between the government of New France and the Jesuits. The two groups often clashed over the treatment of Indigenous converts. They also debated the enforcement of the Inquisition and of the Papal Bull *Santa Cruzada*. At times the Spanish government legalized Kachina dances, much to the chagrin of the Franciscan friars. Most regimes in New Mexico outlawed Kachina ceremonies and confiscated and burned religious paraphernalia. Under those circumstances Pueblos continued to worship and continue their spiritual practices and traditions secretly. The Friars often asked the Spanish to lower the rate of tributes on behalf of the Indigenous converts as they paid tributes of cloth, maize, and corn flour during times of drought, famine, epidemics, and

² Charles William Hackett, "Introduction: Church-State Relations in New Mexico, 1609-1659," in *Historical Documents relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1773, Volume III*, collected by Adolph F.A. Bandelier and Fanny R. Bandelier, English Translations, edited with Introduction and Annotations by Charles Wilson Hackett Ph.D. (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1937), 12.

war. As historian Andrew L. Knaut mentions, Pueblos often lacked clothing and food.³ In his 1638 letter Fray Juan de Prada also asked for New Mexican government to reduce the rate of tributes, arguing that it was harmful, and nobody was benefitting from the tributes.

Pueblos received education from the Franciscans similar to how the residents of Natick received education from the Puritans. Some of the most prominent leaders of the Pueblo Revolt received Spanish education. Some leaders were mixed-raced and familiar with both Spanish and Pueblo cultures, but often identified more with their Pueblo ancestry and spirituality. Pueblos also navigated the Spanish legal system.

Ohkay Owingeh served a unique place in Spanish missionary history and the Pueblo Revolt. Juan de Oñate christened the community *San Juan de los Caballeros* or St. John of the Gentlemen in 1601. Residents of the pueblo continued to adhere to their own religious, political, and cultural practices while the Spanish operated the New Mexican capital virtually on top of them for ten years.⁴ Throughout the seventeenth century, the residents of Ohkay Owingeh balanced their traditions with the changes wrought by Spanish colonialism. This Tewa community had a reputation of leadership during the revolt, as it was home to Po'pay, and other prominent leaders in 1680. While eighteenth-century Spanish writings claimed that the residents were called “caballeros” because many of them assisted the Spanish in their reconquest of New Mexico in the

³ Andrew L. Knaut, *The Pueblo Revolt of 1680: Conquest and Resistance in Seventeenth-Century New Mexico*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 61

⁴ Herman Agoyo, “Ohkay Owingeh: New Mexico’s First Capital,” *White Water Shell Place: An Anthology of Native American Reflections on the 400th Anniversary of the Founding of Santa Fe, New Mexico with a Traditional Blessing* by N. Scott Momaday, (Santa Fe, NM: Sunstone Press, 2010), 58

1690s,⁵ accounts from the 1690s revealed that the majority of residents of Ohkay Owingeh continued to protect themselves from Spanish rule.

There are not many secondary sources about the Pueblo Revolt. I draw from well-known monographs and books throughout the chapter. These works provide broad overarching narratives of the events in New Mexico in the 1680s and 1690s. While they mention the influence of Po'pay, they do not go into detail about the distinctive role of Ohkay Owingeh. Historian John L. Kessell crafts a detailed narrative of the revolt while failing to connect the actions of the Spanish to the problems of seventeenth-century New Mexican society.⁶ Researcher David Roberts utilizes a variety of written and oral sources to provide some solid analysis but writes an uneven narrative that objectifies, and exoticizes both contemporary and historic Pueblos.⁷ Research on the Pueblo Revolt hit its peak in the 1990s and early 2000s and has since stagnated. I aim to reinvigorate conversations about the events in New Mexico in the late seventeenth century while examining the unique Indigeneity of Ohkay Owingeh.

I rely heavily on seventeenth-century Spanish sources. These writings are infused with Spanish interpretations of Catholicism and Pueblo religious traditions, but they also reveal the actions of Tewa-speaking people throughout the revolt, and the leadership role of Ohkay Owingeh. They also demonstrate the willingness and ability of Pueblos to navigate the Spanish legal system in the decades preceding the revolt. The Inquisition

⁵ Fray Miguel de Menchero, "Declaration of Fray Miguel de Menchero, Santa Barbara, May 10, 1744" in *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1773 Volume III*, collected by Adolph F.A. Bandelier and Fanny R. Bandelier, English Translations, edited with Introduction and Annotations by Charles Wilson Hackett, Ph.D., 402.

⁶ John L. Kesell, *Pueblos, Spaniards, and the Kingdom of New Mexico*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008).

⁷ David Roberts, *The Pueblo Revolt: The Secret Rebellion that Drove the Spaniards out of the Southwest*, (Simon and Schuster, 2004).

was one the most violent manifestations of Spanish religious mentalities both in Europe and New Spain. However, the voices, experiences, and desires of Pueblos can be found throughout Inquisition documents. Similarly, Pueblos appear in Spanish legal documents and journal entries. By reading against the grain, and comparing the details provided by in various Spanish documents, and the writings of contemporary authors, the experiences of seventeenth-century Pueblos become apparent.

Ohkay Owingeh as an Indigenous Community

As mentioned on page 68, the Spanish Franciscan friars established missions in Pueblo communities that were already thousands of years old. The Spanish labeled Ohkay Owingeh as a “pueblo” because the community’s adobe housing resembled that from other surrounding Indigenous communities. The Spanish interpreted these peoples to be living in towns, or *pueblos*. Ohkay Owingeh is linguistically and culturally Tewa, like many other northern pueblos. As Joe S. Sando (Jemez Pueblo) explains, the “Pueblos are not one unified group; rather they are separate nations.”⁸ He mentions that the Revolt united all of the pueblos. As to be analyzed later, the Tewa nation effectively led the revolt.

Joseph H. Suina (Cochiti Pueblo) writes that spirituality was at the heart of Pueblo cultures. Through ceremonies, most often in the form of dances, humans were able to keep the world in balance, and in unity with the divine. It was the obligation of all people to maintain this balance. Religious leaders, such as Po’pay, acted “as intermediaries between the visible world and the spirit world.” Suina mentions that the medicine men and women were not appointed but achieved their positions through a divine calling.

⁸ Joe S. Sando, “Introduction,” in *Po’pay: Leader of the First American Revolution*, xvi

They also had to power to elect political leaders.⁹ A defining feature of the Pueblo beliefs was the adherence to the Kachina religion. In his analysis, John Kessell mentions that that this religion was organized around the cycles of the sun and moon, and placed importance on solstices and equinoxes. Rituals occurred in underground kivas, and “reinforced the boundaries of Pueblo culture, wherein the self was always submerged in the group.”¹⁰ Kessell also draws parallels between the surface characteristics of the Kachina religion and Christianity, stating that both religions were patriarchal. Additionally, both belief systems “revered stories, hallowed places, and ritual, sacred and profane. Both embraced visions and believed that the physical and invisible words were somehow one.” The two religions feared witches and had a special contingent of people (medicine men/women and clergy) who had unique intercessional abilities with their deities.¹¹ Through a purely observational understanding of Kachina religion, some New Mexican governors acknowledged these overlaps, and did not criminalize Kachina ceremonies. However, like in New France and New England, Indigenous peoples and Spanish colonizers in New Mexico did not see the other’s religion as false, as in non-existent in a spiritual capacity. In the case of the Pueblos and the Spaniards, they often interpreted each other’s beliefs to be witchcraft which led to a lot of suspicion towards one another. For the Franciscans, as well as many Spanish colonial officials, this belief permitted them to act violently against Pueblos who did not convert to Catholicism, and against Spaniards who tolerated traditional Indigenous spirituality. Comparable to Kahnawake and Natick, Ohkay Owingeh maintained an Indigenous-style government

⁹ Joseph H. Suina, “Underestimation of Pueblo Power,” in *Po’pay*, 76-77

¹⁰ John L. Kessell, *Pueblos, Spaniards, and the Kingdom of New Mexico*, 14.

