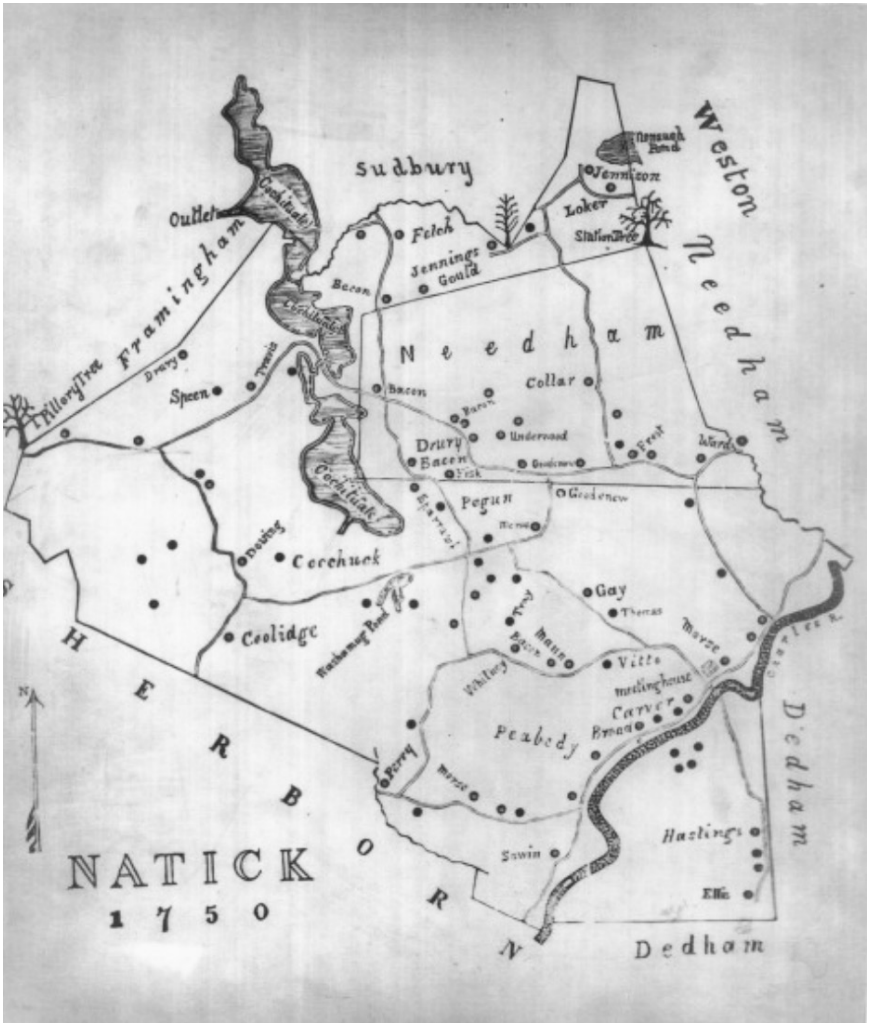

Map of Natick, 1750

Constructing the Praying Town:

How Natick's Indigenous Inhabitants Sought to Maintain Their Traditional Relationships with the Land

Charlie Spragg

Editor's Introduction: *In this fascinating article, Charlie Spragg offers readers an exploration of the ways in which indigenous peoples shaped the architecture and layout of the "praying town" of Natick, Massachusetts. In 1651, the Puritan missionary John Eliot devised this first of many praying towns, in which his indigenous converts were to live in order to prepare for official entry into the Christian Church. Eliot demanded that they give up their traditional migratory lifestyles and construct the town without English aid to demonstrate the sincerity of their faith. This article posits that Natick's indigenous inhabitants actively shaped the construction of the town in ways that maintained their traditional relationship with land, namely through their defense of their preferred location, the reinstitution of their dwelling patterns, and in the construction of an English-style meetinghouse.*

Arriving in Boston in 1631, Eliot was one of the early leaders of this community. As a Puritan minister, Eliot spent nearly six decades living in Roxbury and serving as the pastor for the First Church of Roxbury. He founded

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numerous schools, including the Roxbury Latin School. Called "The Apostle of the American Indian," Eliot learned to speak Massachusett (a local Algonquian dialect), gaveg sermons and translated the New Testament (published 1661) and the Old Testament (1663).

In an effort to assimilate culturally the native population, Eliot led the establishment of fourteen praying towns by 1674, where indigenous people were consolidated into planned villages. Funded by a missionary society called the Company for Propagating the Gospel in New England and Parts Adjacent in North America, Eliot intended to facilitate the conversion of native people to Christianity. The adoption of Anglo culture and lifestyle were believed to go hand-in-hand with the acceptance of Christianity. These towns were self-governed according to biblical laws. Schools were established in each praying town, teaching English and handicrafts to support the population. No white people were allowed to live in these praying towns. Eliot, along with the town residents, were forced to defend their claims to the land in the face of competing claims by colonists. Support for the praying towns evaporated during and after King Philip's War (1675-76), when all but four of these communities were destroyed and colonists increasingly saw the natives as unfit for their Anglo way of life. Eliot attempted to reestablish some of the towns without much success, and died in 1690 at the age of 85. By 1750, Natick was no longer a praying town, with only a few dozen indigenous residents.

The following article recenters the role of indigenous people in the history of the praying town of Natick. Rather than the perspectives, memories, and histories written by English colonists, Spragg looks for the ways, both subtle and explicit, that Native Americans were able to preserve their own customs and culture in the face of powerful efforts at assimilation.