¹¹ J Kessell, *Pueblos, Spaniards, and the Kingdom of New Mexico*, 16.

under Spanish colonization. Additionally, they elected their own governor that worked with the New Mexican government.

Pueblo communities encountered Spanish soldiers and Franciscan priests for the first time in 1540. Starting in 1544 Pueblos had to defend themselves against Spanish attacks.¹² Spanish soldiers travelled with Franciscan friars and evangelization was a high priority, even in these early “exploratory” campaigns. As historian Andrew L. Knaut mentions in *The Pueblo Revolt of 1680: Conquest and Resistance in Seventeenth-Century New Mexico*, upon re-entering New Mexico in 1580s and 1590s to officially establish a colony, Hopis greeted Spaniards with crosses painted on their heads as a way to avoid conflict.¹³ The Pueblo’s earliest encounters with the Spanish and Catholicism were violent. In fact, the Spanish required a vow of obedience from Pueblo communities, and if the vow was not met the Spanish attacked them. The Franciscans advocated for these attacks.¹⁴ Historian Patricia Seed explains that Spanish soldiers and missionaries read a document called the *Requerimento* to the Indigenous peoples they encountered. As implied by its title, the document required Indigenous submission to Spanish leadership, and acknowledgement of Spanish and Catholic “superiority.” Seed describes this as demonstrating the Spanish practice of obtaining land through “conquest not consent.”¹⁵ Like other European powers, the Spanish viewed warring with non-Christian Indigenous peoples as a form of “just warfare.” In the earliest decades of the seventeenth century, as the Franciscans gained stronger footholds in the Pueblo communities, many Pueblos

¹² Kessell, *Pueblos, Spaniards, and the Kingdom of New Mexico*, 19-20.

¹³ Andrew L. Knaut, *The Pueblo Revolt of 1680: Conquest and Resistance in Seventeenth-Century New Mexico*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 33.

¹⁴ Kessell, *Pueblos, Spaniards, and the Kingdom of New Mexico*, 34-36.

¹⁵ Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe’s Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 70-71.

violently resisted Spanish intrusion. Others fled their home pueblos and found refuge in other Pueblo communities.

Throughout the seventeenth century, Indigenous labor was the backbone of Spanish economic and missionary projects. Spanish documents detail, that like in Natick and Kahnawake, Indigenous converts built the churches in the missions. France V. Scholes notes that the under the administration of Bernardo Lopez de Mendizábal, Pueblos “gather[ed] piñon and salt and transport[ed] the accumulated supplies to convenient places for shipment.” A nearly identical operation occurred with maize. Other people made stockings, washed hides, tanned leather, painted leather door hangings, manufactured shoes, and built wagons. They received pay for this labor usually by a combination of money and food. However, laborers often had to sue to receive their payment. Ohkay Owingeh participated in the manufacturing of stockings. Along with the pueblos of Santa Clara, Jacona, Pojuaque, Nambé, and Cuyamingué, Ohkay Owingeh assisted in the creation of 280 pairs in 1661.¹⁶

Mendizábal’s administration from 1659 to 1660 was a unique time for Pueblo culture and New Mexico as a whole. In addition to overseeing the *encomienda*, and Indigenous labor systems, and governing the colony, Mendizábal legalized Kachina dances. As Kessell explains, Mendizábal drew connections between traditional Pueblo dances and Spanish and other European and American dances. Kessell argues that Mendizábal may have actually mistaken secular dances for Kachina dances but legalized the Kachina dances anyway. Historian Andrew L. Knaut mentions that people from the Tewa-speaking pueblo, Teseque, approached Mendizábal and requested the legalization

¹⁶ France V. Scholes, *Troublous Times in New Mexico 1659-1670*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1942), 48-49.

of the Kachina dances. The legalization of the Kachinas was extremely significant because, “The Franciscans in New Mexico had targeted these traditional Pueblo dances...since the earliest days of colonization.”¹⁷ For many Spanish settlers, Pueblo dances became something to emulate. Residents of Ohkay Owingeh conducted Kachina ceremonies in their council chambers of throughout 1660.¹⁸

Mendizábal worked to lessen the control of Franciscans which often benefitted Pueblos. Under Mendizábal, Pueblo women were no longer permitted to bake bread for the missionaries. Mendizábal ensured that the friars could not benefit from free Indigenous labor.¹⁹ Mendizábal also frequently visited pueblos and collected negative information about the Franciscan friars. Residents often complained about the friars’ propensity to use corporal punishment, sexually abuse parishioners, burn religious paraphernalia and the individuals that owned them, and the occasional murder.²⁰ The Franciscan friars, despite occasionally fighting to aid the Pueblo converts, were as violent and controlling as secular colonial authorities. In this instance, under Mendizábal, when the government of New Mexico seemed to be sympathetic to Pueblo interests, they were in fact choosing the lesser of two evils. Throughout the 1660s Indigenous witnesses testified in court cases against the Franciscans.

The Franciscans did not react well to Mendizábal’s leniency towards Pueblo traditions and especially to his attack on Franciscan power. The Franciscans turned to the Holy Office of the Inquisition to punish him. Mendizábal was charged with thirty counts

¹⁷ A Knaut, *The Pueblo Revolt*, 110.

¹⁸ “Declaration of Fray Antonio Tavares, Lay Brother, Senecú, May 15, 1661,” in *Historical Documents relating to New Mexico*, 177.

¹⁹ Kessell, *Pueblos, Spaniards, and the Kingdom of New Mexico*, 83-85

²⁰ Knaut, *The Pueblo Revolt of 1680*, 107-108.

including heresy, practicing Judaism, driving Pueblos back to idolatry, and generally being discriminatory towards the Franciscans. He was even accused of encouraging Pueblos to murder the Franciscans that mistreated them.²¹ The Inquisition also tried another Spanish official, Nicolas de Aguilar, who also supported Pueblo spiritual traditions, around the same time that they tried Mendizábal.

Although on the surface it may appear that Mendizábal acted purely on behalf of the Pueblos, further examination of the charges against him prove that this may not be true. He likely worked primarily to diminish the power and influence of the Franciscans. Witnesses accused Mendizábal of urging the Pueblos to kill the friars under threat of death. The trial documents also included accusations that Mendizábal kept Indigenous women captive in his palace, and that he had “barbarous lust.” One of those women, named Teresa, came from Ohkay Owingeh. The governor admitted that he imprisoned Teresa in his house and used the excuse that he was questioning her about the accusation that she had murdered her husband.²² Teresa’s legal woes were not a major factor in the context of the Mendizábal case, but Mendizábal received accusations about his conduct with Indigenous women multiple times, and always with same the implications. However, these accusations were simply used to demonstrate that Mendizábal had violated his marriage vows. It is impossible determine if Mendizábal was actually guilty. The Inquisition trials relied on verbal testimonies from the accused, and the accusers. However, Mendizábal’s wife, Teresa Aguilera Roche (not the same Teresa he kept

²¹ “First hearing of Don Bernardo de Mendizabal [Documents dated April 28, 1663- October 31, 1691] in *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Neuva Vizcaya and Approaches Thereto, to 1773*, 205, 210.

²² “First hearing of Don Bernardo de Mendizábal” in *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico*, 210.

prisoner), testified on her husband's behalf, which casts doubt on the accusation that he violated his marriage vows.²³ The Tewa influence in the legalization of the Kachina, and details given throughout the Mendizábal trials, implied that many people believed they could trust and depend on Mendizábal.

Many Spaniards viewed everything that did not fit in within their Catholic worldview as a threat that needed to be eradicated. Pueblo spirituality, which served as the basis of Pueblo culture, was seen as one of these threats. Indigenous spirituality persisted, even after the Spanish established a colony and demanded Pueblo obedience. For people to ask Mendizábal to legalize Kachina dances and kiva ceremonies, the dances had to have continued even when they were illegal. The Franciscans also went to great lengths to employ the Holy Office of the Inquisition to rid their society of all "heresy," which of course included Pueblo spirituality. They also aimed to diminish the power of the secular government. Mendizábal's trials demonstrate both the complex relationships between the Spanish church and state, and the willingness of many Spaniards to stamp out Pueblo spirituality, even if it meant momentarily upsetting their own political system. Pueblos also navigated the Spanish legal and political systems on behalf of their safety and their religious beliefs. New Mexican governors throughout the 1660s and 1670s cracked down on Pueblo spiritual traditions in an effort to get rid of the traditions completely. They outlawed Kachina ceremonies, collected ceremonial objects and paraphernalia, and reinforced laws enforcing attendance at Catholic mass. They also reversed all of Mendizábal's rulings on servants in the missions.²⁴

²³ "Deposition of Teresa Aguilera Roche, Wife of Mendizábal, October 5, 1663," in *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico*, 235-237.

²⁴ Knaut, *The Pueblo Revolt of 1680*, 115.

Pueblo practitioners of their spirituality also felt the wrath of the Franciscans and the Inquisition. In the aftermath of Mendizábal, the Franciscans arrested countless Pueblos who complained to political authorities of their mistreatment.²⁵ Furthermore, authorities punished spiritual leaders directly. In 1675, Governor Juan Francisco Treviño arrested forty-seven medicine men, one of which was Po'pay, and accused them of sorcery and witchcraft. Spanish authorities hanged three of the men.²⁶ A group of Tewas protested for the release of Po'pay and others and authorities ultimately spared the rest of the religious leaders. On December 22, 1681, the Sargento Mayor, Diego Lopez Sambrano, who also served a captain of a squadron and fought against the Pueblos during the revolt, made a declaration to Spanish authorities in the estate of Mexican governor, and shared his interpretation of the cause of the revolt. He emphasized Po'pay's leadership noting that Po'pay was known to authorities from his arrest as a sorcerer. He revealed that Po'pay, and many of the other prisoners, ultimately gained his freedom and was not hanged as a witch because a large contingent of armed Tewas arrived in Santa Fe threatening to kill the governor and general Luis de Quintana (who condemned some of the prisoners to death). The Tewas also offered eggs, chickens, tobacco, and deerskin to negotiate for the prisoners' freedom.²⁷

Aside from giving the Spanish a preview of what was to come in following years, this incident demonstrated that Pueblos continued to practice their own religion after the

²⁵ Kessell, *Pueblos, Spaniards, and the Kingdom of New Mexico*, 87.

²⁶ Charles Wilson Hackett, "General Introduction: 1. New Mexico on the Eve of the Pueblo Rebellion, 1670-1680," in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermin's Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682* Vol. VIII, (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1942), xxii.

²⁷ "[Declaration] of Diego Lopez [Sambrano. Hacienda of Luis de Carbajal, December 22, 1681], in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermin's Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, Vol. VIII, 300-301.

Spanish attempted to outlaw it multiple times. Sambrano states that “all of the members of their nation”²⁸ were involved in the confrontation with Treviño. Although the next section of this chapter will demonstrate how that could not possibly be true, Sambrano’s account revealed that Pueblo communities held traditional religious leaders in high esteem. Beginning with the earliest violent interactions between the Spanish and Pueblos, Indigenous spirituality remained a constant priority as something to maintain and protect. The events surrounding the imprisonment of Po’Pay and the other medicine men, demonstrate the willingness of many Pueblos to overthrow the colonial regime to protect their religious leaders, and save their religious traditions. Many scholars credit Po’pay’s arrest as the final straw that led him to begin planning the revolt.

Ohkay Owingeh and Syncretic Catholicism

Both Indigenous and Catholic religious rituals occurred in Ohkay Owingeh, like they had in Kahnawake. Although many residents of pueblos pushed back harshly against the Franciscan and Spanish political presence, others converted willingly to Catholicism. In a petition dated May 10, 1679, Father Fray Francisco de Ayeta, custodian of the missions in New Mexico, wrote to the king of Spain, Charles II, updating him on the work of the Franciscans throughout the 1670s. He provided important details about the functioning of the missions and the ethnographic make-up of the Christian pueblos. He noted that in 1678, there were forty-six “Christian pueblos.” In total, registers counted seventeen thousand Christian Indians across the pueblos. Ayeta mentioned that the vast majority of converts were old men, women, and children, who did not know how to use a

²⁸ “[Declaration] of Diego Lopez [Sambrano. Hacienda of Luis de Carbajal, December 22, 1681], in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermin’s Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682*, Vol. VIII, 301.

bow and arrow.²⁹ Like Kahnawake, women converted to Christianity at a much higher rate than men. This also explains, at least in part, the tendency for children to also be Christian. Ayeta emphasized the lack of military skills amongst converts to demonstrate their need for aid in fighting the Apaches. But Ayeta's analysis implies one of the reasons why the revolt was successful. Young able-bodied men rejected Christianity and composed the primary group fighting in the revolt. However, it is important to note, that beginning immediately in 1680, the Spanish defined the events as the revolt of all Christian Indians.

Suina argues that Pueblos only converted to Catholicism "for show" and to protect their religious traditions.³⁰ Researcher, David Roberts crafts a semi-convincing argument that the majority of the Pueblos pretended to be devout Catholics while planning to rebel which explains why the Franciscans did not suspect anything.³¹ It is safe to assume that for many individuals this may have been the case, but just like in other mission communities, other individuals may have genuinely converted. Historian Ramón A. Gutiérrez recounts that during a drought in the 1620s, the priest prayed for rain shortly before it began raining. This led many residents of Ohkay Owingeh to convert to Catholicism. Believers in Puebloan spiritualities, in which religious individuals could communicate with the divine and manipulate natural occurrences, would not have seen the results of the priest's prayers as bizarre or particularly miraculous. Many residents of Ohkay Owingeh may have viewed Christianity as a different way to maintain balance in

²⁹ "Petition of Father Fray Francisco de Ayeta. Mexico, May 10, 1679], in *Historical Documents relating to New Mexico*, 299.

³⁰ Joseph H. Suina, "Underestimation of Pueblo Power," in *Po'pay*, 77.