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By the mid-seventeenth century, English colonists had gained control over vast swathes of indigenous territory in the south of the region they called "New England." Colonists claimed land ownership through discovery, purchase, and eventually indigenous capitulation. In 1644, indigenous leaders in the area known as Massachusetts Bay submitted to the colonial government. In this article, the term "indigenous" will be used to refer collectively to the great number of interconnected tribes who occupied this region prior to and throughout the colonial period. The primary groups

that settled in Natick were the Massachusetts, Nipmucs, and Pawtuckets.[1] Many settlers in this region were Puritans, English Christians who believed their actions could bring about the return of their savior. John Eliot (1604-90), a Puritan émigré missionary, felt this could be achieved by converting indigenous peoples, starting in Massachusetts Bay, where he lived. Eliot gained a following of indigenous people, but expressed concerns regarding their migratory lifestyles, which he considered "uncivilized." Indigenous groups in southern New England relocated out of their villages to alternative resource sites between harvests. Eliot contended that until his followers "were come up unto Civil Cohabitation... which a fixed condition of life will put them upon, they were not so capable to be betrusted with that Treasure of Christ." He devised the idea of "praying towns," settlements for his indigenous followers to prepare for entry into the Christian Church. Practicing sedentism in an English-style town was thought by Eliot and his associates to be the "great[est] means at least to civilize them."[2] The inhabitants were required to construct the town with limited supervision, and to administer the majority of their affairs to that same end. In 1651, with the support of the Massachusetts General Court and overseas English patrons, Natick was established as the first of fourteen eventual praying towns in Massachusetts Bay.[3] The population fluctuated between forty and one hundred forty-five inhabitants throughout the town's life and comprised members of several Algonquian language-speaking tribes. Their individual motivations for participating in this project have been disputed, including whether all, or any, had sincerely converted. Natick remained a praying town until 1675, when a nearby indigenous rebellion created English distrust towards indigenous populations throughout Massachusetts Bay.[4]

Visual material on early seventeenth-century Natick and sources in the indigenous inhabitants' own voices are scarce. Most information comes from treatises published by Eliot and his colleagues on their missionary work, and from letters written by Eliot to his patrons. These texts were intended to solicit support and funding from English audiences. This purpose often guided their portrayal of the towns; therefore, they must be read critically.[5] Anthropologist and historian Alison Stanley has provided the only dedicated study of Natick's built environment. Through analysis of the tracts, she argues that Eliot designed Natick utilizing English town-planning to "civilize" the inhabitants and thus prove to English audiences that they were suitable candidates for Church membership. On the whole, Stanley assumes that Natick's inhabitants passively accepted Eliot's demands, on the basis that their principal concern was to be accepted into the Church. This presupposition illustrates a lack of intersection between Stanley's research

and other pre-existing evidence and literature on Natick. Understandings of early Natick's built environment have been enriched by archaeological investigations undertaken by the Massachusetts Historical Commission and archaeologists Elise Brenner and Catherine Carlson. Brenner's fieldwork in particular indicates that Natick's inhabitants were acting against Eliot's intentions for the town by continuing to practice mobility. Brenner had made an earlier argument that scholars' assumptions that Natick's residents passively accepted subjugation by English authority are misguided. She demonstrates that they employed various strategies to assert autonomy, focusing on how they undermined Eliot's systems for self-government to maintain their traditional hierarchies.[6]

LOCATING THE PRAYING TOWN OF NATICK

The general absence of scholarship on the built environment of the Natick praying town has meant that the role that the indigenous inhabitants played as the principal constructors of the settlement has not been investigated. Building on Brenner's work regarding indigenous agency, this essay will demonstrate that Natick's indigenous residents actively shaped the construction of the new praying town with the aim of re-establishing their traditional relationship with land, the fundamental basis of which was frequent migration between various locations of cultural significance. To understand Natick in terms of this relationship, the town's "built" aspects must be understood to include permanent and impermanent structures, the location of the town and its boundaries, as well as networks for travel. Here, focus will be placed on the inhabitants' role in the negotiation and defense of the settlement's location, their dwelling patterns, and their construction of an English-style meetinghouse. As will be demonstrated, the indigenous inhabitants of the praying town at Natick repeatedly asserted agency over the town's structural development to maintain their traditional ways of living on the land.

Establishing a general layout of the town will be beneficial for this investigation. The settlement was based in and around present-day South Natick across both sides of the Charles River, connected by a footbridge. Two streets were laid out north of the river with a third to the south. An English-style meetinghouse, the Puritan place of worship, was constructed north of the river, seemingly where the Eliot Church is currently. It was located near a burial ground and palisade. Land plots were allocated to each family to plant crops and set up a residence. It appears that the majority of inhabitants continued to live in "wigwams," the most common type of

dwelling for Algonquian-speaking tribes in this period. A few families may have lived in English-style houses. A weir to catch fish and agricultural fields provided further sustenance. It is difficult to determine the town's boundaries as they were frequently revised on account of a prolonged land dispute with a neighboring town. As the constructors of the town, Natick's indigenous inhabitants greatly influenced the development of this landscape on their own terms.[7]

Even before the town had been established, Natick's future residents fought to shape the new settlement in ways that allowed them to maintain their traditional relationship with the land. This began with negotiating the town's location. Following the capitulation of indigenous leaders to the colonial government of Massachusetts, their tribes could continue to live on land in the government's jurisdiction, but they could not claim land rights unless the General Court had granted them. The Court agreed to provide Eliot with a tract of land for his praying town experiment. The future inhabitants appear to have recognized that they could take advantage of this opportunity to assure the protection of their ancestral homelands within the colonizers' legal system, from the increasing threat of English land encroachment. According to historian Jean O'Brien, homelands formed a central part of the identity of indigenous peoples in New England in this period. As an origin point, they were a location from which the local community could understand their place in the wider world. Additionally, as literary scholar Hertha Wong explains, in indigenous cultures across North America, people tend to see themselves as kin first and as individuals second. Sharing ancestral lands served to strengthen these relationships. Homelands were thus held with deep affection.[8]