³¹ David Roberts, *The Pueblo Revolt: The Secret Rebellion that Drove the Spaniards Out of the Southwest*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 132.

the world, and thus as an extension of their traditional beliefs. In the case of the drought in the 1620s, when traditional prayers did not seem to be working, Christianity presented itself as the solution. Many people also took to the priest's medicines,³² which were extremely important in the epidemics that occurred throughout the seventeenth century. Similar to many converts in Natick and Kahnawake, residents of Ohkay Owingeh saw Christianity as an answer to crises.

Language and education were keys to the conversions of many individuals. Both the English and Spanish educated their converts in European traditions and language. Unlike the Puritan missionaries who made an effort to learn Wôpanâak, the Franciscans did not learn Puebloan languages. Converts were expected to learn Castilian. The number of missionaries in New Mexico fluctuated wildly throughout the seventeenth century, which kept the number of Castilian-speaking Pueblos low well into the eighteenth century. Comparable to how the Mohawk-speaking converts in Kahnawake learned Catholicism through a French filter, the language barrier left the Tewa-speaking converts of Ohkay Owingeh to their own devices in interpreting Catholicism. Throughout the seventeenth century, Ohkay Owingeh relied on visiting priests from San Ildefonso, another Tewa pueblo.³³ This left the community free from an official Catholic gaze at least part of the time. However, some converts did learn how to read and write Castilian. Some received education in art and music. Many converts involved themselves in the music of the church. All of the missions had choirs, and missionaries taught the converts

³² Ramón A. Guitiérrez, *When Jesus Came the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1991), 56.

³³ Charles William Hackett, "III. The Outbreak in the Pueblos," in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians and Otermín's Attempted Reconquest 1680-1682*, xxxv.

to play late Renaissance and early Baroque wind and brass instruments, and the organ. Kessell writes, “these [instruments] the Pueblos accepted willingly as complements to their own traditional percussion and wind instruments.”³⁴

Young boys moved to *conventos* at the urging of Franciscan missionaries. The children received a classroom education and learned to labor for the Franciscans. They cleaned the classrooms when young and worked as sextons who helped during masses when older. Life for students in the *convento* was extremely regimented, and as Kessell explains, “bells governed their daily routine.”³⁵ Interestingly, David Roberts notes that archeologists have uncovered church bells in many pueblos from the seventeenth century, smashed into countless pieces, which were most likely destroyed during the revolt. In 1706, Father Fray Juan Álvarez mentioned that Ohkay Owingeh’s mission, as well as many of the surrounding missions, did not have bells and they were in the process of building churches, likely as a result of the events of the 1680s.³⁶ Although many young men may have valued this education, others such as don Estaban Clemente, who was hanged for planning a rebellion in 1670,³⁷ did not.

Throughout the seventeenth century, Franciscans updated Spanish officials in Spain about the condition of the missions. Similar to the French Jesuits, they emphasized the number of converts to prove that the missionary projects were successful. In a petition from 1679, Ayeta cites a royal cedula from 1635 that said one priest, Alonso de Benavidas, along with “more than one hundred of his Order,” baptized more than

³⁴ Kessell, *Pueblos, Spaniards, and the Kingdom of New Mexico*, 99.

³⁵ Kessell, *Pueblos, Spaniards, and the Kingdom of New Mexico*, 99

³⁶ “Declaration of Father Fray Juan Álvarez [Nambé, January 12, 1706], in *Historical Documents relating to New Mexico*, 374.

³⁷ John L. Kessell, *Spain in the Southwest: A Narrative of Colonial New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and California*, (University of Oklahoma Press, 2013), 118.

“eighty-six thousand” over the course of thirty years in New Mexico ³⁸ Ayeta does not specify whether all of these converts were Pueblo but in this same petition Ayeta mentions that by 1678 there were a total of seventeen-thousand Pueblo converts. All of these numbers, much like the numbers in French Jesuit writings, must be looked at with skepticism, but they do indicate a substantial population of Christian converts. Other Franciscan writings, comparable to the writings of the Puritans and Jesuits, emphasize the piety of the converts, and their enthusiasm for Catholicism. David Roberts hypothesizes that all of the enthusiasm was an act on the part of the converts to hide their plans of revolt, but he does not address that Franciscans observed, reported, and punished Pueblo spirituality and spiritual leaders, to rid New Mexico of what they perceived to be heresy and potential disloyalty. The actions of the Christian and non-Christian residents of Ohkay Owingeh during the Revolt and reconquest, and the Spanish interpretation of those events, further demonstrate the complex role of Christianity in this missionary community.

Ohkay Owingeh in the Pueblo Revolt and the Spanish Reconquest

Contemporary Pueblo scholars do not always refer to the Pueblo Revolt as a “revolt.” Alfonso Ortiz (Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo) refers to the events in New Mexico in 1680, as “the Pueblo Restoration.”³⁹ Herman Agoyo (Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo) calls it “The Holy War.”⁴⁰ The events of 1680 could easily be classified as a restoration as the

³⁸ “Petition [of Father Fray Francisco of Ayeta. Mexico], in *Historical Documents relating to New Mexico*, 303.

³⁹ Alfonso Ortiz, “The Pueblo Restoration of 1680,” in *Po’pay*, 2-4.

⁴⁰ Herman Agoyo, “Ohkay Owingeh: New Mexico’s First Capital,” in *White Water Shell Place: An Anthology of Native American Reflections on the 400th Anniversary of the Founding of Santa Fe, New Mexico with a Traditional Native Blessing* by N. Scott Momaday, ed. F. Richard Sanchez with Stephan Wall and Anne Filemyr, (Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 2010), 63-65.

Pueblos successfully ousted the Spanish from New Mexico and returned, in many ways, to a pre-colonial state in which Pueblos had full power over their communities. And it was certainly a Holy War. While the people of Natick during King Philip's War, and of Kahnawake during the wars of the late seventeenth century, often relied on Christian rhetoric and belief to prove their loyalty to European authorities, the mood, motivations, and actions during the Pueblo Revolt were vehemently anti-Catholic. However, prisoners captured by the Spanish during the war also relied on Christian rhetoric and ideas to prove their innocence. As mentioned in the confessions of Pueblo prisoners in 1681, Po'pay and the other rebels aimed to rid the pueblos of all symbols of Catholicism and return solely to the Kachina religion. Spanish records note that some pueblos, particularly Isleta, remained Catholic and loyal to the Spanish. Other records mention that Tewa individuals, including Pueblo governors from Ohkay Owingeh and elsewhere, also allied themselves with the Spanish. Some even acted as scouts for the Spanish during the reconquest.