The prospective population of the future praying town comprised various indigenous groups. Several vocalized their desire for the new town to be situated on their own historic homelands. Eliot had intended to situate the town in close proximity to English settlements, that they might act as a "civilizing" force. He was met with immediate opposition. According to one of Eliot's tracts, members hailing from the indigenous village of Cohannet were quick to insist that the new town should be established on their previously-held lands, satisfied that they had already identified an ideal location. However, their request was denied as colonists had already staked their claim on the area in question. Ultimately it was decided that Natick be settled on land formerly occupied by the tribe of the convert known as John Speen. As a result, a large number of those who did not hail from this area expressed their dissatisfaction with the compromise, telling Eliot that they desired "to have pitched or first stake in another place."[9] By opening

up a dialogue, these indigenous groups were taking direct action to steer the future of the town in a direction that would best benefit them. That the question of homelands was one of securing their protection is suggested by comments made later by some of the residents. To be accepted into the Christian Church, Eliot's "converts" were expected to give oral presentations to English clergymen and political leaders. John Speen and Magus, another Natick resident, both admitted that they had converted because "I [sic] thought if I prayed, the English would not take away my ground," as they had done to other indigenous groups. Historian Daniel Richter argues that, although there are issues with treating these sources as first-hand accounts, remarks which suggest anything other than commitment to Christianity are likely to be authentic in spirit. This discourse between themselves and Eliot demonstrates that Natick's future residents had a great degree of agency over their given situation and that they actively asserted this agency in an effort to preserve central aspects of their cultural identity.[10]

Soon after the site had been selected and the initial infrastructure laid out, Natick's inhabitants were faced with the expected challenge of English encroachment. Residents from the neighboring English town of Dedham argued that the part of Natick south of the Charles River had already been granted to them by the Massachusetts General Court. The court case which ensued lasted for well over a decade as Dedham refused to accept any rulings in Natick's favor. Accounts of this dispute indicate that Natick's residents actively fought to defend their rights to the homelands they had secured. According to the records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay, "severall of the Indians… challenge [sic] [Dedham's claims] within the bounds of there [sic] town" and outside of the courtroom, Dedham residents had suffered "some affronts offered them by the Indians... as also some difference in relation to land betweene them." The nature of the challenges and affronts remains unclear, but the references to them show that Natick's residents were independently exerting resistance to Dedham's attempts at intrusion. This is further indicated by Eliot's personal records. As identified by literary scholar Kristina Bross, these documents reveal that Eliot was often not present for the proceedings. Therefore, the residents of Natick had likely represented themselves in court. At multiple points during this protracted dispute, the indigenous residents were ordered to renounce that they still held a historic claim to Natick's lands, and to acknowledge that their rights owed to English generosity. This implies that the indigenous residents' personal connection to this land had been a central part of their defense, and thus indicates that this stimulated their passionate participation in the dispute, in and out of the courtroom. The residents may have been made to eschew

their ancestral claims, but this does not equal passive acceptance of English authority. The evidence of indigenous agency thus far presented points to the conclusion that these concessions came from an astute awareness that this was the most pragmatic way to persuade the Court to allow them to remain on their homelands. From the very beginning and throughout the town's life, the inhabitants of Natick acted of their own volition to safeguard lands to which they were intrinsically bonded from the threat of English land encroachment.[11]

WIGWAMS & INDIGENOUS AGENCY

Historically, the lifestyles of the indigenous groups in southern New England were defined by routine patterns of migration. Indigenous communities, comprising extended networks of kin, generally organized themselves around a central village site. One cause for movement out of the village was indigenous methods of subsistence. Once planted, their crops required little attention until harvest time. In the interim, many families would pack up their portable wigwams and depart from the central village site. They used pre-established networks of trails to locate crucial resource sites, where they would reconstruct their wigwams and gather and hunt until it was time to return to celebrate the harvest. Within eight to ten years the soil used for planting would become exhausted and the community would relocate to an alternative village site. Another force that frequently drew individuals away from the village for extended periods was the acknowledgement of their responsibility to maintain strong relationships with their kin living in other settlements. O'Brien explains that many English colonists, who typically resided and farmed in a fixed location, misinterpreted indigenous migration as aimless wandering. According to the missionary tracts, Eliot considered the "unfixed, confused" indigenous way of life to be "uncivilized." One of his official aims behind the praying town project was to teach his indigenous followers how to observe "a fixed condition of life" in order to "civil[ize]" them, as a prerequisite to joining the English Church. Once Natick was established, Eliot allocated every family an individual plot of land on which to establish a permanent residence. However, the indigenous inhabitants of Natick worked to ensure that their traditional dwelling patterns were re-established at the praying town.[12]

The available sources suggest that the majority of Natick residents continued to live in wigwams. References to English-style houses at Natick occasionally show up in the sources, but it appears unlikely that there were any more than a few of these in the town. Daniel Gookin (1612-87), the

Superintendent of the Indians in Massachusetts, summarized the residential habits at Natick as "generally after their old mode," meaning wigwams, "though some they have built… after the English form." His language, specifically "generally" and "some," suggests that inhabitants who built English houses were in a small minority compared to those who maintained their traditional form of dwelling. This is corroborated by the observations of the Boston Pastor John Wilson (1588-1667), who noted a "good store" of wigwams in Natick during his visit in around 1651. Gookin's account goes on to suggest that the residents had provided a rationale, presumably to himself or Eliot, for continuing to live in indigenous dwellings, as opposed to adopting English-style houses. According to Gookin, they argued that English-style residences were "more chargeable to build and not so warm, and cannot be removed so easily as their wigwams, wherein there is not a nail used, to avoid annoyance by fleas, and themselves being generally artists in building and finishing their own wigwams: for these and like reasons, they do incline to keep their old-fashioned houses."[13]