Scholars largely agree on the basic narrative of what happened in 1680. Po'pay planned the revolt in a kiva, most likely in Taos, but possibly in Ohkay Owingeh. Po'pay tasked two young Tewa runners from Tesuque to deliver knotted chords to war leaders in all of the pueblos counting down the days to the beginning of the revolt. On August 9, two days after the runners set out, Governor Antonio de Otermín received word of the revolt through a variety of sources, including Catholic priests, and Pueblo governors and captains.⁴¹ Beginning on Saturday, August 10, a day earlier than they had initially

⁴¹ "Autos Drawn Up as a Result of the Rebellion of the Christian Indians. [Santa Fe, August 9, 1680], in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín's Attempted Reconquest 1680-1682*, 3.

planned, Pueblos killed missionaries, destroyed churches, and religious objects. On August 15, the Pueblos surrounded Santa Fe. Juan, who originally worked for the Spanish and received a Spanish education, presented the governor with choice between a white and a red cross. The white cross symbolized peace and an agreement that the Spanish would leave New Mexico; the red cross symbolized war. Otermín refused to choose a cross and the Pueblos cut off water supply to Santa Fe which led the Spanish officials and settlers to flee. Although the Spanish made a few unsuccessful attempts at reconquest from 1680 to 1682, the Pueblos remained free until the Spanish reconquest which began in 1692.⁴²

Some of the most useful sources that provide insight into Po'pay's leadership are the testimonies given by captives to the Spanish in December 1681. These male captives of various ages and ethnic backgrounds imply that people had varied feelings about the violent events of 1680, and Po'pay himself. They also emphasize the importance of Christian rhetoric and ideas to Spanish authorities. Many prisoners accused Po'pay of murdering his son-in-law, Nicolas Bua, the governor of Ohkay Owingeh. Bua wanted to warn the Spanish of the impending events so Po'pay killed him.⁴³ According to Alfonso Ortiz, Po'pay's position as a religious leader would have prohibited him from killing anybody. Ortiz also argues that Po'pay was solely the orchestrator of the revolt and did not participate in any violence during the revolt, and Po'pay's actions during the events

⁴² John L. Kessell and Rick Hendricks, "Introduction," in *By Force of Arms: The Journal of Don Diego de Vargas 1691-1693*, eds. John L. Kessell and Rick Hendricks, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 13.

"Chronology of the Pueblo Revolt," in *Po'pay*, 254.

⁴³ "Testimony of Juan, Tewa from Tesuque, Married, Age 28," Barbara de Marco, "Voices from the Archives I: Testimony of the Pueblo Indians in the 1680 Pueblo Revolt," in *Romance Philology*, Vol. 53, No.2 (University of California: Brepols Publishers) (Spring 2000), 389.

of 1680 are still a mystery.⁴⁴ In his testimony, Juan, a 28 year-old Tewa from Tesuque mentions that Po'pay forced people to participate in the revolt and many people feared his "wrath."⁴⁵ Whether Po'pay killed his son-in-law and threatened people, or was entirely peaceful throughout his entire life and the revolt, prisoners played up differences in ideology within Pueblo communities to the Spanish. In defending themselves, prisoners ensured to highlight their differences from Po'pay and the other rebels. For instance, Alfonso Attuzayo, a 60-year-old Tiwa from Alameda, argued that he did not know anything about the revolt. He mentioned that he fled from the Spanish after they had taken him and his two grandsons captive during the Spanish attack on Isleta, because the devil tricked him and his grandsons to run away and jeopardized their souls.⁴⁶

Scholars continue to debate the details and usefulness of these testimonies. David Roberts, who cannot speak any Pueblo languages and admits that he struggles reading Spanish, argues that these testimonies cannot be trusted since the Spanish may have tortured these captives. He also hypothesizes that the translation of the testimonies from Pueblo languages to Spanish through interpreters completely changes and invalidates their original meanings.⁴⁷ In her translation and annotations of the testimonies, philologist and Spanish speaker Barbara de Marco, analyzes the "formulaic" nature of the testimonies. But she also mentions that some captives included often mundane

⁴⁴ Alfonso Ortiz, "Po'pay's Leadership: A Pueblo Interpretation," in *Po'pay*, 88-89.

⁴⁵ "Testimony of Juan, Tewa from Tesuque, Married, Age 28," in "Voices from the Archives I: Testimony of the Pueblo Indians in the 1680 Pueblo Revolt," *Romance Philology*, 389.

⁴⁶ "Testimony of Alnso Attuzayo, Tiwa from Alameda, Widower, Age 60," in "Voices from the Archives I," *Romance Philology*, 435.

⁴⁷ David Roberts, *The Pueblo Revolt: The Secret Rebellion that Drove the Spaniards out of the Southwest*, 163.

conversations they had with others at the outset of the revolt.⁴⁸ De Marco's critical analysis of the original Spanish documents demonstrates that Roberts' torture theory is unfounded, and that the interpreters understood nuances in Puebloan languages. The formulaic nature of the testimonies reveals that the captives anticipated the responses that the Spanish wanted to hear, and it is certainly plausible that the captives relied on Christian rhetoric and beliefs solely to please the Spanish and defend themselves. For instance, Alfonso Attuzayo most likely fled Spanish captivity to save his and his grandson's life but blamed the devil for his decision because he did not want to confess his disloyalty towards, or fear of, the Spanish. These testimonies also include important tidbits of information. The captives re-introduced Spanish authorities to Po'pay, this time as a revolt leader. Some testimonies, such as that of the *ladino* brothers, Juan and Francisco Lorenzo, who attended mass in San Felipe on the first day of the revolt, mentioned that the order for the revolt "came from the Tewa pueblos," indicating that the Tewa people, in addition to Po'pay, were commonly seen to be the orchestrators of the revolt.⁴⁹ The majority of the testimonies highlight Po'pay's orders to destroy all Christian objects and return to the Kachina religion. If anybody was caught speaking Spanish, growing Spanish crops, or practicing Catholicism, they would be punished.

Most importantly, the captives mention Po'pay's communication with spiritual beings in a kiva that urged him to plan the revolt. The majority of the testimonies describe these beings simply as "demons" or "the devil," which fits the Spanish interpretation of any non-Catholic spiritual being. Captives also argued that they feared

⁴⁸ Barbara De Marco, "Voices from the Archives I: Testimony of the Pueblo Indians," 379, 380-381.

⁴⁹ "Testimony of Juan and Francisco Lorenzo, *Ladinos*, 20 and 18 years old," in "Voices from the Archives I," 427.

Po'pay for speaking to the devil. Pedro Naranjo, an 80-year-old Keres from San Felipe, named these beings specifically and revealed that Po'pay had spoken with three Pueblo deities: Caudi, Tilini, and Tleume. Naranjo revealed that the deities told Po'pay that they had traveled under the earth to speak to him. They also told him to spread news of the revolt to all of the pueblos via the knotted chords that counted down the days to the beginning of the events. The spirits also told Po'pay that those who returned to the old ways, and obeyed their commands, "would lack nothing."⁵⁰ Barbara De Marco provides an excerpt of Alfonso Ortiz's analysis that relates these three spirits to the Tewa creation story taught in Ohkay Owingeh. The story emphasizes that all life begins within the earth. Life and creation itself began under a lake and travelled up through the earth just like the three spirits that spoke to Po'pay.⁵¹ The revolt was motivated by the creation story that he learned growing up in Ohkay Owingeh. For other people, who desired to return to a pre-colonial society, or interpreted the world to be out of balance, this was a powerful call to arms that tapped into the foundation of their worldview.

In the introduction to his collection of documents, *Revolt of The Pueblo Indians and Otermín's attempted Reconquest 1680-1682*, Charles William Hackett admits that the actions of Ohkay Owingeh in the beginning of the revolt are not well known. He mentions that in 1680, about three hundred people lived in Ohkay Owingeh. During the revolt, the community worked in tandem with Santa Clara, another Tewa pueblo. Both pueblos had important roles during the revolt and Po'pay may have spent some time in Santa Clara planning with other Tewa leaders. The priest, Juan de Morales, who worked

⁵⁰ "Testimony of Pedro Naranjo, Queres from San Felipe, Age 80," in "Voices from the Archives I," 416.

⁵¹ Fn 61r.15 "Voices from the Archives I," 420-422.

in both communities, was killed in one of these communities. To sum up the actions of the Tewa nation as a whole, Hackett writes: “more than thirty Spaniards were known to have been killed, while a number of others were carried off and never heard from again; and there as elsewhere the churches were profaned, the houses and haciendas robbed, and many other devastations committed.”⁵² Although Hackett, looks negatively upon the actions of the participants in the revolt, his analysis demonstrates that Ohkay Owingeh participated fully in the events of 1680. This indicates the community’s importance both as the birthplace and home of Po’pay and other leaders, and as a Tewa-speaking pueblo. Po’pay is credited with uniting all of the pueblos despite their linguistic and cultural differences, but it makes sense that Po’pay, who operated under the same religious world as other Tewas, would find many allies and support throughout the Tewa-speaking communities.

Not all Pueblos supported the revolt and the Spanish made note of their Indigenous allies. Many simply wanted to flee the violence caused by their Tewa neighbors. Throughout September and October of 1680, the Spanish raised an army to quell the rebellion and reestablish the colony. They made lists of the men who “passed muster.” The vast majority of the men named in the lists were Spanish soldiers and civilians.⁵³ Shorter lists from early October included a number of “Mexican Indians,” *mestizos*, and *mulattos*. “Christian Indians” from La Isleta, Sevilleta, Alamillo, Socorro, and Senecú joined the Spanish in their exodus away from the violence. Of these groups

⁵² Charles William Hackett, “III. The Outbreak in the Pueblos,” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín’s Attempted Reconquest 1680-1682*, xxxiv-xxxv.

⁵³ Francisco Xavier, “Auto for passing muster, reviewing arms and horses, and other things. [Place opposite La Salineta, September 29, 1680.],” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians*, 134-153.

“three hundred and seventeen persons passed muster.”⁵⁴ Pueblos allied themselves in large numbers to the Spanish and composed the largest group that fought to stop the Pueblo Revolt. It is important to note that these communities were not Tewa and were geographically separated from Tewa pueblos by a great distance.

Scholars continue to debate what occurred in New Mexico from 1680 until 1692. Po’pay ruled for some time. Some scholars argue that he kept Spanish economic and social structures largely in place, which led him to be ousted from office, only to be reappointed later. Herman Agoyo argues that many of the rumors about Po’pay being a terrible leader come from Spanish sources that purposely made Po’pay look bad. He also mentions that Po’pay would not have been elected twice if he was truly as awful as the rumors said.⁵⁵ Another mystery is why the Spanish re-entered New Mexico. Many scholars cite political differences as the catalyst for representatives travelling to Rio del Norte (Texas) and asking for the Spanish to return. Others argue that the Pueblos needed Spanish aid in defending themselves against their Apache enemies, who continued to raid pueblos.⁵⁶ While returning to New Mexico, the new governor, don Diego de Vargas, kept detailed journals which demonstrate that while many people from Ohkay Owingeh resisted Spanish reconquest, others helped the Spanish.

De Vargas’ journals also prove that the reconquest was not as bloodless or simple as many scholars have hypothesized. The governor strategized his course of action to

⁵⁴ Francisco Xavier, “The count continues, on October 2, 1680, in the said place [La Salineta],” in *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians*, 157-159.

⁵⁵ Herman Agoyo, “Ohkay Owingeh: New Mexico’s First Capital,” in *White Shell Water Place: An Anthology of Native American Reflections on the 400th Anniversary of the Founding of Santa Fe, New Mexico*, 64-65.

⁵⁶ Pueblo scholars Joe Sando, Herman Agoyo, and Tessie Naranjo discussed these theories with David Roberts in chapter 6 “The Bloodless Reconquest” in *The Pueblo Revolt* David Roberts, *The Pueblo Revolt*, 169-171.

eventually retake Santa Fe and the entire colony while ensuring that no harm came to the soldiers and civilians accompanying him. On October 4, 1691 while in El Paso, de Vargas wrote to the Conde de Galve, Gaspar de la Cerda, mentioning that he and his soldiers planned “to triumph or perish until Santa Fe is restored.” To do this he wanted to conquer the pueblos of Cochiti, Santo Domingo Paraguai, and Ohkay Owingeh first. After, he and his men would tunnel under the walls of Santa Fe to sneak up on the Pueblos fortified in the city. His overall aim was “to restore to his majesty his land and vassals, freeing them from the devil’s slavery as apostates.”⁵⁷ De Vargas’ plan to conquer Ohkay Owingeh before the capital of New Mexico indicated the community still held an important, and forceful, leadership role that could potentially derail De Vargas’ further plans of reconquest. This plan never came to fruition. Instead, on October 10, 1691 de Vargas entered New Mexico motivated, in his words, “by my Catholic zeal,”⁵⁸ and slowly began making peace with some Pueblo communities.

Ohkay Owingeh welcomed de Vargas, a contingent of Spanish soldiers, and three Franciscan priests on October 2, 1692. “Don Luis Picurí the governor and leader of its inhabitants and the other Tewa and Tano nations, and his brother, don Antonio” greeted de Vargas and his party before they entered the pueblo. De Vargas mentioned that the community had decorated the entrance to the pueblo and the plaza with crosses and had set up a room for him and the priests. When all of residents were gathered to greet him, the priests absolved them of their sins. He claimed that the community was pleased to see

⁵⁷ Don Diego de Vargas, “Diego de Vargas to the Conde de Galve, El Paso, 4 October 1691, LS.” in, *By Force of Arms: The Journals of Don Diego de Vargas, 1691-1693*, ed. John L. Kessell and Rick Hendricks, (University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 87.

⁵⁸ Don Diego de Vargas, “Diego de Vargas to the Conde de Galve, El Paso, 4 October 1691, LS.” In *By Force of Arms: The Journals of Don Diego de Vargas, 1691-1693*, 87

him and hear news of the peace he made with other pueblos. He concluded by saying that the community “had been newly reduced and conquered for the royal crown and our holy faith.”⁵⁹

In writings from before his arrival in Ohkay Owingeh, de Vargas mentioned speaking to residents of the community who sided with the Spanish and waited with anticipation for de Vargas to arrive in their community. Theodore S. Jojola (Isleta Pueblo) notes that de Vargas gave land grants to individuals “who would fight by his side”⁶⁰ which explains some of the enthusiasm for his arrival. For many residents of Ohkay Owingeh, the crosses and happy feelings may have served the same purpose as the crosses that Hopis painted on their heads over a century earlier to avoid any potential conflict. The return of Spanish colonization also signaled the return of colonial problems, and many pueblos refused to resubmit to Spanish control in the first place. The peace between the Spanish and the Pueblos deteriorated by the end of 1693.

Tewa and Tanos people launched two more rebellions in 1694 and 1696, and once again, Ohkay Owingeh played a vital role. The revolt of 1694 resulted in the war leaders of the participating pueblos eventually surrendering after avoiding Spanish authorities throughout the first half of 1694. In 1696, Ohkay Owingeh took on a role reminiscent of the one it had had in 1680. On June 20, 1696, all of the participating Tewa stationed themselves at Ohkay Owingeh and Santa Clara.⁶¹ The people of Ohkay Owingeh hid out in Embuda and various mesas like they had in 1694. During this rebellion the Spanish

⁵⁹ Don Diego de Vargas, “Entrada to the pueblo of San Juan,” in *By Force of Arms*, 443

⁶⁰ Theodore S. Jojola, “The Legacy of the Pueblo Revolt and the Tiquex Province,” in *Po’pay*, 68.