That the indigenous inhabitants had to justify their decision to keep their wigwams after moving to the new praying town indicates that this was not a situation of which the missionaries initially approved. As suggested by Eliot's remarks about sedentism, the issue was that wigwams were designed to facilitate mobility. Wigwams were constructed by fixing wooden poles into the ground, which were bent into arches with additional poles fastened to the sides. These were covered with mats or sheets of bark. These components were easy to transport and quick to assemble in a new location. A photograph taken by anthropologists in the 1920s of an Anishinabe wigwam under construction provides insight into these methods (Figure 1). The dwellings of indigenous woodland tribes of the Great Lakes region, such as the Anishinabe, were similar to that of the eastern Algonquian-speaking tribes. In contrast, the colonists' English-style houses were sedentary, as the Fairbanks House in the neighboring town of Dedham stands as testimony (Figure 2). The house was built in the 1630s and much of the original structure has survived into the twenty-first century. Therefore, as Eliot explained to his readers, having Natick's inhabitants adopt English-style houses accorded with his official aims for the praying town. Considering the missionaries' apparent disapproval indicates that Natick's inhabitants had made an autonomous decision to keep their wigwams when they moved to the new settlement. Additionally, it appears that when required they were able to successfully defend their decision. Convincing Eliot to agree to something that conflicted with one of his primary intentions for the praying town would have required a considerable amount of resolve on the part of the indigenous residents.[14]

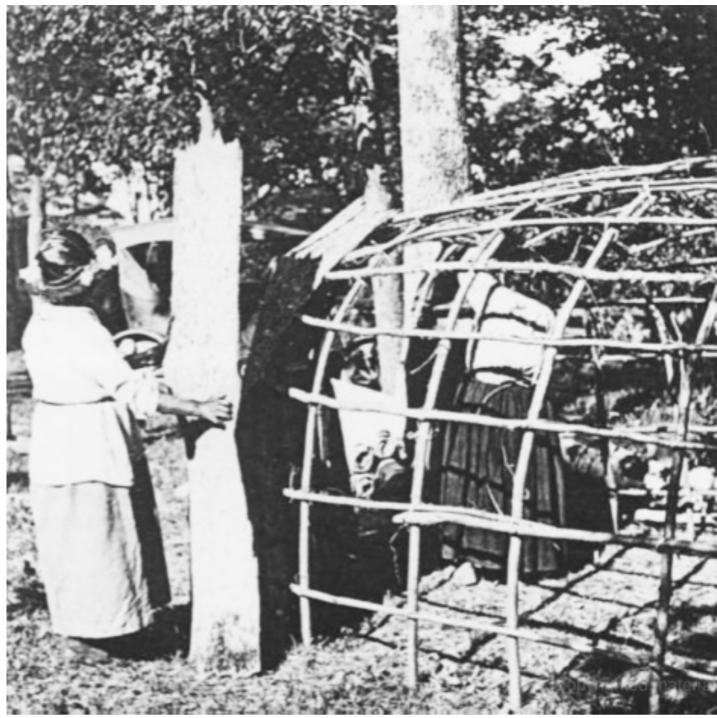


Figure 1: Anishinabe Wigwam Under Construction, ca. 1920

Figure 2: The Fairbanks House, Dedham, MA, Constructed in the 1640s

TRADITIONAL MIGRATION PATTERNS & INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY

Tthere is strong evidence to suggest that the principal reason Natick's residents fought to ensure the preservation of their wigwams were not those that they provided Gookin. It seems apparent that this was part of a wider effort to reinstate their usual mobile lifestyle, treating Natick as their new central village site. Another means by which the residents appear to have prepared the site for this purpose was in the setting of Natick's streets. In the spring of 1651, Natick's inhabitants laid out "three long streets" in the town's center, "two on the north side of the river; and one, on the south." Based on the missionaries' writings, there is no indication that these were not executed in the English style. Literary scholar James Holstun and Stanley have each argued that Eliot had determined this arrangement according to English ideals for town planning. However, the archaeological evidence reveals otherwise. A survey by the Massachusetts Historical Commission in 1980 found that pre-colonial indigenous trails existed on the site of what are now Eliot and Pleasant Streets. Trail systems were a primary means by which the indigenous tribes in the southern region of New England charted their surrounding landscape. They were used to connect villages to critical resource sites and provide links to kin living in other settlements.

Eliot Street and Pleasant Street are some of the most well-established in the South Natick district, pre-dating the earliest maps of South Natick, drawn up in the nineteenth century. As the indigenous groups who built the praying town knew this settlement and the surrounding area, it is highly probable that they had placed the original streets along these trails and that later roads were constructed on top of what was by then a pre-existing layout. As seen in Figure 3, Eliot Street sits to the north of the Charles River. It is met at the Eliot Church by Pleasant Street which crosses the river to the south. This matches with the contemporary descriptions of the arrangement of the praying town. Taken together, this strongly suggests that at least two of Natick's three original streets followed the course of the indigenous trails detected by the Commission. It is therefore apparent that Natick's residents had taken advantage of the opportunity to preserve the trails that already passed through Natick's lands, by laying out the new English-style streets along them. In doing so, the inhabitants re-established their link to the wider networks of trails which connected them to their kin in the wider indigenous community and the resource sites that had historically ensured their livelihood.[15]

Figure 3: Map of Natick

Contemporary map of South Natick showing the present position of Pleasant Street and Eliot Street; the Eliot Church has been highlighted by the author. Data copyright Town of Natick, MapGeo, Sanborn Mapping Company, Google.