⁶¹ Don Diego de Vargas, *Blood on the Boulders: The Journals of Don Diego de Vargas, New Mexico, 1694-97, Book 2*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), eds. John L. Kessel, Rick Hendricks, Meredith Dodge, 776.

relied much more on scouts from the communities they pursued. This included the governor of Tesuque,⁶² Indigenous prisoners, and individuals from Ohkay Owingeh. Both rebellions led to fighting on occasion, and resulted in the deaths of Ohkay Owingeh war leaders, as well as, Franciscans. In 1696, the governor of Ohkay Owingeh, Miguel Saxete, was captured by the governor of Tesuque. On August 27, he made a statement to de Vargas. In explaining the reason behind the revolt, almost as if he had memorized the testimonies of the prisoners from 1681, he argued that he had not known the about the revolt until the night before. A man named Juan Griego planned the revolt hoping to “kill all the religious and Spaniards,” and threatened anybody who did not agree with his plans. He took the majority of the pueblo with him to Taos.⁶³

In the long run, although it did not lead to the Spanish abandoning the colony for any length of time, this revolt, which was so heavily inspired by the events of 1680, was successful. Pueblos no longer had to adhere to earlier tax and tithing systems. Most importantly, they obtained religious freedom to worship the Kachinas. Throughout the events of the last decades of the seventeenth century, residents and leaders of Ohkay Owingeh constantly placed themselves at the forefront of the fight for their rights and beliefs. Eventually, due to the leadership of Ohkay Owingeh, and the other Tewa pueblos, the Pueblos achieved what the majority of them desired.

⁶² Don Diego de Vargas, *Blood on the Boulders: The Journals of Don Diego de Vargas, New Mexico, 1694-97, Book 2*, 794.

⁶³ Don Diego de Vargas, *Blood on the Boulders*, 1001-1002.

CONCLUSION

In the last decades of the seventeenth century, the communities of Natick, Kahnawake and Ohkay Owingeh cared for their souls by moving to missions and participating in colonial warfare. In mission communities, residents often had legal protection from their European colonizers. When this protection ended, or was violated such as during King Philip's War, or changed drastically over the course of various regimes in New Mexico, Indigenous peoples used the tools at their disposal to ensure their safety, both spiritually and physically. The residents of Kahnawake relied on Iroquoian warfare and their relationships to both their kin and to the French to ultimately put an end to the violence. Similarly, the Praying Indians of Natick relied on their kinship relationships and their English education to negotiate peace during the war. In all three wars, European forces relied on Indigenous knowledge, but ultimately, these mission communities acted on their own behalf.

Mission Communities Today

With the exception of Natick, Massachusetts these communities are still Indigenous spaces today. Kahnawake is an Indian reserve in Quebec, Canada. Ohkay Owingeh is still a pueblo and the meeting place of the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council.¹ Although a lot of time, and a lot of history has passed, the events of the last decades of the seventeenth century have had long lasting effects on the communities. In the aftermath of King Philip's War, Indigenous peoples in New England were forced to sell land to white settlers to make money. Many Praying Indians left the community to find jobs and often indentured themselves, or their children, in English households. Over

¹ "Contact," Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Inc., Accessed April 7, 2020, epinc.org/contact.htm

the course of the eighteenth century, the majority of the population became English-speaking.

Due to the laws passed after the reconquest of New Mexico in the late 1690s, residents of Ohkay Owingeh did not face legal discrimination for their religious ceremonies until the nineteenth century and the introduction of United States rule. However, Ohkay Owingeh, and other Pueblo communities, hold the reputation of having maintained more of their precolonial traditions than many other Indigenous nations due to the Pueblo Revolt. Ohkay Owingeh still serves as an important center for Indigenous resistance and activism.

Christianity continues to hold an interesting and important place in the cultures of each of these communities. On the second Saturday of each month, many descendants of the original inhabitants of Natick gather in the Eliot Church in the center of the town. This group calls themselves “The Praying Indians of Natick and Punkapoag.” According to their website, they wish to continue the legacy of their Christian ancestors. They interpret the work of John Eliot and his relationship with the Praying Indians of Natick in an extremely positive light. As staunch Christians, the group believes that John Eliot’s teachings led their ancestors and, in turn themselves, to the possibility of having eternal life. They emphasize that while historians commonly interpret their ancestor’s actions during King Philip’s War “as weakness and [a] dishonorable betrayal [of] Native heritage,” their ancestors were actually “coerced” to act as spies and scouts for the English. Although their analysis is not entirely correct, in defending their ancestors, the group ensures to highlight the indigeneity of their ancestors and of themselves.²

² “Our History,” Natick Praying Indians, Accessed March 24, 2020, <https://natickprayingindians.org/history.html>

As discussed in *The Paths of Kateri's Kin*³ by Christopher Vescey, Indigenous Catholics, including some of the descendants of the seventeenth-century residents of Kahnawake and Ohkay Owingeh, have up to three-hundred years of Catholic ancestors in their family trees. Catholicism is deeply engrained in many Indigenous cultures. Vescey argues that many Indigenous peoples look to Kateri Tekakwitha as a source for inspiration, and identity, within the Catholic Church. In advocating for the canonization of Kateri, Indigenous peoples emphasized her Indigenous identity. The burial place of the saint is in Kahnawake. The community has been site of pilgrimage for Catholics of all backgrounds beginning immediately after Kateri's death.

Kateri Tekakwitha has a special place in the lives of Catholics in Ohkay Owingeh as well. In 1980, the pueblos who participated in the revolt came back together and commemorated the revolt's tricentennial anniversary. The event kicked off in Ohkay Owingeh and involved traditional Pueblo dances and a Catholic Mass said in the honor of Tekakwitha.⁴ The idea of a Catholic Mass to celebrate the Pueblo Revolt may seem ironic at first, but Catholic ritual and Pueblo ceremonial dances often intertwine in Ohkay Owingeh today. The commercial tourist website for the city of Santa Fe provides a schedule of Pueblo ceremonies throughout the nineteen Pueblos. On January 6, Ohkay Owingeh may have been one of "the many pueblos" who performed dances to celebrate the appointment of new tribal leaders. In June, the community will be dancing to

³ Chris Vescey, *The Paths of Kateri's Kin*, (Indiana: Notre Dame Press, 1997).

⁴ Herman Agoyo, "The Tricentennial Commemoration," in *Po'pay*.

celebrate the feast days of Saint Anthony and Saint John the Baptist.⁵ Syncretic Catholicism appears to be alive and well in Ohkay Owingeh.