Evidence suggests that, with their wigwams and participation in local trail systems restored, and the assurance that their homelands were protected from opportunistic colonists by English law, Natick's residents reinstated their traditional patterns of migration. Brenner conducted an archaeological survey in the South Natick town center to determine indigenous dwelling behaviors during the period in which this region was a praying town. She found that the original seventeenth-century land had not been disturbed, yet could find no material remains from this period, despite documentary evidence that Eliot had supplied Natick's residents with numerous provisions, primarily for farming. Additionally, Brenner was able to find materials from the pre-colonial and post-praying town periods in the same test spots, which

Figure 4: Aerial View of the Eliot Church

The original Eliot Church was destroyed in the late 1700s. This meetinghouse was built in 1828. Image courtesy of the Town of Natick, Department of Public Works

indicated that seventeenth-century remains were not present. This led her to conclude that the residents were not living a sedentary lifestyle as this would have produced concentrated middens – heaps of discarded material. The alternative to this is that these provisions were discarded elsewhere. Brenner reasons that the inhabitants must have been leaving the settlement for prolonged periods of time, the most likely explanation being that they were following their pre-existing seasonal subsistence routines or visiting other indigenous communities.[16]

This argument is reinforced by the investigation of Natick's burial ground remains. Due to nineteenth-century construction work, the original interments of the burial ground are gone, but a small collection of seventeenth-century objects was found during the project which are indicative of the early inhabitants' dwelling patterns. These items included an indigenous kettle and pipes, as well as beads. Given the indigenous items that were recovered, it is likely that these were shell beads known as wampum, which was a valuable form of currency between tribes in the southern New England area. It is clear that these were not the types of items Eliot had provided Natick's residents,

Figure 5: Map of Natick, 1853

and that these had come from an indigenous setting. Reciprocal exchange of gifts was central to maintaining relationships with kin and alliances between indigenous communities in southern New England. The remains that were discovered suggest that Natick's inhabitants were continuing this custom with other indigenous groups. When seen in relation to the actions Natick's residents had made to retain their wigwams and their link to indigenous trail systems, it follows that the residents were moving out of the town's boundaries on visits to their kin. Securing homelands under English law allowed the inhabitants to maintain this mobility without becoming landless in the process. Overall, the archaeological evidence indicates that a large number of Natick's inhabitants were actively practicing a traditional mobile lifestyle outside of the town's bounds, at least to maintain their relationships with their kin or other indigenous allies, if not also to observe their seasonal subsistence cycles. It appears that they had shaped the praying town to fulfill the role of the indigenous village center, to which they could leave and return in accordance with these pre-established routines. This result was the opposite of what Eliot had intended. Through a gradual process, Natick's residents had asserted agency over the town's development to ensure the preservation of their traditional relationship with the local and wider landscape.[17]

THE PURITAN MEETINGHOUSE

There is at least one instance where Natick's residents complied with Eliot's vision for the town's design: in the construction of an English-style Puritan meetinghouse, with minimal English assistance. The commitment the inhabitants showed to this activity can be understood as an endeavor to protect the indigenous residential practices they had re-established at Natick. For Eliot, having the inhabitants build an authentic meetinghouse was of much greater concern than them living near English populations or residing in English houses. In his eyes, this would be the proof he needed of their devotion to Christianity and their potential to become "civil[ized]." Completing this project appears to have been one of his few explicit demands. It can therefore be assumed that this was a requisite for the indigenous people to be allowed to remain in Natick. Little is known of the final building's appearance, but it followed the English style closely enough to satisfy Eliot and impress other English observers. Boston Minister Richard Mather (1596-1669) and Pastor Wilson both commented that the house could be mistaken as being of the English hand. This is a mark of the residents' dedication. Meetinghouses tended to be simplistic and plain to reflect Puritan values and being a new type of house of worship they had few stylistic norms. However,