I do not want to imply that all contemporary residents, and the descendants of seventeenth-century residents of these communities, are all devout Christians. Some reactions to the canonization of Kateri Tekakwitha reveal that many Indigenous peoples do not look fondly upon the history of Christian missionary work in North America. In the months leading up to the canonization of Kateri Tekakwitha, a variety of newspapers published articles showcasing the mixed reactions of Kahnawake residents, as well as the reactions of individuals from other Mohawk communities. The articles all argue that the majority of Indigenous Catholics welcomed the canonization, but traditional Mohawks were not as enthusiastic. *The McGill Daily* published an article on November 14, 2012, a few weeks after the canonization, contained a quote from Kahnawake resident, Timmy Montour, who described the event as “colonization. A slap in the face.”⁶ On July 2012, *The New York Times* published an article quoting two Mohawk men, Tom Porter who “leads a small traditional community of Mohawks,” and Toby Whyland-Rich who prays to Kateri, who both implied that she was not actually a Catholic, and mostly practiced Mohawk spirituality. The article implies that both Catholic and traditional Mohawks find Kateri holy and pray to her in various ways at her shrine in Fonda, New York. Elements of Mohawk rituals are frequently incorporated into Masses at the shrine as well.⁷

⁵ “Native American Pueblo Dances, Feast Days, Festivals and Special Events in New Mexico.” SantaFe.com, Accessed March 24, 2020, <https://santafe.com/article/native-american-pueblo-dances-feast-days-festivals-and-special-events-in-ne>.

⁶ Christina Colizza, “A Mixed Blessing: Kahnawake Reacts to Kateri Tekakwitha’s Canonization,” *The McGill Daily*, November 14, 2012.

⁷ Sharon Otterman, “Complex Emotions Over First American Indian Saint,” *The New York Times*, July 24, 2012

For many people the canonization of Kateri Tekakwitha ushered in hope that the relationship between the Vatican and Indigenous peoples would finally improve. Instead, the canonization further exemplified the complex place of Christianity in Indigenous communities, especially in former missions. It appears that Christianity still holds a very important, though often controversial, place in these communities, similar to how it did during the seventeenth century.

Missionary Work and Christian Worldviews Today

Today, just as in the seventeenth century, missionary work is an imperative for most, if not all, denominations of Christianity. Churches still rely heavily on the work of priests to live for multiple years, or permanently, in mission communities throughout the world. Christian advocacy and youth groups, colleges, and private companies offer short-term missionary and “service” excursions to interested individuals. Most often, these organizations target upper-middle class, Euro-American teenagers, or 20-something year-old adults, to travel to “third world” countries throughout Central and South America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia. There, these inexperienced young people build houses, play with orphans, teach classes and sports, and even assist in medical care. Unlike the writers of the seventeenth century who showcase how much their converts benefitted from Christianity; these organizations advertise how much the missionaries will benefit from engaging in missionary work. The slogan of one Catholic Company, The Family Mission Company, is “Find Your Mission,” which urges interested Catholics to not only sign up to participate in missionary work, but to also find their purpose in life as a Catholic. The organization argues that the “supreme duty” of a Catholic is to pursue missionary work

and the company hopes to reach the two-thirds of the world's population who "have never been introduced to Jesus."⁸

Similar to the seventeenth century, common Christian worldviews urge individuals to inject themselves into communities of which they are not apart. This is still a holy obligation, and due to their beliefs, they have the divine right to perform such actions. To this day, many missionaries do not think about the safety of the communities that they visit. For instance, very recent headlines have condemned the fundamentalist evangelical Protestant missionary group, Ethnos360, or New Tribes Mission, for attempting to evangelize to "uncontacted" tribes in the Brazilian Amazon during the COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) pandemic. In addition to violating the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Brazilian Constitution,⁹ this group has come under fire before for spreading disease to other "uncontacted" peoples, as well as being horribly racist and cruel.¹⁰ Similar to missionaries of the seventeenth century, mission leadership from Ethnos360 argues that God will provide for them and that their missions will be successful, meaning that God will allow them to contact the targeted groups and lead them to collect as many souls as possible.

Indigenous peoples in North America still deal with missionaries entering their communities as well. A multi-denominational Christian organization, ShortTermMissions.com, that urges missionaries to "discover your place to serve,"

⁸ "Become a Missionary," Family Missions Company, Accessed March 25, 2020, familymissionscompany.com/become-a-missionary.

"Home," Family Missions Company, familymissionscompany.com.

⁹ Sue Branford, "Spreading the Word of God and Coronavirus: Outrage Over Evangelical Group Trying to Contact Isolated Amazon Tribes Amid Pandemic," *Common Dreams*, March 18, 2020.

¹⁰ Sue Branford, "Evangelical Group to Contact Indigenous Peoples in Amazon Amid Coronavirus Pandemic," *Earth Island Journal*, March 18, 2020.

compiles a list of 1,479 short-term mission programs from different Christian denominations and organizations. The website displays multiple options for missionaries to evangelize in Indigenous communities, from Alaska to Arizona, and everywhere in between in the United States and Canada. Some programs, such as the Isaiah Connection's trip to the Tsimshian Nation on Annette Island, Alaska, mentions that "You can't just show up, you have to be invited to Annette Island, the only Indian Reserve in Alaska." And then asks the very bizarre question, "Do you have the golden ticket?"¹¹ While this statement implies that the community asks for missionaries to visit, the question of having a golden ticket leaves interested missionaries with the feeling that they are about to embark on a very exotic and magical journey to a mysterious community. Missionaries are left with a dehumanized impression of Indigenous Alaskans before they ever step foot in Alaska. It also implies the reality of the beliefs of the Christian missionaries while implying that elements of Indigenous cultures are fantasy.

This Christian world view, both common in the seventeenth century and today, is not limited to Christian missionaries alone. Today, a similar world view is imbedded in American and Canadian cultures. The origin story of the United States is very much a religious story. The notion that a group of poor Englishmen and their descendants crossed the ocean to create a prosperous nation out of the virgin wilderness, dates back to Puritan beliefs that justified their presence in the Americas. The concept of Manifest Destiny, which drove westward expansion both in the United States and Canada, is a continuation of the sentiments set in the Papal Bull *Inter Caetera* and of seventeenth century missionaries and colonizing powers who believed they had the divine right to travel

¹¹ "July 15-22, 2020- The Isaiah Connection," ShortTermMissions.com, Accessed March 25, 2020, shorttermmissions.com/trips/5165?q=89111709.

throughout the world, and claim land for themselves and the Christian kings and god. Steven Newcomb (Shawnee/Lenape) describes this as the “Chosen People-Promised Land Model.”¹² From an early age, Americans are taught to unquestionably believe in the ideas of Manifest Destiny and American exceptionalism. The foundation of both the United States and Canada is rooted both literally, metaphorically, and culturally in religious colonialism.

This worldview is also engrained in American politics. Steven Newcomb points out that throughout the history of the United States, the Supreme Court has cited the Doctrine of Discovery in cases involving Indigenous land claims and disputes. While he analyzes the famous court case *Johnson v. McIntosh*, which took place in the nineteenth century,¹³ the Doctrine of Discovery was also cited in twenty-first century Supreme Court cases. Time and time again, the European and American legal systems have turned to the notation of simply arriving and claiming land as a means to disenfranchise Indigenous peoples.

The canonization of Kateri Tekakwitha made people hopeful that the Vatican, and hopefully by proxy the world, would begin to respect Indigenous peoples. Unfortunately, activists are still asking for the pope to rescind the Doctrine of Discovery. As mainstream and popular historical narratives still emphasize Manifest Destiny and American Exceptionalism, and missionaries still globetrot with the belief of having the divine right to do so, nothing is set to change very soon. However, as demonstrated by the actions of the residents of Natick, Ohkay Owingeh, and Kahnawake during the seventeenth century,

¹² Steven Newcomb, *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2008).

¹³ Steven Newcomb, *Pagan in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery*, 83.

Indigenous peoples will continue to react to Christian worldviews in the ways that they see fit for their spiritual and physical health.

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