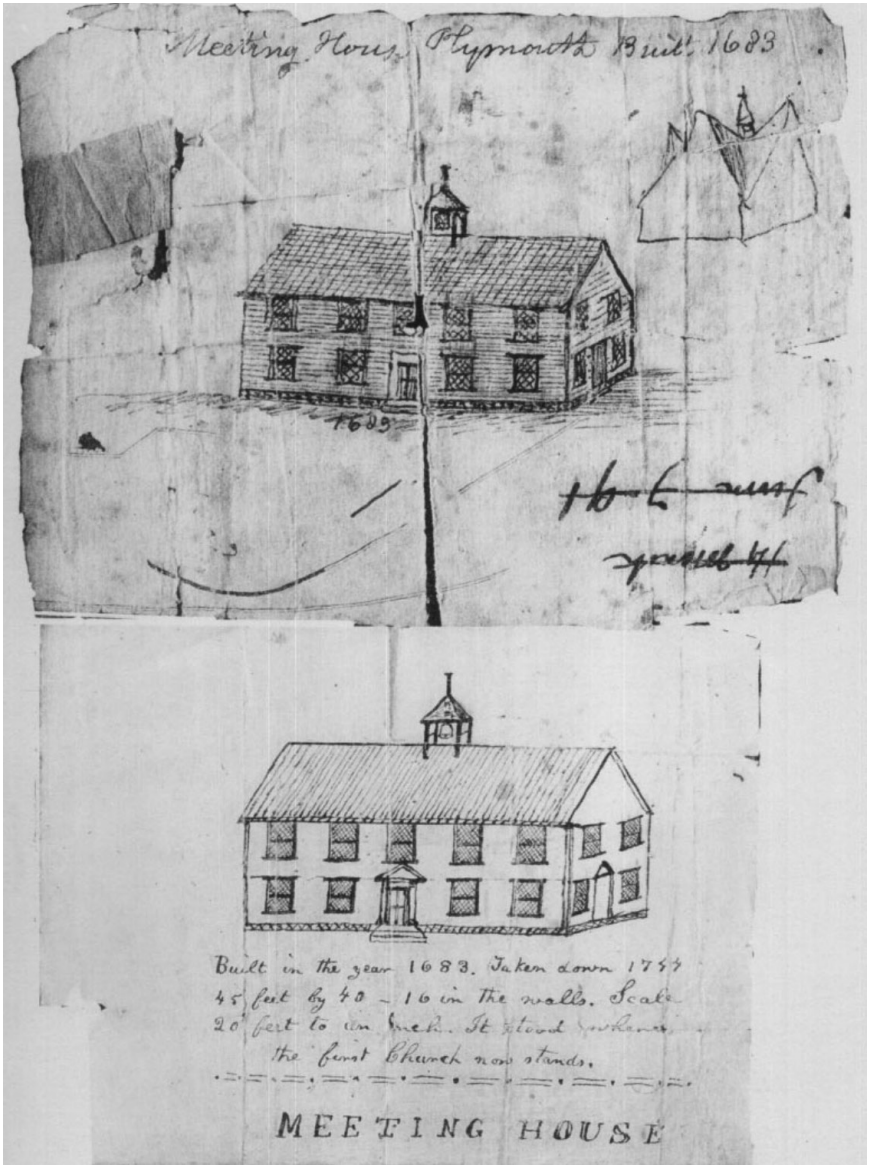
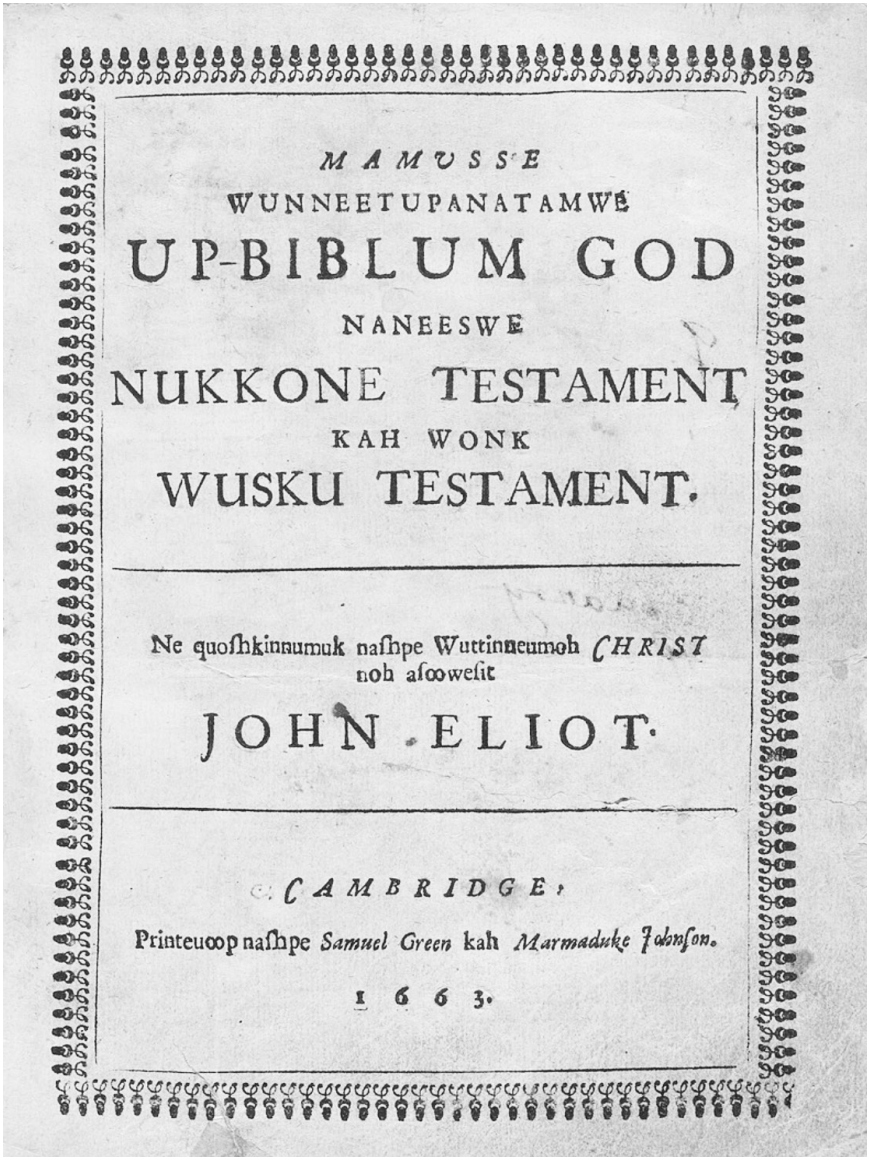


Figure 6: Late Eighteenth-Century Drawings from Memory of the Second Meetinghouse in Plymouth, MA, Constructed c.1683.


MAMUSSE
WUNNEETUPANATAMWE
UP-BIBLUM GOD
NANEESWE
NUKKONE TESTAMENT
KAH WONK
WUSKU TESTAMENT.

Ne quoshkinnumuk nashpe Wuttinneumoh CHRIST
noh ascowesit
JOHN ELIOT.

CAMBRIDGE:
Printeuoop nashpe Samuel Green kah Marmaduke Johnson.
1663.

Figure 6: John Eliot's translation of the Bible into Algonquian.

First published in 1661 with only the New Testament, this text was the work of numerous indigenous translators in addition to Eliot.

for Natick's new inhabitants, English architecture differed significantly from their own adaptable, portable structures. Two eighteenth-century drawings recollecting Plymouth's meetinghouse, constructed within a few decades of Natick's (Figure 5), indicate the types of new techniques that the indigenous people would have had to master, such as joinery and making roof shingles and clapboard. Considering the various ways Natick's residents had shaped the town's landscape in accordance with their traditions, and that completing the meetinghouse in an authentic manner appears to have been a requirement of their residency, it seems reasonable to argue that their commitment was driven by a determination to conserve all that they had secured at Natick. Furthermore, the addition of a meetinghouse did not require the indigenous inhabitants to compromise their historic relationship with land, in the way that abandoning their homelands or living in English residences and adopting a sedentary lifestyle would have. It appears that even in a scenario where they were following Eliot's vision for the praying town, the residents of Natick were taking action to ensure the preservation of their culture's fundamental ways of life. [18]

From the start, the built environment of Natick was the product of its indigenous inhabitants. In direct conflict with Eliot's intentions to have his new followers practice sedentism, Natick's indigenous residents actively asserted agency to secure the elements necessary for them to maintain their traditional, mobile lifestyle, migrating between connected sites of cultural significance. They fought to secure their ancestral homelands under the colonists' legal system and utilized it to defend their possession against English encroachment. They rejected English-style houses, reinstating their wigwams, and demonstrated resolve when challenged by the missionaries. Archaeological findings suggest that when laying down English-style streets the residents took the initiative to re-establish their connection to the local indigenous trail system, and that with these pieces in place they reintroduced their traditional migratory routines. When the residents did decide to comply with one of Eliot's clearest demands for the town's design, in their successful construction of the meetinghouse, it appears that they did so in order to protect all that they had secured. It is apparent that the indigenous inhabitants of Natick actively shaped the new town on their own terms. This evidence thus enriches understandings of the ways in which the indigenous inhabitants of this praying town asserted agency, proving that these people were far from being passive, subjugated followers of the new colonial authority in Massachusetts Bay.

Notes

1. Jean O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees: Indian Land and Identity in Natick, Massachusetts, 1650-1790* (Lincoln, NE and London, 1997), 26, 42-3; Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2001), 65; Francis Jennings, "Goals and Functions of Puritan Missions to the Indians," *Ethnohistory* 18, no. 3 (1971): 197-212, 206.
2. On Puritan missionaries in New England and John Eliot see James Holstun, *A Rational Millennium: Puritan Utopias of Seventeenth-Century England and America* (New York, NY and Oxford, 1987), 3; and O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees*, 26, 31; Quotes from Edward Winslow, ed., "The Glorious Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians of New England," in *The Eliot Tracts: with Letters from John Eliot to Thomas Thorowgood and Richard Baxter*, ed. Michael P. Clark (Westport, CT and London, 2003), 141-68, 159; John Eliot and Thomas Mayhew, Jr. "Tears of Repentance: Or, A Further Narrative of the Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New-England," in *The Eliot Tracts*, ed. Clark, 249-95, 268; and Thomas Shepard, "The Clear Sun-shine of the Gospel Breaking Forth upon the Indians in New-England," in *The Eliot Tracts*, ed. Clark, 101-40, 114.
3. On the conception of praying towns see Alison Stanley, "The Praying Indian Town: Encounter and Conversion Through Imposed Urban Space," in *Building the British Atlantic World: Spaces, Places, and Material Culture, 1600-1850*, ed. Daniel Maudlin and Bernard L. Herman (Chapel Hill, NC, 2013), 142-61; and Neal Salisbury, "'I Loved the Place of My Dwelling': Puritan Missionaries and Native Americans in Seventeenth-Century Southern New England," in *Inequality in Early America* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1999), ed. Carla G. Pestana and Sharon V. Salinger, 111-33, 114, 116.
4. The Indigenous inhabitants of Eliot's praying towns are referred to by some historians as 'Praying Indians', particularly those who argue that these groups were sincere converts to Christianity. As this article does not seek to engage directly with this debate, this term will not be employed. For different arguments on the question of the motivations of the Indigenous inhabitants of Natick see Elise M. Brenner, "To Pray or be Prey: That is the Question: Strategies for Cultural Autonomy of Massachusetts Praying Town Indians," *Ethnohistory* 27, no. 2 (1980): 135-52, 137-8; Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country,* 110-29; and Robert James Naeher, "Dialogue in the Wilderness: John Eliot and the Indian Exploration of Puritanism as a Source of Meaning, Comfort, and Ethnic Survival," *The New England Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (1989): 346-68; Natick's population rates can be found in Stanley, "The Praying Indian Town," 148; Catherine Carlson, "Archival and Archaeological Research Report on the Configuration of the Seven Original Seventeenth Century Praying Indian Towns of the Massachusetts Bay Colony," *University of Massachusetts*

Archaeological Services (1986): 1-164, 27; and *First Congregational Church, 300th anniversary of the First Congregational Church, Natick, Massachusetts: 1651-1951* (Natick, MA, 1951), 6; For more on how the 1675 conflict altered relations between the missionaries and Indigenous inhabitants of Natick see O'Brien.

5. Richter, 95; Naeher, "Dialogue in the Wilderness," 347-8.

6. These investigations involved excavations and the analysis of documentary evidence. William Francis Galvin, "MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report: Natick," *Massachusetts Historical Commission* (1980): 1-9; Carlson, "Configuration of the Seven Original Seventeenth Century Praying Indian Towns"; Elise M. Brenner, "Archaeological Investigations at a Massachusetts Praying Town," *Bulletin of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society* 47, no. 2 (1986): 69-78; Brenner, 'To Pray or be Prey', 135-52.

7. For primary accounts of the town's layout see Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections of the Indians in New England* (New York, NY, 1972), 41; and Henry Whitefield ed., "Strength out of Weakness, Or a Glorious Manifestation of the Further Progresse of the Gospel among the Indians in New England," in *The Eliot Tracts*, ed. Clark, 211-48, 224; For historian's accounts of the town's layout see Peter Benes, "The New England Meetinghouse: An Atlantic Perspective," in *Building the British Atlantic World: Spaces, Places, and Material Culture, 1600-1850*, ed. Daniel Maudlin and Bernard L. Herman (Chapel Hill, NC, 2013), 119-41, 119; O'Brien, 45; Stanley, 147; and Carlson, 29, 38; On wigwams see Peter Nabokov and Robert Easton, *Native American Architecture* (New York, NY and Oxford, 1989), 52.

8. On agreements with the General Court see Nathaniel B. Shurtleff ed., *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England: Printed by Order of the Legislature: Volume II 1642-1649* (Boston, MA, 1853), 166; and Jennings, "Goals and Functions of Puritan Missions to the Indians," 206; O'Brien, 10, 53; Hertha D. Wong, "Pre-Literate Native American Autobiography: Forms of Personal Narrative," *MELUS* 14, no. 1 (1987): 17-32, 18.

9. Stanley, 149-50; O'Brien, 28; Kathleen J. Bragdon and Ives Goddard, *Natick Writings in Massachusett: Part 1* (Philadelphia, PA, 1988), 10; For John Eliot's account of the issues regarding a settlement location see John Eliot, "A Late and Further Manifestation of the Progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England," in *The Eliot Tracts*, ed. Clark, 297-320, 303-4; and John Eliot, Letter to Mr. Steele Oct. 8th, 1652, in *The New England Historical and Genealogical Register: Volume XXXVI*, ed. John Ward Dean (Boston, MA, 1882), 294-7, 295.

10. For the testimonies of John Speen and Magus see John Eliot, "A Further Account of the Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians of New England," in *The Eliot Tracts*, ed. Clark, 355-96, 387; and Eliot and Mayhew, "Tears of Repentance," 276; Richter, 110-29.

11. Kristina Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons: Praying Indians in Colonial America* (Ithaca, NY and London, 2004), 43; Nathaniel B. Shurtleff ed., *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England: Printed by Order of the Legislature: Volume III 1644-1657* (Boston, MA, 1854), 385; For a full account of the dispute between Natick and Dedham see O'Brien, 31-42.
12. Contemporary Indigenous migration patterns are outlined in William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York, NY, 1983), 37-38, 45-6; and O'Brien, 17, 21-22, 26; Eliot's attitudes to Indigenous migration are stated in Winslow, "The Glorious Progress of the Gospel," 159; and Eliot and Mayhew, 268; For Eliot's division of land in Natick see Dennis A. Connole, *The Indians of the Nipmuck Country in Southern New England, 1603-1750: An Historical Geography* (Jefferson, NC and London, 2007), 97.
13. The references to both English-style houses and wigwams in Natick appear in Gookin, *Historical Collections*, 41; and Whitefield, "Strength out of Weakness," 232.
14. Wigwam construction and regional differences are outlined in Nabokov and Easton, *Native American Architecture*, 56-9; and Kathleen James-Chakraborty, *Architecture since 1400* (Minneapolis, MN, 2014), 196, 198; For details of Fairbanks House see Harold Kalman and Louis P. Nelson, 'British North America and the West Indies' in *Architecture and Urbanism in the British Empire*, ed. G. A. Bremner (Oxford, 2016), 239-77, 259; and 'The House', The Fairbanks House https://fairbankshouse.org/about-history/the-house/ (accessed 07/01/2022).
15. Gookin, 41; Whitefield, 224-32; Carlson, 27; Holstun, *A Rational Millennium*, 123; Stanley, 152-3; Galvin, "MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report," 1-4; *For Indigenous trail systems see Howard S. Russell, Indian New England before the Mayflower* (Hanover, NH and London, 1980), 204; and O'Brien, 15.
16. Brenner, "Archaeological Investigations," 71-4; Carlson, 31; Harold W. Van Lonkyuzen, "A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians: Acculturation, Conversion, and Identity at Natick, Massachusetts, 1646-1730," *The New England Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (1990): 396-428, 406.
17. For information on the burial ground remains consult Kathleen J. Bragdon, *Native People of Southern New England, 1650-1775* (Norman, OK, 2009), 150; and J. Sheafe Jr., "The Indian Burying Ground," in *A Review of the First Fourteen Years of the Historical, Natural History and Library Society of South Natick* (South Natick, MA, 1884), 29-32, 31; On wampum see Neal Salisbury, "Social Relationships on a Moving Frontier: Natives and Settlers in Southern New England, 1638-1675," *Man in the Northeast* 33 (1987): 89-99, 91; and Cronon, 95; Discussion of the culture of gift exchange in O'Brien, 6.
18. Eliot allowed the residents two days assistance from an English carpenter in constructing the frame. Van Lonkyuzen, "A Reappraisal of the Praying Indians," 407; For Eliot's intentions as well as the reactions of Minister Richard Mather and

Pastor Wilson see Eliot, Letter to Mr. Steele, 296; Eliot and Mayhew, 266-8; and Whitefield, 230, 231; The style and construction of Puritan meetinghouses are discussed in Benes, "The New England Meetinghouse," 119, 120, 124, 126.